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MACAU RCR electronics

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AP PHOTO



Russia A renegade Ukrainian lawmaker who fled to Russia shortly after Moscow's invasion was found dead yesterday [Macau time] near Moscow. The Ukrainian military intelligence lauded the killing, warning that other "traitors of Ukraine" would share the same fate. Illia Kyva, 46, a former member of Ukraine's parliament who had called for Kyiv to surrender was found dead with a gunshot wound to the head in a cottage village near the capital.

Russia A schoolgirl shot several of her classmates with a gun yesterday, killing one person and injuring five others, before killing herself, state news agencies and authorities said. The shooting happened at a school in Bryansk, in a region that borders Ukraine, Russia's Investigative Committee said. Children were reportedly among the wounded.

AP PHOTO



USA House Republicans are warning Hunter Biden (pictured) that they will move to hold him in contempt of Congress if he doesn't appear this month for a closed-door deposition, raising the stakes in the growing standoff over testimony from President Joe Biden's son. Hunter has insisted that he will only testify to the House if it's in public. But top Republicans told him that their subpoena for a closed-door deposition on Dec. 13 is non-negotiable.

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JUDICIARY POLICE INVESTIGATE TAP SEAC SQUARE FIRE

An investigation has commenced into the possibly suspicious fire under Tap Seac Square on Wednesday, the Judiciary Police (PJ) has announced.

The Wednesday fire happened in the underground coach parking lot at Tap Seac Square. Heavy grey smoke was seen at various entrances to the parking lot, such as the entrance and exit to the underground tunnel and several chimneys on the ground level.

According to a text message the police sent to the press, the fire started in the fifth row of seats of a coach parked at the facility. Although the coach was severely damaged, no casualty or injury was reported.

The case was referred to the police by the Fire Services Bureau (CB) at 6:48 p.m. on Wednesday. At 3:59 p.m. the same day, the CB Control Centre received a report about the fire. When firefighters arrived at the scene just four minutes later, the coach was ablaze. The fire was successfully extinguished at 4:27 p.m. that same day.

Traffic near the scene was severely impacted with neighborhood roads completely cordoned off to support the operation. Traffic from Avenida de Sidónio Pais towards Vasco de Gama Garden was suspended near Tap Seac. Those from Rua de Sacadura Cabral were required to make a U-turn at Tap Seac and disperse through Rua do Bispo Medeiros. Motor traffic from Praia Grande was barred from entering Rua do Campo.

Normal traffic flow resumed at nearly 5 p.m. once the fire was extinguished. **AL**

TOURISM

PATA TO HOST ANNUAL SUMMIT IN MACAU NEXT MAY

RENATO MARQUES

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) will host its annual summit in Macau from May 15 to 17 next year, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) announced yesterday. The announcement came after a three-day site inspection by a delegation of the tourism organization to Macau.

The PATA delegation has toured Macau this week in preparation for the summit as well as to gain immediate understanding in situ of the new tourism and venue offerings in Macau.

This was the first visit by PATA to Macau since the pandemic. The director of the MGTO, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, pointed out that this will be the first PATA event that Macau will host since the pandemic.

"It is an honor for Macau to host the PATA 2024 Annual Summit. The association has a special place in the heart of our tourism industry, and we are happy to once again be allowed to welcome delegates from various destinations to our city. Especially since this will be the first PATA event we have hosted since the pandemic, allowing us to show participants the current dynamism in the evo-



lution of our city towards greater diversification, providing a memorable event in Macau," Senna Fernandes said.

On behalf of PATA, president Peter Semone expressed joy about the return to Macau, saying, "all of us at PATA are excited to return to Macau for the 2024 PATA Annual Summit and experience a first-hand update of the significant develop-

ments in the destination since the successful 2010 and 2017 editions of PATA Travel Mart in Macau, and the PATA Annual Conference in 2005. The MGTO has been a strong partner of PATA since 1958 and a sponsor of the PATA Gold Awards for the last 28 consecutive years. Next year's event provides Macau with the perfect opportunity to showcase the destination

and the Greater Bay Area to all delegates."

The three-day event is scheduled for May next year and will take place at the Grand Lisboa Palace Resort. The international conference will bring together tourism industry leaders from the public and private sectors in the Asia-Pacific region in the city to discuss topics relevant to the sector and related to Macau.

TRANSPORT

Taxi drivers to ask for tariff increase before CNY

Macau taxi drivers are set to lobby the government for a tariff increase just before the Chinese New Year, the Macao Taxi Driver Mutual Association announced. According to the association, it has received opinions and requests from "many colleagues" on the call for an increase.

Tony Kuok of the asso-

ciation said that the surcharge for the Lunar New Year is to compensate drivers who have to work holidays, even if they want to stay with their families.

He argued that taxi fares have not increased in six years. The sector attempted a similar adjustment to the tariffs in 2019, however, the government did not implement the

increase due to the pandemic.

"Now the price of fuel is more or less MOP14, and even the cost of maintaining the vehicles [is high]. We will detail all this in the proposal to the Transport Bureau," Kuok said.

Recently, the DSAT has accepted 21 of 40 bids in the public tender for the

allocation of regular taxi licenses.

The successful bids aim to secure 10 general taxi licenses of eight-year terms.

The city has been facing a taxi shortage following the reopening of the border, making it difficult for residents and tourists to hail one, particularly during peak hours. **LV**



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

GAMING

Fitch raises the bar and forecasts MOP231b GGR for next year

RENATO MARQUES

FITCH Ratings has forecast Macau's gaming industry to reach some MOP231 billion in revenue, according to the American credit rating agency's Global Gaming Outlook 2024 report.

In the report, the agency said it expects local gaming revenue to recover in 2024 to 79% of the level seen back in 2019 (pre-pandemic).

At that time, casino revenues made, according to figures from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ), an accumulated MOP292.455 billion.

In the same report, Fitch also notes that the local ga-



ming industry will continue to grow at a good rate in 2024 despite growing concerns around China's general economic situation, which can greatly affect Macau's gaming performance.

The large majority of the gamblers in Macau come

from mainland China and the flow of these visitors into Macau casinos is controlled using visas. This is a significant mechanism not at the disposal of other jurisdictions.

Although this is the highest projection so far of industry performance next year, it is

not that far off other forecasts, including one from the local government who expect the industry to account for some MOP216 billion in earnings in 2024.

Approximately one month ago, the director of the Institute for the Study of Commercial Gaming and a gaming sector scholar at the University of Macau, Davis Fong also projected the performance of the industry, noting that it could reach as much as MOP220 billion in revenues.

Fong is said to have based his analysis on the flow of visitors this year and the expected continued focus on attracting visitors from the Southeast Asian market. He also based this projection on an expected increase of international tourists from other areas such as Europe and the Middle East.

In a slightly different context and without making projections for next year, Ben Lee, managing partner at IGamiX said in September that the local gaming market is nearing its limit, adding that it "will be difficult to improve gaming revenues much further in 2024 without [increasing] the VIP segment."

IPIM EXPECTS 50% INCREASE IN MICE NEXT YEAR, MORE DIVERSE THEMES

THE Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) expects 2024 to bring increasingly more varied MICE events to Macau, the president of IPIM, Vincent U said yesterday morning during his speech at the Sub-forum: Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Forum on MICE Tourism Economy.

According to U, the number of MICE events next year is expected to increase by approximately 50% to a total of 1,500.

The same official also noted that, continuing from this year, the type of industries involved in MICE events will be more diverse than in the past when most events were business and trade related.

U said that sports, performing arts, and other themes are expected to become more frequent in MICE events in Macau next year, noting that more emphasis will be placed on arts and culture.

The Sub-forum took place at the Galaxy International Convention Center in the presence of approximately 180 participants

This is the first time this kind of forum was held under the "one conference, three places" arrangement with events happening in Macau, Zhuhai, and Guangzhou. **RM**

Gov't reiterates economic benefits of close ties with mainland

ANTHONY LAM

IN response to an unfavorable economic rating, the local government reiterated the potential benefits of positioning the city in step with national policies.

"Moody's Investors Service" (Moody's) announced that it will maintain the long-term issuer credit rating assigned to the Macau Special Administrative Region at "Aa3." According to Moody's rating definition, the "Aa3" rating is the

fourth highest level, meaning the risk of default is very low.

On behalf of the government, the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) emphasized in a statement that "the Macau SAR Government does not agree with Moody's future outlook for the SAR, which was moved from 'stable' to a 'negative' level."

"It should be noted, in fact, that the close economic ties between Macau and Mainland China will provide

strong support for its long-term development. At a time when the global economy is facing complex challenges and multiple uncertainties, mainland China's economy still grew 5.2% in real terms in the first three quarters of 2023, which will have a positive impact on Macau's external demand," the AMCM continued saying, adding that "the International Monetary Fund estimates that China's contribution to world economic growth this year

will be more than 30%."

To further emphasize its stance, the AMCM noted that the local government has adopted "prudent budgetary management," in addition to having ample fiscal and foreign exchange reserves.

It also cited the city's recovery rate of 77.7% in the first three quarters of the year, as well as the clarification of the plan for economic diversification, to further oppose the rating entity's assessment.



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Nearly 400, including distinguished scholars, investigate space science at MUST

ANTHONY LAM

SECOND Macau Space Development Forum, held at the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) from Nov. 28 to 29, attracted nearly 400 participants, many of whom are experts in the area, from some of the world's most distinguished entities.

The forum, a major component of a series of events, was jointly organized by the China Space Foundation and the Macao Foundation, co-hosted by the MUST and China Space Science and Industry Consultation Co., Ltd.

Divided into a main forum and two sub-forums, the event's first afternoon featured Li Guoping, chief engineer of the China National Space Administration (CNSA), who reviewed the remarkable achievements of China's Space industry in the past five years and the fruitful results achieved in the exchange of space technology between Macau and the mainland.

