



IPIM: OVER 1,100 BUSINESS-MATCHING SESSIONS WERE HELD AT THE THREE JOINT EXHIBITIONS THIS YEAR, AN INCREASE OF 30% COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

SUNCITY TRIAL: MONEY LAUNDERING CONVICTION ADDED TO ALVIN CHAU'S RECORD

PHILIPPINES SAYS ITS COAST GUARD SHIP AND SUPPLY BOAT ARE HIT BY CHINESE VESSELS NEAR DISPUTED SHOAL



Pakistan's former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif arrived home Saturday on a chartered plane from Dubai, ending four years of self-imposed exile in London as he seeks to rally supporters ahead of parliamentary elections due in January.



Lebanon A top official with Hezbollah vowed that Israel will pay a high price whenever it starts a ground offensive in the Gaza Strip and said that his militant group based in Lebanon already is "in the heart of the battle."



Egypt, Jordan harshly criticized Israel over its actions in Gaza at a summit on Saturday, a sign that the two Western allies that made peace with Israel decades ago are losing patience with its two-week-old war against Hamas.

'CLEAN JUDICIARY' Judicial year opening puts spotlight on junket, corruption cases as Prosecutor General calls for longer sentences in corruption context

FORUM MACAO FORMER EXECUTIVE CALLS FOR EXPANSION OF CHINA-LUSOPHONE FUND



IMMIGRATION IRIS-AUTHENTICATION IMPLEMENTED AT BORDER GATE

SUNCITY TRIAL

# ALVIN CHAU SENTENCE UNCHANGED AFTER APPEAL, MONEY LAUNDERING CONVICTION ADDED



ANTHONY LAM

**W**ITH an additional conviction for aggravated money laundering, former SunCity boss Alvin Chau's sentence remains at 18 years' imprisonment after his appeal.

The Court of Second Instance has ruled that the appeal of the former head of the now-rebranded junket was "partially upheld."

Seven co-defendants also had their appeals partially upheld, while two other defendants' appeals were completely dismissed.

Chau and seven co-defendants had their conviction and sentences upheld for the charge of involvement in a triad gang. Another defendant had the same result for

the charge of participating or supporting a triad gang, but the details of the charge were adjusted.

Chau and co-defendant Wong Pak Ling received sentences of eight and six year sentences, respectively, for aggravated money laundering. Defendant Cheung Ning received five years for money laundering.

The middle court has revoked orders of compensation for swindling because it found no evidence of such activity. The base court had convicted Chau and six co-defendants of swindling through parallel betting, which consequently generated losses for the government and the licensed casino operators.

Chau was also accused of making HKD17.66 billion and

HKD7.2 billion from parallel betting as well as telephone and on-line betting. He and two co-defendants had made about HKD616.97 million and RMB17 million in profit from money laundering.

As such, the middle court has also ruled that Chau and eight co-defendants must pay the government, jointly and severally, for the aforementioned amounts.

The management of the parallel betting companies held by Chau should also compensate the government for proceeds of parallel betting, jointly and severally.

The court also retained the measures imposed on Chau, namely providing an amount of security of not less than HKD\$6.5 billion and preventive seizure of the bank accounts and real estate owned by Chau and Sawalana Limited in London, United Kingdom.

Suncity was once Macau's largest junket, with various businesses across the retail, catering, film and concert production industry, as well as tourism. It has been renamed as LET Group and now focuses on developing resorts and malls around the world.

IMMIGRATION

## IRIS-AUTHENTICATION IMPLEMENTED AT BORDER GATE

ANTHONY LAM

**L**OCAL border clearance through the use of physiological characteristics has expanded, as local police have announced that iris authentication is now in full operation at the Border Gate Checkpoint.

Before this, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) had conducted several systems tests.

To use the technology, local ID holders must register their iris details with the local police.

Commencing this Saturday, both iris-registration and iris-facilitated border crossing will be available to local ID holders throughout the operational hours of the Border Gate checkpoint. Those intending to register can do so between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.



The police also said the service had gained popularity, with over 81,000 people having registered to use the border crossing option during the four months between June 16 and Oct. 20.

The police added that the first 20 days of October had seen an average of 6,533 travelers per day, accounting for 7.87% of all automatic border clearances at Bor-

der Gate Checkpoint.

Currently, the checkpoint has 10 such channels – five in and five out – and the police said the moderate expansion of iris authentication at several border checkpoints is planned for next year.

When previously questioned by the press, the police said fingerprint authentication will be retained to provide more options to travelers.

MICE

## OVER 1,000 BUSINESS MATCHING SESSIONS DURING JOINT EXHIBITIONS

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) has said that 1,100 business-matching sessions were held at the three joint exhibitions this year, an increase of 30% compared to last year.

Three exhibitions opened concurrently on Thursday in the SAR, aiming to power the growth of Macau's key industries and contribute to China's "dual circulation" economic development pattern.

The exhibitions include 1st China-Portuguese-Speaking Countries (PSCs) Economic and Trade Expo (Macao) (C-PLPEX), the 28th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF) and the Macao Franchise Expo 2023 (MFE).

The first three days saw 101 signings, an increase of 8.6% year-on-year. Among them, two mainland provin-



ces have agreed to cooperate with two Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs) in purchasing sugar and bulk agricultural products, according to IPIM president U U Sang.

IPIM said that more than 60,000 people attended the three exhibitions.

Taking up a total area of 37,000 square meters, the three exhibitions have attracted over 1,200 exhibitors from 14 countries and

regions to attend the offline events, more than 260 of which come from PSCs, hitting an all-time high with respect to the number of exhibitors and brands, according to the IPIM.

Over 60 activities were held during the exhibitions, in the form of themed business matching sessions, conferences, forums, promotion conferences, new product launches, multi-venue events and community tours.

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Public Prosecutor-General Ip Son Sang

# Judicial year opening ceremony spotlights recent cases

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE judicial year's opening ceremony, held over the weekend, highlighted several recent cases, with several speakers addressing the the Suncity and Tak Chun cases.

During his speech, President Justice Sam Hou Fai of the Court of Final Appeal said local judges in the past judicial year had, in the face of intense pressure, swiftly and efficiently handled three complex cases that involved large numbers of suspects, generated intense public attention and had lasting impact.

The three cases were those involving Suncity, Tak Chun and two former chiefs of the former Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau, which was restructured as Land and Public Works Bureau (DSOP).

Sam said court procedures were handled nearly concurrently by different court sections, "which was relatively rare in the judicial history of Macau."

The efficient handling of the procedures showcased the "capability of locally trained judges after the establishment of the Special Administrative Region in having control over processing complex cases," Sam said.

