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A LOCAL ASSOCIATION IS CALLING FOR SUPPORT FOR TEENAGERS AS THE NUMBER OF YOUNGSTERS SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES REMAINS STEADY P6



Japan and the United States have reached an agreement on trade in critical minerals for electric vehicle batteries, part of an effort to ensure secure supplies of strategically important resources. The deal to be signed in Washington by U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai (pictured) and Japan's ambassador to the U.S., Koji Tomita, will grant Japan the same treatment as an FTA partner regarding such minerals, Japanese officials said.



Afghanistan A rights activist who has campaigned for girls' education has been arrested in Kabul, the United Nations said yesterday. The U.N. mission in Afghanistan said Matiullah Wesa, founder and president of Pen Path — a local NGO that travels across Afghanistan with a mobile school and library — was arrested in Kabul Monday. Local reports said Taliban security forces detained Wesa after his return from a trip to Europe.

United Nations The U.N. Security Council declined a Russian request to investigate the blasts on the pipelines that move natural gas from Russia to Europe under the Baltic Sea. Russia, China and Brazil voted in favor of the Russian request, but other Security Council members abstained or said another investigation was unnecessary.

Belgium Police officers have arrested eight people during counterterrorism raids across the country as part of operations aimed at thwarting possible attacks, the federal prosecutor's office said yesterday. Antwerp federal police carried out five searches in Merksem, Borgerhout, Deurne, Sint-Jans-Molenbeek and Eupen at the request of an investigating judge.

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WAY FORWARD

As Forum Macau celebrates 20 years, officials seek for 'new leaps'; local gov't pledges to bolster cooperation P3



RENATO MARQUES

EDUCATION
USJ OPENS NEW CENTER FOR TEACHERS



MDT ARCHIVE

HANY FARID

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT BERKELEY

SHORTLY after rumors leaked of former President Donald Trump's impending indictment, images purporting to show his arrest appeared online. These images looked like news photos, but they were fake. They were created by a generative artificial intelligence system.

Generative AI, in the form of image generators like DALL-E, Midjourney and Stable Diffusion, and text generators like Bard, ChatGPT, Chinchilla and LLaMA, has exploded in the public sphere. By combining clever machine-learning algorithms with billions of pieces of human-generated content, these systems can do anything from create an eerily realistic image from a caption, synthesize a speech in President Joe Biden's voice, replace one person's likeness with another in a video, or write a coherent 800-word op-ed from a title prompt.

Even in these early days, generative AI is capable of creating highly realistic content. My colleague Sophie Nightingale and I found that the average person is unable to reliably distinguish an image of a real person from an AI-generated person. Although audio and video have not yet fully passed through the uncanny valley – images or models of people that are unsettling because they are close to but not quite realistic – they are likely to soon. When this happens, and it is all but guaranteed to, it will become increasingly easier to distort reality.

In this new world, it will be a snap to generate a video of a CEO saying her company's profits are down 20%, which could lead to billions in market-share loss, or to generate a video of a world leader threatening military action, which could trigger a geopolitical crisis, or to insert the likeness of anyone into a sexually explicit video.

Advances in generative AI will soon mean that fake but visually convincing content will proliferate online, leading to an even messier information ecosystem. A secondary consequence is that detractors will be able to easily dismiss as fake actual video evidence of everything from police violence and human rights violations to a world leader burning top-secret documents.

As society stares down the barrel of what is almost certainly

WATERMARKING CHATGPT, DALL-E...

GENERATIVE AIs COULD HELP PROTECT AGAINST FRAUD AND MISINFORMATION



just the beginning of these advances in generative AI, there are reasonable and technologically feasible interventions that can be used to help mitigate these abuses. As a computer scientist who specializes in image forensics, I believe that a key method is watermarking.

WATERMARKS

There is a long history of marking documents and other items to prove their authenticity, indicate ownership and counter counterfeiting. Today, Getty Images, a massive image archive, adds a visible watermark to all digital images in their catalog. This allows customers to freely browse images while protecting Getty's assets.

Imperceptible digital watermarks are also used for digital rights management. A watermark can be added to a digital image by, for example, tweaking every 10th image pixel so that its color (typically a number in the range 0 to 255) is even-valued. Because this pixel tweaking is so minor, the watermark is imperceptible. And, because this periodic pattern is unlikely to occur naturally, and can easily be verified, it can be used to verify an image's provenance.

Even medium-resolution images contain millions of pixels, which means that additional information can be embedded

into the watermark, including a unique identifier that encodes the generating software and a unique user ID. This same type of imperceptible watermark can be applied to audio and video.

The ideal watermark is one that is imperceptible and also resilient to simple manipulations like cropping, resizing, color adjustment and converting digital formats. Although the pixel color watermark example is not resilient because the color values can be changed, many watermarking strategies have been proposed that are robust – though not impervious – to attempts to remove them.

WATERMARKING AND AI

These watermarks can be baked into the generative AI systems by watermarking all the training data, after which the generated content will contain the same watermark. This baked-in watermark is attractive because it means that generative AI tools can be open-sourced – as the image generator Stable Diffusion is – without concerns that a watermarking process could be removed from the image generator's software. Stable Diffusion has a watermarking function, but because it's open source, anyone can simply remove that part of the code.

OpenAI is experimenting with a system to watermark Chat-

GPT's creations. Characters in a paragraph cannot, of course, be tweaked like a pixel value, so text watermarking takes on a different form.

Text-based generative AI is based on producing the next most-reasonable word in a sentence. For example, starting with the sentence fragment "an AI system can...", ChatGPT will predict that the next word should be "learn," "predict" or "understand." Associated with each of these words is a probability corresponding to the likelihood of each word appearing next in the sentence. ChatGPT learned these probabilities from the large body of text it was trained on.

Generated text can be watermarked by secretly tagging a subset of words and then biasing the selection of a word to be a synonymous tagged word. For example, the tagged word "comprehend" can be used instead of "understand." By periodically biasing word selection in this way, a body of text is watermarked based on a particular distribution of tagged words. This approach won't work for short tweets but is generally effective with text of 800 or more words depending on the specific watermark details.

Generative AI systems can, and I believe should, watermark all their content, allowing for easier downstream identification

and, if necessary, intervention. If the industry won't do this voluntarily, lawmakers could pass regulation to enforce this rule. Unscrupulous people will, of course, not comply with these standards. But, if the major online gatekeepers – Apple and Google app stores, Amazon, Google, Microsoft cloud services and GitHub – enforce these rules by banning noncompliant software, the harm will be significantly reduced.

SIGNING AUTHENTIC CONTENT

Tackling the problem from the other end, a similar approach could be adopted to authenticate original audiovisual recordings at the point of capture. A specialized camera app could cryptographically sign the recorded content as it's recorded. There is no way to tamper with this signature without leaving evidence of the attempt. The signature is then stored on a centralized list of trusted signatures.

Although not applicable to text, audiovisual content can then be verified as human-generated. The Coalition for Content Provenance and Authentication (C2PA), a collaborative effort to create a standard for authenticating media, recently released an open specification to support this approach. With major institutions including Adobe, Microsoft, Intel, BBC and many others joining this effort, the C2PA is well positioned to produce effective and widely deployed authentication technology.

The combined signing and watermarking of human-generated and AI-generated content will not prevent all forms of abuse, but it will provide some measure of protection. Any safeguards will have to be continually adapted and refined as adversaries find novel ways to weaponize the latest technologies.

In the same way that society has been fighting a decades-long battle against other cyber threats like spam, malware and phishing, we should prepare ourselves for an equally protracted battle to defend against various forms of abuse perpetrated using generative AI. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

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Forum Macau celebrates 20 years, acknowledging that there is a lot to do

RENATO MARQUES

THE Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries – Macau (Forum Macau) recently turned 20. The date was commemorated with a ceremony held at the Complex of Commerce and Trade Cooperation Platform for China and Portuguese-speaking Countries – Macau yesterday evening, after a day dedicated to a general meeting with the representatives of all parties involved.

In the ceremony, the Dean of the Ambassadors of the Portuguese-speaking Countries (PLP) accredited in China and Ambassador of Mozambique in China, Maria Gustava, noted the achievements and improvements in relations between the Portuguese-speaking countries and China. She also alluded to the way forward, noting that there is still a lot to be done with the help of Forum Macau.

“The 20 years of the Forum [Macau] reminds us of the search for new leaps in the approach of our cooperation to respond to the new global dynamics that are more complex and difficult, demanding from all consideration, wisdom and solidarity to face the global challenges together,” said Gustava.

“The Forum Macau has the task of knowing how to provide answers within the framework of cooperation and act, as far as possible, within its attributions to create positive dynamics that aim to raise the levels of our cooperation,” she added, pointing to specific topics to be addressed.

“It is imperative for all PLP to create a capacity to produce with the required quality so that we can export to the Chinese market, which requires support in training for the application of the Sanitary Standards and Measures required by the Chinese market.”

“We have to boost demand and supply and take advantage of the

opportunities provided in this model of multilateral cooperation; namely free access to the Chinese market for 98% of products originating in Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa and Asia,” she added.

Regarding commentary presented during the report of the 15th anniversary of the Forum Macau, the PLP representative said that the suggestions for improvement were “still valid and will continue to contribute to establishing the guidelines for the betterment and creation of more dynamic activity from the Forum Macau,” she concluded.

In his speech, the Secretary-General of the Permanent Secretariat of Forum Macau, Ji Xianzheng, noted the work and advancements over the last 20 years, stating that the existing cooperation between the PLP and China would not be the same if the Forum Macau did not exist.

Questioned on the sidelines of the meeting that preceded the ce-

remony, Ji said that there is not yet a date for the 6th Ministerial Conference of Forum Macau, noting that more negotiation is needed between the represented countries to find a suitable date.

Although not much has surfaced from the topics addressed in the meeting, the development and advantages of the Cooperation Zone in Hengqin and other opportunities within the Greater Bay Area were also on the agenda.

Also speaking at the ceremony yesterday evening, the Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, said that cooperation between China and the PLP has achieved “some very encouraging results,” adding that Macau will continue to take advantage of the Forum Macau cooperation mechanism to enforce “new dynamics” and implement its duties in linking the PLP to the national policies and developments of China and Macau.

The deputy director-general for Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong of the Ministry of Commerce of China, Li Xiaohui, spoke at the event and noted the role of Macau as an “invisible bridge” that provides a service platform for commerce and trade cooperation between China and the PLP.

The same official also noted the additions over the past years of the participation in the Forum Macau by São Tomé and Príncipe (2017) and Equatorial Guinea (2022), stating that the roles played by the Forum are having noticeable effects.