He also encouraged Macau to fully leverage its advantages in the long-term integration of diverse cultures from the East and West, and to deepen international exchange and cooperation in space.

The government's Deputy Director for Economic and Technological Development, Pong Kai Fu, shared the current situation in terms of policies, measures and goals set for the promotion of science and technology.

Meanwhile, academics and



experts in attendance delivered presentations on the latest achievements in their respective fields. The presentations centered around the theme of interdisciplinary integration and technological convergence in space technology.

MUST was the host of the second day of events, highlighting two sub-forums held on campus. In the sub-forum focused on the role of space technology in promoting diversification of Macau's economy and the technology and applications of Macau satellites, over twenty academics, experts, and industry representatives shared their insights on how space technology can contribute to Macau's

industrial and economic development. They also offered suggestions for the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao International Innovation Center, and provided guidance for the technological advancement and satellite applications of Macau's scientific satellites.

In the same session, Chairman of the Administrative Committee of the Science and Technology Development Fund, Che Weng Keong, expressed in a speech that technological innovation is a key factor in realizing the moderate diversification of Macau's "1+4" economy.

The SAR government, through policy guidance, is gradually build-

ing a technology innovation system with enterprises at its core. It aims to be market-oriented and an in-depth integration of industry, academia, and research. This system aims to encourage financial institutions and community ventures to invest in the technology industry, supporting Macau enterprises in enhancing their core competitiveness through technological means.

After years of exploration, the Macao Science and Technology Development Fund has established a technology innovation funding system with enterprises and universities at its center. Representing cutting-edge national science and te-

chnology, the space and related industries can be deeply integrated with the diverse needs of Macau's industrial and commercial development through the conversion and transfer of high-tech achievements. There is enormous potential for future market development.

The other sub-forum, themed Macau Science Satellites: Science and Application, saw participating experts and researchers, such as Dr Anja Strømme from European Space Agency, Associate Professor Simon Edward Williams from University of Tasmania and Dr Werner Magnes from Space Research Institute of Austrian Academy of Science, providing detailed reports on various crucial scientific and technological issues and advancements related to the Macau Science Satellites-1 (MSS-1).

The hosting of this forum serves as a significant platform for exchange and cooperation between Macau and China in the space field. The reports presented by the participating experts not only showcased the latest research achievements in their respective fields but also indicated directions for future collaboration and development.

The successful organization of the Macau Space Development Forum will further propel Macau's advancements in space technology and facilitate exchange and collaboration between Macau and the international space community.

MUST space scientist: Commodifying space technology relies on threshold

ANTHONY LAM

THE gradual lowering of the threshold to accessing space technology will help in commodifying the science, which should happen soon, Chair Professor Zong Qiugang, director of Space Science Institute and State Key Laboratory of Lunar and Planetary Sciences, Macau University of Science and Technology, said.

"I still remember many years ago, when I was researching near the South Pole, satellite telephone charges were USD4 per minute," Zong recalled. "Now, even GPS and television transmis-



Zong Qiugang

sion use artificial satellite technologies."

The scientist emphasized that the entry threshold for commodified space technology has been consistently

lowered. Referring to commercial astronautics, he believes that it will soon be available in China. In the future, Zong added, space science will help full coverage of mo-

bile communications.

"In fact, many Chinese private enterprises have been investing in this area and are testing the technology," Zong disclosed. "The key

is to further lower the access threshold, so that it can become as widely accessible as possible."

The scholar added that space technology is not as distant from regular people as most people think. Not only has it been used in data transmission, it is also involved in agriculture and tides. He reiterated that the lunar calendar, on which farmers rely, is based on the movements and activities of the moon.

While discussing the position of Macau in national and global research on space, Zong complimented the city's background that is

enriched by cultures from both the east and the west. Admitting to the slight difference between eastern and western mindsets, Zong highlighted Macau's capacity to gather perspectives from both sides in space science research.

Furthermore, the city's strategic geographical and political location determines its academic value. The One Country, Two Systems principle helps gather scholars from around the world to explore science and expand boundaries.

In the meantime, Zong believes that Macau will provide strong support when commercial space travel commences in China. The scientist thinks that people in the city will be intrigued and keen to experience astronautics when it is commercialized.



Werner Magnes



David Gubbins



Simon Edward Williams



Anja Strømme



Zhang Keke

AUSTRIAN SPACE EXPERT EMPHASIZES MACAU'S EFFORT IN HELPING TO 'LOOK INTO EARTH'

An expert on the application of space magnetometers, Dr. Werner Magnes, deputy director, Space Research Institute of Austrian Academy of Sciences, reiterated the special nature of "looking into the Earth" of a locally-orchestrated satellite mission.

Magnes has been involved in the design and manufacturing of the magnetic loads of a number of satellites in Europe and the U.S., as well as that of the Macau Science Satellites-1 (MSS-1). He also helps with the processing of associated data.

When asked to compare his previous projects and MSS-1, the scientist pointed out that the main goal of MSS-1 is to understand the intrinsic magnetic field of the Earth, "looking into the Earth, which is very special," he described. The scholar is also involved in the China Seismic Satellite Mission project.

"Although it is not so much [related to] the intrinsic field, it concerns the relations between the lithosphere and seismic events, as well as [relevant] interactions and signals that we see at four to five hundred kilometers above the ground," Magnes explained.

When asked why artificial satellites are so important to human life, the expert in magnetometers explained that although most people are more familiar with navigation and daily communications - which depend greatly on artificial satellites - the satellites are also used in a variety of scientific scenarios.

"Artificial satellites can help investigate our world and its neighborhood, such as the atmosphere and the solar system," the expert said. "They also help investigate the near-earth environment and sometimes the exoplanets as well."

In fact, on many occasions, artificial satellites have played a crucial role in identifying astronomical scenarios, such as solar storms and asteroids, which could cause significant impacts on people's lives.

"Using artificial satellites in these scientific scenarios is indeed very fascinating," Magnes concluded.

ROYAL SOCIETY FELLOW 'SURPRISED' BY MSS-1 PROGRESS

"If you had asked me back in May, before the satellite was launched, about how much information we would get from this forum, I would have expected nothing and thought [the team] would still be testing," Professor David Gubbins, fellow of The Royal Society, said when commenting on the 2nd Macau Space Development Forum held at the Macau University of Science and Technology.

"I don't think I'm a pessimist, but I do think we're all quite surprised by the speed and success so far," he added as he reviewed the progress that MSS-1 has made so far. Another reason for his surprise is that "previous satellites have taken longer."

"Although it has only been two months since accurate data has come in, it looks very promising," Gubbins said with regards to the Macau Science Satellites-1 (MSS-1) mission.

Explaining that his main interest is in the internal magnetic field of the Earth as well as the magnetization of the rocks and the core field, he revealed that the scientific community finds separating the two areas important. In order to achieve this, "high-resolution measurement is required," he said.

MSS-1 was designed to study the fading magnetic field in the South Atlantic, so it revolves across time zones, in contrast to the polar routes usually taken by other satellites. This will help collect a wider range of data for scientific use.

Macau is closely connected to marine exploration due to its coastal location. Describing this, the expert said the MSS-1 data will complement historical data collected by sailors, to a much more accurate level. "Ancient data may be accurate to a quarter of a degree, but MSS-1 data can be to a sixtieth of a degree or even smaller," Gubbins highlighted, adding that MSS-1 data will help show how the magnetic field has changed, among other meaningful applications. MSS-1 data will also help improve future magnetic detections on cellphones, he previewed.

AUSTRALIAN GEOPHYSICIST COMPLIMENTS MSS-1'S MULTIDISCIPLINARY NATURE

The Macau Science Satellites-1 (MSS-1), being multidisciplinary, will indeed be helpful to a wide range of scientists and non-scientists, Associate Professor Simon Edward Williams, geophysicist at University of Tasmania, said on the sidelines of the 2nd Macau Space Development Forum held at the Macau University of Science and Technology.

The geophysicist emphasized that many people from a variety of disciplines were involved in the MSS-1 project. "The key thing in this kind of project is that it's very hard to find all those kinds of people in one place. This kind of project requires resources and expertise on an international scale," he said. "One of the things that makes it so interesting is that we all have our own specializations, but it gets so inspiring as we interact with experts from different fields in the same project."

Focusing scientifically on the lithosphere - the peripheral rocky part of Earth - the geophysicist explained that in order to conduct his research, he needs data on the magnetic field. For most of his career, he recalled, he has relied on data collected by aircraft and ships. However, the shortcoming of this method is that a large area of the Earth is not covered and data collection takes a long time.

The advantage of using artificial satellites, such as the MSS-1, in data collection is that the entire surface of the planet will be covered and the process can be expedited. "They give us a more holistic picture of what's [happening in] the whole planet at a uniform resolution for us to work on a global scale," he explained.

Echoing fellows at the forum, Williams agreed that MSS-1 will help fill gaps in the picture in his field.

ESA EXPERT TRUSTS MSS-1'S POTENTIAL SUCCESS

The Macau Science Satellites-1 (MSS-1) will become as successful as the Swarm system that she leads at the European Space Agency (ESA), Dr Anja Strømme, Swarm Mission Manager at the Agency and ionospheric physicist, said.

Swarm is the name of a constellation of three satellites that the

expert is managing.

Her opinion is that not only is MSS-1 well placed in space, but the team monitoring it in Macau is working shoulder to shoulder with both the Swarm and international communities.

Another important factor is that data collected by the Chinese system must be made available to interested users, and users must be encouraged to access these data, which should be gathered to solve problems on a global scale. Based on this, the scientist believes that MSS-1 has been set on the path towards success.

