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AP PHOTO



Indonesia's top diplomat warned yesterday of the threat posed by nuclear weapons, saying that Southeast Asia is "one miscalculation away from apocalypse" and pressing for world powers to sign a treaty to keep the region free from such arms. Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi raised the alarm ahead of a two-day summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The agenda would spotlight Myanmar's deadly civil strife, continuing tensions in the South China Sea and efforts to fortify regional economies amid the global headwinds set off by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Saudi Arabia has deposited \$2 billion into Pakistan's central bank, the government said yesterday, a much-needed financial boost ahead of a critical meeting of the International Monetary Fund on the new bailout package for the cash-strapped South Asian country. In a video statement, Pakistani Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said the kingdom was making good on its promise to bolster Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. The infusion is not a loan as such but will shore up the reserves and remain with Pakistan's central bank for at least a year.

AP PHOTO



Sweden US President Joe Biden hailed an agreement for Sweden to join NATO as more work remained to determine a path forward for Ukraine's future with the alliance and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy criticized as "absurd" the absence of a timetable for his country's entry. Biden described the summit as a "historic moment" and said the United States agreed with a proposal, yet to be released publicly, to outline a path for Ukraine's eventual membership. *More on p8*

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The city's hotel rooms will be fully available for the upcoming peak season following partial closures due to staff shortages

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ALL ROOMS OPEN FOR SUMMER, TOURISM CHIEF SAYS

ANTHONY LAM

THE city's hotel rooms will be fully available for the upcoming summer holidays

peak season, Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes said on the sidelines of the opening of the G2E

Asia and the Asian IR Expo.

After the resumption of normal travel, local hotels have been said to be operating at partial capacity due to a per-

sistent lack of workforce. Earlier, Senna Fernandes told the Times that she believed with graduates and for summer job seekers, the situation should ease.

Her comment yesterday acted as a realization of her belief. She added that last week, the city saw an overall hotel occupancy rate of nearly 90%.

On tourist arrival figures, the tourism official disclosed that the first half of the year has counted 11.6 million arriving visitors. The numbers of mainland visitors have recovered to 60% of 2019 numbers and from Hong Kong, even 90%.

However, there is more work to be done to attract foreign visitors, because the quantities of these visitors have only recovered to about 20% of 2019 figures. That is why the MGTO has compiled plans for marketing efforts in foreign source markets in the second half of the year, with Korea the first stop and a campaign to commence next week.

She added that there have been an average of 80,000 arriving visitors per day in the first half of July.

These visitors have not only spent more compared to expenditure seen in 2019, they have also dispersed to community districts. Average tou-

rist spending ranged between MOP2,000 and MOP3,000 in the first quarter of the year, while it was only MOP1,000 in 2019, the official underlined.

A bottleneck factor for tourism recovery is transport capacity, which "is a global challenge," she said. It takes time to fill positions vacated during the past three years, she added.

Meanwhile, during his keynote speech at the Asian IR Expo, Dr Wilfred Wong, president and executive director of Sands China Ltd., told the audience that he anticipates this year's gross gambling revenue (GGR) will reach or even surpass the government estimate of MOP130 billion.

In the first half of this year, the city's casinos have garnered about MOP80 billion in GGR.

At the same time, Wong also took the opportunity to highlight his company's past and future investments in the city. He said that since 2002, Sands China has invested MOP125 billion in Macau. Looking into the coming decade, the company pledges to invest an additional MOP30 billion, which Wong described as "setting [a] new par for the industry." The promised investments will also help Macau upgrade and diversify, the executive said.

G2E Asia returns with parallel expo on integrated resorts

ANTHONY LAM

ASIA'S leading gambling expo G2E Asia returned to Macau yesterday alongside a parallel expo focusing on integrated resorts (IR).

After three years of hiatus and a long-held intention to return to the city, the expo is back at The Venetian Macao for a three-day encounter with audiences from within and outside Greater China.

Hoping to create synergies with the Asian IR Expo, this year's G2E Asia expects to attract 5,000 visitors through a showcase of leading-edge products and solutions in the gaming, entertainment, themed travel, art,

technology, sports and Esports industries.

"The collaboration of the events will provide an expanded range of sector offerings at the exhibition," the organizer noted in a statement.

Complementing the exhibition is a carefully curated conference program led by renowned experts and thought leaders on trending topics shaping the industry landscape. Areas of focus include an in-depth look at Asia's integrated resorts in terms of regulatory oversight and gaming control, as well as future trends and challenges; Asia Gaming Landscape: A Decade into the Future; Transition from VIP to Mass



and Non-Gaming: Bumpy or Smooth; as well as IAGA Best Practices Institute.

As for the Asian IR Expo, the summit program will feature the following, among other topics: Travel Talk and Prospects ('Offer a wealth

of information and insights in the latest travel trends. Connect with industry experts and learn from them how to unlock success factors after the pandemic, shaping tourism development and sharing policy); Art and Entertainment

(work with ArtBiz) ('Explore a diverse range of topics from how the cultural industry drives innovation and promotes the diverse development of the city, to the potential of technology, pop art and entertainment to enhance the custo-

mer experience'); Sports and Esports ('Explore the significant impact of the sports scene to tourism industry'); as well as Health and Wellness ('Discuss the growing trends and development of health conscious tourism in Asia').

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TAIPA FERRY ACHES

Concessionaire claims difficulties, lack of trust of sectors for services shortage

RENATO MARQUES

THE company in charge of the management and operation of the commercial areas of Taipa Ferry Terminal (TFT) – CSI Group Ltd (CSI) – has been struggling with several difficulties to resume the full operation of the terminal after a stoppage of three years due to Covid-19 imposed restrictions, as explained to the Times, yesterday, in response to a Times inquiry.

In a written response that followed a phone conversation, CSI Operations Manager, Christine Chong, explained that the issues mentioned by the Times in a story published yesterday, are mostly related to the lack of trust of some of the sectors involved in the full resumption of visitors to Macau post-pandemic.

Addressing the problems separately observed by several users, CSI noted, regarding the lack of ATMs on the terminal, “Until this moment, we have signed a contract with a local bank and they will provide one ATM [to be located] at the Arrival Hall of TFT. DSAMA [Marine and Water Bureau] has

also provided help in communication with all financial institutions. As for now, we have invited all banks in Macau on at least two occasions. Having been rejected many times, we are still putting our best effort to improve the ATM services at the terminal,” they said, advancing that in the past the TFT used to have 12 ATMs located at the terminal that operated for over three years.

CSI further explained that “Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, the cross-border passenger transport between Hong Kong and Macau, and the mainland and Macau have been suspended for nearly three years. During the pandemic, all the contracts of ATMs have expired and [been] terminated. Although we have waived most charges for them [the banks], they, however, still turned down our offer to renew the contracts.”

Assuming that such a service is necessary for both passengers traveling through the TFT as well as those that work in the facility, the operator said it has been extending invitations to the local banking institutions to install such equipment since December last year, offering “a

very competitive package for all ATM service providers such as waiving all the usage fees (rental) and electricity fees, [and charging] only a small management fee (amounting to a couple of hundred [patacas]).”

LOCAL F&B SMES LACK TRUST IN INVESTING IN THE VENUE

Addressing the topic of lack of options for food and beverage (F&B) venues at the TFT, the CSI told the Times that, according to a survey done by the company with the local F&B small and medium enterprises (SMEs) most said “they are still lacking confidence in investing in new businesses after the Covid-19 outbreak.”