INFLUENZA CASES INCREASING

The Health Bureau (SSM) has reminded that the peak winter influenza season in Macau is generally from January to March. However, as it started later this year, the peak period may end in April. As cited in a TDM report, according to authorities, there were about five cases of influenza-like per 100 adults and 24 cases per 100 children in the emergency departments of Hospital Conde S. Januário and Kiang Wu Hospital last week, an increase of around 60% and 40% respectively from the beginning of March.

AIR MACAU LAUNCHES FLIGHT TO DON MUEANG

Air Macau yesterday inaugurated the new route between Macau and Don Mueang Airport, Bangkok, Thailand, as the region is a tourist hotspot for local residents. Air Macau will maintain one flight every Tuesday and Thursday, with plans to increase flights to one per day in mid-May. Air Macau has pointed out that the opening of the route is an important move for the local carrier in the international market. It is also a specific measure facilitated by the airline to boost economy, trade, tourism and culture between the two destinations.

200 CREATIVE BRANDS FEATURED IN ‘MACAO-HENGQIN CRAFT MARKET’

The ‘Macao-Hengqin Craft Market’ was held over the weekend in Chimelong Hengqin, featuring 200 cultural and creative brands and products from Macau, Zhuhai, Hengqin and other cities of the Greater Bay Area, as well as several music performances. The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) invited nearly 40 cultural and creative brands from Macau via an open call to participate in the event. Participants engaged in the event by displaying and selling a range of cultural and creative products including clothing and accessories, knitted fabric, handmade pottery and original illustrations. In addition, a Macau fashion pop-up store was set up at the same venue to display 16 original fashion brands from Macau.

FINANCE

First listing of REIT free trade zone bond listed on MOX

STAFF REPORTER

HONG Kong-listed Yuexiu Real Estate Investment Trust’s RMB 1.5 billion unsecured bond was listed on the China (Macau) Financial Assets Exchange Co., Ltd. (MOX), being the first listing of a REIT free trade zone bond in the city’s bond marketplace.

The bond is issued with a term of three years and a

coupon rate of 4.15%.

Since the fourth quarter of last year, China’s free trade zone bond market has continued to rise.

Since January this year, the scale of bond issuance in the free trade zone has approached the total amount of last year, which shows that investors’ interest and confidence in the market are gradually increasing, as cited in a report issued by Macao Daily News.

According to MOX’s business statistics, as of February this year, the total size of free trade zone bonds listed in Macau has exceeded 50.8 billion patacas.

Yuexiu’s REIT was listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in December 2005. It is the world’s first listed real estate investment trust fund investing in properties in mainland China.

AP PHOTO



JUDICIAL CONFIRMATION ON STATUS OF CASINO WORKERS WILL NOT RESULT IN RETROSPECTIVE APPEALS

ANTHONY LAM

RECENT judicial confirmation that casino workers are not afforded the status of civil servants will not permit closed cases to be appealed, according to a lawyer cited by local media.

The courts were required to interpret a particular legal provision on crimes committed by casino workers. Two such workers were convicted of civil service embezzlement and abuse of trust respectively. Only civil servants can be convicted of civil service embezzlement.

In light of the situation, the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) then filed for an extraordinary appeal with the Court of Final Appeal.

The top court ruled that casino operations, despi-



te being a legal oligopoly, do not constitute exclusive dealings. The law sets a ceiling on the number of licenses that can be issued for casino operations, and this is currently set at six.

Therefore, casino workers were not deemed to

enjoy the status of civil servants.

Local Lawyer José Liu told local media Macao Daily News that the judgement does not allow those who have been previously convicted to appeal. It will only be binding over on-going

or future legal procedures. He cited "mainstream legal opinions and Portuguese judicial interpretations" to support his view.

Meanwhile, the lawyer added that the judgement would be beneficial to future prosecutions and legal procedures, as it clarifies the position of the law and the courts' interpretation thereof. For example, the police will have more certainty as to which charges to press against a suspect.

The lawyer also believes that the judgement will help clarify the legal position of bus companies and their employees. There have been debates on whether these companies should be considered to fall under these provisions because specific licenses are required.

ARCHITECT TO DISCUSS URBAN CONSTRUCTION AT SEMINAR

ARCHITECT Siza Cham will host a seminar at the Albergue on Apr. 1 to discuss topics related to urban construction.

Apart from being a founder and director of TCDI Architects, Cham is also a consultant at the Asia-Pacific Academy of Economics and Management of the University of Macau.

At the seminar, he will focus on three areas related to urban construction, namely architectural design of large-scale urban public buildings, from plot analysis to project implementation; project design sharing of real estate residences, apartment complexes, and corporate headquarters buildings; as well as urban architectural planning, urban upgrading planning, urban

renovation, characteristic town industrial park/creative park projects, project case analysis and sharing.

Discussions will be carried out on three types of building renovation, activation, authentic restoration of aged buildings and innovative renovations of old building.

Interested participants are required to register online first, and pay the registration fee at the Office of the Albergue. The registration fee is MOP500. For members of the Architects Association of Macau or the Macau Institute of Engineers, the registration fee is MOP300. Registration is open from now until Mar. 31.

The seminar will be conducted in Cantonese. **MDT**

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Fai Chi Kei North pump station construction to start Q2

CONSTRUCTION of the pump station and culvert network at the Northern Bay of Fai Chi Kei is expected to start during the second quarter of this year, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) disclosed.

The President of the executive council of the IAM, José Tavares, revealed the news in response to lawmaker Lam Lon Wai's recent inquiry on the improvement works preventing floods at Fai Chi Kei, further adding that the construction will be implemented in three phases.

Despite the possible rollout date, the bidding process is still in progress, Tavares disclosed.

Citing the Transport Bureau (DSAT), Tavares revealed that a footbridge will be built on Rua Norte do Patane, the road between the



government yard and The Praia residential estate. The construction is expected to commence this year.

When the footbridge is built, the ground level pedestrian crossing facilities will be removed to avoid doubling up of facilities.

For the first public construction project, the municipal affairs official em-

phasized that the IAM will communicate and coordinate with the DSAT, as the works will inevitably affect nearby traffic. The IAM will implement construction plans to minimize digging as much as possible.

As for the footbridge, road network and traffic nearby will be adjusted to accommodate construc-

tion work. Prior announcements will be made via mass media to allow commuters to prepare for the disruption, Tavares cited his DSAT counterparts as saying.

He added that the IAM will follow the Master Urban Plan regarding the establishment of additional coastal leisure areas. **AL**

GOV'T CONSIDERING SUBSIDY FOR INFERTILE COUPLES SEEKING ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

THE government is considering a trial program to subsidize couples who require access to medically assisted reproductive services, the chairman of the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly, Chan Chak Mo, said yesterday in a media briefing.

Chan was speaking after a committee meeting on the bill. The bill aims to establish a regime to subsidize medically assisted reproduction in Macau.

According to Chan, the need for government support for such services has been raised on several occasions. In light of this, the government affirmed it is considering a

trial program, although limited details on the eligibility criteria for couples seeking to access the program were revealed.

Chan noted that the government had historically referred some local couples to receive assisted reproduction services, free of charge, in the neighboring region of Hong Kong. Between 2013 and 2016, the Health Bureau spent over 10 million patacas with this service.

The committee chairman also said that the lawmakers will continue to liaise with the government to agree on program eligibility and how the subsidy plan will work in practical terms. **RM**

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GBA

HONG KONG FINANCE SECRETARY WELCOMES MALAYSIAN ENTERPRISES TO EXPLORE MARKET

STAFF REPORTER

HONG Kong's Financial Secretary, Paul Chan, began his visit to Malaysia Monday, where he welcomed the fintech industry to consider business development in Hong Kong and explore opportunities in Hong Kong with those who have already set foot there.

During the visit and throughout meetings with sector representatives, Chan said that Malaysian enterprises are welcome to make use of Hong Kong as a platform to explore business opportunities connected with the huge mainland market, particularly those of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Chan met with representatives of the Fintech Association of Malaysia (FAOM) and was briefed on the latest industry developments in Malaysia. Chan explained Hong



Kong's vibrant fintech development to FAOM, and outlined measures announced in the budget to speed up the growth and development of the digital economy and Web3.

The official then attended a luncheon co-organized by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Jakarta (HKETO Jakarta) and the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia, where he gave a keynote address.

He pointed out that since Hong Kong has fully resumed connection with the mainland

and the international community, speedy recovery is on the road. Consequently, it is now the best time to invest in Hong Kong and grasp the opportunity presented by the recovery of momentum since resuming connection with the mainland. Under "One country, two systems," Hong Kong possesses unique advantages and is the best gateway for entering the mainland market.

Chan continued his visit in Kuala Lumpur yesterday and proceeded to Singapore last night.

ASSOCIATION EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER PORTUGAL CONSULATE STAFF SALARIES

The Portuguese Overseas Chinese Committee in Asia and Oceania has expressed concerns about the salary of Portuguese Consulate staff. At present, the salary of personnel under the Portuguese establishment is only around MOP7,000, which is not even comparable to the salary of cleaning workers of large hotels. In its first annual face-to-face meeting, committee member Rita Santos noted affected staff members' plans to participate a 12-day strike in April. The intention of the strike is to fight for the rights and interests of affected staff, who hope to improve their working environment.

GOV'T CRACKS DOWN SEVEN ILLEGAL ACCOMMODATIONS

From January 1 to March 26 this year, the Macao Government Tourism Office has cracked down seven units suspected of providing illegal accommodation. The inspection comes as the city has started to accept international visitors since early this year. Also, a total of 354 inspections were carried out, where four cases of suspected unlicensed tour guides were seen at the Border Gate. Last week, the government has pledged that the police departments will safeguard public security amid the tourism revival.

IMPROVEMENTS TO NATIONAL EDUCATION ON THE WAY

The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEDJ) has announced it will introduce more content and an improved national education system for local students. The meeting included a report on the development of the talent training system for youth associations, with DSEDJ noting the system will be developed in three phases. The first phase will create standardized training course content and improve the pertinence and effectiveness of training courses. The second stage will deliver training for all members of the public to strengthen national education and the values taught to young people as well as deepen the understanding of the national system, policies, and development strategies. In the third and last stage, the system will provide opportunities for study exchanges beyond Macau.



EDUCATION

USJ OPENS NEW CENTER FOR TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ANTHONY LAM

PROFESSOR Stephen Morgan, rector of the University of Saint Joseph (USJ), reiterated his confidence in the necessity of the institution's new education center.

Speaking on the sidelines of the opening ceremony for the new center yesterday, Morgan emphasized that the Teachers' Professional Development Centre is the first of its kind in Macau

and offers on-the-job training opportunities for teaching staff.

He recalled that in the past, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) had to rely on experts from Hong Kong to provide such training for the local teaching staff.

