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electronics

BEIJING EXTENDED THE EXPIRATION DATE OF MAINLAND TRAVEL PERMITS FOR ELIGIBLE HK AND MACAU RESIDENTS: NATIONAL IMMIGRATION ADMINISTRATION

CRIME: WOMAN APPREHENDED FOR UNLICENSED PRACTICE OF MEDICINE FOLLOWING SUSPICIOUS DEATH

UN URGES TALIBAN TO END FLOGGINGS, EXECUTIONS



Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang will pay a visit to Germany, France and Norway from May 8 to 12 at the invitation of German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna and Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt, foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin announced yesterday.

More on p6

CROWDS FLOOD OLD TAIIPA

Trade unionist calls for improved tourism environment in Taipa



Pakistan-Afghanistan Taliban-appointed government has agreed with Pakistan to boost trade and lower tensions along their border amid a surge in militant attacks on security forces, officials said yesterday, under China's auspices. Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Afghanistan's Taliban-appointed foreign minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, struck the deal in Islamabad, according to Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.



Egypt The Arab League agreed yesterday [Macau time] to reinstate Syria, ending a 12-year suspension and taking another step toward bringing Syrian President Bashar Assad, a long-time regional pariah, back into the fold. Some influential league members remain opposed to reinstating Syria, chief among them Qatar, which did not send its foreign minister to Sunday's gathering. Thirteen out of the league's 22 member states sent their foreign ministers to the meeting in Cairo.



GAMING

CASINOS HIT MOP4.5B IN FIRST WEEK OF MAY



MICE

PORTUGUESE BUSINESSES TO VISIT HENGQIN

ETIHAD CARGO, SF AIRLINES TO BOOST OPERATIONS IN MAINLAND, SARS

Etihad Cargo and China-based express carrier SF Airlines signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) last month linking their respective networks, aiming to provide greater market access to key destinations in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. Under the MoU the two carriers operate flights via their two hubs. Etihad said the tie-up would enable it to expand its reach into China with an extra 25 destinations via SF Airline's in-country network. "This MoU is the latest step by Etihad Cargo in expanding its operations in China and will see the carrier utilizing SF Airlines' Chinese network to transport cargo to other destinations in China via the Chinese carrier's Hubei Province mega hub," the Middle East based carrier said.

PROPERTY PRICE INDEX ON SLIGHT INCREASE

The residential property price index for January to March increased by 1.3% over the previous period (December 2022 - February 2023) to 249. The indices for the Macau Peninsula (247.8) and Taipa and Coloane (253.8) rose by 1.5% and 0.7% respectively. Analyzed by age of building, the indices for residential units of buildings between six and 10 years old and for those over 20 years old climbed by 1.9% and 1.5% respectively, whereas the index for those between 11 and 20 years old decreased by 0.9%. Compared with the same period last year, the overall residential property price index fell by 4.2%.

IAS: SENIORS' HOUSING REGULATIONS DRAFTING IN PROGRESS

ANTHONY LAM

THE drafting of the Executive Regulations governing the procedures for the Seniors' Housing scheme is in progress, President Hon Wai of the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has disclosed.

In response to a written inquiry by lawmaker Ngan Iek Hang, the IAS president expressed his hopes that the Executive Regulations would be promulgated this year.

According to Hon, the "preliminary ideation" for the eligibility and application procedure is that only local permanent residents aged 65 or above will be accepted. They must also possess self-care ability or the conditions to achieve this. The prospective applicants' family structure and residential conditions will also be taken into account.

Meanwhile, a point-scoring mechanism is under consideration. Factors such as living in traditional low-rise buildings, also known as Tong-lau, will affect point-scoring.

Applications for the housing will commence when construction ends, which is expected by 2024. Market rates will be considered but rates for seniors' housing are expected to be slightly below



market rates.

Hon added that under the scheme, the government will fully consider the needs of senior residents. Development of Big Health, traditional Chinese medicine, healthcare, entertainment and day care is expected within the neighborhood.

On the conversion of industrial buildings on Avenida de Venceslau de Moraes to non-industrial use, Director Lai Weng Leong of the Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) reiterated the stance of complete compliance with the Land Law and the Master Urban Plan on the utilization of land

and urban constructions.

His comment was made in reply to lawmaker Leong Hong Sai's written inquiry.

Lai referred to the Master Urban Plan to explain that the only industrial areas in Macau are located in Ilha Verde, Taipa's Pak On, as well as Coloane's Concordia district and Ka-Ho. Existing industrial areas and constructions, such as those on Avenida de Venceslau de Moraes, will be gradually phased out and converted to non-industrial use, such as commercial activities, according to Lai.

Lai added that currently scattered industrial activities will be gradually incorporated to the four aforementioned industrial areas. He explained that this will be done to improve land efficiency and provide space for the development of new industries, as well as enhancing residential neighborhoods.

He also reiterated that the population structure of a district would be taken into account when the government conducts detailed planning for the district. He stressed that corresponding public facilities and leisure areas would be reserved for a better quality of life for residents.

MICE

IPIM: Portuguese businesses to visit Hengqin

AFTER the city's April marketing campaign in Europe alongside its Chief Executive's official tour, certain Portuguese businesspeople will visit Macau and inspect Hengqin, the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) has recently disclosed in a statement.

The IPIM also indicated that several business promotion events were held between March and April, facing businesses in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. With nearly 350 business matching and discussion sessions, the marketing events have led to the closing of 17 deals.

To further promote Hen-

gqin's role in the development masterplan of Macau, the Economic Development Bureau of the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin will today organize a global business pitching event, the IPIM revealed.

It added that the event will be the largest of its kind held since the establishment of the zone in Hengqin. It is expected that more than 300 attendees will participate.

The IPIM emphasized that the event will "present to the world the business environment on Hengqin and invite foreign investors to personally inspect the environment in Macau and



Hengqin."

Furthermore, it announced that more such events will be held in the future in other overseas locations. Delegations will also be sent to participate in business

pitching events organized by other parties.

Another organization, the British Chamber of Commerce in Macao (BritCham Macao), will host a trip to Hengqin on May

20. Named "a green trip," the organizer expects participants to see Hengqin's "smart technology and sustainable waste management practices" during the five-hour trip. **AL**

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Advertisement advertising@macaudailytimes.com
For subscription and general issues: general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

Trade unionist calls for improved tourism environment in Taipa

ANTHONY LAM

TRADER unionist lawmaker Ella Lei has recommended the government refine the environment in Old Taipa to improve the experience for tourists.

In her latest written inquiry, the lawmaker pointed out that as tourism activities resumed, points of possible improvements in the district have also become an issue. The Old Taipa district is popular among tourists, whether looking for food, historic stories or Instagrammable spots.

For example, Lei explained, the streets and alleys in the districts are mostly packed with people during weekends and major travel seasons. However, due to the preservation of historic values of the buildings and landscape, these streets and alleys cannot be widened.



Nonetheless, not all streets and alleys were visited, the lawmaker added. She also disclosed that some tourists wished for richer tourism elements or activities in the district.

Moreover, Lei underlined traffic

challenges faced in the district. At peak hours, both motor vehicles and pedestrians crowd up nearly all corners, and they have to either squeeze or fight for space. She identified this scenario as a potential safety concern.