Prosecutor General Ip Son Sang labelled a recent alleged bribery case involving an assistant prosecutor general as alarming to the Public

Prosecutions Office (MP). Ip underlined the prosecution body's commitment and attitude towards combatting corruption, saying the MP had reviewed and reevaluated the process of case distribution and archive vetting, among other sections.

He pledged to close any existing loopholes to ensure the MP's ability to fulfil its judicial responsibilities.

"Any violators will be subject to cautious investigations and severe punishments," the chief prosecutor said.

Ip also called for longer sentences in a corruption context, as well as extending the statute of limitations for cases involving abuse of public power.

Ip also described the judiciary as "the last line of defense in safeguarding fairness and justice."

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, meanwhile, said the judiciary must uphold principles of justice and integrity.

"A clean judiciary is the founding stone of a just judiciary," the head of the government said. "We must severely punish judicial corruption without any tolerance."

The judiciary should function to promote the rule of law and serve as a strong shield to safeguard residents' legal rights.

The President of the Ma-

cau Lawyers Association, lawmaker Vong Hin Fai, did not mention any cases, although the aforementioned alleged bribery also involved a lawyer. However, the veteran lawyer skillfully took an excerpt from an ancient Chinese text to remind his fellows to be law-abiding.

## Ip also called for longer sentences in a corruption context, as well as extending the statute of limitations for cases involving abuse of public power

The ancient text suggested that opinions, practices and deeds that do not comply with legal stipulations should not be heeded, promoted and conducted.

"During the practice of our profession, we should always bear in mind the need to abide by the law [and] collectively safeguard the overall reputation of the profession," Vong said.

### DIVORCE AND MINOR OFFENCES

Sam said that in the last judicial year, the Family and Minor Magistracy had received 758 applications for divorce by mutual consent, equating to 46.7% of all cases. Nearly 90% of such cases involved parents of minors.

Sam noted a year-over-year increase in the number of cases handled by the judiciary, reversing the trend of the preceding years.

Ip also said the number of cases the MP handled in the past judicial year was on the rise. Despite the low rate of serious crimes, minor crimes such as digital crimes, swindling and theft have risen. He believed the resumption of free movement after the relaxation of disease control measures was responsible.

The chief prosecutor said the MP handled 201 sex offences against minors in the past judicial year, compared to 168 cases in the preceding year.

Ho suggested the judiciary be modernized to cope with the requirements of a swiftly evolving society, such as upholding positions appointed by the national government, retaining a capitalist and free market, as well as promoting fair competition.

Vong said that so far in 2023, eight lawyers and 19 trainee lawyers had applied for a suspension of practice. Most of them, he explained, have migrated to the executive or full-time education or training.

Currently, the city has 446 registered lawyers and 168 trainee lawyers, 14 of the latter will be eligible for registration this year.

## MORE GRASSROOTS DELEGATES TO ATTEND CHINA'S 13TH NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONGRESS

Over 69% of the delegates to China's 13th National Women's Congress are in frontline posts at the grassroots level, an increase from the previous congress, the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) said at a press conference Saturday. Nearly 1,800 delegates and 90 specially invited delegates from Hong Kong and Macau will attend the congress to be held from Oct. 23 to 26 in Beijing. The congress delegates represent diverse sectors such as industry, agriculture, commerce, science and technology, education, medicine and health, press and publishing. Notably, 5.1% of the delegates are working in the scientific and technology sector, an increase of 1.2%.

## INFLATION UP SLIGHTLY

The September Composite CPI (104.86) grew 0.86% year-on-year, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The change was attributed to higher prices for eating out and rising tuition fees, as well as increases in hotel room rates and clothes prices. The rise was partially offset by falling airfares and lower rentals for dwellings. The price indices of recreation and culture, clothing and footwear, education, and food and non-alcoholic beverages rose 5.45%, 5.13%, 5.06% and 2.67% year-on-year respectively.

## MGTO BOOSTS CITY PROMOTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) is partnering with mega e-commerce platforms such as Tripadvisor and Expedia in the fourth quarter to boost arrivals in the SAR. The office said in a statement that it has opened 24 platforms of destination marketing pages on social media in mainland China, Hong Kong, the Taiwan region, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Portugal. For market diversification, the office has also collaborated with widely influential mainstream media including the BBC, CNBC and The Economist, major e-commerce platforms, celebrities and social media key opinion leaders coming to Macau for events. As of October, some 100 travel influencers worldwide have been invited to experience and spotlight innovative "tourism +" in Macau.

## IFTM PARTNERS WITH FIRM FOR TOURISM METAVERSE

The Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) and Senge Data Technology Macao Ltd. (Senge) have signed a strategic cooperation agreement committing both parties to establishing and operating a "Joint Laboratory on Culture and Tourism Metaverse." Their cooperation will be implemented in the areas of industry-education integration, talent cultivation, and commercial application, promotion and generalization. Also, the two parties aim to build a demonstration base of metaverse-based culture and tourism in Macau and a digital tourism economic infrastructure, through the study and application of metaverse technology, popularization and the market development of smart tourism, the creation of smart campuses and the optimization of smart education.

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FORUM20

# Former Forum Macao executive calls for expanding China-Lusophone fund

**M**ANUEL Amante da Rosa, the former deputy secretary-general of the China-Lusophone Forum in Macau, has called for the expansion of the China-Lusophone fund, the public broadcaster has reported.

Da Rosa voiced this opinion at a seminar celebrating the Forum's 20-year anniversary, concurrently held with the China-Lusophone Expo over the weekend, according to public broadcaster TDM-Radio Macau (Portuguese).

The former executive of the Forum emphasized the necessity of expanding the fund and recommended that the conditions for accessing funding be relaxed to make it more accessible. He called for a reduction in the interest rate, which currently stands at 8%.

He suggested that the Fund be managed by a Board of Directors, which should include a Portuguese speaking expert in development and international trade.

He said the inauguration of the fund "was a summit point for the Forum." However, he noted that it had so far only benefitted a select group of Forum members.

Da Rosa also believed that the creation of new and innovative financial tools is crucial to truly promote financial cooperation and have an impact on all Forum members.

The high-level symposium and exhibition opened Friday in the



SAR to mark the 20th founding anniversary of Forum Macao.

Meanwhile, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said in his address that Forum Macao has fully leveraged Macau's distinctive advantages in connecting China with Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs) and effectively promoted exchange and cooperation between both sides, focusing on economic and trade cooperation.

Ho noted that over the past two decades, Forum Macao has served as an important platform and link for China and PSCs to conduct mutually beneficial and friendly cooperation, increasingly becoming a force for advancing all-round coo-

peration.