After years, he said, both the DSEDJ and the USJ realized that there are sufficient professionals in Macau to merit the establishment of the new facility.

The rector highlighted that

teaching staff outside the university will benefit from the new center as well as the USJ's internal staff.

On the availability of academics for the new center, Morgan highlighted that the university has a large pool of teaching professionals, in addition to an enormous group of adjunct teaching staff. All staff have had a long period of cooperation with the institution, the rector stressed, and will support the deve-

lopment of the center.

At the opening ceremony, DSEDJ director Kong Chi Meng said that the bureau promotes continuous improvement across all aspects of teaching quality and will expand and support the provision of diversified training opportunities for teaching staff.

He believes that the center's establishment will provide high-quality professional training for schools and organizations, which will further promote the development of education in Macau and the Greater Bay Area (GBA). In doing so, it will strengthen the relationship between higher education and non-tertiary education sectors.

Meanwhile, professor Isabel Tchiang, director of the new center, disclosed that the university had seen over 1,200 graduates in the past 10 years after opening its post-graduate diploma in education.

The academic said that the goal of the center is to support the professional development of teaching staff through specific courses, activities, seminars and shared resources, while echoing the rector's comment on promoting on-the-job training for teachers across the GBA.

The opening ceremony also saw the signing of memoranda of understanding with eight local schools and a GBA research center.

The university said that the center will offer professional training for inclusive and special education in Macau, training for new teachers and instructors, management-level training for educational leaders, on-demand school-based training programs, and training for early literacy development and support in early childhood education.

Association says support required for teenagers' mental health

STAFF REPORTER

THE number of teenagers seeking mental health services remains steady this year, said Vincent Yp, executive director of Bosco Youth Service Network. He said that even one case is "too many".

According to Yp, teenagers sometimes hide their negative emotions from their school and student counselors. He advises parents to keep an eye on their kids' moods, confront their difficulties, and seek professional help as soon as possible.

According to a report from the Sheng Kung Hui

Macau social services coordination office, the mental health of middle school students has improved in 2022 as compared to 2021. However, 35% of middle school students are still suffering from "severe" anxiety.

The Bosco Youth Service Network will hold a charity bazaar on April 16. It expects to gather MOP200,000 in activity funds to support teenagers' mental and physical well-being and assist in developing skills that are useful in facing obstacles.

Last year, a survey from the General Union of Neighborhood Associations

(UGAMM) shows that nearly 50% of the local population experience anxiety and stress at moderate or higher intensity.

However, the average intensity level rated by local students was higher than that reported by non-students, both employed and unemployed. The association believes that several factors contributed to the higher levels, including concerns regarding educational prospects, pressure from extra-curricular activities, the desire to improve competitiveness and irregular school suspensions amid the pandemic.





SIBI ARASU, BENGALURU

ENERGY

WHEN the bidders for India's multibillion-dollar incentive to make solar components were announced in early March, the absence of corporate behemoth Adani Group was conspicuous.

The group — which set up a gigantic factory to make solar equipment in 2016, more than tripled its capacity to make solar panels since 2017 and have begun making silicon materials needed to convert the sun rays to electricity — was expected to “bid in a large way,” said Chiranjeev Saluja, the managing director of Premier Energies, an Indian solar components manufacturer.

The absence is another indication of the holding pattern the group has been in since U.S. short-selling firm Hindenburg Research alleged in late January that the businesses had engaged in fraud and stock price manipulation. Spooked investors dumped tens of billions of dollars in shares, while the company's purported proximity to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dominated politics in past weeks.

The group has a considera-

Do Adani's woes matter for India's clean transition?

ble stake in India's clean energy future: Adani's renewable energy ambitions account for 10% of the country's clean energy goals. But some analysts say the group's woes won't hurt India's energy transition, especially in the medium and long term. And with a big government-favored player like Adani forced to scale down, companies that were reluctant to bid for clean energy projects in India are likely to step up now, leading to a more competitive market and bigger investments in green energy in India, market watchers say.

The Adani Group, led by founder Gautam Adani, influences the lives of millions in India. It builds roads and runs airports, operates some of its biggest ports, makes defense equipment, and sells cooking oil.

More recently, the tycoon who made his fortune betting on coal

in an energy-starved nation in the 1990s and remains the largest private developer of new fossil fuel projects in India, had set his eyes on becoming its biggest renewable energy player by 2030.

The group has a clean energy portfolio of over 20 gigawatts of renewable energy, including 10 gigawatts of solar power, accounting for about 5% of clean energy nationwide. Its renewable energy portfolio is spread across 12 Indian states and includes one of the world's largest solar power plants in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Last September, Gautam Adani said the group would invest \$70 billion in clean energy projects by 2032.

What appears to have changed, at least in the short term, is the group's ability to raise funds for its ambitious expansion plans.

Adani is still working on existing renewables projects but not

those in the pipeline. France's TotalEnergies paused a \$4 billion investment plan to develop green hydrogen with the Adani Group. It's also not bid for any new projects since the Hindenburg report.

But India's power minister R. K. Singh dismissed concerns in February that the stock for Adani's green companies along with the rest of his portfolio plummeting could affect the country's green ambitions in any way.

Vinay Rustagi, managing director at the renewable energy consultancy Bridge to India, agrees that long-term effects will be minimal, but said there may be short-term hits. And there may be benefits to opening space for other companies, said Tim Buckley, director of Australia-based Climate Energy Finance who has been tracking the Adani Group's growth for decades.

Buckley said there are other In-

dian companies interested in investing in renewable energy and now there could be an acceleration of India's transition to cleaner energy. India is the largest emitter of planet-warming gases behind China, the U.S. and the EU, and aims to produce 450 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030. That would require that a little more than half of India's total installed capacity be clean by the end of the decade.

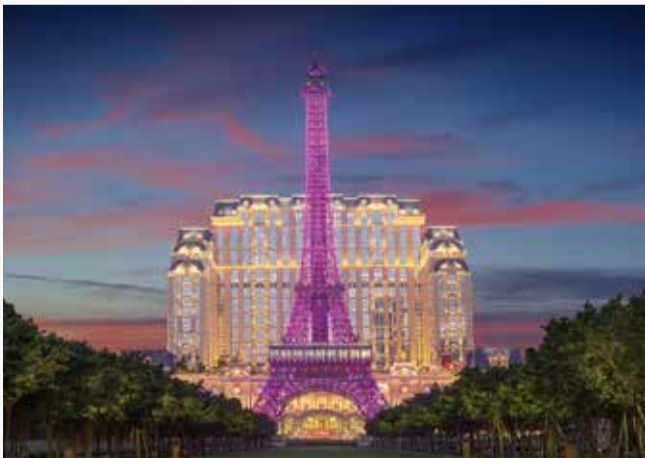
But Adani Group's continuing interest in new fossil fuel projects put the Indian government under pressure to deliver a fossil fuel agenda and “less pressure to deliver on renewables,” said Buckley.

“At the end of the day, it's about removing the biggest single private developer of new fossil fuel projects in India, reducing their impact on the political system and democracy in India,” he said.

The company has consistently aligned itself with India's national priorities and was an early mover into sectors like hydrogen or storing power that were important for the government. Since the report, India's opposition parties have demanded a probe into the company and questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proximity to Gautam Adani. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China sponsors classical music to enrich cultural education



To assist the city in cultural enrichment and the cultivation of multidisciplinary talents, Sands China Ltd. will be the title sponsor for

two of Macao Orchestra's major classical symphony concerts in April, namely Mozart's Requiem on April 1 and Warmth from the Far

East on April 11.

Sands China will also sponsor a vocal masterclass tomorrow, also held by Macao Orchestra. Four vocalists from South Korea — soprano Michelle JuYoung Hong, mezzo-soprano Jungmi Kim, tenor Konstantin Myunghyun Lee and bass singer Sejong Chang — will be instructors at the masterclass. Choirs from local secondary schools and universities will be invited to participate in the masterclass.

Students will have the opportunity to polish their singing skills and improve their capabilities to an international standard.

CTM 5G service now caters to certain iPhone users



Following the conclusion of tests with Apple Inc., CTM has recently announced that its 5G mobile telecommunications service is now available to users of iPhone 12 or later models. The telecommunications service

provider reminded users that to use the CTM 5G connection, users must update their software to migrate their iOS to the latest version.

In alignment with the roll-out, the telecom service

provider has released plans for local and tri-destination data services, with handsets bundled. Prices range from MOP288 for 30GB of local data, and from MOP369 for 30GB to MOP868 for 300GB of tri-destination data.

Customers can purchase an iPhone 14 on the new bundles for as little as MOP6,912 for a handset deposit, which will normally be reimbursed upon payment instalments.

The delay of 5G service for iPhone users, as previously explained by CTM executives, is because Apple's policy of only conducting tests on licensed services.



China Merchants-Yidun, a Chinese-flagged luxury cruise ship, is in a port in Shanghai on Sunday

TOURISM

DOMESTIC CRUISE INDUSTRY HEADS BACK OUT TO SEA AFTER PANDEMIC

WANG YING, CHINA DAILY, SHANGHAI

AFTER a break of 1,152 days, Shanghai's international cruise terminal resumed its regular operations on Sunday.

It's been more than three years since the last home port cruise voyage returned to Shanghai on Jan 29, 2020.

"Despite the huge impact of the pandemic, all parties in the cruise industry maintained confidence and never stopped their hard work. We are delighted to see passengers still hold strong enthusiasm for cruises," said Gu Jinshan, chairman of Shanghai International Port Group.

He made the remark during a ceremony relaunching cruises in the city at the international cruise

terminal in Shanghai's Hongkou district, which was the first home port for leisure cruises on the mainland.

"Lots of arrangements and upgrades have been made to support the safe operation of every single cruise trip and ensure the best experience for passengers," said Xu Juehui, managing director of Shanghai Port International Cruise Terminal Development.

Starting from Shanghai on Sunday, China Merchants-Yidun, the first Chinese-flagged luxury cruise ship, will take passengers on a five-day journey of sight-seeing and cultural experiences to Zhoushan, Zhejiang province, before returning to Shanghai, according to Zhang Shukai, deputy general manager of China Merchants Viking Cruises.

An eight-day cruise trip along China's coastline is being offered from May 7, visiting multiple ports and destinations including Zhoushan, Xiamen, Fujian province and Shenzhen, Zhang added.

"There are countless natural sceneries and cultural resources along the Chinese coastline, which can not only enrich the cruise traveling experience for Chinese travelers, but also offer an option for international tourists to explore," said Zheng Weihang, executive vice-president and secretary general of China Cruise and Yacht Industry Association.

In addition to domestic voyages, the relaunch of international cruise trips is being planned, Xu added.

