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A SURVEY DISCOVERED THAT 30% OF CIVIL SERVANTS FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO CARE FOR THEIR FAMILY 'DUE TO LONG WORKING HOURS'

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AP PHOTO



G-7 Trade and economy officials from the Group of Seven wealthy democracies strengthened their pledge yesterday to work together to ensure smooth supply chains for essentials like energy and food despite global uncertainties. The nations promised to maintain "a free and fair trading system based on the rule of law and enhancing economic resilience and economic security," officials said in a joint statement.

THE SUDDEN DEATH OF LI KEQIANG

CHINA MOURNS FORMER PREMIER



P5,6

AP PHOTO



India An explosive device blew up at a convention center in southern India killing at least one person and wounding 36 others yesterday, authorities said. Hundreds of Jehovah's Witness faithful were gathered for a prayer session at the Zamra International Convention Center in the town of Kalamassery in Kerala state when the explosion took place. The state's top police officer, Sheik Darvesh Saheb, said an initial investigation has revealed an improvised explosive device was used.

AP PHOTO



Afghanistan U.N. agencies have reported a sharp increase in Afghans returning home since Pakistan launched a crackdown on people living in the country illegally. They urged Pakistan to suspend the policy before it was too late to avoid a "human rights catastrophe." Pakistan earlier this month said it will arrest and deport undocumented or unregistered foreigners after Oct. 31. Two provinces bordering Afghanistan have set up deportation centers.

AP PHOTO



SOUTH AFRICA WINS BACK-TO-BACK TITLES, FOUR IN TOTAL

SPRINGBOKS ON TOP OF RUGBY WORLD

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KONG CHI

LAWYER INVOLVED IN ALLEGED PROSECUTOR BRIBES DENIES ROLE IN CASE

ANTHONY LAM

THE lawyer-defendant in the alleged bribery involving senior prosecutor Kong Chi has denied in court having played any part.

According to local media outlet All About Macau, the lawyer wept during her self-defence, which prompted presiding judge, Justice Tong Hio Fong, to ask if the session needed to be halted.

At the beginning of the session, Kuan Hoi Lon, fourth defendant and registered lawyer, confessed to having concealed information during the first judicial interrogation. The information she had concealed was related to her professional and taxation breaches.

She also admitted that during her "partnership" with Choi, her basic salary was MOP35,000 per month, in addition to a 15% commission from each case she handled, contradicting her previous testimony where she had claimed she charged Choi tips and administrative fees.

Moreover, she did not clearly disclose her relationship with Choi because being hired by a non-lawyer raises concerns over her impartiality.

She is accused of participating in the criminal syndicate to help



defendants in cases - whether handled by Kong or otherwise - either get acquitted, receive reduced sentences, or retrieve items under custody.

To explain her partnership with Choi, the lawyer said that when she had training at her previous employer, she was only paid a 40% commission from each case she handled and received no basic salary. This, she said, could

only support her basic needs.

She further said that after obtaining her lawyer registration, her former employer told her that the registration would not mean she would receive a basic salary and asked what she thought about that. She said that she had never expected to become unemployed once she was successfully registered as a lawyer.

Kuan said that in 2012 she

came across Choi in the street when she was with her family, and Choi told her that he wanted to open a law firm. After some consideration, she decided to partner with Choi.

Kuan said that she was told by Choi about another Portuguese lawyer who was in the partnership but worked at another address. She was told that the Portuguese lawyer could be contacted

for legal opinions, suggestions or recommendations. However, this condition only lasted for a few months.

The partnership ended about two years later, after Kuan realized that she had no colleague to help her with work and that her commission was consistently shrinking. She added that Choi would share part of the legal fees to third parties who referred cases to the law firm, and believed that Choi was somewhat deceptive.

She also said she could not tolerate Choi acting as her employer and that she thought she deserved better at that time.

On legal charges, she disclosed that it depended on the economic status of clients.

During the session, the prosecution showed records of communications between Kong and Choi to Kuan. Kuan denied knowing anything about it, adding that she was only in contact with Choi for these cases.

Kuan added that she had never contacted Kong - "not even to send her regards" - nor was she aware of the relationship between Kong and Choi.

The third defendant Ng Wai Chu, the husband of second defendant Choi Sao Ieng, remained silent during his question session.

SURVEY

30% of civil servants blame long working hours for lack of family time

ANTHONY LAM

A survey has discovered that 30% of local civil servants believe long working hours are to blame for reduced family time.

The Macau Civil Servants Federation and Macao Chinese Civil Servants Association co-conducted this survey, which received 1,364 valid responses, according to local media All About Macau.

The findings indicate that 30% of respondents

found it difficult to care for their family due to long working hours, while 40% complained that work was too tiring and that they could not perform much housework.

15% of respondents have served in their positions for fewer than five years, 27% for five to 10 years, 37% for 11 to 20 years, and 21% for over 20 years. 2% of respondents had completed only primary school, 12% had completed up to junior or

senior high school, 60% had attained a licentiate or bachelor's degree, and 26% had completed Master's degree or higher.

By career level, 33.2% of respondents were technical assistants, 18.4% were technicians, 20.7% were senior technicians, and 4.2% were in managerial positions. By branch of government, 21.9% of respondents worked in Administrative and Justice, 22.4% worked in Economy and Finance, 8.1% in Security, 30.4% in

Social Affairs and Culture, and 15.1% in Transport and Public Works. Slightly over 2% directly reported to the Chief Executive.

Of all respondents, 15% reported that family issues had impacted their concentration at work; and the same number reported that heavy housework impacted their work.

On extended work hours, 47% reported working remotely and outside standard work hours for at least an hour on average,



which had consequences on completing household responsibilities. However, some respondents preferred remote work as it provided more flexibility.

In response to the findings, the two organiza-

tions proposed adjustments such as permitting impromptu absence due to family issues without requiring compensatory working hours, and providing training on work-life balance.

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DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR Lynzy Valles
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí **DESIGNERS** Miguel Bandeira, Rebeca Almeida | **ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS** JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | **NEWS AGENCIES** Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua **SECRETARY** Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com
OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com
ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR **Telephones:** +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84
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HEALTH

New specialty building at CSJH inaugurated

STAFF REPORTER

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng presided over the inauguration of the new Public Health Specialty Building, an eight-floor building with 80 wards and 160 beds. The Public Health Specialty Building is in the southwest of the Conde S. Januário Hospital (CSJH) with a gross construction area of around 30,899 square meters.

The Specialty Building can also accommodate 10 intensive care beds where patients can receive extracorporeal membrane oxygenation treatments (artificial lungs), ventilator, hemodialysis and others, which significantly increases the capacity to treat serious cases.

According to the government, the new building is also equipped with a resuscitation room, negative pressure operating room, computerized axial tomography imaging examination room, and a clinical laboratory capable of



treating infectious samples, together providing comprehensive medical examination and treatment.

The development of the building's main structure cost MOP956 million.

Director of the Health Bureau, Alvis Lo, said that the aging population coupled with the prevalence of chronic diseases has led to increased demand for specialized

health care by Macau residents. There has been a 50% increase in the number of patients admitted to the public hospital and a 40% increase in external consultations.

