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AP PHOTO



Malaysian The man who attacked a police station and killed two officers was a recluse and is believed to have acted on his own despite suspected links to the Jemaah Islamiyah extremist group, the country's home minister said Saturday. The man stormed the police station in southern Johor state near Singapore in the early hours of Friday with a machete. He hacked a police constable to death and then used the officer's weapon to kill another. He wounded a third officer before being shot dead.

AP PHOTO



Philippines One of Indonesia's most-wanted drug suspects has been arrested in the Philippines after an international manhunt and efforts were underway to have the suspect extradited to Jakarta to face charges, Indonesian and Philippine officials said Friday. Philippine Immigration Commissioner Norman Tansingco said Gregor Johann Haas (pictured), 46, was detained in Bogo city in the central province of Cebu after the Interpol issued a red notice, stemming from a criminal complaint filed against him by Indonesian authorities.

Vietnam has nominated its Public Security Minister To Lam as its new president, state media said on Saturday, after his predecessor resigned in the ongoing anti-corruption campaign that has shaken up the country's political establishment. The Communist Party's Central Committee had agreed to the nomination of To Lam, a Politburo member, as president, state-run Vietnam News Agency reported. The nomination will likely be approved by Vietnam's rubber-stamp National Assembly during its next session today.

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INTERNATIONAL METROPOLIS



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MACAU ROADSHOW HIGHLIGHTS SUMMER TRAVEL TO HONG KONG

The government has unveiled its three-day "Experience Macao Carnival" roadshow in Hong Kong yesterday, aiming to attract summer visitors from the city. The carnival features stage performances, exhibits on Macau's heritage sites and new attractions in Hengqin Island. It also promotes special airfare and hotel packages for Hong Kong residents. Artists promoted Macau's diverse tourist offerings, from cuisine to beaches and casinos. The interactive games highlighted discounts and packages for the 25th anniversary of Macau's handover to China. The roadshow also debuts promotions of both Macau and Hengqin to tap summer travel potential.

MACAU FORECAST: RAIN, POSSIBLE FLOODING

The Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau has warned of frequent showers with the potential for heavy rain and flooding from today through tomorrow as a weak trough moves through the region. Under the influence of an active low pressure trough, Macau is forecast to have frequent showers on these two days, which could at times become heavy rain and thunderstorms. There is a possibility of flooding in low-lying areas. More unsettled weather is forecast for later in the week as a new area of low pressure develops north of Macau, with increased cloud cover and showers including potential thunderstorms.

WOMAN CAUGHT IN VIRTUAL CURRENCY SCAM

A local middle-aged woman has been caught in a commission-earning scam involving purchasing virtual currencies online, and reportedly lost RMB2,000. Authorities have reported the victim's social platform received a message from a stranger, saying he wanted someone to purchase virtual currency on his behalf for which he would pay a 10% commission per transaction. Hoping for a profit, the victim purchased 293 virtual currencies for RMB2,000 on the virtual currency trading platform. After transferring the virtual currency to the other party as instructed, the victim was blocked.

ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES CROSS-BORDER STUDENT PICK-UP SERVICE AS STUDENT NUMBERS INCREASE

HOWARD TONG

THE General Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Macau will launch a cross-border pick-up and drop-off service for students traveling between Macau and mainland China.

The service aims to reduce the pressure on students and parents navigating the daily commute, according to Chan Ka Ieong, chairman of the association.

The opening of a new school in Hengqin for Macau residents' children has been a major milestone in integrating the lives of people in the Greater Bay Area.

However, as cooperation between Guangdong and Macau deepens, more Macau residents are investing in and purchasing properties in Guangdong.

This has led to a growing number of cross-border students studying in Hengqin, which is expected to continue increasing before additional schools are built.

"Before more schools for these students are completed, the authorities and all sectors of society need to brainstorm ways to further ensure the convenient and safe passage of school children," said Chan, as cited in an Exmoo report.

Some groups, according to the chairman, have proposed providing pick-up and drop-off services for cross-border students, which



could be more convenient and safer than having parents accompany young students through customs.

Statistics show there are over 3,000 cross-border students in Macau who live on the mainland and attend classes in Macau, traveling between the two regions daily.

Many are young kindergarten or primary school students. The Macau government and schools have prioritized supporting these cross-border students, opening dedicated channels at border checkpoints in 2011 and 2019 that have been well-received by parents.

The opening of the Qingmao Port in September 2021 has further streamlined the commute for cross-border students.

The Qingmao Border Inspection Station has set up a special

fast inspection lane for student traffic, reducing wait times to under 5 minutes per child.

On May 31, 2023, the station officially launched this cooperative fast inspection service, adopting a people-first approach and introducing volunteer guides during peak hours.

As the integration of Hengqin and Macau accelerates, more school-age children are commuting between the two regions.

In July 2023, the China Exit-Entry Administration issued new measures requiring the establishment of dedicated student channels at ports.