What is more important is that MSS-1 and Swarm will complement each other on an international scale. A critical factor is that the two systems circumnavigate the Earth in different orbits, with MSS-1 being able to cover all different time zones around the globe, recording local time in a much better fashion. "They are doing very good things in different ways," the expert said.

Further explaining the two projects, both Swarm and MSS-1 study the complex magnetic field of the Earth, Strømme advised, adding that both systems are installed with complicated magnetometers for calibration and collection of extremely accurate data.

The difference, meanwhile, is that Swarm is carrying some plasma instruments to measure iron velocities as well as density and temperature of plasma. Another difference concerns the payloads of the two systems. In addition, the Swarm is a system comprising three satellites, while MSS-1 comes in a pair. These types of artificial satellites are professionally referred to as a constellation. Their orbits are also different, Strømme added.

MUST SPACE SCIENTIST COMPLIMENTS MSS-1 FOR DRAWING LIMELIGHT TO CHINA

The Macau Science Satellites-1 (MSS-1) has attracted the global focus in space science to Macau SAR and China, Chair Professor Keke Zhang, Associate Vice President of Macau University of Science and Technology (M.U.S.T.), Dean of Macau Institute of Space Technology and Application and the Chief Scientist of Macau Science Satellites-1 said.

It is delightful to see that the 2nd

Macau Space Development Forum has attracted nearly 400 participants, Zhang noted, acknowledging this embodied the world's consensus on the significance of the satellite mission.

Adding that he was very much moved by the outcome, he pointed out that MSS-1 has put Macau on the global scientific stage. A scientist from the western part of the world, he recalled, commented that the global limelight is back on China because of MSS-1. Zhang also recalled the scientist describing how, over 1,000 years ago, China invented the compass, drawing a connection between the two accomplishments, which are both related to the planet's magnetic field.

"This is not only a scientific achievement, but also a representation of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," Zhang described.

Earlier, The Royal Society held a seminar on MSS-1. Zhang said that it was unprecedented for the British entity to organize such a seminar for a Chinese artificial satellite. "It gathered much feedback," Zhang said.

The satellite will also foster international collaboration, Zhang said, because he will be in Italy in December representing Macau as part of the Chinese delegation to discuss partnerships related to MSS-1.

Zhang disclosed that preliminary fruits have been seen already. For example, a simple model of the Earth's magnetic field has been formed. Environmental research on the space of the planet was also conducted.

On MSS-1's future, the scholar said it will be used to understand the nature of the Earth's geodynamo and the generation of the planet's magnetic field, as well as the magnetic structure of both the land and seas.

Data gathered will also be used to help enhance applications related to the planet's magnetic field, such as finetuning magnetic functions on cellphones. The research team will attempt to optimize the formation of the model of the Earth's magnetic field so that the knowledge can be applied in economic and commercial arenas.

Agreements with 18 research entities have been signed on exchange and research of data collected by MSS-1.

HEALTH

Macau doctors to do training in Hong Kong

MACAU doctors are scheduled to attend specialist training in Hong Kong in 2024, following the launch of new training program by the SARs.

Hong Kong Secretary for Health, Lo Chung-mau, said that the move comes as 92 Guangdong healthcare professionals arrive in Hong Kong and start working in public hospitals. The Standard reports that 100 more will arrive early next year.

The professionals from the mainland comprise 10 doctors, 70 nurses, seven Chinese medicine practitioners and five radiographers who will all work at public hospitals for different durations.

Meanwhile, Lo said the Hospital Authority has reached a consensus with the Health Bureau of Macau to launch a Macau specialist trainee program.

"The first batch of doctors from Macau is expected to come here for training in the first quarter of 2024," he said.

According to the official, the training provides a "good opportunity for mutual learning and enhancement of clinical work standards for healthcare professionals of both places, and will help alleviate the pressure of labor shortages." LV

TRANSPORT

SOCIAL ADVISOR SUGGESTS BETTER USE OF BARRA STATION FOR VITALIZATION

ANTHONY LAM

IMPROVED support for the LRT Barra Station should be established for revitalization of the neighborhood, a social advisor has suggested.

The newest station on the local railway will open at 6:30 a.m. today. It is the first underground railway station in the city and has space for retail activities.

Ao Ieong Kuong Kao, deputy convenor of Central District Social Advisory Board, told local media Macao Daily News that with the transport hub at Barra swinging into full operation from today, the neighborhood should see revitalization.

He said that tourism and cultural facilities should be developed to make the district more attractive, in ad-



dition to the existing A-Ma Temple and Maritime Museum. LRT passengers may even visit San Ma Lo from

the Barra District, facilitated by the new station.

Hospitality and tourism services, such as commer-

cial and shopping facilities, should also be promoted in the neighborhood of Barra Station to further stimulate the economy in that district.

Surrounding local characteristics and cultural resources should also be utilized to develop related industries such as handicrafts, traditional cultural experiences and local cuisine, and protect and enhance local culture, the social advisor added.

Another advisor, Pui Seng In, emphasized the need for pedestrian-friendly facilities near the new station. Sufficient signage should be installed in the neighborhood to help LRT passengers reach locations nearby. This would create a pedestrian neighborhood that surrounds the new LRT station and will lower the need for motor transport.

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"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)



SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitch says it's withdrawing from the S.Korea over expensive network fees

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

TWITCH, a popular video service, will shut down its struggling business in South Korea, a decision its chief executive blamed on allegedly "prohibitively expensive" costs for operating in the country.

In a blog post announcing the company's plan this week, Dan Clancy said the network fees the company has been paying to South Korean internet operators were 10 times more than in most other markets. He did not provide specific numbers to back such claims.

"We've made the difficult decision to shut down the Twitch business in Korea on Feb. 27, 2024," Clancy said in the post. Twitch was able to lower costs by limiting video quality, he said, but "our network fees in Korea are still 10 times more expensive than in most other countries."

A platform popular with video game fans, Twitch downgraded the quality of its video services in South Korea to a resolution of 720 p from 1080 p in September 2022, citing a need to reduce costs. Later that year it blocked South Korean streamers from uploading video-on-demand content.

The moves drew vehement complaints from South Korean users and are thought to have encouraged many to switch to other services like YouTube or South Korean streaming sites like Afreeca TV.

Twitch likely would have faced tougher competition in South Korea next year with Naver, the big-

AP PHOTO



gest domestic internet company, reportedly planning to launch live streaming services for online video game leagues.

The planned withdrawal from South Korea is the latest sign of business struggles at Twitch, which announced in March that it was laying off 400 employees, saying that its "user and revenue growth has not kept pace with our expectations."

"Twitch has been operating in Korea at a significant loss, and unfortunately there is no pa-

thway forward for our business to run more sustainably in that country," Clancy wrote in his blog post.

South Korean telecommunications companies that operate internet networks have feuded in recent years with global content providers like Network and Google, which complained of excessively high charges. There are similar conflicts between those companies and internet providers in Europe.

In September, Netflix said it

reached an agreement with SK Broadband, a South Korean internet provider, to end a legal dispute over network fees. The companies did not release the terms of their settlement.

Jung Sang-wook, an official from the Korea Telecommunications Operators Association, an industry lobby comprised of the country's major telecommunications providers, said he had no way of verifying Clancy's claims about network fees, which are negotiated individually

between companies and sealed with non-disclosure agreements.

"Similar services like Afreeca TV have been enjoying profits, so Twitch's decision could be based on the company's broader management problems," Jung said. The association in October issued a statement last year criticizing Twitch's decision to lower the resolution of its videos, saying that caused many users to complain to telecoms providers that were "providing services smoothly without any problems." **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China enters partnership with Tencent and Maoyan



Sands China Ltd. has recently entered into a strategic partnership with Tencent Video and Maoyan Entertainment.

The three parties will levera-

ge their respective strengths to foster cooperation, including by hosting large-scale offline events, creating content about lifestyle and entertainment programs, and onli-

ne marketing and promotion.

"These initiatives will provide continued support for the diversification of Macau's tourism industry and further enhance the city's positioning as a premium destination," the gaming operator said in a statement.

Tencent Video is the premier destination for online video streaming with 117 million subscribers as of September 30, 2023. It offers a selection of content that includes drama series, films, variety shows, animation, sports, documentaries, and news.

Maoyan Entertainment, meanwhile, has three major business segments: online entertainment ticketing services, entertainment content services, and advertising services.

Artyzen Grand Lapa kicks off 'Art of Sweetness' festive season



Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau recently hosted a magical Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, ushering

in the festive season with the theme "Art of Sweetness." Rutger Verschuren,

Area Vice President, Macau Operations for Artyzen Hospitality Group, and General Manager of Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau said, "in the 'Art of Sweetness,' we find the essence of the holiday season – a time to embrace the warmth of family, share joy with friends, and create lasting memories."

The highlight of the ceremony was the unveiling of Artyzen's Christmas tree, standing at an impressive 5.5 meters, elegantly crafted from red and gold macarons.

Following this sensational ceremony, the TIS Choir serenaded the audience with six timeless Christmas songs.

TRADE

EXPORTS EDGED HIGHER FOR FIRST TIME IN SEVEN MONTHS, IMPORTS FELL

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINA'S exports rose in November, the first increase since April, while imports fell, according to customs data released yesterday.

