



THREE NON-RESIDENT WORKERS FROM VIETNAM ACCUSED OF PARTICIPATION IN A ROMANCE SCAM THAT SWINDLED MOP5.5 MILLION FROM LOCAL VICTIMS: PJ

SUBWAY SEEKS BUYER, IMPACT ON FRANCHISEES UNEXPLAINED

TOP COURT RULED THAT MAKING FRAUDULENT INCOME AND ASSET DECLARATIONS IN GOVERNMENT HOUSING APPLICATIONS WILL CONSTITUTE FORGERY



China Jiang Yanyong (pictured), a Chinese military doctor who revealed the full extent of the 2003 SARS outbreak and was later placed under house arrest for his political outspokenness, has died, a long-time acquaintance and a Hong Kong newspaper said yesterday. Jiang was 91 and died of pneumonia Saturday in Beijing, according to human rights activist Hu Jia and the South China Morning Post. News of Jiang's death were censored within China.



North Korea test-fired two short-range ballistic missiles in another show of force yesterday, a day after the United States and South Korea began military drills that Pyongyang views as an invasion rehearsal. The missiles launched from the southwestern coastal town of Jangyon flew across North Korea before landing in the sea off that country's east coast, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. It said both missiles traveled about 620 km.



South Korean and Japanese leaders will meet in Tokyo this week, hoping to resume regular visits after a gap of over a decade and overcome resentments that date back more than 100 years. The two major Asian economies and United States allies face increasing need to cooperate on challenges posed by China and North Korea, but previous rounds of diplomacy have foundered on unresolved issues from Japan's 35-year occupation of the Korean Peninsula.

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## BANKING

# WHY SVB AND SIGNATURE BANK FAILED SO FAST – AND THE CRISIS ISN'T OVER YET

VIDHURA S. TENNEKON,  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

**S**ILICON Valley Bank and Signature Bank failed with enormous speed – so quickly that they could be textbook cases of classic bank runs, in which too many depositors withdraw their funds from a bank at the same time. The failures at SVB and Signature were two of the three biggest in U.S. banking history, following the collapse of Washington Mutual in 2008.

How could this happen when the banking industry has been sitting on record levels of excess reserves – or the amount of cash held beyond what regulators require?

While the most common type of risk faced by a commercial bank is a jump in loan defaults – known as credit risk – that's not what is happening here. As an economist who has expertise in banking, I believe it boils down to two other big risks every lender faces: interest rate risk and liquidity risk.

## INTEREST RATE RISK

A bank faces interest rate risk when the rates increase rapidly within a shorter period.

That's exactly what has happened in the U.S. since March 2022.

The Federal Reserve has been aggressively raising rates – 4.5 percentage points so far – in a bid to tame soaring inflation. As a result, the yield on debt has jumped at a commensurate rate.

The yield on one-year U.S. government Treasury notes hit a 17-year high of 5.25% in March 2023, up from less than 0.5% at the beginning of 2022. Yields on 30-year Treasuries have climbed almost 2 percentage points.

As yields on a security go up, its price goes down. And so such a rapid rise in rates in so short a time caused the market value of previously issued debt – whether corporate bonds or government Treasury bills – to plunge, especially for longer-dated debt.

For example, a 2 percentage point gain in a 30-year bond's yield can cause its market value to plunge by around 32%.

SVB, as Silicon Valley Bank is known, had a massive share of its assets – 55% – invested in fixed-income securities, such as U.S. government bonds.

Of course, interest rate risk leading to a drop in market value of a security is not a huge problem as long as the owner can hold onto it until maturity, at which point it

can collect its original face value without realizing any loss. The unrealized loss stays hidden on the bank's balance sheet and disappears over time.

But if the owner has to sell the security before its maturity at a time when the market value is lower than face value, the unrealized loss becomes an actual loss.

That's exactly what SVB had to do earlier this year as its customers, dealing with their own cash shortfalls, began withdrawing their deposits – while even higher interest rates were expected.

This brings us to liquidity risk.

## LIQUIDITY RISK

Liquidity risk is the risk that a bank won't be able to meet its obligations when they come due without incurring losses.

For example, if you spend US\$150,000 of your savings to buy a house and down the road you need some or all of that money to deal with another emergency, you're experiencing a consequence of liquidity risk. A large chunk of your money is now tied up in the house, which is not easily exchangeable for cash.

Customers of SVB were withdrawing their deposits beyond

what it could pay using its cash reserves, and so to help meet its obligations the bank decided to sell \$21 billion of its securities portfolio at a loss of \$1.8 billion. The drain on equity capital led the lender to try to raise over \$2 billion in new capital.

The call to raise equity sent shockwaves to SVB's customers, who were losing confidence in the bank and rushed to withdraw cash. A bank run like this can cause even a healthy bank to go bankrupt in a matter of days, especially now in the digital age.

In part this is because many of SVB's customers had deposits well above the \$250,000 insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. – and so they knew their money might not be safe if the bank were to fail. Roughly 88% of deposits at SVB were uninsured.

Signature faced a similar problem, as SVB's collapse prompted many of its customers to withdraw their deposits out of a similar concern over liquidity risk. About 90% of its deposits were uninsured.

## SYSTEMIC RISK?

All banks face interest rate risk today on some of their holdings because of the Fed's rate-

-hiking campaign.

This has resulted in \$620 billion in unrealized losses on bank balance sheets as of December 2022.

But most banks are unlikely to have significant liquidity risk.

While SVB and Signature were complying with regulatory requirements, the composition of their assets was not in line with industry averages.

Signature had just over 5% of its assets in cash and SVB had 7%, compared with the industry average of 13%. In addition, SVB's 55% of assets in fixed-income securities compares with the industry average of 24%.

The U.S. government's decision to backstop all deposits of SVB and Signature regardless of their size should make it less likely that banks with less cash and more securities on their books will face a liquidity shortfall because of massive withdrawals driven by sudden panic.

However, with over \$1 trillion of bank deposits currently uninsured, I believe that the banking crisis is far from over. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

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JONATHAN KAUFMAN

# Pulitzer Prize-winning author happy to see people 'thrive' in Macau

ANTHONY LAM

**A** former journalist who first visited Macau some 40 years ago has said he was happy to see people in Macau "thrive," although he likes the year-1979 Macau more.

Jonathan Kaufman, a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter and current journalism professor at the Northwestern University in the USA, recently visited Macau to launch his book, "The Last Kings of Shanghai: The Rival Jewish Dynasties That Helped Create Modern China", alongside a seminar.

On the sideline of the event, he discussed with the Times his impression of Macau, then and now. His most vivid memories started with his voyage from Hong Kong, which took him nearly four hours. Nonetheless, his first impression was positive.

"Upon arrival, I was struck to find Macau looking very much like a European city – but quite poor – and there was only one nice hotel, the Lisboa Hotel," he said. "It was a nice place to go and relax, but it didn't have the kind of energy and excitement that you see today."

He said the skyline now is completely different. "It feels like a much more modern city than I remember back in 1979," Kaufman said.

When questioned on whether he likes the current Macau or the city as it was previously, Kaufman admitted that he personally likes the old Macau. "Because when you're in Hong Kong, Hong Kong is so busy all the time," said Kaufman. "It's nice to go to a place that is more relaxed."

ANTHONY LAM



Despite this, Kaufman expressed his respect for the current state of the city, saying that he felt happy to see people in Macau are benefitting economically from the two-decade long economic boom.

Kaufman was also asked about suggestions for aspiring writers in Macau. He said the current period is both a good time and tough time to launch a writing career.

"It's good because there are so many outlets for you to write: through the internet, newspapers all around the world, blogs and digital publications. The hard part is to breakthrough and get a lot of readers," he explained.

However, he believes that all sto-

ries have their audience. Moreover, while reading is crucial to refine writing skills, he emphasized the importance of respecting existing copyrights.

