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**IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, FIREMEN REPORTED A DECLINE IN NUMBER OF CASES REQUIRING THEIR INTERVENTION, OFFICIAL STATS REVEAL**

P2

**CRIME-IN-CRIME UNCOVERED AS MAN APPROPRIATES SUSPICIOUS MOP7M IN FUNDS**

P2

**IN ISRAEL, BIDEN SUGGESTS HAMAS TO BLAME FOR GAZA HOSPITAL BLAST**

P8



AP PHOTO



**Cambodia** A leading opposition politician who was sentenced last month to 18 months in prison on charges of issuing worthless checks was convicted and sentenced yesterday to three more years of imprisonment for alleged incitement to commit a felony and incitement to discriminate on the basis of race, religion or nationality. Presiding Judge Chhun Davy of the Phnom Penh Municipal Court also ordered Thach Setha, a vice president of the opposition Candlelight Party, to pay a 4 million riel fine.

AP PHOTO



**Afghanistan** United Nations' World Food Program yesterday appealed for \$19 million to provide emergency assistance to tens of thousands of people affected by a series of devastating earthquakes and aftershocks that has rocked western Afghanistan. Ana Maria Salhuana, deputy country director of the World Food Program in Afghanistan, said it was helping survivors but it urgently needed more funding because "we are having to take this food from an already severely underfunded program."

AP PHOTO



**Russia** The lower house of parliament yesterday gave its final approval to a bill revoking the ratification of a global nuclear test ban treaty, a move Moscow described as putting it on par with the United States. The State Duma lawmakers voted unanimously to revoke the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in the third and final reading. The bill will now go to the upper house, the Federation Council, which will consider it next week. Federation Council lawmakers have already said they will support the bill.

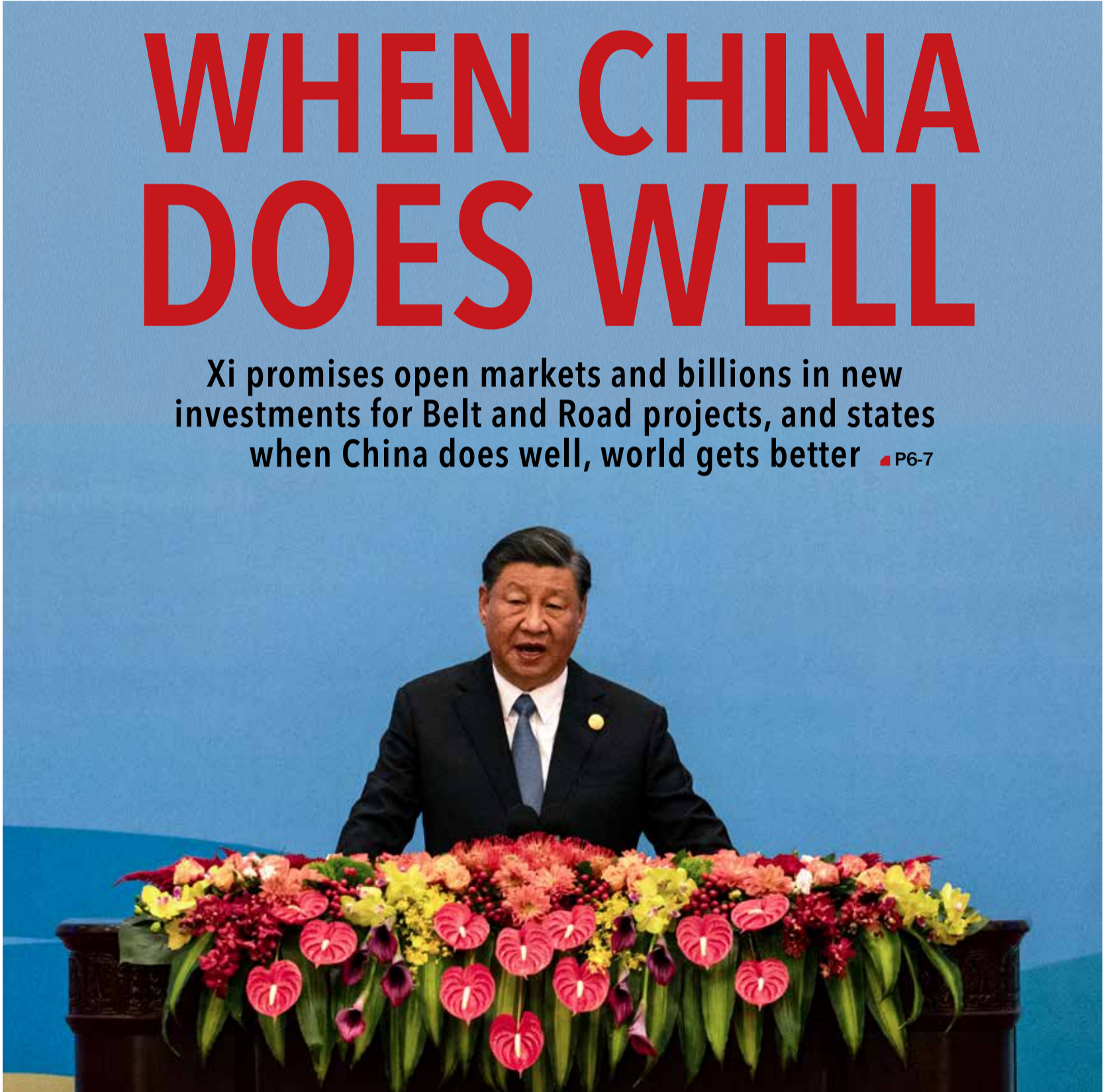
More on backpage

# WHEN CHINA DOES WELL

Xi promises open markets and billions in new investments for Belt and Road projects, and states when China does well, world gets better

P6-7

AP PHOTO



**GP70 ORGANIZERS REVEAL FULL PROGRAM WITH A FEW SURPRISES**

P3



# CRIME-IN-CRIME UNCOVERED AS MAN APPROPRIATES SUSPICIOUS MOP7M IN FUNDS

ANTHONY LAM

A man who has allegedly appropriated foreign currency equivalent to MOP7 million during his work for an illegal currency exchange group was arrested, the Judiciary Police reported.

The police disclosed that three months ago, a man started operating an illegal currency exchange in Macau, according to a report by local media Macao Daily News. He allegedly hired two mainland residents to receive funds in Macau. The funds were said to have been delivered to Macau from mainland China by parallel traders in multiple deliveries, with small amounts each time.

During the early hours on Monday, the purported business operator attempted to smuggle USD600,000 and EUR250,000 into Macau via the Border Gate checkpoint. The parallel traders were told to deliver the money to a shop rented by the operator. Two so-called employees were there to receive the funds, and one of them was subsequently arrested.

The arrested individual is surnamed Huang and is approxi-



mately 40 years old. Huang had overstayed in Macau for nearly a month and did not possess a valid working pass in Macau.

Around 8 a.m. the same day, the other purported employee contacted the purported boss and asked if Huang had been given permission to take all the funds. Failing to reach Huang, the purported business operator

contacted the police.

At 3:45 p.m. on the same day, the PJ arrested Huang in a foot spa in the NAPE/ZAPE District. They found USD10,000 and RMB18,600 on Huang, who denied the allegations.