She then moved on to discuss the former Iec Long Firecracker Plant, which had been converted to a tourists' site. She suggested that the government should add more elements of interest to tourists to the site.

At the same time, she also suggested the government utilize the 23,324 square meters of land adjacent to the Iec Long site retrieved last year to support the improvement of environment surrounding the Old Taipa district, including but not limited to, widening roads.

The retrieved land plot is located on the periphery of the district.

At the end of her inquiry, she asked about the government's plans to enrich tourism elements across the district, and refine the flow of travel with the help of the newly retrieved land plot, as well as streamlining the public transport stops and stands across the area.

TIGERAIR TO RELAUNCH TAIWAN-MACAU ROUTE

Tigerair will reopen and launch five routes to Macau, South Korea, Vietnam and Japan in July, according to the Taichung City Government. Mayor Lu Shiow-yen said in a press conference that the new routes will not only stimulate tourism in Taiwan, but also bring convenience to central Taiwan's citizens looking to travel abroad. Currently, Air Macau, EVA Air and Starlux Airlines operate flights to and from Macau and Taiwan.

IAA LAUNCHES MACAU CHAPTER

The International Advertising Association (IAA) has established a new Macau chapter at Vasco Bar & Lounge at Artyzen Grand Lapa to extend marketing and advertising into "one of the fastest-growing markets in the Asia-Pacific region." According to the association, it will serve as a platform for marketing industry professionals and educators to "connect, learn and share their experiences." The goal is to "collaborate and create meaningful and effective campaigns that can influence positive values for Macau." This new Macau chapter joins 34 other chapters, which cover more than 56 different countries and languages.

HENGQIN CONFERENCE FEATURES BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT OF COOPERATION ZONE

The 2023 Hengqin Global Investment Promotion Conference kicks off today, with over 300 representatives from government, the foreign consular corps in Hong Kong and Macau and Macau business associations. The conference will showcase the business environment of the cooperation zone and invite overseas investors to visit Hengqin and Macau. It will hold a promotional event on the investment environment of the cooperation zone, where a global investment promotional video will be released. On-site investigations of the business environment of the cooperation zone are also on the agenda, as well as invitations for representatives to visit Macau, as a collaboration event with the Beyond Expo.

GAMING

Casinos hit MOP4.5b in first week of May

CASINO floors averaged a daily run-rate of some MOP640 million during the first seven days of May which coincides with the May Golden Week, when the city swarmed with nearly half a million tourists.

Investment bank JP Morgan estimated that from May 1 to May 7, the gross gaming revenue of the casino sector amounted to MOP4.5 billion, a figure higher than last month's MOP490 million daily run-rate.

JP Morgan analysts DS Kim and Mufan Shi said in a note yesterday that the recorded GGR is also higher than the average of



MOP385 million which was recorded for the first quarter for the year.

Although the week included three holiday days, as well as four slow days

post-holiday, the figure is "undeniably a strong print."

According to the analysts, the demand from the mass market had recovered

to at least 90% of pre-Covid 19 levels, "if not 100%-plus" during the holiday.

The recovery is even higher than the 65% observed in the first quarter of the year, when casinos started to regain momentum following nearly three years of bleeding cash every day, due to the pandemic and economic downturn, along with strict border restrictions.

The casino sector continued to recover in April, recording MOP14.7 billion in revenue last month, the highest monthly taking since January 2020.

Last week, Morgan Stanley raised its forecast for

the city's gaming industry as the sector has been painting a rosy picture, estimating a 2023 mass GGR of USD19.9 billion (88% of 2019) and 2024 mass GGR of USD25.7 billion.

Yesterday, the city's gaming stocks declined broadly, led by MGM China, which slid about 3%, while Sands China dived 2.97%

However, the institution has raised its estimates for the two US-based operators, which have announced their first quarter earnings.

Wynn Macau, Galaxy and SJM Holdings slid 1.77%, 1.21% and 0.53% respectively. LV

IMMIGRATION

BEIJING EXTENDS SARS' MAINLAND TRAVEL PERMITS

STAFF REPORTER

BEIJING has extended the expiration date of mainland travel permits for eligible Hong Kong and Macau residents as from yesterday, the National Immigration Administration (NIA) has announced.

The validity of the eligible mainland travel permits

with an expiration date between Jan. 1, 2020, and Dec. 30, 2023, will be extended until Dec. 31, 2023.

The extension will enable permit holders to travel to and from the mainland using normal entry and exit inspection procedures, the NIA said.

The country's immigration authority said it recog-

nized there was a surge in demand for travel between the special administrative regions and the mainland now that border ports have resumed normal services.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many residents from the two special administrative regions have been unable to renew their permits in a timely manner, and have faced

long queues at visa offices, NIA has acknowledged.

As cited in a South China Morning Post report, the announcement came after Hong Kong's China Travel Service (CTS) offices, which issue permits and visas for trips to the mainland, struggled to deal with an influx of new applications after the border fully reopened in

February.

CTS stopped accepting walk-in requests and required all applicants to secure an appointment online first, according to the report. Booking slots have been snatched up four months in advance, while new slots made available at midnight would be swiftly taken within minutes.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



CRIME

WOMAN APPREHENDED FOR UNLICENSED PRACTICE OF MEDICINE

ANTHONY LAM

A woman, 35, was arrested last Saturday for practicing medical procedures without a license, the Judiciary Police (PJ) has announced.

The woman, surnamed

Endang, has Indonesian nationality and works in Macau as a domestic helper.

The case was unearthed when a 30-year-old foreign worker from the Philippines was pronounced dead in the morning of May 6.

She started developing influenza symptoms, a high fever in particular, on May 4 but still decided to take whitening syringes at Endang's residence near the Inner Harbour district.

At noon on the same day, she was sent to the pu-

blic hospital by ambulance due to a high fever and mental disorientation. Her Influenza A test had a positive result.

Last Saturday afternoon Health Bureau officers, accompanied by PJ inspectors, conducted a search and seizure at Endang's residence and discovered a large number of syringes.

Endang confessed that she had administered three injections of the syringes to the victim, as well as at least 10 other people. She also confessed that the syringes were sent by her family in Indonesia, adding that about a decade ago, she learned in Indonesia the skills of a midwife.

Each injection therapy consists of four jabs with a week between each and costs MOP1,000. The victim had finished two therapies and had not reported any discomfort.

The police did not rule out the possibility of pressing additional charges against the suspect, should the post-mortem reveal connections between the death and the syringes. Currently, the cause of death has not been confirmed.

STATS

Mobile payment retreats 4.3%

STAFF REPORTER

TRANSACTIONS carried out by local mobile payment tools retreated by 4.3% from the relatively high base in the previous quarter, to 69.6 million in the first quarter of this year, according to data from Monetary Authority of Macao.

The transaction value dropped by 1.4% to MOP7.2 billion, while the average amount per transaction was MOP103.2.

At the end of March 2023, mobile payment terminals and QR code signs totaled 98,100, an increase of 3.0%

from the end of 2022.

For the first quarter, credit card credit limits granted by banks in Macau reached MOP49.5 billion, up 1.7% from the end of 2022. Credit card receivables amounted to MOP2.5 billion, of which the rollover amount totaled MOP746.9 million, representing 30% of credit card receivables. Credit card repayments, which includes payments for interest and fees, rose quarter-to-quarter by 3.5% to MOP5.5 billion. Debit card transactions other than cash withdrawals grew 1.1% to 330,000.