"Otherwise, people like me cannot earn a living," he said with a laugh.

On why Jews have become the center of his writing, Kaufman said he is himself Jewish. The former journalist says he finds it intriguing to look into the reasons behind existing realities.

"I just find it interesting that in Shanghai and in China – probably the last place you would expect to find Jewish people – there are all these signs of Jewish people being the-

re," he said. "As a reporter, you see something and you want to find out the story behind it."

He started working on these investigations when he saw evidence of footprints that Jewish people left behind in Shanghai during the early days of modern China. He later discovered that Jewish people took refuge in China during World War II.

Kaufman's book is a story of two families – Sassoon and Kadoorie – who amassed great wealth in Shanghai, surviving challenges and hurdles during a globally unsettling era. The book lays bare the moral compromises of the two families, and their exceptional foresight, success and generosity.

## GOV'T MONITORING HOTEL PRICES

Authorities have pledged to monitor the prices of hotel rooms on online platforms to ensure room rates remain at reasonable prices, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has said. In a reply to an interpellation made by lawmaker Leong Sun Lok, the bureau said that according to the current laws and regulations, hotel establishments are free to set prices, but the price list must be uploaded to the website and submitted to the authorities.

## HENGQIN OPENS GOV'T JOB POSTS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

The Executive Committee of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin is recruiting 26 post-based staff members for Macau residents across nine departments. The pre-tax annual income of the relevant positions ranges between 330,000 and 520,000 yuan. The recruitment period will end March 22. According to its latest recruitment system data, there are currently more than 270 people who have signed up. As cited in a TDM report, potential employees are expected to commence their jobs before the end of July.

## 120 ENTERPRISES PARTICIPATE AT MPU'S CAREER DAY

Over 120 enterprises from Macau and the Greater Bay Area participated at the Macao Polytechnic University's (MPU) career day, providing some 3,000 job vacancies and internship opportunities. Data from the university shows employment prospects of graduates in the university are satisfactory. For industries such as general health, education, engineering management and administration, the median salary is MOP16,000.

# Court: Incorrect wealth declaration in housing application constitutes forgery

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE top court has ruled that making erroneous or fraudulent income and asset declarations during government housing applications will constitute forgery.

It is another judicial interpretation made by the Court of Final Appeal (TUI), following a case last week about the legal status of casino employees.

In this case, the debate was about whether making such declarations while applying for social housing – a government housing

rental program – would be a violation of the law against document forgery.

The debate started in 2021, during Case 372/2021, when the Court of Second Instance (TSI) convicted a group of defendants of committing document forgery during their application for social housing. The TSI found the declaration fitted the Penal Code's definition of "document."

However, the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) found this interpretation confusing, because the same court, during Case

504/2021, had acquitted similarly accused defendants of document forgery. During this case, the TSI found the declaration did not fit the legal definition for a "document of importance."

Therefore, the MP filed an extraordinary appeal.

After the hearing sessions, the top court made the aforementioned judgment. During the extraordinary appeal, it said the Penal Code stipulates three criteria for defining documents.

"The document will have

to materially represent a declaration of human will; it will have to be able to prove what it contains and the legally relevant facts; and, the author must be recognizable," stated the court. "The legally relevant fact is any fact that establishes, modifies or terminates a legal relationship."

The court added the income and asset declaration must be submitted and duly signed by the applicants as a component of the application document "with the aim to reveal the inadequate economic con-

dition of the applicants."

"[The declaration] is undoubtedly, in the process of applying for social housing units, a fact of legal importance," the court said. It added that when combined with the fact that applicants who do not meet the economic conditions will be eliminated, the declaration "is a fact that establishes a legal relationship."

Despite changes to laws, the court understood inadequate economic conditions as a key factor for social housing applications. Moreover, logically speaking, wealth declaration remains a component of an application form, although no such express reference to "declaration" is made in current application procedures, the court added.





Pillow from the inn found in one of the buildings the suspect entered

HOMICIDE CASE

# MURDER AT FLORIDA INN MIGHT HAVE BEEN ORDERED

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE murder of a 45-year-old local woman at a small inn located in an alley that connects with the Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro in Macau's central district might have been ordered by a third party, the Times has learned.

According to a Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson during a special press conference yesterday afternoon, the PJ suspects the man detained for the murder is not telling the truth and the story could be far more complex than his initial testimony suggested.

The 45-year-old Hong Kong

man suspected of committing the murder told police he went to the inn to pay for sex. However, upon arrival, the woman said something he took as an insult and he retaliated by killing her out of anger. The same spokesperson said the suspect could not remember exactly what the woman said that

led him to lose his temper. Among other factors, this fact raised suspicions from the PJ.

According to a source heard by the Times after the press conference, the fact that the local woman had been renting a room at the inn since last month for sex work is also relevant to the case.

The source explained that such cases are very rare and usually the people involved in such cases either have severe substance use issues or major gambling debts that they cannot repay.

Such facts potentially point to the theory that the murderer was in reality a hitman acting under someone else's orders.

The PJ also noted the man's immigration records show his last entry into Macau occurred in March 2022. He has no record of ever staying in any hotel or hostel in Macau since then. Responding to police queries, he said he had been sleeping in the streets and parks of Macau for almost a year, yet again raising suspicions about his actions and motivations.

After being identified by the police and before detaining the suspect, the police analyzed footage from several surveillance cameras that show the man exiting the inn after allegedly committing the crime, carrying items including a large piece of luggage. He then circulated the city and entered and exited several residential buildings.

In some of these buildings, the police found objects allegedly from the crime scene, although there are questions about why the man carried them and left some of them in different buildings.

Among them is a pillow from the inn that was found in one of the buildings. However, there was no relation between the object and the crime, suggesting that the man acted premeditatedly to divert the police investigation.

The police have not yet found the murder weapon nor some of the belongings from the murdered woman, including her mobile phone allegedly taken by the murderer and which would be an important piece of evidence.

An autopsy confirmed the woman died of a brain hemorrhage resulting from several strikes to the head with a hard object.

The firemen who first attended the call found her in the hotel room toilet, showing no signs of life.

She had a clear open wound about 15 centimeters long in her head and a skull fracture.

Additionally, although some blood was found on the walls after the attack, it seemed lot of the woman's blood had been partially cleaned.

When the man was caught, he was using a computer at an activity center in the NAPE district.

Based on a psychiatric evaluation of the suspect, the assessor said the man had no identifiable mental health issues or disabilities.

The suspect was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office yesterday to be charged with homicide and theft. Nonetheless, the PJ will continue to investigate the case due to ongoing suspicions the suspect may be trying to conceal the truth behind the motive for murder.