The Hengqin Border Inspection Station has correspondingly strengthened its support, arranging staff to guide students during peak travel times.

To further ease the burden on

parents, the association planning to launch a cross-border student pick-up and drop-off service, targeting younger kindergarten and primary students.

The association is in discussions with Macau and mainland customs to allow vehicles to pass through the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge without students needing to exit, transporting them directly to school.

"We will strive to launch this service within this year," said the chairman.

"The first phase goals will be achieved in September to meet the needs of parents and school children."

The association is committed to providing an affordable, non-profit service focused on convenience and safety for cross-border students and their families.

Chinese foreign ministry, SAR government host symposium on external legal affairs

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China and the SAR government jointly held a symposium on external legal affairs on Friday, seeking new opportunities for legal development and exchanges.

The symposium themed "New Achievements, New Opportunities, New Actions: Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of Macao's Re-

turn to the Motherland" was attended by some 370 officials, scholars, students, and association representatives.

Good work in the SAR's external legal affairs is important to building the country's foreign-related rule of law and essential to Macau's law-based governance, said Miao Deyu, assistant minister of foreign affairs of China. He added that it is

significant for ensuring the steady and long-term development of "one country, two systems" and the SAR's long-term stability.

United Nations (UN) Under-Secretary General for Legal Affairs and UN Legal Counsel Miguel de Serpa Soares said via video that the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration and its subsequent implementation have

vividly demonstrated how countries can hold peaceful negotiations with such tools as international law, and offered innovative and pragmatic options for resolving various complex and historic issues.

At the symposium, André Cheong, Secretary for Administration and Justice of the SAR government, stressed that the SAR will firmly

guard the bottom line of national security and promote the sustainable development of the city's economy and society. In addition, the SAR will use its advantages to better serve the country's overall development, and carry out exchanges and cooperation with foreign countries in a multichannel manner, said the official. XINHUA

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For subscription and general issues: general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd



Director Xia Baolong visits the Macao East Asian Games Dome and the Athlete Training and Development Centre

CE calls for work on international metropolis following Xia's visit

STAFF REPORTER

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng has called on Macau's different sectors to collaborate to polish the region as a golden business card and transform it into an international metropolis.

This comes as Beijing's top official for Hong Kong and Macau affairs Xia Baolong's week-long visit to Macau concluded.

The call was one of the six guidelines Xia left to the SAR Government during his visit, which the Chief Executive confirmed during the press conference to summarize the visit of the director of the Office for Macau and Hong Kong Affairs.

According to Ho, the government will lead the administrative team, and join with all sectors of society to "make better use of Macau's six advantages as praised by Xia and polish the golden business card of Macau as an interna-

tional metropolis."

The six advantages, pointed out by Beijing's top official for SARs affairs are: "the institutional advantage of the 'One country, two systems' principle; sufficient development space; a highly internationalized business environment; a strong economic foundation; a unique blend of Chinese and Western cultural characteristics; and a traditionalist passion of patriotism and loyalty."

Ho said the new direction of the SAR's development includes both culture and the Portuguese language, adding that the direction echoes the construction of this international metropolis.

The city's leader highlighted the importance that the SAR has always given to the Portuguese language and culture.

During his seven-day visit, Xia engaged in a series of activities aimed at gaining a comprehensive understanding of Macau's social, economic and cultural landscape.

Accompanied by government officials, he met with delegates to the National People's Congress, members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and representatives from various associations, discussing social affairs in Macau.

One of the highlights of Xia's visit was his exploration of youth entrepreneurship in Macau, and included inspections of Macau's large-scale infrastructure projects.

According to a government statement, "Xia also put forward the vivid metaphor that Macau is the apple of the country's eye."

"Macau's important status is self-evident," the CE remarked.

Yesterday morning on the last stop of his visit, Xia visited the Macao East Asian Games Dome and nearby Athletes Training and Development Centre.

At the Macao East Asian Games Dome, Xia visited the sports venues and exhibition facilities, where he was briefed by the di-

rector of the Sports Bureau, Pun Weng Kun, on the various functions of the facilities, their typical usage, and the preparations regarding the Macau venues for the 15th National Games.

Afterwards, he went to the Athletes Training and Development Centre, where he toured the various training facilities and gained insights into the selection system and training methods for elite athletes.

Meanwhile, at the press conference, Ho was asked about the

SAR government's shortcomings, which Xia noted, and said there are several areas for improvement.

For example, citizens are dissatisfied with the traffic because roads are narrow and the traffic congested.

"The government is aware of the problem," said Ho.

It is also said Xia "saw and heard it" in Macau, and some people reported it to him.

Therefore, the government will work on the shortcomings, adding that it will do its best in administrative management.

Meanwhile, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, emphasized the importance of the central authorities' support in establishing a solid foundation for Macau's status as an international metropolis.