After preliminary investigations, the police charged Huang with a crime related to the abuse of trust. Huang was delivered

to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for further investigation on Tuesday.

The investigations continued as the police continued tracing the funds to the purported employees, in an attempt to recover the remainder of the funds and determine if there were any other individuals involved in the case.

It was revealed that the pur-

ported business operator hired the two men for HKD10,000 per month. The purported operator faces allegations of improper employment and retaining illegal entrants. The police are also investigating the business operations of the leased shop.

In another case, the PJ arrested a man at large who had been sentenced to jail by a court of law for a sexual offence against a person incapable of resistance. He has been incarcerated in the prison in Coloane.

The Court of First Instance issued an arrest warrant to the PJ last week, demanding the arrest of a convicted man who was at large after committing a sexual offence. The man was sentenced to 4.5 years in jail by the court.

Police inspectors located the man hiding in a shop in the Toi-San District, only briefly venturing out late at night for grocery shopping.

After following him for days, the police intercepted the man on Oct. 15 and took him to the police headquarters for investigation. Upon confirming the man's identity, the police delivered him to the prison.

## CIVIL PROTECTION

# Reduced workload for firemen in the first 9 months of 2023

RENATO MARQUES

DURING the first nine months of this year from January to September, the Fire Services Bureau (CB) reported a decline in the number of cases requiring their intervention, according to a recent statistical release.

Overall, the number of cases in which the CB was called to deploy staff and resources to attend emergencies has dropped from 40,518 cases in 2022 to 38,939 cases (-3.9%) this year.

This drop is largely attributable to the fact that CB has not been deploying as many resources to attend to Covid-19-related cases compared to last year.



Consequently, the number of ambulance deployments dropped by 15.14% (34,286) compared with the same period in 2022 (40,404).

Despite the drop in the total number of medical emergencies, the number of ambulances deployed for issues such as breathing difficulties, dizziness, ab-

dominal pain, fever and palpitations accounted for 18,545 cases, representing 57.97% of the total number of ambulances deployed. The CB noted that most of

these cases did not warrant an ambulance call.

Rescue operations for severe traffic accidents or evacuations during severe flooding also reduced, with a total of 1,388 cases in the first three quarters (-5.71%).

The only category that increased was the number of fires, which saw a slight increase (+1.61%) mostly due to the improper disposal of cigarettes and the careless burning of candles, incense, or joss paper.

Although the number of cases of burned food and incidents related to mishandling of kitchen appliances have also dropped, the CB said that the number of cases (123) is still very high, with an average of almost 14 cases per

month or nearly one every two days.

The CB noted that the cases of mishandling of kitchen appliances, as well as the improper disposal of cigarettes, and the burning of joss papers and incense accounted for 58.77% of all cases of fire station vehicle dispatches. These cases were also often accompanied by significant property damage.

The CB also said that one of their priorities for the next few months is to raise awareness on the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, which often results from the illegal and inappropriate installation of gas water heaters inside bathrooms and without proper ventilation.

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GP70

# Organizers reveal full program with a few surprises

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC) yesterday unveiled the comprehensive program of the 70th anniversary of the local motorsports event.

When comparing the program schedule to previous editions and the original event announcement in mid-July this year, several changes and adjustments are evident.

The most significant modification is that the fifth race scheduled for the first weekend (November 11 and 12) is not a different category but rather a division between GT3 and GT4 specification vehicles for the Greater Bay Area GT Cup.

In saying this, the program for the first weekend will include the Macau Formula 4 Race, TCR Asia Challenge, Macau Roadsport Challenge (with a new format and different cars, running now as a one-make series), Greater Bay Area GT Cup (GT4), and Greater Bay Area GT Cup (GT3).

In the second and primary GP weekend (November 16 to 19), the most significant changes relate to the track time for certain races. For instance, the Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 55th Edition will have only a single 45-minute free practice session on Thursday in the early morning, followed by a 45-minute qualifying session on the track at 8:00 a.m. on Friday.



Motorcycles will conclude their participation on Saturday morning with another 20-minute warm-up session (7:40 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.) followed immediately by the only race (12 laps) at 8:30 a.m.

The reduced track time during practice and qualifying sessions will pose challenges for riders, particularly new riders who must put forward their best efforts while still learning the track to avoid being excluded from the race for exceeding the time gap compared to the fastest lap time. This car-

ries additional risks of mistakes which, in the Guia Street circuit, usually have a hefty price. There are no run-off areas in this circuit and the entire track is surrounded by stone, concrete walls, or Armco barriers.

Additionally, there is only a 30-minute gap between the end of the warm-up session on Saturday morning and the race, which may create potential problems for the teams that need to perform tire changes between the two sessions.

As for the remaining program schedule, the main weekend of the GP will see the return of the FIA F3 World Cup, the Macau Touring Car Cup - China Touring Car Championship, Macau 70th Anniversary Challenge (a special race using the same cars as Macau Roadsport Challenge from the first weekend), and the Macau Guia Race (Kumho TCR World Tour Event of Macau, marking the return to international TCR events), and the returning FIA GT World Cup.

The schedule is packed with racing action, particularly on Thursday (November 16). As is common knowledge, incidents on track, particularly on practice and qualifying days can lead to significant delays and event postponements.

## MR. MACAU RETURNING FOR THE GT WORLD CUP WITH AUDI

**LOCALLY** known as Mr. Macau, Edoardo Mortara is set to return to the Guia Circuit behind the wheel of an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II.

One of the most successful drivers on the 6.2km of Guia Circuit, Mortara finished second in last year's race behind Maro Engel after a weekend marked by the strange episode of the "following the Safety Car" when the grid was set to race.

"We are delighted to have secured Mr. Macau, Edoardo Mortara, for the world's most important GT3 sprint race," said Alexander Blackie, Manager of Audi Sport customer racing Asia.

"After Edoardo's incredible comeback last year to finish

second in the GT Cup, we have some unfinished business to address this year in Macau!"

"Together with our Asian squad, Edoardo Mortara has a real chance of winning the GT3 race, a highlight of global attention. We are very much looking forward to the 70th edition of the famous Macau Grand Prix, the FIA World GT Cup 2023," Chris Reinke, Head of Audi Sport customer racing added.

Although the entry list has yet to be released by the organizers, it is likely that Mortara will have to face fierce competition again from Maro Engel (last year's winner), behind the wheel of one of the Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo from Craft-Bamboo Racing.

# USJ to stage two seminars on cultural preservation, language

**T**HE University of St Joseph (USJ) will host two public lectures next week on intangible cultural heritage and the study of the Chinese language, the university announced yesterday in a statement.

Held in English from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., Oct. 24 at the Don Bosco Auditorium of the university, the first lecture is titled "Documenting Intangible Cultural Heritage via VR Tour: Hungry Ghosts (Yulan) Festival Celebrations in Hong Kong." Hong Kong Professor Selina Ching Chan will discuss the documentation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and explore how it

can be achieved through events such as festivals and by reflecting on the "authorized heritage discourse."

Chan serves as Academic Vice-President and Professor of Sociology at Hong Kong Shue Yan University.