MEDICAL RECRUITMENT FOR COTAI HOSPITAL STARTS

The first phase of local medical recruitment for the Cotai hospital will start today.

The merit-based recruitment process will be completed within 12 days, and involves hiring approximately 90 people, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other people in other positions.

The professionals will not commence providing services until the trial operation of the Cotai hospital at the end of the year.

Lo mentioned that after the Chief Executive's visit to Portugal, the authorities immediately began working with the local medical association to identify qualified Portuguese doctors who could come to work in Macau.

The bureau received 12 applications, eight of which were approved.

DOWNTREND IN INFLUENZA, COVID CASES

Lo has said that there has been a recent downward trend in influenza and new Covid cases. Data shows that only about 15% of samples taken from patients with respiratory symptoms were suffering from influenza, and 13% were infected with Covid. There are approximately 800 emergency department consultations at the public hospital per day, which is still slightly higher than the baseline level of 700, but has dropped from the previous peak of 1,200 to 1,300 per day during summer.

CARITAS CHARITY RUN RAISES MOP640,000

Caritas Macau held its charity run at the University of Macau, its first offline charity run to be held after the pandemic. The event was divided into different categories including a 10 km, 5 km and 2 km run, involving 2,100 resident participants. The event raised MOP640,000, and all the proceeds will be used to set up non-subsidized social enterprises to provide short-term elderly care services. Caritas Secretary-General Paul Pun said that, currently, there are more than 400 people in need of short-term elderly care services, but it is very difficult to recruit caregivers. It was initially planned to recruit 10 staff members, but to date, the number of recruits is only in the single digits.

AIR MACAU POSTPONES FLIGHTS TO JAKARTA

Local carrier Air Macau has postponed its inaugural flight to Jakarta, Indonesia, that was supposed to take off yesterday, following an emergency notification from Jakarta Aviation authorities that there were capacity constraints at the Indonesian capital's Soekarno-Hatta Airport overnight. The flight scheduled for today has also been postponed. The local firm is in talks with the airport about when it can commence the flight that was originally scheduled to operate four times a week.

OUTDOOR PARKING LOT IN TAIPA TO OPEN

The Estr. Gov. Albano de Oliveira parking lot has been redesigned with aim of opening this year. This will provide parking for light and heavy vehicles. Optimization projects have already begun, including renovation of the berths and installation of equipment. Relevant departments will also spend this time drafting usage regulations, according to the government.

EMPLOYEES IN TRANSPORT SECTOR DOWN

Receipts and expenditure of the Transport, Storage & Communications Sector in 2022 amounted to MOP16.83 billion and MOP15.16 billion respectively, down by 11.7% and 10.3% year-on-year. Establishments engaged in the sector decreased by 29 year-on-year to 3,258 in 2022, and number of persons engaged dropped by 1,428 to 16,628. Data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) indicated the total number of employees went down by 1,451 to 18,992.

AL PLENARY

DSF expects higher growth in public income next year

ANTHONY LAM

PUBLIC income is expected to grow next year as compared with the previous several years amid the tourism revival, director of Financial Services Bureau (DSF) Iong Kong Leong has told Parliament.

Lawmakers Ella Lei, Lo Choi In and José Perei-

ra Coutinho have asked about public finances at an oral inquiry session over the weekend. Iong said that the government is cautiously optimistic about the revival of the economy.

Emphasizing that the public budget for next year was still being compiled, Iong said that the work will be conducted

under the principle of retaining different types of social welfare at "reasonable levels," while prioritizing welfare for the elderly and vulnerable groups.

The main requirement of expenditure control will remain. However, Iong said that if there is proven necessity, expenditure can be raised to support emergency or criti-

cal projects. Announcements will also be made later in regard to the pay rise for civil servants.

He also emphasized that the special distribution of budget surplus is a special type of welfare issued to eligible local residents "to share economic fruits."

Meanwhile, director of Economic and Technological Development Tai Kin Ip cited economic recovery in both "tourism and residential areas" to resist calls for another round of consumption stimulus measures, adding that what is required now is to fos-

ter economic vitality a community level.

When asked about the criteria for the issuance of Central Provident Fund and Elderly Subsidies, department head Chan Pou I at the Social Security Fund said that criteria and mechanisms are constantly reviewed.

As of August this year, the city has welcomed over 17.6 million visitors. The first three quarters of the year, meanwhile, have recorded over MOP128 billion in gross gambling revenue, with the government's expectation of MOP130 billion likely to be achieved.

MENTAL HEALTH

NEARLY 800 BEING FOLLOWED UP WITH REHAB SERVICES

STAFF REPORTER

THE Health Bureau (SSM) has announced that its psychiatric service team has so far followed up on 786 cases to provide care, support and rehabilitation services to patients with severe mental illness, of which 178 were remission cases,

as cited in a TDM report.

The reply comes after lawmaker Ron Lam questioned the bureau on what it had done in respect of the rising number of suicide and instances of emotional distress and workplace bullying.

The SSM replied that, in the future, it would further integrate social

resources, strengthen the "four-level joint prevention mechanism," and enforcement of guidelines established by the SSM for mental health.

According to SSM, it currently has 15 psychiatric specialist and 26 psychotherapists at the public hospital, which it believes is enough to

cope with demand.

Previous data from the public hospital's Department of Psychiatry shows that it has diagnosed a total of 200 residents in 2022 with common mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, among others.

Although, according to the SSM, the figure

was similar to the annual average of previous years, Caritas noted that as of August this year, its Life Hotline had received nearly 6,947 calls and online requests seeking assistance. Of these, 527 callers were suffering from depression, and 179 were on the verge of suicide.

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CE mourns passing of former Premier Li, recalls 'great contribution'

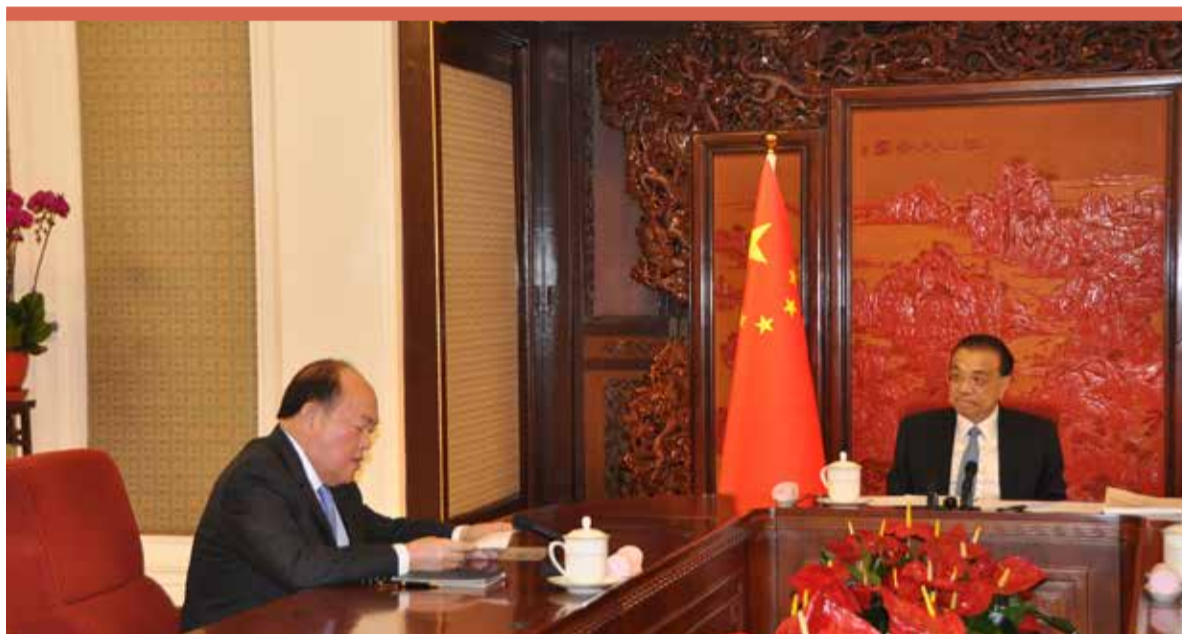
THE memorial arrangements for former Premier Li Keqiang in Macau will be in compliance with national instructions, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng has said over the weekend when asked by the press.

