





FRIDAY

24 Feb 2023

"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN"

THERE IS NO PLAN 'IN THE SHORT TERM' TO START A PROPOSED CABLE CAR SYSTEM **CONNECTING ZONE A RECLAIMED LAND** WITH THE MACAO SCIENCE CENTER

FORMER VIP ROOM EMPLOYEES HOPE TO RETURN TO GAMING INDUSTRY

WARIN UKRAINE RAGES ON: ONE YEAR AFTER



Cambodia An 11-year-old girl in Cambodia has died from bird flu in the country's first known human H5N1 infection since 2014, health officials said. Bird flu, also known as avian influenza, normally spreads in poultry and wasn't deemed a threat to people until a 1997 outbreak among visitors to live poultry markets in Hong Kong. Most human cases worldwide have involved direct contact with infected poultry.

Tajikistan A 6.8 magnitude earthquake shook a lightly populated, remote part of Tajikistan early yesterday near China's far western Xinjiang region. It was 67 kilometers west of Murghob, Tajikistan, and 20 kilometers below ground, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Mughrob is the district capital with a population of a few thousand people high in the Pamir Mountains.

West Bank Palestinian militants in Gaza launched rockets at southern Israel and Israeli aircraft struck targets in the coastal enclave early yesterday after a gunbattle triggered by an Israeli raid in the occupied West Bank killed 10 Palestinians. The bloodshed extends one of the deadliest periods in years in the West Bank, where dozens of Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since the start of the year.



Syria The Islamic State group has carried out its deadliest attacks in more than a year, killing dozens of civilians and security officers in the deserts of central Syria, even as people of northern Syria have been digging out of the wreckage from the region's devastating earthquake. The bloodshed was a reminder of the persistent threat from IS, whose sleeper cells still terrorize populations nearly four years after the group was defeated in Syria.

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THE FUTURE IS NOW

EDUCATION

TIS opens today Innovation Lab eyeing the skills of the future __P2



EXPATS

BORDER REOPENING **ATTRACTING NEW FAMILIES** TO MACAU





RENATO MARQUES

THE International School **▲** of Macao (TIS) today launches a new Innovation Lab wherein students from different age groups can more effectively learn a broad spectrum of in-demand skills suitable for future profes-

The lab will enable students to study the development of technological and technical skills and how these skills are applied to daily tasks.

In the lab, students can carry out original work with state-of--the-art tools that include a 3D printing room, robotics fabrication section, screen printing room, woodwork station, laser center and a power tool room.

Students will not only be able to develop more skills as extra--curricular activities, but will also improve their knowledge beyond that of the normal curriculum, the Head of School, Lorne Schmidt, told the Times in an exclusie interview.

"We are aiming to incorporate technology into their curricular studies in a multidisciplinary way. We are looking at how technology can enhance, can solve problems [...] The best STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) projects are designed to tackle a problem innovatively and collectively. [Students] work in groups and put their heads together to understand how to best work together to solve a problem or build a solution for this problem. This can apply to a [very broad range of issues, including] a logistics transport problem or the reliability of a product problem [...] These are some of the challenges that students can take on," Schmidt explained.

But before being able to solve a problem through cooperative work and technology, students need first to be familiar with the processes. TIS is facilitating the learning of the technology and design process.

Schmidt cited examples where students learn how 3D models can help to visualize how an actual final structure might look. In this way, architecture and design components can be brought into the middle school level even though the students are not taking architecture as a high-school class.

"Still, they are starting to learn those elements, and then when they get older they can start to think how can they innovate in

EDUCATION

TIS OPENS INNOVATION LAB EYEING THE SKILLS OF THE FUTURE







Head of School, Lorne Schmidt

designing something new or perhaps [transform something that already exists] into something more functional, in a real--world setting," he said.

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS HAPPY WITH THE NOVELTY

The Innovation Lab and the new learning opportunities have been well received by both students and teaching staff, Schmidt revealed.

"The students are generally more engaged than they woud be if they were sitting and listening to a teacher lecture them about a particular topic. So, rather than read a book or have the teacher show them a powerpoints about mountains, they're going to build the mountain with all details and layers. They are not only much

more engaged but they also have a deeper understanding at the end. It also gives them a chance to use their strengths as maybe there are [some] who are good at building things and manipulating things and they're not necessarily the most academic of the class, but they're very good in the construction end of things. Then [these students] can take a lead role it will build their confidence. That's how most innovative companies work today. It's not on one person that comes up with all the ideas, it's brainstorming and working together," he remarked.

Questioned on teachers' feedback, he added, "Teachers like it too. It's refreshing for them to try this new approach and to see how their students engage and develop skills that are not found

in a textbook but that are part of the 21st-century learning skills that employers will be looking for, such as can you be part of a team? How do you negotiate and collaborate with other people? How do you delegate responsibilities to different people in the group? How do you build on each other's strengths? How to give voice or an opportunity to voice ideas to everyone?"

He also explained that all this is part of the process of getting students ready for the world that we live in and the kind of jobs that they would be involved in.

"There are very few jobs that are isolated from each other and now there are [also] few disciplines that are isolated from each other," he said.

Similar opinions are shared by

one of the most influential people in envisioning the space. Technology Department Head and Teacher, Todd Voykin, thinks the new lab creates a wide range of opportunities and that it is difficult to predict the outcome.

He said, "With the newly renovated space and enrichment of resources, there is no telling where it will take our students."

"My vision for this space is for it to represent a haven where students can explore and create beyond their imagination. We have done amazing work in the past, even inspiring a student to create prosthetic arms and donate them to people in need. That student is now pursuing a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering at Johns Hopkins University," he explained.

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NEW URBAN PLAN

Zone A cable car not on the table 'for the time being'

ANTHONY LAM

HERE is no plan "in the short term" to commence a proposed cable car system connecting the New Urban Zone A with the Macao Science Center location, the transport secretary said yesterday.

Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário was speaking at an introductory session on Zone A attended by members of the Transport Advisory Committee and the Urban Planning Committee.

The cable car proposal has stirred debate on its feasibility and reliability. Zakarie Man, a Macau real estate developer currently working in the US, has told the Times such systems usually have low capacity, long turnaround times and are subject to weather conditions, making it unsuitable for a city with high commuting needs.

At yesterday's session, the



transport secretary said the government has no plan to build the cable car soon. The connection will be replaced by a bridge. The senior official did not give details about the bridge.

Rosário also said that for economic reasons, the Light Rapid Transit's (LRT) East Line will not have a station at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Border Checkpoint. Given the short distance between the Zone A and the Checkpoint, shuttle buses may be operated in the future to cater to transport needs.