He stressed that this is yet another important initiative to enhance Macau's advantages arising from its status as a Special Administrative Region, to promote adequate diversification of its economy.

He said the Cooperation Zone will contribute to the development and enrichment of Macau's role in expanding and strengthening the Sino-Lusophone Platform.

Ji Xianzheng, secretary-general of the Permanent Secretariat of Forum Macao, said the forum has aided coordination between various parties to improve economic and trade cooperation between China and PSCs, making tremendous

achievements in trade, investment, industrial development and people-to-people exchanges.

Cape Verdean Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration Rui Alberto de Figueiredo Soares suggested that the forum play a more active role, with a focus on areas such as cultural and tourism promotion, attracting investment, holding business meetings and promoting market access.

The related exhibition, which runs to Dec. 20, reviews the development of the forum during the past two decades, and showcases the forum's contribution to the exchanges and cooperation between China and the PSCs. **AL/XINHUA**

## MIDDLE-AGED MAN DIES AFTER FALL FROM BUILDING

A middle-aged man died after falling from a building in Taipa around noon late last week. The police department classified the incident as a case of discovering a body. Last week, the Fire Services Bureau notified the police that a man was lying in a garden opposite a building on Estr. Gov. Albano de Oliveira in Taipa. He was suspected of dying after falling from a height. No suspicious circumstances or injuries related to criminal activities were found.

## FESTIVAL TO KICK OFF IN HENGQIN ON NOV. 4

The 7th China International Circus Festival will be held in Zhuhai Chimelong International Ocean Resort in Hengqin from Nov. 4 to 11. It will host a total of eight performances including a comprehensive performance and circus acrobatics shows, among other performances. Performance groups from all around the world will be invited to present 20 shows covering a variety of arts, such as acrobatics, dancing, burlesque, magic shows, extreme sports, and vocal music. The China International Circus Festival has been through six sessions since 2013, attracting global top circus teams with more than 150 performances.

# Pang Chuan blames gov't for university 'brain drain'

RENATO MARQUES

**L**AWMAKER Pang Chuan has found discrepancies between the speech of the government and their actions in concerning the promotion of Macau as a "university and science and technology city."

In a spoken inquiry delivered recently during the period before the agenda at the Legislative Assembly (AL), Pang blamed the government for a lack of investment in tertiary education institutions and for a "brain drain" that has been taking place at the local universities.

According to the

lawmaker, when assessing applications for qualified staff, great importance is given to those who carry out scientific research and teaching roles in higher education institutions in Macau.

"As for qualified staff from the four major industries that the government is promoting, and in response to my inquiry, the Secretary [Ao Ieong U] mentioned that 'she cannot see a [field of study] that is not related to those four industries,' but, in reality, many academics received answers completely different [from the government's espoused position while applying to residency for qualified sta-

ff]," the lawmaker explained.

The four industries include sci-tech research and high-end manufacturing; traditional Chinese medicine; cultural tourism, convention and exhibition, and modern finance.

"I noticed, with great sadness, that both at public and in private universities elite [academics] have left Macau because they could not obtain the Macau BIR [residency card]. I hope the government does something to help Macau's higher education institutions attract qualified staff," Pang added.

The same lawmaker also

called on the government to help with other aspects such as space for expansion of the universities, as he noted that with the growth of the institutions comes the need for more space to expand the learning facilities.

Additionally, he remarked that while the government calls on the universities to "industrialize" themselves and turn to the production of knowledge and products for the commercial market, there is still a need for investment by the government in research and development for this to happen, otherwise, institutions can only focus on very few projects at the one time.



SOUTH CHINA SEA

# Philippines says its coast guard ship and supply boat are hit by Chinese vessels near disputed shoal

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

A Chinese coast guard ship and one of its militia vessels separately bumped a Philippine coast guard ship and a military-run supply boat yesterday off a contested shoal, Philippine officials said, in a serious flareup that could heighten fears of an armed conflict in the disputed South China Sea.

A top Philippine security official told The Associated Press there were no injuries among the Filipino crew members and an assessment of the damage to both vessels was underway.

The official added that the incidents near the Second Thomas Shoal could have been worse if they were not able to maneuver rapidly away from the Chinese ships. The official spoke on condition of anonymity due to a lack of authority to publicly discuss details of the incidents.

The United States, a longtime treaty ally of the Philippines, immediately condemned the actions by China's ships. The Philippine government also condemned the latest confrontations in "the strongest degree" and called them a violation of Manila's sovereignty.

The Chinese coast guard said the Philippine vessels "trespassed" into what it said were Chinese waters "without authorization" despite repeated radio warnings, prompting its ships to stop them. It blamed the Philippine vessels for causing the collisions.



In this image from a video released by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Filipino sailors, bottom, look after a Chinese coast guard ship with bow number 5203 bumps their supply boat as they approach Second Thomas Shoal, yesterday

"The Philippine side's behavior seriously violates the international rules on avoiding collisions at sea and threatens the navigation safety of our vessels," the Chinese coast guard said in a statement posted on its website.

The U.S. Ambassador to Manila, MaryKay Carlson, said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, that "the United States condemns the PRC's latest disruption of a legal Philippine resupply mission to Ayungin shoal, putting the lives of Filipino service members at risk."

She used the initials for China's formal name, the People's Republic of China, and the name the Philippines uses for the Second Thomas Shoal. She added that

Washington was standing with its allies to help protect Philippine sovereignty and to support a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

A Philippine government task force dealing with the South China Sea disputes said the collisions occurred as two Philippine supply boats escorted by two Philippine coast guard ships were heading to deliver food and other supplies to the atoll in the face of a years-long Chinese blockade.

The task force said it "condemns in the strongest degree the latest dangerous, irresponsible, and illegal actions of the Chinese coast guard and the Chinese maritime militia done this morning in violation of Philippine sovereignty,

sovereign rights and jurisdiction."

The actions by the Chinese ships were "in utter blatant disregard of the United Nations Charter, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea" and international regulations that aim to prevent sea collisions, said the Philippine task force, which includes the country's defense and foreign affairs departments, the military, national security council and the coast guard.

Near-collisions have happened frequently as Philippine vessels regularly deliver supplies to Filipino marines and sailors stationed on the disputed shoal. But this was the first time Philippine officials have reported their country's

vessels being hit by China's ships.

In the first incident that happened yesterday morning, "dangerous blocking maneuvers of China coast guard vessel 5203 caused it to collide with the Armed Forces of the Philippines-contracted indigenous resupply boat Unaiza May 2," the task force statement said. It said the "provocative, irresponsible, and illegal action" of the Chinese coast guard ship "imperiled the safety of the crew."