Li passed in the early hours on Friday, national authorities have announced.

Ho also expressed his sorrow for the passing of the former second-most powerful person in the Chinese government, describing the former official as "an excellent leader for both the [Chinese Communist] Party and the country." He said that the former official had made great contributions to the improvement of China's economy and livelihood. Li was also very interested in Macau, Ho added.

The Chief Executive said that the death of Li is a great loss to the Party and the country, and that he will always remember him and will miss his contributions to the country and people.

Back in December last year, the former Premier of the State Council, spoke highly of the work



Former Premier Li Keqiang meets with Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng in Beijing, December 2022

done in the past year by the SAR Government, in particular the series of measures for "stabilizing the economy, ensuring employment, and securing benefit for Macau people." These efforts helped maintain Macau's momentum and steady development, according to Li.

Premier Li made these remarks when he received the Chief Exe-

cutive, Ho Iat Seng, on December 22, 2022 at Ziguang Pavilion at the Zhongnanhai compound in Beijing.

During the meeting, Premier Li called for the MSAR Government to lead the Macau community to make practical and concerted efforts to better integrate Macau into overall national development; advance on a

programme-by-programme basis the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin; promote adequate economic diversification; enhance Macau people's well-being; and maintain Macau's long-term stability.

During the meeting, the Chief Executive said the MSAR Government carried out work in accordance with Premier Li's ins-

tructions given during Ho's duty visit in 2021, including measures outlined in the Second Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the Macao Special Administrative Region, and the Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2022.

Li visited Macau on October 10 to 12, 2016, and attended the 5th Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries.

On October 11, 2016, after the opening ceremony of the forum, accompanied by the then Chief Executive Chui Sai On, he visited the community.

Li Keqiang visited the Macao Museum, where he explored the collections in the museum that displayed the history and multicultural features of Macau. He then said that Macau should capitalize on the opportunities created by the Belt and Road Initiative and expand and enhance its unique advantages in deepening its commitment to the policy of opening up. Li also presented a set of bronze chariots and horses as gifts to the museum. **MDT**

STATS

Unemployment rate remains at 3.1% in Q3

THE unemployment rate of local residents remained unchanged at 3.1% in the third quarter (Q3), according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The general unemployment rate for July to September 2023 was 2.4%.

Total employment increased by 7,900 quarter-on-quarter, while the proportion of residents who made up this figure rose by 4,200. Analyzed by industry, employment in gaming and junket activities (71,000), hotels and similar activities (26,100) and retail trade

(36,000) increased by 2,500, 1,800 and 1,500 respectively quarter-on-quarter, while employment in the education sector (18,800) dropped by 2,000.

The number of those unemployed decreased by 200 from the previous period to 9,100. Among those unemployed searching for a new job, most were previously engaged in the construction sector, gaming and junket activities and hotels, restaurants and similar activities. The number of the underemployed decreased by 800 from the previous pe-

riod to 5,900, the majority of whom were working in the construction sector.

Median monthly employment earnings of those employed in the third quarter increased by MOP1,000 quarter-on-quarter to MOP18,000; earnings of those engaged in gaming and junket activities and the construction sector stood at MOP20,500 and MOP15,000 respectively. Meanwhile, median earnings of employed residents remained the same as in the previous quarter, at MOP20,000.



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OBITUARY

The sudden death of former No. 2 leader Li Keqiang has shocked many

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

THE sudden death of China's former second-ranking leader, Li Keqiang, has shocked many people in the country, with tributes offered up to the ex-official who promised market-oriented reforms but was politically sidelined.

Li, who died early Friday of a heart attack, was China's top economic official for a decade, helping navigate the world's second-largest economy through challenges such as rising political, economic and military tensions with the United States and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Li was extolled as an excellent (Communist Party of China) member, a time-tested and loyal communist soldier and an outstanding proletarian revolutionist, statesman and leader of the Party and the state," the official Xinhua News Agency said in its brief obituary.

Li was known for his advocacy of private business but lost much of his influence as President Xi Jinping accumulated ever-greater powers and elevated the military and security services in aid of the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."

A hashtag related to his death on the Chinese social media platform Weibo drew over 1 billion views in just a few hours. On posts about Li, the "like" button was turned into a daisy — a common flower for funerals in China, and many users commented "rest in peace." Others called his death a loss and said Li worked hard and contributed greatly to China.

The Chinese government, however, had little to say immediately about Li. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning asked reporters to refer to information from official news agency Xinhua and the obituary released later.

"We deeply mourn over the tragic passing of Comrade Li Keqiang due to a sudden heart attack," she said.

Beijing resident Xia Fan, 20, said she was saddened by the death of Li, whom she called "a really conscientious and responsible premier." She said her mind was blank when she first heard about the news.

"He really accompanied the growth of our generation, that's how it feels in my heart," she said.

Designer Chen Hui said Li contributed greatly to China's development. "If I were to talk about it, it's impossible to finish it in one

AP PHOTO



day. It's a pity," Chen said.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed his condolences on the passing of Li, said Matthew Miller, State Department spokesperson.

Nicholas Burns, U.S. ambassador to China, also extended his condolences to Li's family, the Chinese government and the Chinese people in both English and Chinese on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Japan's embassy in China expressed its condolences on Weibo. It said Li had visited Japan in 2018 and he played an important role in the relations of both countries.

Li, an English-speaking economist, was from a generation of politicians schooled during a time of greater openness to liberal Western ideas. Introduced to politics during the chaotic 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, he made it into prestigious Peking University, where he studied law and economics, on his own merits rather than through political connections.

Li had been seen as former Communist Party leader Hu Jintao's preferred successor as president about a decade ago. But the need to balance party factions prompted the leadership to choose Xi, the son of a former vice premier and party elder, as the con-

sensus candidate.

The two never formed anything like the partnership that characterized Hu's relationship with his premier, Wen Jiabao — or Mao Zedong's with the redoubtable Zhou Enlai — although Li and Xi never openly disagreed over fundamentals.