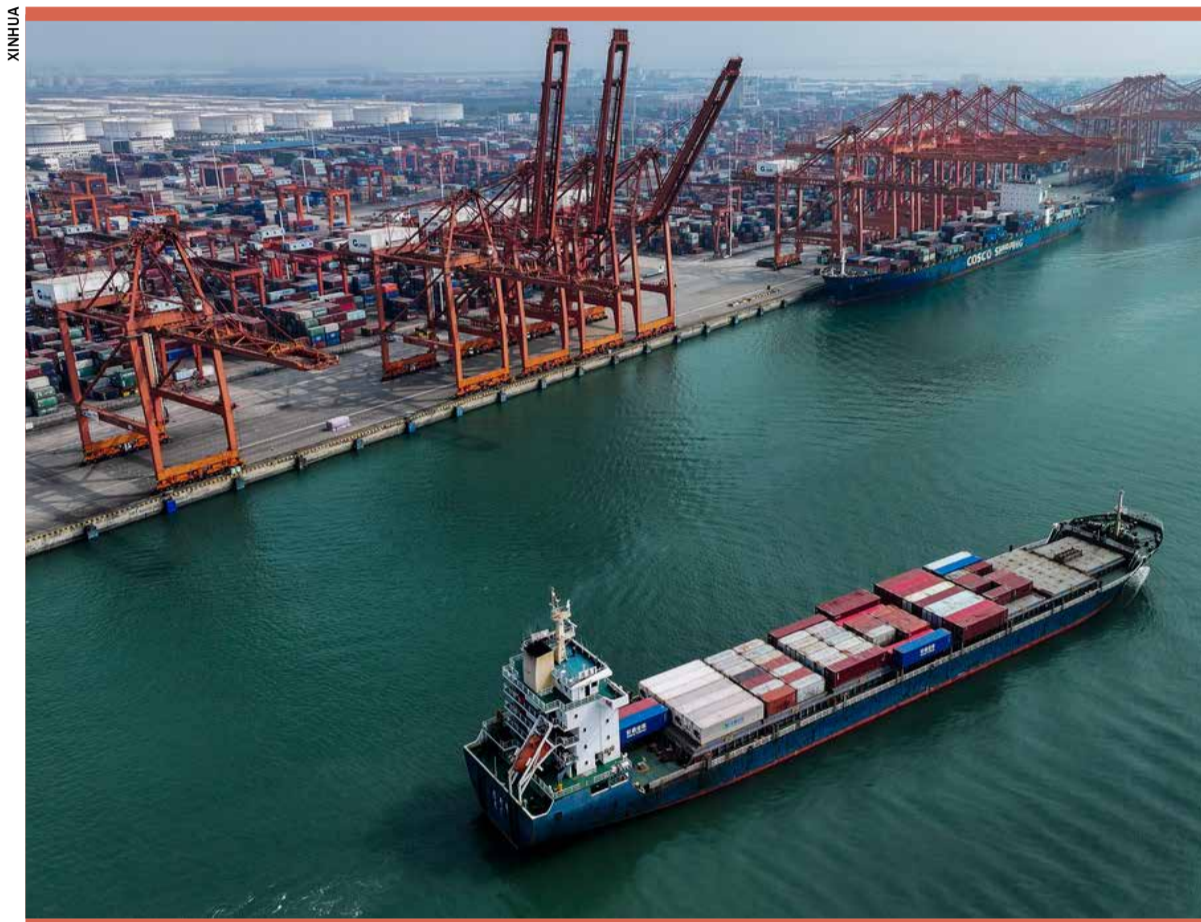
Exports rose 0.5% from a year earlier to \$291.9 billion, a sign that demand may be picking up after months of decline. But imports fell 0.6%, to \$223.5 billion, after they climbed 3% in October.

China has been grappling with sluggish foreign trade this year amid slack global demand and a stalled recovery, despite the country's reopening after its strict COVID-19 controls were lifted late last year.

The trade surplus of \$68.4 billion was up 21% compared to October's \$56.5 billion.

Some economists said they doubt the rise, fueled mainly by exports of vehicles and ships, will continue for long.

"Looking forward, the resilience of exports is unlikely to last. The recent strength is at least partly fueled by exporters slashing prices to gain market share," Zichun Huang, a China economist with Capital Economics wrote in a note, describing the reduction of prices as "unsustainable."



"Without the support of price cuts, exports are unlikely to defy the slowdown in growth among China's major trading partners, which we expect to continue in the first half of next year," Huang

said. Trade with Japan, Southeast Asian countries, the European Union and the U.S. has declined this year.

Demand for Chinese exports

has been weak since the Federal Reserve and central banks in Europe and Asia began raising interest rates last year to cool inflation that was at multi-decade highs.

China's property sector re-

mains a drag on the economy, with sales slumping and developers struggling to repay massive amounts of debt.

The central bank has eased borrowing rules and cut mortgage rates for first-time home buyers while providing some tax relief measures for small businesses. Late last month, it announced plans to issue 1 trillion yuan (\$330 billion) in bonds for infrastructure projects and disaster prevention, dipping deeper into deficit to try to nudge the economy into higher gear.

Yesterday's data was released as President Xi Jinping was meeting with EU leaders.

Exports to the EU fell 11% from a year earlier to \$38.3 billion in November compared. Imports slid 1% to \$23.2 billion.

EU chief Ursula Von der Leyen has said that the EU would tolerate a chronic imbalance in trade with China.

Beijing responded by saying that it doesn't make sense for the EU to curb exports of sensitive technology while trying to increase exports to China. Curbs on exports of sensitive technology are a longstanding point of contention between Beijing and the U.S. and other Western nations. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

Activist says she still feels under police's watch in Canada

TIAN MACLEOD JI, BANGKOK

ACTIVIST Agnes Chow, who left Hong Kong for Canada and won't return to meet her bail conditions, said yesterday she felt still under the watch of the Chinese territory's police even after moving to Toronto.

Chow is one of Hong Kong's most prominent young activists and was arrested in 2020 under the national security law that was enacted following 2019 anti-government protests. While she was not charged and was released on bail, police confiscated her passport before returning her this year under certain conditions, including a visit to mainland China with authorities.

Chow said in an interview with The Associated Press that Hong Kong's national security police called



Agnes Chow

her twice to ask her about her status after she left the city to pursue further studies in September.

"They keep trying to make me feel like I'm under their eyes," she said.

On Tuesday, Hong Kong leader John Lee hit out at Chow's decision to not return to Hong Kong to fulfil

her bail conditions. He called Chow a "liar" and said the police's attempt to offer her lenient treatment eventually led to them being deceived. Chow would be pursued for life unless she turns herself in, he added.

But Chow rejected the government's claims that police had offered her le-

niency. She said in an Instagram post on Sunday she only had her passport returned to her so she could pursue a master's degree after she agreed to go to mainland China with national security authorities.

During that trip in August, she said, she visited to an exhibition on Chi-

na's achievements and the headquarters of tech giant Tencent. She was asked to pose for photos. Later, police asked her to write a thank you letter to them before returning her passport to her, she added.

Chow pondered for "a really long time" whether to publicize her experience.

"If I did not make my story public, these photos, these letters might one day become the evidence of my patriotism. That is something I do not want to see," she said.

The police and Lee have not immediately replied to the AP's request for comment.

They have condemned her decision to leave. Lee on Tuesday highlighted that Chow was arrested for alleged collusion with foreign forces and that those who have committed that offense have become foreign agents.

However, Chow said that framing was "ridiculous," pointing out she has not been charged three years after her arrest. She said her decision to move to Canada and not to return to Hong Kong was entirely her own decision.

She said she was "stopped" from contacting her friends in Demosisto, a now-defunct political party she co-founded with other prominent activists Nathan Law and Joshua Wong.

Demosisto was disbanded on June 30, 2020, the same day the security law was enacted. Wong is in custody on a subversion charge that could result in life imprisonment if he is convicted. Law fled to Britain and Hong Kong police have offered a reward of 1 million Hong Kong dollars (\$127,600) for information leading to his arrest. **MDT/AP**

ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Sands China Successfully Concludes 'Quality Retail Service' Seminar Series

'Tourism + retail' initiative attracts over 430 participants

Sands China recently wrapped up the successful **Quality Retail Service** seminar series, attracting over 430 participants to enhance their knowledge of the retail industry and improve customers' shopping experiences in Macao.

Co-organised by Sands China, MGTO, and the Macao Consumer Council, the seminar series targeted retail and tourism industry practitioners in Macao, merchants of the Quality Tourism Services Accreditation Scheme, and Certified Shops and Adherents. Each seminar at The Londoner Macao or The Venetian Macao covered a specific theme: integrity of service, successful selling, quality affirmation, or complaint resolution.

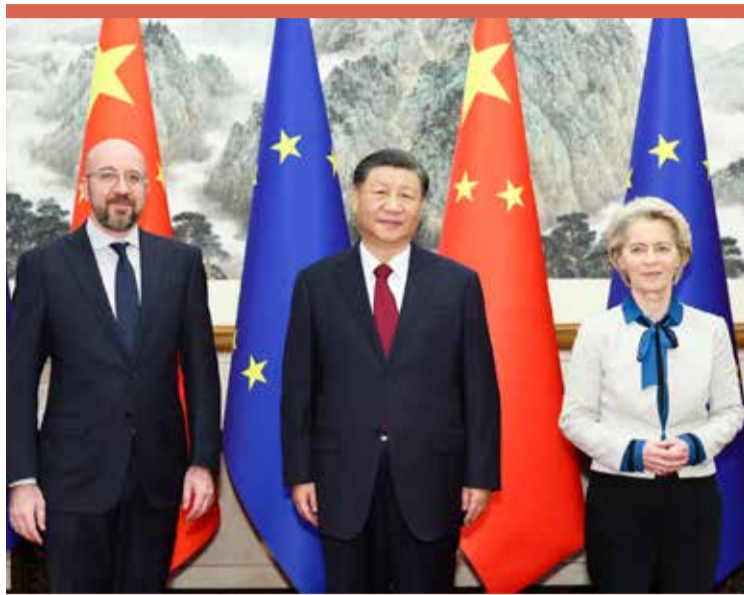
"Sands China is very pleased at the interest shown in the Quality Retail Service seminars, as shown by the eager response of Macao's retail professionals," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd. "In line with the Macao SAR government's 'tourism+' policy, we will continue our efforts to improve service quality in tourism-related industries, thereby helping propel the development of Macao into a world centre of tourism and leisure."