"Although international crui-

se travel is yet to resume at Chinese ports including Shanghai, we believe related Chinese government divisions are actively making preparations for the reopening," said Liu Zinan, chairman of Royal Caribbean Cruises for Asia.

According to Liu, it may take between six months to a year for international cruise operators to fully recover their cruise business in the country after the implementation of related regulations and policies. And it may take at least another year for the market to return to the level of 2019.

"International cruise travel not only makes an important contribution to industrial and economic development, but also plays an active role in promoting international cultural exchanges

and communication. Royal Caribbean Cruises extremely looks forward to resuming business in the China market as soon as possible," Liu said.

The Chinese-flagged ship China Merchants-Yidun is a joint venture between China Merchants Shekou and Switzerland-based cruise line operator Viking Cruises. It is the first high-end cruise ship operated and managed independently by China Merchants Viking Cruises.

Before its maiden voyage in October 2021, the vessel had gone through 453 emergency drills, and another 972 emergency exercises since then. A virus prevention and control system was established on the ship to ensure the health and safety of guests and crew members on board, while ensuring the comfort of the cruise experience, according to Liu Fei, a staff captain of the China Merchants-Yidun.

From the sea to the air, direct flights to outbound destinations resumed at Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport on Sunday, the first day of the summer-autumn aviation season that lasts from March 26 to Oct 28.

"I am so happy that we can start our outbound trips from Hongqiao airport from today," Xiao Lijun, a passenger who was about to check in for her flight to Hong Kong on Sunday, was quoted as saying by media outlet ThePaper.cn.

A man surnamed Guo, who works in art collection, was also excited about his trip to Hong Kong. "I am going to meet some experts tomorrow. We have not met each other for more than three years because of the pandemic, and I am greatly anticipating the reunion," Guo said.

Hongqiao airport plans for 314 outbound flights a week during the new aviation season, 22 more than in the same period of 2019, said Tang Yichen, a vice-general manager with Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport. **CHINA DAILY**

GOVERNANCE

Key SOEs to get disciplinary inspections

YANG ZEKUN, CHINA DAILY

THIRTY centrally administered State-owned enterprises will be examined in the first round of routine disciplinary inspection of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

According to a list issued by the inspection leadership group of the CPC Central Committee on Monday,

this round of inspection will also reinspect the Party committees of five centrally administered financial enterprises: China Investment Corporation, China Development Bank, Agricultural Development Bank of China, China Everbright Group and People's Insurance Company (Group) of China Limited.

Li Xi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC

Central Committee and head of the inspection leadership group, addressed a meeting on the inspection work on Monday, saying that inspection is an important part of the Party and State supervision system and a strategic institutional arrangement for exercising full and rigorous governance of the Party.

The routine disciplinary inspection of centrally administered State-owned

enterprises should focus on issues including whether the Party organization adheres to the Party's overall leadership and fulfills the principal responsibility of exercising full and rigorous governance of the Party, in order to identify major contradictions and prominent problems that impede high-quality development, said Li, who is also secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline

Inspection.

He said the reinspection of financial enterprises should examine their actions and achievements in implementing the rectification measures required by the last round of inspection.

The inspection teams should also urge financial institutions to combine inspection and rectification with the study and implementation of the CPC Central Committee's requirements for financial reform, in order to help solve prominent problems in the financial sector, Li said.

The impromptu and fle-

xible inspection of the Leading Party Members Group of the General Administration of Sport will focus on the performance of the Party's leadership functions and responsibilities and the implementation of major decisions and plans for building China into a leading sporting nation, he said.

The inspection will also further identify and help tackle corruption and deep-seated institutional problems in sports, especially soccer, in order to provide a strong guarantee for building China into a leading sporting nation, he added.

CHINA DAILY



In this photo released by the Kuomintang, Ma Ying-jeou (center) stands at the Mausoleum of Sun Yat-sen in Nanjing, yesterday

ONE-CHINA

Kuomintang's Ma visits Sun Yat-sen tomb in China tour

GUAN NG, NANJING

FORMER Taiwan leader Ma Ying-jeou began a 12-day tour of China with a symbolism-laden visit to the mausoleum where the founding father of both China and Taiwan is entombed.

Ma visited the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum in Nanjing, the capital when Ma's Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) ruled China in the early part of the 20th century. The party claimed to be the legitimate ruler of China for decades and is seen as more sympathetic to integration or

unification with the mainland than the ruling Democratic People's Party.

There, he paid tribute to Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Republic of China and the Nationalist Party, giving a short speech and then bowing in front of the memorial.

"The people of both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to the Chinese nation, are children of Yandi and the Yellow Emperor," he told a group of Chinese and Taiwanese reporters who had been allowed to follow him on the trip, referring to mythical emperors revered as founders of China's dominant Han

ethnicity.

Ma's tour of China comes as tensions between Taiwan and China rise, aggravated by an antagonistic U.S.-China relationship. Taiwan, where the Kuomintang retreated after losing the civil war in China, is today a self-governed democracy and the U.S. is its largest unofficial ally.

Ma's tour comes a few days after Taiwan lost yet another diplomatic ally to China, which has spent the past seven years pressuring countries to switch diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China.

He has framed the trip as an

effort to lower tensions by promoting exchanges, bringing Taiwanese college students with him on the visit, and has said he hopes that his trip could help lower tensions. Observers expect the visit "to be more symbolic than substantive."

"Both sides must pursue peace, otherwise, neither will have a future," Ma said.

Ma praised Sun, who advocated for a modern Chinese nation and the overthrow of the Manchu Qing Dynasty. It was Sun who founded the Republic of China in 1912, and ruled over the mainland, very briefly. After the retreat to Taiwan, the Kuomintang continued to call their nation the Republic of China. Meanwhile, the Communist Party took over the mainland in 1949, and renamed the country the People's Republic of China.

Outside the mausoleum, a crowd of curious onlookers and tourists gathered in the morning to see if they could catch a glimpse of the former President.

Most of the regular tourists expecting to be able to see the mausoleum and the surrounding park found themselves blocked from entering, though a lucky few who had reserved in advance were allowed to enter the site.

"Even though there are some difficulties on the official front, as long as there are benefits to the public and you can build a good foundation, then this will be good for the unification of both sides," said Chen Shao'an, who had come to the mausoleum to see Ma.

Ma is also visiting the China Modern History Museum, which is the site of the old Presidential Palace in Nanjing.

MDT/AP

FDI

SAUDI ARAMCO TO INVEST BILLIONS IN CHINESE PETROCHEMICALS

SAUDI Arabia's state-owned oil giant Aramco will invest billions of dollars in China's downstream petrochemicals industry, including the construction of a new refinery, the company said in deals announced this week.

The announcements came as the company posted a record profit of more than \$160 billion in 2022 and as Saudi Arabia, a longtime U.S. ally, has developed closer ties with Beijing in recent years.

Aramco will acquire a 10% interest in China's Rongsheng Petrochemical Co. Ltd., a purchase valued at \$3.6 billion. Under a long-term sales agreement, Aramco will supply 480,000 barrels per day to Rongsheng affiliate Zhejiang Petroleum and Chemical Co. Ltd., which owns and operates China's largest refining and chemicals complex.

"This announcement demonstrates Aramco's long-term commitment to China and belief in the fundamentals of the Chinese petrochemicals sector," Aramco executive vice president Mohammed Al Qahtani said in a statement. "It also promises to secure a reliable supply of essential crude to one of China's most important refiners."

On Sunday, Aramco announced plans to construct a new refinery and petrochemical complex in northeastern China through a joint venture. Aramco, which holds a 30% stake in the Huajin Aramco Petrochemical Company, would supply 210,000 barrels per day of crude to the complex. MDT/AP

SPACE

New source of water found in moon samples from Chinese mission

MARCIA DUNN,
CAPE CANAVERAL

SCIENTISTS have discovered a new and renewable source of water on the moon for future explorers in lunar samples from a Chinese mission.

Water was embedded in tiny glass beads in the lunar dirt where meteorite impacts occur. These shiny, multicolored glass beads were in samples returned from the moon by China in 2020.

The beads range in size from the width of one hair to several hairs; the water

content was just a minuscule fraction of that, said Hejiu Hui of Nanjing University, who took part in the study.

Since there are billions if not trillions of these impact beads, that could amount to substantial amounts of water, but mining it would be tough, according to the team.

"Yes, it will require lots and lots of glass beads," Hui said in an email. "On the other hand, there are lots and lots of beads on the moon."

These beads could continually yield water thanks

to the constant bombardment by hydrogen in the solar wind. The findings, published Monday in the journal Nature Geoscience, are based on 32 glass beads randomly selected from lunar dirt returned from the Chang'e 5 moon mission.

More samples will be studied, Hui said.

These impact beads are everywhere, the result of the cooling of melted material ejected by incoming space rocks. Water could be extracted by heating the beads, possibly by future robotic missions. More studies are needed to determi-

ne whether this would be feasible and, if so, whether the water would be safe to drink.

This shows "water can be recharged on the moon's surface ... a new water reservoir on the moon," Hui said.

Previous studies found water in glass beads formed by lunar volcanic activity, based on samples returned by the Apollo moonwalkers more than a half-century ago. These, too, could provide water not only for use by future crews, but for rocket fuel.

NASA aims to put astronauts back on the lunar



In this Thursday, Dec. 17, 2020 photo, technicians prepare to weigh a container carrying moon samples retrieved by China's Chang'e 5 lunar lander in Beijing

surface by the end of 2025. They'll aim for the south pole where permanently shadowed craters are believed to be packed with frozen water. MDT/AP

NORTH KOREA

Kim wants to make more nuclear material for bombs

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un has called for his nuclear scientists to increase production of weapons-grade material to make bombs to put on his increasing range of weapons.

North Korean photos of the meeting also showed what appeared to be a small new tactical warhead that was possibly designed to fit on a variety of delivery systems developed in recent years to overwhelm South Korean defenses.

The report in state media yesterday followed a series of missile launches — seven launch events in this month alone — and rising threats to use the weapons against his enemies. North Korea's weapons tests and U.S.-South Korea military exercises have intensified in a tit-for-tat cycle, underscoring heightened tensions in the region.

Officials say North Korea could further up the ante in coming weeks or months with more provocative displays of its military nuclear program, possibly including its first test detonation of a nuclear device since September 2017.

The Korean Central News Agency said Kim, during a meeting on Monday with officials and scientists at a state nuclear weapons institute, stressed the need to ramp up bomb fuel production to meet his goals to expand his nuclear arsenal "exponentially," and issued unspecified "important tasks" for his nuclear industry.

Kim also examined the country's established plans for nuclear counterattacks as scientists briefed him on the North's latest nuclear-



-capable weapons systems and progress in technologies for mounting nuclear warheads on missiles, the agency said.

