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**PUBLIC HOUSING LIKELY TO IMPACT PRIVATE SECTOR BUT NOT AS DIRECT COMPETITION, REALTOR EXECUTIVE OLIVER TONG TOLD THE TIMES**

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER WARNS OF EXTORTION OF MACAU STUDENTS IN EUROPE**

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**CHINA, RUSSIA SHOW OFF TIES AMID MANEUVERING OVER UKRAINE**

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AP PHOTO



**Australian** Prime Minister Anthony Albanese says a deal to provide Australia with nuclear-powered submarines will be the nation's biggest leap in defense capability in its history, adding the United States and Britain also plan to benefit from the partnership. A decision will be announced in March on how a fleet of Australian submarines powered with U.S. nuclear technology will be delivered under the AUKUS tripartite pact.

**Poland** U.S. President Joe Biden yesterday [Macau time] warned of "hard and bitter days ahead" as Russia's invasion of Ukraine nears the one-year mark, but vowed that no matter what, the United States and allies "will not waver" in supporting the Ukrainians. Biden used a strongly worded address in Poland to praise allies in Europe for stepping up over the past year and to send a clear message to Vladimir Putin that "NATO will not be divided, and we will not tire."

AP PHOTO

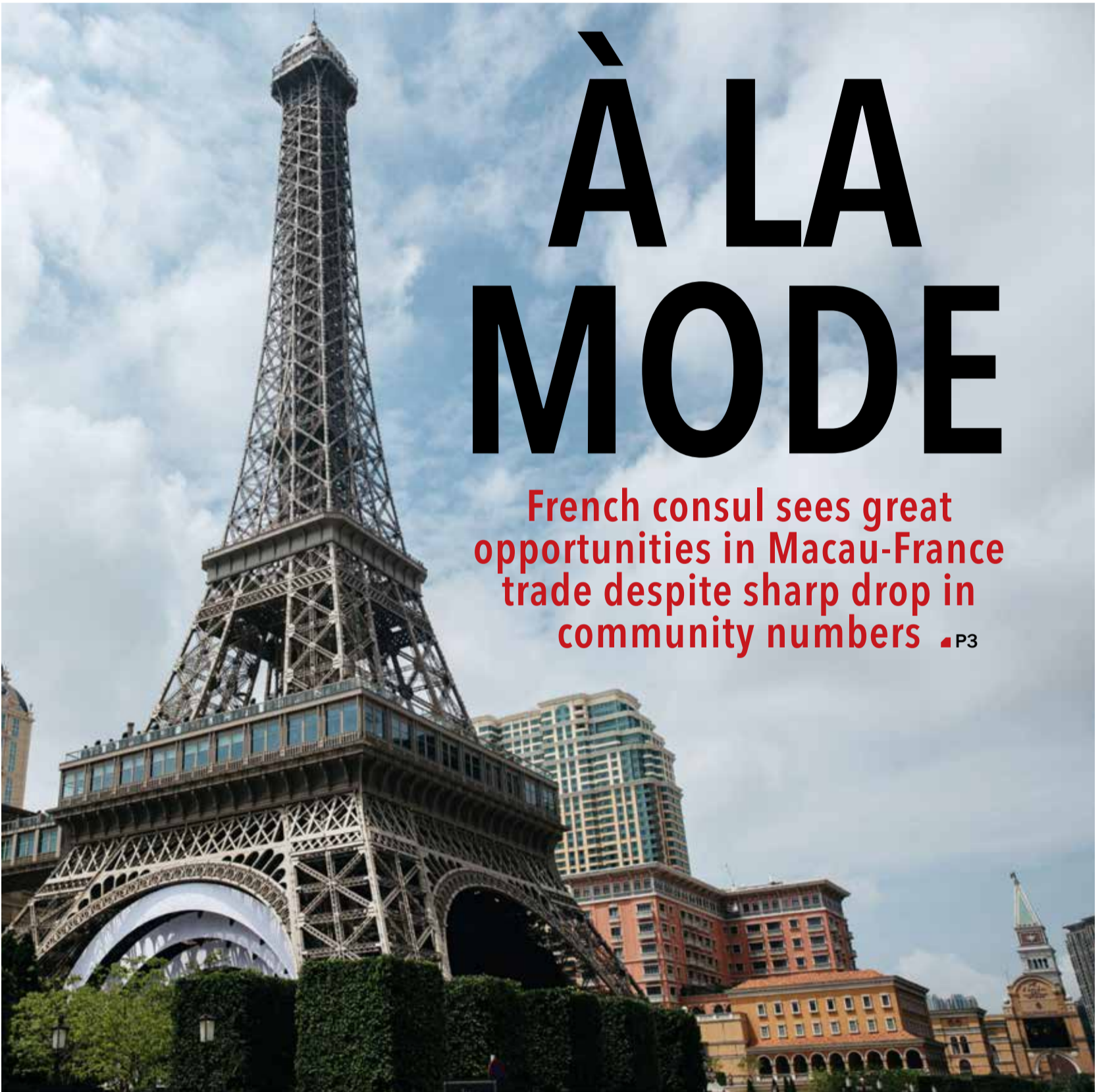


**Russia** President Vladimir Putin suspended Moscow's participation in the last remaining nuclear arms control pact with the United States, announcing the move in a bitter speech in which he made clear he would not change his strategy in the war in Ukraine.

**Germany** A senior government official is proposing U.S.-style tax credits to boost companies involved in shifting the country's economy away from its dependence on fossil fuels. Economy Minister Robert Habeck said Germany and Europe as a whole need to strengthen the production capacity for clean energy, which would also lower electricity prices and help it compete with global rivals.

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MDT ARCHIVE



# À LA MODE

**French consul sees great opportunities in Macau-France trade despite sharp drop in community numbers** ▲ P3

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## MACAU TOURISM NEEDS 'SMILES'

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**EVENTS**

## DIVERSE ART FORMS AT FOUR SEASONS

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# GAMING EXPERT: MACAU FACES TOUGH COMPETITION AS REGIONAL RIVALS THRIVE

ANTHONY LAM

**ALTHOUGH** Macau has geographical advantages, other aspects such as customer service should be improved amid tourism revivals, said Alidad Tash, managing director of 2nt8 Limited.

The comment was made yesterday at a breakfast briefing organized by the France Macau Chamber of Commerce.

Tash has been in the gambling industry since 2000 at the Venetian resort in Las Vegas. Six years later, he relocated to Macau and has remained here ever since. He led the analytics department of the then Venetian Macao resort.

Tash's company is a casino and resort service provider, with scope spanning across analytics, data visualization, casino marketing and gambling operations, among other areas.

He was asked whether Singapore, the Philippines, South Korea and maybe even Japan and Thailand have commenced or are considering operating casinos and, if so, whether these places are threats to Macau.

In response, he said that competitions could be fierce as each competitor has their own advan-



Alidad Tash

tage against Macau. For instance, Singapore is known for its business facilities and services, while Thailand is known for its leisure offerings.

These possible competitions will certainly hurt the Macau government's ambition of attracting foreign visitors. Additionally, the city's service standards should also improve. "There is a service barrier in Macau, where smiles

are not as natural as those in the Philippines," Tash added.

There is an upside, according to the response of Tash. In contrast to threatening Macau's leading position in casino gambling in Asia, the speaker predicts that a thriving casino business within the region may actually support Macau's further development, such as the modernization of facilities and further expansion of

resort projects.

Elaborating on his answer, the speaker said that Macau has been very successful in past decades, a model which has tempted potential competitors to recreate it. These attempts have not been as successful as Macau in its peak, which was USD45 billion a year. For example, the Philippines and Singapore have each only made about several billion dollars.