CRIME

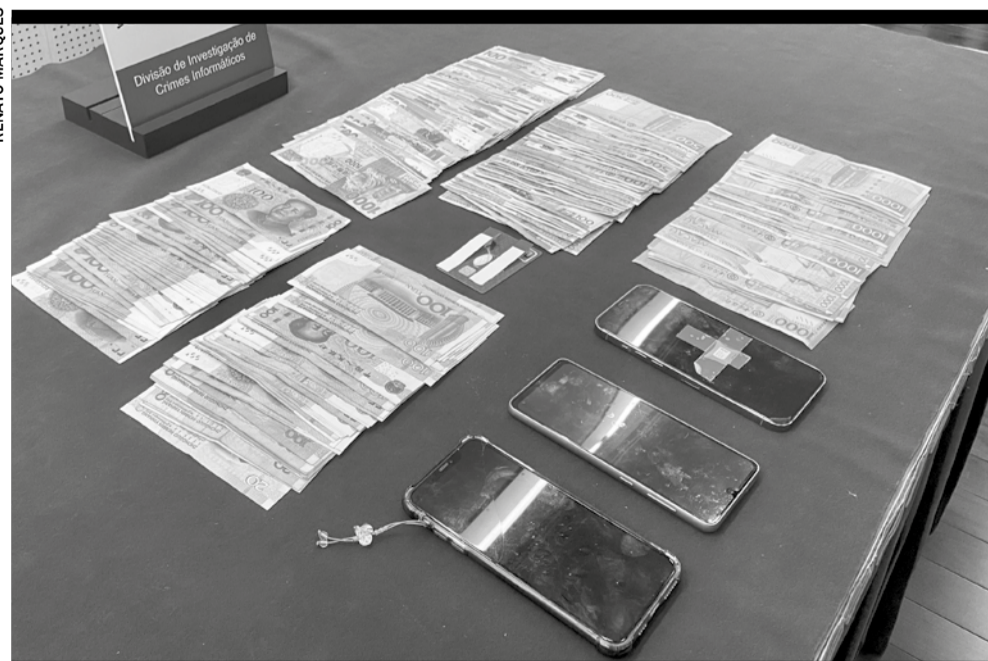
# Three women accused in scam, money laundering amounting to MOP5.5 million

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HREE non-resident workers from Vietnam are being accused of participation in a so-called pig butchering scam or romance scam that swindled 5.5 million patacas from three local victims, the Judiciary Police (PJ) stated during yesterday's special press conference.

The three Vietnamese women, including a mother, daughter and a friend, are being accused of assisting an unidentified group to receive and transfer the earnings collected from the scam victims.

The pig butchering scam is known to follow the same modus operandi and is based on online dating. The



scam usually targets women who are conned into believing that they must pay large sums of money

for customs or other parcel duties to receive a valuable gift sent by an alleged boyfriend.

This time, three local women ranging between 18 and 69 years old paid sums ranging between

MOP10,000 and MOP5 million to the scammers.

The cases date from September last year, when the victims filed complaints with the PJ and the investigation commenced. Contrary to many other cases, the victims had deposited the amounts into a local bank account, which facilitated the PJ's investigation.

The police found there were three bank accounts involved in the scam, belonging to the mother (who works as a domestic worker), her daughter (a worker in the cleaning sector), and a friend, also a domestic worker.

It was subsequently discovered that the other two accounts were required because the first account, be-

longing to the mother, had been flagged as having suspicious transactions and the assets had been frozen by the bank under anti-money laundering laws.

Questioned by the police, the mother said she was only helping an online boyfriend who asked her to open an account to collect some money, but she said she was not aware of the origins and purpose of that money. However, during questioning, her daughter revealed they were aware of the money's intended destination, attesting that after the money was collected in Macau, it was to be transferred to Vietnam and from there to an account in Malaysia. After that, the money would be transferred to other unknown locations worldwide.

The women pled that they did not derive any benefit from this process. Nonetheless, the PJ is charging them with participating in fraud and money laundering.



# Subway seeks buyer, impact on franchisees unexplained

ANTHONY LAM

**S**UBWAY, the American sandwich chain that went global, has reportedly been put up for sale after nearly six decades of family ownership.

The news first broke in the Wall Street Journal, which said the estimated value of the company could reach as much as USD10 billion.

The company later issued a statement, noting, "[Subway announced] that its shareholders are exploring a possible sale of the company," the company said in the statement. The company also announced that an investment bank has been hired to advise on the potential transaction. "J.P. Morgan is advising the company and will conduct the sale exploration process."

With nearly 37,000 outlets in more than 100 countries, the company's operations are highly reliant on franchising operations.

An enquiry was made by the Times to clarify whether its franchises would be affected should the potential transaction take place; and if so, to what extent.

No reply has been received by press time in response to the enquiry made last week.

In contrast, the chain said in the aforementioned statement that "[the] management team remains committed to the future and will continue to execute its multi-year transformation journey, which includes a focus



on menu innovation, modernization of restaurants and improvements to its overall customer experience."

When compared with its rival fast food chains such as McDonald's and KFC, Subway is less adept at adapting its menu to local preferences, at least judging from its Macau operations. Only recently has the chain's local operations started catering to a wider clientele by offering localized options, such as minced pork or chicken patty sub, numbingly spicy chicken sub, as well as red bean and matcha cookies.

The company ended 2022 by exceeding global sales projections and achieving eight consecutive quarters of positive sales.

It attributed this performance to new product innovations and growth in its digital and non-traditional channels.

However, in Macau, customers have occasionally complained about the lack of outlets in certain parts of the city, such as Areia Preta, with delivery platforms refusing to take jobs due to the long distance.

In 2022, the company recorded a 9.2% increase in within-store sales, compared to 2021, and a 29.1% increase in within-store sales, compared to 2020. The company also recorded double-digit growth in digital sales around the world compared to 2021, and these more than tripled since 2019.

Subway started in 1965, when 17-year-old Fred DeLuca asked his family friend and nuclear physicist Dr Peter Buck for advice on how to pay for his college tuition.

With an idea to open a submarine sandwich shop and an initial USD1,000 investment from Dr Buck, the two formed a business partnership that later transformed into the current sandwich chain.

Initially, the shop was named Pete's Drive-In: Super Submarines, to highlight the fact that the investment was made by Dr Buck based on the idea from DeLuca. Later, in 1968, the company was rebranded Subway, with the first franchise opening in 1974.

## HENGQIN, MACAU CO-ORGANIZE BUSINESS PROMOTION IN THREE REGIONS

From March 12 to 21, Macau and the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin will hold joint investment promotion Delegation events in Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. This 10-day investment promotion campaign aims to introducing Hengqin and Macau's investment policies, industrial layout and business environment to the government departments, chambers of commerce, and leading businesses in the three countries. Exchanges with local investors are arranged, covering integrated circuits, traditional Chinese medicine and other key industries. The delegation will pay visits to key local enterprises to explore business opportunities.

## CITY FACED SIX DAYS OF 'VERY UNHEALTHY' AIR QUALITY LEVEL IN 2022

The city recorded six days of poor air quality last year, according to Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG). Data from the bureau shows that the air pollution index reached its highest-level last year in Taipa on September 15, as cited in a report issued by Jornal Tribuna de Macau, when a figure of 224 was recorded. Data from late last year shows that Macau recorded several days of poor air quality levels. In September alone, the city faced 17 "unhealthy" days and four "very unhealthy" days.

## TRAVEL

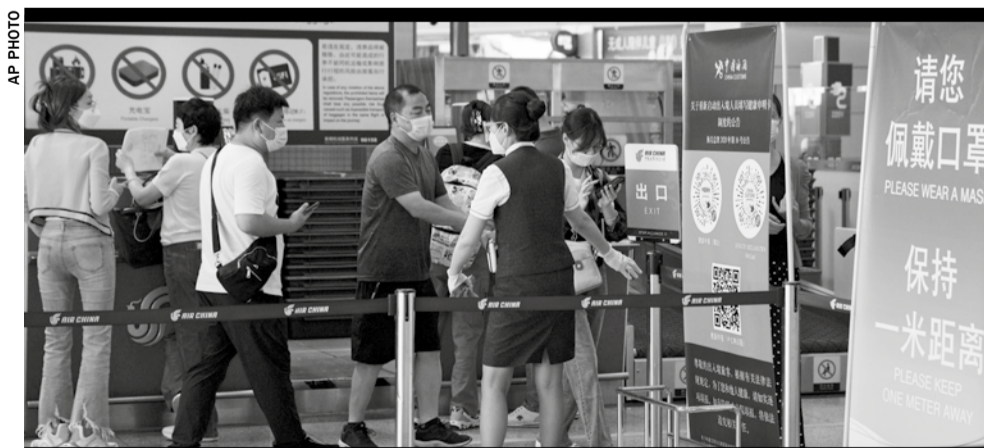
# China to reopen to tourists, resume all visas today

**C**HINA will reopen its borders to tourists and resume issuing all visas today as it tries to revive tourism and its economy following a three-year halt during the Covid-19 pandemic.