He also asked people for patience with road network congestion near Zone A. It was re-

vealed there will be a new road on Zone A to the Border Checkpoint. As for the link between Zone A and northern Avenida de Amizade, Rosário said it will be finished at the end of next year. The situation of a single connection between the Peninsula and Zone A will persist for another year.

LOCAL STUDENTS ARRESTED FOR COLLECTING SCAM MONEY

Two local students, aged 16 and 18, were arrested for helping to collect scam money for a mainland criminal group. MOP100,000 was recovered, according to the Judiciary Police (PJ). According to PJ, a male informant of over 30 years of age reported a case in which his 90-year-old grandfather was asked to hand over MOP100,000 to suppress an accusation of sexual relations with a married woman and assault. The informant's grandfather contacted him about this suspected fraud. The police went to the residential area of the North District and arrested a teenager there for accepting the scam money. Another teenager was arrested near the building. One of them admitted to having collected the scam money for the criminal group in exchange for a 5% commission. The arrested were charged with organized crime and fraud.

MEETING, EXHIBITION EVENTS RISE IN Q4 2022

A total of 197 meeting, incentive, conference and exhibition (MICE) events were held in Macao in the fourth quarter of last year, an increase of 34 year-on-year, the statistics service said yesterday. The latest report from the Statistics and Census Service indicated that the number of participants and attendees dropped by 15.4% to 608,000 as the number of large exhibitions decreased. A total of 166 meetings and conferences were held in the fourth quarter, up by 26 from the same period of last year. The number of participants rose by 35.7 % to 18,000.

AVIATION

CAM: Routes to Jeju, Phnom Penh and Maldives underway

LYNZY VALLES

FOLLOWING what the group considered the worst year for the local air transport industry, the Macau International Airport Co. Ltd (CAM) is confident in posting positive revenues this year as it gradually recovers from heavy losses following the ending of the city's adherence to zero-Covid policies.

The group believes receiving slot applications for international flights is desirable, with a 20% increase compared to last year, the chairman of the Board of Directors of CAM, Mai Iao hang, disclosed in a media luncheon yesterday.

Several airlines have made flight resumption plans as new carriers will launch air services to Bangkok, Haikou and Singapore starting next month.

Ma also revealed there are airlines planning to commence new routes to Jeju, Phnom Penh and the Maldives to Macau this year.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has forecasted passenger demand to reach 85% of 2019 levels this year with pas-



senger numbers expected to surpass the 4 billion mark for the first time since pre-pandemic.

In 2022, the local airport only catered to 599,999 passengers, a deep plunge of 48% compared to the previous year, while it handled 13,642 aircraft movements.

The cargo market, meanwhile, recorded steady growth to 51,400 tons, posting a year-on-year increase of 6%.

Ma said the airport operators are estimated to achieve MOP1.4 billion this year, though it is a decrease of 32%.

Ma also said the incentive and relief offered to eligible airlines

and operators since the global outbreak from 2020 to 2022 has amounted to MOP130 million.

"Looking ahead, Macau International Airport (MIA) will continue to cooperate with the SAR government to promote the market recovery and the expansion of passenger and cargo transportation businesses," Ma said.

The local company has also hailed the central government's approval of land reclamation for the expansion of MIA's capacity.

When the expansion project concludes, the MIA's passenger handling capacity will increase to 15 million passengers per year.

BORDER REOPENING ATTRACTING NEW FAMILIES TO MACAU

RENATO MARQUES

THE lifting of border restrictions late last year is already attracting the interest of some new foreign families who are settling in Macau, the Head of School at the International School of Macao (TIS), Lorne Schmidt, told the Times

Speaking to the Times about new teachers and students, Schmidt said, "the relaxation of borders is a very positive step for us as a school because now we can more easily attract teachers. It was previously very hard to get new teachers into the school."

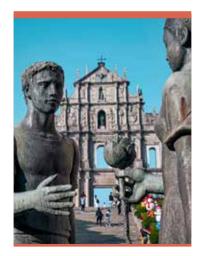
The Head of School at TIS said the school successfully brought a number of new teachers to Macau last summer and this is getting easier which helps the development of the school and its students.

The reopening of the borders has also impacted the students with more inquiries from families interested in sending their children to TIS.

"We are starting to see

some new families coming to Macau. We are receiving expressions of interest for September and October, and a few families are arriving even this term. We are hoping this trend continues and that we get more people coming into Macau," Schmidt remarked.

In a previous interview with the Times last June, Schmidt spoke about TIS's difficulties related to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions that had caused some students and teaching staff to leave Macau between 2020 and 2022.





■ MacauDaily 澳門每日時報。

DSSOPT TRIAL

DEFENCE LAWYER QUESTIONS REASONABILITY OF CASE DETAILS

ANTHONY LAM

WHILE denying the charges against them, two defendants allegedly involved in the bribery case concerning two former construction officials said the details were unreasonable.

The case entered the second day of closing statements yesterday.

Alleged to have been involved in the crimes of a triad gang, a criminal syndicate, bribery and aggravated money laundering, the eighth defendant Lao Pou Fong's lawyer, Lee Kam Iut, said her client was only following her employer's orders while performing the job in which violations are now alleged to have occurred. She worked as an administrative secretary.

On the matters related to the merger of land plots TN20 and TN24, Lee referred to the exhibits presented to the court to highlight that any terms assuring the government's approval on the merger were absent in the agreement between San Kin Tai Limited and Jiayuan International.



The former had tried to sell the land to the latter. With this said, Lee said the transaction was based on the land's market value. The lawyer added that while the seller was a publicly listed company, transaction agreements ought to be made sufficiently unambiguous. She then questioned why the term was not included in the contract, given its importance

to the valuation of the land.

Citing her client, the lawyer said the application for merger of the aforementioned land was filed after the transaction on the request by the new company. She then pointed to several witness testimonies from the former Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) to prove former director Li Canfeng had not intervened nor exerted any pressure.

She also cited the department head for legal affairs of the former bureau, who said the Secretary for Transport and Public Works was industrious at work, to prove it was impossible Li would approve a Dispatch with inclination, so as to deceive his then superintendents to get the merger approved.

On the allegations concerning

a duplex apartment in the Windsor Arch complex, the lawyer cited two property valuation reports that assert that the transaction price was much lower than the market value, implying that the allegations of sending over MOP3.8 million to Li as bribes were unfounded. The lawyer also questioned the practice of paying the alleged bribe in cashier's check, which would place the payment fully on record.

The ninth defendant, Leong Ka I, who is the fourth defendant's goddaughter and businessperson Ng Lap Seng, were accused of crimes related to a triad gang and a criminal syndicate, as well as monev laundering.

While discussing the office unit in Dong Da commercial center, her lawyer Chan Pei Kei said she was unaware of the owner being Li and the price of the transaction. Chan cited her client's then young age as a supporting fact. Instead, his client was told by Ng the rental would support her daily living

Ng's and Leong's families have had a positive relationship for over three decades, proving that phone conversations between them were reasonable and accusations based on this fact were unjustified. The lawyer also said no wire-tap data had proven Leong's involvement in the case.