The agency's photos showed Kim talking with officials inside a hall that displayed what appeared to be various types of warheads, including around 10 khaki-green capsules with red tips. Other weapons included devices that looked like a black-and-white cone with fins or a large torpedo.

A wall poster near one of the green devices described a warhead called "Hwasan-31," based on the Korean word for volcano. The poster's graphics implied that the weapon could fit on some of North Korea's short-range ballistic systems, cruise missiles and a purported

nuclear-capable underwater drone the country first unveiled last week. State media didn't identify any of the devices in the photos.

The size and shape of the Hwasan-31, which some experts estimated was around 50 centimeters (19 inches) wide and 90 centimeters (35 inches) long, suggested progress in North Korean efforts to create a miniaturized warhead that could fit on its delivery systems, said Kim Dong-yub, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul.

Cheong Seong-Chang, an analyst at South Korea's Sejong Institute, said the reports suggest North Korea is moving closer to its next nuclear test.

Hours before North Korea's sixth

test in 2017, state media showed Kim Jong Un observing a silver, peanut-shaped device, which apparently was a purported thermonuclear weapon built for intercontinental ballistic missiles the North claimed to have detonated during that test.

Cheong said the North will likely use its next test to claim it acquired a miniaturized nuclear warhead to mount on a growing range of weapons it describes as "tactical." The North's use of the term communicates a threat to proactively use them during conflicts to blunt the stronger conventional forces of South Korea and the United States.

North Korea likely has dozens of nuclear warheads that can probably be fitted on some of its older systems, like Scuds or Rodong missiles.

Lee Sung-jun, spokesperson of Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the South's military was analyzing the warhead unveiled in the North Korean photos but didn't provide specific assessments.

Kim's calls for boosting bomb fuel production came days after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced plans to station tactical nuclear weapons in neighboring Belarus, in what was seen as a warning to the West as it increases military support for Ukraine.

While aligning with Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, North Korea has stressed three-way cooperation with Moscow and Beijing to confront a "new Cold War" waged by "U.S. imperialists," who it accuses of bringing the conflict to Asia by stepping up military activities with Seoul and Tokyo.

A biennial South Korean defense document released in February said North Korea is estimated to have 70 kilograms (154 pounds) of weapons-grade plutonium, which some observers say is enough for about nine to 18 bombs. The document estimated that North Korea has "a considerable amount of" highly enriched uranium as well.

North Korea's main nuclear complex in Yongbyon has facilities to produce both plutonium and highly enriched uranium, the two main bomb fuels used to build nuclear weapons. North Korea is believed to be operating at least one additional covert uranium enrichment facility, in addition to the one at Yongbyon.

In separate reports, KCNA said the North again detonated mock warheads during tests of nuclear-capable missiles and a purported underwater attack drone this week. The reports came a day after neighboring militaries detected the North firing two short-range ballistic missiles off its eastern coast.

Monday's launches came hours before a nuclear-powered U.S. aircraft carrier and its battle group engaged in joint training with South Korean warships in waters near Jeju island, in the allies' latest show of strength. The USS Nimitz and the other warships pulled into the South Korean mainland port of Busan yesterday.

The North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper yesterday published a commentary condemning the allies' exercises and the U.S. deployment of the Nimitz strike group in the Korean Peninsula, insisting that the move "amounts to an open declaration of war."

KCNA said the missiles tested Monday were tipped with mock nuclear warheads that detonated as intended 500 meters above their sea targets. A front-line unit fired the missiles as part of an exercise familiarizing the troops with executing nuclear attack orders, the agency said. **MDT/AP**

JAPAN-RUSSIA

Russia says it test-fired anti-ship missiles in Sea of Japan

MOSCOW test-fired anti-ship missiles in the Sea of Japan, Russia's Defense Ministry said yesterday, with two boats launching a simulated missile attack on a mock enemy warship about 100 kilometers away.

The ministry said the target was successfully hit by two Moskit cruise missiles.

The Moskit, whose NATO reporting name is the SS-N-22 Sunburn, is a supersonic anti-ship cruise missile that has conventional and nuclear warhead capacity. The Soviet-built cruise missile is capable of flying at a speed

three times the speed of sound and has a range of up to 250 kilometers.

The ministry said the exercise, which included other warships and naval aircraft, took place in the Peter the Great Gulf in the Sea of Japan but did not give more precise coordinates. The gulf borders the Russian Pacific Fleet headquarters at Fokino and is about 700 kilometers from Japan's northern Hokkaido island.

The Russian military has conducted regular drills across the country and

Russian warships have continued maneuvers as the fighting in Ukraine has entered a second year — exercises that were intended to train the troops and showcase the country's military capability.

The U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Japan reacted calmly to the missile exercise, which was conducted near Vladivostok, rather than directly into the waters between the two countries.

Japanese Deputy Chief

Cabinet Secretary Yoshihiko Isozaki told a news conference later yesterday that Tokyo will continue to monitor Russia's military operations, as it has been stepping up activity in the region.

Tokyo does not plan to lodge a protest to Russia over the missile exercise, said Tasuku Matsuki, Japanese Foreign Ministry official in charge of Russia, noting that its location — Peter the Great Bay — is considered Russian coast, though it is facing the water between the two countries. **MDT/AP**



In this photo made from video provided by the Russian Defense Ministry, a Russian navy boat launches an anti-ship missile test in the Peter the Great Gulf in the Sea of Japan

VATICAN

Shattered: Catholic community confronts its founder's lies

NICOLE WINFIELD,
ROCCA DI PAPA

THE findings of an initial expert report were astonishing: One of the 20th century's revered Catholic leaders, who built an international movement of community care for people with intellectual disabilities, perverted Catholic doctrine about Jesus and Mary to justify his own sexual compulsions and abuse women.

The findings of a second report were even worse: The movement he created had at its core a secret, mystical-sexual "sect," and was founded for the precise purpose of hiding the sect's deviant activities from church authorities.

The two rounds of revelations about Jean Vanier and the L'Arche federation he founded have rocked the group to its core, all the more because L'Arche itself commissioned independent scholars to investigate after receiving a first complaint from a victim a few years before Vanier died in 2019. It's the latest case of a Catholic giant, considered a living saint by his admirers and eulogized as a "great" Christian by Pope Francis, falling to revelations that he abused his power to sexually exploit women under his spiritual sway.

L'Arche's national and regional leaders have been meeting for the past week in the hills outside Rome for the first time since the latest revelations to chart a path forward, now that their official history has been shown to be a lie and their hero-founder Vanier a narcissistic and delusional abuser. Emotions were still raw, as L'Arche's most devoted staff processed the gravity of Vanier's deceptions and what it means for the organization's future, according to interviews at the retreat with The Associated Press.

"I believed in something, in a vision that then is revealed to you and you're told it's not like that," said Azucena Bustamante, who oversees five L'Arche communities in Honduras, Mexico and the Dominican Republic. "It does frustrate me — the damage it has caused to a lot of people who believed in this, and then found out everything we were made to believe, it's a lie."

LEAU VIVE

Vanier, a former Canadian and Royal Navy officer, founded L'Arche in 1964 in northern France. He initially invited two intellectually disabled men to live with him, then built the utopian-sty-

AP PHOTO



Edoardo Mira is caressed by a community assistant inside the Chicco community of L'Arche, an international charity that helps people with intellectual disabilities, in Ciampino, near Rome

le, Catholic-inspired community into an international movement bringing people with and without disabilities to live together in a spirit of mutual respect.

Born to socially prominent, religiously devout parents — his father was governor general of Canada — Vanier arrived at his calling after having joined a spiritual community, L'Eau Vive, in 1950 that was founded by a French Dominican priest, the Rev. Thomas Philippe.

According to the investigative reports, it was at L'Eau Vive that Vanier fell under Philippe's spell and was initiated into the priest's mystical-sexual practices.

Philippe developed his twisted theology after experiencing what he called a mystical "grace" one night in 1938 in Rome, while looking at a fresco of the Madonna in the church atop the Spanish Steps. Over time, the "graces" came to involve sexual gratification with women that both Philippe and Vanier justified by claiming that Jesus and Mary were involved in similarly incestuous sexual relationships.

The Vatican was informed of Philippe's deviant practices by two victims in 1952; four years later it sanctioned Philippe for "false mysticism." The Vatican forbade him from public or private ministry, ordered L'Eau Vive dissolved and its members forbidden from reconstituting the community.

But Philippe, Vanier and the women they had manipulated

disobeyed, and regularly met in secret, according to private correspondence and church archives only recently made available to the L'Arche-commissioned researchers.

Over time, Philippe resumed his priestly ministry as his Dominican superiors ignored the Vatican sanctions, at which point Vanier, a layman, founded L'Arche. The study commission concluded in its January report that Vanier did so as a "screen" to hide the reuniting of the original L'Eau Vive group, even though there was also a sincere commitment to help people who otherwise would have been institutionalized.

The study commission identified at least 25 women whom Vanier abused, none of them intellectually disabled. It determined that Vanier and Philippe's deviant practices didn't extend beyond the core "sect" at the original community in northern France. But it called for vigilance, especially in the way authority and power are exercised in L'Arche's more than 150 communities in 37 countries.

L'Arche's leaders have apologized to the victims, thanked them for their courage in coming forward, and assumed responsibility for not having spotted the abuses earlier. They say they questioned Vanier repeatedly as soon as the first victims came forward, as well as what he knew about Philippe's 1956 Holy Office condemnation, but that he lied to them.

The nearly 900-page forensic history of the scandal is remarkable, providing perhaps the best documented case of a phenomenon that has existed in the Catholic Church for centuries but is increasingly coming to the public fore: spiritual charlatans using false mysticism to manipulate their victims and abuse them sexually.

Significantly, L'Arche was able to obtain a summary report of Philippe's 1956 canonical trial, which shows the Vatican was well-versed in the dynamics of abuse of power over women, decades before the #MeToo movement put it in the spotlight.

But the researchers, who hailed from a variety of academic disciplines, blamed the Vatican's secrecy in handling the Philippe case for laying the groundwork for L'Arche's scandal. They found that no one except a few Vatican and Dominican superiors knew of Philippe's deviance or his sanctions, "precisely what allowed him to maintain his reputation for holiness and to rewrite history as he pleased."

One of the Vatican's top experts in abuse prevention, the Rev. Hans Zollner, praised L'Arche for its "fearless" courage in exposing the painful truth about its past and said the phenomenon of spiritual gurus misusing their authority can't be ignored any longer by the church.

"Some time back we did not speak about the abuse of power as the root cause of basically every

type of abuse, be it sexual, be psychological, be it spiritual," he said. "But it has become clear that this is something that we need to engage further," said Zollner, who runs an institute at the Pontifical Gregorian University that trains church personnel on preventing abuse.