The Chinese coast guard gave a different version and said the Philippine supply boat deliberately crossed the bow of its ship, which was on a routine law enforcement patrol, "resulting in a slight collision."

Separately, Philippine coast guard ship BRP Cabra's left side "was bumped by Chinese maritime militia vessel 00003 while it was lying to" northeast of the Second Thomas Shoal, the statement said.

The Chinese coast guard said the Philippine ship "deliberately provoked trouble" by reversing its direction, causing its stern to collide with the Chinese vessel and "heating up the situation at the scene." In the past, Chinese officials have played down claims that the Chinese vessels were military militia ships meant to look like fishing boats.

Despite the Chinese coast guard blockade, one of the two Philippine navy-manned boats managed to maneuver past the Chinese vessels and deliver supplies to the small contingent stationed on board a long-marooned but still actively commissioned warship, the BRP Sierra Madre, the task force said.

It was the latest flare-up in long-simmering territorial disputes in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest trade routes. The conflicts, which involve China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, are regarded as a potential flashpoint and have become a delicate fault line in U.S.-China rivalry in the region. **MDT/AP**

# Apple supplier Foxconn subjected to tax inspections by Chinese authorities



HUIZHONG WU,  
BANGKOK

FOXCONN, a Fortune 500 company known globally for making Apple iPhones, was recently subjected to searches by Chinese tax authorities, state media reported yesterday.

Foxconn, a Taiwanese-headquartered company officially registered as Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., Ltd, had its offices in

Guangdong and Jiangsu provinces searched by tax officials, according to a report in the Chinese state-run Global Times newspaper.

The Ministry of Natural Resources also inspected Foxconn offices in Henan and Hubei provinces, where the company has major factories. Foxconn employs hundreds of thousands of workers across China.

The report did not provide more details about the searches, including when they occurred or what was found.

However, the report quotes an expert who said that "while Taiwan-funded

enterprises, including Foxconn, are sharing in dividends from development and making remarkable progress in the mainland, they should also assume corresponding social responsibilities and play a positive role in promoting the peaceful development of cross-strait relations."

Tensions have been high between China and Taiwan in recent years.

The tensions have occasionally spilled over into the economic realm. In recent years, China has banned pineapples, grouper fish and other agricultural products from Taiwan for import. **MDT/AP**

AUSTRALIA

# Prime minister announces China visit hours before leaving for US to meet Biden

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

**A**USTRALIAN Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he will visit China in early November to meet President Xi Jinping, making the announcement yesterday before he departed for the United States to meet with President Joe Biden.

The Chinese visit dates were confirmed a day after Beijing agreed to review the crippling tariffs it levied on Australian wine that have effectively blocked trade with the winemakers' biggest export market since 2020.

Albanese will become the first Australian prime minister to visit China in seven years when he travels to Beijing and Shanghai on Nov. 4-7.

"It's in Australia's interest to have good relations with China," Albanese told reporters at Australian Parliament House, adding that his focus in the coming days will be on the visit to the United States.

"With Australia's closest partner, talking about the future of our alliance, the future which has been upgraded by the AUKUS arrangements, a future based upon our common values, our commitment to democracy, and our commitment to the international rule of law and stable order throughout the globe," Albanese added, using the acronym for Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Under the trilateral pact, the U.S. and Britain will cooperate to provide Australia with a fleet of submarines powered by U.S.



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese speaks to the media during a press conference at Parliament House in Canberra, yesterday

nuclear technology to counter a more assertive China.

Albanese said he will meet with Xi and Premier Li Qiang in Beijing and then attend the China International Import Expo in Shanghai.

The visit to China and a potential breakthrough in the wine dispute mark a further repair in relations since Albanese's center-left Labor Party won elections last year after nine years of conservative government in Australia.

China has agreed to review its tariffs on Australian wine over five months, Albanese's office said. In return, Australia has suspended its complaint against its free trade

partner to the World Trade Organization.

China confirmed that the two sides had reached a consensus on resolving the issues "appropriately" regarding Australian wine.

"We are willing to work with Australia to continue to meet each other halfway through dialogue and consultation and jointly promote the stable and healthy development of bilateral economic and trade relations," the Chinese Ministry of Commerce said.

A similar dispute resolution plan led to China removing tariffs on Australian barley.

Albanese said reopening the Chinese wine market would be

worth more than 1 billion Australian dollars (\$631 million) to exporters.

"We're very confident that this will result in once again Australian wine, a great product, being able to go to China free of the tariffs which have been imposed by China," Albanese said.

"It is important that we stabilize our relationship with China. That is in the interests of Australia and China, and it is indeed in the interests of the world that we have stable relations and that is what this visit will represent," he added.

Australian Grape and Wine chief executive Lee McLean, a national wine industry advocate, described the breakthrough as a "really positive step."

"The diversification effort needs to continue ... but we absolutely also need to look at opportunities in China as well," McLean said.

"It's one market that is going to be important to us," he added.

Albanese's visit will come near the 50th anniversary of Labor Party leader Gough Whitlam becoming the first Australian prime minister to visit the People's Republic of China in 1973.

Albanese accepted an invitation weeks ago to visit China this year, but finding suitable dates had been challenging.

Albanese is visiting Washington to meet with Biden this week and will return to the United States after his China trip to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders' forum in San Francisco on Nov. 15-17.

It will be the ninth time Biden

has met with Albanese as prime minister. The first meeting was in Tokyo hours after Albanese was sworn in as government leader in May last year for a leaders' summit of the Quad strategic partnership that also includes Japan and India.

As well as the AUKUS deal, the leaders will also seek more cooperation on clean energy, critical minerals and climate change.

Albanese's department announced Friday that it decided after an investigation not to cancel a Chinese company's 99-year lease on the strategically important Darwin Port despite U.S. concerns the foreign control could be used to spy on its military forces.

Some security analysts interpreted the decision to let Shandong Landbridge Group keep the lease signed in 2015 and long criticized by Albanese as a concession to China ahead of his visit.

China's release of Australian journalist Cheng Lei this month after she spent three years in detention in Beijing on espionage allegations was widely seen as a concession to Australia.

Albanese said the breakthrough on wine "has not been transactional," meaning Australia did not make any corresponding concessions to Chinese demands.

"We'll continue to put our case on matters that are in Australia's national interest," he said.

"I've said very consistently: We'll cooperate with China where we can, we'll disagree where we must, and we'll engage in our national interest, and that's precisely what we're doing," he added.

MDT/AP

PHILIPPINES

# Military ordered to stop using artificial intelligence apps due to security risks

**T**HE Philippine defense chief has ordered all defense personnel and the 163,000-member military to refrain from using digital applications that harness artificial intelligence to generate personal portraits, saying they could pose security risks.