Macau stories told once again in book form

ANTHONY LAM

TWO authors of a book **I** filled with stories about Macau said they chose Macau because of its historical richness and because of one author's connection with the

The authors, Christopher Chu and Maggie Hoi, who together wrote Macau's Historical Witnesses, which features stories about Macau's popular landmarks, spoke about the parts of Macau covered in the book during a book presentation session at the Sofitel Macau yesterday.

Chu and Hoi drew connections between their audience and nearby locations. They picked a few locations close to the Sofitel, and also a more distant location, the Mount Fortress, where in 1622 the Portuguese defended Macau against Dutch invasion.

Chu's got the idea for the book from a story of his friend, who had a poor relationship with their mother before Covid-19. When lo-



ckdown arrived, the friend lived in the same residence with the mother for weeks. Instead of having arguments every day, they worked together and compiled a collection of the mother's recipes.

American citizen and Hong Kong resident, Chu decided to do the same thing whenever he came to Macau to visit Hoi, his wife, during Covid-19 quarantine. Coincidentally, when he was in Macau, he stayed at the Sofitel and looked out of the windows at the scene of old Macau, drawing connections between places and stories.

While preparing to write, he talked with many people and discovered "dots" that were later connected. "That's an interesting coincidence," he concluded.

CRIME

Nine perpetrators issued 11 VIOLATION TICKETS FOR ILLEGAL PHONE NUMBER REGISTRATION

STAFF REPORTER

THE real-name regis-1 tration deadline for phone numbers in neighboring regions passed vesterday (Feb. 23), which means unregistered phone numbers can no longer be used. Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau have all implemented the real-name system for Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) Cards.

To evade real-name regulations, criminals may deceive individuals to get their personal information to register phone numbers for illegal purposes. They may even ask them to directly participate in the registration process. This not only puts people's personal information at risk, but it also has legal ramifications.

The Office for Personal Data Protection (GPDP) has warned that



people will be punished if they help criminals with phone number registration. Nine people have been issued 11 violation tickets in the last three years, according to GPDP. The cumulative amount of the penalty is MOP182,000, involving Macau, Hong Kong, and mainland citizens.

perpetrator The who was fined highest amount, MOP 70,000,

was involved in multiple instances. In another case, a perpetrator was fined MOP40,000 for helping register 700 phone numbers.

The GPDP has reminded people to follow the real-name registration regulations and protect their personal information. The GPDP has asked people not to help with illegal phone number registration "even once."



EMPLOYMENT

Former VIP room employees hope to return to gaming industry

STAFF REPORTER

ORMER casino VIP room employees have found significant differences in wages between their current and previous jobs, and some hope to return to the gaming industry, according to the annual press conference of the integrated services center of the Macau Gaming Industry Employees Home, an organization for gaming workers.

A study by the center shows 85% of former VIP room employees were unemployed last March, with 70% assuming it would take six months to find a job. Though most are employed now, they have found disparities in the way they are treated in their current jobs as salespeople, delivery riders, and so on, compared to their previous jobs, said Pak Kin Pong, supervisor of the center.

The center said these former workers would like to return to the gaming industry. Lawmaker



and president of the association Leong Sun Iok has called on the government to offer more training opportunities and the casinos to prioritize these former employees.

Many former employees are still owed money from unpaid past salaries and dismissal payouts, and have expressed concerns that their former employers may not pay because of their financial condition.

This is despite a court ruling that provides that the debts must

be paid. Over 1,000 workers have turned to the center for help about this issue, said Pak. According to Credit Suisse Securities Limited, there are billions of dollars in arrears to be paid.

According to Pak, as the ga-

ming industry's business has changed, they have seen an increase in the number of cases of job or workplace changes among dealers. The workers have expressed concerns about poor adaptation to a new environment, the level of salaries, and future career paths.

The Macau Gaming Industry Employees Home has received 1,490 requests for counseling services, with a third related to job hunting and the workplace.

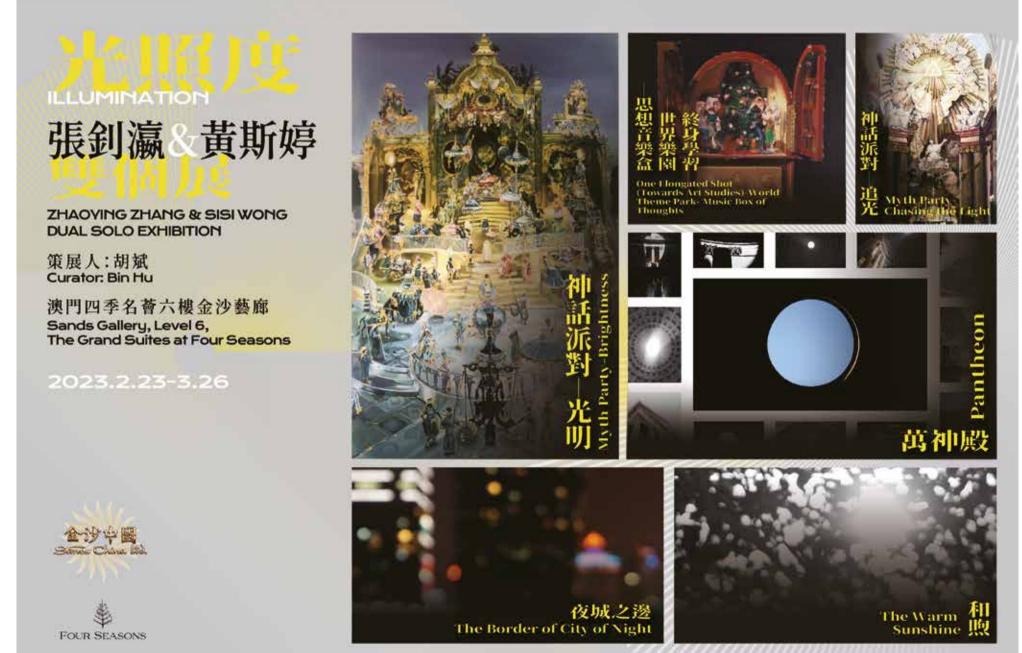
Following the crackdown on junkets, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) opened a special support counter for workers affected by the closure of junket operations.

Data from the first quarter last year from the association also showed that about 85% of employees dismissed from junket operators, due to the turmoil engulfing the sector, are still unemployed, with most being unable to make ends meet.

The study also showed that only 15% of the respondents expect a monthly income of more than MOP20,000, which is significantly less than the original income from their previous jobs; while over 80% expect monthly wages ranging from MOP12,001 to MOP 20,000.