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TOURISM

Botticelli's Venus is an 'influencer' and Italy is not happy

TRISHA THOMAS, ROME

THE Italian tourism ministry thought it had a sure-fire way to bring travelers into the country: turning a 15th century art icon into a 21st century "virtual influencer."

The digital rendition of Venus, goddess of love, based on Sandro Botticelli's Renaissance masterpiece "Birth of Venus," can be seen noshing on pizza and snapping selfies for her Instagram page. Unlike the original, this Venus is fully clothed. The influencer claims to be 30, or "maybe just a wee bit (older) than that."

But the new ad campaign is facing significant backlash — with critics calling it a "new Barbie" that trashes Italy's cultural heritage.

The tourist campaign "trivializes our heritage in the most vulgar way, transforming Botticelli's Venus into yet another stereotyped female beauty," Livia Garomersini, an art historian and activist with Mi Riconosci, an art and heritage campaign organization, said in a response to the project last month.

The yearlong campaign, produced by national tourism agency ENIT and advertising group Armando Testa, is estimated to have cost 9 million euros (about \$9.9 million), according to ENIT CEO Ivana Jelinic.

Jelinic said that the campaign was designed for overseas markets to attract younger tourists. The online Venus launched in Italy on April 20 and made her internatio-



People watch on a monitor the latest Italian Ministry of Tourism nine-million-euro campaign showing Botticelli's Venus depicted as a virtual influencer in Rome

nal debut in Dubai at the Arabian Travel Market earlier this week.

"We liked the idea that it would be a work of art that is timeless," Jelinic told The Associated Press, adding that Botticelli's Venus "seemed to us like a immortal icon who could represent Italy well."

Already the new Venus has been memed mercilessly online, appearing among trash bins, alongside Mafia boss Matteo Messina Denaro, and in other less-than godly places.

The criticism extends beyond the use of a masterpiece to the manner in which the campaign was orchestrated, including its use of stock images and other gaffes like a promotional video featur-

ing a winery in Slovenia, used as a stand-in for Italy.

An even greater sin for many is the campaign's slogan, "Open to Meraviglia" (Open to Wonder), because it mixes English into an Italian tourist campaign even as the country's government seeks to protect the Italian language as a pillar of its culture.

There are other language faux pas.

On the campaign's website, an automatic translator turned Brindisi, a southern Italian port town, into its literal English definition: "Toast," according to Matteo Flora, a professor at the University of Pavia. That part of the website has now been obscured.

"Let's not talk about the creativity point of view," said Flora, "You may like (the campaign) or not, but on a technical point of view, it has been... a sort of avalanche of problems."

That includes a failure to secure domains, allowing anyone to snatch the material and mock the project with it.

Flora said the campaign also wasted money. The campaign's creative team chose to use the "intelligence of human creativity," rather than artificial intelligence, to build the virtual Venus — but Flora showed how he could quickly come up with a similar campaign using AI at a cost of 20 euros. His social media posts have been sha-

red by thousands of people.

The use of a likeness of Botticelli's masterpiece has been lambasted by art historians as well, who say it vastly diminishes the beauty and mystery of the 15th century original.

"Perhaps Botticelli would not be happy about this," said Massimo Moretti, a professor of art history at the University of Rome, Sapienza.

Any use of an iconic image like the "Birth of Venus" risks striking a cultural nerve, marketing experts say.

"The more you try to alter something that's historic, probably the greater the outcry," said Larry Chiagouris, professor of marketing at Pace University's Lubin School of Business.

"People are going to say, 'You're changing the culture. You're changing who we are, because it's part of our history,'" Chiagouris added.

"I didn't like the fact that they used the Botticelli Venus like that, since it is a piece of art," Riccardo Rodrigo, a high school student in Rome, said. "They made it something social friendly to amuse Gen Z, I think it was unnecessary since it can be used just like it is and not modified like they did."

The Uffizi Galleries, which houses Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" in Florence, declined to comment on the campaign.

For the creators of the campaign, however, any press is good press.

"It has become so viral," said Jelinic of ENIT, adding that "web users have made her come alive" even when placing the new Venus in unglamorous places.

"I find (it) interesting in terms of social communication," Jelinic said. "Our campaign is more appealing than (critics) want to admit."

Tourism officials plan to expand the campaign through the use of billboards as well as video screens in airports and railways. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Melco launches The Black Pearl Diamond Restaurants Gastronomic Series



Melco Resorts & Entertainment announced the reactivation of its cross-regional gastronomic series with the 2023 Black Pearl diamond restaurants this summer.

The gaming operator will

present its new series of 10 four-hands dinners involving four different restaurants, including Jade Dragon at City of Dreams, Yong Fu from Shanghai, Pearl Dragon from Studio City and Xizhou Hall at Park

Hyatt Suzhou.

Coinciding with the United Nations' Sustainable Gastronomy Day on June 18, this dinner series will debut with executive chef Kelvin Au Yeung of Jade Dragon and executive chef Xu Kunlei of Yong Fu. The chefs will join forces for the first time to design a nine-course menu between June 23 and 24 at Jade Dragon.

The second four-hands dinner will be held at Studio City's Michelin one star Pearl Dragon between July 15 and 16. The restaurant's Executive Chef Otto Wong will join with Executive Sous Chef Calvin Yu from Black Pearl one diamond Xizhou Hall at Park Hyatt Suzhou to craft a six-course menu.

CTM to showcase 5G+ smart solutions in Beyond Expo



As the Network Partner of the third Beyond International Science and Technology Innovation Expo for the second year, CTM will provide high-quality network communications ser-

vices for the event.

The expo will be held in Macau from May 10 to 12 at the Venetian Convention and Exhibition Center.

At the same time, CTM will set up an exhibition

booth of over 180 square meters to showcase the latest development of CTM's "Cloud, Network, Intelligence and Security" digital foundation and various CTM 5G+ smart solutions.

To further enrich the local ecosystems of cloud-network integration smart application and enable all sectors of Macau to accelerate smart transformation, CTM will join hands with the University of Macau, Huawei and Macau public transport institutions, to deepen the big data cooperation research and develop more cloud-network integration smart transformation solutions.

DIPLOMACY

Beijing tells US to 'reflect deeply' over downturn in ties

CHINA'S foreign minister told the U.S. ambassador yesterday that Washington is responsible for the downturn in relations between the two countries and must "reflect deeply" before ties can return to a healthy track, an official said.

Qin Gang's comments follow a suspension of serious dialogue on a range of issues between the world's largest economies, increasingly at odds over tariffs, attempts by Washington to deprive China of cutting-edge technology, and China's claims to self-governing Taiwan and large parts of the South and East China Seas.

China's Foreign Ministry quoted Qin as telling Ambassador Nicolas Burns that a "series of erroneous words and deeds by the U.S." since a meeting in November between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping "have undermined the hard-won positive momentum of Sino-U.S. relations."

"The U.S. side should reflect deeply, meet China halfway, and propel China-U.S. relations out of the difficulties and back on the



Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang

right track," Qin was quoted as saying.

The United States should "correct its understanding of China and return to rationality," Qin said, repeating his earlier accusation that the U.S. is attempting to suppress and contain China. Beijing routinely cites U.S. political and military support of Taiwan as infringing on its sovereignty.