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. issued the order in an Oct. 14 memorandum, as Philippine forces have been

working to weaken decades-old communist and Muslim insurgencies and defend territorial interests in the disputed South China Sea.

The Department of National Defense on Friday confirmed the authenticity of the memo, which has been circulating online in recent days, but did not provide other details, including what prompted Teodoro to issue the

prohibition.

Teodoro specifically warned against the use of a digital app that requires users to submit at least 10 pictures of themselves and then harnesses AI to create "a digital person that mimics how a real individual speaks and moves." Such apps pose "significant privacy and security risks," he said.

"This seemingly harmless and amusing AI-

powered application can be maliciously used to create fake profiles that can lead to identity theft, social engineering, phishing attacks and other malicious activities," Teodoro said. "There has already been a report of such a case."

Teodoro ordered all defense and military personnel "to refrain from using AI photo generator applications and practice vigil-



ance in sharing information online" and said their actions should adhere to

the Philippines Defense Department's values and policies. MDT/AP

ISRAEL-HAMAS

# Israel strikes Gaza, Syria and West Bank as war against Hamas threatens to ignite other fronts

NAJIB JOBAIN,  
SAM Y MAGDY &  
JOSEPH KRAUSS, RAFAH

**I**SRAELI warplanes struck targets across Gaza overnight and into Sunday, as well as two airports in Syria and a mosque in the occupied West Bank allegedly used by militants, as the two-week-old war with Hamas threatened to spiral into a broader conflict.

Israel has traded fire with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group on a near-daily basis since the war began, and tensions are soaring in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where Israeli forces have battled militants in refugee camps and carried out two airstrikes in recent days.

For days, Israel has seemed to be on the verge of launching a ground offensive in Gaza as part of its response to Hamas' deadly Oct. 7 rampage. Tanks and tens of thousands of troops have massed at the border, and Israeli leaders have spoken of an undefined next stage in operations.

But the military acknowledges there are still hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians in northern Gaza despite a sweeping evacuation order, which would complicate any ground attack. And the risk of triggering a broader war with Hamas' allies in Lebanon and Syria might also give them pause.

On Saturday, 20 trucks of aid were allowed to enter Gaza from Egypt through the Rafah crossing, the first time anything has gone into the territory since Israel imposed a complete siege two weeks ago.

Aid workers said it was far too little to address the spiraling humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where half the territory's 2.3 million people have fled their homes. The U.N. humanitarian agency, known as OCHA, said the convoy carried about 4% of an average day's imports before the war and "a fraction of what is needed after 13 days of complete siege."

The Israeli military said the humanitarian situation was "under control" as OCHA



AP PHOTO

called for 100 trucks a day to enter.

Hospitals packed with patients and displaced people are running low on medical supplies and fuel for generators, forcing doctors to perform surgeries with sewing needles, using kitchen vinegar as disinfectant, and without anesthesia.

The World Health Organization says at least 130 premature babies are at "grave risk" because of a shortage of generator fuel. It said seven hospitals in northern Gaza have been forced to shut down due to damage from strikes, lack of power and supplies, or Israeli evacuation orders.

Shortages in critical supplies, including ventilators, are forcing doctors to ration treatment, said Dr. Mohammed Qandeel, who works in Khan Younis' Nasser Hospital. Dozens of patients continue to arrive and are treated in crowded, darkened corridors, as hospitals preserve electricity for intensive care units and incubators for newborns.

"It's heartbreaking," Qandeel told The Associated Press. "Everyday, if we receive 10 severely injured patients we have to manage with maybe three or five ICU beds available."

Palestinians sheltering in U.N.-run schools and tent camps are running low on food and drinking water. A power blackout has crippled water and sanitation systems. OCHA said cases of chicken pox, scabies and diarrhea are on the rise because of the lack

of clean water.

Airstrikes were reported across Gaza, including in the southern part of the coastal strip, where Israel has told hundreds of thousands to seek refuge. Israel's military has said it is striking Hamas members and installations, but does not target civilians. Palestinian militants have fired over 7,000 rockets at Israel, according to the military, and Hamas says it targeted Tel Aviv early yesterday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened his Cabinet late Saturday to discuss the expected ground invasion, Israeli media reported. A military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said Israel planned to step up airstrikes starting Saturday as preparation for the "next stages of the war."

An Israeli ground assault would likely lead to a dramatic escalation in casualties on both sides. More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed in the war — mostly civilians slain during the initial Hamas attack. At least 212 people were captured and dragged back to Gaza, including men, women, children and older adults. Two Americans were released on Friday in what Hamas said was a humanitarian gesture.

More than 4,300 people have been killed in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry. That includes the disputed toll from a hospital explosion.

Syrian state media meanwhile reported that Is-

raeli airstrikes have targeted the international airports in the capital, Damascus, and the northern city of Aleppo. It said the strikes killed one person and damaged the runways, putting them out of service.

Israel has carried out several strikes in Syria, including on the airports, since the war began. Israel rarely acknowledges individual strikes, but says it acts to prevent Hezbollah and other militant groups from bringing in arms from their patron, Iran, which also supports Hamas.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah said six of its fighters were killed Saturday, and the group's deputy leader, Sheikh Naim Kassem, warned that Israel would pay a high price if it starts a ground offensive in the Gaza Strip. Israel struck Hezbollah targets early yesterday in response to rocket fire, the military said.

Israel also announced evacuation plans for another 14 communities near the border with Lebanon. Kiryat Shmona, with a population of more than 20,000 people, was told to evacuate last week.

In the occupied West Bank, dozens of Palestinians have been killed in clashes with Israeli troops, arrest raids and attacks by Jewish settlers. Israeli forces have closed crossings into the territory and checkpoints between cities, measures they say are aimed at preventing attacks. Israel says it has arrested more than 700 Palestinians since Oct. 7, including 480 suspected Hamas members. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 2001 IRA BEGINS DECOMMISSIONING WEAPONS



The Northern Ireland peace process has reached an historic breakthrough as the IRA announced they had begun decommissioning their weapons.

In a statement the IRA said: "In order to save the peace process we have implemented the scheme agreed with the IICD [Independent International Commission on Decommissioning] in August 2001."

General John de Chastelain, head of the IICD confirmed the action.

"We have now witnessed an event which we regard as significant in which the IRA has put a quantity of arms completely beyond use. The material in question includes arms, ammunition and explosives" he said.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair praised the Sinn Fein leadership for the "boldness of this move."

"This is a peace process that despite it all is working. We are a very long way from finishing our journey but a very significant milestone has been passed," he added.

Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern also welcomed the move, recognising that "taking this step has meant a lot to the leadership of the IRA and I fully acknowledge that this was not an easy decision for them."

Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams, who recommended the move, described the announcement as "a huge, liberating leap forward".

"At a time when there is international calamity in the world, this shows that matters can be resolved through politics," he said.

The absence of decommissioning arms, a move pledged in the Good Friday Agreement, has been one of the main stumbling blocks in the peace process but this move looks set to renew the agreement.

Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble said, "There is now clear evidence of a commitment." He added that he was now ready to return to the power sharing executive with Sinn Fein.

Despite the IRA statement and assurances from the IICD, there are concerns that the IRA will retain enough weapons to be capable of causing massive damage.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Having resigned as first minister to encourage the IRA into decommissioning weapons David Trimble was re-elected to the position in November 2001.

The plan for the IRA to decommission its weapons was set out in the Good Friday Agreement which was signed in 1998.

The issue of decommissioning remained the major stumbling block in talks between all parties seeking to restore devolution since the Northern Ireland Assembly was suspended in October 2002.

Five years of direct rule ended in May 2007 when power-sharing was restored when DUP leader Ian Paisley and Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness took office as first and deputy first ministers.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**



**ARIES**

**Mar. 21-Apr. 19**

Resist the temptation to gamble. Risks will not be profitable. You can't help everyone. You may have difficulty trying to get your mate to understand your position.



**TAURUS**

**Apr. 20-May. 20**

Children may be less than honest with you. Too much talk will lead to disputes. Financial limitations may add to your depression.



**GEMINI**

**May. 21-Jun. 21**

You have two choices; Get out on your own, or bend to your mate's whims. Your mate is going to want and need some attention.



**CANCER**

**Jun. 22-Jul. 22**

You will be able to contribute a great deal to organizations that you join. Unexpected bills may set you back. If they're really interested, they'll wait.



**LEO**

**Jul. 23-Aug. 22**

You can help them with difficult projects. Help those incapable of taking care of their personal affairs. Don't allow colleagues to stand in your way.



**VIRGO**

**Aug. 23-Sep. 22**

You can make professional decisions today that will affect your position. Don't evade issues or twist the truth around. You should include children in your activities.



**LIBRA**

**Sep. 23-Oct. 22**

Don't hesitate to voice your opinions when it comes to matters pertaining to work. Minor fevers or infections will develop if you're over-stressed.



**SCORPIO**

**Oct. 23-Nov. 21**

Compromise will be necessary. You can buy or sell if you're so inclined. Large organizations may try to talk you out of your hard-earned cash.



**SAGITTARIUS**

**Nov. 22-Dec. 21**

You are best to be discreet. Don't make any rash decisions that may affect friendships. You can make gains if you look at long-term investments.



**CAPRICORN**

**Dec. 22-Jan. 19**

You will do well if you mingle with the brass today. Don't be shy; show your abilities! Your relationship appears to be stressed out and depleted.



**AQUARIUS**

**Jan. 20-Feb. 18**

Be sure to get involved with those who can introduce you to unusual forms of entertainment. Mingle with those who can further your goals.



**PISCES**

**Feb. 19-Mar. 20**

Having your own business is a good idea. Use your head and do things to your liking. Don't let others know about your private affairs.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sanson**



**SUDOKU**

**EASY**

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

**EASY+**

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

**MEDIUM**

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

**HARD**

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

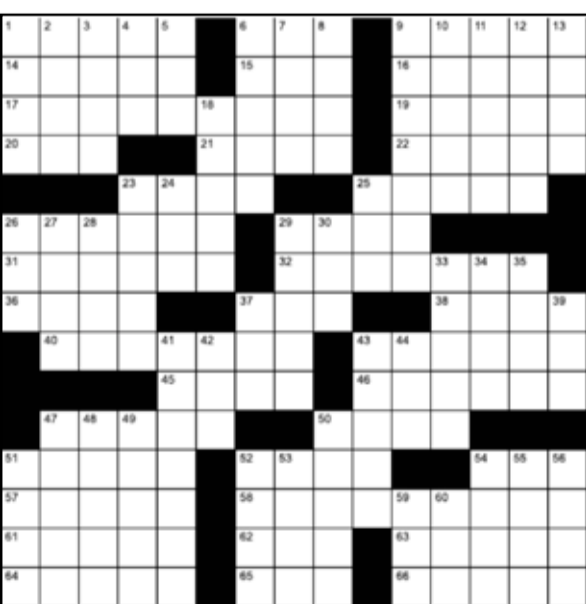
**WEATHER**

	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- Musical instrument; 6- Scratch the surface of; 9- Cow catcher; 14- Lucid; 15- Suffix with Capri; 16- Bungling; 17- Neglect; 19- Symbol of Lebanon; 20- Grab a bite; 21- JFK postings; 22- Dicembre follower; 23- Bad time in the Senate; 25- \_\_\_ nous; 26- Free; 29- Coop group; 31- Marquis \_\_\_; 32- States; 36- Satirist Mort; 37- CBS logo; 38- Mozart's "\_\_\_ kleine Nachtmusik"; 40- Name given to the fox; 43- Uncover; 45- Tied up; 46- Vigor; 47- Nephew of Donald Duck; 50- Environmental sci.; 51- Had in mind; 52- Soprano Gluck; 54- Pixie; 57- Cobble; 58- Ally; 61- Designer Simpson; 62- Meal crumb; 63- Trace; 64- "Lou Grant" star; 65- Whimsical; 66- Browned sliced bread;

DOWN 1- A followers; 2- Inter \_\_\_; 3- Resting place; 4- Cookie holder; 5- Galena, e.g.; 6- Castle water pits; 7- Gillette brand; 8- Cincinnati team; 9- Official permit; 10- Concerning; 11- Passover meal; 12- Surplus; 13- Other, in Oaxaca; 18- Farm layers; 23- San Marino surround; 24- Accomplished; 25- Nav. officer; 26- Mdse.; 27- The back end of something; 28- Tennis great Arthur; 29- "Surprise Symphony" composer; 30- Ending for legal or Japan; 33- Party; 34- Stadium section; 35- Hang-up; 37- Poet's preposition; 39- English cathedral city; 41- Nor's partner; 42- Hail, to Caesar; 43- Summarize; 44- Brian of rock music; 47- Guides; 48- Like Cheerios; 49- Quitter's cry; 50- Vacant; 51- Movie-rating org.; 52- Starting from; 53- Draw in; 54- Europe's highest volcano; 55- Race parts; 56- Worry; 59- Polo Grounds hero; 60- Grande;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



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AD

RUGBY WORLD CUP

# South Africa pulls off great escape to beat England and make the final

ENGLAND 15, SOUTH AFRICA 16

**T**HE Springboks finally broke the English scrum, and once again their hearts, to reach the Rugby World Cup final and have a chance at back-to-back titles.

