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THERE IS LITTLE ROOM TO PROMOTE MAJOR CHANGES TO THE UNION TRADE BILL, THE AL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, CHAN CHAK MO, SAID IN A PRESS BRIEFING

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Taiwan French President Emmanuel Macron commented on his published remarks on China and Taiwan that raised questions after he visited Beijing last week, insisting that his views have not changed. "The position of France and the Europeans on Taiwan is the same. We are for the status quo, and this policy is constant," Macron told reporters in Amsterdam. "It hasn't changed. It's the policy of one China and the peaceful settlement of the question."



Philippines U.S. and Filipino forces yesterday blasted vehicles with anti-tank missiles in combat-readiness drills in the Philippines that are part of a show of American firepower that has alarmed China. The long-time treaty allies are holding their largest joint military exercises called Balikatan in decades. They involve about 17,600 military personnel and will feature live-fire maneuvers, including a ship-sinking rocket attack and beach assaults to simulate retaking an island near the disputed South China Sea.

UAE The Gulf nations of Bahrain and Qatar agreed to restore diplomatic relations yesterday [Macau time]. Bahrain had been the last holdout of four Arab nations that imposed a boycott on Qatar in 2017. They were angered by Qatar's support for Islamist groups that rose to power in some countries following the 2011 Arab Spring protests, which the other autocratic nations viewed as terrorist organizations.

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ON LONELINESS

Examining loneliness in an era of instant connectivity, Israeli choreographer Nir de Volff says his play calls for 'resuming physical contact,' in an interview with the Times



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THE SKY IS NO LIMIT

IS THE US IN A SPACE RACE AGAINST CHINA?



SVETLA BEN-ITZHAK
AIR UNIVERSITY

Headlines proclaiming the rise of a new “space race” between the U.S. and China have become common in news coverage following many of the exciting launches in recent years. Experts have pointed to China’s rapid advancements in space as evidence of an emerging landscape where China is directly competing with the U.S. for supremacy.

This idea of a space race between China and the U.S. sounds convincing given the broader narrative of China’s rise, but how accurate is it? As a professor who studies space and international relations, my research aims to quantify the power and capabilities of different nations in space. When I look at various capacities, the data paints a much more complex picture than a tight space race between the U.S. and China. At least for now, the reality looks more like what I call a complex hegemony – one state, the U.S., is still dominating in key space capabilities, and this lead is further amplified by a strong network of partners.

A CLEAR LEADER MAKES FOR A BORING RACE

Calling the current situation a race implies that the U.S. and China have roughly equal capabilities in space. But in several key areas, the U.S. is far ahead not only of China, but of all other spacefaring nations combined.

Starting with spending: In 2021, the U.S. space budget was roughly US\$59.8 billion. China

has been investing heavily in space and rocket technology over the last decade and has doubled its spending in the last five years. But with an estimated budget of \$16.18 billion in 2021, it is still spending less than a third of the U.S. budget.

The U.S. also leads significantly in the number of active satellites. Currently, there are 5,465 total operational satellites in orbit around Earth. The U.S. operates 3,433, or 63% of those. In contrast, China has 541.

Similarly, the U.S. has more active spaceports than China. With seven operational launch sites at home and abroad and at least 13 additional spaceports in development, the U.S. has more options to launch payloads into various orbits. In contrast, China has only four operational spaceports with two more planned, all located within its own territory.

PARITY WITH NUANCE

While the U.S. may have a clear advantage over China in many areas of space, in some measures, the differences between the two countries are more nuanced.

In 2021, for instance, China attempted 55 orbital launches, four more than the U.S.’s 51. The total numbers may be similar, but the rockets carried very different payloads to orbit. The vast majority – 84% – of Chinese launches had government or military payloads intended mostly for electronic intelligence and optical imaging. Meanwhile, in the U.S., 61% of launches were for nonmilitary, academic or commercial use, predominantly for

Earth observation or telecommunications.

Space stations are another area where there are important differences hiding beneath the surface. Since the 1990s, the U.S. has worked with 14 other nations, including Russia, to operate the International Space Station. The ISS is quite large, with 16 modules, and has driven technological and scientific breakthroughs. But the ISS is now 24 years old, and participating nations are planning to retire it in 2030.

The Chinese Tiangong space station is the new kid on the block. Construction was only completed in late 2022, and it is much smaller – with only three modules. China has built and launched all of the different parts and remains the sole operator of the station, despite having invited others to join.

China is undoubtedly expanding its space capabilities, and in a report published in August 2022, the Pentagon predicted that China would surpass U.S. capabilities in space as early as 2045. However, it is unlikely that the U.S. will remain stagnant, as it continues to increase funding for space.

ALLIES AS FORCE MULTIPLIERS

A major point of difference between the U.S. and China is the nature and number of international collaborations.

For decades, NASA has been fruitfully cultivating international and commercial partnerships in everything from developing specific space technologies to flying humans into space. The U.S. government has also signed 169 space data sharing agreements with

33 states and intergovernmental organizations, 129 with commercial partners and seven with academic institutions.

China also has allies that help with space – most notably Russia and members of the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, including Iran, Pakistan, Thailand and Turkey. China’s collaborators are, however, fewer in number and have far less developed space capabilities.

Efforts to return to the surface of the Moon excellently highlight this difference in ally support and synergy. Both the U.S. and China have plans to send people to the surface of the Moon and to establish lunar bases in the near future. These competing lunar aims are often cited as evidence of the space race, but they are very different in terms of partnerships and scope.

In 2019, Russia and China agreed to jointly go to the Moon by 2028. Russia is contributing its Luna landers and Oryol crewed orbiters, while China is improving its Chang’e robotic spacecraft. Their future International Lunar Research Station is “open to all interested parties and international partners,” but, to date, no additional countries have committed to the Chinese and Russian effort.

In contrast, since 2020, 24 nations have joined the U.S.-led Artemis Accords. This international agreement outlines shared principles of cooperation for future space activity and, through the Artemis Program, specifically aims to return people to the Moon by 2025 and establish a Moon base and lunar space station soon after.

In addition to the broad international participation, the Artemis Program has contracted with a staggering number of private companies to develop a range of technologies, from lunar landers to lunar construction methods and more.

CHINA IS NOT THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN

While China may seem like the main competitor of the U.S. in space, other countries have space capabilities and aspirations that rival those of China.

India spends billions on space and plans to return to the Moon, possibly with Japan, in the near future. South Korea, Israel, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Germany and the European Union are also planning independent lunar missions. Japan has developed impressive technological space capabilities, including rendezvous proximity technology to send a spacecraft to an asteroid and bring samples back to Earth, that rival and even surpass those of China.

In the past, the space race was about who could reach the stars first and return home. Today, the goal has shifted to surviving and even thriving in the harsh environment of space. I believe it is not surprising that, despite its decisive lead, the U.S. has partnered with others to go to the Moon and beyond. China is doing the same, but on a smaller scale. The picture that emerges is not of a “race” but of complex system with the U.S. as a leader working closely with extensive networks of partners.

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Che Sai Wang wants regular and standardized medical exams for civil servants

RENATO MARQUES

THE government should enforce regular and standardized medical exams for all civil servants to protect their health and, consequently, the services they provide to the public, Lawmaker Che Sai Wang has said in a written inquiry.

Che is linked with the Macau Civil Servants' Association (AT-FPM).

Che recalled that back in 2007, the government created the medical examination center to safeguard the physical and mental health of civil servants.

But the workers feel that booking an appointment takes too long and does not fit their work schedules, said Che.

The lawmaker has called on the government to simplify the process so it is more convenient for civil servants to schedule medical appointments and exams to "ease their heavy workload burden."

Che fears the current system's difficulties are causing many workers to forsake timely medical checkups which can, in time, cause problems in disease prevention and control, especially the early stages of severe illnesses.

He also noted many civil ser-



Che Sai Wang

vants are aging, which will make the problem even more complex in the future if it is not tackled now.

According to Che, many workers have already missed their annual checkup for 2022 and could not book appointments in 2023, with the government's human resources department claiming the-

re is a long wait time.

The same lawmakers have called for the government to allow workers affected by long wait times to be specially authorized to obtain checkups in other hospitals and clinics (both public and private), with the public services to reimburse the expense.



Elsie Ao Ieong

AO IEONG TO VISIT PORTUGAL WITH PHYSICIANS' RECRUITMENT ON AGENDA

THE Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, will visit Portugal next month, after a stop in Geneva, for a meeting at the World Health Organization (WHO), TDM Radio has reported.

The Secretary's trip is scheduled for the end of May and, according to undisclosed sources quoted by TDM, one of the main agenda topics will be the recruitment of physicians in Portugal to come and work at Macau's public hospital.

The same source told TDM that applications should open shortly after Ao Ieong's visit, and that an advertisement for the different posts would be

published on the Portuguese Medical Association (Ordem dos Médicos) website.

The last time the Macau government launched a drive to recruit physicians from Portugal was 2017.

Ao Ieong will join Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng's delegation visiting Lisbon next week.

Before heading to Portugal, Ao Ieong will participate in the WHO General Assembly, which starts on May 21 in the Swiss city of Geneva.

A meeting with the Portuguese Minister of Education, João Costa, will also be part of the Secretary's official program in Portugal. **RM**

Trade Union Law: No room to promote major changes at AL Committee

RENATO MARQUES

THERE is little room to promote major changes to the Union Trade bill, the committee chairman, lawmaker Chan Chak Mo, said yesterday in a press briefing after the committee meeting.