The speaker also mentioned the case of Japan, describing the project as "crumbled" because "it should have been opened already." Nevertheless, the speaker believes that "eventually it's going to happen."

Tash was also asked for his views on the evolution of entertainment in resorts, as they are obliged to stage more shows and non-gambling activities.

He responded with a question: regardless of the type of non-gambling activities, "be that MICE, museums or shows," how many will they attract? He pointed out that there are shows or entertainers who are being "locked up" elsewhere, such as Celine Dion in Las Vegas.

Another question he raised for consideration was about the large gap between gambling and non-gambling revenues, although he believes the gap could be closed. He said he was not against the non-gambling development strategy, but doubts the on-and-off mode of shows will be appealing to tourists.

He agrees with the government in the development of sports entertainment, as he said "it is an area that we should grow."

## ART

# Sands China holds exhibition with dozens of diverse art forms

STAFF REPORTER

**SANDS** China launched a new exhibition at the Sands Gallery, featuring works of the first-prize winners in its Time is on My Side - 2021 Greater Bay Area Young Artists Scheme.

The competition is in support of Art Macao: Macao International Art Biennale 2021 series of events organized by the Macau government, aiming to create a platform for young artists to showcase their works.

Titled "Illumination - Zhaoying Zhang & Sisi Wong Dual Solo Exhibition," the exhibition showcases nearly 60 magnificent works of diverse art forms and media including oil

painting, sculpture, installations, photography and projection.

It probes into the cultural connotations of light through the exhibits, and explores, from the perspective of technique, how the artists interpret the diverse aspects of the artworks using light.

Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd., said: "through presenting this exhibition, we hope to foster art appreciation among visitors, inspire local artists, bolster the vibrant growth of Macau's cultural and creative industries, and help boost artistic exchange between artists in the Greater Bay Area."

Exhibition artist Zhaoying Zhang has utili-



sed materials across cultures and times to depict theatrical and carnival scenes, employing uncanny visual effects along with

sharp contrast between brightness and darkness. Sisi Wong, on the other hand, has taken different narrative forms and

approaches such as giclée prints, projection lamps, and videos to create special effects that reveal the vastness of the spiritual world

and the universe.

The exhibition at Sands Gallery, at Four Seasons is open to the public 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily until March 26.

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# French consul eyes growing opportunities in Macau-France trade

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE city's development strategy targeting economic diversification will benefit French businesses already operating or which will operate in Macau, Christile Drulhe, Consul-general of France in Hong Kong and Macau, has this week commented.

Drulhe assumed her position in September last year. Her first visit to Macau after commencing in the position was last month to meet with the French community here. She recently paid another visit to Macau to attend a cocktail reception organized by the France Macau Chamber of Commerce (FMCC).

When asked her predictions about the momentum in trade after the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, she said she is confident that economic exchange will become increasingly frequent.

Highlighting the long-time partnership and collaboration between Macau and France, Drulhe pointed out that France is the second largest exporter to Macau during Covid-19, only after mainland China, on whom Macau relies highly for food and daily products. The Consulate and the government of France will "build on this momentum" and further improve trade between the two jurisdictions.



Christile Drulhe, Consul-general of France in Hong Kong and Macau

She added that Beijing's and Macau's desire to diversify Macau's economy will certainly help French businesses further thrive in the city. "Many French companies have been in Macau for a long time, especially in infrastructure, hotel, catering and luxury goods," said the consul-general. "The strategy of economic diversification will create more opportunities for French businesses, including those in creative, cultural and innovation industries."

With the local government emphasizing attracting foreign tourists, the consul-general also expressed her confidence that Macau's charm will attract French travelers and tourists, despite the long journey. "Macau is a unique place in history and culture," she said, adding that these qualities appeal to French people.

Accompanying the consul-general on this recent trip is Philippe Baudry, head of the Economic Department of the Consulate. Baudry added to Drulhe's answer, saying that the gastronomy in Macau will also help attract people from France.

Mentioning gastronomy, the French consul-general announced that her government is ready to help arrange visits of French culinary stars to Macau to share their expert knowledge with students here, especially at the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM).

Drulhe emphasized that it is the consulate's mission to encourage exchanges between Macau and France. She hinted that work had been difficult in the past few years as Covid-19 restrictions were in place, blocking channels for physical interactions.

Commenting on the impression of Macau's economic position during this latest visit, Baudry said that he could see that tourists, especially those from mainland China, have started returning. "Definitely this will give some impetus to the world," said he. "We do hope that with Macau seeing more activities, French businesses can benefit from [the situation]."

The consul-general revealed that the local French community had shrunk from 300 to 150 in the past three years. It was mainly caused by Covid-19 restrictions. Many of them left Macau to reunite with families but could not return to Macau.

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER WARNS OF EXTORTION OF LOCAL STUDENTS IN EUROPE

STAFF REPORTER

**A** Macau student studying in Europe was "virtually kidnapped", causing huge economic loss, mental and physical impairment, and negative impact on their study, according to the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (OCMFA) of the People's Republic of China in Macau Special Administrative Region. The student is no longer in danger.

Virtual kidnapping takes on several forms, yet is always an extortion scheme.

The fraudster tricks victims into paying a ransom to free a loved one they believe is being threatened with violence or death.

According to OCMFA, virtual kidnapping that targets overseas Chinese students has been occurring overseas.

As newcomers who lack social experience, students overseas are easily targeted by offenders. The offenders



JEFFERSON SANTOS

will pretend to be international criminal police or officers from organs of public security, and execute extortion by intimidation.

They will force students to shoot videos about being "kidnapped", leading to severe loss and trauma.

Increasingly, Macau students are going abroad for study or exchange as international communication resumes, the office said.

OCMFA, in a note, urges Macau residents, particularly students overseas, to improve their safety awareness and precautions against similar fraud.

The office called on students to keep passports,

IDs, phone numbers, bank accounts, passwords, and other important information safe. When receiving calls from people who identify themselves as "police handling cases", "tracking down crimes" and "[investigating] prohibited mailing", students should hang up and contact authorities such as the police for help.

Parents should report the case to local police and China's public security organs, and turn to the embassy and the anti-telecom network fraud center for help when receiving information stating that their children have been victims of the extortion scheme.

GBA

## BORDER-CROSSING TRIPS IN HENGQIN EXCEED PRE-PANDEMIC PERIOD

STAFF REPORTER

**N**EARLY 1.6 million trips have occurred since the restrictions on cross-border travel were relaxed, according to Hengqin authorities.

Cross-border trips surged after January 8, when the travel restrictions were largely eased. Until February 19, there had been 1.58 million trips and 230,000 car trips, including 150,000 car trips by single-plate cars. Compared to the same period three years ago before the pandemic, the number of visitors has increased by 27.4%, while the number of car trips is up by 109.1%.

Statistics from the Hengqin checkpoint suggest that cross-border trips have exceeded 40,000 for several consecutive days.

Construction of livelihood projects, such as the Macao New Neighbourhood is accelera-



RENATO MARQUES

ting, and cultural tourism projects are also being pushed, according to Hengqin checkpoint.

As announced earlier, construction of the second phase of Hengqin checkpoint is scheduled for the end of next month, which will "further improve the transportation and border crossing facilities."

Previously, the local government said it wants to improve the facilities of the Macau Port Area at the Hengqin Border to facilitate the use of this

checkpoint by locals and visitors.

The goal is that this border post become more convenient so it can be used more frequently and so benefit the businesses located on both sides of the border.

On Feb. 11, daily car crossings by Macau-plated cars at the Zhuhai border has also surpassed 1,200 trips, which is the highest daily record since the execution of the "Northbound Travel for Macau Vehicles" scheme.