This implies that these former workers already have lowered their expectations.

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INNER MONGOLIA

More bodies found in mine COLLAPSE, 48 REMAIN MISSING

NG HAN GUAN, ALXA LEAGUE

ESCUERS with backhoes and hulldozers dug through tons of earth and rubble yesterday for 48 people missing after a landslide buried an open-pit mine in northern China. State broadcaster CCTV reported that the confirmed death toll in the disaster rose to

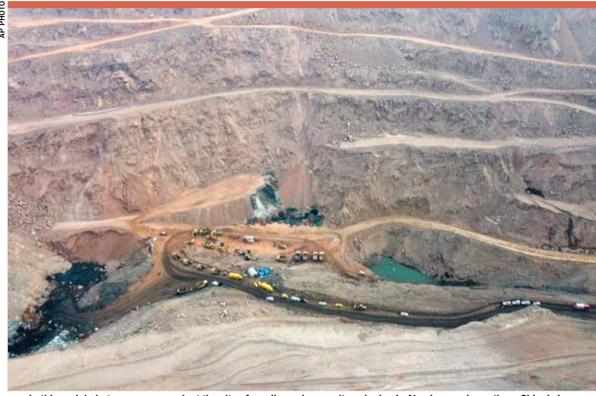
Conditions in the area remain dangerous, and the search had to be suspended for several Yesterday afternoon, more than a dozen bulldozers, trucks, SUVs and fire engines were seen passing through a remote police checkpoint about 25 kilometers southwest of

Nearly all personnel were stopped by police and checked for entry approvals before being allowed to proceed along the road leading to the mine.

A police officer said only those with government approval would be allowed access to the area. She said people living close to the mine had been sent to stay in a nearby town.

Security was also tight at another checkpoint in the neighboring region of Ningxia, 15 kilometers east of the mine, with dozens of officers inspecting every vehicle that sought to pass in either direc-

Cranes and other pieces of heavy equipment could be seen, along with covered trucks. It was



In this aerial photo, rescuers work at the site of a collapsed open pit coal mine in Alxa League in northern China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, yesterday

unclear what the trucks were car-

Rescuers used heavy digging equipment and cameras that could snake down into the debris, along with thermal imagers and equipment to detect vital signs, Chang Zhigang, the head of the rescue operation, told reporters.

Crews were using extreme caution to avoid more secondary disasters, Chang said.

"We will continue to increase

the rescue force, race against time, and do our best to search and rescue the lives of every trapped person," he said.

Police are investigating the cause of the collapse and some people have been detained, Chang said.

"We will publicize the result of the investigation in due course,"

The initial cave-in of one of the pit's walls occurred at about 1 p.m. Wednesday, burying people

and mining trucks below in tons of rocks and sand. It was followed about five hours later by the additional landslide, forcing the work suspension.

The official Xinhua News Agency said about 900 rescuers with heavy equipment were on the scene and they had resumed the search by yesterday morning.

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for "all-out efforts in search and rescue" and for "ensuring the

safety of people's lives and property and maintaining overall social stability."

Images of the collapse distributed by CCTV showed a massive wall of debris rushing down a slope onto people and vehicles below.

The company running the mine, Inner Mongolia Xinjing Coal Industry Co. Ltd., was fined last year for multiple safety violations including insecure routes into and out of the pit, unsafe storage of volatile materials and a lack of training for its safety staff, according to the news website The

Inner Mongolia is a key region for mining of coal and various minerals and rare earths that critics say has ravaged the region's landscape of mountains, grassy steppes and deserts.

China overwhelmingly relies on coal for power generation but has tried to reduce the number of deadly mine accidents through a greater emphasis on safety and the closure of smaller operations that lacked necessary equipment.

It 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 make profits.

Despite those high-profile incidents, the overall number of industrial accidents fell by 27% in 2022, when much of China's economy was shut down under its "zero COVID" policy, from the previous year, the Ministry of Emergency Management announced last month. The number of deaths in the accidents also fell 23.6%, the ministry said. MDT/AP

HONG KONG

HKEX chief executive says positive sentiment returns to IPO market

ted (HKEX) remained one o Kong

f the world's premier capital raising venues throughout 2022, with positive sentiment returning to the IPO market in the second half, according to the HKEX Chief Executive Officer Nicolas Aguzin.

Aguzin said in the HKEX's 2022 final results released yesterday that a total of 90 new companies from a range of sectors and geographies successfully joined the Hong Kong markets in 2022, raising HKD104.6 billion (\$13.33 billion), 65% of which was for the new economy sector, putting

According to the HKEX, it recorded 18,456 million Hong Kong dollars in revenue and other income for 2022, 12% lower than the record in 2021.

Core business revenue was down 9% against 2021, reflecting reduced trading and clearing fees, lower depository fees and listing fees, which was partly offset by the increase in net investment income from margin funds and higher trading fees from the derivatives market, it showed.

Northbound Bond Connect average daily trading reached a record high of 32.2 billion RMB (\$4.67 Xinhua dispatch.

Laura Cha Shih May--lung, chairperson of the HKEX, said that 2022 was a good year of strategic progress for the HKEX, and a significant number of important strategic initiatives were accomplished or announced during the year, which have positioned the HKEX well to continue to lead and shape the development of the region's global capital markets.

ASIAN MARKETS UP

Asian stock markets rose yesterday following Wall Street's biggest one-day decline in two months after

THE Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limi-Hong Kong in the top four markets globally in 2022. Hong Kong in the top four with 2021, according to a notes from a Federal Reserve meeting showed officials expect to keep U.S. interest rates high to fight stubborn inflation.

> Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul advanced. Japanese markets were closed for a holiday. Oil prices and the U.S. dollar gained.

> Wall Street sank Wednesday after notes from the Federal Reserve's latest board meeting showed members expect "ongoing increases" in its key lending rate to slow the economy. That dampened hopes that cuts might start as early as late this year.

> "The need for 'higher for longer' rates was made plain," said Vishnu Vara-



than of Mizuho Bank in a report.

The Shanghai Composite Index gained 0.1% to 3,294.68 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong advanced 0.5% to 20,524.60.

The Kospi in Seoul rose 1.2% to 2,447.70 while Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 shed

0.3% to 7,289.70.

New Zealand and Jakarta advanced while Singapore declined.

Global stock prices have been declining on worries inflation might not be cooling as quickly or smoothly as traders hoped. MDT/AGENCIES



MILITARY

NATO chief sees 'some signs' China could back Russia's war

MONIKA SCISLOWSKA, WARSAW

ATO'S chief said yesterday [Macau time] that the military alliance has seen "some signs" that China may be planning to support Russia in its war in Ukraine, and strongly urged Beijing to desist from what would be a violation of international law.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg also told The Associated Press in an interview that the alliance, while not a party to the war, will support Ukraine "for as long as it takes."