According to CSI, for the time being, eight restaurants are operating at the TFT CSI Food Court with hours of operation from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

These hours should be extended next month when two new restaurants open in the same area.

The company is also said to be keeping a close track of the operations of all food and beverage (F&B) tenants to avoid cases of restaurants and other services operating with a reduced timetable or temporarily

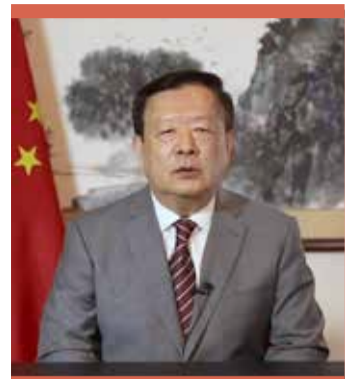
closing without warning, as mentioned by several users.

“In addition, to improve our F&B experience, we have planned to invite different cuisine providers to join our food court,” the concessionaire added, reaffirming that including the food court, the terminal has 54 shops and 17 24-hour-operating vending machines.

As for the only convenience store existing on the premises, CSI clarified that the venue operates only between 9:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m., with the services being complemented by six vending machines that operate around the clock to meet basic needs.

CSI also noted that is their “obligation, mission and vision” to continue to improve and enhance all areas of the TFT including facilities, shop choices and better service quality, among others, to provide the best services to all travelers.

In the story published by the Times yesterday, DSAMA was said to be aware of some of the situations and to have urged CSI to comply with the concession contract that states that the company must provide a range of services to the passengers and users of the TFT.



XIA BAOLONG HEADS TOP OFFICE OVERSEEING SARS

Xia Baolong is the head of China's recently created Central Office for Hong Kong and Macau Affairs, according to an official statement that showed him as chair of a meeting in that capacity yesterday. Zhou Ji was appointed the executive deputy director of the State Council Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, while Zheng Yanxiang and Zheng Xincong were appointed the office's deputy directors. The Beijing-based Central Office for Hong Kong and Macau Affairs – created earlier this year as part of broad institutional reforms – reports directly to the ruling Communist Party.

MGTO TO HOLD ROADSHOW IN KOREA

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) will unveil an “Experience Macao Unlimited” Mega Roadshow in Seoul, Korea on July 14 for four days in a row, after hosting the “Macao-Korea Travel Trade Networking Seminar” tomorrow. A delegation of Macau's travel trade will follow the office's lead to Korea for the seminar, which, together with the roadshow, are set to “familiarize Korean residents and tourism businesses with the destination's fascinating offers.”

UM STUDENTS HOLD COURSES IN GUIZHOU

Students from the University of Macau (UM) have participated in an eight-day service-learning program at Congjiang No 4 Primary School in Guizhou province to offer local primary school students customized courses. To date, nearly 200 HFPJC service leaders have traveled to different provinces to provide creative courses to more than 20,000 primary and secondary school students, the university said in a statement. The courses covered topics such as English, hygiene and safety, anti-bullying, Macau's history and culture, Chinese etiquette from oracle bone inscriptions and computer basics, among others.



NEW HK, MACAU WORK OFFICE MAKES DEBUT

A new Hong Kong and Macao Work Office, under the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made its debut as its deputy head reportedly attended a recent event.

According to the website of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the 2023 Pan-Pearl River Delta Regional Cooperation Chief Executives Joint Conference was held in Guiyang, Guizhou province.

The event was attended by heads of several provincial regions.

Yang Wanming, the deputy director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office under the CPC Central Committee, and other officials from the office attended the meeting, according to the report.

It was the first time the newly launched office appeared in public reports, and also the first time that Yang made an appearance in his capacity as a senior

official of the office.

Yang, 59, holds a doctoral degree in law. He has previously served as the director-general of the Latin American Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador of China to Chile, Ambassador of China to Argentina and Ambassador of China to Brazil.

He assumed the position of deputy director of the State Council Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office in April 2022.

A Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the CPC Central Committee will be formed based on the existing Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, according to a plan released by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on reforming Party and State institutions in March.

The new office will function as a working body of the CPC Central Committee, according to the plan. **CHINADAILY**



UNMARRIED MIGHT STORE CELLS FOR FUTURE REPRODUCTION, GOV'T PROPOSES

ANTHONY LAM

A new bill proposes allowing single people to deposit their sperm or ova for future reproduction purposes.

The Second Standing Committee of the parliament has commenced its consideration of an updated version of the Medically Assisted Reproduction Technology Bill submitted by the government.

According to committee president Chan Chak Mo, the new version features major changes, as reported by local media Cheng Pou.

Chan said the new version proposes permitting unmarried people to par-

ticipate in assisted reproduction. Should these people fear they may become ill in the future or marry late, their gametes – such as sperm or ova – can be collected and frozen.

However, these procedures must be conducted in compliance with the principles of consent and future technical guidelines compiled by the Health Bureau (SSM).

The new version of the bill also sees more specific stipulations: beneficiaries will be banned from designating particular donors; donors and beneficiaries must not be close relatives or in adoption relations; and donors must be at least 18 years old, with

good mental and physical health conditions, and possess no clinical symptoms of hereditary or contagious diseases.

The new version has also added bans on parties in a separated de-facto marriage as beneficiaries.

The SSM proposed dropping the expiration stipulations regarding frozen gametes, “considering the ever-evolving technologies,” Chan cited bureau officials as saying.

Data concerning assisted reproduction operations is proposed to be retained for a century, “considering the extended life expectancy of human beings,” Chan said.

AL COMMITTEE SEEKS EXPLANATION ON AIRSPACE, EXEMPTIONS

ANTHONY LAM

THE parliamentary committee reviewing the Civil Aviation Activities Bill is calling for explanations on certain exemptions and the definition of airspace.

The Third Standing Committee of the parliament recently commenced considering the bill, which further sets out rules for local civil aviation activities.

After the committee's inaugural discussion Monday, committee president Vong Hin Fai told a post-meeting press conference that the bill proposes exemptions for three types of entities, individuals, equipment or activities, and that the

committee would like further justifications, according to local media outlet Macao Daily News.

These exempted bodies include equipment used for military, customs, policing, search and rescue, fire, border control, as well as government-led public interest purposes; individuals or entities controlling the equipment; as well as airports, equipment and individuals controlled by the People's Liberation Army's Macau Garrison.

Vong said committee members wondered whether these exempted bodies would be governed by other laws and regulations.

Vong also enquired whether, if a public interest mission is outsourced to a third party by the government, they will be subject to governance by this bill.

The bill also concerns activities conducted within Macau's airspace and airports. Vong revealed that committee members requested further explanation on airspace and airports, because it was not clear whether the terms cover other aviation facilities.

The committee was also concerned with the bill's relationship with Decree-Law No 41/88/M, which concerns the construction and concession of Macau International Airport.





More diverse opinions means more sensible decisions, Portuguese Consul says

RENATO MARQUES

A greater diversity of opinions, expressed by the members of the Advisory Council for the Portuguese consulate for the Macau and Hong Kong area, will contribute to more sensible decisions on matters related to the Portuguese residents in Macau and Hong Kong, as well as in the preparation of recommendations regarding policies aimed at Portuguese communities, the Portuguese Consul-General, Alexandre Leitão, said yesterday in an interview with media outlet TDM Rádio Macau.