## LI CANFENG DENIES CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS

Businessman and former director of the now-restructured Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) Li Canfeng has denied corruption allegations in a court hearing yesterday, as cited in a TDM report. Li Canfeng's lawyer stated in court that he denied the charges, and also said that there is no direct evidence that Li accepted bribes. The lawyer argued that the former official only knew in August 2014 that he would take over as the director of the bureau and, considering this, questioned how he could have collected the bribes and assisted in the relevant projects before this date. Lawyer for the former accused director, Jaime Carion, will appear in court today for closing statements.

## IPIM HANDLED 806 RESIDENCY APPLICATIONS

In 2022, the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute handled 806 temporary residency applications for "Investors, Managerial Personnel and Professionals with Special Qualifications." Among them, there were 511 renewal applications, 20 applications for residency extension to family dependent, and 275 new applications. According to the statistics and industry classification of approved new applications in 2022, five cases involved are in education, financial services and other industries.

## TAIWAN TRAVEL INDUSTRY VISITS MACAU

Macau's travel trade organizations have invited over 60 members of the travel industry from Taiwan region to Macau for a familiarization trip, and hosted a Taiwan & Macau travel industry networking seminar in Macau yesterday. The delegation attending the networking seminar include delegates from 58 Taiwan travel agencies. The seminar also featured a business matching session joined by industry delegates from 77 of Macau's hotels, travel agencies, integrated tourism and leisure enterprises as well as tourism-related facilities in the afternoon. Arranged by Travel Industry Council of Macau, Macau Travel Agency Association and Association of Macao Tourist Agents, the delegates from Taiwan Region arrived in Macau for a five-day familiarization trip.

# Public housing likely to impact private sector but not as direct competition

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE many housing projects owned by the public sector, planned and already undergoing construction, are likely to have an impact on the private market but only in terms of perception, and will not be a direct competitor to the sector, Oliver Tong, general manager for Macau and Zhuhai and, Head of Retail for Hong Kong of real estate investment company JLL told the Times.

Tong was speaking on the sidelines of a press conference organized by JLL Macau on the 2022 Macau Year-end Property Market Review and Forecast.

Questioned by the Times on the perceived and expected impacts of the numerous public housing projects, particularly on the sandwich-class housing, he said, "many projects are coming and we are talking about a huge amount of supply that will be around 35,000 units. However, we don't have a very clear timeline [of] when it's going to be launched so it takes time to observe," adding, "I don't think it is good for the private market in terms of value and leasing because, in people's perception, they think they will have more options at a much cheaper rate when compared to the private market. It is very tough to say right now but I am sure there will be an impact."

Such a perceived impact that would mainly influence the value and leases of the private sector is nonetheless seen as less influential in terms of direct competition, with Tong saying that sandwich-class housing would not directly compete with private housing.

"Macau's market is very unique. I don't think [the sandwich-class housing] will be a direct competitor because most of the residents would love to own properties. [This new housing type] will just create the perception that they will have more options [choices] but eventually, I think that if they have the opportunity they [would] prefer the private market," he remarked.

After 2022 was considered a "tragedy" for the property market with transactions on residential property to drop by 50.6% year-on-year, JLL forecasts that in 2023 the Macau property market is expected to pick up with more residential leasing transactions, in light of the reopening of the borders.

However, taking into account the rising interest rates on loans and the issues related to unem-

RENATO MARQUES



ployment and underemployment rates which will not be immediately tackled, it is not expected that the market will see a major recovery this year, with JLL forecasting capital values for high-end residential to remain stable, while growth up to 5% is expected on the mass-to-medium residential segment.

As for rental values, it is forecasted that high-end could reach some 5% up while the mass-to-medium segment could see a 5 to 10% increment.

### 'MARKET COOLING MEASURES' NOT SUITABLE

For JLL the current "market cooling measures" being applied by the government, dating back to 2010 and 2018, were not effective, and are now contributing to additional difficulties in the property market, which is struggling to recover from the pandemic.

"When the cooling measures were launched, I don't think anyo-

ne on the planet predicted [something like] Covid and the related impacts. Back in the day I believe it was necessary to have some cooling measures but now the world is very different and in terms of the property market we are at a very low level and I believe it can pose a risk if this market decreases too much as it will hurt everyone's pockets," Tong said.

"I think it is time to, at least, re-evaluate these measures. We are not suggesting to remove all of them but we believe it is the right time to review and evaluate any potential easing," JLL's General Manager for Macau and Zhuhai noted.

Among these measures are restrictions related to the loan-to-value (LTV) ceiling that reduced the percentage of the loan that buyers can obtain from financial institutions (via mortgages) for the acquisition of property.

"I think it's not [just] about transaction volume and investment. I think it affects the quality of life,"

Tong said, explaining that young couples who acquired a studio or 1-bedroom apartment when they start their married life now cannot find a way to move to a bigger apartment as the ceiling for the LTV is placed at 50%, which requires home buyers to have a very large down payment. This required down payment could easily reach HKD4 to 5 million, making it impossible for growing families to upsize their homes.

"Recently, the mainland has gradually relaxed the restrictions on real estate in some cities, and at the same time were urged to provide more financing support for the systemically important real estate companies. Though the pandemic in Macau has been under control and borders have reopened, it is crucial to implement appropriate measures to help alleviate the cash flow pressures faced by the small and medium enterprises SMEs, which in turn will help boost the local economy," added Tong.

## OFFICE SPACES ONLY SEGMENT NOT EXPECTED TO GROW

**T**HE only property segment in which JLL does not forecast any growth is related to office spaces.

In contrast to residential and also retail, which on top-tier spaces is expected to grow up to 5% in capital value and between 10 to 15% in rental value, the office segment is expected to remain stable in 2023.

"Macau's office leasing market was very weak with the rising vacancy rate in 2022 as the local economy was badly hit by the pandemic.

Government authorities are also gradually moving out of their existing offices that were rented from the private market," Matt Kou, senior manager for Leasing at JLL Macau said, adding that although the activity is resuming as well as the influx of tourists, due to the fact that the government is said to be building its own building in NAPE area to host several services that are current lodged in private office

buildings, it is expected that the overall vacancy rate will remain high.

"Vacancy rates of offices in NAPE district remains high; Grade A offices in Nam Van district are more resilient but the office space available for lease in the Treasure Island Resort World development will increase the Grade A office supply in the area," Kou said, adding that the exiting of government services from Vicky Plaza in Rua do Campo at the end of 2022 also contributed to more prime spaces in the city center.

Nonetheless, JLL says that such a space is in demand and already achieved an occupancy rate of 50%.

Still another co-working space in Nantong Commercial Building expected to start operating mid this year will create new competition in the Macau office market, which fell by 11.2% in 2022.