Qin said ties had "grown icy" and the priority was to stabilize them "and avoid a downward spi-

ral and unanticipated events."

The U.S. should stop "undermining China's sovereignty, security, and development interests," particularly through support of Taiwan's independent identity, Qin said.

China says Taiwan must come under its rule, by force if necessary, while the United States says the relationship between the sides must be resolved peacefully. U.S. law requires it to treat threats to Taiwan, including a military

blockade, as a matter of "grave concern," though it remains ambiguous under what conditions U.S. forces could be dispatched to defend the island.

Despite the lack of formal diplomatic relations, the U.S. is Taiwan's largest supplier of military hardware and diplomatic support, even while it continues to maintain relations with Beijing. Biden has been seen as going a step further by repeatedly saying that the U.S. would back Taiwan militarily, and America has been upgrading basing arrangements with the Philippines, located just south of Taiwan.

U.S.-China military contacts have been on hold for years, and China's top staff refused to answer a call from Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin after then-Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan last year. China retaliated for the visit by staging a naval and air force blockade of Taiwan and cutting off channels of communication with the U.S. on issues from environmental protection to maritime security.

At a daily briefing yesterday,

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin described the meeting between Qin and Burns as "a normal diplomatic arrangement."

In a tweet, Burns said he met with Qin and "discussed challenges in the U.S.-China relationship and the necessity of stabilizing ties and expanding high-level communication."

In comments to a U.S. think tank last week, Burns said Washington has been consistent in its approach toward Taiwan and insists that "any resolution of the (cross-Taiwan Strait) differences has to be peaceful."

"We hope that the government here in China will commit itself to a peaceful resolution of the dispute," Burns said in an online discussion with the Washington-based Stimson Center.

Contacts between Washington and Beijing have been fraught for months since U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken abruptly canceled a Beijing trip aimed at easing U.S.-China tensions in February. That came after a large high-altitude Chinese balloon was shot down after it sailed across the U.S., drawing Pentagon accusations of spying on sensitive military sites despite firm Chinese denials.

Qin has departed for visits to Germany, France and Norway amid China's fraying relations with Europe over alleged unfair trade practices, human rights abuses and Beijing's support for Russia in its war against Ukraine. **MDT/AP**

ACROSS CHINA

Building zero-carbon village in coal-rich province

XINHUA STAFF REPORTER

AT the photovoltaic charging station in Zhuangshang Village, where dozens of agricultural vehicles are parked, farmer Chen Jiuhong is charging his electric tricycle.

"A full charge, enabling a drive of 50 km, costs less than 2 yuan, just one-fifth of the cost for the conventional diesel-fueled vehicles to drive the same distance," Chen said. "Our farm machinery, such as weeders and spreaders, are all powered by electricity now, which is both cheap and environmentally friendly."

Amid the country's pursuit of green development, Zhuangshang, Ruicheng County of north China's coal-rich Shanxi Province, has bid farewell to traditional coal burning and

reached carbon neutrality thanks to the use of photovoltaic energy.

The village has recently won the title of zero-carbon energy demonstration village in China, jointly recognized by the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

According to the village Party chief Du Kanglei, Zhuangshang began to promote photovoltaic power generation in 2019, gradually replacing coal and diesel with clean energy.

"Motorcycles have been replaced by electric tricycles, diesel lawn mowers have been changed into electric lawn mowers, and coal is no longer burned for cooking or heating," Du added.

Today in Zhuangshang Village, the roofs of the farmhouses are equipped with blue photovoltaic panels. Villager Zhang Baomin said his photovoltaic panels can generate enough electricity to power all his household appliances.

"My rice cooker, air conditioner, and electric heater are all powered by electricity, and the surplus electricity can be stored or sold (to the grid)," he said.

"Diesel-powered motorcycles used to ply the streets, spewing black smoke, but they have been replaced by electric vehicles," 81-year-old villager Zhang Pingding said. "The village has become cleaner after the use of photovoltaic power."

In order to make better use of solar power, the village is transforming barren lands into photovoltaic fa-

cilities. A 173-meter-long photovoltaic corridor has been constructed in a large wasteland adjacent to the Yellow River. The corridor, with 320 photovoltaic panels, generates 220,000 kWh of electricity annually.

An abandoned traditional cave dwelling has been renovated into a photovoltaic courtyard where 192 photovoltaic panels have been installed, producing 130,000 kWh of electricity per year.

With a roof made of photovoltaic panels to protect it from wind and rain, the courtyard provides another facility for the locals to sit and enjoy a cup of tea.

Du Kanglei said the village plans to turn more abandoned cave dwellings into photovoltaic courtyards.

The green transformation of Zhuangshang is part of the Enabling Zero Carbon Energy in Rural Towns and Villages in China Project, funded by the Ministry of Finance and the GEF, and officially launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the UNDP in 2022. **XINHUA**

ARCHEOLOGY

CENTURIES-OLD STELE DISCOVERED IN NORTHERN CHINA

A 502-year-old stele of an official has been discovered in China's Hebei Province, local authorities yesterday said.

Carved on a slab of bluestone, the stele dating back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) was found in Zhaopai Village of Xingtai City. It stands at 130cm tall, 75cm wide, and 22cm thick.

The stele was erected at the tomb of a local official named Zhao Siming. It bore 854 Chinese characters on one side detailing Zhao's study and work experience, as well as the filial piety - one of the most important tra-

ditional moral tenets in China - shown by three generations of Zhao's family, from his parents down to his son, which was then deemed as exemplary.

On the other side of the stele was the lineage atlas of the Zhao family, who moved to Hebei from nearby Shanxi Province.

According to Lan Jianhui, a local expert in culture and history, the stele was relatively well-preserved, and its discovery would be helpful for the study of politics, culture, history, and customs in the area during the mid-Ming Dynasty. **XINHUA**



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida waves as he leaves the Seoul military airport in Seongnam, yesterday

SOUTH KOREA

Yoon, Kishida vow better Seoul-Tokyo ties following summit

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

SOUTH Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol yesterday called for officials to map out specific steps to hasten security and economic cooperation with Japan following his weekend summit in Seoul with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Kishida during Sunday's meeting expressed sympathy toward Koreans forced into industrial slavery during Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula as the leaders vowed to overcome historical grievances and strengthen cooperation in the face of a nuclear North Korea and other challenges.

The summit, which was the second meeting between the leaders in less than two months, drew a mixed reaction in South Korea. Critics, including Yoon's liberal opponents who control majority in the National Assembly, said Kishida's comments fell short of a meaningful apology and accused Yoon of letting Japan off the hook over its past aggressions while pushing to repair bilateral ties.

Others saw the summit as a sign that the two key U.S. allies are finally moving forward after years of bickering as they step up their three-way partnership with Washington.

After the summit, Yoon said Seoul, Tokyo and Washington are engaging in talks to implement

their earlier agreement on a faster exchange of information on North Korean missile tests. Yoon also said he wouldn't rule out Japan's possible participation in future nuclear deterrence consultations between Washington and Seoul to better cope with North Korean nuclear threats.

Yoon, Kishida and President Joe Biden are expected to hold a trilateral meeting later this month on the sidelines of the Group of Seven meetings in Hiroshima to discuss North Korea and geopolitical uncertainties created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China's assertive foreign policy. While South Korea isn't a G-7 country, Yoon was invited as one of eight outreach nations.