Leitão was speaking on the sidelines of the first-ever meeting of the Council which, according to the Consul-General, had a positive outcome with the assurance that there is an interest that the body has more regular meetings than the two per year that are the expected frequency.

Jorge Neto Valente, António José de Freitas, Amélia António, Francisco Manhão, Catarina Cortesão, Francisca Beja and the Chancellor of the Consulate General, Ricardo Silva, are some of the names participating in this new body, which takes office for the duration of the term of each new Consul-General.

Leitão will chair the Council,

which, besides the advisors mentioned, also includes the advisors of the Portuguese Communities including Rita Santos, Armando de Jesus, and Gilberto Camacho.

The creation of the Council was heavily criticized at the announcement of its inception by lawmaker and president of the board of the Macau Civil Servants' Association, José Pereira Coutinho, who said that in the past there was never the need for such an advisory mechanism as the Portuguese Communities advisors were taking good care of such matters, an opinion not shared by Leitão or the Portuguese Foreign Affairs Ministry, which supervises the activities of the local consulate.

PUBLIC WORKS

OUTER HARBOUR FERRY SERVICE TO HALT JULY 14 DUE TO FOURTH BRIDGE WORKS

RENATO MARQUES

THE Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal will have all services canceled Monday (July 17) due to construction of the 4th Macau-Taipa Bridge, the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) has advised.

The suspension of all departures or arrivals at the terminal is due to work related to the assembly of a section of the bridge structure, which will obstruct the circulation of all vessels in the Outer Harbour Canal.

To minimize the disruption to passenger traffic, the maritime transport operator (TurboJet) will temporarily increase services at the Taipa Ferry Terminal.

DSAMA is said to have also already informed all

ship and vessel operators in the area, and during the suspension period DSAMA and Customs Service patrol vessels will control and coordinate maritime traffic in the area.

DSAMA calls on citizens and tourists planning to travel by sea to take note of the temporary suspension of services from the Outer Harbour and to make the necessary arrangements according to the existing alternatives.

The suspension of maritime traffic due to works related to the bridge construction has occurred on several occasions and, according to the authorities, will recur during the construction of this mega-structure, which aims to link Taipa's Pac On areas to Zone A of the new landfills.

RENATO MARQUES



CORPORATE BITS

Wynn introduces new concepts as Chef Andre Chiang takes on Culinary Ambassador role



Chef André Chiang will take on the new role of Culinary Ambassador with Wynn Macau, having previously served as Culinary Director for Sichuan Moon.

"Celebrated around the world as a culinary genius, Chef André will create a new Sichuan Moon restaurant at Wynn Palace, which will open in a new, intimate setting to be announced soon," the gaming operator announced in a statement.

Sichuan Moon will close at the end of July to

move to its new location, and in his new role as Culinary Ambassador, Chef André and the entire Sichuan Moon team will host a series of innovative events in August, including "Sichuan Moon Culinary Tours" in Shanghai and Singapore.

Meanwhile, on the heels of his renowned success at Wing Lei Palace of Wynn Palace, Cantonese Master Chef Tam Kwok Fung will present a new restaurant concept of his own in the existing Sichuan Moon location.

The concept is based upon his "personal vision for elevating Cantonese cuisine to a global level."

Cantopop superstar Jacky Cheung performed record-breaking shows at The Venetian Macao



Cantopop superstar Jacky Cheung performed a record-breaking 12 shows at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Arena between June 9 and July 2,

selling more than 109,000 tickets on the first leg of his 10th world tour.

The FWD Insurance 10th Anniversary Presents: Jacky

Cheung 60+ Concert Tour was slated for six nights only, with the number of shows doubled after quickly selling out.

"I believe the shows also helped stimulate domestic consumption and boost the local economy," said Lawrence Che, founder and CEO of Chessman Entertainment Production and director-general of the Macau Federal Commercial Association of the Convention & Exhibition Industry.

In a bid to drive more international tourism to Macau and increase the number of first-time and repeat visitors, Sands China pledged that it would "continue bringing in A-list concerts, sporting events, theatre productions and other new-to-market attractions."

Hong Kong will ban more products from Japan if treated wastewater is discharged

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

HONG Kong's leader warned yesterday that the city will ban marine products from "a large number prefectures" if Japan discharges treated radioactive wastewater into the sea.

Chief Executive John Lee said in a press briefing that his government would err on the side of caution because the planned release of wastewater from the damaged Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean is an unprecedented exercise.

He said he has to take the issue seriously because it affects not only the current population of Hong Kong but also the next generation.

"The action we will take, if the exercise really starts, is that we will be banning a large number (of) prefectures' sea products," he said. But he did not name which prefectures and what products will be affected.

A massive earthquake and tsunami in March 2011 destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant's cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt and releasing large amounts of radiation. The tanks storing the water used since the accident to cool the reactor cores will reach their ca-

AP PHOTO



An employee of Tokyo Electric Power Company explains to the media about the facility to be used to release treated radioactive water at Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Fukushima, northern Japan, on June 26, 2023

capacity in early 2024.

In 2021, Japan's government announced plans to gradually release the treated — but still slightly radioactive — water following its dilution to what it says are safe levels. Japanese officials say the water, currently stored in about a thousand tanks at the plant, needs to be removed to prevent accidental leaks in case of

an earthquake and to make room for the plant's decommissioning.

On Monday, the operator of the wrecked nuclear plant began testing equipment constructed for discharging the wastewater.

Last week, the United Nations nuclear agency endorsed the plan, saying it meets international standards and the environmental and health impact would

be negligible.

But the plan has faced fierce protests from local fishing communities concerned about safety and reputational damage. Neighboring countries, including South Korea, China and Pacific Island nations, have also raised safety concerns. Chinese authorities last week highlighted import restrictions on food products

from 10 prefectures in Japan, including Fukushima.

The Hong Kong government will formulate policies in response to Japan's plans, Lee said Tuesday, and they will be announced when ready.

"The risks are very unknown," he said. "I must ensure that food safety is protected in Hong Kong."

In the semi-autonomous southern Chinese city, the import of certain products — such as fruits and vegetables — from Fukushima is currently banned. Other products such as meat and poultry from there are allowed in if they come with a radiation certificate.

The import of many food products from four other Japanese prefectures immediately south of Fukushima — Gunma, Ibaraki, Tochigi and Chiba — will also have to be accompanied with radiation certificate.

Last year, the major food imports from Japan amounted to about 2% of the total food supply in Hong Kong, official data showed. Although the city is not highly dependent on Japanese food products in terms of quantity, many residents are fond of Japanese food and there are many Japanese restaurants across the territory, the government said. **MDT/AP**

China says its foreign minister is ill. A senior diplomat will take his place at ASEAN

CHINESE Foreign Minister Qin Gang is unwell and the country's senior diplomat will take his place at a two-day summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations this week in Jakarta, Indonesia, the Foreign Ministry said yesterday.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin gave no details of what was ailing Qin, who has not been seen in public in more than two weeks.

"State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang is unable to attend this series of foreign ministers' meetings due to health reasons," Wang said at a daily briefing yesterday.