# 光照度

ILLUMINATION

## 張釗瀛 & 黃斯婷 雙個展

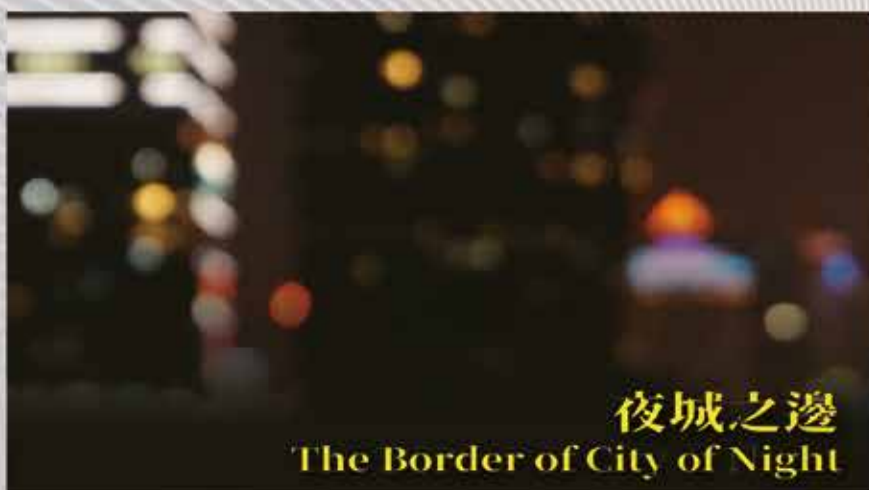
ZHAOYING ZHANG & SISI WONG  
DUAL SOLO EXHIBITION

策展人：胡斌  
Curator: Bin Hu

澳門四季名薈六樓金沙藝廊  
Sands Gallery, Level 6,  
The Grand Suites at Four Seasons



2023.2.23-3.26





## CHINA BLASTS PENTAGON OFFICIAL'S TAIWAN VISIT, MILITARY TIES

CHINA yesterday sharply criticized a visit to Taiwan by a senior Pentagon official and reaffirmed it has sanctioned Lockheed Martin and a unit of Raytheon for supplying military equipment to the self-governing island democracy.

The comments from the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office underscore the dramatic deterioration in relations between Beijing and Washington over Taiwan, technology, spying allegations, and, increasingly, Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Asked about the reported visit by Michael Chase, deputy assistant secretary of defense for China, office spokesperson Zhu Fenglian said China "resolutely opposes any official interaction and military collaboration" between the U.S. and Taiwan.

Efforts by Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party to cement the island's independence

with foreign assistance are "doomed to failure," Zhu told reporters.

China considers Taiwan part of its territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary, and has been stepping up its military and diplomatic harassment. The sides split amid civil war in 1949, and China's authoritarian Communist Party has never held sway over the island.

A Pentagon spokesperson did not comment directly on Chase's visit, repeating that "our commitment to Taiwan is rock-solid and contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and within the region." Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said it had no information about any such visit.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said a "new round of tensions" in the Taiwan Strait was a result of the Taiwanese authorities' attempt-

to "seek independence with U.S. support, as well as the U.S. intention to contain China with Taiwan."

"We urge the U.S. to ... stop any form of official U.S.-Taiwan contacts, stop meddling in the Taiwan issue and stop creating new factors of tension in the Taiwan Strait," Wang said at a daily briefing.

Tensions between the U.S. and China again ratcheted up last month after Washington accused Beijing of sending a spy balloon that was shot down over the American East Coast. Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled a trip to Beijing in the wake of the incident and said over the weekend that the United States was concerned China would provide weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine.

China, which has declared a "no limits" friendship with Russia, has pointedly refused to cri-

ticize Moscow's actions, blaming the U.S. and NATO for provoking the Kremlin, and has blasted the punishing sanctions imposed on Russia. Russia, in turn, has strongly backed China over Taiwan.

On a visit to Moscow Tuesday, the Communist Party's top diplomat Wang Yi said relations between Moscow and Beijing are "solid as a rock" and will "stand the test of the volatile international situation."

Russia and China have an "excellent opportunity to continue close strategic cooperation and contacts to protect our shared strategic interests," Wang said.

Wang Wenbin, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said he had no information about a possible visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Moscow this spring.

A delegation of U.S. lawmakers visiting Taiwan met on Tuesday with Tsai Ing-wen, who said she looked for increased cooperation

on issues from security to climate change.

On Monday, the delegation met with the head of the legislature as part of their five-day visit. They include Reps. Ro Khanna of California, Tony Gonzales of Texas, Jake Auchincloss of Massachusetts and Jonathan Jackson of Illinois.

The congressional team held talks with Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company's founder Morris Chang, considered the father of the island's world-leading microchip industry that is now investing heavily in U.S. production.

Khanna and Auchincloss are both members of the new House select committee focused on competition with China.

Amid the flurry of exchanges, Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu and head of the National Security Council Wellington Koo were in Washington on Tuesday for what are believed to be security meetings.

They were filmed by Taiwan's private TVBS television station entering the offices of the body the U.S. uses to oversee relations with Taiwan in lieu of formal diplomatic ties. Washington cut formal relations in 1979 in order to establish ties with Beijing, but remains the island's chief political and military ally.

China has increasingly lashed back at the increase in exchanges with Taiwan by officials and elected representatives from the U.S. and other democratic nations. China's campaign of diplomatic isolation has left Taiwan with just 14 formal allies, although it retains robust unofficial relations with dozens of other countries.

Last Thursday, China imposed trade and investment sanctions against Lockheed Martin Corp. and Raytheon Technologies Corp.'s Raytheon Missiles and Defense, barring them from importing goods into China or making new investments in the country.

The Ministry of Commerce declared they had been added to the "unreliable entity" list of companies whose activities are restricted because they might endanger national sovereignty, security or development interests. It wasn't clear what impact the penalties would have. **MDT/AP**

### INNER MONGOLIA

## At least two dead, more than 50 missing in mine collapse

AN open pit mine collapsed in China's northern Inner Mongolia region yesterday, killing at least two people and leaving more than 50 missing, state media reported.

The official Xinhua News Agency said people were buried under debris

at the mine in Alxa League. Rescuers brought out three people, two of whom showed no signs of life.

Other state media reports gave the total number of missing at 57 and said numerous vehicles were also buried in the collapse.

Inner Mongolia is a key region for mining coal and other minerals in China, which critics say has ravaged the original landscape of mountains, grassy steppe and deserts.

China overwhelmingly relies on coal for power generation, but has strived to

reduce the number of deadly mine accidents through a greater emphasis on safety and the closure of smaller operations that lacked necessary equipment.

Most mining deaths are attributed to explosions caused by the buildup of

methane and coal dust, or to drownings caused when miners break into shafts that had been abandoned due to flooding.

China has recorded a slew of deadly industrial and construction accidents in recent months as a result of poor safety training

and regulation, official corruption and a tendency to cut corners by companies seeking to eek out profits. The economy has slowed, partly as a result of draconian lockdowns and quarantines imposed under the now-abandoned "zero-COVID" policy. **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

# Police hunting killers of New Zealand tourist

A Philippine police search was underway yesterday for two motorcycle-riding men who shot and killed a New Zealand man in a brazen street robbery that officials fear could scare foreign tourists away.

The 34-year-old tourist, Nicholas Peter Stacey, was fatally shot once in the chest while trying to wrest a pistol from one of the two robbers who held him up and his Filipina girlfriend on Sunday in a suburban street in Manila's Makati financial district, police Maj. Gen. Jonnel Estomo said.

"We regret to report this incident and extend our sympathy to the bereaved family," Estomo said in a statement, adding he has ordered the police to "leave no stones unturned until the culprits are brought to jail and are prosecuted."

While he described the deadly street robbery as an "isolated incident," Estomo acknowledged it has the potential to frighten foreign tourists. Police patrols would be beefed up to prevent a recurrence, said Estomo, who heads the Metropolitan Manila police.

"We know that this incident could spark fear among tourists, who plan to visit our country so we will make sure the slain victim will get justice and demonstrate that the police are always ready to provide service," Estomo said in a statement.

The slain victim's girlfriend, Pamela Gaye Villanoza, told in-

AP PHOTO



Investigators at the site where New Zealander Nicholas Peter Stacey was shot by suspected robbers in Makati, last Sunday

vestigators that she and Stacey had just arrived in the capital region from a holiday trip in the western island province of Palawan and were walking to a laundry shop in the early

hours after midnight when the suspects approached on a motorcycle.

One of them alighted and pointed a pistol at the couple while his companion parked

the motorcycle a few meters away. Stacey grappled with the armed man and was shot and killed, she said.