A representative from MGTO shared that the quality of tourism services is an essential aspect of visitors' experience in Macao, while a Macao Consumer Council representative said that integrity of service, successful selling, quality affirmation, and complaint resolution by professionals and industry representatives help elevate service quality in the industry.

The seminars were presented by representatives from Haidilao Hot Pot, Macau Beer Company, Fábrica de Medicina Chinesa Cheong Kun, and the Macao Consumer Mediation and Arbitration Centre.

The Quality Retail Service seminar series was offered by Sands China via the company's **Sands Retail Academy**, which offers complimentary training to retail professionals at Sands Shoppes Macao. It has trained nearly 12,000 retail practitioners in Macao to date, further enhancing overall service quality and work effectiveness in the tourism sector.

It is one of eight sub-academies under the umbrella of the **Sands China Academy**, which provides diversified training programmes for team members and local industry professionals, and collaborates with local and international tertiary educational institutions to promote the development of professionals in various industries in Macao.



President Xi Jinping meets with President of the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen for the 24th China-EU Summit, at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing

DIPLOMACY

Divides over trade, Ukraine in focus in China-EU summit

THE leaders of China and the European Union were holding wide-ranging talks yesterday that included their disputes over trade and a deep divide on the war in Ukraine.

Chinese President Xi Jinping met at a state guesthouse in Beijing with the two European presidents, Ursula von der Leyen from the EU Commission and Charles Michel from the EU Council. The two European leaders met Premier Li Qiang, China's No. 2 leader, later in the day.

The European Union is calling on China to improve market access for products from its 27 member countries to address an annual trade imbalance of more than \$200 billion between the two sides. China exported \$458.5 billion worth of goods to the EU in the first 11 months of this year, and imported \$257.8 billion, according to Chinese customs data released yesterday.

The EU also has angered China by launching an investigation into the latter's subsidies for electric vehicles to determine whether they give manufacturers in China an unfair competitive advantage in European markets.

"China has never deliberately pursued a trade surplus,"

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said ahead of the summit. He noted recent import and supply chain expos that he said encourage foreign companies to sell to the Chinese market of 1.4 billion people.

Wang also took aim at possible EU restrictions on technology exports to China. "I'm afraid it's unreasonable if the EU imposes strict restrictions on the export of high-tech products to China while expecting a significant increase in exports to China," he said.

The EU is looking for better market access for a range of products including cosmetics, infant formula and wine and other alcoholic beverages.

China has angered the EU by taking a neutral stance in what most European countries see as a Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

The EU is calling on China to use its influence with Russia to end the invasion, ensure that exports from or via China are not aiding Russia's war effort and support Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's peace formula.

Von der Leyen, as commission president, heads the day-to-day business of the EU, while Michel chairs the summits of EU leaders. **MDT/AP**

SOUTH PACIFIC

AUSTRALIA SIGNS A SECURITY PACT WITH PAPUA NEW GUINEA

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

THE Australian government signed a security pact with its nearest neighbor Papua New Guinea yesterday that strengthens Australia's place as the preferred security partner in a region where China's influence is growing.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his Papuan counterpart James Marape signed the agreement in Australia's Parliament House six months later than initially planned.

The June date was abandoned after a security deal struck between the United States and Marape's government sparked protests in the South Pacific nation in May over concerns that it undermined Papua New Guinea's sovereignty.

Marape said the agreement with Australia respects both nations' sovereignty and was initiated by his government.

He said the security agreements with Australia and the United States did not mean he was siding with those nations in their strategic competition against China.

AP PHOTO



"Our major foreign policy as friends to all, enemies to none remains. And it's never picking sides," Marape told reporters.

Albanese said both Australia and Papua New Guinea's negotiators achieved what they wanted in the agreement.

"This is a comprehensive and a historical agreement," Albanese said. "It will make it easier for Australia to help PNG address its

internal security needs and for Australia and Papua New Guinea to support each other's security and the region stability."

Both governments have committed to release full details of the agreement but have yet to do so.

The agreement is less significant than the treaty-level pact proposed early in the year, but the differences are not yet apparent.

Papua New Guinea is a diverse,

developing nation of mostly subsistence farmers with 800 languages in a strategically important part of the South Pacific.

With 10 million people, it also the most populous South Pacific nation after Australia, which is home to 26 million.

Papua New Guinea is a near-neighbor of the Solomon Islands where the government sent shock waves through the Pacific last year

by striking a security pact with China.

China later fell short in an ambitious attempt to get 10 Pacific island nations, including Papua New Guinea, to sign a sweeping deal covering everything from security to fisheries.

Mihai Sora, an expert on Papua New Guinea at the Sydney-based international policy think tank Lowy Institute, said the pact cemented Australia's position as a primary security partner in the region.

"For Australia, it's very much about bedding down the regional security order. Projecting to other Pacific countries that Australia is a trusted security partner," Sora said.

"The primary security dividend for Papua New Guinea will be addressing internal security concerns," Sora added.

Papua New Guinea struggles to contain escalating tribal violence and civil unrest in remote regions and has a long-term aim to increase its police numbers from 6,000 officers to 26,000.

Australia has agreed to support Papua New Guinea's internal security in areas of policing, courts and prisons.

Australia will support the running of a new police training center in the capital Port Moresby that will be open to recruits from other Pacific nations. MDT/AP

AD

Advertisement for MACAUCLOSER magazine featuring a motorcycle rider. Text includes '馳騁高峰 RIDING HIGH', 'NOW ON SALE', and 'WWW.MACAUCLOSER.COM'.

Advertisement for Centro Medico Pedder (仁德醫療中心). Includes a photo of a doctor and a list of medical services and staff: General Surgery, Breast Surgery, Urology, Paediatric Surgery, etc.

CAMBODIA

Chinese navy ships are first to dock at new pier at Sihanoukville naval base

SOPHENG CHEANG,
PHNOM PENH

CHINESE naval vessels have become the first ships to dock at a new pier at a Cambodian naval base that the United States and some international security analysts say "is destined to serve as a strategic outpost for Beijing's navy."

The docking of the two ships, which received little publicity, coincided with an official visit to Cambodia this week by China's top defense official, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission He Weidong.

News of at least two Chinese ships docking at the Ream Naval Base on the Gulf of Thailand came out indirectly, through a Facebook post on Sunday by Cambodian Defense Minister Tea Seiha. It said he visited the base to see preparations for Cambodian navy training and to inspect progress on infrastructure construction, but did not mention China by name.

He also posted photos showing Cambodian officials with Chinese Ambassador Wang Wentian, and reviewing Chinese sailors. At least two warships could be seen in the photos, one whose gangway identified it as the Chinese navy corvette Wenshan.

Satellite photos taken Sunday



In this photo released by the official Facebook page of the Ream Naval Base, former Cambodian Defense Minister Tea Banh reviews navy members before a training at Ream Naval Base in Sihanoukville, last week

by Planet Labs PBC analyzed by The Associated Press show what appear to be two Chinese warships docked at the base. They correspond to the images shared online by Tea Seiha.

The AP analysis, comparing the ship's measurements and the images released by the minister, suggest they may both be Type 56 Chinese corvettes.

Controversy over Ream Naval Base initially arose in 2019 when The Wall Street Journal reported that an early draft of a reputed agreement seen by U.S. officials would allow China 30-year use of the base, where it would be able to post military personnel, store weapons and berth warships.

Cambodia's then-Prime Minister Hun Sen denied there was such an agreement. He pointed out that Cambodia's constitution does not allow foreign military bases to be established on its soil, but said visiting ships from all nations are welcome.

The base is situated on the Gulf of Thailand, adjacent to the South China Sea, where China has asserted its claim to virtually the entire strategic waterway. The U.S. has refused to recognize China's sweeping claim and routinely conducts military maneuvers there to reinforce that they are international waters.

For the U.S., a Chinese base in Cambodia could become "a

chokepoint" in the Gulf of Thailand close to the strategically important Malacca Strait.

Basing rights in Cambodia would extend Beijing's strategic military profile considerably, and tilt the regional balance of power in a way that would pressure adjacent Southeast Asian countries whose security concerns traditionally have been aligned more closely with the United States.

Washington has repeatedly made known its concerns about the base's intended use. When China and Cambodia broke ground on its naval port expansion project in June last year, the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh reiterated Washington's position that

a Chinese "military presence at Ream could threaten Cambodia's autonomy and undermine regional security."

China is Cambodia's biggest investor and closest political partner. Cambodia generally supports Beijing's geopolitical positions on issues such as its territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Prime Minister Hun Manet, who succeeded his father Hun Sen in the leadership position earlier this year, said in a post Monday on the Telegram messaging platform that he and China's visiting official He discussed the continuation of military cooperation through agreements between their respective defense ministries on human resource training and demining operations.

Hun Manet also recalled how, when he was serving as Cambodia's army commander, he took the initiative to strengthen cooperation between the two countries' armed forces, collaborating on a memorandum of understanding that led to improving unit-to-unit relationships and training exchanges that enhanced the ability of the Cambodian army.

Hun Manet's first official trip abroad after becoming prime minister was to Beijing, reflecting his country's warm relations with China. **MDT/AP**

KOREAS

South Korea, Japan and US security advisers will meet to discuss North Korea threat

THE national security advisers of the United States, South Korea and Japan will meet in Seoul this week to discuss North Korea's growing military threat and other regional security issues as they continue to promote trilateral cooperation in Asia.

South Korea's presidential office said its national security office director, Cho Tae-yong, will host a three-way meeting in Seoul tomorrow with U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan and Japanese National Security Secretariat Secretary General Takeo Akiba for in-depth discussions on North Korea and other matters related to securi-



ty, technology, and trade. Cho will also hold bilateral meetings with Sullivan and Akiba today.