Wang Yi, a former foreign minister and the current head of the ruling Commu-

AP PHOTO



Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang

nist Party's Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, will represent China at the meetings Thursday and Friday, Wang Wenbin said.

Wang Yi drew controversy last week with comments saying Westerners are

incapable of distinguishing among Chinese, Koreans and Japanese, and suggesting the three countries with vastly different societies and politics form an alliance based on racial and cultural similarities.

Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Teuku Faizasyah confirmed Wang Yi would be attending the ASEAN meeting in Qin's stead. Wang will attend the China-ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting, the

ASEAN-China-Japan-South Korea foreign ministers' meeting, the East Asia Summit foreign ministers' meeting and the ASEAN Regional Forum foreign ministers' meeting.

China has sought to engage the 10 members of ASEAN, mainly through trade, as part of a campaign to dilute U.S. influence in the region and challenge the American-led liberal world order.

However, China's influence has been limited by its assertion of its claim to virtually all of the South China Sea.

ASEAN members Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines exercise overlapping claims and have largely welcomed the United States military pre-

sence in the region. China denounces U.S. involvement as outside meddling.

The foreign ministers' meeting is a "platform to enhance mutual trust and cooperation," Wang Wenbin told reporters. "China hopes this meeting will help build more consensus, make political preparation for a fruitful ASEAN leaders' summit in September, and promote regional peace, stability and prosperity."

In March, Qin warned Washington of "conflict and confrontation," striking a combative tone amid conflicts over Taiwan, COVID-19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. That followed an accusation by leader Xi Jinping that Western governments led by the U.S. wanted to encircle and suppress China.

According to the Foreign Ministry's website, Qin's last public appearance was at a meeting with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry in Beijing on June 25. **MDT/AP**

KIM TONG-HYUNG &
HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

NORTH KOREA

Leader's powerful sister says warplanes repelled US spy plane

THE powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un alleged that the country's warplanes repelled a U.S. spy plane flying over nearby waters Monday and warned of "shocking" consequences if the U.S. continues reconnaissance in the area.

The United States and South Korea dismissed the North's accusations and urged it to refrain from any acts or rhetoric that raises animosities.

It's unclear if North Korea would follow through. It has made numerous similar threats over alleged U.S. reconnaissance activities, but its latest statement came amid heightened animosities over North Korea's barrage of missile tests earlier this year.

Kim Yo Jong, one of her brother's top foreign policy officials, claimed that the U.S. spy plane reached into the North's eastern exclusive economic zone eight times Monday. In a statement carried by state media Monday night, she claimed that the North scrambled warplanes to chase away the U.S. plane.

"A shocking incident would occur in the long run in the 20-40 kilometer section in which the U.S. spy planes habitually intrude into the sky above the economic water zone" of North Korea, Kim Yo Jong said.

Earlier Monday, North Korea's Defense Ministry accused the U.S. of flying a strategic reconnaissance

AP PHOTO



Kim Yo Jong, sister of North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un

ce plane into its "inviolable airspace" several times and warning that approaching aircraft might be shot down.

While the Defense Ministry statement seemed to imply an intrusion into North Korean territorial airspace, Kim Yo Jong accused the U.S. of conducting aerial surveillance over the North's exclusive economic zone, the area within 200 nautical miles of its territory

where it controls rights to natural resources.

Sabrina Singh, deputy Pentagon press secretary, called the North's claim on the airspace violation "just accusations."

"The United States, as always, remains committed to safely and responsibly flying, sailing, operating anywhere that international law allows and alongside our allies and partners," Singh said.

Matthew Miller, a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department, said the United States urges North Korea to refrain from "escalatory actions" and engage in serious diplomacy.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff denied that the U.S. had flown any spy plane into North Korean territory. Spokesperson Lee Sung Joon said at a briefing that the U.S. was conducting stan-

dard reconnaissance activities in coordination with South Korea's military.

Later Monday, the South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a second statement that it strongly urges North Korea to stop rhetoric that raises tensions over "normal flight by the Korea-U.S. alliance over open waters."

Early Tuesday, Kim Yo Jong issued another statement reasserting that intensifying U.S. reconnaissance activities were encroaching on the North's sovereignty and that the U.S. forces would "experience a very critical flight" if they continue with their illegal intrusions.

Earlier this year, tensions on the Korean Peninsula rose sharply as the pace of North Korean weapon tests and U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises have intensified. North Korea has test-fired nearly 100 missiles since the start of 2022 as Kim Jong Un expands a nuclear arsenal he apparently sees as his strongest guarantee of survival.

The United States stations about 28,500 troops in South Korea as deterrence against potential aggression by North Korea. **MDT/AP**

NEW ZEALAND

Tourists received no safety warnings before volcano eruption killed 22, prosecutor says

ROD MCGUIRK

TOURISTS received no health and safety warnings before they landed on New Zealand's most active volcano ahead of a 2019 eruption that killed 22 people, a prosecutor said yesterday.

There were 47 people on White Island, the tip of an undersea volcano also known by its Indigenous Maori name, Whakaari, when superheated gases erupted on Dec. 9. Most of the 25 people who survived were severely burned.

The island's owners, brothers Andrew, James and Peter Buttle; their company Whakaari Management Ltd.; and tour operators I.D. Tours NZ Ltd. and Tauranga Tourism Services Ltd. went on trial Tuesday in Auckland District Court for allegedly

AP PHOTO



Prosecutor Kristy McDonald addresses a court in Auckland, New Zealand, yesterday

failing to adequately protect tourists and staff.

Prosecutor Kristy McDonald said in opening the prosecution case that the eruption at the popular tourist destination was not predictable but was foreseeable. The 20 tourists and two tour guides who died were given no warning of the risks, she said.

"They were not given the opportunity to make any informed decision about whether they wanted to take the risk of walking into the crater of an active and unpredictable volcano that had erupted as recently as 2016," McDonald said.

"The business of tourism on Whakaari was a risky business. It involved

tours to an active volcano, taking people to the heart of the crater in circumstances where no one could predict when an eruption might occur, and if an eruption did occur, those on Whakaari were likely to die or suffer very serious injury. And tragically, that risk was realized," she said.

Of those killed, 14 were

Australians, five were Americans, two were New Zealanders and one was German.

McDonald said the company that owned the volcano — Whakaari Management Ltd., which she called WML — failed to understand the risk, failed to consult with tour operators on the hazards, failed to ensure appropriate personal protective equipment was provided to tourists and staff, and failed to provide an adequate means of evacuation.

The company left tour operators to monitor the changing risk. An eruption on April 27, 2016, occurred at night without warning when no one was on the island. That should have prompted the owner to review the risk assessment, McDonald said.

The volcano had gone through 42 "eruptive periods" since colonial records began in 1826, McDonald said.

After the 2016 eruption, New Zealand geology agency GNS Science said its staff were banned from visiting the crater floor until further notice because of the "heightened state of volcanic unrest," McDonald said.

Despite knowing this, several operators continued taking tourists to the crater from the day after the eruption, she said.

WHL, which made a profit of 1 million New Zealand dollars (\$621,000) a year from tourists, could have paid GNS for a formal risk assessment but did not, she said.

McDonald said warning tourists of the dangers "would obviously not be good for business."

"However, profit should never come before safety," she said.

