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AP PHOTO



China Heavy snow blanketed swaths of China's northeastern region, shutting schools and halting transportation in the first major snowstorm of the season. Major highways in the northeastern city of Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang province, were closed and flights canceled. China's state broadcaster CCTV said. Elementary and middle schools also canceled classes for yesterday. The National Meteorological Center said that snowfall is likely to "breakthrough the historical records" for the same period.

AP PHOTO



Australia A car crashed into an Australian pub's outdoor dining area, killing five people and injuring six others including the driver, officials said yesterday. The 66-year-old driver of the luxury BMW SUV was taken to a hospital after the crash at the crowded Royal Daylesford Hotel beer garden in the rural town of Daylesford, northwest of Melbourne, on Sunday evening, police said.

AP PHOTO



Vatican Pope Francis met with European rabbis yesterday and decried antisemitism, war and terrorism in a written speech he declined to read, saying he wasn't feeling well. Francis told the rabbis during the audience in the Vatican's Apostolic Palace that he was very happy to receive them, but added: "I'm not feeling well, and so I prefer not to read the speech but give it to you, so you can take it with you." Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said the pope "has a bit of a cold and a long day of audiences."

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF FINAL APPEAL RELOCATED

The Office of the President of the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) will move to the Complex of Commerce and Trade Co-operation Platform for China and Portuguese-speaking Countries Macao from Nov. 13. According to a statement from TUI, the office will be located on the second floor of the premises, while telephone and fax numbers remain unchanged.

BEIJING OPPOSES THREATS OF SANCTION AGAINST HK OFFICIAL

On Sunday, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of China's State Council condemned U.S. politicians who threatened to impose sanctions against government officials and judicial personnel of Hong Kong. The rule of law in the HKSAR has received wide recognition from the international community, said a spokesperson of the office, adding that safeguarding national security and the rule of law in Hong Kong are the duties of HKSAR officials and judicial personnel, who tolerate no interference. The threats made by certain US politicians to impose such sanctions run contrary to the spirit of the rule of law and ignore international justice, the spokesperson said.



PUBLIC HOUSING

SENIOR RESIDENCE PROJECT RECEIVES 200 QUERIES, APPLICATIONS IN FIRST HOUR

ANTHONY LAM

DURING the first hour for official applications, the senior residence project received over 200 queries and applications, local media reported yesterday.

The official opening of applications for the residential units commenced yesterday morning.

While visiting an application

counter, sirector of Social Welfare Hon Wai stated that over 200 queries and applications had been received by the 15 designated counters during the first hour of the application period. He described the situation as "popular as predicted," according to several local media outlets.

Hon added that his bureau had established 62 service desks to

assist applicants with online processes, which he said took about 10 minutes per application on average.

On whether there is scope for lowering rentals for the residential units, Hon pointed out that the current rental levies are already lower than market rates.

Meanwhile, an octogenarian applicant surnamed Chan, said

that the application process was smooth and took about 10 minutes. She disclosed in an interview with public broadcaster TDM-Radio Macau (Chinese) that she currently lives on the third floor of a low-rise building (tong-lau), and she struggles to climb the stairs with her aching legs. She hopes to see rental fees being lowered later.

A septuagenarian applicant applying with his spouse said he was seeking a better living circumstances because his spouse was often in pain climbing stairs. His plan is to lease out his current property if his application is accepted.

Amid the opening of applications, lawmaker Leong Sun Iok called for lowered rentals for the residential units in his latest written enquiry. The lawmaker pointed out that the average rental for senior residential units is MOP164 per square meter. In comparison, average rental for units in Areia Preta is MOP146 per square meter, while for industrial units it is MOP122 per square meter.

He added that even for applicants who successfully rent out their older tong-lau units, the rental income would still not cover the rental being asked for the senior residential units. Another worry for the lawmaker is that the existing Areia Preta Health Centre will not be able to cope with this influx of residents in the area. The health center in the New Urban Zone A, will not be ready for a couple of years, and is planned to serve nearly 100,000 residents on Zone A.

Alcohol control law has room for clarification despite enactment

ANTHONY LAM

WHETHER or not the serving of liqueur chocolate or wine-infused dishes will be subject to penalties when provided to underage diners is still unclear.

The alcohol control law has recently come into force, meaning that the selling of alcoholic drinks with an alcohol content higher than 0.05% by volume to minors is now legally prohibited.

Alcohol-infused dishes are not unusual in either eastern or western menus. For example, "drunken chicken, crab and shrimp" are infused with Chi-

nese wine and are expected to have higher alcohol levels than permitted by the law, according to the local catering industry as cited by local media Macao Daily News.

To cope with the situation, the industry will consider making relevant menu notes on these dishes to minimize the possibility of misunderstanding. The industry also commended some hotels and bars for making similar notes on cocktails for clarity, and proposes that the rest of the industry should follow suit.

On the other hand, the news outlet cited social advisor Wong

Man Pang as saying that most retailers have in general been fully compliant with the new law, posting legal bills regarding the new regulation. Some of them have even displayed separate signs to distinguish alcoholic drinks from non-alcoholic ones.

In addition, the social advisor pointed out that alcoholic sweets, such as liqueur chocolates, are available in retail shops. On whether these products should be considered alcoholic or non-alcoholic, Wong recommended the government promptly clarify the matter so as to maintain market operations.



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Sectors upbeat for November events as boost in gaming, tourism arrivals expected

LYNZY VALLES

THE tourism industry expects a daily average of 100,000 arrivals during the upcoming 70th Macau Grand Prix, forecasting that even hotels on the Macau Peninsula will be at 90% occupancy.

It also envisioned that the spending power of tourists is comparable to that of conventions and exhibitions visitors.

The two-week Grand Prix is being held in conjunction with the 23rd Macau Food Festival, which will be held Nov. 17 to Dec. 3.

Andy Wu, chairman of the Travel Industry Council of Macau, attributed the group's expectations to the fact that this year's edition of the Grand Prix will feature the comeback of international races FIA Formula 3 and Macau GT World Cups and TCR, which were put on pause due to the pandemic.