She notes that existing documentation of ICH, through dances, martial arts performances and craftsmanship, has focused on tangible aspects, such as physical features, conveyed through a variety of techniques, positions, rotations, forces, and joint angles.

She argues that despite the widespread use

of digital technology in ICH preservation, which may be used to capture intangible aspects by emphasizing the accuracy of postures and skills, it has disregarded the fluidic nature of ICH and overshadowed the multiple and complex meanings inherent in it. She contends that the documentation of ICH should highlight its dynamic features, and individual agency in creating "new" practices, as well as its communal aspect.

In another lecture also held in English from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. the following day at the same venue, Dr. Ana Cristina Alves will

delve into the relationship between contemporary Sinograms and Chinese tradition.

Through the analysis of some of the most commonly used characters in contemporary Chinese thought, she will discuss the ideological mainstream based on the philosophical tradition of the country.

Alves received a PhD in Philosophy of History, Culture and Religion from the University of Lisbon in 2005. She coordinates the Educational and Chinese-Portuguese translation activities at Macau Scientific and Cultural Center in Lisbon. **AL**



**BANKING**

# SINGAPORE'S OCBC BANK RESTRUCTURES SENIOR MANAGEMENT FOR ITS GREATER CHINA OPERATIONS

ANTHONY LAM

**T**WO new appointments have been made for OCBC Group's Greater China Region operations, "as the group's ASEAN-Greater China strategic thrust gathers momentum," OCBC Group, parent company of OCBC Macau in Singapore, announced yesterday.

Wang Ke, currently CEO of OCBC Wing Hang China, will assume the role of Head of Greater China, succeeding Tan Wing Ming, the group noted in a statement.

With Wang's appointment, the group added that Ang Eng Siong, currently Deputy President and Head of Corporate Banking at OCBC Wing Hang China, will step up as the Acting CEO of OCBC Wing Hang China. Ang's appointment will be formalized once regulatory approval is obtained.

The group underlined that both appointments will take ef-



fect on Nov. 1, 2023. Tan will return to Singapore as an adviser to the Group CEO.

Wang joined the OCBC Group in 2012 as the Head of IT in China and expanded his responsibilities

to include operations in 2014. Under his helm, the group noted, OCBC Wing Hang China's profit has more than doubled since 2019. The group highlighted that a branch in Wuhan, the largest

city in Central China, opened in the fourth quarter of last year, a reflection of Wang's capabilities.

Meanwhile, Ang has been with OCBC since 2009. After spending six years in Singapore, he relocated to China under the company's talent development program. Currently the head of corporate banking of the bank's operations in China, Ang has led the China Corporate Banking Division into new frontiers in sustainable finance and renewable energy as well as the technology, media, and telecom (TMT) sector. The executive is experienced in risk management, finance and business development.

Nine years ago, OCBC's acquisition of Wing Hang Bank in the Greater China Region transferred the deep-rooted presence of the now-defunct bank to the Singaporean company. The group noted that its key markets are Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Greater China.

## MACAU EXITS WC26 QUALIFIERS AFTER 0-0 AT HOME

**T**HE Macau football teams have exited the pre-eliminary of the Asian qualifiers from the World Cup 2026 (WC26) after a tie without goals (0-0) in a match held on Tuesday evening at the Macau Olympic Stadium in Taipa.

Macau faced the herculean challenge of overturning the four-goal deficit from the first leg played in Yangon, which ended 5-1 in favor of Myanmar.

Much like the first match, the physical condition of the local players seemed to hamper their performance, with several players experiencing cramps as early as the end of the first half.

This became especially apparent at the one hour mark, where medical assistance became a near-constant, with Coach Lázaro Oliveira making most, if not all, substitutions due to fatigue rather than game strategy or tactics.

In the end, the goalless draw allowed Myanmar to progress to the group stage of the World Cup 2026 Asian Qualifiers Group F, where they will play against teams from Syria, North Korea, and Japan. **RM**

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ANALYSIS

# CEPA promotes development of Macau, mainland over two decades

**T**HE Mainland and Macau Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) has brought about unprecedented opportunities to the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) and promoted joint development over the past two decades.

CEPA, a free-trade-agreement-like arrangement established between two separate customs territories of a single sovereign state, was officially signed on Oct. 17, 2003, and implemented in January 2004, to further enhance the level of economic and trade cooperation between the two places.

Between 2004 and 2013, the two sides signed 10 supplements to CEPA, as well as the CEPA Agreement between the Mainland and Macau on Achieving Basic Liberalization of Trade in Services in Guangdong, CEPA Agreement on Trade in Services, CEPA Investment Agreement, and so on.

Lao Keng Chong, director-general of the Macau Innovation Development Research Association, said the implementation of CEPA



has further deepened and materialized cooperation mechanism between the mainland and Macau, which serves as a specific example of the advantages of "one country, two systems" in the economic sector.

"The central government's integrated institutional arrangement has provided a fundamental guarantee for Macau's long-term prosperity and stability," Lao said.

Over the years, CEPA has continuously expanded and deepened opening-up in trade in goods, trade

in services, investment, and economic and technological cooperation, increasing the flow of goods, personnel, capital and technology between the mainland and Macau.

Chan Tze Wai, acting director of the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED), said the arrangement has created unprecedented opportunities for various sectors in Macau.

In terms of trade in goods, all Macau-made products that comply with CEPA's specific rules of origin can enjoy zero-tariff policies

when being exported to the mainland. Statistics from the DSED showed that as of September this year, Macau enterprises had exported zero-tariff goods to the mainland worth up to MOP1.4 billion (USD174 million), saving tariffs of over MOP90 million.

As of date, the bureau has issued 876 certificates of service providers to help Macau companies expand business in the mainland.

Thanks to CEPA's opening-up policy, enterprises and professionals from Macau in the areas of finance, medical, legal, tourism and social services were able to operate in the mainland.

Ip Kuai Peng, vice rector of the City University of Macau, said that the region had enjoyed conveniences in the opening up of goods and service trade as well as investment, deepened cooperation with the mainland in economic and technological areas, facilitated two-way trade and investment, and forcefully promoted social integration between the mainland and Macau and their quality economic develop-

ment.

"This also fully demonstrates the central authorities' strong support for Macau's appropriate economic diversification and its integration into overall national development," Ip added.

Under the CEPA framework, Macau was able to further open up its market, attracting many mainland and foreign enterprises to set up their branches in the city.

Yu Wai Hang, secretary-general of the Macau Innovation Development Research Association, said these enterprises not only enriched Macau's industrial structure and brought a large amount of job opportunities, but also helped with the development of local service and tourism industries and hence its appropriate economic diversification.

Vong Kok Seng, vice president of the board of directors of the Macao Chamber of Commerce, said CEPA not only generated economic benefits for both parties, but also provided a broader platform for people-to-people exchanges and social cooperation between the two sides.

Chan said the SAR government will join the mainland to actively seek methods to enrich the contents of CEPA, to help Macau better integrate into overall national development and promote long-term economic cooperation between the two sides. XINHUA

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U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo

TRADE

# CHINA SAYS US MOVES TO LIMIT ACCESS TO ADVANCED COMPUTER CHIPS HURT SUPPLY CHAINS

**C**HINA vigorously protested yesterday the U.S. Commerce Department's latest update of export controls to prevent exports to China of advanced computer chips and the equipment to make them.