Yoon during a meeting with his chief secretaries instructed them to establish follow-up measures to carry out bilateral security, economic and technology cooperation and facilitate culture and youth exchanges between the countries, which were discussed in his meeting with Kishida. Yoon's office didn't elaborate.

Speaking to reporters before departing Seoul, Kishida said he hoped to further strengthen his personal relationship with Yoon and "work together to carve out a new era."

Kishida, who earlier yesterday separately met with groups of South Korean lawmakers and business leaders, stressed the need for facilitating people-to-people exchanges between the coun-

tries, which he said would "help further promote our mutual understanding and give widths and thickness to our relations."

Kishida's visit to Seoul reciprocated a mid-March trip to Tokyo by Yoon. It's the first exchange of visits between the leaders of the countries in 12 years.

The summit, which was the second meeting between the leaders in two months, drew a mixed reaction in South Korea

The back-to-back summits were largely meant to resolve bitter disputes triggered by South Korean court rulings in 2018 that ordered two Japanese companies to compensate some of their former Korean employees for forced labor before the end of World War II. Those rulings irked Japan, which insists all compensation issues were settled by a 1965 treaty that normalized relations.

The wrangling led to the countries downgrading each other's trade status and Seoul's previous liberal government threatening to spike a military intelligence-sharing pact. Their strained ties complicated U.S. efforts to build a stronger alliance to counter challenges posed by North Korea and China.

Relations thawed after Yoon's conservative government in Mar-

ch announced a domestically contentious plan to use local corporate funds to compensate the forced labor victims without demanding Japanese contributions. Yoon later that month traveled to Tokyo to meet with Kishida, and the two agreed to resume leadership-level visits and other talks.

Their governments have since taken steps to withdraw their economic retaliatory steps.

Kishida's trip to Seoul drew intense public attention in South Korea, where many people still harbor resentment over Japan's colonial occupation.

In a news conference Sunday, Kishida avoided a new, direct apology over the colonization but still sympathized with the Korean victims, saying he personally feels "strong pain in my heart" over their ordeals, in an apparent effort to maintain momentum for improving ties.

He reaffirmed his government upholds the positions of previous Japanese administrations on the colonization issue, including the landmark 1998 joint declaration by then-South Korean President Kim Dae-jung

and Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, in which Obuchi said: "I feel acute remorse and offer an apology from my heart."

Kishida also said he and Yoon would pay respects before a memorial for Korean atomic bomb victims in Hiroshima during the G-7 meetings. He addressed South Korean concerns about food safety following Japan's 2011 nuclear disaster, saying Tokyo will allow South Korean experts to inspect a planned release of treated radioactive water from the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant.

Seoul's Foreign Ministry said the South Korean inspection team will consist of experts from related government agencies and organizations and that it will soon hold talks with Japanese officials to set up their visit planned for May 23-24.

Bong Young-shik, an expert at Seoul's Yonsei Institute for North Korean Studies, said it was notable how Yoon's government carefully tempered public expectations before the summit, which made it easier for both governments to present the outcome as substantial.

"For both the South Korea and Japanese governments, the resumption of 'shuttle diplomacy' in itself is a win," he said, referring to regular visits between leaders.

Yoon had faced criticism at home that he had preemptively made concessions to Tokyo without getting corresponding steps in return, and opposition politicians and some newspapers described the summit as a disappointment.

"Normalizing relations between South Korea and Japan is a necessity, and I am in favor of it, but not at the cost of our national interests, national dignity, history and justice," said Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung, who narrowly lost to Yoon in last year's presidential race.

The conservative Chosun Ilbo, South Korea's biggest newspaper by circulation, acknowledged that Kishida's comments were insufficient to ease South Korean frustrations over history but also said that the summit reflected the countries' "desperate" need for cooperation.

"South Korea and Japan are in need of greater cooperation in the wake of recent events like Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China's maritime assertiveness that threatens its neighbors. The countries' need to jointly respond to North Korean nuclear and missile threats is greater than ever. Moreover, the countries face similar challenges related to their slowing economies and declining populations," the newspaper said.

"This is not the time to be stuck in the past." **MDT/AP**



AFGHANISTAN

UN urges Taliban to end floggings, executions

RAHIM FAIEZ, ISLAMABAD

A U.N. report on Monday strongly criticized the Taliban for carrying out public executions, lashings and stonings since seizing power in Afghanistan, and called on the country's rulers to halt such practices.

In the past six months alone, 274 men, 58 women and two boys were publicly flogged in Afghanistan, according to a report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, or UNAMA.

"Corporal punishment is a violation of the Convention against Torture and must cease," said Fiona Frazer, the agency's human rights chief. She also called for an immediate moratorium on executions.

The Taliban foreign minis-

try said in response that Afghanistan's laws are determined in accordance with Islamic rules and guidelines, and that an overwhelming majority of Afghans follow those rules.

"In the event of a conflict between international human rights law and Islamic law, the government is obliged to follow the Islamic law," the ministry said in a statement.

The Taliban began carrying out such punishments shortly after coming to power almost two years ago, despite initial promises of a more moderate rule than during their previous stint in power in the 1990s.

At the same time, they have gradually tightened restrictions on women, barring them from public spaces, such as parks and gyms, in line with their interpretation of Islamic law. The restrictions have triggered an international uproar,

increasing the country's isolation at a time when its economy has collapsed — and worsening a humanitarian crisis.

Monday's report on corporal punishment documents Taliban practices both before and after their return to power in August 2021, when they seized the capital of Kabul as U.S. and NATO forces withdrew after two decades of war.

The first public flogging following the Taliban takeover was reported in October 2021 in the northern Kapisa province, the report said. In that case, a woman and man convicted of adultery were publicly lashed 100 times each in the presence of religious scholars and local Taliban authorities, it said.

In December 2022, Taliban authorities executed an Afghan convicted of murder,

the first public execution since they took power the report said.

The execution, carried out with an assault rifle by the victim's father, took place in the western Farah province before hundreds of spectators and top Taliban officials.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the top government spokesman, said the decision to carry out the punishment was "made very carefully," following approval by three of the country's highest courts and the Taliban supreme leader, Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada.

There has been a significant increase in the number and regularity of judicial corporal punishment since November when Mujahid repeated comments by the supreme leader about judges and their use of Islamic law in a tweet, the report said.

Since that tweet, UNAMA documented at least 43 instances of public lashings involving 274 men, 58 women and two boys. A majority of punishments were related to convictions of adultery and "running away from home," the report said. Other purported offenses included theft, homosexuality, consuming alcohol, fraud and drug trafficking.

In a video message, Abdul Malik Haqqani, the Taliban's appointed deputy chief justice, said last week that the Taliban's Supreme Court has issued 175 so-called retribution verdicts since taking power, including 79 floggings and 37 stonings.

Such verdicts establish the right of a purported victim, or relative of a victim of a crime to punish or forgive the perpetrator. Haqqani said the Taliban leadership is committed to carrying out such sentences. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1972 ISRAELI COMMANDOS STORM HIJACKED JET

Twelve Israeli soldiers disguised as maintenance staff have stormed a hijacked Sabena Boeing at Lod airport in Tel Aviv and released the 100 people on board.



Two of the Arab hijackers were shot dead and their two female companions were captured, although one of them was injured in the attack.