White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said the meetings will be driven by

a "robust agenda of discussions of regional issues of mutual concerns, particularly in the security envi-

ronment" as the countries continue to build on an August summit between their leaders in Camp David, where they vowed to deepen three-way security and economic cooperation.

Japan's prime minister's office said the discussions on North Korea will include that country's recent launch of its first military reconnaissance satellite, a device North Korean leader Kim Jong Un described as crucial for monitoring U.S. and South Korean military movements and enhancing the threat of his nuclear-capable missiles.

There are also broader concerns about a potential

arms alignment between North Korea and Russia, in which the North provides badly needed munitions to fuel Russian President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine in exchange for possible Russian technology assistance to advance Kim's nuclear-armed military.

South Korean intelligence officials have said that the Russians likely provided technology support for North Korea's successful satellite launch in November, which followed two failed launches. Many outside experts question whether the North's satellite is sophisticated enough to send militarily useful high-resolution imagery.

Both Pyongyang and Moscow have denied U.S. and South Korean claims that the North has been shipping artillery shells and other arms supplies to Russia in recent months. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

US files war crime charges against Russians for torturing an American

LINDSAY WHITEHURST,
WASHINGTON

FOUR Russian men accused of torturing an American during the invasion of Ukraine have been charged with war crimes in a first-of-its-kind case, the Justice Department announced yesterday [Macau time].

It is the first prosecution against members of the Russian armed forces in connection with atrocities during Moscow's war against Ukraine and it is the first time the Justice Department has brought charges under a nearly 30-year-old statute that makes it a crime to subject an American to torture or inhumane treatment during a war.

The charges are largely symbolic for now, given the unlikely prospects of the department bringing any of the four defendants, who are fugitives, into custody. But U.S. officials described the case as a history-making moment in their investigation into Russian war crimes. More charges could be coming.

"This is our first, and you should expect more," Attorney General Merrick Garland said at a news conference.

He said the American people and their government have a long memory. "We will not forget the atrocities in Ukraine. And we will never stop working to bring those responsible to justice," the nation's top law enforcement official said.

The four Russians are identified as members of the Russian armed forces or its proxy units. Two are described as commanding officers.

The Russians are accused of kidnapping an American man from his home in a Ukrainian village in 2022. The American was beaten and interrogated while being held for 10 days at a Russian military compound, before eventually being evacuated with his wife, who's Ukrainian, U.S. authorities said.

The American told federal agents who had traveled to Ukraine last year as part of an investigation that the Russian soldiers had abducted him, stripped him naked, pointed a



Attorney General Merrick Garland during a press conference at the Department of Justice, in Washington

gun at his head and badly beaten him, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said.

He was also subjected to harsh interrogation methods, threatened with sexual assault and forced to participate in his own mock execution, according to a five-count indictment unsealed in the Eastern District of Virginia.

"The evidence gathered by our agents speaks to the brutality, criminality, and depravity of Russia's invasion," Mayorkas said.

Homeland Security and FBI investigators interviewed the American, his family and others who were around the village of Mylove around the time of the kidnapping to identify the four Russians, Mayorkas said.

"Cases like this one are among the most complex the FBI works, but bringing them is essential to deterring crimes like these and showing would-be perpetrators that no one is above the law and the war crimes will not go unpunished," FBI Director Christopher Wray said.

Garland has been outspoken on war crimes in Ukraine since Russia's invasion in February 2022, and his department assigned federal prosecutors to examine the potential of bringing criminal charges.

Independent human rights experts backed by the United Nations have said they have found continued evidence of war crimes committed by

Russian forces, including torture that ended in the rape and death of women up to age 83.

The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin in March for war crimes, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia does not recognize the ICC and considers its decisions "legally void." He called the court's move "outrageous and unacceptable."

The United States is not a member of the ICC, but the Justice Department has been cooperating with it and supporting Ukrainian prosecutors as they carry out their own war crime investigations.

The four defendants are identified as Suren Seiranovich Mkrtychyan and Dmitry Budnik, both of whom are described by prosecutors as commanding officers in Russia's armed forces, as well as two lower-ranking officers identified only by their first names.

All four were fighting on behalf of Russia in its war against Ukraine and are identified in the indictment as either members of the armed forces or military units from the Donetsk People's Republic. After invading Ukraine, Moscow in September 2022 illegally annexed parts of the Donetsk region and three other Ukrainian regions under its control as part of Russia.

The U.S. and Russia do not

have an extradition treaty, but the Justice Department has brought repeated criminal cases against Russian nationals, most notably for cyber crimes and including for interference in the 2016 presidential election. In some of those cases, the defendants have been taken into custody by American officials, such as when they've traveled outside Russia.

The charges come as the Biden administration is pressing Congress to approve more military aid for Ukraine's war effort. President Joe Biden said it was "stunning" that lawmakers have yet to approve tens of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance for Ukraine. Failure to act, he said from the White House, would be "gift" to Putin.

The president has requested nearly \$106 billion to fund the wars in Ukraine and Israel and to meet other security needs. Some Republicans have grown tired of providing support to Ukraine after the U.S. has already sent \$111 billion, and other GOP lawmakers are insisting on stiff changes to U.S. border policy as a condition of voting for the package.

The U.S. is expected to announce a \$175 million package of military aid to Ukraine on Wednesday. The Pentagon has said there is about \$1.1 billion left in funding to replenish U.S. military stockpiles for weapons and equipment sent to Ukraine and roughly \$4.8 billion in drawdown authority still available. MDT/AP

this day in history

1980 JOHN LENNON
SHOT DEAD



Former Beatle John Lennon has been shot dead by an unknown gunman who opened fire outside the musician's New York apartment.

The 40-year-old was shot several times as he entered the Dakota, his luxury apartment building on Manhattan's Upper West Side, opposite Central Park, at 2300 local time.

He was rushed in a police car to St Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center, where he died.

His wife, Yoko Ono, who is understood to have witnessed the attack, was with him.

A police spokesman said a suspect was in custody, but he had no other details of the shooting.

"This was no robbery," the spokesman said, adding that Mr Lennon was probably shot by a "deranged" person.

Witness reports say at least three shots were fired and others have claimed they heard six.

There are also reports Mr Lennon staggered up six steps into the vestibule after he was shot, before collapsing.

Jack Douglas, Lennon's producer, said he and the Lennons had been at a studio called the Record Plant in mid-town earlier in the evening and Lennon left at 2230.

Mr Lennon said he planned to have some dinner and then return home, Mr Douglas said.

The Lennons are said to have left their limousine on the street and walked up the driveway when the gunman opened fire.

It is unclear whether the man had been lying in wait in the entrance to the building for Mr Lennon, or whether he came up behind him.

Witnesses describe the gunman as a "pudgy kind of man", 35 to 40 years old with brown hair.

Other former band members, Paul McCartney, guitarist George Harrison and drummer Ringo Starr are thought to have been informed of Lennon's murder.

Fans have already begun arriving at the scene, many still unaware Lennon has died.

Mr Lennon is survived by his wife, their son Sean, and his son from a previous marriage, Julian.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

John Lennon was shot four times in the back by Mark Chapman who had asked the former Beatle for his autograph only hours before he laid in wait and killed him.

Chapman pleaded guilty to gunning down Mr Lennon and is currently serving life in Attica prison near New York. In October 2004 he failed for the third time to secure his release. He said he had heard voices in his head telling him to kill the world-famous musician.

Twenty years after his death millions of fans paid tribute to Mr Lennon in his home town of Liverpool and in New York.

His widow launched a campaign against gun violence in the United States to mark the anniversary.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You have to take hold of your life and make some crucial decisions. Real estate should be lucrative for you. Be careful that you aren't saddled with the responsibilities of others.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
You're in the mood to do things such as competitive sports, or perhaps a night on the town. Help if you can, but more than likely it will be sufficient just to listen.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
You will get along well in social situations. If you want to make your mark, try to get involved in projects that will bring you some glory.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Try to include friends and relatives in your activities. Opportunities for travel and socializing are evident. Someone close to you may need help.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Uncertainties about your home may cause tension. Self-deception regarding your own worth may lead you down the wrong path. You may be experiencing emotional turmoil in regard to your mate.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
You will do well in social settings, and new and interesting individuals may spark a romantic curiosity. Don't let your mate force you into making a decision that you aren't ready to make.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You should want to feel good about yourself and your goals. You should look into making some physical changes, such as new hair color or toning up your body.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
You may find that your generosity has been taken for granted. You can learn a great deal if you listen to those who are older or more experienced. Get busy putting your place in order.