L'ARCHE

The L'Arche community on Rome's outskirts was buzzing with activity on a recent weekday: After nearly three years of pandemic lockdown, the ceramics studio had recently reopened, volunteers were helping some of the 19 live-in residents decorate Easter baskets and the gardening team was busy recycling wood chips.

Here, where Pope Francis visited in 2016, the revelations of Vanier and L'Arche's origins have hit longtime staffers hard, though there is no questioning of the fundamentals of the mission, said Loredana Moretti, a 35-year veteran of L'Arche's Il Chicco community and now on its leadership team.

"For sure the investigation shocked all of us at the start," said Moretti, adding that she now realizes Vanier epitomized a type of charismatic leader: "extreme in the good and in the bad."

"What's important is to not make a myth or idealize anyone, including our founder. If we made a myth out of him, we were wrong," she said.

Such soul-searching was the order of business at the L'Arche leadership retreat a short distance away. It was held in a converted monastery in the hills overlooking Lake Albano, within view of the papal summer residence at Castel Gandolfo across the lake.

L'Arche leaders were tackling big issues. How to tell its foundational story, now that it wasn't just about helping disabled people as Vanier claimed. How are power and authority exercised, given the risk that Vanier's methods trickled down to the next generation. How does L'Arche move forward with its unique spirituality, given Vanier's writings were found to be problematic once details of his secret life were uncovered.

"As a whole body, the question we have is: Do we tell our story now? What does it look like? It's a broken story," said Stacy Cates-Carney, L'Arche's vice international leader. She said the revelations had "shattered" L'Arche's understanding of its origins.

Regular audits are now planned to ensure L'Arche's safeguarding practices are being implemented. Reviews are under way to ensure staffers' professional, personal and spiritual needs are being met appropriately. And for now, L'Arche staff are being given time to talk and process the revelations.

"We're in a stage of grief," Cates-Carney said. "And in grief, people move through that really differently." MDT/AP

USA

NASHVILLE SHOOTER WHO KILLED 6 DREW MAPS, SURVEILLED SCHOOL

JONATHAN MATTISE,
NASHVILLE (TENN.)

A former student shot through the doors of a Christian elementary school yesterday [Macau time] and killed three children and three adults after elaborately planning the massacre by drawing out a detailed map and conducting surveillance of the building, police said.

The massacre at The Covenant School in Nashville was the latest in a series of mass shootings in a country that has grown increasingly unnerved by bloodshed in schools.

The victims included three 9-year-old children, the school's top administrator, a substitute teacher and a custodian. Amid the chaos a familiar ritual played out: Panicked parents rushed to the school to see if their children were safe and tearfully hugged their kids, and a stunned community planned vigils for the victims.

"I was literally moved to tears to see this and the kids as they were being ushered out of the building," Metropolitan Nashville Police Chief John Drake said during one of several news conferences.

Police gave unclear information on the gender of the shooter, who police say was fatally shot by two responding officers at the school. For hours, police identified the shooter as a 28-year-old woman and eventually identified the person as Audrey Hale. Then at a late afternoon press conference, the police chief said that Hale was transgender. After the news conference, police spokesperson Don Aaron declined to elaborate on how Hale currently identified.

Drake did not give a specific motive when asked by reporters but gave chilling examples of the shooter's prior planning for the targeted attack.

"We have a manifesto, we have some writings that we're going over that pertain to this date, the actual incident," he said. "We have a map drawn out of how this was all going to take place."



AP PHOTO

He said in an interview with NBC News that investigators believe Hale had "some resentment for having to go to that school."

The shooter gained entry by firing into glass doors on the building, shattering them, police later said in a tweet.

The shooter was armed with two "assault-style" weapons as well as a handgun, authorities said. At least two of them were believed to have been obtained legally in the Nashville area, according to the chief.

Police said a search of the shooter's home turned up a sawed-off shotgun, a second shotgun and other unspecified evidence.

The victims were identified as Evelyn Dieckhaus, Hallie Scruggs, and William Kinney, all 9 years old, and adults Cynthia Peak, 61; Katherine Koonce, 60; and Mike Hill, 61.

The website of The Covenant School, a Presbyterian school founded in 2001, lists a Katherine Koonce as the head of the school. Her LinkedIn profile says she has led the school since July 2016. Peak was a substitute teacher and Hill was a custodian, according to investi-

gators.

Students held hands as they walked to school buses, which drove them to a nearby church to be reunited with their parents.

Rachel Dibble, who was at the church as families found their children, described the scene as everyone being in "complete shock."

"People were involuntarily trembling," said Dibble, whose children attend a different private school in Nashville. "The children ... started their morning in their cute little uniforms, they probably had some Froot Loops and now their whole lives changed today."

Communities around the U.S. has suffered through one mass killing after another in recent years, with school shootings taking an especially painful toll.

Recent tragedies nationwide include the massacre at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, last year; a first grader who shot his teacher in Virginia; and a shooting last week in Denver that wounded two administrators.

President Joe Biden, speaking at the White House, called the shooting

a "family's worst nightmare" and implored Congress again to pass a ban on certain semi-automatic weapons.

"It's ripping at the soul of this nation, ripping at the very soul of this nation," Biden said.

Biden later ordered the U.S. flag to be flown at half-staff on all federal buildings through March 31. He also spoke to Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee and Nashville Mayor John Cooper about the shooting, officials said.

Founded as a ministry of Covenant Presbyterian Church — which is affiliated with the conservative evangelical Presbyterian Church in America — The Covenant School is located in the affluent Green Hills neighborhood just south of downtown Nashville that is home to the famed Bluebird Café — a spot typically beloved by musicians and songwriters.

The school has about 200 students from preschool through sixth grade, as well as roughly 50 staff members.

The tragedy unfolded over roughly 14 minutes. Police received the initial call about an active shooter at 10:13 a.m. (local time). **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1971 CALLEY GUILTY OF MY LAI MASSACRE



Lieutenant William Calley has been found guilty of murder at a court martial for his part in the My Lai massacre which claimed the lives of 500 South Vietnamese civilians.

The 27-year-old commander could receive the death penalty or life imprisonment after the massacre which saw US soldiers open fire on civilians in My Lai and neighbouring villages in central Vietnam in March 1968.

Lieutenant Calley was in charge of Charlie Company, a unit of the American Division's 11th Infantry Brigade, who were on a mission to root out the communist 48th Viet Cong Battalion fighters.

The Viet Cong were not in the village and instead more than 500 unarmed civilians were brutally killed in an unprovoked attack by US troops.

Lieutenant Calley will be sentenced in the next few days after the verdict was announced at Fort Benning, Georgia today.

The jury of six army officers spent 13 days weighing up evidence from a four month trial.

They rejected his claim he was merely following orders in a military chain of command instilled in him since joining the army.

Lieutenant Calley faced four charges:

- the murder of at least 30 "oriental human beings" at a junction of two trails
- killing 70 others in a ditch
- shooting a man who approached him with his hands raised begging for mercy
- killing a child running from the ditch where the 70 died.

He was found guilty on the first three charges, although the number of the first was slashed from 30 to one because of conflicting evidence, and the death toll in the second charge was reduced to 20.

The final charge was reduced to assault with intent to kill a child of which he was found guilty.

Three of Lieutenant Calley's senior officers will be tried on charges arising from the massacre, two men junior to him have already been tried and acquitted and charges against 19 others have been dropped.

Charges came after the army commissioned an investigation into the cover-up of the massacre which became known as the Peers inquiry.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The massacre came to light a year after it happened after investigative media reports.

The crimes included murders, rape, sodomy, maiming and assault of civilians.

The Peers inquiry recommended charges should be brought against 28 officers and two non-commissioned officers involved in the concealment of the massacre.

Lieutenant Calley was the only one to be convicted and he was sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour.

Within three days he was out of prison, pending appeal, on the personal instructions of President Richard Nixon.

He spent the next three years under house arrest at Fort Benning in Georgia.

Freed on bail in 1974 his sentence was then cut to 10 years but he was paroled later that year after completing one third of his sentence.

On August 19, 2009, while speaking to the Kiwanis Club of Greater Columbus, Calley issued an apology for his role in the My Lai massacre:

"There is not a day that goes by that I do not feel remorse for what happened that day in My Lai. I feel remorse for the Vietnamese who were killed, for their families, for the American soldiers involved and their families. I am very sorry."

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Group endeavors will provide you with entertainment. You will find that you are able to clear up a number of small but important details.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

You will want to complain about the injustice that is going on. You may feel a need to make changes to your legal documents. One sided attractions are likely.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Opportunities to make money may interfere with your personal plans. You should be looking into making changes around the house.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Social activities will be satisfying. You're best to avoid disputes. You may find yourself in an emotional fix if you interfere in other people's problems.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Don't let them blame you. Someone may be trying to damage your reputation. Accept the inevitable. Don't get involved in secret affairs or underhanded involvements.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Get involved in activities that will bring you knowledge about foreign land, philosophies, or cultures. Don't forget to let your mate know how much you care.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Luck is with you. Take a break; you can finally mend any disputes on the home front. Travel and social activity will bring about interesting talks, not to mention contacts.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You may want to plan physical activities that will help burn off some of their excess energy. Don't let friends or relatives make you feel guilty if you're not able to attend one of their affairs.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Try to have patience and refrain from being judgmental. You could come into extra cash. Difficulties may be encountered while traveling in foreign countries.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Someone important may be watching you from afar. You are best to concentrate on work. Travel opportunities must be taken advantage of.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Joint ventures might prove to be unfavorable. You must use discretion when it comes to lending money or making donations. Don't overspend on luxury items.