The revisions to the U.S. rules were announced yesterday, roughly a year after the export controls were first launched to counter the use of the chips for military applications that include the development of hypersonic missiles and artificial intelligence.

China's Commerce Ministry said the controls were "improper" and urged that Washington lift them as soon as possible.

It said that since the semiconductor industry is highly globalized, the restrictions on chips used for artificial intelligence and other advanced applications were hindering normal trade and economic activities. They violate international trade rules and "seriously threaten the stability of industrial supply chains," it said according to a transcript of a briefing on the ministry's website.

"U.S. semiconductor companies have suffered huge losses and semiconductor companies in other countries have also been affected," it said.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry said Beijing would take "all necessary measures" to safeguard its rights and interests, without giving any details.

In a call with reporters, U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said the restrictions are meant to protect technologies with clear national security or human rights implications.

"The vast majority of semiconductors will remain unrestricted. But when we identify national security or human rights threats, we will act decisively and in concert with our allies," she said.

The updates stemmed from consulting with industry and conducting technological analyses. There will now be a gray zone that will be monitored for chips that could still be used for military aims even if they might not meet the thresholds for trade limitations.

Chip exports to companies headquartered in Macao or anywhere under a U.S. arms embargo can also be restricted to prevent countries of concern from circumventing the controls and providing chips to China.

The updates also introduce new requirements that make it harder for China to manufacture advanced

chips in other countries. The list of manufacturing equipment that falls under the export controls also was expanded, among other changes.

China's leaders view the design and manufacturing of high-level semiconductors as essential for its economic and geopolitical goals. Raimondo has said the limits on these chips are not designed to impair China's economic growth.

In an August meeting, Raimondo and her Chinese counterparts agreed to exchange information about the export controls. But a senior administration official, insisting on anonymity to discuss the policy, said the U.S. government did not discuss with China the parameters of the revised export controls.

Chinese officials are scheduled to attend a summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in San Francisco in November.

President Joe Biden has suggested he could meet on the sidelines of the summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping, though a meeting has yet to be confirmed. The two leaders met last year following the Group of 20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, shortly after the export controls were announced.

MDT/AP

## STATEMENT

Liu Xianfa\*



### BELT AND ROAD COOPERATION: SETTING SAIL AGAIN AFTER 10-YEAR SUCCESS AND GLORY

On 18 October 2023, the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation opens in Beijing with representatives from more than 140 countries and over 30 international organizations participating in this grand event. In the opening ceremony, Chinese President Xi Jinping reviewed the 10-year great journey of Belt and Road cooperation, summarized its remarkable achievements and experiences, and solemnly outlined eight major measures to support high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, kicking off a new chapter of Belt and Road cooperation in the coming golden decade.

Belt and Road cooperation is a magnificent symphony of history and reality. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), rooted in history, answers questions raised by reality. In the history, our ancestors created a land Silk Road connecting Asia, Europe and Africa, and opened a maritime Silk Road linking the East and the West, beginning a new phase of friendly exchanges among peoples, and shaping the Silk Road spirit characterized by peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit. In 2013, President Xi Jinping unveiled the BRI, and reinvigorated the ancient silk routes in the new era. At present, the world is undergoing major changes unseen in a century. Economic globalization is facing counter-currents, and the world economy is facing the risk of recession. About 90% of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are "derailed", and nearly one-third of the goals have stagnated or even regressed. The world's attention is focused on Beijing, expecting China to lead the way. At this critical moment, President Xi Jinping, in his keynote speech, declared that China will take eight major measures, including building a multidimensional belt and road connectivity network, supporting an open world economy, carrying out practical cooperation to support high-quality Belt and Road construction, promoting green development, advancing scientific and technological innovation, supporting people-to-people exchanges, promoting integrity-based Belt and Road cooperation and strengthening institutional building for international Belt and Road cooperation, thus injecting strong impetus into high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and world modernization.

Belt and Road cooperation is perfect synergy of concepts and practice. It excels in both ideas and real results. The BRI is in alignment with the concept of a global community of shared future, and has been welcomed by the international community both as a public good and a cooperation platform, and achieved solid results. More than 150 countries and over 30 international organizations

have signed Belt and Road cooperation documents with China, establishing over 3,000 cooperation projects, driving nearly a trillion U.S. dollars in investment and recording fruitful achievements in physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity: a large number of signature projects and "small yet smart" people-centered programs have been launched; cooperation on the Health Silk Road, Green Silk Road, Digital Silk Road and Innovation Silk Road has made steady progress; over 20 specialized multilateral cooperation platforms have been established; people-to-people exchanges and connectivity have been deepened. Important guiding principles for high-quality Belt and Road cooperation have been laid down, which include the principle of "planning together, building together, and benefiting together", the philosophy of open, green and clean cooperation, and the goal of pursuing high-standard, people-centered and sustainable cooperation. All these flourishing achievements have composed a soul-inspiring symphony in the new era.

Belt and Road cooperation benefits both China and the world. The BRI, proposed by China, belongs to the whole world. Under the guidance of the BRI, China is opening its door even wider to the world, with its inland regions turning from "fullbacks" into "forwards", and coastal regions scaling new heights in their opening-up. China's market has become even more closely integrated with the global market. The BRI has injected new impetus into the global economy, created new opportunities for global development, and improved development capacity and people's well-being of the stakeholders. Researches show that thanks to the BRI, trade costs for the world would decline by 1.8 percent, trade is estimated to grow by between 2.8 and 9.7 percent among participating countries and between 1.7 and 6.2 percent for the world, and global real income is expected to increase by 0.7 to 2.9 percent. By 2030, BRI transport projects could help lift 7.6 million people out of extreme poverty and 32 million people out of moderate poverty. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres lauded that the BRI has brought hope and progress for billions of people in the world.

Ten years is just the prologue. Facing changes that are consequential to the world, to our times, and to history, the BRI, setting sail again from a new historical point, will definitely open a new window of opportunity for China and the world with higher-quality and higher-level development, and make people's wish for a happy life come true at a faster pace.

\*Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Macau Special Administrative Region

BRI FORUM

# Xi promises open markets and billions in new investments for 'Belt and Road' projects

**C**HINESE President Xi Jinping promised foreign companies greater access to China's huge market and more than \$100 billion in new financing for other developing economies as he opened the third forum yesterday on his signature Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

Xi's initiative has built power plants, roads, railroads and ports around the world and deepened China's ties with Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Mideast.

At the forum's opening ceremony at the Great Hall of the People, Xi promised that two Chinese-backed development banks – the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China – will each set up 350 billion yuan (\$47.9 billion) financing windows.

An additional 80 billion yuan (\$11 billion) will be invested in Beijing's Silk Road Fund to support BRI projects.

"We will comprehensively remove restrictions on foreign investment access in the manufacturing sector," Xi said. He said China would further open up "cross-border trade and investment in services and expand market access for digital products" and carry out reforms of state-owned enterprises and in sectors such as the digital economy, intellectual property rights and government procurement.

The pledges of hefty support from Beijing come at a time when China's economy has slowed and foreign investment has plunged.