Last October, Li was dropped from the Standing Committee at a party congress despite being more than two years below the informal retirement age of 70. He stepped down in March and was succeeded by Li Qiang, a crony of Xi's from his days in provincial government. His departure marked a shift away from the skilled technocrats who have helped steer China's economy in favor of officials known mainly for their unquestioned loyalty to Xi.

MOURNERS LAY FLOWERS

Hundreds of mourners lined the streets and laid flowers near former Premier Li Keqiang's childhood residence on Saturday.

Li was born in Hefei in the eastern Chinese province of Anhui, where he spent most of his childhood and youth. People came overnight to Li's former residence at Hongxing Road No. 80 with bouquets of chrysanthemums and other flowers. Some bowed in respect, while others cried.

"Everyone is in sorrow," said Fei Wenzhao, who visited the site on Friday night. She said that the flowers laid out stretched 100 meters.

The road leading to the residence was closed to traffic Saturday afternoon to allow people to pay their respects. The line stretched hundreds of meters.

LI KEQIANG'S BIOGRAPHY

Born in July 1955, Li was from Dingyuan, east China's Anhui Province. In March 1974, he went to Dongling Brigade, Damiao Commune, Fengyang County of Anhui as an educated youth.

He became a CPC member in May 1976. Between November 1976 and March 1978, Li served as the Party chief of Damiao Brigade.

Li went to study at the Department of Law at Peking University between March 1978 and February 1982. He once served as the head of the Students' Union of the university.

Since February 1982, Li had successively served as secretary of the Peking University Committee of the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC), a member of the Standing Committee of the CYLC Central Committee, director of the School Department of the CYLC Central Committee and secretary-general of the All-China

Students' Federation, an alternate member of the Secretariat of the CYLC Central Committee, a member of the Secretariat of the CYLC Central Committee and vice chairman of the All-China Youth Federation, and the head of the National Working Committee of the Chinese Young Pioneers.

In March 1993, he began to serve as the first member of the Secretariat of the CYLC Central Committee, president of the China Youth University of Political Studies, and a member of the Standing Committee of the 8th NPC.

Starting from June 1998, Li served successively as deputy secretary of the CPC Henan Provincial Committee, acting governor of Henan, and later governor of Henan; secretary of CPC Henan Provincial Committee and governor of Henan; and secretary of CPC Henan Provincial Committee and chairman of the standing committee of Henan Provincial People's Congress.

He put forward the goal of realizing the rise of central China and pushed for huge progress in various causes in Henan's economic and social sectors.

Starting from December 2004, Li served as the secretary of the CPC Liaoning Provincial Committee, and later the secretary of the CPC Liaoning Provincial Committee and concurrently chairman of the standing committee of Liaoning Provincial People's Congress.

He firmly seized the combined opportunities of both the revitalization of northeast China and the opening up of coastal areas, and scored marked achievements in the revitalization of the old industrial bases in Liaoning.

In October 2007, Li was elected member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and its standing committee at the first plenary session of the 17th CPC Central Committee.

In March 2008, Li was appointed vice premier of the State Council and served as deputy secretary of its Leading Party Members Group. He was in charge of the State Council's day-to-day work.

He assisted in the work regarding responding to the international financial crisis, accelerating economic restructuring, deepening the implementation of the coordinated regional development strategy, promoting energy conservation, emission reduction and environmental protection, and furthering the reform of the medical and healthcare systems.

MDT/AGENCIES

SOUTH KOREA

Residents hold subdued Halloween celebrations a year after party crush killed about 160 people

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

HALLOWEEN celebrations in South Korea were subdued on the eve of the first anniversary of a harrowing crowd surge that killed about 160 people in a Seoul alleyway.

Many restaurants, bars, department stores and amusement parks avoided Halloween-themed events this year as a sign of respect for the victims. Few people clad in Halloween costumes were seen Saturday in Seoul's popular Itaewon neighborhood, where revelers fell on each other like dominos as a large number of people crammed into the narrow, sloping alley.

Post-it notes with condolence messages such as "We won't forget you forever" or "Sorry. Please, rest in peace" plastered the walls of the site. A mourning station established in central Seoul received many visitors, who laid white flowers and burned incense in front of photos of the victims.

"I think this kind of incident must never happen again. Our hearts are aching too much," Choi Seul Gi, a 30-year-old office worker, said in Itaewon.



South Korean Interior and Safety Minister Lee Sang-min places flowers to pay his condolence to the victims of the Oct. 29, 2022 crush, in front of the messages for victims in Seoul, South Korea, Saturday

Bereaved families held a formal memorial service yesterday.

In Seoul's Hongdae area, another entertainment zone, there were only a small number of people wearing Halloween outfits. There were no reports of any safety-related incidents across South Korea by early Sunday.

Authorities have deployed thousands of police, emergency and other officials since Friday for crowd control and safety of pedestrians in Itaewon and 15 other major nightlife districts in Seoul. About 200 police officers were separately mobilized to monitor narcotics use and vio-

lent crime, according to Seoul police.

In January, a police special investigation team concluded that police and municipal officials failed to work out effective crowd control steps despite correctly anticipating a huge number of people in Itaewon. Investigators also concluded that police had ignored hotline calls by pedestrians who warned of swelling crowds before the surge turned deadly.

The Itaewon crush caused a nationwide outpouring of grief as the dead were mostly in their 20s and 30s. There was also anger that the government again ignored safety and regulatory issues despite the lessons learned since the 2014 sinking of the ferry Sewol, which killed 304 people — mostly teenagers on a school trip.

"I offer a deep apology again by bearing the sorrow and heavy responsibility for the disaster in my heart," Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon said in a statement Friday. "The way to overcome the pains and sorrow of the disaster is preventing this kind of incident from happening again."

Officials have tried to overhaul the country's safety systems and response protocols since the

Itaewon tragedy. But safety-related incidents have continuously occurred.

"First of all, the problem is that there have been only stop-gap measures whenever some incidents happened," said Park Sangin, a professor at Seoul National University. "Also, the bigger problem is that there has been no clear accountability for them."

When police in January announced the results of the probe into the Itaewon crush, they said they were pursuing criminal charges, including involuntary manslaughter and negligence, against 23 officials. But no top-level official was included. Most of the 23 officials are still on trial.

In February, South Korea's opposition-controlled parliament voted to impeach the safety minister, Lee Sang-min, over the Itaewon disaster. But the Constitutional Court in July overturned Lee's impeachment.

Families of the victims and their supporters have demanded President Yoon Suk Yeol offer a more sincere apology and accept a thorough, independent investigation.

"The attitude by the government and the ruling party is inflicting deeper and more painful scars on (us)," the families said in a joint statement. "We just want to know the fundamental reasons why on Oct. 29, 2022, thousands of people fell, 159 of them died and thousands of others were injured or ended up living with trauma."

The families said they invited Yoon to attend yesterday's memorial. Local media reported Yoon decided not to go due to concerns the event could be politically used by his rivals. **MDT/AP**

Malaysia picks powerful ruler of Johor state as country's new king under rotation system

MALAYSIA's royal families have elected the powerful and wealthy ruler of southern Johor state as the country's new king under a unique rotating monarchy system, the palace said Friday.

Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar, 64, will ascend to the throne on Jan. 31 for a five-year term, the palace said in a statement. His election had been widely expected, as the ruler of Johor state bordering Singapore was next in line based on a rotation order established among the country's nine state rulers.

He succeeds incumbent Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah of central



Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar of Johor, second right, walks with Malaysia's King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, second left, after the election for the next Malaysian king at the National Palace in Kuala Lumpur, last week

Pahang, who presided over a tumultuous period that included COVID-19 lockdowns and political instability that has seen four prime ministers since 2018 gene-

ral elections.

Nine ethnic Malay state rulers take turns serving as Malaysia's king for five-year terms under the world's only such system, which

has been maintained since the country's independence from Britain in 1957.

Known as the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, or He Who is Made Lord, Malaysia's king plays a largely ceremonial role, since administrative power is vested in the prime minister and Parliament. But the monarch is highly regarded as the guardian of Islam and Malay tradition, particularly among the ethnic Malay Muslim majority.

Despite the ceremonial nature of the post, the king has become more active in politics in recent years. Current King Sultan Abdullah had to intervene in the past few years to decide who be-

came prime minister. This included naming Anwar Ibrahim as prime minister after 2018 general elections led to a hung parliament.

Sultan Ibrahim, a ruler who takes annual road trips to meet people in his state, has expressed his readiness to be king.

"It is not a promotion. It is a responsibility I am prepared to undertake," he told national Bernama news agency last month. "The (people) will always come first."

Sultan Ibrahim has an extensive collection of luxurious cars and motorcycles. He also owns a private army and is involved in many business ventures.

This includes a stake in the multibillion-dollar Forest City development project in Johor with China's beleaguered developer Country Gardens.

The Johor ruler also has close ties with Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and has said Anwar's year-old government should be given more time to strengthen the economy.

The king is the nominal head of the government and armed forces. All laws, Cabinet appointments and the dissolution of Parliament for general elections require his assent. The king also issues pardons for criminals. Malaysia's Constitution allocates some 5 million ringgit (\$1.21 million) a year for the expenses of the king and his household, including palace maintenance, although the sum can be increased with Cabinet approval. **MDT/AP**

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

Thousands break into UN aid warehouses in Gaza in a sign of growing desperation

WAFAA SHURAF &
SAMY MAGDY, DEIR AL-BALAH

THOUSANDS of people broke into aid warehouses in Gaza to take food and "basic survival items," a U.N. agency said yesterday, in a mark of growing desperation and the breakdown of public order three weeks into the war between Israel and Gaza's militant Hamas rulers.

Tanks and infantry pushed into Gaza over the weekend as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced a "second stage" in the war, three weeks after Hamas launched a brutal incursion into Israel. The widening ground offensive came as Israel pounded the territory from air, land and sea.

The bombardment — described by Gaza residents as the most intense of the war — knocked out most communications in the territory late Friday, largely cutting off the besieged enclave's 2.3 million people from the world. Communications were restored to many people in Gaza early Sunday, according to local telecoms companies, Internet-access advocacy group NetBlocks.org and confirmation on the ground.

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, provides basic services to hundreds of thousands of people in Gaza. Its schools across the territory have been transformed into packed shelters housing Palestinians displaced by the conflict. Israel has allowed only a small trickle of aid to enter from Egypt, some of which was stored in one of the warehouses that was broken into, UNRWA said.

Thomas White, the agency's Gaza director, said the break-ins were "a worrying sign that civil order is starting to break down after three weeks of war and a tight siege on Gaza. People are scared, frustrated and desperate," he said.

Residents living near Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest, said Israeli airstrikes overnight Sunday hit near the hospital complex and blocked many roads leading to it. Israel accuses Hamas of having a secret command post beneath the



hospital, without providing much evidence.

Tens of thousands of civilians are sheltering in Shifa, which is also packed with patients wounded in the strikes.

"Reaching the hospital has become increasingly difficult," Mahmoud al-Sawah, who is sheltering in the hospital, said over the phone. "It seems they want to cut off the area." Another Gaza City resident, Abdallah Sayed, said the Israeli bombing over the past two days was "the most violent and intense" since the war started.

Israel says most residents have heeded its orders to flee to the south, but hundreds of thousands remain in the north, in part because Israel has also bombed targets in so-called safe zones.

An Israeli airstrike hit a two-story house in the southern city of Khan Younis on Sunday, killing at least 13 people, including 10 from one family. The bodies were brought to the nearby Nasser Hospital, according to an Associated Press journalist at the scene.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment when asked about reports of strikes near Shifa. The army said it had struck over 450 militant targets over the last 24 hours, including Hamas command centers, observation posts and anti-tank missile launching positions.

The military also said more forces were sent into Gaza overnight.

The army recently released computer-generated images showing what it said were Hamas installations in and around

Shifa Hospital, as well as interrogations of captured Hamas fighters who might have been speaking under duress. Israel has made similar claims before, but has not substantiated them.

Little is known about Hamas' tunnels and other infrastructure, and the claims could not be independently verified. Hamas' government dismissed the allegations as "lies" and said they were "a precursor for striking this facility."

The escalation ratcheted up domestic pressure on Israel's government to secure the release of some 230 hostages seized in the Oct. 7 rampage, when Hamas fighters from Gaza breached Israel's defenses and stormed into nearby towns, gunning down civilians and soldiers in a surprise attack.

Desperate family members met with Netanyahu on Saturday and expressed support for an exchange for Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

Hamas' top leader in Gaza, Yehia Sinwar, said Palestinian militants "are ready immediately" to release all hostages if Israel releases all of the thousands of Palestinians held in its prisons. Rear Adm. Daniel Haggari, an Israeli military spokesman, dismissed the offer as "psychological terror."

Netanyahu told the nationally televised news conference that Israel is determined to bring back all the hostages, and maintained that the expanding ground operation "will help us in this mission." He said he couldn't reveal everything that is being done

due to the sensitivity and secrecy of the efforts.

"This is the second stage of the war, whose objectives are clear: to destroy the military and governmental capabilities of Hamas and bring the hostages home," he said in his first time taking questions from journalists since the war began.

Netanyahu also acknowledged that the Oct. 7 "debacle," in which more than 1,400 people were killed, would need a thorough investigation, adding that "everyone will have to answer questions, including me."

The Israeli military said it was gradually expanding its ground operations inside Gaza, while stopping short of calling it an all-out invasion. Casualties on both sides are expected to rise sharply as Israeli forces and Palestinian militants battle in dense residential areas.

Despite the Israeli offensive, Palestinian militants have continued firing rockets into Israel, with the constant sirens in southern Israel a reminder of the threat.

The Palestinian death toll in Gaza rose Saturday to just over 7,700 people since the war began, with 377 deaths reported since late Friday, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Most of those killed have been women and minors, the ministry said.

An estimated 1,700 people remain trapped beneath the rubble, according to the Health Ministry, which has said it bases its estimates on distress calls it received. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1991 BUSH OPENS HISTORIC MID EAST PEACE CONFERENCE



US President George Bush has encouraged Arabs and Israelis to "lay down the past" in his opening speech to the Middle East peace conference in Spain.