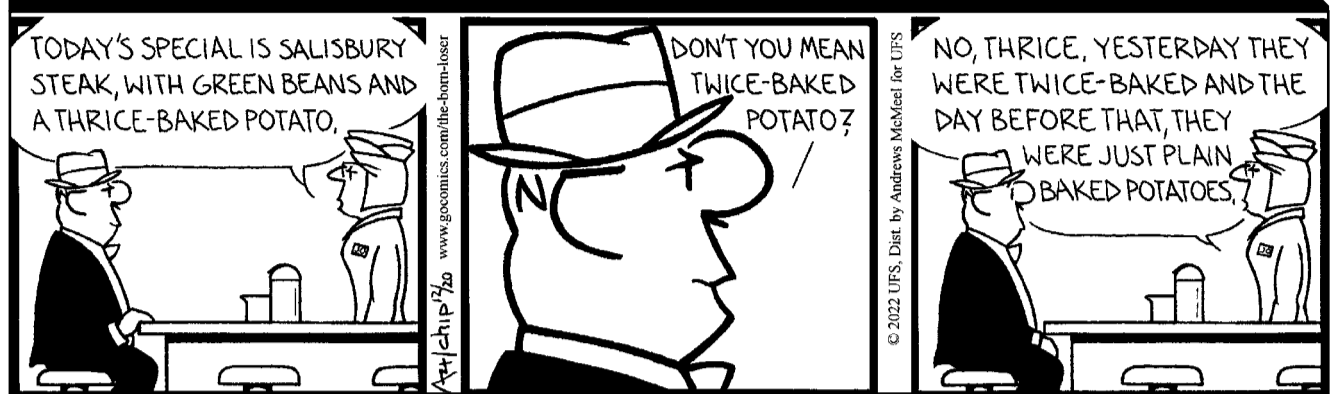


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Physical work or exercise should be part of your schedule. Don't let your mate talk you into going somewhere you'd rather not go. Don't be too eager to dismiss someone who works under you.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

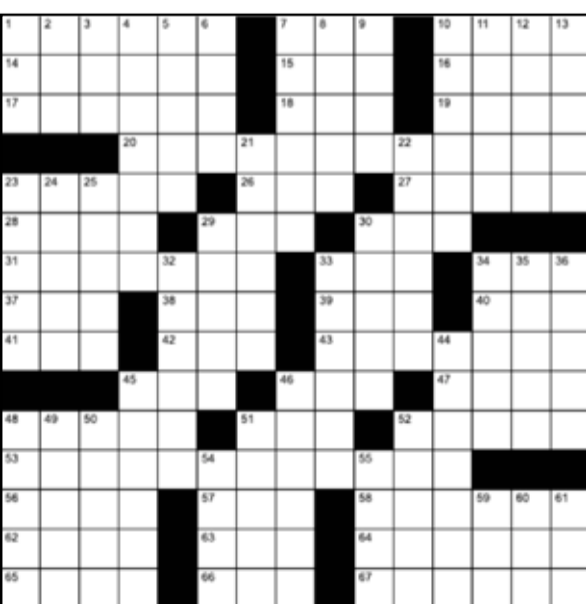
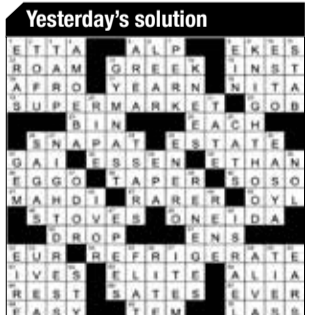
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	7	24	fine
Changchun	3	16	fine
Chengdu	10	18	cloudy
Chongqing	12	20	overcast
Fuzhou	11	18	rain
Guangzhou	14	20	thunderstorms
Guiyang	7	13	overcast
Haikou	21	27	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	10	15	overcast
Harbin	1	16	fine
Hefei	8	17	overcast
Nanjing	8	16	cloudy
Shanghai	9	18	overcast
Taipei	17	22	rain
Wuhan	10	17	rain
Hong Hong	19	21	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	4	9	rain
Frankfurt	10	15	cloudy
Paris	13	22	cloudy
London	11	14	rain
New York	1	13	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Apex; 7- 1963 Paul Newman film; 10- Warner ___; 14- Wild; 15- Chowed down; 16- Alley; 17- Closer; 18- By way of; 19- Romeo's last words; 20- Annulment; 23- John of England; 26- ___ v. Wade; 27- Thick-skinned charger; 28- Bridle part; 29- DC bigwig; 30- Go head to head; 31- The tiniest bit; 33- Dance step used in ballet; 34- LAX posting; 37- Excavate; 38- Refusals; 39- Cheer for Manolete; 40- Test site; 41- Printing widths; 42- Very cold; 43- Convent; 45- NASA affirmative; 46- Frozen water; 47- Nephew of Abel; 48- Set straight; 51- Bat wood; 52- "Hyperion" poet; 53- Carousel; 56- To ___ (perfectly); 57- First name in Notre Dame football; 58- Second drink; 62- Writer Grey; 63- Shoshone language member; 64- Slush; 65- French summers; 66- Indian dish; 67- Joined by treaty;

DOWN 1- Sky light; 2- French article; 3- 1959 Kingston Trio hit; 4- Radio pioneer; 5- That is to say...; 6- Small gull; 7- Wear; 8- Helpful; 9- What's the big ___?; 10- Cheerful; 11- Spokes; 12- Pungent bulb; 13- ___ evil...; 21- Easily wrinkled; 22- Out of bed; 23- Wear down, physically or emotionally; 24- Russian revolutionary leader; 25- Supermodel Cheryl; 29- Inventory; 30- Worth; 32- Like some bagels; 33- Blanketlike cloak; 34- Actress Verdugo; 35- Fortune-telling cards; 36- Vast chasm; 44- Necessary; 45- Concur; 46- Sharon's land; 48- Astonish; 49- Free to attack; 50- Peace goddess; 51- Trunk line; 52- Mournful sound; 54- Showy trinket; 55- Bear in the sky; 59- Despot Amin; 60- Bigger than med.; 61- Conducted;



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

RONALD BLUM

OPERA

FLEMING STARS AS 'NIXON IN CHINA' ARRIVES AT PARIS OPERA

AFTER spending decades portraying generals' wives, a countess and a courtesan, Renée Fleming walked gingerly onto the stage of the Bastille Opera in a blond wig, red coat and black gloves to depict Pat Nixon, former first lady of the United States.

John Adams' "Nixon in China," a 1987 work among the most acclaimed American operas, received its Paris Opera premiere on Saturday night to eight minutes of applause following a revelatory production by Argentine director Valentina Carrasco that replaced literalism with metaphor. The lasting images were of a dark American eagle pitted against a bright red Chinese dragon and of ping-pong tables symbolizing both diplomacy and the quest for superiority.

"You really have to be in your mid-60s to even remember this other than as it's something that you learn about in school," said Fleming, a 64-year-old soprano who bid farewell to the standard repertory six years ago. "I'm sorry, but in the context of what's going on now, Watergate doesn't seem quite as horrific as it did at the time."

Thomas Hampson, a 67-year-old American baritone, starred as President Richard Nixon, complete with hunched shoulders and a sweaty face he repeatedly dabbed with a white handkerchief. Hampson broke out Nixon's stiff V-for-victory motion with arms outstretched during curtain calls.

Hampson was a high school senior in Spangle, Washington, when Nixon made the seven-day trip to China in 1972, the first visit by an American president following the 1949 communist revolution.

"The whole effort of an American president to just simply shake hands across the globe was extremely impressive," Hampson said. "Nixon will always and forever be Watergate. But there are parts of the presidency of Richard Nixon and parts of Richard Nixon that we just have to parse out and respect for what it is."

Adams, now 76, made the trip from his California home and signed autographs during intermission, then joined the curtain calls. He wrote the opera



This image released by Opéra national de Paris shows Renee Fleming as Patricia Nixon during a rehearsal on March 20

with librettist Alice Goodman.

"They are larger-than-life characters. They created these personae, as most politicians do, but between Mao and Kissinger and Madam Mao and Nixon, they're kind of political archetypes and I think that just captures the public imagination," he said.

"Nixon" launched at the Houston Grand Opera with realistic sets by Peter Sellars that were reproduced for the 2011 Metropolitan Opera premiere. The Paris Opera became the first major European house to stage it, and "Nixon" debuts at Madrid's Teatro Real on April 17 in a John Fulljames staging that first appeared at the Royal Danish Opera in 2019.

Fleming was making her Santa Fe Opera debut on a rainy night in August 2019 when company artistic director Alexander Neef approached her with an idea.

"He said, 'I'm going to Paris and I want you to come for the first three of my seasons,'" Fleming recalled Neef saying of his job starting in 2021-22. "I was sort of shocked and said, 'Well, let me see what I can think of that I could sing.'"

Carrasco, now 49, was living in Rome in 2020 and rushed to see the monu-

ment Ara Pacis Augustae after an impending pandemic closure was announced. While walking in, she received a call from Neef asking her to stage "Nixon."

"I thought it was a sign," Carrasco said

She had a flash to a childhood memory of seeing "From Mao to Mozart," a film with violinist Isaac Stern that won the 1981 Academy Award for best documentary feature. A segment stuck in her head in which Stern gives a master class and tells a student to swing her instrument while playing as if swinging a ping-pong paddle.

"Ping-pong is good because it's like a terrain divided in two, like the Cold War, an Iron Curtain in-between," Carrasco said. "It's a winner-loser situation, and I thought it was an interesting metaphor for the world. And Ping-Pong is a very beautiful choreographic for a visual. And the tiktok, tiktok, tiktok of the ping-pong ball reminded me of many places where the music is very percussive. And then, of course, there was Ping-Pong Diplomacy."

Gustavo Dudamel conducts a strong cast that includes Xiaomeng Zhang as Chou En-lai, Joshua Bloom as Henry Kissinger, John Matthew Myers as

Mao Tse-Tung and Kathleen Kim as Madame Mao. There are seven more per-

formances through April 16, and the April 7 show will be streamed in France

and aired later on Medici and Mezzo.

Carrasco splits the stage in two levels early on, scenes of diplomacy on top and torture on the bottom.

Kissinger plays table tennis against Chou, each dressed like a wrestler entering a ring. Chou wins the match 69-1 — China repeatedly cheats by not crediting Kissinger with points he won. Carrasco had tried 49-3 during a rehearsal, using the numbers for the French constitution article that allowed the retirement age to be lowered without French Assembly approval.

A clip of the Stern film is shown between the second and third acts.

Fleming prepared by speaking with former Nixon aide Frank Gannon and reading Will Swift's "Pat and Dick: The Nixons, an Intimate Portrait of a Marriage."