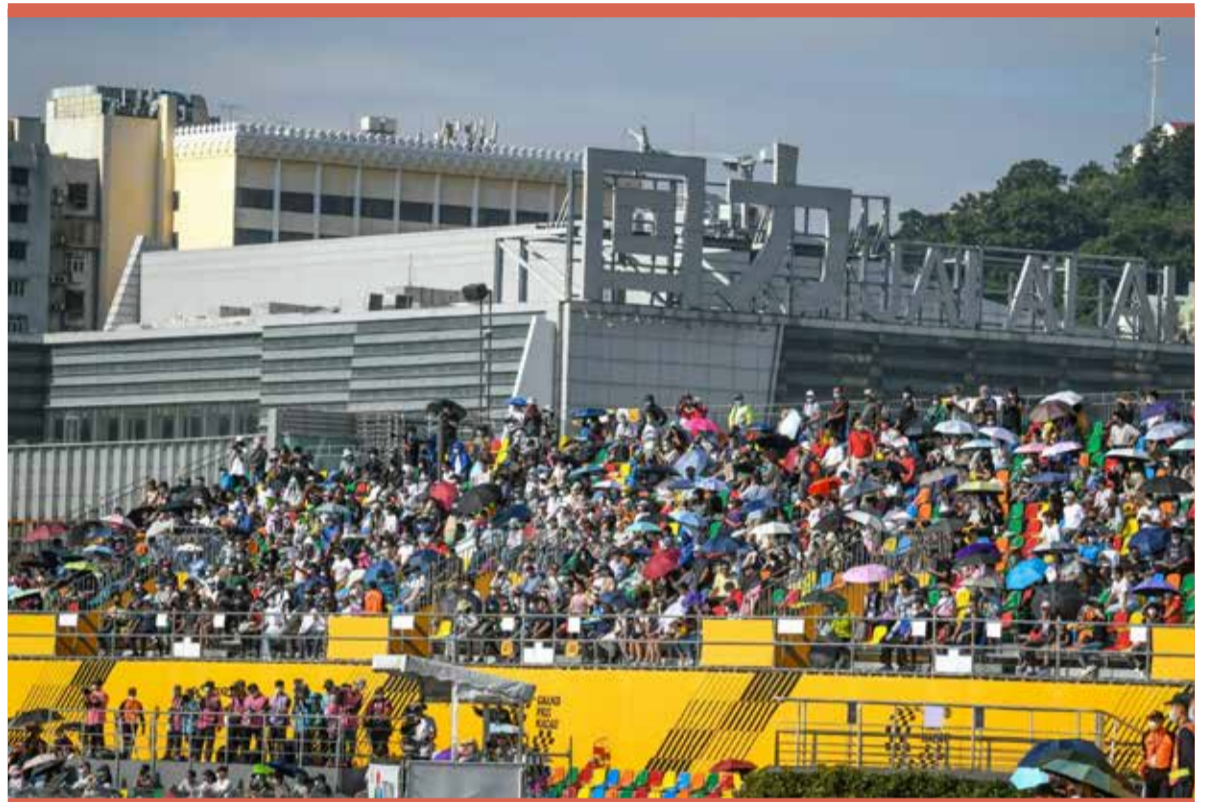
The celebration of the 70th anniversary of the two-weekend races this November will make headlines, especially the Macau Motorcycle GP which will hold its 55th edition this year.

The 11 racing events expected to take place starting Nov. 11 and continuing over six days, will begin on the first weekend with the return of the Formula 4 single-seaters from the 2023 F4 Chinese Championship, which is in its ninth season this year.

Pun Weng Kun, Sports Bureau director said yesterday that 90% of the tickets for the last day were sold out.

This year's event includes six days of track action and the budget has grown from MOP180 million last year to MOP260 million.

Meanwhile, a note from Morgan Stanley Asia Ltd. stated that the Grand Prix is slated to boost November casino earnings, as will the Westlife concert.



Forecasting gross gaming revenue of MOP16.9 billion, the estimates also included the

concerts held last month, which recorded the highest post-pandemic revenues, also assisted by

the National Day Golden Week. The estimated figure is about 74% of pre-Covid levels.



AVIATION

GOV'T EXTENDS AIR MACAU LICENSE FOR 3 YEARS UNTIL NEW BILL IN FORCE

THE SAR Government has extended the concession contract of Air Macau for three years or until the new Civil Aviation Activity Law is effective.

In a statement, the government reiterated that the concession contract does not prevent foreign airlines flying to Macau.

The extension is longer than what was previously considered.

In September, the government said it was considering the extension to Air Macau's concession for another six months to a year. Vong Hin Fai, president of the standing

committee analyzing the proposed law, said the extension would take place if the Legislative Assembly (AL) fails to approve the new legislation on civil aviation activity by Nov. 9. The government proposes to end Air Macau's monopoly, whose current concession ends in November.

The new law, which introduces the new legal system for civil aviation activities in the Macau SAR, is still under the legislative process.

"It is necessary to maintain the present airline concession system so that Air Macau can continue to provide uninterrupted service to Macau resi-

dents and visitors," the statement read.

The aviation industry has been gradually recovering in 2023 after the severe impact of the pandemic. The government said it will continue to be flexible in approving flight applications to accommodate the operators' needs, as well as collaborating with the airline to launch tourism campaigns in international markets.

In addition, the airport concessionaire is actively working on marketing programs to attract more mainland and foreign airlines to Macau. LV

MACAU ATHLETE CLINCHES GOLD IN QIANGSHU EVENT

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU athlete Wong Weng Ian won the gold medal yesterday in the women's Qiangshu event at the first Student (Youth) Games of China, becoming the Macau delegation's first medalist in the events competition.

Wang scored 9.663 points, beating the Jiangxi provincial representative by 0.003 points and becoming the champion of the Qiangshu event.

Kong Chi Meng, head of the Macau Sports De-

legation and director of the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), said that he is pleased that Macau athletes can perform well and show their style in the first Student (Youth) Games of China.

"I am also very pleased that Macau student-athletes can balance academic studies and competition training, especially in such a national competition where high-level athletes gather, and their performance is encouraged," he said,

as cited in a government statement.

Macau has sent 174 athletes to participate in the competition.

Organized by the Ministry of Education, the General Administration of Sports, and the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, the Games will take place from Nov. 5 to Nov. 15, featuring 39 sports, 51 disciplines and 805 events in open and campus categories, where more than 18,000 athletes will participate.



Wong Weng Ian

61 MACAU-FUNDED ENTERPRISES IN TCM IN HENGQIN

Hengqin's four major industries have experienced strong development since the establishment of the Cooperation Zone, according to a recent announcement made by the Executive Committee. Focusing on the strategic position outlined in the Hengqin Plan, the zone has developed the four major industries: sci-tech research and high-end manufacturing; traditional Chinese medicine (TCM); cultural tourism, convention and exhibition; and modern finance. In terms of the TCM industry, the Cooperation Zone actively explored innovative models such as "Macau Registration + Hengqin Production." So far, 61 Macau-funded enterprises have been established in the Traditional Chinese Medicine Science and Technology Industrial Park of Cooperation between Guangdong and Macau.

NEARLY MOP80,000 SMS SCAM LOSSES

Between Oct. 25 and Nov. 3, 11 residents were victimized by a "phony MPay phishing SMS scam" and incurred losses of close to MOP80,000. In a statement, the Judiciary Police (PJ) announced it has received many complaints from the public about phishing SMS scams. All victims claimed they had received a fraudulent SMS stating that their MPay points would soon expire, and in order to redeem points for gifts, they would have to log into a bogus website and input the usernames and passwords of their MPay accounts. The PJ reminds the public to be cautious of any suspicious SMS.

ONE ACCOUNT FOR UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCE APPLICANTS

Residents can apply for the Social Security System's unemployment allowance through the Macao One Account, the government announced yesterday. Applicants can file an application with the Social Security Fund through the system, as well as register for job search with the Labour Affairs Bureau for involuntary unemployment. Under normal circumstances, the vetting and approval outcome will be available within 14 working days, counting from the next day after meeting the eligibility requirements for the unemployment allowance and submitting all required documents.



KONG CHI

MP OFFICER DESCRIBES CASE DISTRIBUTION METHOD AS AN EXCEPTION

ANTHONY LAM

AN officer at the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) has described in court senior prosecutor Kong Chi's mode of case distribution as an exception.

The court hearing for Kong's alleged corruption continued and several MP officers have testified before judges.

It was said that in 2014, Kong had allocated a document forgery case involving his friend, Liu Haigui, to himself. The case was archived – meaning that charges were dropped – on the same day.

It was also disclosed that when the case arrived at the MP, three prosecutors were on duty, with two of them being Kong and

his wife Tam I Kuan, according to local media All About Macau.

An officer surnamed Wong, who has worked at the Central Division of the MP, testified that Kong had a couple of times distributed cases in person instead of via the computer system. Kong did not offer any explanation but the officer did not consider it problematic either, as Kong is authorized to do so.