Before fleeing, the gunman, who was wearing a black shirt

and red athletic shorts, took the cellphone and wallet of Stacey's girlfriend, police said.

Investigators would try to match a slug found in the area and compare it with slugs recovered from other recent crime scenes in the heavily populated metropolis to try to identify the suspects and assess how they operate, police said.

Stacey's killing occurred amid high-profile gun attacks on two local politicians that underscore how criminal violence even against officials has persisted despite the government's pledge to combat such violence.

Gunmen wounded Governor Mamintal Alonto Adiong Jr. of southern Lanao del Sur province and killed four of his bodyguards in an attack on their convoy Friday. Police said yesterday they had killed one of the suspects in a clash.

Separately, unidentified men reportedly wearing police uniforms fired guns at the van of northern Aparri town Vice Mayor Rommel Alameda on Sunday, killing him and five companions in northern Nueva Vizcaya province. The suspects remain at large.

Crimes, decades-long Muslim and communist rebellions, and other security concerns have long hampered tourism in the Philippines, a Southeast Asian archipelago that offers white sand tropical beaches, diving and surfing resorts, heritage towns, rainforests and warm hospitality. **MDT/AP**

NORTH KOREA

# Pyongyang calls UN chief's remarks on missile test 'unfair'

NORTH Korea yesterday accused U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres of "an extremely unfair and imbalanced attitude," as it lambasted him for condemning its recent missile test but ignoring alleged U.S. hostility against the North.

The accusation came as U.S., South Korean and Japanese destroyers were holding trilateral anti-missile training near the Korean Peninsula, a move the North could regard as a provocation.

After the North's intercontinental ballistic missile test on Saturday, Guterres strongly condemned the launch and reiterated his call for the North to immediately desist from making any further provocations. In a statement, Guterres also urged North Korea to resume talks on

AP PHOTO



Guterres: under Kim's fire

denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

"To be most deplorable, the U.N. secretary-general is going on the rampage of illogical and miserable remarks, which are

little different from those of U.S. State Department officials over the years," Kim Son Gyong, the North's vice foreign minister for international bodies, said in a statement car-

ried by state media.

Kim said North Korea's ICBM test was a response to the security threat the U.S. posed to the North by temporarily deploying long-range bombers for

joint training with South Korea earlier this year. Kim said the test was also a warning to the earlier convocation of the U.N. Security Council on the North.

North Korea views U.S.-South Korea military drills as an invasion rehearsal and is particularly sensitive to the U.S. mobilization of B-1B bombers that can carry a massive conventional payload of both guided and unguided weapons. After the North's ICBM test, the United States flew B-1B bombers again for separate drills with South Korean and Japanese warplanes.

"The U.N. secretary-general should clearly understand that his unreasonable and prejudiced stand on the Korean Peninsula issue is acting as a factor inciting the hos-

tile acts of the U.S. and its followers against (North Korea)," Kim said.

Last November, North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui called Guterres "a puppet of the United States" for condemning an earlier ICBM test by the North.

Saturday's ICBM test, the North's first missile test since Jan. 1, was made on a steep angle to avoid neighboring countries. The reported launch details again suggested the North has missiles that can reach the U.S. mainland. But many foreign experts say the North still must master some last remaining technologies to acquire functioning nuclear-tipped missiles, such as one shielding missiles from the harsh conditions during atmospheric reentry. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

# Russia, China show off ties amid maneuvering over Ukraine

**R**USSIA and China showcased their deepening ties yesterday in a series of meetings closely watched for signs that Beijing might offer stronger support to the Kremlin for its war in Ukraine.

The visit by Wang Yi, the Chinese Communist Party's most senior foreign policy official, to Moscow comes as the conflict in Ukraine continues to upend the global diplomatic order.

Relations between Russia and the West are at their lowest point since the Cold War, and ties between China and the U.S. are also under serious strain. Moscow suspended its participation in the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty with Washington this week. And the U.S. expressed concern in recent days that China could provide arms and ammunition to Russia.

Speaking at the start of talks with Wang, Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed ties between the two countries and added that the Kremlin expects Chinese President Xi Jinping to visit Russia.

The Russian leader noted escalating international tensions, adding that "in this context, cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on the global arena is particularly important for stabilizing the international situation."

Wang said that "the Chinese-Russian relations aren't directed against any third countries and certainly can't be subject to pressure from any third countries" — but the specter of the war and the ways in which it has galvanized the West and deepened its divide with Russia hung over the meeting.

For instance, Wang emphasized that Moscow and Beijing both support "multipolarity and democratization of international relations" — a reference to their shared goal of countering the perceived U.S. dominance in global affairs.

Earlier, Wang held talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who noted that "our ties have continued to develop dynamically,



Russian President Vladimir Putin greets Chinese Communist Party's foreign policy chief Wang Yi during their meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow, yesterday

and despite high turbulence in the global arena we have shown the readiness to speak in defense of each other's interests."

Wang responded in kind, underlining Beijing's focus on deepening ties with Russia — a relationship it says has "no limits."

China has pointedly refused to criticize the invasion of Ukraine — echoing Moscow's claim that the U.S. and NATO are to blame for provoking the Kremlin while blasting the punishing sanctions imposed on Russia. Russia, in turn, has staunchly supported China amid tensions with the U.S. over Taiwan.

The two nations have held a series of military drills that showcased their increasingly close defense ties. Both countries and South Africa are holding naval drills in the Indian Ocean this week.

A Russian frigate, the Admiral Gorshkov, arrived in Cape Town in recent days sporting the letters Z and V on its sides, letters that mark Russian weapons on the front lines in Ukraine and are used as a patriotic symbol in Russia.

The rapprochement has worried the West, leading U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to warn that any Chinese involvement in the Kremlin's war effort would be a "serious problem."

Wang's talks with Lavrov followed his meeting Tuesday with Nikolai Patrushev, the powerful secretary of Russia's National Security Council, who called for

closer cooperation with Beijing to counter what he described as Western efforts to maintain dominance by thwarting an alliance between China and Russia.

While China has emphasized its close ties with Moscow recently, it also has to tread carefully to avoid an escalation of tensions with the West as it looks to stimulate its economy after taking a hit from the COVID-19 epidemic.

"Isolation from the West is not something (Beijing) wants to risk," Yu Jie, senior research fellow for China in the Asia-Pacific program at Chatham House, said in comments published yesterday. "President Xi and his colleagues have begun to realize that cooperation with Russia comes with substantial limits to avoid undermining China's own political priorities and longer-term economic interests."

Wang's trip to Moscow took place against a backdrop of grinding battles in Ukraine as neither side appeared to gain momentum, following weeks of virtual stalemate during the winter.

## WAR'S RAGING

Ukraine's presidential office said yesterday that at least seven civilians were killed over the previous 24 hours. Fight remained most intense in eastern areas, Ukrainian officials said.

In the partially occupied Donetsk region, the Ukrainian governor of the region, Pavlo Kyrylenko, accused the

Kremlin's forces of adopting "scorched-earth tactics" as they pummeled cities, towns and villages.

In the neighboring Luhansk region, also largely occupied, the Russian army tried to break through Ukrainian defenses near the city of Kreminna, but after a "very heavy battle" the attack subsided, Luhansk Gov. Serhii Haidai said.

The growing relationship between China and Russia is another example of the ways the war has spread into perilous new terrain.

Putin's announcement Tuesday that Russia would suspend its participation in the New START Treaty, raising new concerns about the fate of the arms pact, which was already on life support.

The move follows Moscow's decision last fall to allow the resumption of U.S. inspections of its nuclear sites but also its refusal to hold a scheduled round of consultations under the pact.