Six of the passengers were also wounded in the gun battle. The 90 passengers and 10 crew had been held hostage for 23 hours.

The end to their ordeal came when two vans, said to be carrying repair men, drove onto the runway and approached the plane. The men got out and pretended to begin work on the airliner but suddenly climbed onto the wings and opened the emergency doors.

The British pilot, Captain Reginald Levy, said: "Everyone of us is lucky to be alive. I have had some tough times but this was my toughest."

The airliner was hijacked after leaving Vienna, where it had made a stop on a flight from Brussels to Tel Aviv. Capt Levy said: "Two of the men burst into the cockpit and said they were taking over the jet."

He was ordered to fly the plane to Lod, where the gunmen offered to free the passengers in exchange for 100 Arab prisoners held by the Israelis.

While the plane was sitting on the tarmac, the Israelis managed to let down the tyres and empty the fuel tanks to prevent it taking off again.

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Dayan took charge of negotiations with the hijackers, initially offering to free the Arab prisoners in return for the release of the hostages.

Later Israeli officials said there was never any intention to release the prisoners. It was simply a delaying tactic.

The gunmen belonged to the Black September Organisation of Palestine guerrillas, a splinter group of the PLO.

One of the rescued passengers, Mor Weiss, from Brooklyn, told The Times: "The soldiers opened the four doors, two on either side at the same time. Immediately the Arabs started shooting wildly."

"The troops fired back and I saw the younger of the two male hijackers fall with a bullet through his forehead. Seconds later the other one was shot."

Mr Weiss said he had been picked on because he was wearing a skull cap. He was sent to the back of the plane and made to sit with a stick of dynamite between his feet.

Captain Levy, who comes from Slough, told a news conference, the drama had happened on his 50th birthday. His wife had accompanied him on the flight so they could have a celebratory birthday meal in Tel Aviv.

Courtesy BBC News

IRAN

Two people hanged in rare blasphemy case as executions surge

IRAN hanged two men yesterday convicted of blasphemy, authorities said, carrying out rare death sentences for the crime as executions surge across the Islamic Republic following months of unrest.

Iran remains one of the world's top executioners, having put to death at least 203 prisoners since the start of this year alone, according to the Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights. But carrying out executions for blasphemy

remains rare, as previous cases saw the sentences reduced by authorities.

The two men executed, Yousef Mehrad and Sadrollah Fazeli Zare, died at Arak Prison in central Iran. They had been arrested in May 2020, accused of being involved in a channel on the Telegram message app called "Critique of Superstition and Religion," according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Both men faced months of solitary confinement and

could not contact their families, the commission said.

The Mizan news agency of Iran's judiciary confirmed the executions, describing the two men as having insulted Islam's Prophet Muhammad and promoted atheism. Mizan also accused them of burning a Quran, Islam's holy book, though it wasn't clear whether the men allegedly did that or such imagery was shared in the Telegram channel.

Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, who leads Iran Human Rights, decried the executions as exposing the "medieval nature" of Iran's theocracy.

"The international community must show with its reaction that executions for expressing an opinion is intolerable," he said in a statement. "The refusal of the international community to react decisively is a green light for the Iranian government and all their like-minded people around the world." **MDT/AP**

IN CONTEXT

The two women hijackers were jailed for life in August 1972. They were found guilty after boarding the Sabena aircraft with explosives packed into the lining of corsets they were wearing and also carrying a pistol and grenade concealed in cans of talcum powder. They were jailed for life - although one of the three judges voted for the death penalty. On 29 May 1972 three Japanese gunmen opened fire on crowds at Lod International Airport in Tel Aviv, killing 26 people and injuring dozens more. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine said they had recruited the gunmen from the Japanese Red Army. Two died in the attack, the third, Kozo Okamoto, was tried and sentenced to life imprisonment. Lod, or Lydda airport, has since been renamed Ben Gurion Airport and has some of the strictest airport security in the world.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Don't let others take advantage of your good nature. You can make moves, but they won't be settling. You're in the mood to spend time with your lover.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Don't overreact to someone's advances. Be sure to think twice before you say something that might hurt your partner's feelings.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Major job changes or opportunities to get ahead professionally are apparent. Finish those changes you've been talking about making to your residence.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You are best to put your efforts into redecorating or inviting friends over. Travel will turn out to be far more exciting than you imagined.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You'll find it difficult to control your emotions. Your philanthropic contributions will bring you praise. Romantic opportunities may not be as they appear.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Take care of any paperwork concerning institutional or governmental agencies. You can sort out any differences you have in an amiable manner.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Do not blow situations out of proportion. You can set your goals and make a beeline for your target. You can enjoy doing things that include children.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Try not to make waves. Time is money and you must be ready to take action in order to reach your highest potential. You should look into a healthier diet.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Be prepared to lose friends or alienate loved ones due to your stubborn nature lately. Believe in yourself and so will those who count.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You could lose a good friend because of it. Your irritability will lead to family squabbles. Your partner may blame you for everything.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Do not expect too much from others. Take time to look at any outdated papers or possible investments. You will find that valuable knowledge can be gained if you are willing to listen.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

A little volleyball or other outdoor sports should be on your agenda. If you haven't already, consider starting your own business. You will earn recognition for the work you are doing.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	13	27	cloudy
Changchun	6	20	fine
Chengdu	14	17	rain
Chongqing	18	22	overcast
Fuzhou	17	23	cloudy
Guangzhou	19	26	showers
Guiyang	10	19	rain
Haikou	25	28	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	11	22	fine
Harbin	7	18	fine
Hefei	11	23	fine
Nanjing	9	22	cloudy
Shanghai	12	23	fine
Taipei	18	21	cloudy
Wuhan	13	24	cloudy
Hong Kong	21	23	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	4	14	cloudy
Frankfurt	12	21	rain
Paris	10	16	rain
London	9	18	rain
New York	10	17	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- ___ breve; 5- Caviar; 8- Repeated, an island of French Polynesia; 12- Mall frequenters; 14- Fishing gear; 15- Egg cell; 16- Get the better of; 17- Manager; 18- Last name in spydom; 19- Likeness of a person; 21- Main arteries; 23- T.G.I.F. part; 24- Author Rand; 25- Overhead trains; 26- Incense; 30- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 32- Weaving machines; 33- Fellow student; 37- Jai ___; 38- Lifeless; 39- Rorschach's "spill"; 40- Having long antennae; 42- Passover meal; 43- ___ a customer; 44- Unit in a sentence; 45- Fannie ___; 48- Sweet suffix; 49- ___ chi ch'uan; 50- Fervent; 52- Like a well-edited puzzle; 57- Barbershop request; 58- Hydrox rival; 60- Marnier's creator; 61- Sensitivity; 62- Monetary unit of Cambodia; 63- Back in; 64- Ballpark figs.; 65- Atlas item; 66- Observed;

DOWN 1- At the apex of; 2- Carson's successor; 3- Sly look; 4- Sometimes you feel like ___; 5- Underground part of a plant; 6- Takes too much; 7- Editorial writer; 8- 1922 Physics Nobel; 9- Like Humpty Dumpty; 10- Bucolic; 11- Not quite right; 13- Small shoots; 14- Diamond stats; 20- Grazed; 22- Singles; 24- I don't give ___; 26- Airline to Tel Aviv; 27- ___ contendere; 28- Horse of mixed color; 29- Compadre; 30- Olds model; 31- Brown earth pigment; 33- Benjamin; 34- Pierce portrayer; 35- Some digits; 36- French 101 verb; 38- Freezing rain squall; 41- A party to; 42- Tremble; 44- Close friend; 45- Dull surface; 46- Hand woven wall hanging; 47- Decree; 49- Hammer or sickle; 51- CPR experts; 52- Ooze; 53- Draft picks; 54- Sever with the teeth; 55- Learning; 56- Harrow rival; 59- Inlet;



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

CORONATION CONCERT

LIONEL RICHIE, KATY PERRY SING FOR ROYAL CORONATION CONCERT

A day after a gilded coronation ceremony watched by millions, King Charles III and Queen Camilla let others take the center stage yesterday [Macau time] as they took in a star-studded concert featuring Katy Perry, Lionel Richie and others at Windsor Castle.