The bill has been approved in its first reading and is now being debated in detail at the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL).

Chan's comments were based on information provided by government representatives, noting that the committee discussion mostly concerns the bill's technical details.

The committee chairman also told the media that the government will submit a revised bill at the next meeting, but the updates are small adjustments rather than major policy changes.

Committee members want to see clarification on Union leaders'



Chan Chak Mo

absence from work due to their union duties, among other topics.

Chan also clarified that the list of members who are part of a certain Union – which needs to be submitted to the Labour Affairs Bureau

every year until April – refers only to the Union's current number of members and does not include their personal details. He noted the new version of the bill will include this clarification.

CHINESE COMMUNITY AWAITS HO IAT SENG'S PORTUGAL TRIP

STAFF REPORTER

THE Chinese community in Portugal is awaiting Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng's visit, according to Chinese League president Y Ping Chow.

"It is the first visit after Covid, which is a visit much awaited by the Chinese community," Y Ping Chow told *Lusa* in Porto.

Ho will be in Portugal from April 18 to 22 for his first official visit to Europe since taking office in late December 2020.

Y Ping Chow, who also heads the Chamber of Commerce of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Portugal – China (CCPC – PME), shared his desire to restore trade, tourism and business relations, which have been affected by the pandemic.

Developing projects on Hengqin Island and the Greater Bay Area is the main goal of the CCPC – PME leader. He added there are "lots of possibilities and capacities to invest in Portugal," and is welcoming of the Macau government's interest in Portuguese habits and culture.

"Portugal should be more interested in participating in development with Macau" said the association president, saying that although there has been much effort in this area, there is much more to do.

The CE will lead a delegation comprising several members of the government, including the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, and representatives across various economic interests and business sectors.

REHABILITATION ORGANIZATION TO ORGANIZE SERIES OF EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU IC2, a rehabilitation organization run by people with intellectual disabilities and autism, will hold its third Earth Day event on April 22.

"We want to show that environmental protection is for all, and people with disabilities can also make excellent contributions to the environment," said Ada Lo, a volunteer course instructor for the association.

With the theme "Invest In Our Planet," various activities including a pickleball demo, tree planting and a recycling fashion exhibition will be held to promote and raise awareness on environmental protection awareness.

"We expect people to practice green living in their daily food, clothing, housing, transportation, education, entertainment and shopping choices," said Antonio Leung, president of the association.

"The fashion show is new to this event," Lo said.

She said members came up with the idea in the third session of the course. Members and



their families will be both tailors and models, with their clothes made from newspapers and textile waste.

The event is organized by 10 graduates of an event-organizing course taught by Lo at the association. Since first teaching the course in 2021, Lo has been waiting for a chance for association members to fully exhibit their capabilities.

Environmentally-friendly practices are part of the association's regular events as well members' daily lives. Tommy Tou, one of the students in the course and emcee of the event, said he participated in activities to make eco-friendly soaps.

"This association brings us hope," said Murni and Florence, each parents of newly-joined members who have watched

their kids learn, make friends and participate in various activities.

The sixth session of the course was held yesterday at the Concordia School for Special Education. It included a talk on environmentally friendly food choices presented by the founding president of the Society of Food and Environmental Health (Macao), Ruby O.

"Food is a good medium to talk about environmental protection,

as it is close to us," said O. She hopes to educate the event organizers and inform the community about the roles they can play in environmental protection.

The event will start with a green walk at 3:45 p.m. from Fisherman's Wharf Rocks Hotel to Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau, followed by an inauguration ceremony and other activities.

Leung's mother, Ruby Lou, expressed her gratitude for the government's support, saying, "Thanks to the resources from the government that show people with intellectual disabilities and autism can lead a good life, I have supported Antonio in setting up the association, witnessed more and more incoming volunteers and members, organized various activities and courses, and extended our helping hands to more special kids in China."

Established in 2016, Macau IC2 is the only NGO organized and managed by people with intellectual disabilities and autism in Macau.

*Macau Daily Times is the official media partner of the event.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

MUST starts Int'l Communication Week, video exhibition

ANTHONY LAM

THE Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) has opened Visual Macao 2023, a series of events celebrating communications and video productions.

Comprising the annual World Communication Week and the MUST Chinese Youth Film Project, Visual Macao 2023 was opened by Vice Chancellor and President Joseph Hun-wei Lee of the university, among other guests.

After welcoming the guests and the audience, Lee expressed his elation at seeing a vigorous community re-emerging after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lee said internationalization is a key developmental strategy of the MUST. Visual communication represents a common way of cultural production and human pragmatism, which forms the backdrop for the theme of Visual Macao, he added.



"[Visual communication] is critical to defining everyday life," Lee said. "In MUST, computer and artificial intelligence scientists are also conducting interdisciplinary research related to communication."

Lee thinks Macau is an ideal place to "explore and study" visual communication, due to its rich and unique cultural heri-

tage as well as its multifaceted and elegant scenery.

MUST's Chinese Youth Film Project includes a series of events, such as topical forums, roundtable meetings, film screenings and dialogue. Films from Beijing and Taiwan will also be showcased.

The award ceremony of the film exhibition will be held on

April 20 in MUST's Block D Auditorium. There are 13 awards to be announced. In addition, a "Doctoral Student Forum" will be held and a global call for papers will be launched.

The opening ceremony also saw the unveiling of the signboard of a research center as well as the signing of a cooperation agreement.

26 DAYS OFF WORK FOR CIVIL SERVANTS IN 2024 IN PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND COMPENSATION

Civil servants will enjoy 26 public holidays next year, taking into account obligatory and non-obligatory public holidays as well as compensation for holidays that fall on weekends. This information is in the official calendar of government holidays for 2024, published in the government's official gazette. The calendar includes, as usual, 10 obligatory public holidays, 10 non-obligatory public holidays, and six compensatory days for public holidays that fall on weekends. The number of public holidays in 2024 equals those in 2023, with the same number (six) of compensatory days for public holidays that fell on weekends.

LOCALLY PRODUCED FEATURE FILM WINS AWARD

Locally produced feature film "Kissing the Ground You Walked On" has won the Young Cinema Competition (Chinese Language), Best Director award for its director, Hong Heng Fai, at the 47th Hong Kong International Film Festival. Last year, the film received three nominations at the Golden Horse Award in Taiwan, namely Best New Director, Best Cinematography and Best Sound Effects.

AD

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TAP SEAC CRAFT MARKET TO FEATURE 220 STALLS

The Tap Seac Craft Market in spring will be held from April 20 to 23 and April 27 to 30 for two consecutive weeks, featuring over 220 handicraft and food stalls by cultural and creative entities from Macau, mainland China and Hong Kong. The stalls will showcase and sell a range of products including daily necessities, clothing and accessories, handicrafts, as well as natural and handmade products. The market will feature food stalls and 47 music performances by singers from Macau and mainland China will be held at the market. In addition, 52 creative handicraft workshops will be held during the event.

IC TO DISTRIBUTE READING MATERIALS TO TODDLERS

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has launched a series of activities with a budget of MOP6 million yuan, kicking off a number of projects throughout the city to promote reading. Among them, the Infant and Toddler Reading Rewards Program will distribute "reading packs" to infants and young children under the age of 2 in Macau. Local public libraries will participate in the program for one month starting from tomorrow, launching a number of community activities to promote reading.

CE AT AL TODAY FOR Q&A ON GOV'T POLICY AND SOCIAL ISSUES

The Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng, will attend today's Legislative Assembly (AL) session to participate in a Q&A session with lawmakers about the government's policies, implementation, and social issues. The CE's presence at the AL to respond to lawmaker's inquiries – submitted in advance – happens at least annually around mid-year. It is an opportunity for the CE to update the public on the progress of government work and the implementation of measures presented during the policy address for the year. As always, the session is televised and will also be available through several online channels including YouTube, Facebook and official government websites.

ANTHONY LAM



MACAO ARTS FESTIVAL

EXAMINING LONELINESS, CHOREOGRAPHER CALLS FOR RESUMING PHYSICAL CONTACT

ANTHONY LAM

ALTHOUGH lockdowns have been necessary, physical contact is critical to human life, said Nir de Volff, choreographer for a show at this year's Macao Arts Festival (FAM), in an exclusive interview with the Times.

Club Loneliness is the name of the dance play that will be featured at the festival.

De Volff is not a new face in the festival, having choreographed the closing show, "Trust," for the 26th edition of the festival.

Born and raised in Israel, de Volff founded the dance company Total Brutal in 2007 and currently resides in Berlin.

The inception for this year's work began in 2019, when de Volff finished that year's play in Macau. He planted seeds in 2019 and has since seen it grow.

"I dare not say it will bear good and ample fruits, but the scene is developing," he said.

He wanted to do the dance play earlier than this year, "But then came the coronavirus," he said, implying that restrictions forced the work to be suspended.

The past three years accentuated loneliness, the motif of this play, de Volff said. He especially noted that during Covid-19 restrictions, human interaction was virtualized and physical contact was literally impossible.

The restrictions helped him

compose a blueprint of this play before arriving in Macau, although it was vague and he "did not know what the actual play would be like."

Adding to this, his Macau collaborator, Stella Ho of Stella & Artists, said the motifs of love and loneliness are universal. As the producer of this work, she thinks Macau audiences will understand both the show and the motifs.