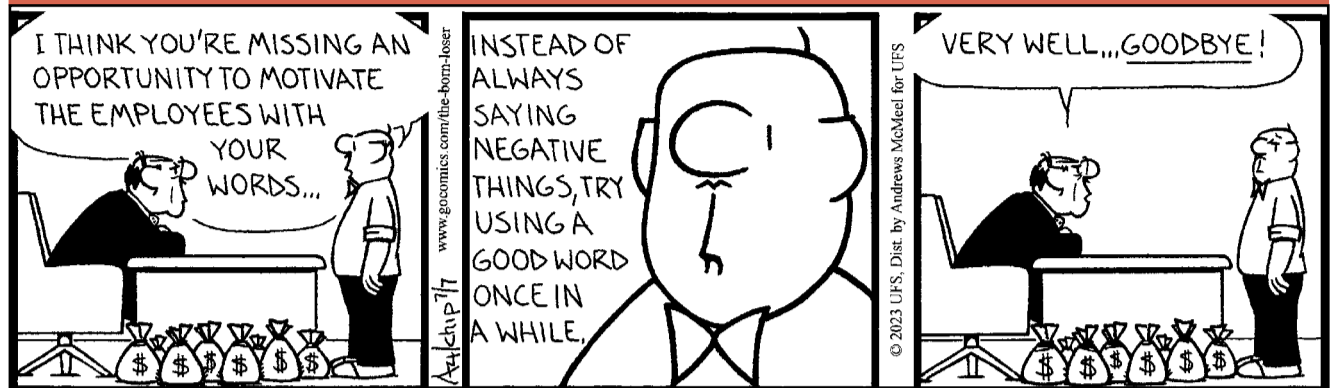
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
It's hard to stay mad if the object of the anger refuses to react. Strong willpower will come to your rescue. You can get ahead if you present your ideas to superiors.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Don't be too quick to spend money. You may have difficulties with someone who lives with you. Spend some quality time with your lover.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Such over indulgence due to emotional upset will be your downfall. You can make money through your creative efforts. You will get drawn into groups that are not favorable to you.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Travel and family gatherings should be in order. Avoid getting too close to coworkers or employers. Emotional partnerships may develop through projects you initiate.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	12	fine
Changchun	-9	8	cloudy
Chengdu	6	16	overcast
Chongqing	9	19	cloudy
Fuzhou	11	24	cloudy
Guangzhou	10	24	cloudy
Guiyang	6	16	rain
Haikou	17	28	cloudy
Hangzhou	8	19	cloudy
Harbin	-15	2	cloudy
Hefei	6	23	fine
Nanjing	7	23	cloudy
Shanghai	9	21	overcast
Taipei	15	23	fine
Wuhan	6	24	cloudy
Hong Kong	22	24	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-16	-15	cloudy
Frankfurt	2	3	rain
Paris	7	11	cloudy
London	7	11	overcast
New York	5	9	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Capital of the Ukraine; 5- Sale sign; 9- Minute; 12- Et ____ (and other men); 13- Clogs, e.g.; 15- Units of resistance; 16- "All The Way To ____", song by REM; 17- Actress Berger; 18- Disfigure; 19- Ultimatum words; 21- Foreign film feature; 23- What's more; 25- Scheme; 26- Wall St. debut; 29- Serpents; 31- Bars legally; 35- ____ Quentin; 36- Recurring theme; 38- Have a feeling about; 39- Busy as ____; 41- Bill attachment; 43- Like a noted Norwegian Blue parrot?; 44- Warning; 46- Assert as a fact; 48- After; 49- Lure; 51- Catch sight of; 52- K-O connection; 53- Whispers sweet nothings; 55- Small gull; 57- Theoretical; 61- Oppose; 65- Crown of the head; 66- Dike, Eunomia and Irene; 68- Pip; 69- Go downhill fast?; 70- Erupts; 71- "A Jug of Wine..." poet; 72- Frozen Wasser; 73- Squeezes (out); 74- Me neither;

DOWN 1- Syrup brand; 2- Robert of "The Sopranos"; 3- Mozart's "____ kleine Nachtmusik"; 4- Orchestra string; 5- Estimator; 6- Female pronoun; 7- Charged particles; 8- Organization; 9- Come again?; 10- Pianist Gilels; 11- Salinger girl; 14- Fine fur; 15- Left out; 20- Close with force; 22- Throw; 24- Sight-related; 26- Son of Abraham; 27- Poet Neruda; 28- Late bedtime; 30- Move sideways; 32- Actor Ryan; 33- Sacred song; 34- Family car; 37- Sumptuous meal; 40- Put up; 42- Maturity; 45- Heath; 47- Pianist Hess; 50- ____ Ark; 54- Extent; 56- Thermoplastic yarn; 57- Church recess; 58- Indonesian resort island; 59- Canonized Fr. women; 60- Arduous journey; 62- Japanese wrestling; 63- Banned apple spray; 64- Cosmonaut Gagarin; 67- Reverence plus fear;

Yesterday's solution

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

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	
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DRIVE IN

IN 'POOR THINGS,' EMMA STONE TAKES AN UNUSUAL PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT

LINDSEY BAHR,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

IT is sickly hilarious to make a movie in which so much consensual sex is had, often so gleefully, that is not the least bit sexy. Though Bella Baxter's insatiable libido might be her guiding light at first in "Poor Things," sexual liberation (or "furious jumping," as she calls it) is only part of this fantastical, anarchic journey to consciousness.

Filmmaker Yorgos Lanthimos and his star, Emma Stone, have a good and strange thing going whether she's playing a striving scullery maid who works her way into the favor of Queen Anne, or a re-animated Victorian woman finding independence. Stone helps make his black humor more accessible, and he creates unorthodox opportunities for her to play and stretch. We, the audience, are the benefactors.

"Poor Things" was not a whole cloth invention. It is an adaptation of Alasdair Gray's 1992 novel, done by "The Favourite" screenwriter Tony McNamara whose edges and wit haven't dulled and in fact flourishes outside the cruelty of the previous film. Don't worry, the humor is plenty dark here, but self-actualization looks good on them.

In this depraved and not so subtle fairy tale, men see Bella as a thing to possess and control. Her creator, Dr. Godwin Baxter (Willem Dafoe), a mad scientist with violent scars all over his face from a childhood as test subject for his own father, wants to hide



Emma Stone and Ramy Youssef (background) in a scene from "Poor Things" (Searchlight Pictures)

her away from the corrupting influences of the world. His horrified student Max McCandles (Ramy Youssef), enlisted to study Bella, wants her to be his wife. And the dandy attorney Duncan Wedderburn (Mark Ruffalo) sees a sex doll, someone with the potential to be as wild and adventuresome as him and eschew the conventional stuffiness of their time. Everyone assumes that Bella will not be too much of a problem. And everyone is wrong.

It wouldn't be a Lanthimos movie without some immense, irreconcilable discomfort, like using a highly sexualized woman with the mind of a toddler for comedic purposes. But this is hardly the first fairy tale to exploit its heroine for her innocence or naivete. Does it make it better if that's the point? Is it making light of second-degree rape? Is it the film's responsibility to answer to? Or is this the prickly post-film debate that everyone is supposed to be having? That is

something only the individual can answer.

Stone moves like a doll who hasn't quite figured out she has joints yet and talks in incomplete, childish sentences. She is not actually mimicking a toddler, it's something weirder and more fantastical than that. In "La La Land" she moved as though walking on air. In "Poor Things," there is a marionette quality.

And Bella evolves quickly. She learns to walk and speak and

think and masturbate and dance and read and philosophize about inequalities. It does not ever occur to her to not do, or say, exactly what she pleases in this opera of appetites. And her evolution is appropriately messy, taking her to Portugal, Alexandria and Paris, as she figures out her likes and dislikes. You almost want to see her go up against the mean teens in Barbie. Social mores really are the duller things.

This story exists in a Victorian dream/nightmare, a vision so stuffed with fantasy it reminded me of "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen." But it is undoubtedly among the year's most sumptuous visual delights with production design by James Price and Shona Heath, and costumes by Holly Waddington. Lanthimos and cinematographer Robbie Ryan again employ the fisheye lens that they used in "The Favourite." It's extra, but at least it makes more sense in this purposely disorienting world.

While it is Stone's movie, all the supporting men are exemplary and unexpected, especially Ruffalo who is so deliriously fun and funny that it's almost criminal that he hasn't been unleashed like this before.

"Poor Things," a Searchlight Pictures release in select theaters Friday and everywhere on Dec. 22, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "gore, disturbing material, graphic nudity, language and strong sexual content." Running time: 141 minutes.

★★★★

THE newest gem in the ever-growing catalog of Bill Evans, the late jazz pianist, commemorates a return to his roots.

European classical music is at the foundation of Evans' distinctive sound, and "Tales — Live in Copenhagen (1964)" features previously unreleased recordings from his first European tour.

The vinyl version will be released for Record Store Day on Friday, Nov. 24, with the CD edition scheduled for Dec. 1. The album is record label Elemental Music's follow-up to "Treasures — Solo, Trio & Orchestra Recordings from Denmark (1965-1969)," an engaging two-CD set of later performances.

♫TUNES

New live jazz album of 1964 performances by Bill Evans trio sings and swings

"Tales" contains 11 cuts, 10 of which feature Evans with bassist Chuck Israels and drummer Larry Bunker. Most of the tunes had been part of the trio's repertoire for some time when they arrived in Copenhagen, and their comfort level results in music filled with inventive interplay that is a marvel of syncopation and synchronicity.

As always, Evans' rhythmic creativity delights. There are two renditions

of "How My Heart Sings," and the piano sparkles with rapid stop-and-start single-note explorations that swerve, skip, spin and dance.

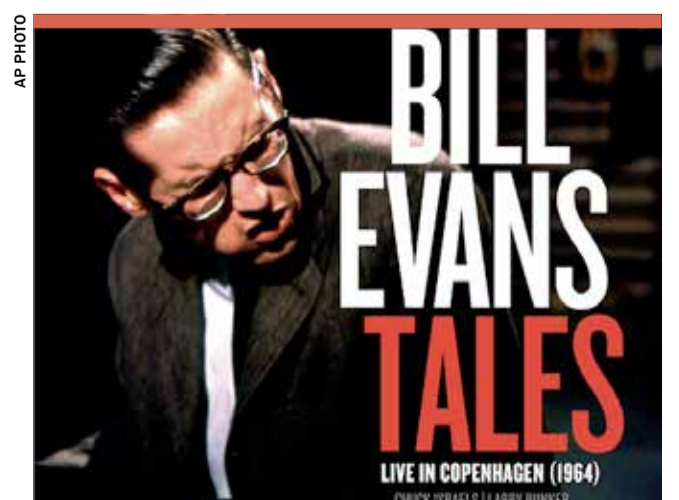
Since this is Bill Evans, the music sings as well as swings. "Waltz for Debby" receives a lovely, spirited rendering, and while "My Foolish Heart" begins at a mournful tempo in two performances, Evans' embrace of the melody soon dispels the gloom.