Xi alluded to efforts by the United States and its allies to reduce their reliance on Chinese manu-



facturing and supply chains amid heightened competition and diplomatic frictions and reiterated promises that Beijing would create a fairer environment for foreign firms.

"We do not engage in ideological confrontation, geopolitical games nor clique political confrontation," Xi said. "We oppose unilateral sanctions, economic coercion and the decoupling and severance of chains," a reference to moves elsewhere to diversify industrial supply chains.

Reiterating Chinese complaints that such moves are meant to limit China's growth, Xi said that "viewing others' development as a threat or taking economic interde-

pendence as a risk will not make one's own life better or speed up one's development."

"China can only do well when the world is doing well," he said. "When China does well, the world will get even better."

**"When China does well, the world will get even better."**

XI JINPING

Representatives from more than 130 mostly developing countries are attending the forum, including at least 20 heads

of state and government. Russian President Vladimir Putin is attending, reflecting China's economic and diplomatic support for Moscow amid the isolation brought by its war in Ukraine.

Also in attendance are the presidents of Indonesia, Argentina, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka, Kenya among other countries, as well as U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres. Most Western European countries and U.S. allies sent lower level or former officials to the forum.

Guterres highlighted the BRI's potential to bring development to neglected areas while stressing the need for projects to be environmentally sustainable.

He said the initiative could help drive the transition away from reliance on fossil fuels.

"Developing countries will need massive support for a fair, equitable and just energy transition toward renewables while providing affordable electricity to all," Guterres said.

He also called for an "immediate, humanitarian" ceasefire in the Israel-Palestine war.

With the BRI, China has become a major financier of development projects on a par with the World Bank. The Chinese government says the initiative has launched more than 3,000 projects and "galvanized" nearly \$1 trillion in investment.

## PEOPLE-CENTERED PROJECTS

According to Xi, the initiative now aims to become smaller and greener after a decade of big projects that boosted trade but left big debts and raised environmental concerns.

During his keynote address, President Xi emphasized that Belt and Road cooperation has evolved from mere outlines to tangible projects, including numerous signature initiatives and innovative people-centered programs.

He laid out essential guiding principles for high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, emphasizing the ideals of collaborative planning, construction, and mutual benefit, as well as the values of openness, environmental responsibility, and sustainability.

The Belt and Road Initiative, which spans across land, sea, sky, and the digital realm, has revitalized the ancient Silk Road in the modern era.

Notably, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the Belt and Road became a crucial lifeline. President Xi underscored that the Belt and Road Initiative represents a collective effort for global development.

"It transcends differences in civilizations, cultures, social systems, and development stages, forging new paths for international exchange and cooperation," Xi concluded. **MDT/AGENCIES**

# Putin and Xi meet in Beijing and call for close policy coordination

**T**HE leaders of Russia and China met yesterday in Beijing and called for close foreign policy coordination.

At their morning meeting, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin discussed trade and the 10th anniversary of Xi's trademark Belt and Road Initiative that has built highways, ports and

power plants across Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere.

The policy has left many states deep in debt to Chinese banks, and the attempt to pump new life into it comes at a time when China's own economy has slowed considerably due to huge overinvestment in real estate.

"In the current difficult conditions, close foreign policy coordination is especially required," Putin said in his opening remarks.

"So, in terms of bilateral relations, we are moving forward very confidently," he said, noting that bilateral trade was on track to surpass a record \$200 billion this year.

China is a key customer for Russian oil and gas, providing Moscow with an economic lifeline in the face of punishing Western sanctions imposed over its campaign against Ukraine.

Just weeks before Russia's invasion of Ukraine last February, Putin met with Xi in Beijing and the sides signed an agreement



pledging a "no-limits" relationship. Beijing's attempts to present itself as a neutral peace broker in Rus-

sia's war on Ukraine have been widely dismissed by the international community. **MDT/AP**

ISRAEL

# Biden pledges solidarity with Israelis, suggests 'other team' to blame for Gaza hospital blast

AAMER MADHANI & COLLEEN LONG, TEL AVIV

**P**RESIDENT Joe Biden vowed to show the world that the U.S. stands in solidarity with Israelis during his visit there yesterday, and offered an assessment that the deadly explosion at a Gaza Strip hospital apparently was not carried out by the Israeli military.

"Based on what I've seen, it appears as though it was done by the other team, not you," Biden told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a meeting. But he said there were "a lot of people out there" who weren't sure what caused the blast, which sparked protests throughout the Middle East.

Biden didn't offer details on why he believed the Israelis were not responsible for the blast, and the White House did not immediately explain his assessment.

"The entire world was rightfully outraged but this outrage should be directed not at Israel but at the terrorists," Netanyahu said during a subsequent meeting with Biden and Israel's war cabinet.

Biden had been scheduled to visit Jordan to meet with Arab leaders after the stop in Israel, but the summit was called off after the hospital explosion. And his remarks spoke both of the horrors the Israelis had endured, but also the growing humanitarian crisis for Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

He told Netanyahu he was "deeply saddened and outraged" by the hospital explosion. He stressed that " Hamas does not represent all the Palestinian people, and it has brought them only suffering."

Biden spoke of the need to find ways of "encouraging life-saving capacity to help the Palestinians who are innocent, caught in the middle of this."

But he also said Hamas had "slaughtered" Israelis in the Oct. 7 attack that killed 1,400 people. Biden described at length the horror of



President Joe Biden is greeted by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv, yesterday

the killing of innocent Israelis, including children.

"Americans are grieving, they really are," Biden said. "Americans are worried."

"I want you to know you're not alone. We will continue to have Israel's back as you work to defend your people," Biden said during the larger meeting with Netanyahu and Israeli officials. "We'll continue to work with you and partners across the region to prevent more tragedy to innocent civilians."

Netanyahu thanked Biden for coming to Israel, telling him the visit was "deeply, deeply moving."

"I know I speak for all the people of Israel when I say thank you Mr. President, thank you for standing with Israel today, tomorrow and always."

Netanyahu said Biden had rightly drawn a clear line between the "forces of civilization and the forces of barbarism," saying Israel was united in its resolve to defeat Hamas.

"The civilized world must unite to defeat Hamas," he said.

Biden also planned to meet Israeli first responders and the families of victims and those being held hostage by Hamas. Netanyahu met Biden at Ben Gurion International Airport and the two embraced. It was almost exactly a month ago that they

sat together at the United Nations General Assembly, where Netanyahu marveled that a "historic peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia" seemed within reach.

The possibility of improved relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors appears to be dimming; Israel has been preparing for a potential ground invasion of Gaza in response to Hamas' attacks.

Roughly 2,800 Palestinians have been reported killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza. Another 1,200 people are believed to be buried under the rubble, alive or dead, health authorities said.

Those numbers predate the explosion at the Al-Ahli hospital on Tuesday. No clear cause has been established for the blast.

Protests swept through the region after the blast at the hospital, which had been treating wounded Palestinians and sheltering many more who were seeking a refuge from the fighting.

Hundreds of Palestinians flooded the streets of major West Bank cities including Ramallah. More people joined protests that erupted in Beirut, Lebanon and Amman, Jordan, where an angry crowd gathered outside the Israeli Embassy.