She said people nowadays have a lot of entertainment, but are not talking to each other. She and de Volff referred to scenes of people sitting at the same dinner table without saying a word with each other.

The duo found the practice of people gathering for meals but making no conversation unappetizing.

"Everybody has at least three messaging platforms but, at the end of the day, there is no physical contact," de Volff said, as Ho nodded in agreement.

There has always been debate on the power of eastern and western dancers, but there is no such debate within de Volff.

He disagrees that Chinese dancers are less powerful than their western counterparts. Comparing dancers from the two cultures, the choreographer thinks the differences in diversity are obvious.

"Maybe [western dancers] have

more diverse experience, styles and emotional or intellectual ideas," de Volff said. "But it's hard to say."

Considering Macau, he thinks it is right to say dancers in Berlin have more diverse experiences. However, when it comes to his productions, the difference is not obvious, because he focuses on breathing. "If you are a living human being, you breathe," he said.

Cultural differences are becoming vaguer in this era when international communication occurs often and is so simple to access

As breathing provides energy to the entire body, which is crucial to dancers, he developed the Breathing Body Method (BBM). He does not mind the method being compared to conventional and new age philosophies, because the core idea is to energize the body and mind through respiration.

Sometimes, dancers in the show experience difficulties adjusting their breathing patterns, "but this has nothing to do with culture," he said.

De Volff said cultural differences are becoming vaguer in this era when international communication occurs often and is so simple to access. People – especially those of the younger generations – are very much up to date on the latest trends and news.

Technological advances have also expanded the platforms for dancing. "Young dancers will get more support on social media and video streaming platforms," de Volff added.

Discussing her collaborations with Total Brutal, Ho said de Volff did not hold back in pushing the limits of local dancers. She said he would test local dancers against his standards in Berlin, so local dancers would see improvements.

"It can be difficult to invite a choreographer who actually helps cultivate improvement in local dancers," Ho added.

De Volff's choreographic philosophy relies more on the dancers themselves. He does not normally formulate a full set of dances for performers to follow. Instead, he presents a topic or motif to dancers and allows them to create the dances and movements they consider authentic to the topic or motif. Then, he will provide his opinions on the movements and suggestions on how these movements can be better presented.

TOURISM

Thailand hopes for major visitor's splash during Songkran



HORDES of revelers toted colorful water guns yesterday as Thailand kicked off its exuberant three-day Songkran festival at full blast for the first time since 2019, hoping for a significant boost in tourism after the industry was devastated by coronavirus travel restrictions.

The New Year celebration's signature water fighting — a major draw for tourists — had been banned or discouraged since 2020 to curb the spread of the virus, and its full-scale return was widely promoted. In Bangkok alone, there are 40 designated spots this year for public water splashing, including the touristy Khao San Road where vendors hawked food, clothes and water-fighting gear in the scorching heat.

The festival, which is also celebrated in neighboring Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, falls at the hottest time of the year when temperatures can creep above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

While many tourists and locals congregate in the capital, millions of workers head home to rural provinces to see family and celebrate by cleansing images of the Buddha for luck, throwing water on each other, and washing the hands and feet of elders to

pay respect and ask for a blessing.

Police geared up for the "Seven Dangerous Days" — taking into account the travel days on either end of Songkran — during which traffic-related casualties spike in a country where road traffic death rates ranked No. 9 worldwide in the WHO's 2018 road safety report. Many accidents involve drunk driving, and motorcyclists account for a large number of the deaths.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand projects this year's Songkran festival will help generate more than 18 billion baht (\$530 million) in revenue and bring in more than 300,000 international travelers for the holiday week — a 525% increase over the same period in 2022, but just 58% of 2019's number from before the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Although the country gradually eased up travel restrictions before fully reopening in October, local entrepreneurs remain concerned about the pace of recovery.

Thailand received about 40 million international visitors in 2019. That number decreased sharply to 6.7 million in 2020 and fewer than 500,000 in 2021, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. **MDT/AP**

ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Sands China's Integrated Resorts Go Dark for Earth Hour 2023

15 consecutive years of support

Sands China Ltd. observed **Earth Hour 2023** at its properties March 25, turning off exterior lights and non-essential indoor lights for one hour in support of the annual global event. It is the company's **15th straight year** joining businesses and individuals around the world to support the annual global event. All Sands China properties took part in the lights-off activity: Sands Macao; The Venetian Macao; The Plaza Macao featuring Four Seasons; The Parisian Macao; and The Londoner Macao, comprising The Londoner Hotel, Londoner Court, St. Regis, Conrad, and Sheraton.

In addition to its yearly participation, Sands China has been taking the initiative since 2013 to observe **Earth Hour each month**. The company's resorts turn off exterior lights, signage and marquees for one hour on the first Tuesday of each month, in an effort to maximise the positive environmental effects of the energy-saving movement.

Since 2019, Sands China's various sustainability measures have resulted in **28 Million kWh of annualized energy savings** to date.

Some highlights from 2022 include:

- 292 gigajoules of renewable energy generated by solar thermal hybrid system
- 2.2 million kWh energy saved
- US\$5.8 million invested in energy-efficiency projects
- Emissions decreased 56% compared to a 2018 baseline (including impacts from the pandemic)
- Completed installation of high-temperature heat pump at The Plaza Macao, replacing the need for liquid petroleum gas boilers
- Installed high efficiency LED lights to reduce energy usage in nearly 2,155 rooms

Sands China's awards and recognitions in 2022 include:

- All certified Sands China hotels hold a Macao Green Hotel Gold Award: Sands Macao, The Venetian Macao, The Parisian Macao, Four Seasons, Sheraton, Conrad, St. Regis, and The Londoner Macao
- Named to the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) **DJSI World** for the first time and **DJSI Asia Pacific** for the second consecutive year in 2022

Sands China's environmental sustainability efforts are part of the **Sands ECO360 global sustainability strategy**, which utilises energy saving, resource recycling, conservation, and community engagement to help minimise the company's environmental impact and lead the way in sustainable building development and resort operations.





ECONOMY

EXPORTS REBOUND UNEXPECTEDLY TO GROWTH IN MARCH

CHINA'S exports rebounded unexpectedly to growth in March despite a decline in U.S. and European demand following interest rate hikes to cool inflation.

Exports rose 14.8% over a year earlier to \$315.6 billion, recovering from a 6.8% decline in January and February, customs data showed yesterday. Imports sank 1.4% to \$227.4 billion, a smaller contraction than the 10.2% slide

in the previous two months.

China's politically sensitive global trade surplus widened by 82% over a year earlier to \$88.2 billion.

Exports to the United States and the 27-nation European Union, China's biggest foreign markets, declined after the Federal Reserve and other central banks raised rates to slow consumer and business activity. That was offset by double-digit gains in sales to Canada, Indonesia, Russia

and other markets.

"The current external environment still is severe and complex," said a government spokesperson, Lyu Daliang, at a news conference.

Trade weakness adds to complications for President Xi Jinping's government, which is trying to revive economic growth that sank last year to 3%, the second-weakest rate since the 1970s. The ruling Communist

Party set this year's growth target at "around 5%."

In the first three months of the year, exports edged up 0.5% over the same period of 2022 to \$821.8 billion, the General Administration of Customs of China reported. Total imports contracted 7.1% to \$617.1 billion.

A revival in Chinese demand would be a boost to global suppliers, replacing weak U.S., European and Japanese sales. China

is the biggest export customer for its Asian neighbors and a key consumer market.

Retail sales and other activity are gradually improving after anti-virus restrictions that kept millions of people at home and temporarily shut down Shanghai and other industrial centers were lifted in December.

The economy also is under pressure from tighter controls on the use of debt in China's vast real estate industry, which triggered a slump in mid-2021.

Exports to the United States slid 7.7% in March from a year earlier to \$45.9 billion, an improvement over the 21.8% contraction in January and February.

Imports of U.S. goods gained 5.6% to \$16.1 billion, rebounding from a 5% decline in the first two months of the year. The Chinese trade surplus with the United States shrank by 14% compared with a year earlier to \$27.6 billion.

Imports from Russia, mostly oil and gas, surged 40.5% over a year ago to \$11 billion, accelerating from a 31.3% increase in January and February.

China, the biggest global energy consumer, has stepped up purchases from Russia to take advantage of price discounts after Washington, Europe and Japan cut imports to punish President Vladimir Putin's government for its attack on Ukraine.

Exports to Russia more than doubled to \$9 billion. China's trade deficit with Russia narrowed by 50% to \$2 billion.

Exports to Europe tumbled 18.2% over a year ago to \$45.9 billion while imports of European goods shrank 37.2% to \$25.1 billion. China's trade surplus with Europe widened by 29.2% to \$20.7 billion. MDT/AP

WEATHER

Northern China blanketed with floating sand and dust

MANY areas in northern China were blanketed with floating sand and dust yesterday, and a sandstorm was expected to sweep through parts of Inner Mongolia.

The sandy, dusty weather and strong winds will last until Sunday, the National Meteorological Center said in a statement, adding the public should take precautionary measures to guard against poor air quality.

It renewed a blue alert for sandstorms — the least severe warning in the country's four-tier weather warning system — and forecast that more than a dozen regions, including major cities like Beijing and Shanghai, would see some

areas affected by floating sand and dust yesterday.

The center's chief forecaster, Gui Hailin, earlier said the sandy and dusty weather began Sunday in southern Mongolia. As cold air moved southward, the weather spread to various regions including northern and northeast China, he said.