China is one of the last major countries to reopen its borders to tourists. The announcement yesterday came after it declared a "decisive victory" over Covid-19 in February.

All types of visas will resume from Wednesday. Visa-free entry also will resume at destinations such as Hainan island as well as for cruise ships entering Shanghai that had no visa requirement before Covid-19.

Foreigners holding vi-



## Visa-free entry will resume for foreigners entering Guangdong from Hong Kong and Macau

sas issued before March 28, 2020, that are still valid will be allowed to enter China. Visa-free entry will resume for foreigners entering Guangdong in southern China from Hong Kong and Macau. The notice didn't specify whether

vaccination certificates or negative Covid-19 tests would be required, but Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters yesterday that China had "optimized measures for remote testing of people coming to China from relevant countries," allowing pre-boarding antigen testing instead of nucleic acid testing.

"All these have been well implemented, and the epidemic risk is generally controllable," Wang said at a daily briefing.

The move would "further facilitate the exchange of Chinese and foreign personnel," according to the notice posted on the websites of numerous Chinese missions

and embassies.

China had stuck to a harsh "zero-Covid" strategy involving sudden lockdowns and daily Covid-19 testing to try to stop the virus before abandoning most aspects of the policy in December amid growing opposition.

The relaxation of visa rules follows China's approval of outbound group tours for Chinese citizens, the results of which have been positive, and the overall improvement in pandemic conditions, Wang said.

"China will continue to make better arrangements for the safe, healthy and orderly movement of Chinese and foreign personnel on the basis of scientific assessments and in light of the situation," he said. "We also hope that all parties will join China in creating favorable conditions for cross-border exchanges." MDT/AP



DIPLOMACY

# BEIJING SAYS AUKUS ON 'DANGEROUS PATH' WITH NUCLEAR SUBS DEAL

**T**HE United States, Australia and the United Kingdom are traveling "further down the wrong and dangerous path for their own geopolitical self-interest," China's Foreign Ministry said yesterday, responding to an agreement under which Australia will purchase nuclear-powered attack submarines from the U.S. to modernize its fleet.

Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the arrangement, given the acronym AUKUS — for Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States — arises from the "typical Cold War mentality which will only motivate an arms race, damage the international nuclear nonproliferation regime, and harm regional stability and peace."

"The latest joint statement issued by the U.S., U.K., and Australia shows that the three countries have gone further down the wrong and dangerous path for their own geopolitical self-interest, completely ignoring the concerns of the international community," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing.

U.S. President Joe Biden flew to San Diego to appear with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak as they hailed an 18-month-old nuclear partnership that enables Australia to access nuclear-powered submarines, which are stealthier and more capable than conventionally powered vessels, as a counterweight to China's military buildup.

Biden emphasized the ships would not carry nuclear weapons of any kind. Albanese has said he doesn't think the deal will sour its relationship with China, which

AP PHOTO



Wang Wenbin, Foreign Ministry

he noted had improved in recent months.

Wang repeated China's claims that AUKUS poses a "serious risk of nuclear proliferation and violating the object and purpose of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons."

"The three countries claim that they will abide by the highest nuclear non-proliferation standards, which is pure deception," Wang said, accusing the three of "coercing" the International Atomic Energy Agency into giving its endorsement.

Speaking in a video call with

reporters yesterday, U.S. Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel J. Kritenbrink said the degree of transparency involved was one of the key features of the arrangement.

"AUKUS partners have made our intentions clear, including our commitment to regional peace and stability," Kritenbrink said. "We have committed ourselves to the highest safety and nonproliferation standards, and we look forward to continuing to engage with our friends, partners, and allies in the region," he said.

AUKUS is one of several U.S.-

led security arrangements that have drawn fire from Beijing, which routinely rails against regional blocs from which it is excluded as vestiges of the Cold War.

Along with Russia, China has denounced the Quad — a grouping of Australia, India, Japan and the United States — whose foreign ministers earlier this month made clear they aim to be an alternative to China. The ministers said they viewed with concern "challenges to the maritime rules-based order, including in the South and East China Seas," in a reference to China's aggressi-

ve moves to assert its territorial claims in a quest to replace the U.S. as the region's preeminent military force.

China has also been unsettled by an agreement between Washington and the Philippines, giving U.S. forces greater access to Filipino bases along what is called the "first island chain" that is key to Chinese control of the region.

U.S. military and political support for Taiwan have also drawn more threatening responses from Beijing in recent years.

Recent days have seen officials from President Xi Jinping down issue dire pronouncements on U.S. China relations and Chinese security in general.

Foreign Minister Qin Gang warned Washington last week of possible "conflict and confrontation" if the U.S. doesn't change course to mend relations strained over Taiwan, human rights, Hong Kong, security, technology and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

A day earlier, Xi told delegates of China's legislature that "Western countries led by the United States have implemented all-round containment, encirclement and suppression of China, which has brought unprecedented grave challenges to our nation's development."

On the legislature's closing day Monday, Xi said it was necessary to modernize the armed forces and "build the people's army into a great wall of steel" that protects China's interests and national security. Xi also reiterated China's determination to bring Taiwan under its control by peaceful or military means amid rising concern abroad over a possible attack on the island Beijing claims as its own territory.

China must "resolutely oppose interference by external forces and Taiwan independence separatist activities, and unwaveringly promote the process of reunification of the motherland," Xi said.

MDT/AP

HONG KONG

# 'Villain hitting' ritual draws crowds

ALICE FUNG & KARMEN LI ASSOCIATED PRESS HONG KONG

**P**EOPLE holding a grudge may have found a way to release it in Hong Kong's "villain hitting" ritual.

To relieve themselves from a bad mood, customers paid ritual practitioners who work underneath the Canal Road Flyover in Causeway Bay, one of the city's shopping districts, and watched

AP PHOTO



them bashing an image of their target with a shoe. It could be anyone — ri-

val lovers and unfriendly colleagues, or horrible bosses and unlikeable

public figures.

The ritual is particularly popular in March

because some people believe that the best day to perform it falls on "ging zat," as pronounced in Cantonese, a day on the Chinese lunar calendar that literally means "awakening of insects."

This year, "ging zat" fell on March 6. The tradition, mostly run by elderly women, attracted crowds of customers after the lifting of major COVID-19 restrictions, including the mask mandate.

"I'm hoping to cut out all the gossip around me and wish that the bad people would stay away from me," said tourist Edison Chan, who traveled from neighboring

Guangdong province.

Ho Pan-yong, one of the practitioners, said she wanted to help her customers whack the bad people away from their lives. She charged 50 Hong Kong dollars (\$6.40) for the five-minute act, which includes lighting incense offering to gods followed by whacking the target and concludes by ritual blessing.

The ritual, which does not hurt anyone physically, could help bring hopes to those who are distressed, said Dr. Beatrice Ng-Kessler, a registered clinical psychologist in Hong Kong and in the U.K. MDT/AP



MYANMAR

# Activists urge UN Security Council to refer military rulers to court

EDITH M. LEDERER,  
UNITED NATIONS

**H**UMAN rights activists urged the U.N. Security Council yesterday to refer Myanmar's military rulers to the International Criminal Court and urged neighboring Southeast Asian countries to support the opposition pro-democracy movement.

The leaders of two women's rights organizations spoke to reporters ahead of a closed council meeting on Myanmar. Members heard briefings by U.N. special envoy for Myanmar Noeleen Heyzer and Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, whose country chairs the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

May Sabe Phyu, director of the Gender Equality Network, a coalition of organizations promoting women's rights in Myanmar, accused Myanmar's military of conducting "a terror campaign" and committing "heinous acts" that constituted crimes against humanity. She said the Security Council should refer the junta's actions to the International Criminal



May Sabe Phyu, prominent human rights activist and wife of Patrick Kum Ja Lee

minal Court for prosecution.