At the MP, cases are either allocated in person or by the computer system. Computer allocation is conducted randomly. Whenever the former mode takes place, corresponding records must be made, denoting which prosecutor has made the decision.

The same officer also disclosed that between 1998 and 2016,

Kong had requested five or six times to view documentation of cases handled by other prosecutors. The same request had been made by other officers as well, however, the frequency of such requests by other prosecutors was much lower than Kong's.

Another officer surnamed Lei working at the Division, testified that Kong normally made the request to view the documentation in person, but could not remember if Kong had made similar requests by phone.

Lei been surprised at Kong allocating a case to himself but considered this an exception. Not distributing via digital means was also an exception.

At that time, Lei did not question the decision.

An MP administrative staff member surnamed Chang explained that under normal circumstances, items under custody are released after notification is issued to concerned members of the public. Should retrieval of their items be requested without prior notification, permission from the concerned prosecutors would be sought before release. The staff added that Kong would need to be notified about the release of any items valued over MOP50,000.

Another MP staff member, surnamed Chui, disclosed that she works as coordinating secretary at the MP. She had to draft indictments or notices for archive of cases handled by Kong. She would view details of the cases before drafting the documents. Kong would later edit her drafts.

A judge asked if the work was difficult, to which Chui said drafts for simpler cases would see fewer edited or polished parts. For more complex cases, the opposite would happen. The same judge questioned if Chui somehow considered herself a prosecutor and if Kong was not too occupied by work. Chui only said she "worked as per orders."

Another staff member surnamed Chan, remembered that a belt under custody appeared different from the original item, but nobody undertook any official identification. When it was returned to a case stakeholder, Kong reminded Chan to make it clear that the belt and the diamonds on the buckle must not circulate in the market.

However, the prosecution asserted that an official identification had actually taken place, and questioned the reliability of Chan's testimony on the grounds of unreliable memory. To this, Chan explained that the identification had been requested by the Macao Customs.

STATS

Newly firms increasing amid market recovery

STAFF REPORTER

Atotal of 1,355 new companies were incorporated in the third quarter of 2023, an increase of 383 year-on-year, data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows.

The increase comes after the significant decrease of new firms in 2022 due to the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.

The number of new companies operating in Wholesale & Retail Trade and Business Services to-

taled 472 and 408 respectively.

However, the total value of registered capital of the new companies fell by 39.6% year-on-year to MOP535 million due to the incorporation of a company with above average capital in Financial Activities in the same quarter last year.

Meanwhile, companies being dissolved totaled 242 in the third quarter, and the value of registered capital of these companies amounted to MOP57 million.

A total of 261 small

and medium enterprises (SMEs) which benefited from government support measures have already closed their doors due to bankruptcy, data from the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED) in August 2022 shows.

In reference to the origin of capital of the newly incorporated companies, Macau and mainland China contributed MOP261 million (48.7% of total) and MOP239 million (44.6%) respectively. Capital from the Mainland cities in the Greater



Bay Area totaled MOP76 million, of which Zhuhai accounted for 70.0%. In addition to this, capital from Hong Kong stood at MOP19 million.

TECH

Google's antitrust headaches compound with another trial, targeting Play Store

MICHAEL LIEDTKE,
SAN FRANCISCO

GOOGLE today [Macau time] will try to protect a lucrative piece of its internet empire at the same time it's still entangled in the biggest U.S. antitrust trial in a quarter century.

The latest threat will unfold in a San Francisco federal court, where a 10-person jury will decide whether Google's digital payment processing system in the Play Store that distributes apps for phones running on its Android software has been illegally driving up prices for consumers and developers.

The trial before U.S. District Judge James Donato is scheduled to last until just before Christmas and include testimony from long-time Google executive Sundar Pichai, who is now CEO of the company's parent, Alphabet Inc.

Pichai recently took the witness stand in Washington D.C. during an antitrust trial pitting Google's long-running dominance of internet search against the U.S. Justice Department's attempt to undercut it on the grounds the company has been abusing its power to stifle competition and innovation.

The case targeting Google's Play Store is being brought by Epic Games, the maker of the popular Fortnite video game, which lost in a similar 2021 trial focused on many of the same issues in Apple's iPhone app store.

Although a federal judge sided with Apple on most fronts in that



trial, the outcome opened one potential crack in the digital fortress that the company has built around the iPhone.

The judge and an appeals court both determined Apple should allow apps to provide links to other payment options, a change that could undermine the 15% to 30% commissions that both Apple and Google collect on digital purchases made within a mobile app. Apple is appealing that part of the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, where Epic is also challenging most elements of the case that it lost.

Epic is now taking aim at Google's commission system, even though Android software is al-

ready set up to allow other stores, such as Samsung's installed on its phones, distribute apps that work on the operating system. Even so, Epic maintains that Google still maintains a stranglehold on the Android app ecosystem and the payment system attached to it — and has paid hundreds of millions of dollars to stifle competition.

Much like Apple did in its trial, Google defends its commissions as a way to be compensated for all money that it invests into its Play Store and asserts that the controls over it are a way to protect the security of the tens of millions of people in the U.S. who download apps for phones powered by Android.

Google initially was going to have to defend itself against multiple foes in the trial, but in September it settled allegations that had been brought against the Play Store by state attorneys general and just last week resolved a case being pursued by Match Group, the owner of Tinder and other online dating services.

The Match settlement prompted Google to switch from its original request for a jury trial to a proceeding to be decided by the judge, but Donato rebuffed the bid.

Match is receiving \$40 million and adopting Google's "user choice billing" system in its settlement. The terms of the resolution with the state attorneys general is ex-

pected to be revealed during Google's trial with Epic.

Epic CEO Tim Sweeney skewered the "user choice billing" option as a sham in a social media post vowing to fight Google in court. Sweeney also is expected to take the witness stand during the trial.

Wilson White, Google's vice president of government affairs and public policy, accused Epic of trying to get "something for nothing" in a blog post. After pointing out that Epic already lost the crux of its case against Apple, White blasted the game maker for "trying their luck with Android by bringing a case that has even less merit." **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

CESL Asia's sports day raises MOP125,000



In its 7th edition, CESL Asia and Friends Sport Fun Day 2023 brought together 22 entities and over 200 participants, and raised MOP125,000 in donations for the Macau Special Olympics (MSO) to support

educational sports' programs. Held at the Macau Federation of Trade Unions Workers Stadium on Sunday, the event showcased football and bocce tournaments, where teams from various participa-

ting entities and organizations competed alongside MSO athletes.

The team from MGM carried off the Corporate Football Tournament, while the Golden Cup and Silver Plate Corporate Inclusive Bocce Tournament were secured by the teams from MdME Lawyers and Banco Nacional Ultramarino, respectively.

CESL Asia president and CEO, António Trindade, said, "This remarkable day has left an indelible mark on our dedicated employees, engaged partners, and grateful MSO families. It sparks a powerful transformation, challenging boundaries, fostering empathy, and nurturing well-being for all involved."

The Londoner Hotel wins 'China Top 10 Hotels' award



The Londoner Hotel has been honored by the 2023 Condé Nast Traveler Gold List and is now the only hotel in Macau to win the 'China Top

10 Hotels' award.

The results were unveiled at the Condé Nast Traveler Gold List Ceremony, which made its Macau debut Nov. 3

at The Londoner Arena.

The Chinese edition of the Gold List was launched in 2014 and has since become the gold standard of service and hospitality in the travel industry.

Grant Chum, chief operating officer and executive director of Sands China Ltd., said "Winning the most coveted title on the prestigious Gold List is a true testament to the hard work, dedication and passion of our team members."