Defending champion South Africa was second-best to England's smart tactics and precise execution for the best part of 70 minutes of their semifinal at Stade de France on Saturday before what's becoming a traditional great escape by the Boks saw them steal a thriller 16-15 and set up a title decider next weekend against their fiercest rival, New Zealand.

One of them will win a record fourth World Cup and, with England's agonizing exit, the trophy is

set to stay in the southern hemisphere once again.

By next Saturday night [Sunday, 03:00], the southern hemisphere will have won nine out of 10 Rugby World Cups.

South Africa's brute force at scrum time won it against England, as it so often does. But it only came in the dying minutes of another white-knuckle knockout game at this World Cup as replacement props Ox Nche and Vincent Koch produced a huge, desperate heave to win a penalty for South Africa near halfway and set up replacement flyhalf Handre Pollard for the game-winning kick with under two minutes left.

Pollard nailed it, as he did with a late kick in another epic 29-28 Springboks win from behind in the quarterfinals against host France.

"It's unbelievable. It's a lot of relief in this moment," Pollard said. "Frustrated we weren't at our best tonight, especially in that first half. We knew we had so much more to give but fair play to England, they put us under pressure in exactly the right areas."

"But, jeez, the fight we showed never giving up, it is what we stand for as a team and as a nation."

England led for the entire match before Pollard's boot — from about 50 meters — swung the Springboks into a second straight Rugby World Cup final at the very death and cruelly denied the English again. South Africa has beaten England in the quarterfinals, semifinals and in two finals at the Rugby World Cup, including the title game four years ago.

"After a difficult loss like this all that stands with me is how proud I am to be English," said England captain Owen Farrell, who also lost in the 2019 final to South Africa. "You can always look back at things but South Africa are a top, top side. They have shown that over the course of the World Cup."

England was minutes from sweet revenge for all those painful Springboks experiences having executed its gameplan to perfection to be in control for most of the match at Stade de France. England sent kick after kick from scrumhalf Alex Mitchell at the base of the ruck or from Farrell at flyhalf down onto the Springboks, who struggled with the high bombs all day in the rain in Paris.

England won almost every contestable kick, and was sharper in every facet, and Farrell gave the white shirts the scoreboard dominance they deserved with four penalties in the first half and a drop goal from long range early in the second half for a 15-6 lead.

The drop goal evoked memories



of Jannie de Beer's five drops for South Africa to flatten England in the quarterfinals of the 1999 Rugby World Cup. The 15-6 scoreline was the same that England lost to the Boks in the 2007 final in Paris.

England fans, who came to France this time with very limited expectations given the team's dire pre-tournament form, belted out "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot."

England, surprisingly, was rumbling toward the final having been written off before a ball was kicked in France.

And then it turned.

The Boks went to their bench. The comeback began in the 69th minute with a try by replacement

FINALS

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
Sat	Oct 28	03:00	Argentina	England	H 3.75, D 29, A 1.4
Sun	Oct 29	03:00	New Zealand	South Africa	H 1.89, D 23, A 2.2

AD

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



### RUGBY WORLD CUP

## ERRANT ALL BLACKS WING TELE'A PROVES A POINT IN SEMIFINAL AFTER AXING

NEW ZEALAND 44, ARGENTINA 6

**PUNISHED** one week, punisher the next.

New Zealand winger Mark Tele'a responded to being dropped for the Rugby World Cup quarterfinals with a powerful performance in their semifinal thrashing of Argentina this weekend.

Tele'a didn't score a point in the All Blacks' 44-6 win, unlike fellow wing Will Jordan who scored three tries, but Tele'a was even more outstanding.

His willingness to work, especially around the ruck, ability to get over the gainline and crack the Pumas defense bagged him a brilliant outing in an All Blacks career less than a year old.

"Mark was strong in the close-quarter areas and defended really well," New Zealand coach Ian Foster said.

Tele'a had a point to prove after he was axed from the team last week for breaking curfew. The All Blacks weren't willing to overlook what they called a minor breach of protocol ahead of a monumental quarterfinal with Ireland they were tipped to lose, and made a sta-



New Zealand's Mark Tele'a (left) is grappled by Argentina's Agustin Creevy

tement about their principles by dropping one of their first-choice wingers.

His replacement Leicester Fainga'anuku had a great try-scoring game in the win against Ireland but Tele'a was returned to the starting side this week without hesitation, a statement by the All Blacks about his value.

Foster said Tele'a did the time, and, "We have got faith in him and think he is in a good place to play this game."

He stripped Pumas scrumhalf Gonzalo Bertranou to launch the counterattack for the second try, and made the decisive break for the third try on halftime, when he

smashed past the tackles of Julian Montoya, Facundo Isa and Juan Martin Gonzalez. He had another big say in the sixth of New Zealand's seven tries, when he tied up four defenders.

Tele'a finished the match with 14 defenders beaten, joint most for a game in this World Cup.

His 13 carries, many of them off rucks, earned him a team-leading 129 meters. He also contributed eight tackles, one of them dominant.

Less than a year after his two-try debut against Scotland, Tele'a is heading towards a Rugby World Cup final.

He's certain to be in the team hotel on time this week. **MDT/AP**

lock RG Snyman, who powered over on only the Springboks' second visit to the England 22 of the second half. Pollard's conversion closed it to 15-13.

The Springboks' set-piece misfired for most of the game — mostly down to English pressure — but they won a scrum near halfway in the closing minutes having worked their way out from deep in their 22. Nche, Koch and the rest of the pack went to work, the scrum screwed sideways and the Boks won the penalty they were looking for.

Pollard, thrown on as early as the 31st minute when it was all going wrong for South Africa, sent the highest of pressure goalkicks through

the middle.

"That is probably the strength of this team," South Africa coach Jacques Nienaber said. "They find a way, even if things are not going our way, to get a result. It took them probably 70 minutes to get a foothold in the game. They just refused to give up."

Nienaber, who will leave after the World Cup, might have thought his time was up in the semis. He put his head down on a desk in the coaches box and covered it with his hands at the end as the Springboks erupted in celebration on the field.

He has one more game to leave the No. 1-ranked Springboks at the very top. **MDT/AP**



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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**CORDIALITY AND COOPERATION CHARACTERIZE RELATIONS BETWEEN BEIJING AND MOSCOW**

President Xi Jinping talked with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing on Wednesday.