In Beijing, buildings and traffic were shrouded by low visibility. The IQAir website showed an air quality index of 540 for the capital and labeled its air pollution level as "hazardous." The Beijing Municipal Ecological and Environmental Monitoring Center issued the highest air pollution warning.

Running enthusiast Tu

Jiaxian said the sandstorm had a "huge impact" on her life because it interrupted her marathon training plans.

"I want to run but I dare not run because of the weather. That is very painful," Tu said, adding she had quit her daily 10-kilometer jogs for three days this week due to the weather.

Cao Yuanyuan, a newcomer to Beijing, was surprised at first to see the hazy scenes and took photos of them. But the bad weather forced her to wear glasses as a protective measure and keep the windows in her room shut.

"But there is still sand coming in, and I can smell the earth," Cao said. MDT/AP



People wearing face masks walk across an intersection during a dust and sandstorm in Beijing yesterday

DIPLOMACY

Brazil's Lula in Shanghai on visit to boost ties with China

BRAZILIAN President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was in the Chinese financial hub of Shanghai yesterday as he looks to boost ties and win political support for attempts to mediate the conflict in Ukraine.

Lula arrived yesterday [Macau time] and is due to meet with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Beijing today before concluding his visit tomorrow.

The Brazilian government says the sides are expected to sign at least 20 bilateral agreements during Lula's trip, underscoring the improvement in relations with the South American giant's biggest trade partner following a rocky patch under predecessor Jair Bolsonaro.

In Shanghai, Lula will also attend the official swearing in of close adviser and former Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff as head of the Chinese-backed New Development Bank.

The institution posits itself as an alternative to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which are controlled mainly by the United States and its Western allies. It is focused on the so-called BRICS group of developing nations made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Established more than seven years ago, the bank has approved



Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and first lady Rosângela Silva receive flowers presented by children from the Shanghai Children's Palace of the China Welfare Institute upon arrival in Shanghai

99 loan projects totaling more than \$34 billion, mainly for infrastructure projects, according to China's Foreign Ministry.

Much of that credit has gone to Brazil for projects such as a metro system in the business capital of Sao Paulo.

Lula was shown arriving at the bank's headquarters and embracing Rousseff, his former chief of staff who succeeded him as president representing the Workers

Party. Both later became embroiled in legal controversies, but Lula bounced back to win a third term by a narrow margin.

During his meeting with Xi, Lula is expected to discuss trade, investment, reindustrialization, energy transition, climate change and peace agreements, according to the Brazilian government.

China is Brazil's biggest export market, each year buying tens of billions of dollars worth

of soybeans, beef, iron ore, poultry, pulp, sugar cane, cotton and crude oil. Brazil is the biggest recipient of Chinese investment in Latin America, according to Chinese state media, although Lula has spoken against outright Chinese ownership of Brazilian companies.

One of the agreements Lula will sign in China will be for construction of the sixth satellite built under a binational program that will monitor biomes such as the Amazon rainforest.

China also recently ended a ban on Brazilian beef imposed in February after the discovery of an atypical case of mad cow disease.

Politically, the left-leaning Lula's visit is a sign of Brazil's reemergence in global relations since he replaced Bolsonaro in January.

Bolsonaro is a noted admirer of right-wing nationalists and showed little interest in international affairs or travel abroad. The often-abrasive right-wing populist and members of his family at times caused friction with Chinese authorities on issues from the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic to controversial telecommunications company Huawei.

Lula made trips to Argentina and Uruguay in January and to the U.S. in February, signaling the importance he gives to international

affairs, experts said. He toured the world during his first presidency from 2003-2010, particularly in his second term, when he visited dozens of countries, and has visited China twice before.

Yesterday, he also visited a Huawei research center in Shanghai where he was shown a presentation on 5G and solutions in telemedicine, education and connectivity

"A very strong investment in research and innovation," Lula tweeted in a show of support for a company shunned by the U.S. and many European countries as a potential security risk.

A key piece of Lula's outreach abroad is his proposal that Brazil and other developing countries, including China, mediate peace over Ukraine. However, his suggestion that Ukraine cede Crimea as a means to forge peace has angered Kyiv and its closest backers.

China has also sought to play a role in ending the conflict, though in a manner highly supportive of Moscow. It has refused to condemn the invasion, criticized economic sanctions on Russia and accused the U.S. and NATO of provoking the conflict.

Russia and China declared a "no limits" relationship in a 2022 joint statement and Xi reaffirmed the closeness of ties in March by meeting with President Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

A Chinese peace proposal presented in February contains aspects in common with Lula's, such as ceasing hostilities and starting negotiations, but says nothing about the return of Ukrainian territory seized by Russia and its separatist allies. **MDT/AP**

DIRE STRAIT

Germany appeals for reducing tensions over Taiwan

GERMANY'S government appealed for efforts to reduce tensions over Taiwan as the German foreign minister arrived in China yesterday for official talks following Chinese military exercises near the self-governed island democracy that Beijing claims is part of its territory.

Annalena Baerbock arrived in the northeastern port city of Tianjin for meetings and was due to hold talks with her Chinese counterpart, Qin Gang, today in Beijing and with senior diplomat Wang Yi tomorrow. Her ministry said she would discuss Taiwan, Ukraine, human rights and other issues with Chinese officials.

China's ruling Communist Party sent warships and fighter planes near Taiwan



Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock

last weekend in retaliation for a meeting between U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and the island's leader, Tsai Ing-wen.

"Threatening military gestures" increase "the risk of unintentional military

confrontations," a spokesperson for Baerbock's ministry, Andrea Sasse, said in Berlin.

"We therefore call on all partners in the region and are working also with our international partners to

contribute to a de-escalation in the Strait of Taiwan," Sasse said.

Taiwan and mainland China split in 1949 after a civil war. The Communist Party says the island is obligated to rejoin the mainland, by force if necessary.

European governments are increasingly worried about Chinese pressure on Taiwan, a global high-tech center and one of the biggest trading economies.

European governments with the exception of Vatican City have diplomatic relations with Beijing instead of Taiwan but maintain informal and commercial relations with the island. European legislators have visited Taiwan and met Tsai to show support in the face of Chinese intimidation.

On Ukraine, Baerbock

said in a statement issued by her ministry that Germany's interest in "bringing the war on our European doorstep in Ukraine to a swift, lasting and just end" was at the top of her agenda for the visit.

"As a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, China bears a special responsibility for world peace," she said.

Germany has strongly backed Ukraine's resistance to Russia's invasion, while Beijing has blamed the U.S. and NATO for provoking the conflict.

While trade and investment between them remain strong, Germany has grown increasingly wary of China's growing influence in its economy.

Germany has ordered a new security assessment

of Chinese company COSCO's plan to purchase a 25% stake in a container terminal in Hamburg amid heavy criticism from many in Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government, throwing the deal into doubt and prompting strong complaints from Beijing.

"We hope Germany can refrain from politicizing business cooperation, making it something about ideology or security, or artificially setting up obstacles," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a briefing yesterday.

Baerbock plans to travel to South Korea on Saturday and then attend a meeting of foreign ministers of the Group of Seven major economies in Japan on Sunday. **MDT/AP**

NORTH KOREA

Kim fires missile that may have been new type of weapon

NORTH Korea yesterday conducted its first intercontinental ballistic missile launch in a month, possibly testing a new more mobile, harder-to-detect missile for the first time, its neighbors said, as it extends its provocative run of weapons tests.

Japan briefly urged residents on a northern island to take shelter in an indication of its vigilance over North Korea's evolving missile threats.

The missile was launched on a high angle from near the North Korean capital of Pyongyang and fell in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan following a 1,000-kilometer flight, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staffs said in a statement.

It described its range as medium or longer. The U.S. National Security Council called it a long-range missile and Japan's government said it likely had an intercontinental range.



A TV screen is seen reporting North Korea's missile launch with file footage during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul yesterday

South Korea's military believes North Korea launched a new type of ballistic missile, possibly using solid fuel, a defense official said under the condition of anonymity because of office rules.

If the launch involved a solid-fuel ICBM, it would be the Nor-

th's first test of such a weapon. North Korea's known ICBMs all use liquid propellants that must be fueled before launches. But the fuel in a solid-propellant weapon is already loaded, allowing it to be moved easier and fired faster.

A solid-fuel ICBM is one of the

key high-tech weapons that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has vowed to build to better cope with what he calls U.S. military threats. He also wants a multiwarhead missile, a nuclear-powered submarine, a hypersonic missile and a spy satellite.

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said the launch may have involved a new intermediate- or long-range missile powered by solid propellants, or be linked to North Korean preparation to launch a spy satellite.

U.S. National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said the latest launch "needlessly raises tensions and risks destabilizing the security situation in the region." Watson said the United States will take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the American homeland and South Korean and Japanese allies.

During an emergency meeting of Seoul's National Security Council,

officials stressed the need to tighten three-way security cooperation with Washington and Tokyo. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida held a meeting of his NSC to analyze the launch and Japan's response.

The nuclear envoys of Seoul, Washington and Tokyo held a telephone conversation where they called for a "decisive and united international response" to North Korean provocations and stronger efforts to stem illicit North Korean funding of its weapons program.

North Korea commonly test-launches missiles toward the international waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, using elevated trajectories to avoid neighboring countries. South Korea and Japan typically don't issue evacuation orders unless they determine the North Korean weapon is flying in their direction.

Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada told reporters the North Korean missile launched yesterday did not reach Japan's exclusive economic zone. But Japanese authorities still urged people on the northernmost island of Hokkaido to seek shelter and temporarily suspended train, bus and subway services there. Local communities also activated alert sirens through community speakers, urging people to evacuate. **MDT/AP**

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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER
"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)



AP PHOTO



U.S. President Joe Biden (right), and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol

SOUTH KOREA

US intelligence leak complicates summit with Seoul

HYUNG-JIN KIM & KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

LEAKED U.S. intelligence documents suggesting Washington spied on South Korea have put the country's president in a delicate situation ahead of a state visit to the U.S., the first such trip by a South Korean leader in 12 years.

The documents contain purportedly private conversations between senior South Korean officials about Ukraine, indicating that Washington may have conducted surveillance on a key Asian ally even as the two nations publicly vowed to reinforce their alliance.

Since taking office last year, conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol has put a bolstered military partnership with the United States at the heart of his foreign policy to address intensifying North Korean nuclear threats and other challenges. The April 26 summit with President Joe Biden is seen as crucial to winning a stronger U.S. security commitment and resolving grievances over the Biden administration's economic and technology policies.

The leaked documents were posted online as part of a major U.S. intelligence breach. The papers viewed by The Associated Press indicate that South Korea's

National Security Council "grappled" with the U.S. in early March over an American request to provide artillery ammunition to Ukraine.

The documents, which cited a signals intelligence report, said then-NSC Director Kim Sung-han suggested the possibility of selling the 330,000 rounds of 155 mm munitions to Poland, since getting the ammunition to Ukraine quickly was the United States' ultimate goal.

South Korea, a growing arms exporter, has a policy of not supplying weapons to countries at war. It has not provided arms directly to Ukraine, although it has shipped humanitarian aid and joined U.S.-led economic sanctions against Russia.

Yoon's government said it discussed the leaked papers with the United States, and they agreed that "a considerable number" of the documents were fabricated. The South Korean government avoided any public complaints about the U.S. and did not specify which documents were faked.

"There's no indication that the U.S., which is our ally, conducted (eavesdropping) on us with

malicious intent," Kim Tae-hyo, Seoul's deputy national security director, told reporters Tuesday at Dulles Airport near Washington at the start of a trip aimed at preparing for the summit.

Senior Biden administration have discussed the leaks with allies at high levels and sought to reassure them of the U.S. government's commitment to safe-guarding intelligence. The administration also sought to downplay the impact the leak would have on Yoon's upcoming visit.

Seoul said it discussed the leaked papers with the US, and they agreed that 'a considerable number' of documents were fabricated

"Our commitment to the Republic of Korea remains iron-clad, and President Biden looks forward to welcoming President Yoon to the White House for the upcoming state visit to discuss their shared commitment for a strong and deeply integrated U.S.-ROK Alliance that maintains peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond," the

White House National Security Council said in a statement, using South Korea's official name.

The Yoon government's stance invited criticism from liberal rivals, who called on the government to lodge strong protests with the U.S. They also suspected what they call Yoon's hasty relocation of his presidential office to a Defense Ministry compound in central Seoul may have left the office vulnerable to wiretapping.

"As a sovereign nation, we must sternly respond to the spying of state secrets, even if it was committed by an ally with whom (South Korea) has bonded over blood," said Park Hong-geun, floor leader of the main liberal opposition Democratic Party.

In an official statement, Yoon's office said it maintains tight security, including anti-eavesdropping systems. It called the opposition party's attempts to link the office relocation to the spying allegation "diplomatic suicidal acts" that shake South Korea's national interests and its alliance with the U.S.

The situation is unlikely to threaten the country's alliance with the U.S. that was forged during the 1950-53 Korean War,

many experts say.

"No big damage is expected on the Korea-U.S. alliance as it seems both governments share the view that they would focus on the alliance, more concretely on a successful state visit by Yoon," said Bong Young-shik, an expert at Seoul's Yonsei Institute for North Korean Studies.

If Yoon returns with some achievements, Koreans will conclude that he put up with the spying allegations "because bigger matters were at stake," Bong said. But if the visit amounts to "a pomp-only trip," people could question whether South Korea "made lots of concessions."

One possible achievement for Yoon would be if South Korea takes on a role in the management of U.S. nuclear weapons in the face of North Korea's advancing nuclear arsenal.

Other wins would be securing U.S. benefits for major South Korean businesses involved in the making of electric vehicles and easing U.S. restrictions on technology exports to China, which has been a major manufacturing base for South Korean chipmakers.

If the U.S. intends to help Yoon, "the latest incident on the documents could end up strengthening the Korea-U.S. alliance and helping South Korea win something from the U.S.," said Kim Yeol Soo, an expert at South Korea's Korea Institute for Military Affairs.

Kim Tae-hyung, a professor at Seoul's Soongsil University, said the exposure of possible U.S. spying could help Seoul maintain its existing policy of not supplying weapons to Ukraine. But it's also possible that the Yoon government reconsiders that policy now that the U.S. demands are public, Kim said.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, South Korea has agreed to provide billions of dollars' worth of tanks, howitzers, fighter jets and other weapons to Poland, a NATO member.

An American official said in November that the United States had agreed to buy 100,000 artillery rounds from South Korean manufacturers to provide to Ukraine, although South Korean officials have maintained that the munitions were meant to refill depleted U.S. stocks.

Choi Jin, director of the Seoul-based Institute of Presidential Leadership, said it's also no secret that allies spy on each other, as well as their adversaries.

The U.S. wiretapping activities "are something that everyone already knows," although it becomes a more sensitive matter when the practice is made public, Choi said.

"I think South Koreans also try to wiretap (U.S. officials) as well," Choi said. "People feel animosity toward the word 'wiretapping.' But in other words, it's called intelligence gathering." **MDT/AP**



Ajay Banga, former president and CEO of MasterCard

ANALYSIS

NEW INDIA-BORN WORLD BANK CHIEF: REAL CHANGE OR REBRANDING?

SIBI ARASU, BENGALURU

The incoming president of the World Bank was born in India and forged his early business success there, a fact supporters say gives Ajay Banga valuable insight into the challenges faced by the developing countries the bank is supposed to help.

But not everyone is sure that Banga, who has spent most of the last two decades in the U.S. corporate world, can be counted on to shake up the bank in the way some think it should be.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen talked up Banga's credentials this week on the sidelines of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's spring meetings in Washington. Banga, currently vice chairman at private equity firm General Atlantic, has more than 30 years of business experience, including as CEO of Mastercard and on the boards of the American Red Cross, Kraft Foods and Dow Inc.

"He has the right leadership and management skills, background, and financial expertise to lead the World Bank at a critical moment in its history," Yellen said.

That came after President Joe Biden, in nominating Banga in February, heralded his "critical experience"

dealing with urgent world challenges like climate change, even though his resume shows little to do with climate credentials.

The World Bank — the world's largest and oldest development bank — includes 189 member countries with a mission to reduce poverty and build prosperity in the developing world. The threat of climate change is a major focus, with the bank billing itself as the largest financier of climate action in developing countries.

But leaders and activists from poorer nations, especially those vulnerable to the extreme weather made worse by climate change, have called for massive reforms in the entire multinational development bank system. Led by Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley and embraced by French President Emmanuel Macron, they have pushed something called the Bridgetown Initiative, which would make it easier and faster for developing countries hit by weather disasters to get money with lower interest rates for both recovery and for building to be more resilient.

Banga will replace David Malpass, a Donald Trump appointee who announced he would step down this June, a year early, after

coming under pressure for declining to say whether he agreed with scientific consensus on climate change.

Climate finance analysts are relieved that Banga at least believes climate change is caused by fossil fuels. But many are skeptical that his experience — which includes stints at Nestle, Pizza Hut and Mastercard — is a natural fit for climate finance. And while he comes from a climate-stressed state in India, a nation that's simultaneously battling growing energy demands and climate change effects, his long career in America adds to their wait-and-see attitude.

Anit Mukherjee, a senior fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, a think tank devoted to India's global development, called Banga's ascension "a proud moment for India."

"Growing up in India, Banga will likely understand the issues developing countries face. It is also clear he understands markets around the world," said Mukherjee, who has worked closely on reforming multilateral development banks. "Whether he will understand the challenges of climate financing and development is still unclear."

Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at

Climate Action Network International, called Malpass's departure a historic opportunity to "change the system." But Banga is just old wine in a new bottle, Singh said.

"He has worked in corporations whose prime motive is profit. When it comes to development, especially climate change, it is about justice and equity," said Singh. Banga's background "doesn't inspire confidence," he said.

"We are facing multiple crises including climate change, the debt crisis, and the banking crisis. We cannot continue with the same systems that are responsible for these crises," said Singh.

Luiz Vieira, coordinator of the Bretton Woods Project, which watchdogs the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, lamented as unfair the tradition by which the U.S. typically appoints the World Bank head and Europe appoints the IMF head. Banga "doesn't even meet the bare bones criteria," he said.

The son of an Indian army officer, Banga was born in 1959 and educated in some of India's premier institutions. When India's economy liberalized in the early '90s, Banga was able to work and rise through the ranks of multinational corporations breaking into India.

Since moving to the U.S. in the early 2000s, Banga has held prestigious positions in the corporate world, including heading Mastercard and serving as director of Exor and Temasek, large holding companies whose portfolios are diverse and include media companies such as Mediacorp and the Economist as well as automobile companies like Ferrari.