"We are proud to represent Macau on China Top 10 and will continue our commitment to providing guests with unique and unforgettable journeys each and every time."

CHINA-AUSTRALIA

Xi and Albanese meet in Beijing while their countries try to mend ties

KEN MORITSUGU
& HUIZONG WU, BEIJING

AUSTRALIAN Prime Minister Anthony Albanese met Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday on the first visit by an Australian leader to China in seven years as the two countries try to mend their tattered ties.

Chinese state media reported the meeting but did not provide details. The talks were expected to focus on trade as China has eased some but not all of the restrictive steps it took as relations deteriorated.

Albanese struck an optimistic tone ahead of his meeting, calling for cooperation while emphasizing that the two countries will continue to have differences.

"What I've said is that we need to co-operate with China where we can, disagree where we must and engage in our national interest," he said in Beijing. "I think there are promising signs we've al-

ready seen, a number of the impediments to trade between our two nations removed and an uplift already, substantial uplift in the trade between our two nations."

His visit comes near the 50th anniversary of the first trip by an Australian prime minister to the People's Republic of China.

China and Australia's relations nosedived in recent years as suspicions of Chinese interference in Australian politics increased. China, in turn, was angered by Australia's call for an inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 virus.

China levied official tariffs and unofficial trade barriers that are estimated to have cost Australian exporters up to 20 billion Australian dollars (\$13 billion) a year for commodities such as coal, wine, beef, barley and lobsters.

In the past few months, China and Australia have publicly signaled that resolutions were in sight for the trade issues.

Further, Australian journalist Cheng Lei was released in Oc-

AP PHOTO



tober after three years in detention under charges of espionage, a case that had come to be a focal point in the tensions.

Even as Albanese has largely sounded upbeat during his visit, Australia is still actively pursuing a security partnership with the

United Kingdom and the United States that China views as an attempt to counter its influence in the region. **MDT/AP**

APEC SUMMIT

Yellen to host Chinese vice premier for talks in San Francisco ahead of start of summit

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen will host Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng for two days of talks this week, the latest in a series of high-level talks between U.S. and Chinese officials as the world's two largest economies aim to ease tensions, the Treasury Department announced yesterday.

The Yellen-He talks set for Thursday and Friday come ahead of the start of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco which starts November 11. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping are expected to meet next week during the summit, what would be the first engagement between the two leaders in nearly a year.

"As a foundation, our two nations have an obligation to establish resilient lines of open communication and to prevent our disagreements from spiraling into conflict," Yellen wrote in a Washington Post op-ed

AP FILE PHOTO



to spotlight the upcoming meeting. "But we also know that our relationship cannot be circumscribed to crisis management."

The meeting between the two senior government officials comes after Biden spoke with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the White House for about an hour late last month, when Beijing's top diplo-

mat came to Washington for talks with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan. Xi similarly met with Blinken in June when the secretary of State traveled to Beijing for talks with Wang.

Yellen last met with her counterpart He during a July visit to Beijing, when

she urged Chinese government officials for cooperation on climate change and other global challenges and not to let sharp disagreements about trade and other irritants derail relations.

China's Foreign Ministry said that He, who is the government's lead person on U.S.-China economic and trade issues, would visit the

U.S. from Nov. 8-12.

Yellen is expected to amplify the message on climate during her talks with He in San Francisco. Treasury in a statement said that Yellen will also underscore that the Biden administration "will take targeted action to advance our national security and that of our allies, and protect human rights, but we do not use these tools to seek economic advantage."

Tensions between the two countries remain high, including over U.S. export controls on advanced technology. The Biden administration has also taken Beijing to task for economic practices that it says have put U.S. companies and workers at a disadvantage.

The U.S. has also criticized China's lending practices under its \$1 trillion Belt and Road Initiative, a network of projects and maritime lanes that snake around large portions of the world, primarily Asia and Africa. Critics, inclu-

ding the Biden administration, say China's projects often create massive debt and expose nations to undue influence by Beijing.

Yellen in her op-ed wrote she would raise during the meetings the administration's "serious concerns with Beijing's unfair economic practices, including its large-scale use of non-market tools, its barriers to market access and its coercive actions against U.S. firms in China."

The U.S. has also repeatedly raised concerns about China's assertive actions in the East and South China seas.

The U.S. also has renewed a warning that it would defend the Philippines in case of an armed attack under a security pact, after Chinese ships blocked and collided with two Philippine vessels off a contested shoal in the South China Sea.

Beijing has released its own video of close encounters in the region, including what it described as footage of the USS Ralph Johnson making a sharp turn and crossing in front of the bow of a Chinese navy ship. The U.S. destroyer also was captured sailing between two Chinese ships. **MDT/AP**

SINGAPORE

PM Lee plans to step down and hand over to his deputy before the 2025 election

SINGAPORE Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said this week he planned to bow out and hand over power to his deputy, Lawrence Wong, late next year, before the 2025 general election.

Lee, 71, initially intended to retire before turning 70, but it was shelved because of the COVID-19 pandemic. He has served as head of the long-ruling People's Action Party, or PAP, and as prime minister since 2004. Last year, he named Wong, who is also finance minister, as his designated successor.

"I have full confidence in Lawrence and his team and there's no reason to delay their political transition. Therefore, I intend to hand over to DPM (Deputy Prime Minister) Lawrence before the next general election," Lee said at a party conference.

He said passing the baton to Wong before the national polls will allow the 50-year-old politician to win his own mandate and take the country forward.



Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong

"If all goes well, I will hand over (to Wong) by PAP's 70th birthday next year" in November 2024, Lee said without giving an exact date.

Pausing to hold back his tears,

an emotional Lee said he was thankful for the time he had served, and that he would do his utmost to support Wong and his new team.

"After (handing over), I will be at the new PM's disposal. I will do wherever he thinks I can be useful. I will do my best to help him fight and win the next GE (general elec-

tion)," Lee added.

Wong, who came to prominence in helping to coordinate Singapore's fight against COVID-19, will be the city-state's fourth leader since independence in 1965.

He was picked by PAP as the likely successor to Lee after then Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat, who was earlier tipped to succeed Lee, withdrew his nomination. Heng bowed out after the PAP, one of the world's longest-serving parties, suffered its worst election performance in 2020. Although the PAP retained its super majority, it lost some seats and support slipped.

Lee is the eldest son of Lee Kuan Yew, who became Singapore's first prime minister and built the resource-poor city-state into one of the world's richest nations during 31 years in office. But it has also been criticized for tight government control, media censorship and use of oppressive laws and civil lawsuits against dissidents. **MDT/AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Seoul plans to launch its first military spy satellite on Nov. 30

SOUTH Korea said yesterday it plans to launch its first domestically built spy satellite at the end of this month to better monitor rival North Korea, which is expanding its arsenal of nuclear weapons.

The plan was unveiled days after North Korea failed to follow through on a vow to make a third attempt to launch its own reconnaissance satellite in October, likely because of technical issues.

Jeon Ha Gyu, a spokesperson for the South Korean Defense Ministry, told reporters yesterday that the country's first military spy satellite will be launched from California's Vandenberg Air Force Base on Nov. 30.

The satellite will be carried by SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket. Under a contract with SpaceX, South Korea plans to launch four more spy satellites by 2025, according to South Korea's Defense Acquisition Program Administration.

South Korea currently has no military reconnais-



sance satellites of its own and relies on U.S. spy satellites to monitor moves by North Korea.

The possession of its own spy satellites would give South Korea an independent space-based surveillance system to monitor North Korea in almost real time. When operated together with South Korea's so-called three-axis system — preemptive strike, missile defense and retaliatory

assets — the country's overall defense against North Korea would be sharply strengthened, according to Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute.