Asked whether NATO has any indication that China might be ready to provide arms or other support to Russia's war, Stoltenberg said:

"We have seen some signs that they may be planning for that and of course NATO allies, the United States, have been warning against it because this is something that should not happen. China should not support Russia's illegal war."



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaks during an interview after meeting U.S. President Joe Biden and the Bucharest Nine leaders in Warsaw

Stoltenberg said potential Chinese assistance would amount to providing "(direct) support to a blatant violation of international law, and of course (as) a member of the U.N. security council China should not in any way support

violation of the U.N. charter, or international law."

On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted the Chinese Communist Party's most senior foreign policy official — Wang Yi — raising concern in the

West that Beijing might be ready to offer Moscow stronger support in the almost year-old war.

China has pointedly refused to criticize the invasion of Ukraine while echoing Moscow's claim that the U.S. and NATO were to blame for provoking the Kremlin. China, Russia and South Africa are holding naval drills in the Indian Ocean this week.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said any Chinese involvement in the Kremlin's war effort would be a "serious problem." Ties between China and the U.S. are under severe strain over Taiwan and other issues.

Stoltenberg spoke to The Associated Press in Warsaw, following a meeting of NATO's nine eastern flank members with U.S. President Joe Biden on the region's security.

He stressed that while NATO "is no party" to the Ukraine conflict its tasks are to "ensure that Ukraine prevails" and to "prevent this war from escalating beyond Ukraine and becoming a full-fledged war between Russia and

NATO."

He said the main message from the meeting in Warsaw was that "we will provide support to Ukraine for as long as it takes."

It would be a "tragedy for the Ukrainians if President Putin wins in Ukraine," Stoltenberg said, and also "dangerous for all of us" because it would "send the message to all authoritarian leaders that when they use military force, they get what they want."

The Russian attack on Ukraine has prompted Sweden and neighboring Finland to abandon decades of nonalignment and apply to join the 30-nation alliance. But their bids—particularly Sweden's—are being delayed by Turkey, which wants the two countries to crack down on mostly Kurdish groups Ankara regards as terrorists

Stoltenberg told the AP that following talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last week he could see Turkey "is moving closer to being ready to ratify and (to) welcome Finland into the alliance. But (Ankara continues) to have some challenges with Sweden."

He said he welcomed the fact that he and Erdogan agreed to a meeting soon "of experts and officials in Brussels" from the three countries involved "to look into how we can make progress also on the ratification of Sweden as a full NATO ally." MDT/AP

AD





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ENT: Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang
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ONE YEAR AFTER

Biden shores up Western allies as Putin digs in on Ukraine

AAMER MADHANI & ZEKE MILLER, WARSAW

RESIDENT Joe Biden closed out his wartime visit to Europe yesterday [Macau time, working to shore up partnerships with allies on NATO's perilous eastern flank — even as Russia's Vladimir Putin was drawing closer to China for help as his invasion of Ukraine reached the one--year mark.

Biden's meeting with leaders of the Bucharest Nine nations in Warsaw came at the conclusion of a whirlwind, four-day visit to Ukraine and Poland meant to reassure allies that U.S. support in fending off Russia isn't at risk of waning.

In dramatic counterpoint, Putin played host in Moscow to Wang Yi, the Chinese Communist Party's most senior foreign policy official, as

U.S. intelligence warned that Beijing is considering supplying arms and ammunition to the worn-down Russian military.

The flexing of alliances was a fresh indication that both sides are digging in for prolonged conflict in Ukraine with the fighting expected to intensify with the arrival of spring.

Biden's trip had provided yet another moment of telling counterprogramming on Tuesday when he delivered a ringing speech on Western unity in Warsaw, a day after he swept into Kyiv unannounced for a visit with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. As Biden spoke in Poland, Putin announced that Russia was suspending its participation in the last remaining U.S.-Russia nuclear arms control treaty.

Biden called that departure "a big mistake."

The exit is expected to have an immediate impact on U.S. awareness of Russian nuclear activities. However, the pact — known as New START — was already on life support following Moscow's cancellation late last year of talks that had been intended to salvage an agreement that each side has accused the other of violating.

Biden met with leaders of the Bucharest Nine, the nations in the easternmost parts of the NATO alliance that came together in response to Putin's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. They include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

"You're the frontlines of our collective defense," Biden told them. "And you know, better than anyone, what's at stake in this conflict. Not just for Ukraine, but for the freedom of democracies throughout Europe and around the world."

These countries have worried that Putin could move to take military action against them next if he's successful in Ukraine. Biden responded to that anxiety by pledging that NATO's mutual defense pact is "sacred" and that "we will defend literally every inch of NATO.'

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who attended the meeting, pointed to past Russian actions in Georgia and Ukraine and said, "We cannot allow Russia to continue to chip away at European security. We must break the cycle of Russian aggression."

It was unclear how the U.S. and its allies aimed to do that, other than by continuing to arm Ukraine's military with the Western and aging Soviet arms that have allowed it retake about half of the territory it lost in the opening days of the war.

Biden returned to Washington yesterday.

After the Russian military's battlefield shortcomings were revealed at the start of the conflict, Putin, too, has been seeking rearmament, drawing on Iran and North Korea for assistance and potentially China.

Administration officials don't yet have an indication that China has decided to move forward on sending Moscow weaponry, but Secretary of State Antony Blinken said this week it would be a "serious problem" should Beijing follow through.

Throughout the conflict, China has cautiously weighed the pros and cons of directly aiding Russia. But a year into the war, Beijing now seems increasingly concerned that Russia — one of its closest allies - is teetering toward something that could approximate a loss in Ukraine.

The U.S. and its allies have threatened secondary sanctions on countries that support the Russian war effort. But there was no consensus this week on potentially steeper sanctions for China, which could have global economic implications, should it decide to rearm Putin's forces. MDT/AP

this day in history @



1981 Prince Charles AND LADY DI TO MARRY



The Prince of Wales and the Lady Diana Spencer have ended months of speculation with the announcement they are to be

At 1100GMT Buckingham Palace made the engagement offi-

Lord Maclean, the Lord Chancellor made the following statement at an investiture at the Palace: "It is with greatest pleasure that the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh announce the betrothal of their beloved son the Prince of Wales to the Lady Diana Spencer, daughter of the Earl Spencer and the Honourable Mrs Shand Kydd.

Prince Charles proposed to Lady Diana three weeks ago at a private dinner at Buckingham Palace before she went to Australia. He wanted her to use the trip to think over his proposal but she accepted immediately and he gave her a diamond and sapphire engagement ring.

Despite the intense public interest, they managed to keep their

Lady Diana, who is 19, will leave her job as a kindergarten teacher and move out of her flat share in Kensington to live in Clarence House until the marriage

The couple will then move to the Prince's house in Highgrove, Gloucestershire.