She blamed the Buttle brothers for the WML's failure to assess the volcano danger. **MDT/AP**

NATO

Summit reaches agreement on admitting Sweden but faces division over Ukraine

CHRIS MEGERIAN,
SEUNG MIN KIM
& KARL RITTER, VILNIUS

U.S. President Joe Biden yesterday hailed an agreement for Sweden to join NATO as more work remained to determine a path forward for Ukraine's future with the alliance. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy criticized as "absurd" the absence of a timetable for his country's entry.

Biden described the summit as a "historic moment" and said the United States agreed with a proposal, yet to be released publicly, to outline a path for Ukraine's eventual membership.

However, Zelenskyy, who was on his way to Vilnius to join the summit, expressed disappointment with how the negotiations were playing out.

"We value our allies," he wrote on Twitter but added that "Ukraine also deserves respect."

"It's unprecedented and absurd when time frame is not set neither for the invitation nor for Ukraine's membership," Zelensky said. He finished with, "Uncertainty is weakness. And I will openly discuss this at the summit."

A public flash of anger from the Ukrainian leader, who has been hailed by the West as a hero for his leadership during the Russian invasion, could renew tensions in Vilnius just as they had begun to subside.

On Monday evening, the night before the summit opened, Turkey withdrew its objections to Sweden joining the alliance, a step toward the unity that Western leaders have been eager to demonstrate in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The deal was reached after days of intensive meetings, and it's poised to expand the alliance's strength in Northern Europe.

"Rumors of the death of NATO's unity were greatly exaggerated," Jake Sullivan, the U.S. national security adviser, told reporters triumphantly on Tuesday.



From left: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson

According to a joint statement issued when the deal was announced, Erdogan will ask Turkey's parliament to approve Sweden joining NATO. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, another holdout, is expected to take a similar step.

The outcome is a victory for Biden as well, who has touted NATO's expansion as an example of how Russia's invasion of Ukraine has backfired on Moscow. Finland has already become the 31st member of the alliance, and Sweden is on deck to become the 32nd. Both Nordic countries were historically non-aligned until the war increased fears of Russian aggression.

Because of the deal on Sweden's membership, "this summit is already historic before it has started," Stoltenberg said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that NATO's expansion is "one of the reasons that led to the current situation."

"It looks like the Europeans don't understand their mistake," Peskov said. He warned against putting Ukraine on a fast track for NATO membership.

"Potentially it's very dangerous for the European security, it carries very big risks," Peskov said.

Biden began Tuesday by meeting with Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda,

where he emphasized his commitment to transatlantic cooperation.

"Nothing happens here that doesn't affect us," he told Nausėda. The White House said Nausėda presented Biden with the Order of Vytautas the Great, the highest award a Lithuanian president can bestow. Biden is the first U.S. president to receive it.

Biden and Erdogan were scheduled to meet Tuesday evening, and it was unclear how some of the Turkish president's other demands will be resolved. He has been seeking advanced American fighter jets and a path toward membership in the European Union. The White House has expressed support for both, but publicly insisted that the issues were not related to Sweden's membership in NATO.

"I stand ready to work with President Erdogan and Turkey on enhancing defense and deterrence in the Euro-Atlantic area," Biden said in a statement late Monday.

The phrasing was a nod to Biden's commitment to help Turkey acquire new F-16 fighter jets, according to an administration official who was not authorized to comment publicly.

The Biden administration has backed Turkey's desire to buy 40 new F-16s as well as modernization kits from the U.S. It's a move some in Con-

gress, most notably Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Menendez, D-N.J., have opposed over Turkey blocking NATO membership for Sweden, its human rights record and other concerns.

In Washington, Menendez said he was "continuing to have my reservations" on providing the fighter aircraft to Turkey. If the Biden administration could show that Turkey wouldn't use the F-16s belligerently against other NATO members, particularly its neighbor Greece, and meet other conditions, "then there may be a way forward," Menendez told reporters.

NATO members are now focused on Ukraine's desire to join NATO. The Baltic states — including Lithuania, which is hosting the event — have pushed for a strong show of support and a clear pathway toward membership for Ukraine.

The United States and Germany have resisted that, and Biden said last week that Ukraine wasn't ready to join. Members of NATO, he told CNN, need to "meet all the qualifications, from democratization to a whole range of other issues," a nod toward longstanding concerns about governance and corruption in Kyiv.

Zelenskyy is scheduled to attend the summit today and meet with Biden. MDT/AP

this day in history

1986 ORANGE PARADE SPARKS RIOTS



Dozens have been injured in the second consecutive night of violence in Portadown, County Armagh.

Violence flared when Orangemen converged on the town yesterday evening after their annual marches to commemorate the Battle of the Boyne.

Protestant youths began throwing missiles at the police as they attempted to section off Catholic areas.

Disturbances are expected into the night with nationalist and loyalist rioters directing their anger against the security forces and each other.

Vehicles have been overturned and police have been attacked with darts, bottles and stones. Four were seriously injured including one who was dragged from his car and stabbed in the neck.

RUC officers responded with baton charges and about 150 plastic bullets. A total of 127 police and civilians have been injured over the two nights.

Yesterday evening there were skirmishes between Catholic and Protestant factions as they hurled petrol bombs over wasteland in anticipation of today's parade.

The march in the Portadown area passed off peacefully this afternoon after the Orangemen accepted a compromise from the RUC late last night.

The authorities expected trouble after sealing off the Tunnel section of Obins Street yesterday. This is the traditional outward route of the Portadown parade to Drumcree church.

When the RUC allowed Orangemen down Obins Street last Sunday there were angry scenes between police, loyalist marchers and Catholic residents.

Today, hundreds of troops joined the 1,000-strong force of officers lining the re-routed parade.

It took the 400 Orangemen from eight lodges 25 minutes to walk down the mainly Catholic Garvaghy Road.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Orange Order was founded near Portadown in 1795 after a clash between Catholics and Protestants at the Battle of the Diamonds.

With about 75,000 members it remains the largest Protestant organisation in Northern Ireland. Every 12 July it celebrates the victory of Protestant William of Orange over Catholic King James at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

Tensions were high in 1986 because loyalists claimed concessions were being made to Catholics through the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement. In 1997 an independent Parades Commission was established.

The Garvaghy Road continues to be a source of unrest and Orangemen have not been allowed to march down there since 1997. /CPS:BOX>

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Social get-together will bring you in contact with intelligent new friends. Travel should be on your mind. You must not make unnecessary changes today.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

You will meet a person who may turn out to be more than just a friend. Today will be hectic. Don't overextend yourself in the process.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Your willingness to help others can and will lead to fatigue if you don't learn to say no. Try to curb your bad habits. Your dynamic, determined approach will win favors as well as a helping hand.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Opportunities to meet new lovers will evolve through your interaction with groups or fundraising functions. Be aware of any deception on the part of those you deal with. Deceit with coworkers is apparent.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Residential moves will be favorable, and larger quarters the most probable direction. A romantic dinner, followed by a quiet evening with the one who is enticing you, should be most satisfying.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Confronting a situation will only result in indignation and misunderstandings. Be confident in your endeavors and others will believe in your efforts. Don't be too quick to react.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Be careful not to let friends or peers make you look bad. Travel will also entice you. You must be sure not to be frivolous, because as the saying goes, easy come, easy go.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

New romantic ties can be made; however, you must make sure that your motives are not selfish before you make your move. Be discreet about any information you uncover.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Your ability to organize and get everyone together will enhance your popularity and bring interest from potential mates. Catch up on your correspondence and reading.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Go to the top if you're being harassed or held back. Depression may be likely if you're away from home. Spend some quality time with your lover.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Talking to those you trust and respect will help you sort out any problems. Try to make your lover understand that you need to do things with your friends.