Outrage scuttled Biden's plans to visit Jordan, where King Abdullah II was to host

meetings with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi. But Abbas withdrew in protest, and the summit was subsequently canceled outright.

Ayman Safadi, Jordan's foreign minister, told a state-run television network that the war is "pushing the region to the brink."

Jordan declared three days of mourning after the hospital explosion and Safadi said the summit was canceled after speaking with all leaders. He said they had wanted the meeting to produce an end to the war, which seems unlikely now, and to give Palestinians the respect they deserve. Kirby said Biden understood the move was part of a "mutual" decision to call off the Jordan portion of his trip. He said Biden would speak to the Arab leaders by phone as he returned to Washington.

Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian U.N. ambassador, said Tuesday that Biden was "capable of telling Israel, Enough is enough."

"You have to stop this carnage against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. Let this stop. Let humanitarian assistance take place," he said. "Do not displace two million Palestinians and push them in the direction of Jordan and then let's begin a political horizon." **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1987 SHARES PLUNGE AFTER WALL STREET CRASH



The world's stock market has collapsed after shares on Wall Street suffered a wave of panic selling.

The Dow Jones industrial average plummeted by a record 508 points, registering a percentage drop of 22.5%.

On Wall Street itself, share prices crashed across the board in frenzied trading that saw collective losses worse than the infamous "Black Monday" in October 1929.

In London the value of quoted shares fell by £50bn as the FT 30-share index dived 183.7 points to 1629.2.

The previous sharpest one day fall was on March 1, 1974 after Labour's indecisive election victory, when shares fell 7.1%.

The FTSE index also crashed more than 300 points with a loss of £63bn.

The collapse was triggered by Friday's fall on Wall Street and a steep drop in Tokyo.

The White House attempted to calm investors by issuing a statement declaring that President Ronald Reagan remained convinced that the US economy was sound.

Dealers marked prices down in an effort to discourage sellers amid scenes close to hysteria.

The percentage drop was the second largest ever next to the 24.4% fall of 12 December, 1914.

Chairman of the New York Stock Exchange John Phelan said: "This is the nearest thing to a financial melt-down I've ever come across. I would not want to be around for another one like this."

But officials warned against comparisons, saying that the situation is dramatically different from 1929.

Trading activity was driven down by growing fears of rising interest rates and a falling dollar.

These were exacerbated by the news that the US had retaliated against Iranian attacks in the Gulf by bombarding an offshore oil rig.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

In the wake of the 1987 crash, which also became known as Black Monday, markets around the world were put on restricted trading mainly because at the time computers were dealing with so many orders that they were unable to keep up. By the end of October, stock markets in Australia had fallen by 41.8%, Hong Kong 45.8% and the United Kingdom 26.4%.

The effects of the crash were not as crippling as expected because it was not followed by a depression.

Over the next decade interest rates went down and investors showed new faith in the market. The debate over the cause of the crash continued for many years after the event but economists have never been able to name a single factor that ushered in Black Monday.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Residential moves will be in your best interest. Travel will be favorable. Try to curb overindulgence today. Money may slip through your fingers.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Your interest in religion and philosophy may lead you to specific destinations. You can't make things better if you don't know what to fix.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
The existing problems must be dealt with one way or another. Partnerships may be strained if one of you has been erratic and hard to deal with.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Lack of funds may add stress to your already uncertain situation. Your need to put great detail into everything you do may cause you to miss the overall picture.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
You will be able to make changes regarding your living arrangements. You can sort out any differences you have in an amiable manner.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Your communication skills are at an all-time high. You will get great satisfaction from your efforts. Try to keep ahead of the game. Don't take any comments too seriously.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Your ideas may be a little ahead of their time; don't push them, instead just continue working on development. Limitations will set in if you haven't followed the rules.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
You need to look into ways to change your self-image. Find out all the facts before you jump to conclusions. You'll be an emotional basket case today.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Try to be patient and understanding. If you can work at home, do so. Enlist coworkers in order to get the job done on time. Someone envious of your popularity may challenge you to a debate.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
There's lots to be done and if you meet your deadline you'll be in your boss's good books. Use your charm to get your own way. Mishaps due to preoccupation will be upsetting.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Plan to do things with your faithful pet or with youngsters who have interesting hobbies. Find an outlet for any mounting frustration. Consider a creative hobby.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Trips, educational pursuits, or projects that could lead to new outlooks should be on your agenda. Be considerate and avoid being overly opinionated, or arguments will ensue.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	11	21	fine
Changchun	4	13	fine
Chengdu	13	19	overcast
Chongqing	18	21	cloudy
Fuzhou	21	30	overcast
Guangzhou	22	26	rain
Guiyang	15	19	rain
Haikou	23	29	rain
Hangzhou	16	28	fine
Harbin	3	10	cloudy
Hefei	14	25	rain
Nanjing	15	27	rain
Shanghai	18	27	cloudy
Taipei	22	27	cloudy
Wuhan	16	24	rain
Hong Kong	26	28	rain
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	2	6	rain
Frankfurt	11	18	rain
Paris	14	18	rain
London	13	17	rain
New York	14	20	overcast

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Texas city; 5- Prehistoric sepulchral tomb; 9- Collectible frames; 13- Make \_\_\_ for it; 14- City on the Allegheny; 16- Word that can precede hygiene, tradition and agreement; 17- Scoundrels; 18- Utah's \_\_\_ Mountains; 19- Starchy staple; 20- Hawaiian dances; 22- Rotated; 24- Privileged; 27- Minstrel's instrument; 28- Disinclined; 29- Impresario; 33- Fungal infection of the skin or nails; 34- Actress Sofer; 35- Word in many college names; 36- Yes, in Yokohama; 37- Wretched hut; 38- Summer sign; 39- Bibliography abbr.; 41- Black, in poetry; 42- Dish of raw vegetables; 44- Connection; 46- Arboreal lizard; 47- High-ranking NCO; 48- Fast fliers; 49- Fermented soybean cake; 52- Debussy's "La \_\_\_"; 53- Horse's gait; 57- Muffin topper; 58- Iota preceder; 60- Wife of a rajah; 61- Saab model; 62- Connected series of rooms; 63- \_\_\_ never work; 64- Revenuers, for short; 65- Hydroxyl compound; 66- \_\_\_ sow, so shall...;

DOWN 1- WWII female enlistee; 2- First name in Notre Dame football; 3- Something to chew; 4- Like lighthouses; 5- Small valley; 6- Greek epic poem; 7- Chamber workers; Abbr; 8- Sylvester, to Tweety; 9- Make right; 10- "\_\_\_ Brockovich"; 11- Ornamental fabric; 12- Husky burden; 15- Word before beauty or bridge; 21- Bear up there; 23- Shoshone language member; 24- Sire; 25- Fly; 26- Trifling; 27- Fabric woven from flax yarns; 29- English cattle breed; 30- I cannot \_\_\_ lie; 31- Body of salt water; 32- Role for Valerie; 34- Android; 37- Elevations; 40- Pasquinade; 42- Cpl.'s superior; 43- Republic in central Europe; 45- Lao \_\_\_; 46- Sharon's land; 48- Brief brawl; 49- Just right; 50- K-6; 51- Nothing more than; 52- Chow \_\_\_; 54- Phooey!; 55- One's partner; 56- One with a glazed look, perhaps; 59- Color;

**Yesterday's solution**

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Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	

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RUGBY WORLD CUP

# Pulsating quarterfinals highlight enduring

STEVE DOUGLAS,  
SPORTS WRITER

**S**OUTH 3, North 1. Talk of a potential shift in the balance of power in world rugby toward the northern hemisphere might have been premature.