It is the first time in 43 years that Israel has sat down with all its Arab neighbours to discuss peace.

"Territorial compromise is essential for peace," said President Bush.

"We seek peace, real peace. And by real peace I mean treaties. If we cannot summon the courage to lay down the past for ourselves then let us do it for the children."

Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev added: "We have a unique opportunity, and it would be unforgivable to miss this opportunity. Success is in everybody's interests."

Reaction to the opening day was positive from all sides.

Israelis praised President Bush for promising not to railroad them into any agreements while the Palestinians believed he showed support for their hopes for some form of self-government.

The conference was organised by the US and Soviet Union and has taken months of careful preparation.

Representatives from all Israel's immediate Arab neighbours were present at the Madrid Royal Palace and there was a surprise appearance from Saudi Prince Bandar Bin Sultan who had not been expected to attend.

The opening day of the conference will be followed by one-on-one sessions between Israel and each of its neighbours and then wider discussions in the hope of finding a solution to end the current troubles.

The aim of the talks is for all sides to resolve their rival territorial claims. Areas including the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Jerusalem are the main points of contention.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Madrid conference was deemed a success and paved the way for more talks. In 1993, the Oslo Peace Accords resulted in an agreement that the Palestinians would consent to recognise Israel in return for the beginning of phased dismantling of Israel's occupation.

In November 1995 Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish religious extremist. Shimon Peres took over as Prime Minister of Israel. In 1999 Yasser Arafat was persuaded to continue with the interim resolutions founded in Oslo so negotiations could take place with the new administration.

In 2000 a visit by Israeli's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to the al-Aqsa/Temple Mount led to a Palestinian uprising or intifada.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Use your energy wisely. Your talent will be recognized. It would be in your best interest to stay away from any intimate involvement with a client or coworker.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 You should make sure that your personal papers are in order. Express your interest if you want the relationship to progress. Do not get involved in joint financial ventures.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 You can complete any projects efficiently, especially if you put the effort in yourself. Quarrels will erupt if you get into philosophical debates with friends.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Your ability to be practical in business will help. Helping children may be rewarding and challenging. Don't let others put unreasonable demands on you.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 You may be tempted to spend too much on entertainment or luxury items. Your intellectual charm will entice new love interests. Make any decisions you have to in order to avoid feeling unsettled.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Express your interest if you want the relationship to progress. Secret affairs will only lead to deception. If it can make you extra cash, it will be even better.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Give everyone in the house a physical chore that will help burn off some of the excess energy. You will be emotional when dealing with coworkers or employers.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 You can make financial deals, but it may be best if you're not using your own cash. Don't bother trying to make someone you live with see your point of view.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Don't rely on others to handle the workload. Romantic relationships could be under pressure. Your health may suffer if you don't control your present situation.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 You can bet officials will be waiting for you when you do. Raise your self-esteem and your confidence if you want to get back into the mainstream again. Don't jump as quickly as you usually do.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Take time to catch up on overdue correspondence. Refrain from using the highway as a racetrack. You mustn't take on other people's responsibilities or you may find yourself irritable and exhausted.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Your leadership ability will enhance your reputation. Don't play on your partner's emotions. Hold on; your time will come. You will be emotional when dealing with coworkers or employers.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	11	24	fine
Changchun	6	13	cloudy
Chengdu	15	22	overcast
Chongqing	15	23	fine
Fuzhou	18	27	cloudy
Guangzhou	21	29	cloudy
Guiyang	10	23	cloudy
Haikou	24	26	rain
Hangzhou	15	25	fine
Harbin	5	11	fine
Hefei	12	27	fine
Nanjing	14	25	fine
Shanghai	17	25	fine
Taipei	20	25	rain
Wuhan	13	27	fine
Hong Kong	22	26	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	5	6	snow
Frankfurt	9	14	rain
Paris	12	16	overcast
London	8	16	overcast
New York	7	18	showers

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Stellar; 7- Nipper's co.; 10- Not fem.; 14- Closing number; 15- Projection at the corner of a door architrave; 16- "A Jug of Wine..." poet; 17- Releases; 18- 6, on a phone; 19- Bright star; 20- Juice aroma enhancer; 23- Bandleader Shaw; 26- Employ; 27- TV producer Michaels; 28- Dodge model; 29- Baseball execs; 30- Flight formation; 31- Domain; 33- Bruce ___ was a famous kung-fu movie star; 34- Tic ___ Dough; 37- Bigger than med.; 38- Judge in 1995 news; 39- Business abbr.; 40- Feeling of self-importance; 41- Printing widths; 42- Firearm; 43- Regal; 45- Pinch; 46- Stage signal; 47- Rind; 48- Young hooter; 51- Mai ___; 52- Young purr; 53- Standing alone; 56- Adoring; 57- Intelligence; 58- Mother of Calcutta; 62- End in ___ (draw); 63- Any person; 64- Period of the year; 65- Give for a while; 66- Orch. section; 67- Nearly;

DOWN 1- CIO's partner; 2- Sprechen ___ Deutsch?; 3- Big bang producer; 4- Grating; 5- Aquarium buildup; 6- Tolstoy and Gorcey; 7- Negligent; 8- Boat often made of birchbark, canvas, or fiberglass; 9- Elvis's middle name; 10- Doctrine maker; 11- Love affair; 12- Eurasian juniper; 13- Orange container; 21- Call for the presence of; 22- Swindle; 23- Slender part of the leg; 24- Monarch's rule; 25- Shades; 29- Arose; 30- Locale; 32- Numerals; 33- Neither gas nor solid; 34- Principle; 35- Lace tip; 36- In a shy way; 44- Witty saying; 45- Required; 46- Easy gallop; 48- Garbage; 49- Penned; 50- Russian revolutionary leader; 51- Spoil; 52- Use a prie-dieu; 54- Terrible time?; 55- ___ boy; 59- That, in Tijuana; 60- Distress signal; 61- Aardvark morselet;

Friday's solution

A	B	E	E	T	G	A	B	S	A	W	L	S
T	E	R	S	E	A	C	R	E	W	H	I	P
R	A	I	S	E	E	M	I	R	H	A	L	O
I	N	C	O	M	P	L	E	T	E	I	T	A
I	S	I	S	N	O	R						
B	O	T	A	N	I	C	A	N	I	C	A	N
A	M	O	N	G	A	D	D	S	R	O	O	
S	A	L	A	P	A	S	T	E	L	O	L	A
S	H	E	C	A	P	S						
O	A	T	C	A	K	E						
P	A	R	R									
R	I	E	L									
U	E	L	E									

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
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

ENGLAND GETS BRONZE AFTER HOLDING OUT HARD-CHARGING PUMAS

FOSTER NIUMATA, PARIS

ENGLAND 26, ARGENTINA 23

ENGLAND finished third at the Rugby World Cup for the first time by stopping waves of late Argentina attacks and prevailing 26-23 in their tense playoff this weekend.

The Pumas brought the game alive by rallying from 13-0 down to lead by one point straight after halftime. England hit straight back and just stayed in front enough thanks to the boot of captain Owen Farrell, who was mercilessly booed all night.