Lee said U.S. spy satellites produce much higher-resolution imagery but are operated under U.S. strategic objectives, not South Korea's. He said the U.S. also sometimes doesn't share

satellite photos with highly sensitive information with South Korea.

Last year, South Korea used a homegrown rocket to place what it called a "performance observation satellite" in orbit, becoming the world's 10th nation to successfully launch a satellite with its own technology.

Observers say South Korea's 2022 launch proved it can launch a satellite that is

heavier than the spy satellite, but that it needs more tests to ensure the rocket's reliability. Lee also said it's much more economical to use a SpaceX rocket to launch the spy satellite from the Vandenberg base.

North Korea is also eager to acquire its own spy satellite. But its two launch attempts earlier this year ended in failure for technical reasons. The country said it would make a third attempt sometime in October but did not do so and its state media have not provided a reason.

South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers last week that North Korea is likely receiving Russian technological assistance for its spy satellite launch program. The National Intelligence Service said North Korea was in the final phase of preparations for its third launch, which the NIS said would likely be successful.

The possession of spy satellites is part of ambitious arms build-up plans announced by North Korea leader Kim Jong Un in

2021. Kim said North Korea also needs more mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear-powered submarines, hypersonic weapons and multi-warhead missiles to cope with intensifying U.S. military threats.

South Korea, the U.S. and other foreign governments believe North Korea is seeking sophisticated weapons technologies from Russia to modernize its weapons programs in return for supplying ammunition, rockets and other military equipment for Russia's war in Ukraine. Both Russia and North Korea have rejected the reported arms transfer deal as groundless.

After North Korea's first failed launch in May, South Korea retrieved debris from the satellite and concluded it was too crude to perform military reconnaissance. Lee said the North Korean satellite would still be capable of identifying big targets like warships so it could be militarily useful for North Korea. **MDT/AP**

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

Blinken wraps up frantic Mideast tour with tepid, if any, support for pauses in Gaza fighting

MATTHEW LEE, ANKARA

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was wrapping up a grueling Middle East diplomatic tour yesterday in Turkey after only limited success in his furious efforts to forge a regional consensus on how best to ease civilian suffering in Gaza as Israel intensifies its war against Hamas.

Blinken met in the Turkish capital of Ankara with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan after a frantic weekend of travel that took him from Israel to Jordan, the occupied West Bank, Cyprus and Iraq to build support for the Biden administration's proposal for "humanitarian pauses" to Israel's relentless military campaign in Gaza.

Blinken's shuttle diplomacy came as Israeli troops surrounded Gaza City and cut off the northern part of the besieged Hamas-ruled territory. Troops are expected to enter the city today, and are likely to face militants fighting street by street using a vast network of tunnels. Casualties will likely rise on both sides in the month-old war, which has already killed more than 9,700 Palestinians.

The top U.S. diplomat hopes that pauses in the war would allow for a surge of humanitarian aid to Gaza and the release of hostages captured by Hamas during the militants' deadly Oct. 7 incursion into southern Israel that killed more than 1,400 people, mostly civilians — while also preventing the conflict from spreading regionally.

Neither Blinken nor Fidan spoke as they posed for photographers ahead of their formal talks in Ankara. The top U.S. diplomat was not going to meet with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who has been highly critical of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin



Blinken (left) meets with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan

Netanyahu and an outlier among NATO allies in not expressing full support for Israel's right to defend itself.

Outside the Foreign Ministry, dozens of protesters from an Islamist group carried Turkish and Palestinian flags and held up anti-U.S. and anti-Israel placards as the Blinken-Fidan meeting got underway. Earlier, police dispersed a group of students marching toward the ministry chanting "murderer Blinken, get out of Turkey!"

It was the second day of protests denouncing Blinken's visit. On Sunday, pro-Palestinian protesters clashed with Turkish riot police outside the U.S.-Turkish Incirlik military air base in the southern city of Adana. Police fired tear gas and water cannon as the demonstrators tried to cross fields to enter the base.

Several hundreds also marched to the U.S. Embassy in Ankara on Sunday, chanting "God is great."

Blinken's mission, his second to the region since the war began, has found only tepid, if any, support for his efforts to contain the fallout from the conflict. Israel has rejected the idea of pauses while Arab and Muslim nations are instead demanding an immediate cease-fire as the casualty toll soars among Palesti-

nian civilians under Israeli bombardments of Gaza.

U.S. officials are seeking to convince Israel of the strategic importance of respecting the laws of war by protecting non-combatants and significantly boosting deliveries of humanitarian aid to Gaza's beleaguered civilian population.

It remained unclear, however, if Netanyahu would agree to temporary, rolling pauses in the massive operation to eradicate Hamas — or whether outrage among Palestinians and their supporters could be assuaged if he did.

Already Jordan and Turkey have recalled their ambassadors to Israel to protest its tactics and the tide of international opinion appears to be turning from sympathy toward Israel in the aftermath of Oct. 7 to revulsion as images of death and destruction in Gaza spread around the world.

On Saturday in the Jordanian capital of Amman, both the Egyptian and Jordanian foreign ministers appeared at a joint news conference with Blinken. The two said Israel's war had gone beyond self-defense and could no longer be justified as it now amounted to collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

That sentiment was echoed by tens of thou-

sands of demonstrators who marched in the streets of world capitals over the weekend to protest Israel and condemn U.S. support for Israel.

After finishing his talks in Turkey, Blinken will head to Asia where the Gaza conflict will likely share top billing with other international crises at a series of events in Japan, South Korea and India, including Russia's war on Ukraine and North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

On Sunday, Blinken flew from the occupied West Bank, where he held talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, to Baghdad for talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani.

When word spread of Blinken's arrival in the West Bank city of Ramallah, dozens of Palestinians turned out to protest, holding signs showing dripping blood and with messages that included, "Blinken blood is on your hands." The meeting with Abbas ended without any public comment.

The Palestinian Authority administers semiautonomous areas of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. It has not been a factor in the Gaza Strip since 2007, when Hamas seized control after winning in elections there a year earlier. Abbas himself is unpopular among Palestinians. MDT/AP

this day in history



1956 EISENHOWER RE-ELECTED WITH RECORD VOTE



General Dwight D. Eisenhower has been returned to the White House with the biggest Republican win since Abraham Lincoln's in 1860.

President Eisenhower won 58% of the popular vote, up 3% from 1952.

He amassed some 34 million votes, winning 41 states and 457 electoral college votes.

His opponent Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson totalled around 27 million votes, securing seven states and 74 electoral college votes.

The Democrats have won majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate, making General Eisenhower the first president-elect ever to face a Congress controlled by the opposition.

Tonight President Eisenhower and Vice-President Richard Nixon were greeted by elated supporters at Republican headquarters.

Having already conceded victory to President Eisenhower in 1952, Governor Stevenson accepted this year's result with customary magnanimity saying,

"There are things more precious than a political victory; there is the right to political contest ... as for me, let there be no tears."

The Republicans have retained the support they gained four years ago from the traditionally Democratic South while Stevenson won just seven states in the region.

Commentators suggest that voters did a significant amount of "ticket splitting", choosing Eisenhower as president because he is more popular than Stevenson but sending more Democrats to Congress because of their "caring" economic and social welfare policies.

The key electoral issues included the economy, international affairs and occasionally the president's ill health.

Throughout the campaign, Mr Stevenson focused on Mr Eisenhower's recent heart attack and abdominal operation to suggest he was unfit for office.