According to the world rankings, the teams from Europe were favored to win the four quarterfinals in the Rugby World Cup over the weekend.

Rugby is played on grass, though, not on paper. And after a quartet of titanic games with razor-thin

margins, it's the southern hemisphere which emerged — again — as the likelier to win the Webb Ellis Trophy.

The semifinals are set: Argentina vs. New Zealand on Friday [03:00, Saturday] and England vs. South Africa on Saturday [00:30, Sunday], both at the Stade de France outside Paris.

The smart money is on a New Zealand-South Africa final on Oct. 28, a repeat of the 1995 title match and the latest episode of the ultimate rugby match and the biggest rivalry in the sport. Both are bid-

ding for a record fourth world title.

England and Argentina still have plenty to say about that but, on the evidence of the quarterfinals, the All Blacks and the Springboks — rugby's most mythical teams — are at a different level to the teams they'll be facing.

Indeed, the France-South Africa and Ireland-New Zealand matches were instant classics, the highlights of one of rugby's great weekends.

The combined margin of victory from those two games was five points. They could have gone either way but they went the way

of the south, as is often the case in Rugby World Cups, despite Ireland being ranked No. 1 and the title favorite and France No. 2 and the home hope.

England is the only team from the northern hemisphere to have won the competition in its nine previous editions and is the only European team standing, a beneficiary of a lopsided draw that put Ireland, France, South Africa and New Zealand all on the same side.

But England is an experienced World Cup campaigner heading into the semifinals for the sixth

time, and may feel hardly any pressure considering no one expected Steve Borthwick's team to be a threat.

England wants payback against the Springboks from not just the final four years ago in Japan but also the one 16 years ago in France. That 2007 World Cup had three of the same semifinalists — England, South Africa, Argentina — from this year.

**HOSTS OUT**

France's slogan for the Rugby World Cup has been 'United for a

RUGBY WORLD CUP | PREVIEW

## Erasmus thinks Springboks' running game might be key in defense

**P**LAYING pretty rugby has never been high on the Springboks' agenda, especially when it comes to the business of winning a World Cup in tense knockout games.

South Africa director of rugby Rassie Erasmus still claimed something of an evolution for the defending champions this week after a scintillating victory over host France in an ultra-close quarterfinal kept the Boks in with a chance of retaining the title, and getting their country's name etched on the trophy for a record fourth time.

The Springboks are unlikely to ever go too far from the power game that has always defined them, but Erasmus and coach Jacques Nienaber have spoken often this year about finding another method of attack to complement — and not replace — South Africa's big pack of forwards. That's meant more backline tries.



South Africa's Cheslin Kolbe (right) and France's Louis Bielle-Biarrey challenge for the ball

The primary motivation for that is, of course, winning. Aesthetics are of little consequence.

"As a team we don't want to be this wonderful rugby playing team that the whole world loves," Erasmus said.

"But we do want to score tries."

The Springboks ground to the 2019 title with a massive focus on scrummaging, lineout mauls and tactical kicking. The South African brains trust of Erasmus and

Nienaber concluded that was 2019 rugby and few teams wouldn't know what South Africa would bring. How to stay a step ahead has largely revolved around putting faith in playmaking flyhalf Manie Libbok to re-

lease a backline with razor-sharp wings in Cheslin Kolbe and Kurt-Lee Arendse a little more often.

They were both on the scoresheet against France as the first three of South Africa's four tries were scored by backs, even if they were more well-timed counter-punches than free-flowing attacking moves.

Backs scored 66% of South Africa tries at the 2019 Rugby World Cup. The speedsters have 76% of their tries at this World Cup so far. It's not a massive shift, but a significant tweak.

Erasmus said the change came a year ago when South Africa lost 30-26 to France in an epic physical battle. France worked out the Springboks, but Erasmus also said they found referees were finding it much harder to officiate the Boks' constant "close-contact work."

"We had to adapt. Also to try and score tries through more open, fluent, running

rugby. And you could see in our try-scoring tally there's a lot scored by our backs, more than our forwards," Erasmus said.

"If you only rely on a certain aspect of the game which is very tough for the referee to referee and he gets two (decisions) wrong but you are only relying on those three or four of five opportunities that you get, 50% of your opportunities are gone. But if you fire shots in open play, general play from the top of lineouts or counterattack, it's clearer decisions for the referee and easier to make."

South Africa's forwards ground down England in the 2019 final in Japan before adding the coup de grace with two tries out wide. The English are the semifinal opponents next weekend in France, and have noticed that new willingness for South Africa to go wide, and go at any time.

damage." MDT/AP

**SEMI-FINALS**

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
<b>Sat</b>	Oct 21	03:00	Argentina	New Zealand	H 10, D 51, A 1.09
<b>Sun</b>	Oct 22	03:00	England	South Africa	H 6.1, D 41, A 1.2

AP PHOTO



# strength of the southern hemisphere

Dream' and it has been clear over the past month that the connection between Les Tricolores and the French public was as strong as ever.

Elimination on Sunday broke French hearts and it's to be seen if that bond between the rugby team and the nation, which was missing for much of the previous decade, can remain. In superstars such as Antoine Dupont and Damian Penaud, the team has role models to which kids can aspire.

All is not lost for the French,

though it might feel like it at the moment.

## FAREWELLS

Each passing weekend sees greats of the game leave the tournament.

None are bigger than Dupont, the 26-year-old scrumhalf tyro and the best player in the world for many. At least he'll be back for more Rugby World Cups, one would think.

The same cannot be said of retiring Ireland captain Jonathan Sexton. At 38 and with his body just

about being held together, Sexton had one last chance to add a World Cup title to a career where he became Ireland's record point-scorer, the highest scorer in the Six Nations and a world player of the year (in 2018).

It wasn't to be, but his son couldn't be prouder.

"You're still the best, dad," Luca Sexton could be seen telling his father.

Another top No. 10 who will never be seen again in international rugby is Dan Biggar, the battling Welshman who is 112 tests and

out. He was also on his last legs, with his chest and knees wrapped in bandages in the loss to Argentina that he couldn't quite finish.

Biggar was looking at the bright side following the loss in Marseille as he focuses his energy on his club career at Toulon, also in the south of France.

"The only positive," he said, "is I've got a cheap Uber back to the house in Toulon."

## PASSIONATE PUMAS

The twirling of the shirts. The inward flapping of the hands. The

jumping on the spot in unison.

Argentina's fans celebrated their team's win over Wales with the same passion and style that the South American country's soccer fans marked all those wins for Lionel Messi and his teammates on their run to the world title in Qatar almost a year ago.

It would be quite the double to win the biggest prize in soccer and rugby in the space of 10 months.