The newly crowned monarch and his wife appeared to enjoy the show as Richie performed "All Night Long," at one point getting up on their feet and swaying to the music. Other members of the royal family, including 8-year-old Princess Charlotte and Prince George, 9, waved Union flags along with a crowd of some 20,000 gathered on the castle's east terrace.

Charlotte and her mother, Kate, the Princess of Wales, sang along as Perry, dressed in a gold foil ball gown, performed her pop hit "Roar."

"Top Gun" star Tom Cruise appeared in a recorded video message, saying: "Pilot to pilot. Your Majesty, you can be my wingman any time." The mixed



Katy Perry performs during the concert at Windsor Castle

program also saw performances by the Royal Ballet, Nicole Scherzinger from the Pussycat Dolls, opera singer Andrea Bocelli and British band Take That.

Even Miss Piggy and Kermit the Frog made an appearance, joking with host Hugh Bonneville.

The entertainment was interspersed with more serious moments. A message from Charles on the importance of environmental conservation was played,

and the show was accompanied by a light and drone display with a nature theme.

Prince William, heir to the throne, took to the stage to pay tribute to his father's dedication to service. "Pa, we are all so proud of you," he said.

Concert goers sang "God Save the King" as landmarks around the U.K. were lit up in colorful lights.

Sunday, thousands of picni-

cs and street parties were held across the U.K. in Charles' honor. The community get-togethers, part of a British tradition known as the Big Lunch, provided a down-to-earth counterpart to the gilded spectacle of the king's crowning Saturday.

The events were intended to bring neighbors together to celebrate the crowning even as support for the monarchy wanes. Critics complained about the coronation's cost at a time of exorbitant living expenses amid double-digit inflation.

But plenty others took the opportunity to enjoy a party with friends and family. In Regent's Park in London, Valent Cheung and his girlfriend showed up to cheer the new king with the neighbors who embraced them when they moved from Hong Kong. They dolled up their loyal and "royal" fluffy white dog, Tino, with a tiny purple crown for the occasion.

"This is a new era for U.K.," Cheung said. "We didn't have these things in Hong Kong. Now,

we are embracing the culture. We want to enjoy it, we want to celebrate it."

William and his wife, Kate, surprised people picnicking outside the castle before the concert. Dressed far more casually than the day before, they shook hands and Kate embraced a crying girl in a hug.

The king's siblings, Prince Edward and Princess Anne and their spouses took on lunch duty for the royal family at events across England. The king's nieces, Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie, the daughters of Prince Andrew, joined a lunch in Windsor.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak hosted U.S. first lady Jill Biden and her granddaughter Finnegan Biden at the Big Lunch party held in front of his office. Other guests included Ukrainian refugees and community activists.

Like the picnic in the park, Downing Street and Sunak's spread — even his teapot — were festooned in the nation's colors of blue, white and red.

Sausage rolls and salmon were served along with coronation chicken — a dish cooked up for Queen Elizabeth II's coronation 70 years ago — and coronation quiche, which was picked to suit Charles' taste and has been the buzz of social media, often for the wrong reasons. MDT/AP

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



FOOTBALL

After years of turmoil, Milan teams back in European elite

DANIELLA MATAR, MILAN

Wednesday, 03:00
Real Madrid v Man City
H 3.35, D 3.76, A 2.23

Thursday, 03:00
AC Milan v Inter Milan
H 3.25, D 3.2, A 2.52

ODDSCHECKER.COM

FIRST came a return to the top of Italian soccer, now comes a chance to reach the Champions League final.

The Milan teams are back.

But only one will get the opportunity to compete for European soccer's top prize as AC Milan faces city rival Inter Milan in the semifinals of the Champions League.

The victor will face either Real Madrid or Manchester City in the final.

Three-time European champion Inter was the last Italian club to lift the trophy, when it won an unprecedented treble



AC Milan's manager Stefano Pioli

of the league, Italian Cup and Champions League under José Mourinho in 2010.

Milan won the last of its seven titles in 2007.

"To be part of a club like this is

a dream," Milan defender Fikayo Tomori said in an interview with The Associated Press. "To go and play in the San Siro, seeing it on the Champions League nights ... it's such an iconic stadium, such

an iconic sort of club.

"The fact that two Italian teams are in the semifinals ... it's obviously good for the league, good for Italian football. We're obviously focusing on us. We want to be the best."

Milan hosts Inter on Wednesday [3:00, Thursday] before the return leg the following Tuesday. Both games will be at the San Siro as the teams share the stadium.

"We got two really exciting games coming up," Tomori said. "Two games that we can really show ourselves, prove ourselves and you know, we can hopefully add to the history of this club."

Since the Milan teams' last triumphs in Europe there have been slumps on the field and turmoil off it, with both clubs changing ownership several times and coaches even more frequently.

However, after years of mediocrity, Inter and Milan ended lengthy waits for a Serie A title before finally making it back to the top level of European soccer.

COACHING CHANGES

Inter has had 14 different coaches since Mourinho left the Nerazzurri after winning the Champions League — an average of more than one a year.

Rafael Benítez replaced Mourinho but he lasted a matter of months before being fired. The rest of the list includes Claudio Ranieri, Roberto Mancini and Antonio Conte.

Current Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti steered Milan to the Champion League trophy in 2007 — and also in 2003 — but he quit just two years later.

Since then there have been 10 different coaches in the Rossoneri hot seat. The incumbent Stefano Pioli was also in charge of Inter in the 2016-17 season.

Inter is now coached by Simone Inzaghi, who has emerged as somewhat of a cup specialist. He steered both previous club Lazio and Inter to the Italian Cup trophy and the Nerazzurri are back in the final of this year's competition.

Inzaghi also led Inter to back-to-back Italian Super Cup titles to match the two he won with Lazio.

Chinese retail giant Suning and U.S.-based hedge firm Elliott Management turned things around for the Milan clubs, which were under the stewardship of long-term Italian owners the last time they were at the top of European soccer. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily

Chen Weihua, China Daily



**WESTERN AIRLINES
 CRY WOLF AFTER SELF-
 IMPOSING DISADVANTAGES**

The issue of a level-playing field in business has become even more bizarre these days given that Air France wants the French government to limit Chinese airlines' access to France due to their alleged "unfair advantage" of flying over Russian airspace.

In a Bloomberg report last week, the latest of such accusations were leveled by the airlines of many European countries and the United States which have been barred from using Russian airspace after their governments banned Russian airlines and private jets from flying over their airspace following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on Feb 24, 2022.