In the last five minutes, the Pumas missed a penalty to tie the score and England replacement George Ford pulled off a try-saving tackle on wing Mateo Carreras.

"We started the game really well, got on the front foot, were really physical and made some inroads, but it didn't end up being a game like that," Farrell said. "Argentina were always going to play a big part in that and it was pretty scrappy therea-



fter. We did what we needed to do to grind out a win."

Third place gives England comfort after it was written off before the tournament. England and Argentina combined for only three wins in nine matches

in the Six Nations and Rugby Championship but scratched their way out of the same pool to reach the semifinals from the easiest half of the World Cup draw.

Seven weeks after their drab pool game in which 14-man En-

gland beat Argentina on goalkicks, the same teams were disciplined and wholehearted and showed they dearly wanted the bronze medal.

"It is hard to accept losing this game," Argentina coach Michael Cheika said. "It is hard to draw any positives but I believe that the trajectory over this World Cup will make Argentines proud. What is missing from us is excellence. We need it, but we have the capacity to overcome obstacles."

Playing Sam Underhill and Tom Curry together in a World Cup game for the first time since the 2019 final paid dividends for England in an attritional first half. They were England's top two tacklers and got the only two turnovers in a half that was fairly even except on the scoreboard.

Curry was superb in a week when he and his family were abused online for complaining he was the subject of a racial slur from South Africa during the semifinals last weekend. Underhill, an emergency replacement playing his first test in

more than a year, finished with a game-best 24 tackles. "Surreal," was how he summed up his last three weeks.

Marcus Smith sent No. 8 Ben Earl through a gap and soft defense for the opening try. Farrell's conversion and two penalties sent England ahead 13-0.

Argentina thought it was playing a Barbarians game and gave up two kickable penalties to try a lineout and scrum, both of which were wasted. The next penalty, though, was kicked over by Emiliano Boffelli, which pleased a crowd of 77,647 giving the Pumas partisan support.

Farrell kicked England 16-3 ahead, and just when the game was plodding along, it was given a welcome lift by the Pumas after scrumhalf Tomas Cubelli dived through English legs to score.

The game really came alive straight after halftime when, out of nothing, Pumas flyhalf Santiago Carreras slipped front-rowers Theo Dan and Ellis Genge and glided around Smith to score between the posts. **MDT/AP**

AD

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RUGBY WORLD CUP

Superb defending, grit and resilience lead Springboks to record fourth cup win

SAMUEL PETREQUIN, PARIS

NEW ZEALAND 11,
SOUTH AFRICA 12

THERE was just seven seconds left on the clock, and one massive scrum to play to decide the winner of the Rugby World Cup between South Africa and New Zealand.

The Springboks led by a point and needed to withdraw a last furious push from the All Blacks.

The two lines of forwards locked horns, and South Africa won the scrum, making sure it would keep the ball from the ruck, prompting referee Wayne Barnes to call an end to a nerve-racking and gritty final.

Definitely not the most spectacular of the two teams on the field, South Africa claimed a record fourth Rugby World Cup after a phenomenal defensive effort.

The Springboks won 12-11. Another win by the skin of their teeth. Like they did it in the semi-finals against England and France in the quarterfinals, progressing each time by the slimmest one-point margin.

Even when they played at 15 against 14 for 50 minutes they struggled, relying on their excellent kicking game and resilience.

"They are an amazing bunch of guys, they are all warriors," said South Africa coach Jacques



Man of the match: South Africa's Pieter-Steph du Toit (center) tackles New Zealand's Jordie Barrett

Nienaber.

South Africa defended its title thanks to Handre Pollard's four penalties, which had given his team a 12-6 half-time lead. The Springboks did not score a point in the second-half, pushed back by unrelenting charges from the All Blacks, who desperately tried to add another try after Beauden Barrett had revived a nation's ho-

pes they could turnaround the match.

After the final whistle at the Stade de France, there was one statistic standing out. The Springboks had managed 209 tackles — with a success rate of 81%. South Africa also won seven turnovers to just one from New Zealand.

Flanker Pieter-Steph du Toit

was responsible for 28 of South Africa's tackles and was named the man of the match.

"I guess as a team we like drama," Du Toit said. "We have had drama for the last few years. It helped us a lot as a team to get through the drama and cope with it and it shows the resilience of the team and the whole of South Africa."

Nienaber said Du Toit "was outstanding. Defensively, which is my department, he was absolutely outstanding. Well done to him on his man of the match."

Du Toit was so good that despite all his efforts and fatigue he stayed on until the end, even though Nienaber has put seven power-packed forward replacements on his bench.

The 7-1 split proved to be a successful gamble and Nienaber was happy to have plenty of muscles and power left in store in the last 30 minutes.

"The main thing is they're a squad. They have been in a World Cup final before, some of them have played their third World Cup now. I think the experience pulled them through," said Nienaber.

But the move could have backfired when Mbongeni Mbonambi, the only specialist hooker in the squad, got injured early on and had to be replaced in the fourth minute by Deon Fourie.

The Springboks were not as dominant as usual in the scrum and had some issues on the lineouts. But the tight five was rock-solid defensively.

"We lost our hooker in the early part of the game and we had to adjust to that," said South Africa captain Siya Kolisi. "Credit to my boys too for the fight. I am just grateful we could pull it off."

MDT/AP

RUGBY WORLD CUP

All Blacks captain Cane is first man to be red-carded in a final

SAM Cane leaned back on his sin-bin chair and crossed his arms. That was it then.

The New Zealand captain in the Rugby World Cup final had just become a spectator in the biggest match of his career yesterday [Macau time] and an historic footnote.

Cane received the news that his yellow card was upgraded to red with despair. He'd been sin-binned with 51 minutes still left in the final, his team was trailing South Africa 9-3, and his absence, rather than his presence, was expected to determine the outcome.

But the All Blacks fought brilliantly without the inspirational Cane, and lost



New Zealand's Sam Cane sits on the bench after being shown a red card

only 12-11 to the defending champion Springboks.

Cane, naturally, was pai-

ned but also proud at the end.

"It's so, so hard," he said.

"I'm feeling so much hurt, but I am so proud of the group the way they fought back and gave ourselves a shot of winning that game. It speaks volumes for the group as a whole. It is a fantastic group of men who care so much for playing for the All Blacks and making New Zealand proud. So there is a lot of heartbreak in the sheds right now. It is hard."

He was sent off for a shoulder-led tackle into the face of South Africa's Jesse Kriel in the 29th minute.

"At the time I wasn't even aware, it caught me off guard that he stepped back," Cane said. "But we have been here for two

months now and anything around the head has ramifications. I'm not here to discuss whether it was the right or wrong decision. It can't be changed. Unfortunately it is something I am going to have to live with forever."

Cane became the first player to be red-carded in a final.

The only previous card in a Rugby World Cup final was a yellow for All Black Ben Smith in 2015, when New Zealand beat Australia.

But the first final in the professional era between rugby's greatest teams, the only three-time champions, was a tight, stomach-turning contest that

conjured not just Cane's red card but three more yellows.