In a BBC interview, the 32-year-old Prince said he was "delighted and frankly amazed that Diana is prepared to take me on".

Looking shyly up through her long blond fringe and giggling occasionally, Lady Diana said she too was "delighted and thrilled,

Asked how she would cope with a dramatic change to her life she said: "With Prince Charles beside me I cannot go wrong."

Tributes to the couple were made in both Houses of Parliament. The Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, said the news brought "great pleasure" to government and MPs

They will be married in late July, but exactly when and where has yet to be decided

Earl Spencer, Lady Diana's father, said he was also very happy for

Speaking outside Buckingham Palace with his wife Raine, daughter of novelist Barbara Cartland, he said his daughter had handled the pressures of constant media attention over the last six months very well

"It will be easier now. She will be under some protection whereas before she had to face the music on her own." he said

Courtesy BBC News

In context

It was the wedding of the century and a national holiday was declared for the occasion on 29 July 1981

Prince Charles and Lady Diana married in St Paul's Cathedral watched by 3,500 invited guests and an estimated 750 million people around the world on live television.

The sumptuous ivory taffeta and antique lace wedding dress was created by young British designers David and Elizabeth Emmanuel and had a 25-metre train.

Their first child, William, was born less than a year later on 21 June 1982

After Prince Harry's birth on 15 September 1984 it was clear the fairytale marriage was falling apart.

The couple separated in 1993 and officially divorced in 1996. Diana spoke publicly about her own and her husband's infidelities in a BBC Panorama documentary in November 1995. Diana was stripped of the title of Her Royal Highness but was never far from the front pages of the tabloid newspapers. She became actively involved with charities for children, the homeless, the disabled and those with HIV and AIDS. She campaigned for a ban on the use and manufacture of land-

Her death in a car crash in Paris on 31 August 1997 shocked

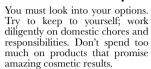


YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19





GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You can stabilize your situation if you compromise. Use your creative talent in order to accomplish your goals. Be sure to take care of any minor ailments.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Invite people home to discuss your plans for group fundraising events and outings. Try to control your irritability if you're experiencing emotional problems with your partner.



LIBRA

Sep.23-Oct. 22

Don't try to deal with important issues or make changes that will upset the apple cart. Your energy will be high; however, if not channeled suitably, temper tantrums may erupt.



Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Emotional relationships will be plentiful if you attend group activities. Keep your wits about you and be sure that you can trust those you confide in Deep discussions may only lead to friction.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Pamper vourself: the self esteem it brings you will be most gratifying. Equilibrium in vour romantic life is likely if you treat your partner well.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Try to communicate if you wish to help. You could be tempted to overspend on unnecessary items. Hassles with your boss are sure to erupt if you speak your mind.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Coworkers may not be completely honest with you; try not to rely on help from others. Any attractions toward clients will be one sided and must be put right out of your



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You will need to do a lot of research if you wish to get to the bottom of things. Don't hesitate to look for alternatives that will enable you to raise the kind of donations you need to do the job right.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Sudden trips will take you by surprise. You're not your usual self today. You are best to work at home, clearing up overdue projects.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You will be popular and will easily attract members of the opposite sex. Be careful; your ideas are good but make sure that you're realistic and start off on solid



ground.

PISCES

Feb.19-Mar. 20

Try to be there for someone they need assistance. Don't forget to read the fine print. Relationships have not been the best for you lately and it's left you somewhat gun shy.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

6 3 4

EASY+

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MEDIUM

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HARD

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7					8			
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							7	1
								5
	6	2				4		
			5	7				
				3				

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA -			
Beijing	-1	7	cloudy
Changchun	-11	-2	fine
Chengdu	6	18	cloudy
Chongqing	8	14	cloudy
Fuzhou	10	20	cloudy
Guangzhou	12	24	fine
Guiyang	2	5	overcast
Haikou	15	24	cloudy
Hangzhou	4	8	rain
Harbin	-16	-4	fine
Hefei	1	10	cloudy
Nanjing	4	12	cloudy
Shanghai	4	9	cloudy
Taipei	15	16	rain
Wuhan	2	13	cloudy
Hong Hong	24	15	fine
WORLD			

WORLD			
Moscow	-16	-13	overcast
Frankfurt	7	12	fog
Paris	6	12	rain
London	4	9	rain
New York	4	14	rain

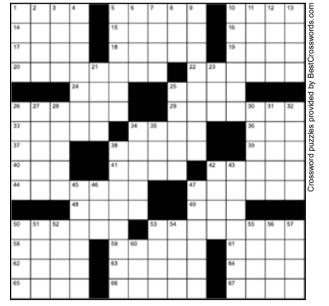
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Steamed flour pudding; 5- Japanese beer brand; 10- Cairo cobras; 14- Actress Raines; 15- Early evening; 16- Follow; 17- Long time; 18- Between, old-style; 19- Paris pronoun; 20- Recently discovered; 22- Overjoyed; 24- Toward the stern; 25- Coloured part of the eye; 26- "The __ Queene"; 29-Merit: 33- Bay: 34- Terrible time?: 36- ___ Lingus: 37- Never, in Nuremberg: 38- Passed out; 39- Like some vbs.: 40- Computer key: 41- Roadside stops: 42- Deputised group: 44- Ins and outs: 47- Truly: 48- Libertine: 49- Free (of): 50- Edible nut; 53- Unmarried woman; 58- Pentathlon need; 59- Brainstorms; 61- La Scala solo; 62- Torn clothing; 63-_ Dame; 64- 1996 Tony-winning musical; 65- Son of Aphrodite; 66- No-see-ums; 67- French summers;

DOWN 1- Faculty head; 2- Peter Fonda title role; 3- Move along in a stream; 4- Trumpet flourish; 5- Sagacious; 6- In stitches; 7- Gung-ho; 8- Curse; 9-

Concern; 10- Relaxed; 11- Tar; 12-Heap; 13- Dog-powered snow vehicle; 21- Think nothing ___; 23- Fleur-de-___; 25- Adored ones; 26- Penalized; 27-Biscotto flavoring; 28- Give a seat?; 30-Elevate; 31- Poem; 32- Made a mistake; 34- On edge; 35- Pallid; 38- Humectant; 42- Nabokov novel; 43- Most likely...; 45- "Gunsmoke" star; 46- Chit; 47-Van Gogh masterpiece; 50- Used to be; 51- On ___ with; 52- Building block brand; 53- Stiff bristle; 54- Constituent; 55- Waste allowance; 56- Mozart's kleine Nachtmusik"; 57- Phooey!; 60- Put





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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

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JAKE COYLE, MDT/AP FILM WRITER

THOUGH gently restrained **▲** and delicately crafted, "The Quiet Girl" has managed to make plenty of noise. Colm Bairead's modestly scaled drama, his narrative directorial debut, is the highest-grossing Irish-language film of all time. It bested "Belfast" at the Irish Film & Television Awards. And it's nominated for best international film at the Academy Awards, a first for Ireland.