Putin has attended all of the Belt and Road forums, demonstrating Russia's unswerving support for the China-proposed initiative. To date, the two heads of state have met 42 times over the past decade, consolidating the strong working relationship and deep personal friendship between the two leaders.

The exchanges between the two heads of state have been both the anchor and the compass for China-Russia relations. They have ensured the sustained and steady development of bilateral ties by providing a top-level design and strategic guidance. This has been especially important, given the rapidly changing international landscape, and the need for the two sides to enhance their coordination on bilateral and international issues.

Following the blueprint drawn by the two leaders, China-Russia cooperation has flourished in recent years. It encompasses a wide range of fields, such as the economy, trade, investment, energy, science and technology, as well as people-to-people and cultural exchanges. Bilateral trade, which hit a historical record in 2022, is expected to set a new record this year, reaching \$200 billion.

The strong China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership has also established itself as an important diplomatic and strategic asset shared by both sides as the two countries provide valuable strategic support to each other on multilateral platforms such as the United Nations, the G20 and the BRICS mechanism.

With the United States-led West adhering to a zero-sum mentality and stoking bloc competition and confrontation to contain China and Russia, it is only natural that the two countries should opt to strengthen their mutual support on issues concerning each other's core interests. Not to mention that the two countries share the same or similar views on hot-button regional and international issues as well as global governance. As Xi said, it is not an expediency, but a long-term policy to develop China-Russia relations featuring permanent good-neighborly friendship, comprehensive strategic coordination and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Although the West tries to portray otherwise, both countries have repeatedly stressed their relations do not target any third party. In an increasingly turbulent world, the steady and reciprocal China-Russia ties have set a good example for relations between countries. In contrast, the cobwebbed Cold War shenanigans of the US and its allies are stoking geopolitical tensions and creating ever greater global uncertainty.

Just because the US chooses to remain stuck in the past, and insists on playing its zero-sum games targeting the two countries does not mean the rest of the international community should tag along with Washington. The determination of Beijing and Moscow to maintain close and cordial ties should be viewed as a welcome stabilizer amid Washington's ruinous attempts to maintain the US' hegemony in the face of a tide of change sweeping the world.

**A MONTH AFTER A PIG HEART TRANSPLANT, MAN WORKS TO REGAIN STRENGTH WITH NO REJECTION SO FAR**

**THE BUZZ**

It's been a month since a Maryland man became the second person to receive a transplanted heart from a pig -- and hospital video released Friday shows he's working hard to recover.

Lawrence Faucette was dying from heart failure and ineligible for a traditional heart transplant because of other health problems when doctors at the University of Maryland School of Medicine offered the highly experimental surgery. In the first glimpse of Faucette provided since



the Sept. 20 transplant, hospital video shows physical therapist Chris Wells urging him to smile while pushing through a pedaling exercise to regain his strength.

"That's going to be tough but I'll work it out," Faucette, 58, replied, breathing heavily but giving a smile.

"His heart is doing everything on its own," said Dr. Muhammad Mohiuddin, the Maryland team's cardiac xenotransplantation chief.

AP PHOTO



**ISRAEL-HAMAS**

**FRENCH INTELLIGENCE POINTS TO PALESTINIAN ROCKET, NOT ISRAELI AIRSTRIKE, FOR GAZA HOSPITAL BLAST**

**JOHN LEICESTER, PARIS**

**A**n assessment by French military intelligence indicates the most likely cause of the deadly explosion at Gaza City's al-Ahli hospital was a Palestinian rocket that carried an explosive charge of about 5 kilograms and possibly misfired, a senior French military official said Friday.

Several rockets in the arsenal of the Palestinian militant group Hamas carry explosive charges of about that weight, including an Iranian-made rocket and another that is Palestinian-made, the intelligence official said.

None of their intelligence pointed to an Israeli strike, the official said.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity, but was cleared to discuss the assessment by President Emmanuel Macron in what was described as an attempt to be transparent about the French intelligence findings. The assessment was based on classified information, satellite imagery, intelligence shared by other countries and open-source information,

the official said.

The size of the blast crater in a courtyard of the hospital was assessed by French military intelligence to be about 1 meter long, 75 centimeters (29 1/2 inches) across and about 30 to 40 centimeters deep.

That is consistent with an explosive charge of about 5 kilograms, the official said. The official said the hole appeared to be slightly oriented on a south to north axis, suggesting a projectile that hit at an oblique angle on a south to north trajectory.

Officials in Hamas-ruled Gaza quickly blamed an Israeli airstrike for the explosion at the hospital Tuesday. Israel denied it was involved and released live video, audio and other evidence it said showed the blast was caused by a rocket misfired by Islamic Jihad, another Palestinian militant group. Islamic Jihad denied responsibility.

The death toll remains in dispute. Within just over an hour of the blast, the Hamas-run Health Ministry said 500 had died. It then revised that number slightly to 471 on Wednesday,

without giving details of the dead. The Israeli military told reporters that number was inflated.

While also cautioning that "I have no certitude," the French military intelligence official said: "We don't see at all that a rocket that size could have produced 471 dead. It is not possible."

A United States intelligence report estimated that somewhere between 100 and 300 Palestinians were likely killed.

Even in Gaza there were conflicting estimates of the dead. Al-Ahli Hospital officials said only that the toll was in the hundreds, without giving a firm number.

The general director of Gaza's largest hospital, Shifa, Mohammed Abu Selmia, said he thought the toll was closer to 250, based on the casualties he saw streaming into the triage center. Two witnesses said they thought the toll was in the dozens, not the hundreds.

All officials in Gaza have said the blast left body parts strewn everywhere, complicating the task of counting the dead. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



**Swiss** voters casted final ballots yesterday to choose their next legislature, with polls pointing to a rebound for right-wing populist and Socialist parties, while Greens are expected to lose ground compared to the last such election four years ago. The election of the 200-seat lower house, known as the National Council, and the 46-seat Council of States, the upper house, will set the tone for Swiss policy as the rich Alpine country adapts its self-image as a "neutral" country outside the European Union and grapples with issues like climate change, rising health care costs and migration.

AP PHOTO



**Kosovo** The envoys of the European Union and the United States urged Kosovo and Serbia on Saturday to resume their dialogue on normalizing relations before the bitter tensions between the two sides result in more violence. EU envoy Miroslav Lajcak and U.S. Special Representative to the Western Balkans Gabriel Escobar met with Prime Minister Albin Kurti in Kosovo's capital, Pristina. They later traveled to Serbia for a meeting with President Aleksandar Vucic in Belgrade.

**HOLIDAY TIMES**

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Wednesday October 25. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.