All the Pumas have to do is beat the All Blacks, then either the Springboks or England.

Easy, right? **MDT/AP**

AD

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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**DISTORTED REPORT CAN'T SOUR CHINA-RUSSIA TIES**

The fuss some US media outlets have made over Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to China, during which he will also attend the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, exposes their bias against Beijing and Moscow and their proclivity for distorting facts.

"The two countries have forged an informal alliance against the United States and other democratic nations," a US media organization claimed in its report on Tuesday on Putin's two-day visit to China.

That is a gross distortion of the relationship between the two neighbors. The US media sees the ghost of "alliance" in Sino-Russian relations because neither Beijing nor Moscow yields to Washington's hegemony. Instead, the two countries follow international laws, respect the United Nations-centered world order, and support multipolar global governance.

The US side has been claiming the good-neighborly and friendly relationship between China and Russia is a type of alliance because it is desperate to project them as enemies of "democratic nations". The tragedy is that the US media uses Washington's yardstick to measure Sino-Russian ties.

Sino-Russian relations are based on mutual respect and win-win cooperation; they neither target any third party nor are they at the mercy of any third party. Not to mention the two countries, both permanent members of the UN Security Council, play important roles in promoting global security and stability.

In the same report, the US media, in all its absurdity, has tried to drive a wedge between Moscow and Beijing by distorting what Putin told a Chinese media outlet about the Belt and Road Initiative on Friday.

Putin supported the initiative, saying "We don't have any contradictions here, on the contrary, there is a certain synergy" referring to the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union program. But the US media misinterpreted it to claim Moscow has downplayed the "impact of China's economic influence in a region that Russia has long considered its backyard". The report went so far as to vilify the initiative as a "debt trap" as well.

Ironically, the aforementioned US media, as well as other US media outlets, has maintained a studied silence on the Joe Biden administration's "Build Back Better World" program, floated two years ago. After the "B3W" proved to be empty talk, the Biden administration put forward the "India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor" at the G20 Summit in New Delhi last month. But it, too, lacks practicality.

The US has never lacked such "practicality" to incite "color revolutions" or launch wars around the world. But it's always short of that when it comes to promoting common development. The US media's prejudice is self-evident in such reports, and by selling the US' agenda, such media outlets are harming their own credibility.

**A HONG KONG PROTESTER SHOT BY POLICE IN 2019 RECEIVES A 47-MONTH JAIL TERM**

**THE BUZZ**

A Hong Kong man who was shot by police during pro-democracy protests in 2019 was sentenced yesterday to 47 months in prison on charges of rioting, assaulting a police officer and perverting the course of justice.

Tsang Chi-kin was the first known victim of police gunfire during the months-long protests beginning in June 2019.

Tsang was charged with rioting and assaulting police. But after he was released on bail, he failed to appear in court. In October 2020, he tried to seek asylum at the U.S. Consulate but was turned away. He hid in various locations in the city with assistance from mem-

bers of a YouTube channel that was critical of the Hong Kong government, and then attempted unsuccessfully to flee by boat to Taiwan. He was recaptured by police in July 2022.

Deputy District Judge Ada Yim said the sentencing had to reflect the court's determination to safeguard public order. She said Tsang was well-prepared for his acts as shown by the gear he was carrying, including the metal rod, and that he ignored a police warning.

Tsang, 22, appeared calm as the sentence was delivered. Yim said he had written in a mitigation letter that he regretted his acts.

AP PHOTO



**SERENA WILLIAMS TWO-BOOK DEAL STARTS WITH 'INTIMATE' MEMOIR**

**HILLEL ITALIE, NEW YORK**

**N**ow that she's stepped back from the sport she dominated like few others, Serena Williams is ready to reflect.

The tennis great has a two-book deal with the Random House Publishing Group, starting with an "intimate" memoir in which she will open up about everything from her childhood and early tennis training, dramatized in the 2021 film "King Richard," to her extraordinary career and the obstacles and setbacks she endured along the way. The book is not yet titled and does not have a release date.

"For so long, all I was focused on was winning, and I never sat down to look back and reflect on my life and career," Williams, who in August gave birth to her second child, said in a statement yesterday. "Over the last year I've really enjoyed taking the time with my growing family to celebrate my accomplishments and explore my other passions. I couldn't be at a more perfect place to be able to take-on such a personal intimate project, and there's no one I would rather do it with than the team at Ran-

dom House."

The second book, also untitled, will be an "inspirational" work, according to Random House, which announced that "Williams will offer rules for living that draw on her experiences as a philanthropist and advocate, her career as an investment unicorn with Serena Ventures, and someone who has long sought to lift a diverse and emergent generation of young women whose aspirations are not confined to the court."

Williams, 42, announced her retirement — famously eschewing that term and saying instead she was "evolving" away from professional tennis — shortly before the 2022 U.S. Open. She has not played since that tournament, which included a second-round victory over No. 2-ranked Anett Kontaveit before a third-round loss to Ajla Tomljanovic.

Williams left the sport with 23 Grand Slam titles in singles, another 14 in doubles with her sister Venus, more than 300 weeks at No. 1 in the rankings and four Olympic gold medals. She also has been widely cited for breaking down racial barriers in tennis and racial and gender barriers in spor-

ts and beyond.

In an essay published in Vogue last year, she wrote that she hoped that because of her success "women athletes feel that they can be themselves on the court. They can play with aggression and pump their fists. They can be strong yet beautiful. They can wear what they want and say what they want and kick butt and be proud of it all."

Her previous books include a memoir from 2009, "On the Line," and a picture story, "The Adventures of Qai Qai," released last year.

In its press release yesterday, Random House announced that her new memoir would be an "open-hearted exploration of the experiences that have shaped her life." Williams will share her thoughts on "overcoming scrutiny and attacks in a predominantly white and male-dominated sport, navigating devastating losses on and off the court, falling in love with tech entrepreneur Alexis Ohanian, celebrating body diversity and expanding the confines of style in sports and pop culture, bringing awareness to maternal health disparities, and being a devoted mother to her daughters, Olympia and Adira." **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



**German** Chancellor Olaf Scholz strongly condemned a firebomb assault on a synagogue in Berlin yesterday, saying "we will never accept when attacks are carried out against Jewish institutions." Assailants threw two Molotov cocktails at the synagogue in the center of the German capital, police said, as antisemitic incidents in the country have been rising following the violent escalation in the Middle East.

AP PHOTO



**UK** Climate activist Greta Thunberg (pictured) has been charged with a public order offense after being arrested at a demonstration against an oil and gas industry conference in London. The Metropolitan Police force said yesterday that the 20-year-old Swedish campaigner was one of 26 people charged after protesters gathered outside the luxury InterContinental Hotel during the Energy Intelligence Forum. Thunberg was among dozens of protesters who chanted "oily money out" and sought to block access to the hotel yesterday.

AP PHOTO



**Twitter** Elon Musk's social media platform X has begun charging a \$1 fee to new users in the Philippines and New Zealand, in a test designed to cut down on the spam and fake accounts flourishing on the site formerly known as Twitter. The company said late Tuesday that it has started trying out the annual subscription method for new and unverified accounts. The program, dubbed Not a Bot, won't apply to existing users.