It's not hard to see why. Bairead's sensitive and heartfelt film, which is debuting in many theaters Friday, is a stirring testament to what's possible on a modest scale with a few well-chosen words. Set in 1981 rural Ireland, "The Quiet Girl" — a clever tweak to the title of John Ford's Ireland-set "The Quiet Man" — comes from Claire Keegan's short story "Foster," and it preserves much of the rhythm and concision of a good short story.

A willowy and taciturn 9-year--old, Cait (Catherine Clinch, a newcomer of staggering poise), is mostly overlooked in her cacophonous and coarse working-class family. Her mother (Kate Nic Chonaonaigh) is exhausted from raising another baby and has another on the way. Her gruff

DRIVE IN

Irish Oscar nominee 'The QUIET GIRL' SPEAKS CLEARLY



Catherine Clinch, left, and Carrie Crowley in a scene from "The Quiet Girl"

father (Michael Patric) has abandoned tending to their farm and mostly spends his time drinking and gambling. Cait's older sisters don't have much affection for her, either. "Which one is she?" someone asks her father. "The wanderer," he answers.

To ease life at home, they ship Cait to her mother's cousin for the summer. The sisters don't bother

saying goodbye. Her father peels out forgetting to even leave her bags. Cait's never even met the couple that takes her in: Eibhlin and Sean Cinnsealach (Carrie Crowley and Andrew Bennett), an older pair who live far more peacefully on a sun-dappled and well-tended farm. Eibhlin, played beautifully by Crowley, is immediately tender with her.

"If there are secrets in a house, there is shame in that house," she tells Cait. "There are no secrets in this house."

Some things go unspoken. The bedroom Cait sleeps in has train wallpaper but there's no mention of them having had a child. Sean is initially standoffish with Cait, and you wonder if here, again, is a father-figure without any love

for her. But their relationship warms and Cait falls into the daily routines of the farm and the blessed quiet harmony of their home. "The Quiet Girl" unfolds as a nurturing idyll that couldn't be sweeter even though we know it can't last forever. A calf is weaned on her mother's milk, Cait is told, but then is fed powdered milk. Nourishment, for all creatures, can come from outside the home.

There's much to soak up in "The Quiet Girl," including Kate McCullough's radiant cinematography and Emma Lowney's graceful production design. Sentimentality is always close at hand but never barges in. Bairead, who's worked previously in documentary, coaxes the story out sensitively, sticking almost entirely to Cait's perspective. As a portrait of a child's resilience — and the damning view of adulthood that can be spied from young eyes — it could sit comfortably alongside Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne's similarly affecting "The Kid With a Bike."

"The Quiet Girl," a Super release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for some strong language and smoking. In Irish. Running time: 94 minutes.

AD 🖿







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IRENE SAM, MDT

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would like to have a short vacation in Hong Kong, The Park Lane Hong Kong- a Pullman Hotel in the heart of Causeway Bay, is one of the very few hotels in town which offers breath--taking views of the city landscape, Victoria Park and Victoria Harbour. As a brand, Pullman Hotels and Resorts delivers an experience that is upscale, upbeat and perfectly in tempo with the global zeitgeist. Against the backdrop of today's fast paced life, Pullman helps guests be at their best, in business and at leisure, enabling them to seamlessly conduct business, explore the locale, workout and make connections -to the neighbourhood and people around them.

Spacious and stylish, the rooms at Park Lane are designed to provide a comfortable stay. Without going out of the hotel, guests could head up to SKYE Roofbar and Dining for an unforgettable evening. A contemporary restaurant and bar with electrifying views of Hong Kong's skyline, SKYE combines edgy, modern art with funky yet stylish interiors, serving creative cocktails and featuring an extensive continental menu of contemporary French cuisine curated by an international team of young and dynamic professionals.

Chef Florian, Chef de Cuisine at SKYE welcomes this season with new mouthwatering seasonal menu items, with an all-new luxurious Caviar and Champagne tasting menu and Westholme Wagyu dishes during the month of February and March. Caviar and Champagne Menu features a 30-gram Superior Sturgeon Caviar from Royal Caviar Club, which is greatly appreciated for its great value, fresh and creamy taste and delicate flavour, served with blinis together with chopped capers, farm cream, egg yolk, egg white, radish and cucumber. Westholme Wagyu from Australia produces signature marbling with layers of rich, complex, buttery flavours. Carefully selected by Chef Florian, the menu features different approaches and presentations.











Macau Racing Tips By Davy Chiu, MDT



THE CINCINNATI 1500M TURF 2023-02-25|Sat|15:25

TOP Mountain God is my idea of an each way bet for this Saturday's MJC meeting. He got the gift draw in barrier three which should see him has the run of the race under the in form C.L. Cheung. Top Mountain God is a model of consistency and the 116 that he carries is a big bonus, while the punters are focus on the top weight favourite, he should find a nice firing position in the straight and get across to score another win due to his consistency in this C&D. Return to 1500M there is still improvement in him. Top Mountain God is my best bet of the week.

Race 3 Horse no. 7 Top Mountain God Win & Place bets





WHEN THERE ARE NO WORDS: TRANSLATING WARTIME TRAUMA IN UKRAINE

On the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, one thing is clear: The destruction the war has wreaked upon Ukrainians over the last 12 months is so catastrophic that the country will be dealing with the humanitarian consequences for the foreseeable future. One of the consequences is trauma.

As an anthropologist, I have long sought ways to describe my interviewees' narratives in ways that are true to what they experienced. This is particularly challenging after shocking, painful or overwhelming experiences, which are often difficult for survivors to describe in chronological order – or sometimes, to describe at all.

Still, abundant research shows that unverbalized memories are not necessarily lost. Often, they return in the form of flashbacks and physical sensations. Survivors may find themselves reaching, consciously or unconsciously, for different ways to describe their experiences.

Ukrainians often described their decision to leave areas of active military conflict as a visceral, rather than cerebral, process. A woman I call "Zhenia," for example, lived through the epic siege of the Donetsk airport in 2014. Although her family planned to stay, that changed one night when her husband saw a mortar from a missile strike land down the street from their high-rise apartment while he was standing on their balcony.

But they didn't need to talk about it. Zhenia remembers thinking that her husband's skin looked almost green from shock. Then, he threw up in the bathrooom. By the glances they exchanged, she knew it was time to pack their bags.