The lower house of Russia's parliament yesterday quickly endorsed Putin's move to suspend the treaty, with officials and lawmakers casting it as an 11th-hour warning to Washington amid the tensions over Ukraine.

Reflecting Beijing's cautious stance, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the treaty is key to peace and stability and said China hopes "the two sides will properly resolve their differences." **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1972 HIJACKERS SURRENDER AND FREE LUFTHANSA CREW



A group of Palestinian hijackers who took over a Lufthansa jet in the skies over India two days ago has released the crew and surrendered at an airstrip in the Yemen.

All the 172 passengers - including Joseph Kennedy, son of the late Senator Robert Kennedy - were freed yesterday after painstaking negotiations with the prime minister of Yemen, Nasser Muhammad, and West German officials.

The five Palestinians had demanded an undisclosed sum of money and the release of three Jordanians under arrest in West Germany after a shooting took place in Cologne on 6 February.

Women and children were released first from the New Delhi-Athens Boeing 747 and flown to Frankfurt.

It was followed this afternoon by a Lufthansa Boeing 707 carrying all the male passengers.

The men had had to wait in the second Boeing for three hours parked near the hijacked plane while talks with the guerrillas continued.

As the Palestinians were led away, 14 crew members emerged tonight from the aircraft looking tense after their two-day ordeal but still smart in their black and gold uniforms.

Explosives experts then boarded the plane to defuse charges planted on the aircraft.

Among the hijacked passengers was 19-year-old Joseph Kennedy, whose father was assassinated by a Palestinian, Sirhan Sirhan in 1968.

On his release he told journalists he did not think he was the target behind the hijacking.

"I do not think the plane was hijacked because of me. I was not certain I was going to be aboard," he said.

According to one stewardess, Karin Bode, released earlier because of health problems, they had at first ordered the plane to land at a desert airstrip near Amman in Jordan.

But the pilot had talked them out of this saying the plane was too large to land there and flew the plane to its intended destination - Aden in the Yemen.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

It later emerged the hijackers belonged to the PFLP (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and had been paid \$500m in ransom. The South Yemen government was also paid \$1m for allowing the jet to land on its territory. Working with other groups, the PFLP pioneered aircraft hijackings as a high profile means of drawing attention to their movement, most notably the capture of an Air France plane en route from Paris to Athens in 1976. The plane was flown to Entebbe in Uganda, where after a standoff, Israel launched a dramatic commando raid to rescue nearly 100 hostages. The decline and collapse of the Soviet Union, its main supporter, during the late 1980s undermined the PFLP, and the group lost ground to the radical Islamic Hamas movement. The succession of Abu Ali Mustafa - who replaced the founder of the movement, George Habash - in 2000, was seen by many in Israel as heralding a return to the group's radical policies of 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
 Club memberships or donations could be expensive and prove unnecessary. Control your temper by getting immersed in your work.

**TAURUS**  
 Apr. 20-May. 20  
 A long discussion is in order if you wish to clear the air. You will find your personal partner taxing today. You could receive recognition for a job well done.

**GEMINI**  
 May. 21-Jun. 21  
 You need to control your temper and deal with the situation rationally. Travel for business or pleasure. Curb or cut out that bad habit you've been meaning to do something about.

**CANCER**  
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
 Think of joining a health club that will benefit your physical appearance. You will be in a high cycle regarding work. Social events may lead to a romantic interlude.

**LEO**  
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
 Major job changes or opportunities to get ahead professionally are apparent. Someone you care about may not be too well. Don't reveal information that is personal or confidential.

**VIRGO**  
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
 Try to get others to stand behind your good judgment. Accept the inevitable and continue to do your job. Be careful not to take on other people's problems. You may find yourself in a financial bind.

**LIBRA**  
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
 You won't have much time for your mate today. Money problems will get worse if your partner hasn't been playing by the rules. Do your work at home, if you can.

**SCORPIO**  
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
 Go on business trips if at all possible. Double check your work and be sure that your boss is in a good mood before you do your presentation.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
 Travel could include delays and other minor problems. You can expect changes in your living arrangements. Your colorful conversation may attract new mates.

**CAPRICORN**  
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
 Acceptance will be necessary. Problems with relatives and friends could surface. You should follow through on educational endeavors you have wanted to pursue for some time.

**AQUARIUS**  
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
 Your mate could get on your nerves if he or she backs you into an emotional corner or puts restrictions on your time. Your need to use emotional blackmail will only cause more conflict.

**PISCES**  
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
 Do not travel unless absolutely necessary. Be careful. Career changes may not be your choice right now, but in the long run they will be to your advantage. Social events will be rewarding.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

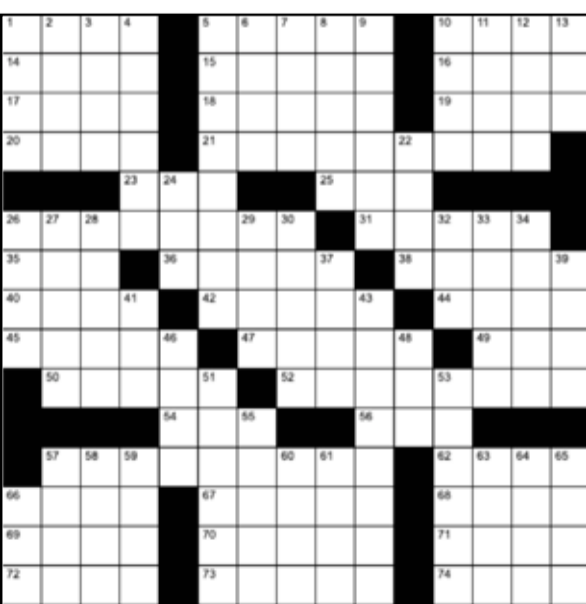
**WEATHER**

|              | MIN | MAX | CONDITION |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----------|
| <b>CHINA</b> |     |     |           |
| Beijing      | -2  | 12  | cloudy    |
| Changchun    | -11 | 3   | fine      |
| Chengdu      | 6   | 11  | rain      |
| Chongqing    | 7   | 11  | overcast  |
| Fuzhou       | 7   | 20  | cloudy    |
| Guangzhou    | 11  | 24  | fine      |
| Guiyang      | 1   | 5   | rain      |
| Haikou       | 15  | 23  | cloudy    |
| Hangzhou     | 5   | 11  | rain      |
| Harbin       | -15 | 0   | cloudy    |
| Hefei        | 0   | 5   | rain      |
| Nanjing      | 1   | 6   | rain      |
| Shanghai     | 5   | 9   | rain      |
| Taipei       | 13  | 17  | rain      |
| Wuhan        | 4   | 5   | rain      |
| Hong Kong    | 17  | 20  | fine      |
| <b>WORLD</b> |     |     |           |
| Moscow       | -14 | -19 | overcast  |
| Frankfurt    | 4   | 12  | rain      |
| Paris        | 4   | 12  | cloudy    |
| London       | 1   | 8   | cloudy    |
| New York     | 7   | 11  | cloudy    |

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Course list?; 5- English royal house; 10- Elysium of Genesis; 14- Piccadilly Circus statue; 15- Exclude, remove; 16- Desperate; 17- "Peter Pan" pirate; 18- Baseball Hall of Famer Cap; 19- Fender ding; 20- One of two equal parts; 21- Large red blood cell; 23- Motor City gp.; 25- Round Table title; 26- Bivalve molluscs; 31- Piece of history; 35- Not neg.; 36- Aggregate of qualities that make good character; 38- Conger catcher; 40- Rock blasters; 42- Hangs on to; 44- Arizona river; 45- Mikhail's wife; 47- Song of joy; 49- The Greatest; 50- Rub vigorously; 52- Synthetic narcotic; 54- Last mo.; 56- Class; 57- Hives; 62- If \_\_\_ be so bold...; 66- Boris Godunov, for one; 67- Toothbrush brand; 68- Exec's note; 69- Stiff bristle; 70- Highway stop; 71- Tolerate; 72- One hunted; 73- Overjoy; 74- Will-\_\_\_-wisp;