Myanmar's military has long been accused of human rights violations, most notably during a brutal 2017 counterinsurgency campaign against Rohingya Muslims in the western state of Rakhine. International courts are considering whether that crackdown was genocide.

In 2021, the military ousted Myanmar's elected civilian government, then moved to violently suppress public opposition to the takeover. Some experts now consider the situation in Myanmar to be a civil war in which the army

has conducting major offensives against widespread armed resistance.

ASEAN adopted a five-step consensus on restoring peace in April 2021 to which Myanmar agreed but has not implemented, leading to Myanmar's exclusion from some top-level ASEAN meetings since then.

The Security Council approved its first-ever resolution on Myanmar in December, demanding an immediate end to violence, urging its military rulers to release all "arbitrarily detained" prisoners including ousted leader

Aung San Suu Kyi and to restore democratic institutions. It also reiterated a call for dialogue and reconciliation and urged all sides "to respect human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law."

The activists called for an arms embargo, for the U.N. special envoy to have public engagements with pro-democracy actors, and for accountability for crimes perpetrated by the military.

Phyu, who left Myanmar after the takeover and is now based in the United States, asked the Security Council to pressure Myanmar's neighbors not to support the government but to publicly support democratic forces, including the National Unity Government, which she said has the support of the people of Myanmar.

And she criticized U.N. envoy Heyzer for meeting Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing but not meeting publicly with pro-democracy groups including the National Unity Government, which operates underground and calls itself the country's legitimate government.

Naw Hser Hser, head of the Women's League of Burma, said

supporters of democracy feel forgotten by the international community.

Before Monday's council meeting, Britain's U.N. Ambassador Barbara Woodward said the Security Council fully supports ASEAN and the five-point council, but stressed that it's time for progress now.

"The people of Myanmar have been suffering for too long," Woodward said. "Myanmar is the second deadliest place in the world for civilians and the people of Myanmar really can't wait."

France's deputy U.N. ambassador Nathalie Broadhurst told The Associated Press after the council meeting that Marsudi presented the implementation plan which calls for action on all five points in parallel, not sequentially.

"They say they don't want megaphone diplomacy," Broadhurst added, expressing hope that the ASEAN effort will eventually lead to a national inclusive effort and end the "desperate situation" in Myanmar.

Brazil's U.N. Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho told AP that council members supported ASEAN, and some said the Security Council should be prepared for further action, but no new council action is expected "for the time being."

The Security Council in New York has been increasingly divided due to a major rift among its five permanent members: China and Russia on one side, Britain, France and the United States on the other. **MDT/AP**

AUSTRALIA

# Defense minister nuclear subs needed to counter militarization

**A**USTRALIA'S defense minister said yesterday a deal to buy nuclear-powered attack submarines from the United States was necessary to counter the biggest conventional military buildup in the region since World War II.

Australian officials said the deal will cost up to \$245 billion over the next three decades and create 20,000 jobs. It comes at a time that China is rapidly building up its own military.

Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles said it had made a huge diplomatic effort for months ahead of Monday's announcement of the deal, including making more than 60 calls to regional and world leaders. Australia had even offered to



Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles (center) in Canberra, yesterday

keep China in the loop, he said.

"We offered a briefing. I have not participated in a briefing with China," Marles said.

Asked by reporters if China had rejected the briefing or responded at all, Marles replied: "I'm not aware of that res-

ponse."

Without specifically mentioning China, Marles said Australia needed to respond to the military buildup in the Pacific.

"A failure to do so would see us be condemned by history," he said.

China has said the deal poses serious nuclear proliferation risks and stimulates the arms race.

"We urge the U.S., Britain and Australia to abandon the Cold War mentality and zero-sum game, faithfully fulfill their international obligations and do more to contribute to regional peace and stability," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said during a daily briefing last week.

Marles said Australia intended to increase its military capabilities and to spend more on defense in the future, something it wanted to be transparent about.

"You know, our concern about other military buildups is that they happen in a man-

ner which is opaque, and where neighbors are left uneasy as to why it is occurring," he said. "That is why we have gone to such an effort to make clear exactly why we are taking the steps that we're taking."

U.S. President Joe Biden announced the deal in San Diego along with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. Albanese said the agreement "represents the biggest single investment in Australia's defense capability in all of our history."

Australia is buying three, and possibly up to five, Virginia-class boats as part of deal. Under the so-called AUKUS partnership, a future generation of submarines will be built in Britain and in Australia with U.S. technology and support.

Australia estimates the deal will cost it between 268 billion and 368 billion Australian dollars

(\$178-\$245 billion).

Biden emphasized the ships would not carry nuclear weapons of any kind. Albanese has said he doesn't think the deal will sour its relationship with China, which he noted had improved in recent months.

The secretly brokered AUKUS deal included the Australian government's cancellation of a \$66 billion contract for a French-built fleet of conventional submarines, which sparked a diplomatic row within the Western alliance that took months to mend.

Marles yesterday appeared eager to move on from that.

"In an operational sense, we are building our relationship with France, with a much greater tempo of military exercises, with much greater access to our bases on the Australian continent but also French bases in the Pacific and indeed in the Indian Ocean," he said. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO



Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and his wife Rosangela Silva receive gifts from Indigenous leaders at the Caracarana Lake Regional Center in Normandia, on the Raposa Serra do Sol Indigenous reserve

BRAZIL

# Lula meets with Indigenous in Amazon, pledges lands

EDMAR BARROS & MAURICIO SAVARESE, RAPOSA SERRA DO SOL INDIGENOUS TERRITORY

**O**N his first trip to Indigenous land in the Amazon rainforest since taking office, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva expressed support for creating new territories for those communities, but stopped short of announcing any demarcations.

Wearing white cap and dark shirt in the heat, Lula addressed some 2,000 Indigenous people who painted their faces, wore traditional feather headdresses and sang songs to welcome him yesterday [Macau time] to the Raposa Serra do Sol region bordering Venezuela and Guyana.

He said he wants quick demarcation of their lands "before other people take over, invent false documents" to claim ownership rights. That has been a common occurrence throughout Brazil's history, which prompted the start of demarcation processes over a half century ago.

"We need to quickly try to legalize every land whose (demarcation) studies are almost finished so the Indigenous can take the land that is theirs," Lula said at the 52nd general assembly of the Indigenous peoples of the State of Roraima.

Yet Lula stopped short of actually announcing any

new designations that are much anticipated by Indigenous people and rights activists. Many already had their hopes dashed that new demarcations would take place in the first 30 days of his administration, which began Jan. 1.

Their movement has pressured Lula to demarcate 13 new Indigenous territories that have cleared all regulatory steps and require nothing more than presidential approval to be official. Doing so would mark a sharp change in policy from the previous administration of Jair Bolsonaro, who did not demarcate any land for them during his presidency.

Some of the territories pending a presidential authorization began their demarcation processes decades ago.

Lula authorized the demarcation of Raposa Serra do Sol in 2005, during his first term as president. Different from other reserves in the Brazilian Amazon, Raposa Serra do Sol is mostly tropical savannah. It is home to 26,000 people from five different ethnicities.

Since receiving its protected status, it has been a scene of conflict between rice farmers and Indigenous people and has had sporadic violence, making the territory something of a case study in the challenges of protecting land that is increasingly under pressure from without.

Bolsonaro's relentless push to legalize mining on Indigenous territories rekindled long-standing divisions among Raposa Serra do Sol's local communities about the best path forward for their collective well-being. He visited an illegal gold mining camp in the same Indigenous territory in October 2021 and openly encouraged the activity, despite criticism from local Indigenous leaders.