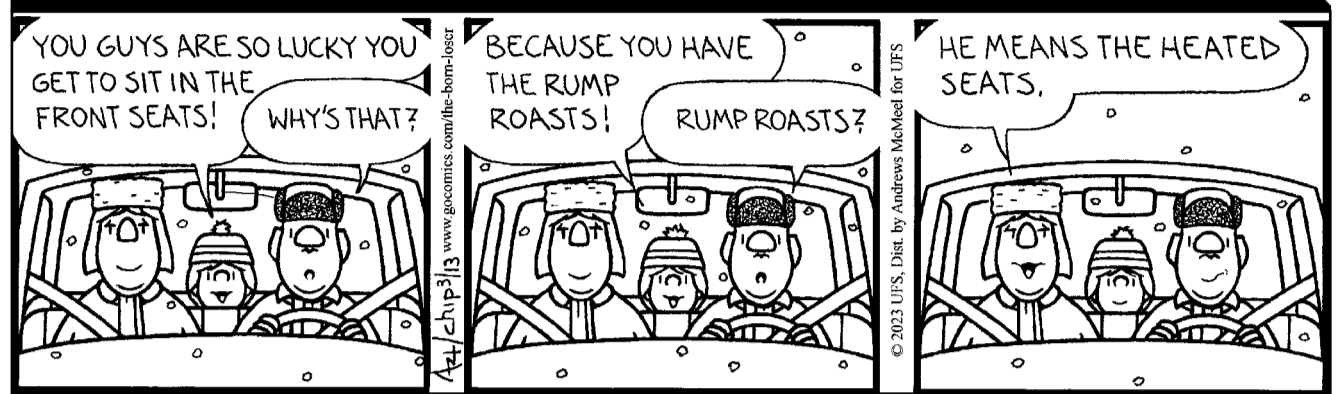


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You will have no problem getting your point across to those in a position to help you. Trips will be exciting. Someone may try to damage your reputation.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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| 6 | | 2 | | 8 | | | | |
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| 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | | |
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| 8 | | 6 | 9 | 2 | 3 | | | |

EASY+

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MEDIUM

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WEATHER

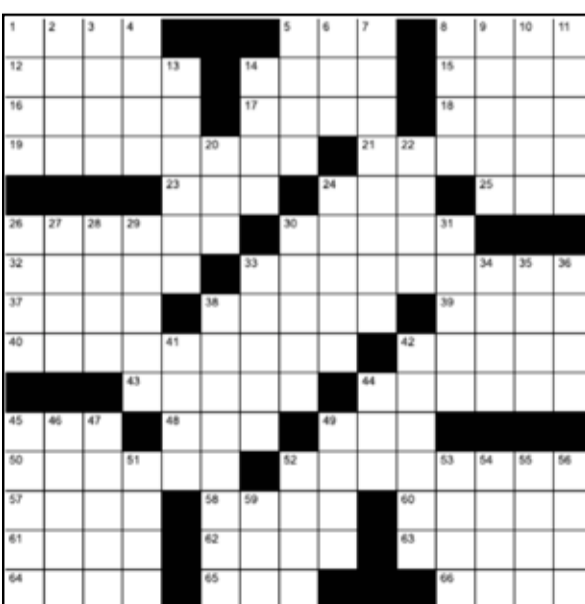
| | MIN | MAX | CONDITION |
|--------------|-----|-----|---------------|
| CHINA | | | |
| Beijing | 24 | 29 | rain |
| Changchun | 19 | 29 | cloudy |
| Chengdu | 24 | 32 | rain |
| Chongqing | 30 | 38 | overcast |
| Fuzhou | 27 | 37 | cloudy |
| Guangzhou | 27 | 36 | cloudy |
| Guiyang | 23 | 30 | cloudy |
| Haikou | 27 | 36 | cloudy |
| Hangzhou | 27 | 37 | fine |
| Harbin | 19 | 30 | fine |
| Hefei | 27 | 36 | cloudy |
| Nanjing | 27 | 35 | cloudy |
| Shanghai | 28 | 36 | cloudy |
| Taipei | 26 | 31 | cloudy |
| Wuhan | 30 | 36 | fine |
| Hong Kong | 28 | 32 | cloudy |
| WORLD | | | |
| Moscow | 12 | 18 | cloudy |
| Frankfurt | 16 | 28 | thunderstorms |
| Paris | 15 | 27 | overcast |
| London | 13 | 21 | rain |
| New York | 24 | 34 | overcast |

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Molecular component; 5- Perceive; 8- Traditional prayer ending; 12- Rate; 14- Be dependent; 15- Room in a casa; 16- Ascend; 17- Ashtabula's lake; 18- ___ boy; 19- Large landed estate; 21- Medieval; 23- Affirmative answer; 24- Literary monogram; 25- Calendar abbr.; 26- Critique; 30- Closes; 32- Turn over; 33- Flightless bird; 37- Actress Talbot; 38- Alleviates; 39- Nabisco cookie; 40- Adam Smith or Alan Greenspan; 42- Tendency; 43- Abrasive mineral; 44- Midday nap; 45- Lunar plain; 48- Guadalajara gold; 49- Choose; 50- Free of an obstruction; 52- Post-dawn luminescence; 57- Part of a bird's beak; 58- Frozen treats; 60- Slip; 61- "Charlie's Angels" angel; 62- Cool; 63- Beam; 64- Lays down the lawn; 65- Hair goo; 66- Primates with short tails or no tail;

DOWN 1- Foot part; 2- Currency unit in Western Samoa; 3- Auricular; 4- Food critic Sheraton; 5- Lab fluids; 6- Whitney; 7- Monocle; 8- Be that ___ may...; 9- Course with pluses and minuses; 10- Beast of Borden; 11- Civilrights.org.; 13- Compiled; 14- Cincinnati team; 20- Original; 22- Capital of Norway; 24- Adjust to zero; 26- Mysterious character; 27- Long poem, such as those attributed to Homer; 28- Rejection power; 29- Absurd; 30- Pert; 31- Cursed; 33- Africa's most populous city; 34- Ancient Athens's Temple of ___; 35- 1996 Tony-winning musical; 36- Weird Al Yankovic's parody of "Lola"; 38- Appearing; 41- Melville tale; 42- Names; 44- Engage in espionage; 45- Uses a straw; 46- Diciembre follower; 47- Bitterly pungent; 49- Oven used to dry hops; 51- To a smaller extent; 52- Distribute cards; 53- "The Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer; 54- Clench; 55- Gap; 56- Very, in Versailles; 59- Bee follower;

Yesterday's solution



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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Nam Long
HKD3,988,000 2 beds 1 bath

Manhattan
HKD 2,400/mth CARPARK

AD

MUSIC

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS AND LAURYN HILL WILL HEADLINE GLOBAL CITIZEN FESTIVAL TO FIGHT INEQUALITY

GLENN GAMBOA, NEW YORK

RED Hot Chili Peppers, Lauryn Hill and Megan Thee Stallion will headline this year's Global Citizen Festival as the anti-poverty nonprofit looks to focus attention on increasing inequality for girls and young women around the world.