DOWN 1- Engage, as gears; 2- Writer Bombeck; 3- Christmas song; 4- Handy; 5- Cooperative effort; 6- It, parallels a radius; 7- Round object, often used to store computer data; 8- Smells; 9- Impressionist Pierre; 10- Christian Science founder; 11- Intake; 12- Sea eagle; 13- Mosquito protection; 22- Manitoba native; 24- After; 26- Box; 27- Unconscious states; 28- Savory jelly; 29- Quick look; 30- Water vapor; 32- Human limb, section of a journey; 33- Greek epic poem; 34- Big fiddle?; 37- Fencing sword; 39- Picnic spoiler; 41- Georgia, once; Abbr.; 43- Capable of being appeased; 46- Autobahn auto; 48- Flyers' org.; 51- Wax; 53- With hands on hips; 55- Christmas song; 57- Addict; 58- Charge per unit; 59- Salver; 60- Pro follower; 61- Belinda Carlisle's "Should \_\_\_ You In?"; 63- Run into; 64- Eastern nanny; 65- Long ago; 66- Cookbook abbr.;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



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AD

AP PHOTO



was insulting them, professing its love or voicing other disturbing or bizarre language.

Powered by some of the same technology behind the popular writing tool ChatGPT, built by Microsoft partner OpenAI, the new Bing is part of an emerging class of AI systems that have mastered human language and grammar after ingesting a huge trove of books and online writings.

They can compose songs, recipes and emails on command, or concisely summarize concepts with information found across the internet. But they are also error-prone and unwieldy.

Reports of Bing's odd behavior led Microsoft to look for a way to curtail Bing's propensity to respond with strong emotional language to certain questions. It's mostly done that by limiting the length and time of conversations with the chatbot, forcing users to start a fresh chat after several turns. But the upgraded Bing also now politely declines questions that it would have responded to just a week ago.

"I'm sorry but I prefer not to continue this conversation," it says when asked technical questions about how it works or the rules that guide it. "I'm still learning so I appreciate your understanding and patience."

Microsoft said its new technology will also be integrated into its Skype messaging service. **MDT/AP**

TECH

# MICROSOFT BRINGS BING CHATBOT TO PHONES AFTER CURBING QUIRKS

**M**ICROSOFT is ready to take its new Bing chatbot mainstream — less than a week after making major fixes to stop the artificially intelligent search engine from going off the rails.

The company said yesterday it

is bringing the new AI technology to its Bing smartphone app, as well as the app for its Edge internet browser.

Putting the new AI-enhanced search engine into the hands of smartphone users is meant to

give Microsoft an advantage over Google, which dominates the internet search business but hasn't yet released such a chatbot to the public.

In the two weeks since Microsoft unveiled its revamped Bing,

more than a million users around the world have experimented with a public preview of the new product after signing up for a waitlist to try it. Microsoft said most of those users responded positively, but others found Bing

AD

**International Women's Day**

## Embrace Equity

Let the experience and knowledge of our diverse speakers empower you as we celebrate International Women's Day with this year's theme — Embrace Equity. Uniting forces to give equity a huge embrace, AustCham and BritCham invite you to join this spectacular event for an afternoon of discussion addressing interesting and controversial topics. The proceeds of the lunch will support a local women's charity — The Good Shepherd Sisters.

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| Date  | Wednesday, 8 March   |
| Time  | From 11.30 time to network before sit-down<br>Sitdown 12.00noon<br>Conclusion 3.00pm |
| Venue | Astor Ballroom, The St. Regis Macao  |
| Price | MOP550 nett per person<br>MOP5,500 nett per table                                    |

**Speakers**



**Jingbo Huang**  
Director of the United Nations University Research Institute in Macau



**Joanna Tam**  
Palliative Care Nurse in Macau



**Michelle Garnaut**  
Owner, M Restaurants Group

Monies raised from the ticket price will be donated to The Good Shepherd Sisters.

Kindly RSVP by 3 March 2023 to:  
Sharon Warren secretary@austcham.mo  
Ivone de Jesus ivone@britchammacao.org

Sponsored by

#InternationalWomensDay #IWD2023 #EmbraceEquity

TECH

# BAIDU TO IMPLEMENT CHATGPT-LIKE ERNIE BOT CHATBOT FROM MARCH

**B**AIDU Inc., one of China's biggest search and artificial intelligence firms, said yesterday it plans to implement its artificial intelligence chatbot Ernie Bot into its search services from March.

Baidu, which is known for its search engine and autonomous driving technology, leads China's efforts to create an equivalent of OpenAI's ChatGPT chatbot. It said earlier this month that it will complete internal testing of Ernie Bot in March before making the service public.

In an internal memo, Baidu CEO Robin Li said that Ernie Bot will be integrated across all of Baidu's operations, including its search and cloud services. Baidu also plans to integrate Ernie into its smart car operating system and smart speaker.

The company's stock price in New York jumped nearly 7% in pre-market trading Wednesday to more than \$150 a share.

AP PHOTO



"AI technology has reached a tipping point and all industries will inevitably go through transformation," Li said in the memo.

"Baidu stands as the best example of the long-term growth of China's AI market and is advancing at the forefront of this new wave," he said.

The company also announced a \$5 billion share buyback yesterday.

Baidu reported revenues of 33.1 billion yuan (\$4.8 billion) for the quarter that ended in December, about level with the same period of 2021.

Most of Baidu's revenue comes from its online marketing services, which generated 18.1 billion yuan (\$2.62 billion) in sales in the last quarter.

Its Apollo Go autonomous ride-hailing services provided 561,000 rides in the fourth quarter, up 162% from a year earlier.

After years of regulatory scrutiny following a crackdown on the technology sector and a sluggish economy battered by COVID-19, companies like Baidu look likely to invest more as China looks to the industry to revive the economy. **MDT/AP**

**FOOTBALL**

# Haiti, Portugal qualify for Women's World Cup for first time

**H**AITI and Portugal qualified for the FIFA Women's World Cup finals for the first time after winning playoff matches yesterday in New Zealand.

Carole Costa scored a 94th-minute clincher in Portugal's 2-1 win over the Cameroon "Lionesses" who have reached the round of 16 at the last two World Cups.

Haiti beat Chile 2-1 earlier yesterday in an historic match it hopes will bring joy and "a breath of fresh air" to a strife-torn homeland.

Melchie Dumornay scored twice to ensure 55th-ranked Haiti will return to the southern hemisphere in July to play in Group D of the Women's World Cup alongside England, China and Denmark.

Haiti and Portugal have taken two of the last three places at the World Cup which will be decided at the this 10-team inter-continental playoff in New Zealand. Paraguay will play Panama today for the last place in the 32-team



Roselord Borgella of Haiti celebrates a goal by teammate Melchie Dumornay during their FIFA women's World Cup qualifier against Chile in Auckland

tournament which will be co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand in July and August.

Haiti's Dumornay recently was signed by seven-time Champions League winners Lyon and showed why with two pieces of slick finishing. She won the race to a through ball from Roselord Bor-

gella in first-half stoppage time to give Haiti a 1-0 lead at the break.

Dumornay then seemed to make the game safe in the eighth of 11 minutes added on by the referee after Chile captain Christiane Endler had saved Nerilia Mondesir's attempt from the penalty spot.