The Democratic candidate also tried to present the opposition as a party of big business that ignored high inflation and pockets of poverty.

This tactic failed to dampen the widespread feel good factor among American voters.

Similarly, Mr Stevenson's promises to end H-bomb tests and military drafting did little to inspire the public's confidence in his foreign policies.

In contrast, General Eisenhower's election slogan "prosperity and peace" proved to be a vote winner.

Mr Eisenhower's status as a former World War II hero and international statesman also gave him an advantage on the foreign affairs front.

The landslide result suggests that the electorate support his policy of "non-involvement" in the recent Middle Eastern and Central European crises.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Eisenhower's domestic policies included encouraging business through tax cuts, decreasing federal control of the economy and implementing social welfare programmes.

He sped up defence spending after the Russians launched Sputnik, the first man-made satellite in 1957.

Eisenhower sponsored a landmark civil rights bill in 1956 and in 1957 he used federal troops to squash segregationist violence in Arkansas.

Hopes of reaching agreement on nuclear disarmament with Russia faded after the Soviets shot down an American U-2 spy plane over their territory.

The General found peaceful solutions to clashes with Communist China over Taiwan (in 1955 & 1958) and with the Soviets over Berlin (in 1959).

A constitutional amendment prevented Eisenhower from running for a third term.

He left office in 1961 and died in 1969 after a long illness.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You can have a great time if you go out with the one you love. Sports, physical fitness programs, exercise in general will make you feel better and show some pretty quick results.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 You may want to make drastic changes concerning your personal partner. You are able to make changes in your home that will be favorable to all involved.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Someone you live with will get angry if you are neglecting your duties. Elders may get you going today. Travel will stimulate your need to experience exciting new things.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 You are in a high energy, get it all done, mood and you'll have little patience with those who are slacking off. Be sure that you lay your cards on the table.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 You may find that you are a little lucky today. Don't volunteer private information about yourself unless you're prepared to be talked about behind your back.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Don't take your frustrations out on the ones you love. You are best to work at home if you can. You can make money if you're willing to push your ideas on those in a position to support your efforts.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 You have a tendency to think that no one else will do things properly. Be aware of deception when it comes to your position, and be sure not to jump to conclusions.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Take time to look at any outdated papers or possible investments. Concentrate on getting ahead financially and let your personal life settle down for a while.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Catch up on correspondence. Lovers will be demanding. You are best to sign your partner up for activities that will be tiring. Travel will stimulate your need to experience exciting new things.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Be innovative. Overindulgence will mean poor health. Put your time and energy into travel, philosophy, and soul-searching. Your best results will come through business trips.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Your childlike quality may get you into big trouble today if you neglect your responsibilities. Develop some of your good ideas. Make sure that you make reservations early.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Do what you can but don't jeopardize your health trying to please everyone. You can learn from those who have had similar experiences. Self-deception is likely.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

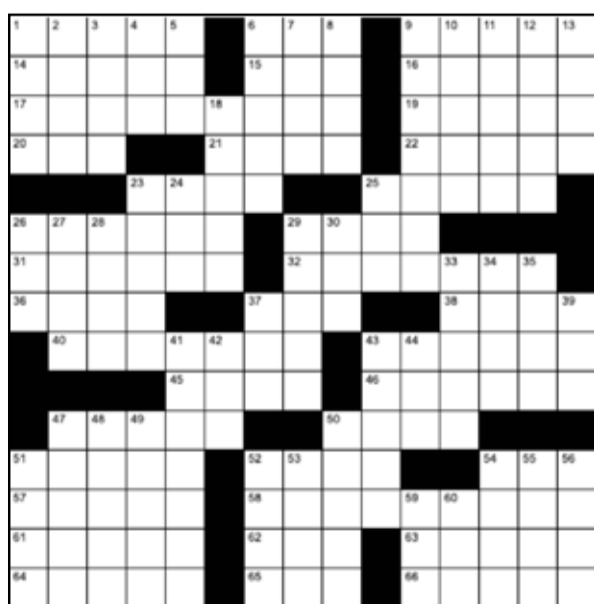
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	13	21	cloudy
Changchun	0	20	rain
Chengdu	16	21	cloudy
Chongqing	16	24	cloudy
Fuzhou	19	26	cloudy
Guangzhou	18	31	fine
Guiyang	12	25	cloudy
Haikou	24	28	rain
Hangzhou	14	28	fine
Harbin	-2	15	rain
Hefei	13	28	fine
Nanjing	15	27	fine
Shanghai	18	25	fine
Taipei	21	27	fine
Wuhan	14	29	fine
Hong Kong	23	27	fine
WORLD			
Moscow	0	9	rain
Frankfurt	7	13	rain
Paris	6	13	cloudy
London	8	11	rain
New York	5	12	fine

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Lover of Juliet; 6- CIO's partner; 9- Some Art Deco works; 14- Pontificate; 15- Canterbury can; 16- Mock, annoy; 17- Vegetable; 19- Best of a group; 20- Cal pages; 21- Tar; 22- Strictness; 23- Ready to eat; 25- Remove a covering; 26- Third sign of the zodiac; 29- Editor Wintour; 31- Slip by; 32- Lamenting loudly; 36- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 37- Satisfied sound; 38- Lumpy fuel; 40- High ruler; 43- Verdi opera; 45- Low-lying area; 46- People of courage; 47- It's a good thing; 50- Aeons; 51- Fall bloomer; 52- Franc replacement; 54- Nasser's org.; 57- Practice; 58- Breeding stallion; 61- Doughnut-shaped surface; 62- Decorative flap on a garment; 63- Break up; 64- Eight singers; 65- There you are!; 66- Small rodent;

DOWN 1- Travel far and wide; 2- Estimator's phrase; 3- Charts; 4- Zeta follower; 5- the land of the free...; 6- Aquarium buildup; 7- Disgusting; 8- Missing; 9- Endless; 10- Piece of history; 11- Coniferous evergreen forest; 12- Bar, legally; 13- Psychic; 18- Easy ___; 23- Shred; 24- Officeholders; 25- Verse starter?; 26- "Fancy that!"; 27- Different; 28- Yes, ___; 29- Alert, knowing; 30- Slangy negative; 33- Champagne buckets; 34- ___ contendere; 35- Strong wind; 37- "You've got mail" co.; 39- Acapulco article; 41- Himalayan peak; 42- Squeal (on); 43- 1977 George Burns film; 44- Driving peg; 47- Org.; 48- Square one; 49- Smooth transition; 50- Island off Venezuela; 51- Mercury or Saturn; 52- This, in Tijuana; 53- Beehive State; 54- Pakistani tongue; 55- Sale sign; 56- Network of nerves; 59- Skirt stitching; 60- Lennon's love;



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

ROWING

PRINCE WILLIAM GOES DRAGON BOATING IN SINGAPORE AHEAD OF EARTHSHOT PRIZE CEREMONY

BRITAIN'S Prince William took to the waters in Singapore for a morning of dragon boating yesterday, ahead of activities for the annual Earthshot Prize awards aimed at promoting solutions for the planet's environmental threats.

Donning a life vest and a black cap, the Prince of Wales sat in a long narrow boat as he paddled with athletes from the British Dragons club on the Kallang river. Working in pairs, William and the other 19 paddlers rowed vigorously to the steady beat of a drummer standing in the bow.

His boat triumphed in a brief race with another boat captained by British High Commissioner Kara Owen. It was not the first time for William, an avid sportsman who tried his hand at dragon boating with his wife, Kate, the Princess of Wales, during a tour of Canada in 2011.

Dragon boat racing, originating from China, can be traced



back nearly 2,000 years before it became a modern international sport in 1976.