Global Citizen CEO Hugh Evans said the Sept. 23 event at New York's Central Park will be the centerpiece of his group's campaign to encourage supporters, especially those in Gen Z, to take action on gender inequality, climate change and other issues.

Studies show that half of Gen Z "feel disillusioned and powerless to make a positive impact," Evans told The Associated Press in an interview. "As long as you and I have been alive, there was almost this sense of positive momentum in the world that almost felt like the eradication of extreme poverty could be inevitable," he said. "But the data suggests the world is now getting worse."

According to the United Nations Population Fund, 257 million women around the world want to



Anthony Kiedis, from left, Flea, John Frusciante and Chad Smith, of Red Hot Chili Peppers

avoid pregnancy, but don't have access to modern contraceptives. The fund's partnership to provide reproductive health services is currently underfunded by \$100 million.

Education Cannot Wait, the United Nations fund that helps ensure nearly 20 million children in crisis continue learning, needs \$670 million for its work.

The Global Citizen Festival,

which will also include performances from K-pop sensation Stray Kids and singer-songwriter Conan Gray, provides free tickets to the event in exchange for fans taking actions on the group's app and website that support these goals.

This year, that may mean asking Canada, Norway and Japan to donate more to the United Nations Population Fund. It may

mean pushing companies to join the United Nations Race to Zero to set targets for reducing their carbon emissions. Or urging the governments of the United States, United Kingdom, Italy and Australia to provide more funding to vulnerable countries to adapt to climate change.

Global Citizen's use of supporters to convince political, business and philanthropic leaders to

tackle some of the world's biggest problems is designed to appeal to younger generations, Evans said.

"These are pillars of what we know Gen Z cares about, but often they feel powerless because the data isn't on their side," Evans said. "We're talking to Gen Z in a way that they know their actions can have a scalable impact."

Singer Angelique Kidjo, who was recently named to this year's Great Immigrants list by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, said that her Batonga Foundation found that supporting girls and young women ends up strengthening entire villages in her native Benin and throughout Africa.

"Helping women in a community is like starting a rolling stone that never stops rolling," said Kidjo, adding that it was the women who kept their villages safe during the COVID-19 pandemic by making masks and soap for hand-washing, as well as enforcing social distancing.

Not only will Hill and Megan Thee Stallion provide examples of female empowerment with their performances, but Evans hopes they will encourage their fans to take action during the event, which will be streamed on numerous digital platforms.

"For many decades, the Red Hot Chili Peppers have occupied that space where music and activism meet," said Evans, adding that the band's classic "Under the Bridge" was the first song he learned to play on guitar. "We couldn't be happier with this lineup." MDT/AP

AD

Advertisement for Macau International Short Film Festival. Includes text: 'Macau International Short Film Festival', 'SH RTS Short Film International Competition', 'NOW CALLING FOR SUBMISSIONS', 'VOLUME Music Video International Competition', and submission dates: 'Submit Until 16.06.2023' and 'Submit Until 20.07.2023'.

Advertisement for Centro Medico Pedder. Includes logo '仁德 CENTRO MEDICO PEDDER', a photo of a doctor and patient, and a list of medical services: 'General Surgery', 'Breast Surgery', 'Urology', 'Paediatric Surgery', 'Obstetrics & Gynaecology', 'Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery', 'Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine', 'ENT', 'Cardiology', 'General Medicine', and 'Dietitian'.

BASKETBALL

In Las Vegas, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver discusses keeping eye on gambling

TIM REYNOLDS,
LAS VEGAS

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said yesterday (Macau time) that he believes all leagues have to continue keeping an incredibly close eye on gambling trends within their sport, mindful of issues that the NFL in particular has had to address in recent months.

Silver — who has been a longtime proponent of legalized sports betting frameworks within sports — spoke in Las Vegas, part of a moderated discussion as part of the Associated Press Sports Editors convention. He said he draws the analogy to insider trading, and how leagues, he believes, are finding ways to stay ahead of major problems.

“I think that public markets worked very well in this country,” Silver said. “But the other side of a public market is the potential for insider trading. And there’s very sophisticated algorithms, etc., that track it. It’s not that different in sports now, especially when you get higher volumes of betting. You have very sophisticated computers; when they see aberrational betting ... you’re going to get caught.”

The NFL recently suspended four players for violations of its gambling policy; three received at least yearlong bans for betting on NFL games and one a six-game suspension for wagering on non-NFL games. It brings the total to 10 players disciplined over the past two years as that league vowed to increase training efforts across the board with an eye toward protecting the integrity of the game.

“I think there’s a responsibility for these leagues to invest more education, not just our own players, but of young people who might be doing something inappropriate or anybody who might be engaging in problematic gambling,” Silver said.

In other matters Silver discussed Monday:

AP PHOTO



NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, center

BLACK OWNERSHIP

As he did during the NBA Finals, Silver discussed how the league’s ownership landscape will change when Michael Jordan — the lone Black majority owner in the league — finalizes his sale of his majority stake in the Charlotte Hornets.

“I’m so sad to see him leaving, choosing to leave as an owner, but of course he has the right to sell to whomever he wants to,” Silver said. “And I will say in terms of Black representation, we will not have a principal owner who’s Black but we have several, especially former players, Dwyane Wade being the most recently in Utah, Grant Hill, a couple others who have interest in a team.”

Silver said he can use his “bully pulpit” to make sure ownership groups coming into the league have diversity within their group.

EXPANSION

With a new collective bargaining agreement in place, the league will turn its attention toward finishing the next series of media rights deals.

And when that’s done, the NBA will seriously consider expansion — but not before, Silver said.

“We will turn to expansion once those media deals are done,” Silver said. “It’s not a sure thing. But as I’ve said before, I think it’s natural that organizations grow over time. There’s no doubt that there’s enormous

interest in this (Las Vegas) market.”

Seattle has also long been mentioned as an expansion target. Many players have lobbied for Seattle to return to the NBA, and many — LeBron James among them — have said they strongly support the notion of Las Vegas getting a franchise.

QATAR OWNERSHIP

It became known last month that Qatar’s sovereign wealth fund is buying a roughly 5% stake in the parent company of the NBA’s Washington Wizards, NHL’s Washington Capitals and WNBA’s Washington Mystics as part of a \$4.05 billion deal.

But there is no mechanism now — and none coming in the foreseeable future — that would allow such funds to purchase the controlling stake of an NBA team, Silver said.

“It’s very important to us, putting aside sovereign wealth funds, that individuals are in a position to control our teams, be responsible to the fans, be responsible for their partners, and to the players,” Silver said.

JAMORANT

Silver stood by the 25-game suspension he gave Memphis guard Ja Morant for his second instance of displaying a gun on social media, even though the National Basketball Players Association has said it believes the sanction is too harsh.

As he said at the NBA Fi-

nals, Silver made it clear that he’s rooting for Morant.