Preparations for Lula's arrival at Raposa Serra do Sol began shortly before daybreak in the Amazon, with Indigenous people of different groups waking early to gather at a community center for their final rehearsal of songs and dances for the president. People of different ages wearing straw skirts lurched backward and forward as drums and chants resounded. Other Indigenous people were back at their tents preparing breakfast for the members of their groups.

Indigenous leaders, including Osmar Lima Batista of the Macuxi people, Leticia Monteiro da Silva of the Taurepang people, and Adailton Waiwai of the Waiwai people, told The Associated Press at the meeting that they expect better days compared with the prior four years, when they believed they did not have a friend in the presidential palace.

All agreed that Lula's first visit to the region since 2010 was not enough, however.

Davi Kopenawa, leader of the Yanomami people, took the microphone during the gathering to tell Lula that his people's needs are greater than those of four years ago.

"After we take the gold miners out, we need to recover our Indigenous health care system, which was destroyed," Kopenawa said. "We need to save the children we have left. I don't want more children dying. We need hospitals in our community. Disease is still strong in the Amazon."

"I don't want mining on Yanomami lands and in the Raposa Serra do Sol territory," he added. "Mining kills us, it kills people in the city, the river, the water of the forest. We don't need heavy mining at our home."

Lula said in his speech that his administration will definitively expel gold miners from Indigenous lands — as it has already begun working to do in the Yanomami territory.

"That gold doesn't belong to anyone. It's there because nature placed it there. It's on Indigenous land," Lula said.

The president was accompanied by Sonia Guajajara, his minister of Indigenous peoples, and Joenia Wapichana, who heads the Indigenous affairs agency.

Lula said there will be a meeting involving leaders of countries of the Amazon rainforest — Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1962 LIBERALS SEIZE ORPINGTON



The Liberals have seized Orpington from the government in their first by-election victory for four years.

Eric Lubbock won the seat with a majority of 7,855, marking a swing of nearly 22% away from the Conservatives. It brings the number of Liberal MPs to seven.

It is the first seat the Government has lost since the general election in October 1959 and is probably its biggest humiliation since 1951, when the Tories returned to power.

The election was caused by the appointment of Donald Sumner, formerly Conservative MP for Orpington, to be a county court judge.

The Liberal victory crowns a long series of by-elections in the past two-and-a-half years in which their candidates have captured second place.

Mr Lubbock, 33, an engineering consultant, told the jubilant crowd: "We want more Liberal councils, more Liberal candidates. We must not stop in our efforts to overthrow Tory blunder. There is not a safe Tory seat in the country."

Liberal leader Jo Grimond was delighted. "It is an incredible result. I must say the first thing that I should like to do is to congratulate Mr Lubbock. It is a wonderful victory," he said.

Lord Aldington, vice-chairman of the Conservative Party, who was with Mr Grimond, said: "I am quite certain the Conservative Party will not be shaken by [this result]. We shall march on and win the next general election."

Today's result follows the collapse yesterday of the safe government seat at North Blackpool into a marginal.

In today's other by-election in Middlesbrough, an experienced Labour front-bencher, Arthur Bottomley, was returned to Westminster. He lost his seat of Rochester and Chatham in 1959.

In this election too, the Liberals came a strong second.

There is to be another by-election at Pontefract on 22 March.

The seat was held with a Labour majority of more than 24,000 at the general election.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The Orpington by-election did not mark a dramatic Liberal resurgence.

But it is still regarded as one of the biggest by-election upsets in British political history. Eric Lubbock stood in the leadership contest for the Liberal party in 1967 but lost to Jeremy Thorpe.

He lost the Orpington seat in the 1970 general election and to date (2002) it has remained Conservative. It ranks 12th on the party's list of target seats.

Mr Lubbock succeeded to the peerage in 1971 as Lord Avebury. He founded the parliamentary human rights group in 1976 which he chaired for 21 years.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS



### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Pamper yourself; you deserve it. Use your innovative mind to surprise youngsters. Your stubborn nature will backfire if you give your mate an ultimatum.



### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

You'll find it easy to deal with government agencies or large institutions. Your ability to deal with humanitarian groups will enhance your reputation.



### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You can make career moves that will bring you a much higher income. Concentrate on spending quality time with children and friends.



### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Make sure that you get legal matters checked out thoroughly. Opportunities for new and exciting relationships will be yours if you get out and join groups.



### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You should look into making some physical changes, such as new hair color or toning up your body. Opportunities to get together with friends will be enlightening and entertaining.



### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Overindulgence may cause conflicts. You won't be admired at home if you haven't been taking care of your share of the work. Complete those hobbies you started a long time ago.



### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Don't spend too much in order to impress others. Electrical problems may be an issue. You may find that you're being used. Relationships will be erratic today.



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Consider applying for a job in another part of the world. Unique forms of entertainment could capture your attention and bring about a romantic interest.



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You can have a working relationship with children if you exercise patience and understanding of the dilemmas they face. Don't make unreasonable promises.



### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Don't put limitations on yourself. Involvement in groups of interest will bring you in touch with important individuals. Listen to the complaints of others.



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Your creative ability will surface, giving you good ideas for ways of making money. Misunderstandings at work could easily lead to your demise.



### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You may have major blowups with someone you love if you don't back down. Friendships will be ruined if you let too many people get involved in any disputes.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



## SUDOKU

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

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

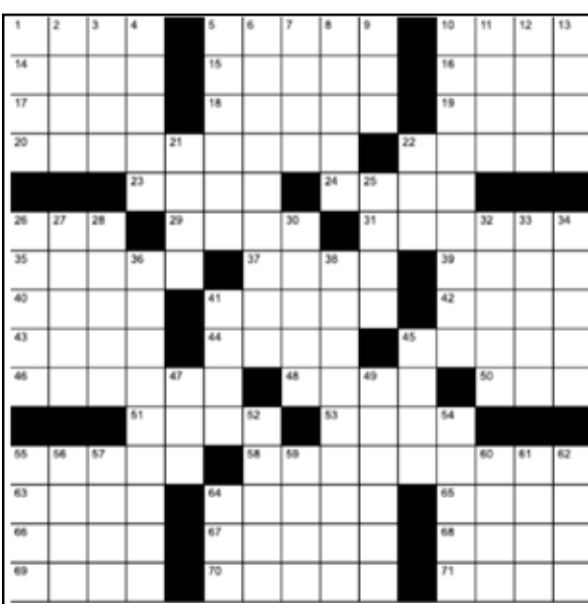
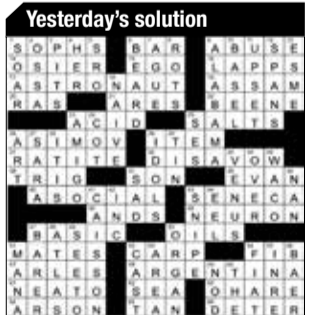
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	1	13	fine
Changchun	-5	3	cloudy
Chengdu	10	21	overcast
Chongqing	11	25	fine
Fuzhou	11	29	fine
Guangzhou	15	27	cloudy
Guiyang	6	17	showers
Haikou	18	27	cloudy
Hangzhou	9	25	overcast
Harbin	-5	2	snow
Hefei	9	21	fine
Nanjing	10	20	cloudy
Shanghai	11	24	cloudy
Taipei	13	21	fine
Wuhan	11	23	cloudy
Hong Kong	20	23	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	2	4	cloudy
Frankfurt	-1	8	snow
Paris	5	12	cloudy
London	7	9	rain
New York	1	8	cloudy