"Appointing someone like Banga is a great way to open the conversation with developing countries," said Suranjali Tandon, an assistant professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, a research institute affiliated to the Indian government.

But Tandon wondered whether Banga will be able or willing to drastically change how the World Bank works.

"His private sector experience makes him well versed with taking high risks and getting high returns," she said.

"Development finance, especially climate finance though, is about high risk and low return investments. Given this, I don't see the World Bank radically transforming under his leadership." **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1970 CRITICAL EXPLOSION CRIPPLES APOLLO 13

An explosion on board Apollo 13 has caused one of the most critical situations in American space history and put the lives of the three astronauts on board in severe jeopardy.

The explosion happened in the fuel cells of the spacecraft's service module approximately 56 hours after lift-off.

This resulted in the loss of Apollo 13's main power supply which means oxygen and water reserves are now critically low.

The safety of the three astronauts, Captain James Lovell, Jack Swigert and Fred Haise, is uncertain although Nasa is hoping emergency contingency plans will ensure their safe return.

The cause of the explosion is not yet clear although it is understood it could have been the result of a meteorite crashing into the service module.

It is unlikely the exact cause will ever be ascertained as the service module will burn up before the spacecraft's re-entry into the earth's atmosphere.

The crew are currently surviving on the emergency battery power supply of the lunar module, Aquarius.

If the accident had occurred after the lunar module had been detached for the moon landing, the astronauts would have faced certain death.

The spacecraft's main computer has now been switched off to conserve what little power remains in the command module, Odyssey, as this part of the spacecraft will be required for re-entry into the earth's atmosphere.

Plans have been made to "slingshot" Apollo 13 around the Moon and fire the spacecraft's last remaining booster engine to take it away from the Moon's orbit and bring it back on course to Earth.

This is a highly risky operation and there is no back-up should anything go wrong.

If all goes to plan Apollo 13 is due to splash down at approximately 1900 BST on Friday 17 April.

The Apollo 13 mission was to have been man's third Moon landing. The spacecraft was due to land in the Fra Mauro area of the Moon on Thursday 16 April.

Captain Lovell and Mr Haise were due to carry out geological experiments on the Moon's surface as part of an ongoing project to establish the true age of the Moon.

Rock samples taken from previous missions have been dated as being 4,500 million years old.

During the 33-hour Moon landing Mr Swigert would have been responsible for piloting the command module in lunar orbit.

Mr Swigert replaced Thomas Mattingly as command module pilot just hours before the mission began after it was found that Mr Mattingly had no immunity after exposure to German Measles.



Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Apollo 13 successfully returned to Earth on Friday 17 April 1970.

The spacecraft entered the atmosphere 400,000 ft (121,920 metres) above the Earth and hurtled towards Earth at 25,000 mph (40,234 km/h).

The command capsule splashed down in the Pacific Ocean at 1907 BST. The lunar module and the service module had been jettisoned before re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere.

Within three minutes of the capsule landing helicopters were on the scene.

The three astronauts were airlifted onto rescue boat Iwo Jima where they spent the night before flying to Samoa to be reunited with their families.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Lovers may no be truthful. Secret affairs may be brought out in the open. Put your efforts into making changes to your domestic scene.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Try not to upset others with your plans. You have been going through a period of change that no doubt caused problems with your loved ones.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
You can get into weight loss programs or go out and change your image with a new look in clothing, hairstyle, and attitude. This will not be the best day to make changes or renovations to your residence.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You can pick up information that will give you an edge. Be careful that you aren't saddled with the responsibilities of others. Reevaluate your position and make decisions about your future goals.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Work quietly behind the scenes for best results. Don't expect others to live up to their promises and you won't be disappointed or find yourself stuck with delays.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
You'll only hurt your lover if you don't. Take the time to do something nice for your friends and relatives. Be prepared for an active but rewarding day.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Relax and enjoy what you've accomplished when you're finished. You can find out interesting information if you get a chance to talk to people you respect.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Curb or cut out that bad habit you've been meaning to do something about. You may find it difficult to discuss personal matters with family members.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
You need activity. You can be sure that any dealing with large institutions should go well. You will be able to catch up on overdue paper work.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Don't consume more than necessary. It will be all around you. Don't blow situations out of proportion. Try not to lend or borrow money today.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Your ability to stand out in a crowd will bring you the recognition you desire. Take the time to do something nice for your friends and relatives.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Your confidence is growing and advancement is apparent. Help others solve their dilemmas. Try to mix business with pleasure while traveling.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

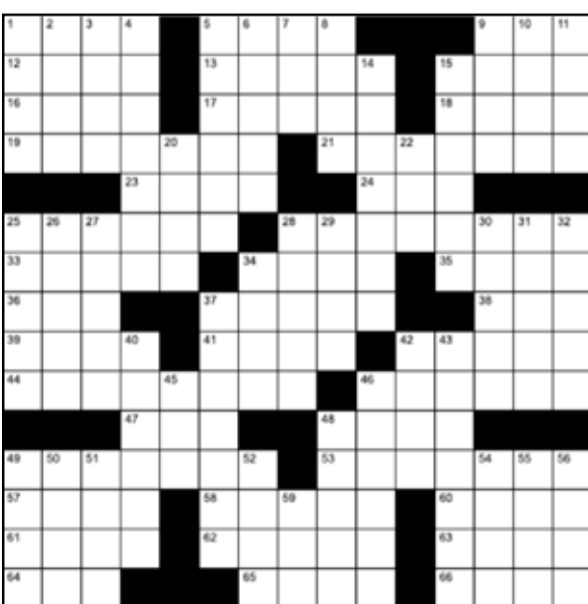
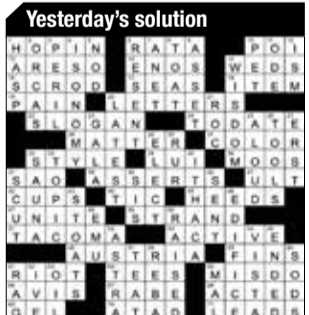
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	13	23	sandstorm
Changchun	0	15	cloudy
Chengdu	16	27	cloudy
Chongqing	19	29	cloudy
Fuzhou	18	31	cloudy
Guangzhou	22	28	thunderstorms
Guiyang	17	23	overcast
Haikou	24	31	cloudy
Hangzhou	14	27	rain
Harbin	-2	13	fine
Hefei	14	25	overcast
Nanjing	16	26	cloudy
Shanghai	15	24	rain
Taipei	18	26	cloudy
Wuhan	18	25	rain
Hong Hong	24	27	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-2	8	cloudy
Frankfurt	2	16	cloudy
Paris	8	11	rain
London	6	11	rain
New York	16	29	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Mother Hubbard's quest; 5- Radius neighbor; 9- Sgt., for one; 12- Mil. addresses; 13- Sound of a horse; 15- Simpleton; 16- DEA agent; 17- Inuit dwelling; 18- Other, in Oaxaca; 19- Dry red table wine of Italy; 21- Sincere; 23- Ovid, e.g.; 24- Put on; 25- Quaking trees; 28- Very hot day; 33- Scuffle; 34- Pack away; 35- Bronte heroine; 36- Follower's suffix; 37- Get to know; 38- Actress Joanne; 39- Incite; 41- Shrek, e.g.; 42- ___-ski; 44- Punctually; 46- Scrape off; 47- Film director Lee; 48- Canadian tribe; 49- Embrangle; 53- Illness; 57- Inner surface of the hand; 58- Negates; 60- Member of a great Peruvian people; 61- Hip bones; 62- Orchard; 63- "The Lion King" villain; 64- 100 yrs.; 65- Flock members; 66- Brio;

DOWN 1- Judge's seat; 2- Moonfish; 3- Me neither; 4- One on the run; 5- Combines; 6- On the up-and-up; 7- Latin word meaning "nothing"; 8- Awestruck; 9- Words of denial; 10- Toe woe; 11- It's blown among the reeds; 14- Dancing party; 15- Spring back; 20- Zilch; 22- Hide-hair link; 25- Compadre; 26- Attack; 27- Fold; 28- Square one; 29- An apple or a planet will have this at the centre; 30- Nine-headed serpent; 31- Made a mistake; 32- Employ again; 34- Utah lily; 37- Accommodation in a house; 40- Teaching of the Buddha; 42- Genesis shepherd; 43- Proposition; 45- Brian of Roxy Music; 46- Comes up; 48- Have a cow?; 49- Long poem, such as those attributed to Homer; 50- Boy or man; 51- Russian pancake; 52- Decoy; 54- Business letter abbr.; 55- Final Four org.; 56- Mountain lake; 59- Fan setting;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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AD

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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'THE PEKING EXPRESS' RAISES NICHE HISTORICAL EVENT

A little-known piece of history is resurfacing 100 years after the luxurious Peking Express train was attacked by bandits in the middle of the night and hundreds of passengers, including dozens of foreigners, were taken hostage and marched across the Chinese countryside.

James M. Zimmerman's "The Peking Express: The Bandits Who Stole a Train, Stunned the West, and Broke the Republic of China" takes mountains of research and boils it down to a digestible telling of the 1923 train derailment that, despite having considerable political and personal consequences, had been largely forgotten. Aided by pictures and quotes — some directly from the bandits, hostages and other players involved in the so-called Lincheng Outrage — the lawyer takes on a surprisingly engaging voice as a historical author, cutting between people and scenes like a movie.