"I was lucky enough to be sitting next to him, and he is just a really nice guy," said Laura Greenwood, a British expat who is a member of the British Dragons. "He has dragon boated before, so he felt kind of confident in what he was doing ... It was quite fast pace, so he kept up really well."

William, 41, arrived Sunday ahead of the annual Earthshot Prize awards ceremony, the first to be held in Asia. William and his Royal Foundation charity launched the global environment competition in 2020 to promote innovative solutions and technologies to combat global warming and repair the planet.

William is to address a star-studded award ceremony Tuesday,

where winners will be named in five categories: nature protection, clean air, ocean revival, waste elimination, and climate change.

Each winner will get 1 million pounds (\$1.2 million) to help them scale up their projects for wider global reach. All 15 finalists, representing six continents and selected from 1,300 nominees this year, will receive help in expanding their projects.

Actors Hannah Waddingham and Sterling K. Brown will co-host the event, which will also be attended by wildlife conservationist Robert Irwin and celebrities including Oscar-winner Cate Blanchett and actors Lana Condor and Nomzamo Mbatha.

The prize's name refers to the late President John F. Kennedy's 1962 "moonshot" speech, which challenged Americans to reach the moon by the end of that decade. That inspired the prince and his partners to set a similar goal for finding solutions to environmental problems by 2030.

The inaugural ceremony was held in London in 2021 and the second in Boston last year.

William's office at Kensington Palace has said Singapore was chosen to host this year's ceremony because of its role as a "hub for innovation" in Southeast Asia.

During his four-day visit, his first to the city-state since 2012, William will also call on Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and meet with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

William also plans to attend the United for Wildlife summit, featuring representatives of law enforcement agencies, conservation groups and corporations working to combat trade in illegal wildlife products, estimated at \$20 billion annually. **MDT/AP**

AD

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FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)



FOOTBALL | SERIE A

Lukaku loses perfect penalty record in Italy but scores late to help Roma beat Lecce

DANIELLA MATAR, MILAN

ROMA 2, LECCE 1

ROMELU Lukaku lost his perfect penalty record in Italy but made up for it with a last-minute winner as two stoppage-time goals saw Roma snatch a 2-1 win over Lecce in Serie A yesterday [Macau time].

Lukaku should have got Roma off to the perfect start but his spot kick was saved by Lecce goalkeeper Wladimiro Falcone.

It was the first penalty Lukaku had failed to convert in Italy, having scored 14 times from the spot for Inter Milan.

The penalty had been awarded on video review after Federico Baschirotto was adjudged to have handled Paulo Dybala's strike in the second minute.

Dybala, who was returning from a month out with injury, almost gave Roma the lead in the 31st minute but he saw a first attempt accidentally blocked by



Lukaku and, as the move continued, he volleyed narrowly wide of the left post.

Lecce broke the deadlock in the 71st when Lameck Banda raced down the left and cut inside past Roma defender Gianluca Mancini. He managed to evade another tackle to get the ball to Pontus Almqvist, who swept it into the bot-

tom left corner.

It appeared as if Lecce was heading to its first win in seven matches but substitute Sardar Azmoun headed in Nicola Zalewski's cross in the first minute of stoppage time. It was the Iran forward's first goal in Italy.

And the home crowd at the Stadio Olimpico went from despair

to delight in less than three minutes as Lukaku then curled Dybala's through ball into the top left corner.

Roma moved level on points with seventh-place Fiorentina.

Juventus cut the gap to Serie A leader Inter Milan back to two points with a 1-0 win at Fiorentina, which dominated the match

for long periods. Inter won 2-1 at Atalanta on Saturday.

Fabio Miretti scored the only goal in the 10th minute, firing Filip Kostić's cross into the near bottom corner. It was a first senior goal for the 20-year-old Miretti, who has been at Juventus since he was 8 years old.

Juventus has not conceded a goal for six straight matches.

A section of hardcore Fiorentina fans boycotted the match in protest as they felt it shouldn't have gone ahead at a time when the Tuscany region is struggling after devastating floods in the wake of Storm Ciarán.

They left their seats empty at one end of the stadium and were instead working to help clear the mud and standing water from homes and businesses.

There was a minute's silence before all Serie A matches this weekend in memory of the victims. In Florence, the two teams — normally fierce rivals — mixed together during that moment to show their solidarity. **MDT/AP**

AD

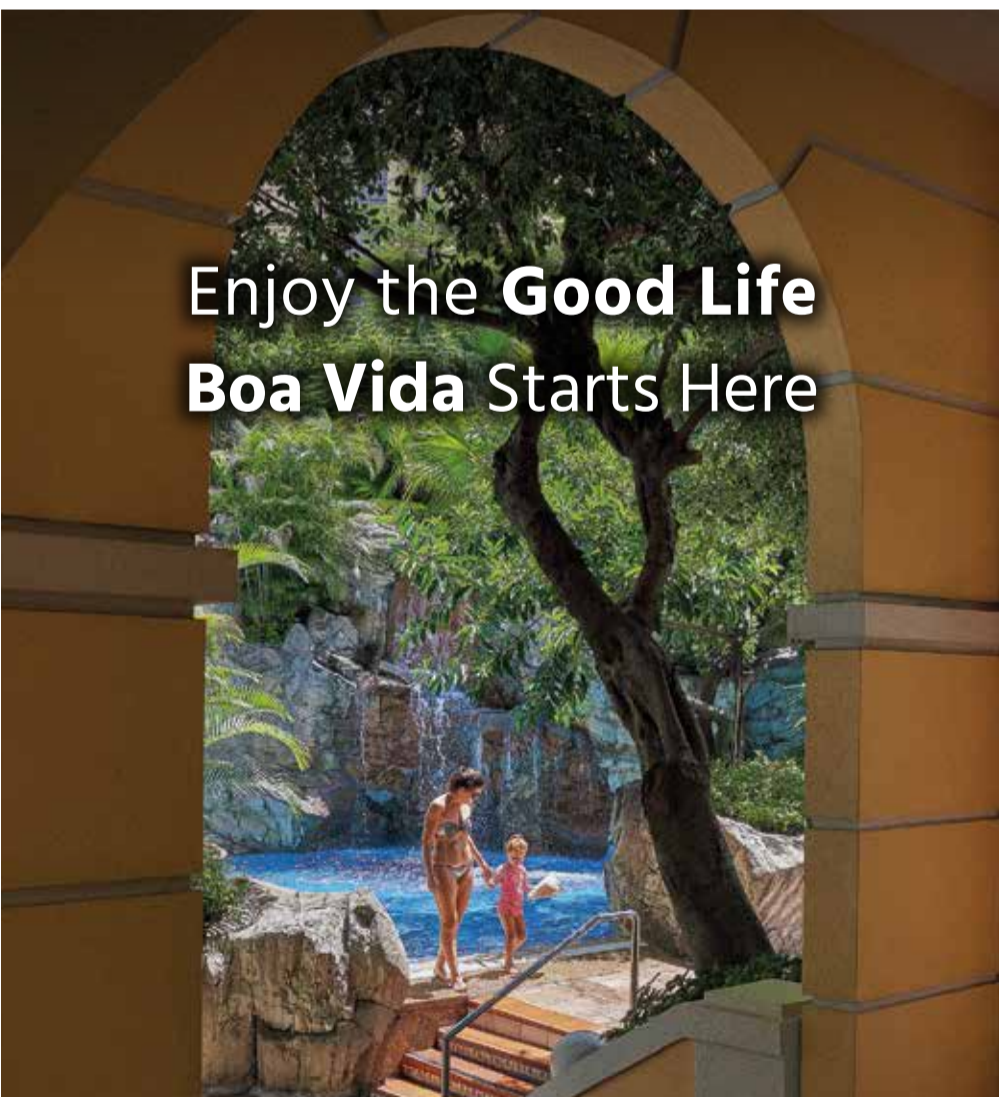


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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

'DEBT TRAP' CLAIM NOTHING BUT A MYTH

US President Joe Biden pledged to increase US investment in the Americas and the Caribbean at the first Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity Leaders' Summit in Washington on Friday. Yet in his opening remarks, he unnecessarily alluded to China which drove home the point that the event is another front to counter China's influence in the Western hemisphere rather than to help regional countries meet their urgent infrastructure needs.