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- \_\_\_ California; 5- Brown pigment; 10- Title; 14- Petri dish gelatin; 15- Neural transmitters; 16- Are you \_\_\_ out?; 17- Actress Singer; 18- "Quiet!"; 19- Old Pontiacs; 20- Inanimate; 22- Glisten; 23- Stead; 24- Lacking slack; 26- May \_\_\_ excused?; 29- Hey, over here!; 31- Wound; 35- Carries; 37- Bound; 39- "The Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer; 40- Additional; 41- Nairobi's nation; 42- Slay; 43- Novelist Waugh; 44- Advantage; 45- Gossipmonger; 46- Aria; 48- Biblical birthright seller; 50- Conscripting org.; 51- Rock clinging plant; 53- Member of the Conservative Party; 55- Of first importance; 58- Sojourn; 63- Peeved; 64- Attack; 65- Old Italian money; 66- King of comedy; 67- \_\_\_ vincit amor; 68- Cabinet dept.; 69- Look after; 70- Unfolds; 71- Ooze;

DOWN 1- Neighbor of Java; 2- Stravinsky ballet; 3- Jolts; 4- Shakespearean sprite; 5- Talks back to; 6- Tired; 7- Sulk; 8- Atlas feature; 9- Tree used to make baseball bats; 10- Dark face of a planet; 11- Against; 12- Earth's satellite; 13- Gaelic language of Ireland or Scotland; 21- Bites; 22- Litigate against; 25- Pierce portrayer; 26- Girder; 27- Pretty girl; 28- Art supporter; 30- Trace; 32- Golf clubs; 33- Drops; 34- Grannies; 36- Suggest as appropriate; 38- Ocular discomfort; 41- Lock openers; 45- Cosmonaut Gagarin; 47- Her partner would be a buck; 49- Main arteries; 52- Stub; 54- Some locks; 55- H.S. exam; 56- Portrayal by an actor; 57- Neighbor of Turkey; 59- Diarist Frank; 60- Mudville complement; 61- Manitoba native; 62- Tombstone lawman; 64- Outback hopper;



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



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

GAMING

# BILL TO LEGALIZE SPORTS WAGERING CLEARS KENTUCKY HOUSE

BRUCE SCHREINER,  
FRANKFORT (KY.)

A bill to legalize sports betting in Kentucky won House passage yesterday [Macau time], setting up a Senate showdown on a proposal that creates divisions among the Republican supermajorities.

Past efforts to legalize sports wagering in the Bluegrass State garnered House support but died in the Senate. It's a reflection of how divisive the gambling issue is in the state that's home to Churchill Downs in Louisville, where the Kentucky Derby is run.

"This does create a regulated marketplace for sports wagering, taking sports wagering in Kentucky out of the shadows, out of the darkness and moving it into the light," said Republican Rep. Michael Meredith, the bill's lead sponsor.

The measure cleared the House on a 63-34 vote, but its prospects in the Senate are uncertain, with a higher procedural hurdle

AP PHOTO



for supporters to overcome this year. It needs a three-fifths vote in each chamber to pass, since it's a revenue-producing bill in an odd-numbered year.

Opponents dug in for the looming fight in the Senate. After the House vote, The Family Foundation said the sports wagering bill represents "a massive expansion of predatory gambling at a time when Kentuckians can

least afford it."

A key supporter of the bill, Senate Majority Floor Leader Damon Thayer, said later that it's "going to be tough" to reach that higher threshold in the Senate.

"But first thing's first, I want to try to get it out of committee," Thayer said in an interview.

After several years of coming up short, supporters said it's time for Kentucky to accept a form

of wagering already available in most of Kentucky's neighboring states.

"You literally just have to drive across the county line or cross the river to go take part in their programs," Meredith said.

The bill's opponents said state-sanctioned sports wagering would create more social problems that hurt families. Republican Rep. Chris Fugate said: "This is

not legislation that Kentucky can be proud of."

"This is not good for Kentucky," he said. "It's not good for families. It's not good for people. And I really hope and pray we get to see some legislation that will bring jobs into east Kentucky and to the rural parts of this state."

If legalized, sports wagering in Kentucky is expected to generate about \$23 million a year in tax revenue, Meredith said.

House Bill 551 would allow Kentucky's horse racing tracks to be licensed as sports betting facilities for a \$500,000 upfront fee and an annual renewal fee of \$50,000. Participating tracks could contract with up to three service providers to provide sports wagering services at the track itself, or through online sites and mobile applications. Service providers would have to pay \$50,000 for an initial license, with a \$10,000 annual renewal fee.

Under the bill, the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission would regulate sports wagering operations. Revenue generated from taxing such wagering would cover those regulatory costs. A percentage of the revenue would go into a fund focused on dealing with problem gambling. The leftover revenue after that would flow into the state public pension system. **MDT/AP**

AD

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FOOTBALL

# Madrid tries to avoid Liverpool comeback in Champions League

TALES AZZONI, MADRID

Thursday, 4:00  
Real Madrid v Liverpool  
H 2.36, D 4.1, A2.9

ODDSCHECKER.COM

**R**EAL Madrid got used to pulling off dramatic comebacks in the Champions League last season. Now it needs to avoid one to keep its title defense going.

It will be Liverpool needing to do something magical at the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium today [Thursday, 4:00] to reverse a 5-2 loss from the first leg in the round of 16.

It definitely won't be easy — no away team has ever erased a three-goal loss from the first leg in the Champions League. Only five times the team that lost at home rallied in the second leg, with Manchester United the only one to overcome a two-goal deficit in a round-of-16 matchup against Paris Saint-Germain in 2019.

Liverpool did manage a huge



AP PHOTO

comeback at home in the 2019 semifinals, rallying against another Spanish club, Barcelona. It had lost 3-0 at the Camp Nou before pulling off a 4-0 win in the second leg at home to keep alive a run that eventually ended with

the team winning the trophy. Only three other teams overcame a deficit of three or more goals — Barcelona, Roma and Deportivo La Coruña.

"We need to go and do something special," Liverpool defender

Trent Alexander-Arnold said. "It's about throwing the kitchen sink at it and going all out."

Madrid, which beat Liverpool in last season's final for a record-extending 14th European title, pulled off thrilling comebacks on

its way to that final, rallying from behind against PSG in the round of 16, Chelsea in the quarterfinals and Manchester City in the semifinals.

Madrid also rallied against Liverpool in the first leg this season after going down 2-0 in the first half in England, eventually building its comfortable three-goal advantage with two goals each by Vinicius Júnior and Karim Benzema. Éder Militão also scored for Madrid at Anfield.

The only time Madrid failed to advance in the Champions League after winning the first leg on the road was in 2019 when it was eliminated by Ajax in the round of 16.

Madrid has won six of its last seven matches against Liverpool in the Champions League, drawing the other one.

The team coached by Carlo Ancelotti ended a three-match winless run with a 3-1 victory over Espanyol at the Bernabéu in the Spanish league on Saturday. The coach is expected to have Ferland Mendy and Benzema available after recovering from injuries.

Liverpool took another hit to its confidence with a 1-0 loss at relegation-threatened Bournemouth over the weekend, hurting its chances of moving closer to the top four in the Premier League. Mohamed Salah missed a penalty in that game. **MDT/AP**

AD

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

**Paediatric Surgery** : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

**Paediatrics** : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

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**Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery** : Dr. Lam U Lin

**Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine** : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

**ENT** : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

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OPINION

China Daily

Swaran Singh, China Daily\*



CHINESE DREAM GETS A NEW TEAM

The one and a half hour long news conference of Premier Li Qiang on the concluding day of the annual session of the 14th National People's Congress, China's top legislature, on Monday was both revealing and reassuring for China watchers.

Revealing because President Xi Jinping continues to be at the helm and the world is familiar with his style and substance of leadership.

Since the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October, however, the world had been speculating about the new leadership team of China's State bodies and who would lead the State Council, China's Cabinet, for the next five years or more. Monday's news conference was the first time the world saw China's new premier address such a large gathering of domestic and international journalists. Li faced a whole range of probing questions with the grit and grace needed to lead the State Council at this important juncture as China could become the world's largest economy during his tenure.