By imposing such a ban on Russia, the airlines of the European countries and the US have to fly two or three hours more between Europe and Asia and between the US and Asia compared with airlines from China, India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and many other countries which are permitted to fly through Russian airspace.

That translates into more jet fuel consumption and a higher carbon footprint for the aviation industry, which, for example, accounts for 13.9 percent of the transportation emissions in the European Union, the second-largest after road transport.

It is a contradiction and a blow to the EU's ambition to become the first economy to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, not to mention the hassles and waste of time for millions of passengers.

Such a ban will offset the effort made just last week by the European Parliament and EU member states in a provisional agreement to decarbonize the aviation sector by promoting sustainable aviation fuels.

I actually questioned the rationale of the ban on Russia after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced it on Feb 27 last year, because fighting climate change is by far the biggest global challenge for humanity.

The urgency to fight climate change outweighs any geopolitical rivalry. On Tuesday, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres again called for global climate action, saying it requires cooperation of all countries rising above geopolitical divisions.

Those countries which have weaponized airspace ban for civilian passenger jets are indeed doing it at the high cost of the global climate fight.

In other words, the "disadvantage" of the US and many European airlines are totally self-imposed and not imposed by countries being accused of enjoying "unfair advantage". If the absurd accusation by Air France and other US and European airlines were valid, they could also make the same accusation in various economic sectors against China, India and many other countries which continue normal trade relations with Russia.

For example, the EU has opted to buy more expensive energy sources, such as the costly liquefied natural gas from the US compared with Russian natural gas, thereby raising their overall industrial production costs and dampening competitiveness.

Chinese tourists were a major source of tourism revenue for many European countries before the COVID-19 pandemic. And the European tourism industry, as I talked with some industry insiders over the past months, is eager for the return of Chinese tourists since China lifted travel restrictions months ago.

In that sense, the EU should welcome more Chinese tourists and more flights from China so they could help contribute to the economic recovery of its member states which have been hit hard by the pandemic as well as the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The easiest way to address such "unfair advantage" is to not restrict the access by airlines from China and other countries, but simply to lift the airspace ban for civilian flights.

The truth is that it's cease-fire, diplomacy and negotiation, as urged by China and many other countries, which will help end the Russia-Ukraine conflict and bring peace to Europe. Banning airlines from using each other's airspace is a futile exercise with high environmental cost, and it will not help achieve that goal.

**ASEAN LEADERS TO TACKLE REGIONAL
 CRISES AT TROPICAL RESORT**

THE
BUZZ

A picturesque tourist destination will host crisis-weary Southeast Asian leaders with sun-splashed tropical islands, turquoise waters brimming with corals and manta rays, seafood feasts, and a hillside savannah crawling with Komodo dragons.

The sunshiny setting is a stark contrast to the seriousness of their agenda. Indonesian President Joko Widodo picked the far-flung, rustic harbor town of Labuan Bajo as a laidback venue to discuss an agenda rife with contentious issues. These include the continuing bloody civil strife in Myanmar and the escalating territorial conflicts in the South China Sea between fellow leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The 10-nation regional bloc and its member states will meet for three days starting today, with the growing rivalry between the United States and China as a backdrop.

Indonesia, this year's ASEAN chair, has also confronted Chinese fishing fleets and coast guard that have strayed into what Jakarta says was its internationally recognized exclusive economic zone in the gas-rich Natuna Sea.

Widodo, who's in his final year on the world stage as he reaches the end of his two-term limit, said ASEAN aims to collaborate with any country to solve problems through dialogue.

AP PHOTO



A law enforcement officer walks as people are evacuated from a shopping center where a shooting occurred last weekend, in Allen, Texas

EIGHT KILLED IN MASS SHOOTING

**INVESTIGATORS
 EXAMINE IDEOLOGY
 OF TEXAS GUNMAN**

**JAKE BLEIBERG,
 ALLEN (TEXAS)**

FEDERAL officials are looking into whether the gunman who killed eight people at a Dallas-area mall expressed an interest in white supremacist ideology yesterday [Macau time] as they work to discern a motive for the attack, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press. The official cautioned the investigation is in its early stages.

Federal agents have been reviewing social media accounts they believe were used by Mauricio Garcia, 33, and posts that expressed interest in white supremacist and neo-Nazi views, said the official, who could not discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Garcia also had a patch on his chest when he was killed by police that read "RWDS," an acronym for the phrase "Right Wing Death Squad," which is popular among right-wing extremists and white supremacy groups, the offi-

cial said.

In addition to reviewing social media posts, federal agents have interviewed family members and associates of Garcia to ask about his ideological beliefs, the official said. Investigators are also reviewing financial records, other online posts they believe Garcia made and other electronic media, according to the official.

Allen Police Chief Brian Harvey declined yesterday to answer questions from the AP, saying of the investigation, "we actually don't have a lot."

The Texas Department of Public Safety identified Garcia as suspected of killing eight people at a Texas outlet mall, a day after the attack turned an afternoon of shopping into a massacre.

Garcia was fatally shot Saturday by a police officer who happened to be near the suburban Dallas mall.

A law enforcement official said investigators have been searching a Dallas motel near an interstate where Garcia had been staying. The official said

police also found multiple weapons at the scene after Garcia was killed, including an AR-15-style rifle and a handgun.

Two law enforcement officials said investigators also searched a Dallas home connected to the suspect. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss details of an ongoing investigation.

A woman who lives three houses down from the low brick house said she saw a large group of uniformed officers go into the home Saturday between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.

"They went in like real fast, and I seen them do that like twice," said Marsha Alexander, who said officers were still in the area when she went to bed around 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. They were gone by Sunday morning (yesterday, Macau time).

In a statement, President Joe Biden said the assailant wore tactical gear and fired an AR-15-style weapon. He urged Congress to enact tighter restrictions on firearms and ammunition. **MDT/AP**

Russia enacted a major security clampdown ahead of today's [Macau time] annual commemorations marking the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, curbing the use of drones, jet skis and car-sharing services in its largest cities amid its 14-month war with Ukraine. At least 21 Russian cities canceled May 9 military parades — the staple of Victory Day celebrations across Russia — for the first time in years, Russian media said.

AP PHOTO



Peru A fire broke out deep in a gold mine in southern Peru and killed at least 27 workers during an overnight shift, Peruvian authorities reported. The Yanacocha mining company said in a statement that 175 workers had been safely evacuated after the accident, which happened last weekend. It said the 27 dead worked for a contractor that specializes in mining.

AP PHOTO



Congo The death toll from floods in eastern Congo has almost doubled, reaching close to 400 people as of yesterday [Macau time], according to a local official. The administrator of the worst-affected area, the Kalehe territory of South Kivu province, told The Associated Press by phone that more bodies were recovered, including many found floating in Lake Kivu.

AP PHOTO



UK King Charles III made a cameo appearance on "American Idol" after the royal coronation concert in his honor. Charles and Queen Camilla walked into a room at Windsor Castle on Sunday where "Idol" judges Lionel Richie and Katy Perry — who performed at the concert of eclectic acts — were appearing virtually on the talent show. The king, wearing a dark blue suit and tie, named-checked one of Richie's signature songs, which he performed at the show, asking if he was planning to do this "All Night Long."