There's also a lyrical

interpretation of "I Didn't Know What Time It Was." According to the extensive, excellent liner notes, it's Evans' only recording of the Rodgers-Hart song.

Considering the age and sources of the material, the sound quality is remarkably good. That makes it easy to enjoy Evans' earliest European evocations of the many influences he distilled so beautifully, from Miles and Monk to Debussy and Beethoven.

STEVE WINE, MDT/AP



"Tales" by Bill Evans (Elemental Music)



TASTE OF EDESIA

Seasonal feast

IRENE SAM, MDT

THIS season, **The Ritz-Carlton Café** has curated a variety of menus catering to all occasions. The Sunday Treasure Festive Brunch Buffet guarantees a sumptuous feast that delivers everything from chilled and hot seafood, to mains, sides, a charcuterie and a carving station, not to mention dozens of desserts. Apart from highlight dishes such as the Lobster Thermidor, the Salt Crust Tasmania Salmon and the Provençal Lamb Rack, be sure to also try festive flavors of the Roasted Turkey with country stuffing, giblet gravy, cranberry sauce,

the Crepe Suzette with orange, wild berries and Grand Marnier and mulled wine.

For a more luxurious experience, choose the Savor the Season Festive Dinner and expect the crème de la crème of French traditional gastronomy. The ultra-exclusive five-course menu features a stellar lineup of authentic French plates including the Roasted Wood Pigeon Tartlet, the Winter Truffle Bisque and the Glacier 51 Toothfish, and finishes strong with a Traditional Chocolate Yule Log served with spice rum raisin ice cream. In addition, an expertly curated string of wine pairings promises to take the experience to a whole new level.



Journey of Wellbeing

THE cooler weather is here. During this season, circulation of the body may slow and energy might decrease due to temperature change and less movement of the body.

For two days in December (14,15), one can join renowned holistic practitioner, Dr. Buathon Thienarrom as she conducts a series of private healing sessions at The Spa in Mandarin Oriental, Macau, leading one's body and mind to find peace and harmony. An expert in Tibetan and Taoist medicine and massage techniques, Dr. Buathon is a master in treating energy flow issues that are caused by emotional distress as she is able to identify specific thought patterns that lead to physical discomfort.

Her unique and powerful methods of healing allow advice and precise instructions to be given after each treatment to achieve long lasting benefits for both the body and mind. **IS**



OPINION

Multipolar World

Jorge Costa Oliveira



COP28, PLEDGES, STEPS, AND REALISTIC PUBLIC POLICIES

As this article is being written, COP28 is still in progress, with some tangible results – such as the agreement to create a Climate Impact and Response Fund – amidst a flurry of statements and various pledges made at COP28. These pledges include strengthening the Green Climate Fund, various climate funds (like the one to be established by the UAE and BlackRock), a pledge to triple the production of renewable energy by 2030, and a pledge to triple nuclear energy production by 2050.

It is important to remember that the term “pledge” means “promise”, not “commitment”. For example, the pledge by the U.S. Vice President to bolster the Green Climate Fund with 3 billion dollars will require the agreement of the U.S. Congress...

Meanwhile, we have also learned of fantastic initiatives that allow for better monitoring of greenhouse gases (GHGs).

One example is Climate TRACE, an independent initiative launched by Al Gore, providing granular tracking of GHG emissions, which is apparently accounting for 352 million (!) emitting assets. It's also worth following the Energy Transition Accelerator – a carbon credit and financing platform revealed by the U.S. and “philanthropic giants” at COP27 – which has finally produced a core framework detailing how this innovative platform will work, intended to catalyze financing to accelerate a just energy transition in emerging and developing economies.

In the negotiations at COP28, it seems a given that accelerating the energy transition, whose goals and action timetable are outlined by the International Energy Agency (IEA), is necessary. However, the IEA, in its World Energy Outlook 2022, apart from the ideal “rosy” Net Zero Emissions by 2050 (NZE) scenario, continues to outline an Announced Pledges Scenario (APS) - which assumes that all aspirational targets announced by governments are met on time and in full, including their long-term net-zero and energy access goals – and an [increasingly realistic] Stated Policies Scenario (STEPS), which shows the trajectory implied by current policy settings.

The comparison between STEPS and NZE shows a huge discrepancy. For example, in the STEPS scenario, projections for the demand for fossil fuel energy sources in 2050 show a slight increase in gas, similar demand for oil, and only a one-third reduction in coal compared to the current situation. The severity of this scenario is evident.

However, instead of histrionic outbursts or symbolic eco-activism (throwing paint at buildings or political and business leaders), it's important to calmly analyze the reasons for this in defining [realistic] public policies. Bearing in mind that there is an ever-increasing global energy demand (in particular in emerging countries), as well as significant constraints stemming from the limited disposable income of most people and businesses to fund the energy transition. For instance, a road map that assumes that low-income individuals (the vast majority of people in the world) will be able to afford switching quickly to electric vehicles is not very realistic...

GUTERRES USES RARE POWER TO WARN OF IMPENDING ‘HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE’

THE BUZZ

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres used a rarely exercised power to warn the Security Council yesterday [Macau time] of an impending “humanitarian catastrophe” in Gaza and urged its members to demand an immediate humanitarian cease-fire.

His letter to the council's 15 members said Gaza's humanitarian system was at risk of collapse after two months of war that has created “appalling human suffering, physical destruction and collective trauma,” and he demanded civilians be spared greater harm.

Guterres invoked Article 99 of the U.N. Charter, which says the secretary-general may inform the council of matters he believes threaten in-

ternational peace and security. “The international community has a responsibility to use all its influence to prevent further escalation and end this crisis,” he said.

A short draft resolution circulated to council members late Wednesday by the United Arab Emirates, the Arab representative on the council, would act on Guterres' letter under Article 99. It demands “an immediate humanitarian cease-fire” and expresses “grave concern over the catastrophic situation in the Gaza Strip and the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population.”

Earlier, the 22-nation Arab Group at the U.N. strongly backed a cease-fire.

AP PHOTO



THREE KILLED

LAS VEGAS SHOOTING SUSPECT WAS A PROFESSOR WHO RECENTLY APPLIED FOR A JOB AT UNLV

KEN RITTER, LAS VEGAS

TERRIFIED students and professors cowered in classrooms and dorms as a gunman roamed the floors of a University of Nevada, Las Vegas building, killing three people and critically wounding a fourth before dying in a shootout with police.

The gunman in Wednesday's shooting (yesterday, Macau time) was a professor who had unsuccessfully sought a job at the school, a law enforcement official with direct knowledge of the investigation told The Associated Press. He previously worked at East Carolina University in North Carolina, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to release the information publicly.

The attack was the worst shooting in the city since October 2017, when a gunman killed 60 people and wounded more than 400 after opening fire from the window of a room at Mandalay Bay casino on the world-famous Las Vegas Strip only a couple miles from the UNLV campus.

Lessons learned from that shooting — the deadliest in modern U.S. history — helped authorities

to work “seamlessly” in reacting to the UNLV attack, Sheriff Kevin McMahon said at a news conference.

At about 11:45 a.m., the gunman opened fire on the fourth floor of the building that houses UNLV's Lee Business School, then went to several other floors before he was killed in a shootout with two university police detectives outside the building, UNLV Police Chief Adam Garcia said.

Authorities gave the all-clear about 40 minutes after the first report of an active shooter.

Three people were killed and a fourth was hospitalized in critical but stable condition, police said.

It wasn't immediately clear how many of the school's 30,000 students were on campus at the time, but McMahon said students had been gathered outside the building to eat and play games. If police hadn't killed the attacker, “it could have been countless additional lives taken,” he said.

“No student should have to fear pursuing their dreams on a college campus,” the sheriff said.

Police didn't immediately identify the victims, the attacker or the motive and didn't say what kind of weapon was used, al-

tho some witnesses reported hearing as many as 20 shots fired.

UNLV professor Kevaney Martin took cover under a desk in her classroom, where another faculty member and three students took shelter with her.

“It was terrifying. I can't even begin to explain,” Martin said. “I was trying to hold it together for my students, and trying not to cry, but the emotions are something I never want to experience again.”

Martin said she was texting friends and loved ones, hoping to receive word a suspect had been detained. When another professor came to the room and told everyone to evacuate, they joined dozens of others rushing out of the building. Martin had her students pile into her car and drove them off campus.

“Once we got away from UNLV, we parked and sat in silence,” she said. “Nobody said a word. We were in utter shock.”

Selena Guevara said she got a phone call from her daughter, Markie Montoya, who was in class in the building and heard “gunshots, screaming and yelling” but wasn't hurt.

“She's hysterical, telling me ‘I love you’ and so scared,” Guevara said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Peru's former President Alberto Fujimori was released from prison on humanitarian grounds, despite a request from a regional human rights court to delay his release. Fujimori, 85, was serving a 25-year sentence in connection with the slayings of 25 Peruvians by death squads in the 1990s.

AP PHOTO



UK The government triggered criticism from opponents and division inside the governing Conservatives with a bill that will let it ignore a part of the country's human rights law in order to send asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to Rwanda. But Home Secretary James Cleverly (pictured) said the Safety of Rwanda Bill “will make absolutely clear in U.K. law that Rwanda is a safe country.”

AP PHOTO



Media Time magazine named Taylor Swift its person of the year, a week after Spotify announced she was the most-played artist on the streaming platform. Swift was picked from a group of nine finalists that included Barbie, King Charles III, and OpenAI chief executive Sam Altman, among others. “This is the year that Swift, 33, achieved a kind of nuclear fusion: shooting art and commerce together to release an energy of historic force,” Time said.