“As I understand it, he is continuing to seek help,” Silver said. “And I know there’s enormous pressure

that comes with being an NBA player, particularly a superstar player. So I’m certainly empathetic to the pressures he faces but I also feel, particularly around

guns and the kind of violence we’re seeing among young people in our society, that this is something we have to take incredibly seriously.” MDT/AP

AD

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**CHINA-US
 CLIMATE CHANGE
 COOPERATION
 BOON FOR THE
 INTERNATIONAL
 COMMUNITY**

In yet another sign that both sides are making efforts to halt the downward spiral in China-US relations, John Kerry, US President Joe Biden's special envoy for climate change, is reportedly scheduled to visit China next week to restart global warming negotiations between the world's two largest greenhouse gas emitters.

The planned trip to China, Kerry's third as climate envoy, comes after visits by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in June and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen last week, which have helped stabilize bilateral ties. Kerry is expected to meet with his Chinese counterpart Xie Zhenhua and discuss with him about "climate cooperation", as well as collaborative efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, according to Bloomberg. The meeting could also set a backdrop for the upcoming UN climate conference in the United Arab Emirates in November.

China and the US, as the two largest investors in clean energy, have played an irreplaceable role in the fight against global warming, and their previous cooperation on climate change has helped make global breakthroughs such as the 2015 Paris Agreement possible. Their separate climate ambitions — China has set a target of hitting peak emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060, while the US has pledged to cut up to 52 percent of its greenhouse gas emissions before 2030 — will to a large extent determine whether the world as a whole will succeed in the attempt to prevent global temperatures from continuously rising.

Yet the deteriorating Sino-US relations, caused by frictions over trade, technology and human rights, have unfortunately compromised cooperation between the two countries on climate change. Beijing had to suspend climate talks with the US in August last year when Nancy Pelosi, then US House speaker, visited Taiwan despite repeated warnings from Beijing, which insisted that climate cooperation cannot be separated from the broader relationship.

That Sino-US ties have started to stabilize, and that Kerry and Xie have established a productive working relationship dating back to the Barack Obama administration, have raised expectations that progress can be made during Kerry's upcoming China visit.

"We need genuine cooperation," as Kerry once said in an interview. As the two largest emitters, China and the US have a special responsibility to find common ground in jointly addressing climate change, which would be a boon for the world at a time when the highest global temperatures are being recorded in much of the planet.

CHINA SIGNS PACT WITH SOLOMON ISLANDS TO BOOST COOPERATION ON 'LAW ENFORCEMENT

THE BUZZ

The Solomon Islands has signed an agreement to boost cooperation with China on "law enforcement and security matters," in a move likely to raise concerns among the South Pacific island's traditional partners including Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

The agreement, details of which were not immediately released, was contained in a joint statement made public yesterday following a meeting Monday in Beijing between Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Solomons Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare. As part of efforts to build a "comprehensive strategic partner-

ship" the sides agreed to: "Enhance cooperation on law enforcement and security matters. The Chinese side will continue to provide support and help to Solomon Islands as needed in strengthening Solomon Islands' police law enforcement capacity."

Located 2,000 kilometers northeast of Australia, Solomon Islands has been China's biggest success in a campaign to expand its presence in the South Pacific.

The nearby island nation of Kiribati also switched official relations to Beijing in 2019.

AP PHOTO



ISRAELIS BLOCK HIGHWAYS IN NATIONWIDE PROTESTS OF GOV'T'S PLAN TO OVERHAUL JUDICIARY

**ILAN BEN ZION,
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THOUSANDS of Israeli protesters took to the streets yesterday and blocked highways leading to Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv as part of countrywide demonstrations against the government's planned judicial overhaul that has divided the nation.

The demonstrations came the morning after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's parliamentary coalition gave initial approval to a bill to limit the Supreme Court's oversight powers, pressing forward with contentious proposed changes to the judiciary despite widespread opposition.

The legislation is one of several bills proposed by Netanyahu's ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox allies. The plan has provoked months of sustained protests by opponents who say it is pushing the country toward authoritarian rule.

Anti-overhaul activists called for nationwide mass demonstrations throughout the day, including protests at Israel's main international airport that could disrupt travel.

Yesterday, 300 reservists from the military's cyber unit signed a letter saying they would not volunteer for service, explaining the government has demonstrated "it is determined to destroy the state of Israel."

"Sensitive cyber abilities with the potential for being used for evil must not be given to a criminal government that is undermining the foundations of democracy," the letter said.

Police used a water cannon to clear protesters who blocked a main artery leading to Jerusalem. Officers arrested several others who had obstructed a highway next to the central city of Modiin. Demonstrators blocked a main highway in Haifa with a large banner reading "Together we will be victorious," snarling traffic along the beachfront.

Police said 42 people were arrested for public disturbance during the protests.

Arnon Bar-David, head of the country's national labor union, the Histadrut, threatened a possible general strike that could paralyze the country's economy.

"If the situation reaches an extreme, we will intervene and employ our strength," Bar-David said, calling on Netanyahu to "stop the chaos."

The Histadrut called a general strike in March as the government pushed the judicial overhaul legislation through parliament after weeks of protest. The move shut down large swaths of Israel's economy and helped contribute to Netanyahu deciding to freeze the legislation.

But he decided to revive it last month after talks with the political opposition ai-

med at finding a compromise collapsed.

Netanyahu's allies have proposed a series of changes to the Israeli legal system aimed at weakening what they say are the excessive powers of unelected judges. The proposed changes include giving Netanyahu's allies control over the appointment of judges and giving parliament power to overturn court decisions.

The Netanyahu government, which took office in December, is the most hard-line ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox in Israel's 75-year history. His allies proposed the sweeping changes to the judiciary after the country held its fifth elections in under four years, all of them seen as a referendum on Netanyahu's fitness to serve as prime minister while on trial for corruption.

Critics of the judicial overhaul say it will upset the country's fragile system of checks and balances and concentrate power in the hands of Netanyahu and his allies. They also say Netanyahu has a conflict of interest because he is on trial for charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes, all of which he has denied.

A wide section of Israeli society, including reserve military officers, business leaders, LGBTQ+ people and members of other minority groups have joined the protests. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



EU Protesters and legislators converged on the European Union parliament yesterday as the bloc prepared a cliffhanger vote on protecting its threatened nature and shielding it from disruptive environmental change. Spurred on by climate activist Greta Thunberg, a few hundred demonstrators demanded that the EU pushes through a bill to beef up the restoration of nature in the 27-nation bloc that was damaged during decades of industrial expansion. A counterdemonstration of farmers demanded a slower approach that would lessen the impact on their income.

AP PHOTO



Iceland Authorities yesterday warned tourists and other spectators to stay away from a newly erupting volcano that is spewing lava and noxious gases from a fissure in the country's southwest. The eruption began Monday afternoon after thousands of earthquakes in the area, meteorological authorities said. This one comes 11 months after its last eruption officially ended. The eruption is in an uninhabited valley near the Litli-Hrútur mountain, some 30 kilometers southwest of the capital, Reykjavik.

AP PHOTO



Tunisia Hundreds of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa are being transferred back to Tunisia after being pushed into a dangerous no-man's-land on the Libyan border and trapped for a week there without access to basic necessities, according to aid agencies. The group was driven out earlier this month amid a spike in anti-migrant and racism-fueled tensions linked to a killing in the Tunisian port city of Sfax, a hub for traffickers organizing risky and sometimes deadly boat journeys across the Mediterranean Sea to Italy.