"I didn't know he was funny. I never would have guessed that," Fleming said. "I didn't know anything about her. So all of this material is really interesting. She was fiercely protective of him and of her children." MDT/AP

AD

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MACAUCLOSER

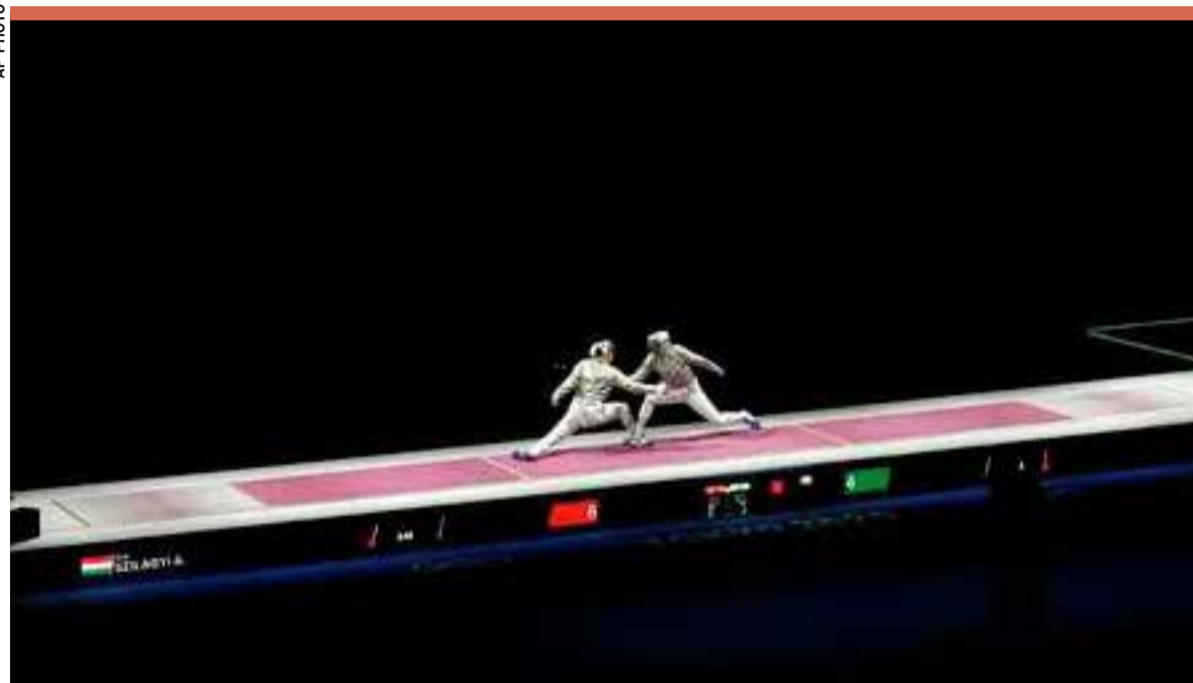
OLYMPICS

Hundreds of fencers protest against letting Russians compete

MORE than 300 fencers, including nine medalists from the last Olympics in Tokyo, signed an open letter published yesterday urging the sport's governing body and the International Olympic Committee not to allow Russian fencers to compete while the war in Ukraine continues.

The International Fencing Federation, known by its French acronym FIE, voted this month to allow fencers from Russia and its ally Belarus to return to international competitions as qualifying for next year's Olympics in Paris ramps up. They are set to compete as neutral athletes without national symbols like an anthem or flag.

"The FIE is not fulfilling its duty of care for athletes, especially for Ukrainians. Your insufficient leadership in completely banning Russia and Belarus is



being called out by athletes and civil society across the globe," said the open letter signed by the fencers, organized by two advocacy groups, Athleten Deutschland and Global Athlete.

"You have chosen Russian and Belarusian interests over the rights of athletes, notably Ukrainian athletes, and by doing so, you are failing to support the very people your organizations

are meant to support." The letter was published on the same day that the board of the IOC — whose president Thomas Bach is a former fencer — was meeting to discuss set-

ting new recommendations for sports bodies 16 months before the opening of the Paris Games.

The IOC recommended excluding Russian and Belarusian athletes on security grounds last year following Russia's invasion but has recently sought to create a pathway for them to return to competition.

The fencers who have signed include Lee Kiefer of the U.S., who is the Olympic gold medalist in women's foil, French men's team foil gold medalist Erwann Le Péchoux and four-time Olympic medalist from Ukraine, Olga Kharlan.

Billionaire Russian businessman Alisher Usmanov has been the FIE president since 2008, though he suspended himself from his duties on March 1, 2022, days after the invasion, after he was placed under European Union sanctions.

The FIE's decision has already affected its competitions after the organizers of an upcoming event in Germany on the showpiece Grand Prix circuit refused to stage it.

The event in May in the town of Tauberbischofsheim, where Bach grew up, would have been one of the first fencing competitions to include Russian and Belarusian athletes since the invasion. **MDT/AP**

AD

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FOOTBALL | **BASKETBALL** | **DAILY TRAININGS**

OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**CROSS-STRAITS
 CULTURAL BONDS
 UNITE THE FAMILY**

Although he is visiting in a private capacity, the visit of Ma Ying-jeou to the Chinese mainland on Monday has still captured much attention as the former Taiwan leader's trip comes at a time when cross-Straits tensions are running high.

Ma, who is on a 12-day visit for the purpose of paying his respects to his ancestors on Tomb-Sweeping Day and leading a delegation of youngsters for exchanges with mainland students, is the first former Taiwan leader to visit the mainland since 1949.

History has shaped the itinerary of his trip. As well as the visit to his ancestral home in Xiangtan, Central China's Hunan province, Ma's delegation will visit Nanjing and the Mausoleum of Dr Sun Yat-sen, who founded the Kuomintang. Ma served as the party's chairperson twice, from 2005 to 2007 and from 2009 to 2014. He will also visit Wuhan, where the first gunshot of the 1911 Revolution was fired, and Chongqing, which served as the capital of China in the early 1940s, when the Communist Party of China and Kuomintang forces fought the Japanese aggressors together.

Some youngsters from Taiwan are accompanying Ma, who is a legal professor at Taipei-based Soochow University. By learning Chinese history together, young people from both sides of the Straits can strengthen the cross-Straits cultural bonds, understand and stress the undeniable fact that the two sides are part of one family.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were over 9 million cross-Straits visits in 2019, with more than 6 million being those from Taiwan to the mainland. The number of cross-Straits visits is expected to again pick up now that the pandemic travel restrictions have been lifted.

Although Ma is not visiting Beijing and no high-level meetings are planned, given that one of the purposes of his trip is to improve understanding and communication among young people on the two sides of the Straits, the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council has wished him a good trip.

True to form, Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party has been less than happy about the trip, not least because it comes when current Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen is on a trip to Central America. She is scheduled to stop off in the United States, during which she is expected to meet with US lawmakers, and they will no doubt try to make a scene in order to create frictions in the island.

Tsai herself came to the mainland in 1998 as a professor and member of Taiwan's "mainland affairs council" to participate in the second meeting of the talks in 1992 that reached the 1992 Consensus.

Yet she has put aside the interests of the people of Taiwan since she joined the DPP in 2004, and as leader of the island she has pursued a pro-independence agenda that denies the 1992 Consensus and has made Taipei a pawn in Washington's strategy to contain China.

It is this stance and her collusion with Washington that is escalating cross-Straits tensions.

China said yesterday its new ambassador to North Korea has taken up his post, in a sign the North is reopening amid reports it has been suffering heavily from the COVID-19 pandemic and food shortages.

Wang Yajun will help in the development of the traditional friendship between the "close neighbors sharing mountains and rivers," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a daily briefing.

China is North Korea's main source of economic aid and political support, but interactions have been disrupted by travel restrictions imposed in an attempt to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The ambassador's posting comes as North Korean state media reported that leader Kim Jong Un urged his nuclear scientists to increase production of weapons-grade material to make bombs to put on the country's widening range of weapons. (See p10)



This May 21, 2020, photo provided by Victor Gensini shows a tornado in Moscow, Kansas

STUDY SAYS WARMING-FUELED SUPERCELLS TO HIT SOUTH MORE OFTEN

AMERICA will probably get more killer tornado- and hail-spawning supercells as the world warms, according to a new study that also warns the lethal storms will edge eastward to strike more frequently in the more populous Southern states, like Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee.

The supercell storm that devastated Rolling Fork, Mississippi is a single event that can't be connected to climate change. But it fits that projected and more dangerous pattern, including more nighttime strikes in a southern region with more people, poverty and vulnerable housing than where storms hit last century. And the season will start a month earlier than it used to.

The study in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society predicts a nationwide 6.6% increase in supercells and a 25.8% jump in the area and time the strongest supercells twist and tear over land under a scenario of moderate levels of future warming by the end of the century. But in certain areas in the South the increase is much higher. That includes Rolling Fork, where study authors project an increase of one supercell a year by the year 2100.

Supercells are nature's

ultimate storms, so-called "Finger of God" whoppers that are "the dominant producers of significant tornadoes and hail," said lead author Walker Ashley, a professor of meteorology and disaster geography at Northern Illinois University. Tall, anvil-shaped and sky-filling, supercells have a rotating powerful updraft of wind and can last for hours.

Supercells spawned the 2013 Moore, Oklahoma, tornado that killed 51 people, the 2011 Joplin, Missouri, tornado outbreak that killed 161 people and the 2011 super outbreak that killed more than 320 people in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee, the Mid-South.

The study used computer simulations to predict what will happen by the end of the century with different levels of global carbon pollution levels. But Ashley said that stormier future seems like it's already here.

"The data that I've seen has persuaded me that we are in this experiment and living it right now," Ashley said in an interview three days before the EF-4 tornado killed more than 20 people in Mississippi on Friday. "What we're seeing in the longer term is actually occurring right

now."

Ashley and others said although the Mississippi tornado fits the projected pattern, it was a single weather event, which is different than climate projections over many years and a large area.

Ashley and study co-author Victor Gensini, another meteorology professor at Northern Illinois University and a longtime tornado expert, said they are watching the potential for another supercell blow-up in the Mid-South on Friday.

Past studies have been unable to forecast supercells and tornadoes in future climate simulations because they are small-scale events, especially tornadoes, that global computer models can't see. Ashley and Gensini used smaller regional computer models and compensated for their reduced computing power by spending two years running simulations and crunching data.

While the study finds a general increase in supercell counts, what it mostly finds are large shifts in where and when they hit — generally, more east of Interstate 35, which runs through east central Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas, and fewer to the west. MDT/AP



France Protests and strikes against unpopular pension reforms kicked off again across France, with police security ramped up against feared violence and government warnings that radical demonstrators intend "to destroy, to injure and to kill." Fears that violence could mar the demonstrations prompted what Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin described as an unprecedented deployment of 13,000 officers.



USA The nation's top financial regulator is asserting that Silicon Valley Bank's own management was largely to blame for the bank's failure earlier this month and says the Federal Reserve will review whether a 2018 law that weakened stricter bank rules also contributed to its collapse. "SVB's failure is a textbook case of mismanagement," Michael Barr, the Fed's vice chair for supervision (pictured), said in written testimony.



Ghana U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris will pledge a new era of partnership with Africa today [Macau time] when she speaks from Black Star Gate, which commemorates Ghana's independence from colonialism. The speech on her second full day in Ghana is part of a weeklong trip that will include visits to Tanzania and Zambia.



Rwanda The man who inspired the film "Hotel Rwanda" and was freed by Rwanda last week from a terrorism sentence has arrived in Qatar on his way to reuniting with family in the United States. Paul Rusesabagina is currently in Doha, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told journalists yesterday [Macau time].