All Blacks flanker Shannon Frizell was sin-binned in just the third minute for a neck roll on Bongsi Mbonambi. Mbonambi injured his leg which ended the night for the South Africa hooker. The injury was ruled accidental and Frizell returned to the field.

Cane was the next to go, and the red card ruling sent gasps of shock through the crowd.

The final became 14 vs. 14 in the 47th minute when Springboks captain Siya Kolisi was sin-binned for a head-on-head tackle of Ardie Savea, but Kolisi eventually returned, too. MDT/AP

OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

IN-DEPTH TALKS PRODUCE POSITIVE SIGNAL THAT SINO-US RELATIONS CAN FIND RIGHT TRACK OF HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

After two rounds of talks between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and United States State Secretary Antony Blinken on Thursday and Friday, the two sides agreed to further increase direct passenger flights between the two sides.

An upcoming bilateral meeting to coordinate affairs concerning people with disabilities, which may lead to a memorandum of understanding on corresponding cooperation, was also agreed.

At the level of state-to-state relations, the two sides agreed to hold consultations respectively on maritime issues, arms control, proliferation prevention, and foreign policies.

And they reached a consensus on making concerted efforts for a meeting of the countries' leaders on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in San Francisco next month.

Wang's visit to Washington can certainly be considered successful given the list of "deliverables" it produced.

But its real significance lies in the fact the two parties are finally to take meaningful moves toward honoring promises of keeping the lines of communication open.

Just as Beijing has stated on several recent occasions and Wang repeated on his Washington trip, Beijing's hope is that China-US relations "get back on track". Wang's trip and the potential San Francisco meeting between leaders of the two countries are all about making that happen.

No matter how different their views are on many things — be it the Taiwan question and the South China Sea issue or the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Israel-Palestine conflict — it is of critical importance that the two sides keep the conversation going.

Wang's visit was constructive in that he met not only his US counterpart, but also US President Joe Biden and US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, and told the US leader what Beijing cares about the most.

The principles he laid out, essentially about both countries following the guidelines set out by Beijing for handling bilateral ties, may sound less than actionable to Washington's policy circles as they seek "all-of-government competition", rather than win-win cooperation. But just as the White House has stressed on multiple occasions, face-to-face communication is conducive to avoiding misunderstandings and misjudgments.

The "road to the San Francisco summit will not be a smooth one" and the course cannot be left to "autopilot", Wang reportedly said. Given the array of differences the two governments have, that is no doubt the case.

But as Wang told his hosts, the twists and turns in the path of China-US relations this year offer lessons to learn from and experience to draw on — not least the fact that candid and constructive high-level exchanges have repeatedly produced positive outcomes, and are therefore crucial to further improving their relations.

The common interests of the two countries outweigh their differences and disputes. Rather than viewing their relationship as a zero-sum game, the two sides should recognize that bringing their relationship back on the track of healthy and steady development would benefit both of them.

Therefore, not only should the two sides resume dialogue, the dialogue should be "in-depth and comprehensive", as Wang told Blinken.

So long as both sides bear the benefits in mind, there is no reason why it can't be.

MATTHEW PERRY, EMMY-NOMINATED 'FRIENDS' STAR, DEAD AT 54

THE BUZZ

"Friends" star Matthew Perry, the Emmy-nominated actor whose sarcastic, but lovable Chandler Bing was among television's most famous and most quotable characters, has died at 54.

The actor was found dead of an apparent drowning at his Los Angeles home yesterday (Macau time), according to the Los Angeles Times and celebrity website TMZ, which was the first to report the news. Both outlets cited



unnamed sources confirming Perry's death. "Matthew was an incredibly gifted actor and an indelible part of the Warner Bros. Television Group family," the company said in a statement. "The impact of his comedic genius was felt around the world, and his legacy will live on in the hearts of so many. This is a heartbreaking day, and we send our love to his family, his loved ones, and all of his devoted fans."



AP PHOTO

AGREEMENT REACHED FOR BIDEN-XI TALKS, BUT DETAILS STILL BEING WORKED OUT: OFFICIALS

DIDI TANG, MATTHEW LEE & AAMER MADHANI, WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping have agreed to meet on the sidelines of next month's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco, according to a U.S. official familiar with the planning.

The two sides worked out an agreement in principle to hold a meeting during the summit as Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Friday with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan, according to the official, who was not authorized to comment and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The official added that the two sides have still not worked out details on the exact day of the meeting, venue and other logistics.

The White House said in a statement following Friday's meetings that the two sides were "working toward" a Biden-Xi face-to-face on the sidelines of APEC, a forum of 21 Pacific countries.

Earlier Friday, Biden met with Wang, holding

an hourlong talk with the senior Chinese official in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The meeting, with Blinken and Sullivan present, was the latest in a series of high-level contacts between the two countries as they explore the possibility of stabilizing an increasingly tense relationship at a time of conflict in Ukraine and Israel.

The White House said Biden "emphasized that both the United States and China need to manage competition in the relationship responsibly and maintain open lines of communication," and he "underscored that the United States and China must work together to address global challenges."

White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Biden viewed his meeting with Wang as "a positive development, and a good opportunity to keep the conversation going."

Biden had been widely expected to talk with Wang, a reciprocal action after Xi met with Blinken in June.

Beijing has yet to confirm if Xi will travel to San Francisco for the annual APEC summit, which runs

from Nov. 11 to Nov. 17.

Wang is in the midst of a three-day visit to Washington, where he's been meeting with top U.S. officials. He sat down with Blinken on Friday morning for the second time during his trip.

On Thursday, after their initial meeting, the Chinese side said "the two sides had an in-depth exchange of views on China-U.S. relations and issues of common concern in a constructive atmosphere."

In its readout, the U.S. State Department said the two men addressed "areas of difference" and "areas of cooperation," while Blinken "reiterated that the United States will continue to stand up for our interests and values and those of our allies and partners."

Wang said before Thursday's meeting that China's goal was to "push the relationship as soon as possible back to the track of healthy, stable and sustainable development."

U.S. officials had said they would press Wang on the importance of China stepping up its role on the world stage if it wants to be considered a responsible major international player. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

Russia accused Ukraine on Saturday of damaging a nuclear waste storage facility in a drone strike on the Kursk nuclear power plant while fighting raged on for the control of the key eastern city of Avdiivka, where Russians apparently suffered heavy losses. The Russian Foreign Ministry said that three drones armed with explosives targeted the power plant on Thursday evening, 26, hitting both the station's administration building and a warehouse storing nuclear waste.



AP PHOTO

Turkey marked the 100th anniversary of the creation of the modern, secular republic from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire yesterday, but expect no grand pageantry or gala reception to memorialize the important milestone. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has opted for a low-key celebration of the centennial, which comes months after a devastating earthquake that killed 50,000 people and coincides with the Israeli-Hamas war that has roiled the Middle East.



AP PHOTO

Vatican Pope Francis' big gathering of Catholic bishops and laypeople said Saturday it was "urgent" to guarantee fuller participation of women in church governance positions and called for research on allowing women to be deacons to be released within a year. But the meeting didn't take decisive action on that issue, and it backed off any specific calls for welcoming LGBTQ+ Catholics despite Francis' repeated outreach to the gay community and willingness to consider blessing same-sex couples.