Anthropologists have long debated how best to communicate about pain and violence in a way that honors survivors' experiences without being voyeuristic. In my 2023 book, "Everyday War," I address the challenge by giving voice to the embodied language the people I spoke with used, relating their lives to me by talking about their bodies and possessions.

Among survivors of horrific experiences, there is also a tendency to dissociate. Dissociation refers to the sense of detachment from reality that occurs when the ways we typically make sense of our experiences are inadequate to what is happening.

War crimes exemplify humanity at its worst, and ordinary words often feel insufficient to describe what people witness. It is not uncommon for individuals who have survived war and conflict to describe feeling detached from reality and other people. Many experience the world in which they are living as unreal, dreamlike and distorted.

In Ukraine, people I spoke with who had been affected by the war painted a world so uncannily altered by violence that it felt as they were living in a science fiction drama: The previously familiar became very strange.

A woman who had been displaced from Donetsk, "Yuliya," told me she left after an otherworldly quality seemed to overtake her city. She compared her time in the city to a science fiction movie she had seen about the Soviet Union, in which high-tech sonic waves were used to subdue the population. Others described the Russian occupiers as bestial, monstrous and "zombies." "Valya," for example, described the mercenaries who entered her town as an "animal horde" because their activities were so indiscriminate.

When the war ends, Ukrainians may return to the places they had to flee, but both their inner and their outer worlds have changed. This means anyone intent on understanding will need flexible ways to listen. For anthropologists, it is vital to listen to not only what people say, but how they say it.

[Abridged]

US SANCTIONS MEXICAN DRUG PRECURSOR SUPPLIERS

The U.S. Treasury Department announced sanctions Wednesday on six members of a Mexican ring accused of supplying massive amounts of precursor chemical used to make deadly fentanyl and methamphetamines.

The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control blocked any U.S. properties of brothers Ludim and Luis Alfonso Zamudio Lerma, as well as several people they did business with.

The six allegedly supplied chemicals used in super labs, which the office described as "large-scale drug laboratories that produce 10 or more pounds of an illicit drug per production cycle" to make meth and the synthetic opioid fentanyl for the Sinaloa Cartel.

The ring allegedly supplied top-level Sinaloa cartel traffickers like the recently imprisoned Ovidio Guzman, the son of imprisoned cartel leader Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman.

Authorities in Mexico have found ever-larger processing facilities in Mexico where precursor chemicals, often imported from China, are used to make meth and fentanyl.

Mexican cartels often press fentanyl into pills that mimic legitimate medications, heightening the danger of overdoses because many victims do not know they are taking fentanyl.

Over 70,000 Americans died of overdoses involving opioids in 2020, mainly fentanyl.

FIRST BABY PANGOLIN IN EUROPE BORN IN PRAGUE ZOO, DOING WELL

Achinese pangolin has been born in the Prague zoo, the first birth of the critically endangered animal in captivity in Europe, and is doing well after initial troubles, the park said yesterday.

For the first few days after the baby female was born on Feb. 2, park keepers were worried because it was losing weight.

The reason was found to be that the mother, Run Hou Tang, didn't have enough milk. Following consultations with experts from Taiwan, a program of artificial feeding with milk from a cat was introduced and the mother was stimulated to produce more of her own.

That turned things around, with the zoo now expressing cautious optimism about the pup, which still has no name but has been nicknamed "Little Cone" because it resembles a spruce cone.

"We have only overcome the first hurdle and others are still waiting for us," zoo director Miroslav Bobek said.

The baby's birth weight was just 135 grams (4.76 ounces). Adults can reach up to 15 pounds.

The Chinese pangolin is native to southern China and southeastern Asia and is one of the four pangolin



A baby Chinese pangolin is being weighed at the Prague Zoo vesterday

species living in Asia, while another four can be found in Africa.

Prague received the rare animal from Taiwan last year, becoming only the second European zoo to keep the species.

Guo Bao, the male pangolin, and Run Hou Tang both came from the Taipei zoo, the leading breeder of the mammals that are hunted heavily for their scales and meat.

It's estimated that almost 200,000 were trafficked in 2019 because of the scales that are used in traditional medicine in Asia and elsewhere.

They're difficult to breed in captivity because they require a special feed that includes drone larvae and need a particular humidity and temperature in their enclosure.

The pangolins' arrival in Prague came after the city decided to revoke a sister-city agreement with Beijing and signed a similar deal in 2020 with the Taiwanese capital, Taipei. That agreement, which has caused tensions with China, also included cooperation between the zoos of the two cities.

Taiwan split from mainland China amid a civil war in 1949, but Beijing considers the self-ruled island part of its territory.

The Czech government recognizes the one-China principle but Prague officials said they wanted to focus on cultural and other cooperation, not on politics. MDT/AP



South Africa The Russian military denied that it was planning to test its new Zircon hypersonic missiles during naval drills off the coast of South Africa this week that will coincide with the one-year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine. China's navy also is participating in the Indian Ocean exercises, which come at a time when Russia's relationship with the West is at its lowest point since the Cold War.



USA The number of U.S. mass killings linked to extremism over the past decade was at least three times higher than the total from any other 10-year period since the 1970s, according to a report by the Anti-Defamation League. The report, provided to the AP ahead of its public release today [Macau time], also found that all extremist killings identified in 2022 were linked to right-wing extremism, with an especially high number linked to white supremacy.

TIKTOK BANNED FROM EU COMMISSION PHONES OVER CYBERSECURITY

THE European Union's executive branch said yesterday that it has temporarily banned TikTok from phones used by employees as a cybersecurity measure, reflecting widening worries from Western officials over the Chinese-owned video sharing app.

In a first for the European Commission, its Corporate Management Board suspended the use of TikTok on devices issued to staff or personal devices that staff use for work.

TikTok faces intensifying scrutiny from Europe and

the U.S. over security and data privacy amid worries that the hugely popular app could be used to promote pro-Beijing views or sweep up users' information. It comes as China and the West are locked in a wider tug of war over technology ranging from spy balloons to computer chips.

The EU's action follows similar moves in the U.S., where more than half of the states and Congress have banned TikTok from official government devices.

"The reason why this decision has been taken

is to ... increase the commission's cybersecurity," commission spokesperson Sonya Gospodinova said at a press briefing in Brussels. "Also, the measure aims to protect the commission against cybersecurity threats and actions which may be exploited for cyberattacks against the corporate environment of the commission."

Caroline Greer, TikTok's Brussels-based public policy official, tweeted that the suspension "is misguided and based on fundamental misconceptions." MDT/AP



Space Astronomers have discovered what appear to be massive galaxies dating back to within 600 million years of the Big Bang, suggesting the early universe may have had a stellar fast-track that produced these "monsters." While the new James Webb Space Telescope has spotted even older galaxies, dating to within a mere 300 million years of the beginning of the universe, it's the size and maturity of these six apparent mega-galaxies that stun scientists.