The news conference was also reassuring because Li appeared at peace with his new position — confident about showing his pragmatic approach — as he said that his team faces "many new challenges" and that the growth rate of 5 percent will not be an easy task to achieve.

He, however, said that people "don't fix their sights every day" on growth rates but on "specific issues close to them" which include their concerns about unemployment, education, health and housing. Saying that the higher number of college graduates this year will put extra pressure on the job market, he asserted that "developing the economy is the fundamental solution for creating jobs".

Li was upfront about recent discussions on China's private entrepreneurs, promising to create a better environment for the private sector while reiterating China's commitment to promote the public sector and guide the development of the non-public sector. This reflected his understanding that the bulk of foreign direct investment comes from and through the private sector.

The challenges of China's economic development have to be understood against the backdrop of its unprecedented average growth rate of 9-plus percent for the past four decades. It is no longer possible to achieve such a high growth rate for an \$18 trillion economy. Also, like the rest of the world, China is bracing to deal with not only the after-effects of the pandemic-induced disruption in, and deceleration of, the supply and industry chains, but also the impending inflationary and recessionary pressures.

No doubt one doesn't expect any fundamental changes from China's new leadership team as the principle of upholding the leadership of the Party with Xi as the core was once again unanimously endorsed by the two sessions. As such, China's new leaders are expected to further accelerate their work to achieve the Party's clearly defined goals with their given trajectories and timelines.

It is important to note the conformity and conviction of the new premier toward those goals. It is also important to note his professionalism and hands-on approach as he spoke extempore and gave detailed and specific replies without any notes or aides supporting him, albeit he was accompanied by the vice-premiers.

Premier Li took a range of questions, from aging population, unemployment, State- versus market-driven development to Beijing's anti-pandemic policy, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and Sino-US relations. The news conference also saw him echo President Xi's speech at the closing ceremony of the 14th NPC and caution the US that "encirclement and suppression are not advantageous for anyone". Likewise, Li underlined that the Chinese mainland and Taiwan are "one and the same family" and share an "unbreakable bond of blood and friendship".

But conforming to the Party's goals and timelines is one thing and delivering on them another. To realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation, therefore, the new leadership team members must hit the ground running, without waiting to familiarize with their new positions.

Given the grand goals and timelines for China's new leaders, it will be an uphill task for new leaders. [Abridged]

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UKRAINE: OBJECTS OF WAR BECOME NEW NORMAL IN KYIV SCENERY

THE BUZZ

There are sandbags around the statues and anti-tank obstacles by the side of the streets, trenches in the nearby forests and land mine warnings in the woods.

Signs painted on walls point to the nearest shelter, while air raid sirens occasionally wail across the city, which still sometimes comes under missile attack.

But against this backdrop of war, residents of the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, are living their lives as normally as they can while Russia's invasion of their country continues into its second year.

Although many fled in the opening stages of the war, residents have gradually returned to their homes as Russian forces were pushed back from north of the city last year, and the conflict became centered mainly in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine.

Shops, restaurants and bars are open — even if customers have to wrap up their evenings early and rush home in time for the 11 p.m. curfew. Nobody pays attention to the angular steel anti-tank hedgehogs by the side of the road, or the occasional pile of sandbags.

HOW THIS LITTLE SEE-THROUGH FISH GETS ITS RAINBOW SHIMMER

MADDIE BURAKOFF, NEW YORK

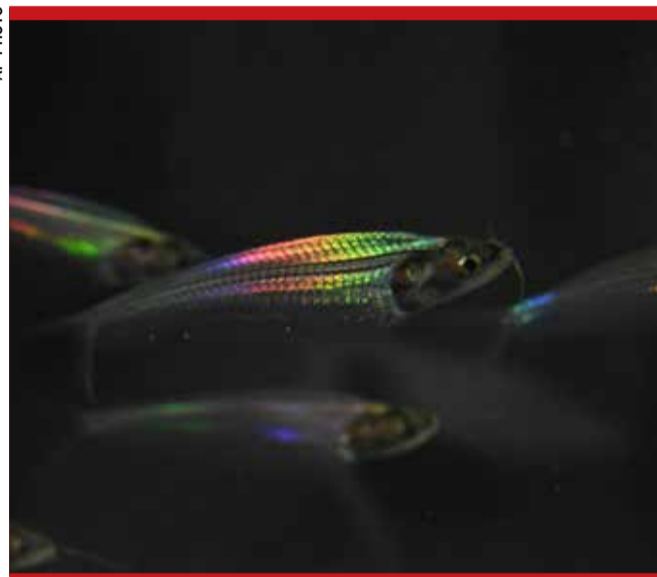
You can see right through this little aquarium fish from Thailand: Its skin is almost completely transparent. But when the light hits it just right, its body flickers with shimmering rainbow colors.

Now, scientists have figured out how this fish — called the ghost catfish — creates its iridescent glow.

That glow comes from within, according to a study published this week in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. As light passes through the fish's skin, it hits tiny structures in the muscle that turn the light into a colorful spectrum.

The ghost catfish — sometimes known as the glass catfish — is a small species native to rivers in Thailand, averaging just a few inches long. It's sold around the world as an aquarium fish.

Other creatures are also iridescent, creating the shimmering rainbow effect where colors shift as you move. Usually, they have shiny outer surfaces that reflect the light — like a



AP PHOTO

hummingbird's feathers or a butterfly's wings, explained Arizona State University biologist Ron Rutowski, who was not involved with the research.

But the ghost catfish has no scales, said senior author Qibin Zhao, a physicist at China's Shanghai Jiao Tong University, who became fascinated by the fish after seeing it in an aquarium store.

Instead, it has tightly packed structures in the muscles that can bend light into rainbow hues, which researchers found after shining different lights and

lasers onto its body in the lab. As the ghost catfish swims, those muscles relax and tighten, sending off a glinting range of colors.

And the very see-through skin, which lets in around 90% of outside light, is essential: "We wouldn't be able to see the colors if the skin of the fish is not so transparent," Zhao said in an email.

Some species use their iridescence to attract mates or give off warning signals, but it's not clear whether the ghost catfish's colors serve a purpose, Rutowski said. MDT/AP



USA Joe Biden is moving aggressively to assure the public that the banking crisis is contained, bank executives will be fired, deposits are safe and taxpayers aren't on the hook. As he contemplates an announcement for a second term, Biden's ability to avert a contagion among financial institutions will test his contention that his administration represents competence and stability in contrast to the chaos of the Donald Trump years.



USA The Biden administration is allowing thousands of Ukrainians who fled their homeland when Russia invaded a year ago to stay in the United States longer, the administration said. The decision provides relief to Ukrainians whose one-year authorization to remain in the U.S. was set to expire soon. The Homeland Security Department said the extension is for certain Ukrainian nationals and their immediate family members.

Russia has been invited to participate in the inaugural Central Asian Football Association Championships in June along with seven other national teams. Russian teams have been barred from European and FIFA competitions since the invasion of Ukraine. But the Tajikistan Football Association announced yesterday that a Russian team could join the new regional tournament along with former Soviet republics Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Malawi An unrelenting Cyclone Freddy that is currently battering southern Africa has killed at least 56 people in Malawi and Mozambique since it struck the continent for a second time this week. 51 people in Malawi, including 36 in Chilobwe in the financial hub of Blantyre in the center of the country have died, with several others missing or injured. Authorities in Mozambique reported that five people were killed in the country since Saturday.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Vincent Thian



Little princess. Janet Yeoh, mother of Michelle Yeoh, celebrates after her "little princess" won in the best actress category during the 95th Oscars in Los Angeles, as seen in a live view event at a cinema in Kuala Lumpur.