But Maria Jose Rojas scored in the 11th minute of stoppage time to keep Chile's hopes alive and make the final moments nerve-racking for Haiti's Les Grenadiers, who held on to claim an historic victory.

Players shed tears of joy when the final whistle blew, reflecting

on success attained in the most difficult of circumstances.

Haiti's Les Grenadiers had to win two matches in New Zealand to qualify for their first World Cup. They beat Senegal 4-0 in their opening match and then beat 38th-ranked Chile for their first ever win over a South American opponent.

Prior to the tournament midfielder Danielle Etienne told ESPN "there's a lot of unhappiness in the country and football is the joy."

"Being able to qualify to the World Cup would be major," she said at the time. "We want that for the country as a whole, to have a breath of fresh air and kind of step aside from anything going on."

While Portugal's win was sealed late it came at the end of a dominant performance. Portugal had 20 shots on goal, most of which were comfortably saved by Cameroon's 16-year-old goalkeeper Cathy Biya who was promoted after Ange Bawou was sent off against Thailand.

Diana Gomes gave Portugal the lead after 22 minutes and the match seemed to be heading to extra time when Ajara Nchout Njoya equalized for Cameroon in the 89th minute.

But an Estelle Johnson hand ball was spotted after a VAR check and Costa scored from the penalty spot. **MDT/AP**


AD

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OPINION

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**POSITION PAPER WILL POINT TO GLOBAL SECURITY INITIATIVE AS SOLUTION FOR HOTSPOT ISSUES**

Since senior Chinese diplomat Wang Yi told the Munich Security Conference on Saturday that the Chinese government would issue a position paper on the Ukraine crisis there has been a lot of speculation about what that might entail.

The formal proposals of the position paper remain to be seen. But the value of such a document lies more in whether it contributes to promoting an acceptable solution to ending the hostilities rather than in whether it brings up anything that had previously been unmentioned.

As the bloodshed of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine extends into a second year, nothing is more important than brokering a truce, creating conditions for the two antagonists to sit at the negotiating table. Continued fighting is a formula for disaster not only for the two belligerents, but to Europe and in some ways the world at large.

Whatever biased judgments they have about China's stance and their perceptions of the "role" it has played in it so far, the United States and European Union should be receptive to Beijing stepping up, trying to do its bit to resolve the crisis. While the proposed Chinese solution may or may not be acceptable to all parties, expounding on its position can at least foster greater understanding of where Beijing stands on the matter.

Nobody holds a crystal ball. But nonetheless, it is expected that the position paper will call for a balanced solution — one that takes every side's concerns into consideration. One doesn't have to wait until Friday, when the policy paper is expected to be published, to see this, as China has friendly relations with both Russia and Ukraine.

A spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry told the media on Monday that the position paper will reiterate China's corresponding proposals, including the principles that each country's sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected, and each country's reasonable security concerns are worth due attention. These proposals are the backbone of the Global Security Initiative Concept Paper that Beijing released on Tuesday. Speaking at the Munich Security Conference, Wang accentuated such proposals, saying all parties' concerns must be considered, "which certainly include both Russia's and Ukraine's".

Given the very contradictory security concerns of those two countries, there may be very different interpretations of what concerns are reasonable, and what are not. Moscow's opposition to NATO's expansion and Ukraine's pursuit of NATO membership, for instance, are difficult to reconcile.

Despite this, it is to be hoped that the Chinese position paper can initiate serious international efforts to at least maneuver a cease-fire in Ukraine and thus open a window of opportunity for talks on a feasible pathway to end the conflict.

Consistent with the concept and principles laid out in the Global Security Initiative Concept Paper, the position document is a demonstration of China's sincerity and readiness to work with other countries to secure the peaceful settlement of hotspot issues and global stability.

Top financial leaders from the Group of 20 leading economies are gathering in the south Indian technology hub of Bengaluru this week to tackle myriad challenges to global growth and stability, including stubbornly high inflation and surging debt.

India is hosting the G-20 financial conclave for the first time in 20 years. Later in the year it will convene its first summit of G-20 economies. The meetings offer the world's second most populous country a chance to showcase its ascent as an economic power and its status as a champion of developing nations.

This week's gathering of finance ministers and central bank governors takes place just a year after Russia invaded Ukraine, setting off a cascade of shocks to the world economy, chief among them decades-high inflation.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is expected to address the global economic impacts of the war while at the G-20 meetings. India is among the countries treading lightly between the Western nations and Russia, eager to claim more global sway but wary of becoming embroiled in antagonisms as its economy benefits from purchases of discounted Russian crude oil.

**MALCOLM X'S DAUGHTER TO SUE CIA AND FBI FOR WRONGFUL DEATH**

THE family of slain civil rights leader Malcolm X marked Tuesday [yesterday, Macau time] the anniversary of his 1965 assassination by announcing plans to sue agencies including the CIA, FBI, the New York Police Department and others for \$100 million, accusing them of playing a role in his death.

Two of his daughters, Ilyasah Shabazz and Qubilah Shabazz, were joined by attorney Ben Crump at a news conference at the site of the former Audubon Ballroom in upper Manhattan, where Malcolm X was fatally shot as a crowd gathered to hear him speak on Feb. 21, 1965.

For decades questions have circulated over who was responsible for his death.

Three men were convicted, but two were exonerated in 2021 after a renewed investigation into the cases against them showed the evidence used to gain convictions was shaky and that authorities had held back some information.

Ilyasah Shabazz, the co-administrator of her father's estate, filed notices of claim, which is the first step in the process, saying that



Ilyasah Shabazz, a daughter of Malcolm X, speaks during a news conference in NYC

the agencies "conspired with each other and with other individuals and acted, and failed to act, in such a way as to bring about the wrongful death of Malcolm X."

"For years our family has fought for the truth to come to light," she said at the news conference. "We want justice served for our father."

Emails seeking comment were sent to the CIA, FBI, Department of Justice and New York City's legal department. The DOJ and NYPD declined to comment.

Crump noted the anniversary date and said that ever since then, "there has been speculation as to who

was involved in the assassination of Malcolm X."

He cited the 2021 exonerations and said that government agencies including the Manhattan district attorney, the NYPD and the FBI "had factual evidence, exculpatory evidence that they fraudulently concealed from the men who were wrongfully convicted for the assassination of Malcolm X."

Asked if he believes government agencies conspired to assassinate Malcolm, Crump said, "That is what we are alleging, yes. They infiltrated many civil rights organizations." MDT/AP



**EU** Nearly 1 million people applied for international protection in the European Union in 2022, according to data published yesterday, bringing the number of asylum requests to a level not seen since the refugee crisis of 2015-2016. The EU agency for asylum said 966,000 asylum applications were made in the 27 EU countries as well as in Norway and Switzerland last year, up 50% from 2021. That doesn't include more than 4 million Ukrainian refugees who were granted temporary protection in the EU.



**Namibia** It will be her sixth time in Africa when she arrives in Namibia today (Macau time) as part of a commitment by President Joe Biden to deepen U.S. engagement with the fast-growing region. It's her first visit as first lady, though. And she'll be following in the footsteps of her recent predecessors, who all made the trip across the Atlantic Ocean in the name of trying to help foster goodwill toward the United States.

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

AP Photo/Luca Bruno



Milan FW. Models wear creations as part of the Diesel women's Fall-Winter 2023-24 collection presented in Milan Fashion Week, yesterday.



**Somalia** Security forces in the country have ended a siege by al-Shabab extremists that killed 10 people and wounded three others at a home in the capital, Mogadishu. The Information Ministry yesterday (Macau time) said the al-Qaida-linked fighters launched the rare attack on a private home with a suicide bombing. Al-Shabab often attacks hotels and government buildings.