Drawing heavily from firsthand accounts and news co-

verage from the time, the whole tone has a slight air of an early 20th-century radio report so that you can almost hear a transatlantic accent in the words.

The sourcing also provides quirky eccentricities to illuminate the various folks at play throughout the story: Hostage Lucy Aldrich is an overweight, hard-of-hearing spinster who doesn't take grief from the bandits, even bossing them around from time to time; Russky is a well-traveled, vodka-drinking bandit who can belt out a Chinese or Russian folk song at a moment's notice and brighten the spirits of both the hostages and his fellow bandits.

Those details — with a touch of the racism, sexism and ageism for a well-rounded view of the time — become vital to keeping the characters straight and the story interesting, as well as understanding people's motives.

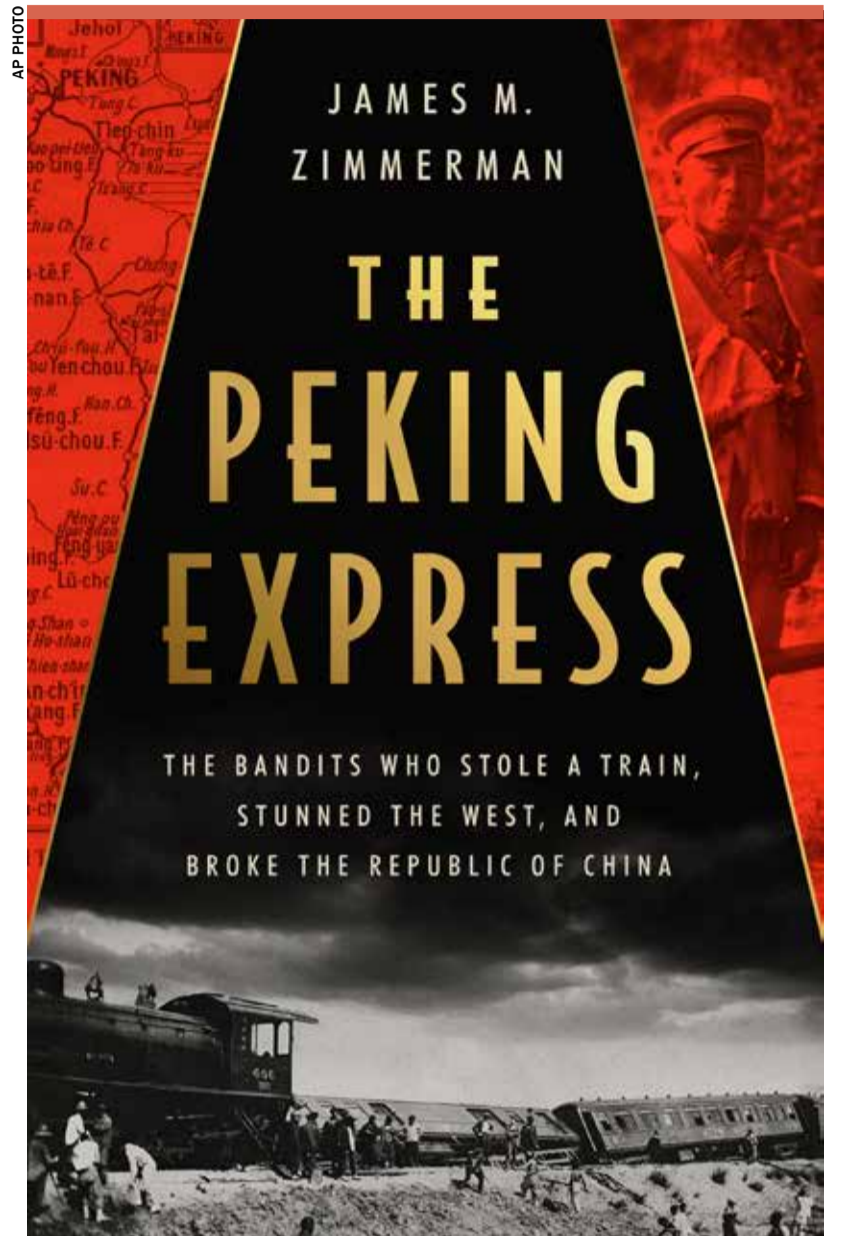
And "The Peking Express" is friendly for popping in and out. While it reads well chronologically, you can also pick a section

of personal import and have enough context that you won't be lost. There's a detailed index, maps and even a character list for easy reference.

Tasked with balancing dry geopolitics and tricky negotiations with the human experience and emotion that make it important and impactful, Zimmerman is mostly — but not entirely — successful.

Slow moments dot "The Peking Express." But the bits that drag are balanced by shocks of emotion cycling through camaraderie, disgust, elation and many more as the complex situation brings together totally disparate lives.

If you like historically accurate retellings of niche events, you'll be pleased. If nonfiction isn't normally your thing, this may not be magical or exciting enough to keep you locked in, but if you're willing to go along for the ride you'll find transportive moments and highlights of intrigue.
DONNA EDWARDS, MDT/AP



"The Peking Express: The Bandits Who Stole a Train, Stunned the West, and Broke the Republic of China" by James M. Zimmerman (PublicAffairs)

AD

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TASTE OF EDESIA

Delicately spicy

IRENE SAM, MDT

FOR fans of Hunan and Sichuan cuisine, **Feng Wei Ju**, StarWorld Hotel's flagship restaurant, has a special place in our hearts. The restaurant has earned a number of prestigious accolades, and remains as the only Hunan and Sichuan cuisine restaurant in Macau to have received two Michelin stars for six consecutive years. These awards are a tribute to the attention to detail and profound respect for culinary craftsmanship found in the creation of each dish, from the remarkably precise knifing skills for Sichuan cuisine and the colourful chopped chillies in Hunan dishes, to the delicate handmade noodles served with tender morsels of meat. By staying true to the authenticity of Chinese cuisine and the nation's culinary art forms, Feng Wei Ju stimulates the senses of sight, smell and taste to present an unprecedented dining experience for guests.

Master Chef Chan Chek Keong, the Executive Chinese Chef of StarWorld Hotel and a well-respected leader in the culinary industry, is at the helm of Feng Wei Ju. He searched all over China to find three chefs who are true masters in their craft in creating authentic Hunan and Sichuan dishes as well as handmade noodles to build a dream team at Feng Wei Ju. His foresight and vision for these three culinary art forms has led to the tremendous success of the restaurant. Master Chef Keong upholds the culinary philosophy that "tradition is not old-school, and innovation never forgets its roots."

One of the most symbolic dishes of Feng Wei Ju is the Boiled Mandarin Fish Fillets in Chili Oil which features a homemade red

chili oil creation that is slowly and meticulously brewed together with more than 20 selected spices for three days. A fresh Mandarin fish weighing 900 grams is also purposely chosen for its tender and succulent meat and is sliced to the right thickness. Chef Zhang's signature Sliced Pork with Garlic Puree and Crispy Chicken Fillets (a Sichuan favorite), showcase his impressive knife skills and meticulous seasoning techniques. For the chicken dish, he carefully selects chicken legs of perfect consistency, and uses his precise knifing skills to cut the chicken into small fillets for marinating. To ensure the chicken is crispy on the outside and tender on the inside, he applies different frying techniques which give the chicken its sweet and tender texture.

Feng Wei Ju is also renowned for its homemade noodles. The signature Sichuan Dan Dan Noodles are a world apart from other restaurants which serve machine-made noodles. Chef Li Shuan Xiang, who is Head of the Noodles and Dim Sum Section for Feng Wei Ju, personally traveled to Inner Mongolia to source the highest quality flour, and this flour is air-flown into Macau and used to create fresh noodle dough that is skillfully kneaded by hand. For the finishing touch of the dan dan noodles, he chops pork leg into finely minced meat, seasons it with his own homemade secret recipe of ingredients and cooks them together to create the dark brown topping that is typical of dan dan noodles. The pork is fragrant, the noodles are smooth and the soup is thick and salty – a mouthwatering dish, and the perfect ending to an unforgettable Hunan and Sichuan dining experience at Feng Wei Ju.



Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu, MDT



THE TIMARU 1500M TURF

2023-04-16|Sun|15:25

TOP Mountain God is on his upward trajectory in MJC, this Fastnet Rock offspring can mount a strong challenge here, he is in form and 1500M turf is always his aim in getting a win. **Top Mountain God** is holding his condition well with only 116 to shoulder and a good barrier draw, he will give a strong fight at the straight with Out TO Win, hopefully he can get to the front and out to win, it wouldn't surprise to see him outperform his odds here.

Race 3 Horse no. 7 Top Mountain God Win & Place Bets of the Day



OPINION

Tech Views

Sayonha Mandal, University of Nebraska



PASSKEYS OR, HOW PASSWORDS ARE A THING OF THE PAST

Passwords could soon become passé.

Effective passwords are cumbersome, all the more so when reinforced by two-factor authentication. But the need for authentication and secure access to websites is as great as ever. Enter passkeys.

Passkeys are digital credentials stored on your phone or computer. They are analogous to physical keys. You access your passkey by signing in to your device using a personal identification number (PIN), swipe pattern or biometrics like fingerprint or face recognition. You set your online accounts to trust your phone or computer. To break into your accounts, a hacker would need to physically possess your device and have the means to sign in to it.

As a cybersecurity researcher, I believe that passkeys not only provide faster, easier and more secure sign-ins, they minimize human error in password security and authorization steps. You don't need to remember passwords for every account and don't need to use two-factor authentication.