"We want to make sure that our closest neighbors know they have a real choice between debt trap diplomacy and high quality, transparent approaches to infrastructure and to development," he told the leaders of 11 other inaugural Americas' Partnership countries — Barbados, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay — that attended the meeting.

The United States has become so desperate to contain China that it is turning even a meeting on economic issues into an event to attack China. True, China has developed extensive cooperative relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries — it has free trade agreements with Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru, and 21 Latin American countries have joined the Belt and Road Initiative. But that doesn't mean China is targeting the US. On the contrary, its goal is to help improve infrastructure connectivity in the region so the countries there can boost their development and China can benefit from their development.

Poor infrastructure and shortage of funds are the major obstacles to economic growth in the region. As such, the development loans China has offered to, and its rising investments in, Latin American and Caribbean countries have enabled them to make up for the fund shortage and focus on key construction projects such as ports, airports, highways and railways to the benefit of the local economy and people.

Yet such mutually beneficial relations have irked the US, which has always seen the region as its backyard and, of late, China as its major strategic competitor. That's why it has been trying to demonize China's cooperation with the countries in the region by using tropes such as the "debt trap" narrative.

China has not caused a debt crisis in any country. Instead, it is the US, the biggest source of investment in the region, which has been linked with many debt crises in Latin America and the Caribbean over the past several decades.

Washington should abandon its Cold War mentality and stop slinging mud at China if it really seeks to promote economic prosperity in the Americas and the Caribbean. But when has Washington been interested in helping other countries achieve economic prosperity?

MAN ACCUSED OF ANTARCTIC ASSAULT SENT TO REMOTE ICEFIELD WITH GRADUATE STUDENTS

THE BUZZ

A man accused of physically assaulting a woman at a U.S. research station in Antarctica was then sent to a remote icefield where he was tasked with protecting the safety of a professor and three young graduate students, and he remained there for a full week after a warrant for his arrest was issued, documents obtained by The Associated Press show.

Stephen Tyler Bieneman has pleaded not guilty to misdemeanor assault over the incident last November at McMurdo Station, which his lawyer said was nothing more than "horseplay." The case is due to go to trial today [Macau time] in Honolulu.

The National Science Foundation declined to answer AP questions about why Bieneman was sent out into the field in a critical safety role while under investigation. The case raises further questions about decision-making in the U.S. Antarctic Program, which is already under scrutiny.

An AP investigation in August uncovered a pattern of women at McMurdo who said their claims of sexual harassment or assault were minimized by their employers, often leading to them or others being put in further danger.

AP PHOTO



AID TRICKLES IN TO NEPAL VILLAGES STRUCK BY EARTHQUAKE AS SURVIVORS SALVAGE BELONGINGS FROM RUBBLE

BINAJ GURUBACHARYA, KATHMANDU

Aid trickled in to villages yesterday in Nepal's northwest mountains flattened by a strong earthquake over the weekend as villagers searched through the rubble of their collapsed homes to salvage what was left of their belongings.

The magnitude 5.6 temblor struck just minutes before midnight Friday, killing 157 people, injuring scores and leaving thousands homeless. The U.S. Geological Survey said that the quake occurred at a depth of 11 miles (18 kilometers). Nepal's National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Center confirmed that the epicenter was in Jajarkot, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) northeast of the capital, Kathmandu.

Authorities yesterday pressed on with efforts to bring food and other supplies, tents and medicines to the remote villages, many only reachable by foot. Roads were also blocked by landslides triggered by the earthquake. Soldiers could be seen trying to clear blocked roads.

Rescue and search teams said that the first part of their mission — to rescue survivors, get the injured to treatment and search for

bodies — was over.

"Now we are working on the second phase of our work to distribute relief material, get aid to the villagers, and at the same time we are collecting details about the damages," said government official Harish Chandra Sharma.

The National Emergency Operation Center in Kathmandu said that along with the 157 killed, at least 256 people were injured and 3,891 houses were damaged.

In Chepare, villagers were going through piles of rocks and logs that used to be their homes, looking for anything they could salvage.

"Most of what belonged to us is under the rubble, all our beds, clothes, whatever jewelry and money we had, it's all under there," said Nir-mala Sharma, pointing to her wrecked home.

She said they got a tent and some food on Sunday night. Authorities distributed rice, oil, instant noodles and salt in the village, to last them for a few days.

Tarpaulin and plastic sheets made for temporary shelters for a lucky few while thousands of others spent a third night in the cold.

Mina Bika said her family was sleeping on Friday night when the ceiling fell

and buried them. A relative rescued them. Her husband was badly injured and taken to hospital in the town of Surkhet while she and the couple's two sons were only lightly hurt.

"It felt like the world had collapsed and I was not sure if anyone had even survived and would be able to help," she said.

Most of the homes in the villages in the districts of Jajarkot and Rukum — where houses are traditionally built by stacking rocks and logs — either collapsed or were severely damaged but even the few buildings made out of concrete were also damaged.

After a Cabinet meeting on Sunday, Communications Minister Rekha Sharma told reporters that supplying food and setting up temporary shelters were the main focus of government efforts for the moment while also working on plans to reconstruct damaged houses.

Friday night's quake was also felt in India's capital, New Delhi, more than 800 kilometers away.

Earthquakes are common in mountainous Nepal. A 7.8 magnitude earthquake in 2015 killed around 9,000 people and damaged about 1 million structures.

MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



USA President Joe Biden — perhaps the nation's biggest Amtrak fan — is set to promote new federal investments for trains on the heavily trafficked Northeast Corridor. The Democratic president is headed to Bear, Delaware today [Macau time] to announce more than \$16 billion in new funding that will go toward 25 passenger rail projects between Boston and Washington, the White House says. Bear is located about 12 miles from Biden's home of Wilmington.

USA Tyson Foods is recalling nearly 30,000 pounds of breaded chicken "Fun Nuggets" after consumers complained of finding metal pieces in the dinosaur-shaped patties. The nuggets, sold in 29-ounce bags, were produced on Sept. 5 by the Berryville, Arkansas, company. Tyson informed the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service and said it recalled the nuggets voluntarily "out of an abundance of caution."

AP PHOTO



Spain's Canary Islands last weekend have set a new record for the number of irregular arrivals to the archipelago, with more than 32,000 migrants making the treacherous boat journey on the Atlantic Ocean to the European Union territory this year. Most migrants are leaving from Senegal. The islands, located near the African continent, have been used for decades as a stepping stone to Europe.

AP PHOTO



Brazil Three-time champion Max Verstappen led from the start and won the Brazilian Grand Prix yesterday [Macau time]. Sergio Perez of Red Bull finished in fourth place, distancing himself from Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton in one of the few competitions left this season — a position for runner-up. Perez nearly took the podium position from third-place Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin, but the Spaniard saw the checkered flag 0.053 seconds before the Mexican.