Passkeys are generated via public-key cryptography. They use a public-private key pair to ensure a mathematically protected private relationship between users' devices and the online accounts being accessed. It would be nearly impossible for a hacker to guess the passkey – hence the need to physically possess the device the passkey is accessed from.

Passkeys consist of a long private key – a long string of encrypted characters – created for a specific device. Websites cannot access the value of the passkey. Rather, the passkey verifies that a website possesses the corresponding public key. You can use the passkey from one device to access a website using another device. For example, you can use your laptop to access a website using the passkey on your phone by authorizing the login from your phone. And if you lose your phone, the passkey can be stored securely in the cloud with the phone's other data, which can be restored to a new phone.

Passwords can be guessed, phished or otherwise stolen. Security experts advise users to make their passwords longer with more characters, mixing alphanumeric and special symbols. A good password should not be in the dictionary or in phrases, have no consecutive letters or numbers, but be memorable. Users should not share them with anyone. Last but not least, users should change passwords every six months at minimum for all devices and accounts. Using a password manager to remember and update strong passwords helps but can still be a nuisance.

Even if you follow all of the best practices to keep your passwords safe, there is no guarantee of airtight security. Hackers are continuously developing and using software exploits, hardware tools and ever-advancing algorithms to break these defenses. Cybersecurity experts and malicious hackers are locked in an arms race.

Passkeys remove the onus from the user to create, remember and guard all their passwords. Apple, Google and Microsoft are supporting passkeys and encourage users to use them instead of passwords. As a result, passkeys are likely to soon overtake passwords and password managers in the cybersecurity battlefield.

However, it will take time for websites to add support for passkeys, so passwords aren't going to go extinct overnight. IT managers still recommend that people use a password manager like 1Password or Bitwarden. And even Apple, which is encouraging the adoption of passkeys, has its own password manager.

US, UKRAINE SAY MANY WAR SECRETS SAFE FROM INTEL LEAKS

Ukraine's leaders say they don't see a major U.S. intelligence leak as gravely damaging future offensives. A key reason: They have long held back on sharing their most sensitive operational information, doubting Washington's ability to keep their secrets safe.

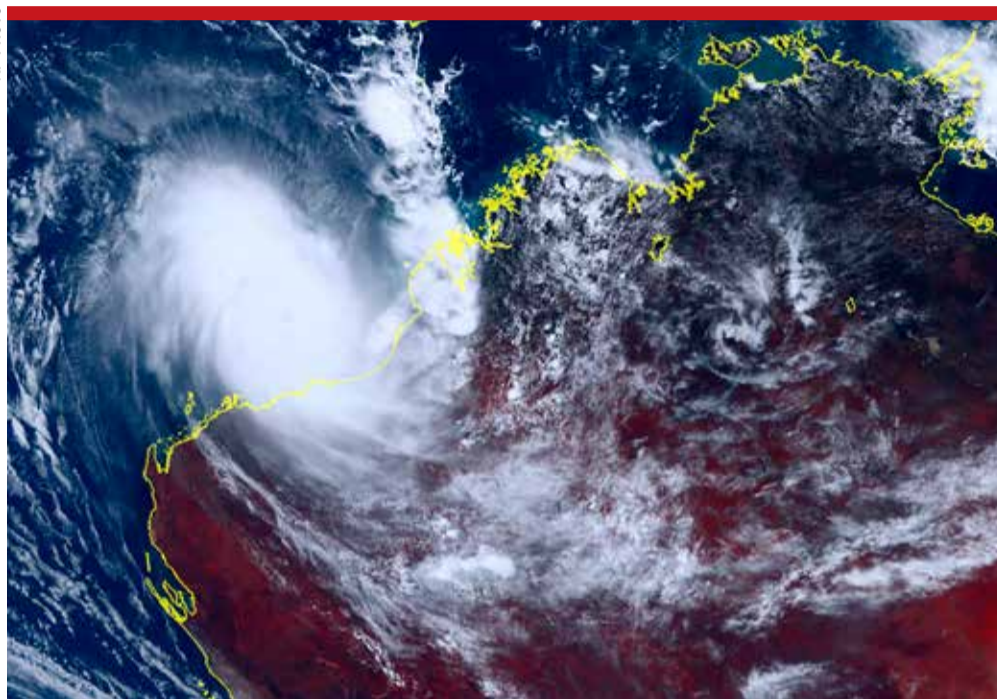
Ukrainian and U.S. officials said this week that only Ukrainians know some battle plans and other operational information, not the Americans, their most important ally. That means the leak of secret military documents, including some assessing Ukraine's battlefield strengths and weaknesses against Russia, may not have been enough – so far – to change the course of the war.

"If military operations are planned, then only a very narrow circle of people know about the planning of the special operation," Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar said on Ukrainian television. "The risk of leaks is very minimal" for the most important war matters.

Still, the U.S. sees the leaks as grave. The documents include previously unreported sensitive disclosures about Ukraine, South Korea, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and others. Senior Biden administration officials are working to stop the flow of classified information onto social media and websites and head off any lasting damage to relationships with allies and strategic partners (see p11).

THE BUZZ

AP PHOTO



This satellite image shows cyclone Ilsa approaching Australia's west coast yesterday

AUSTRALIA'S MOST POWERFUL CYCLONE IN 12 YEARS TO CROSS COAST

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

A tropical cyclone nearing Australia is forecast to be the most powerful storm in 12 years to hit the country, bringing wind gusts of up to 315 kilometers per hour as it crosses the northwest coast, meteorologists said yesterday.

Cyclones are common along the sparsely populated Pilbara coast of Western Australia state and fatalities are rare, but authorities fear that Cyclone Ilsa's extraordinary wind speeds could take some in its path by surprise.

Ilsa reached the highest Category 5 intensity yesterday over the Indian Ocean and is expected to maintain that destructive level as it crosses the Pilbara coast by early today, Australia's Bureau of Meteorology said.

Category 5 cyclones have mean wind speeds exceeding 200 kph with gusts exceeding 280 kph. They typically cause widespread destruction, the bureau said.

The last Category 5 storm to cross the Australian coast was Cyclone Yasi in 2011. Yasi caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage in the east coast state of Queensland. The only death blamed on the storm was a man killed by

exhaust fumes from a electricity generator he had used in a confined space.

In 2019, Category 5 Cyclone Veronica did not cross the Pilbara coast, but damaged infrastructure and disrupted the region's mining and offshore gas industries.

Ilsa is expected to cross the coast somewhere in a 220-kilometer span between the iron ore export town of Port Hedland and Wallal Downs Station, a 200,000-hectare cattle ranch to the east.

Those close to where Ilsa makes landfall will experience gusts of up to 315 kph, the bureau said.

The storm's expected landfall is near the remote Pardoo Roadhouse and Tavern where manager Will Bath planned to shelter.

"We haven't had any as strong as this in many years. This is a big one," Bath said. "There's no point in worrying. I can't stop it."

Yesterday, police closed the highway along the Pilbara coast between Port Hedland and the tourist town of Broome, 610 kilometers to the northeast, to prevent motorists from risking the worsening conditions. Authorities expect the North West Coastal Highway will be impassable due to flooding before Ilsa

passes.

Port Hedland and Broome are the largest population centers in the Pilbara region with 16,000 and 15,000 people respectively.

Bidayadanga, home to around 700 people midway between Wallal Downs Station and Broome, stocked enough food and fuel by Thursday to last a week in case the community is isolated by floodwater. Bidayadanga CEO Tania Baxter said maintaining the community's electricity would be critical to how they weather the storm.

"Without power, we haven't got water and possibly even communications," Baxter said. "So if we can maintain power supply, then we'll be fine. We'll manage everything else that comes with it and any damage that comes."

Many in the cyclone's path have evacuated in recent days. In Port Hedland, from which the world's largest bulk export port sends Australian iron ore around the globe, evacuation centers have opened to people whose homes might not withstand the storm, Mayor Peter Carter said.

"Everyone is on edge," Carter said. "They understand that cyclones are what they are. They're very, very unpredictable." MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



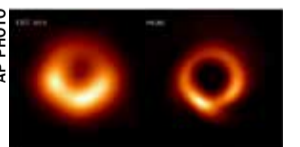
USA Former President Donald Trump is expected to visit the offices of New York's attorney general today [Macau time] for his second deposition in a legal battle over his company's business practices. The Republican was scheduled to meet with lawyers for Attorney General Letitia James, who sued Trump last year. Her lawsuit claims Trump and his family misled banks and business associates by giving them false information about his net worth and the value of assets such as hotels and golf courses.

AP PHOTO



England Mary Quant, the visionary fashion designer whose colorful, sexy miniskirts epitomized Swinging London in the 1960s and influenced youth culture around the world, has died. She was 93. Quant's family said she died "peacefully at home" in Surrey, southern England, yesterday. She created mix-and-match, simple garments that had an element of whimsy. Some compared her impact on the fashion world to the Beatles' impact on pop music.

AP PHOTO



Space The first image of a black hole captured four years ago revealed a fuzzy, fiery doughnut-shaped object. Now, researchers have used artificial intelligence to give that cosmic beauty shot a touch-up. The updated picture, published yesterday in the Astrophysical Journal Letters, keeps the original shape, but with a skinnier ring and a sharper resolution, said lead author Lia Medeiros, an astrophysicist at the Institute for Advanced Study in New Jersey.