The transport and public works team of the MSAR Government pledged to leverage all advantages provided by the central authorities to enhance Macau's infrastructure and development.

In addition, Ho said the central government does not intend to hand over the 106 square kilometers of Hengqin to Macau.

However, he said Hengqin has been handed over to Macau in terms of concept, use and direction.

When asked about tourism cooperation with neighboring regions, Ho said he will cooperate with Hong Kong, Guangdong Province and other cities in the mainland.

CE RE-RUN NOT ON AGENDA

ASKED whether he would re-run as the Chief Executive as his term ends this year, Ho said they did not talk about the work related to the replacement of the Chief Executive during Xia's inspection in the SAR. According to Ho, Macau is currently carrying out the Chief

Executive Election in accordance with the arrangements laid out in the Chief Executive Election Law. The procedures for registration of members of the election committee were not discussed, so there was no discussion on relevant issues.

Gaming industry accounts for 36% of GDP in 2023

THE gaming industry accounted for 36.2% of Macau's gross domestic product in 2023, meeting economic diversification targets, according to Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, speaking at a press conference yesterday.

Summing up a weeklong visit by Beijing official Xia Baolong, Ho said gaming industry value is projected to rise in 2024 but remain below 40% of GDP as per Macau's 2024-2028 blueprint.

"While GDP will continue increasing, we hope

to keep this share at around 40%, with non-gaming activities at 60%," Ho said.

Gaming peaked at 63% of economic output from 2011-2013 when gross gaming revenue hit a record MOP360 billion.

In 2019, the last pre-pandemic year, gaming fell to 51% of MOP292 billion in revenue.

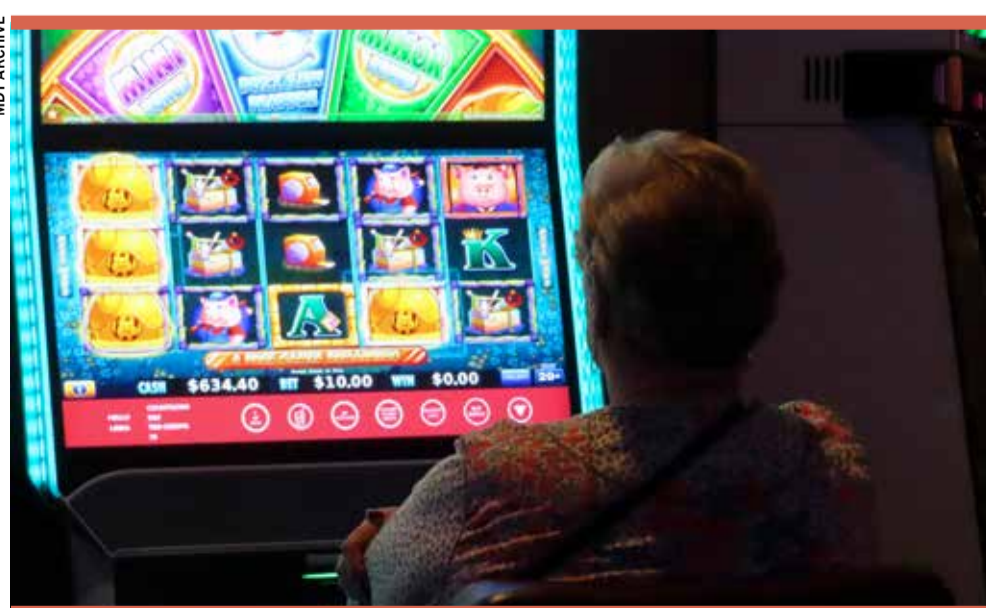
After three pandemic-affected years, Macau's economy recovered to 80% of 2019 output last year as gaming hit MOP183 billion.

The IMF has forecast

13.9% GDP growth in 2024 with a projected MOP216 billion in gaming revenue.

The diversification plan focuses on integrated tourism and four "emerging industries:" traditional Chinese medicine, finance, technology and convention/culture/sports.

Ho said Macau will "make good use of its six advantages to promote continuous development" as the "golden business card" of an international metropolis, as per Xia's instructions.



PROPERTY PURCHASES ON THE RISE IN Q1

A total of 965 building units and parking spaces were purchased and sold in the first quarter of 2024 as per Stamp Duty record, and the total value of transactions was MOP4.76 billion, up by 19.0% and 26.6% respectively quarter-on-quarter. Data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows that purchase and sale of residential units increased by 48 quarter-on-quarter to 573 units, and the total value went up by 16.7% to MOP3.34 billion. Number of existing residential units transacted (530 units) grew by 20.7% and the transaction value (MOP3.11 billion) swelled by 27.6%.

MACAU LEGEND SELLS LAOS RESORT

Macau Legend Development Limited has sold its Savan Legend resort in Laos, having obtained all necessary government approvals. According to a filing late last week to the Hong Kong stock exchange, the purchaser is Eminent Innovations, a company incorporated in the British Virgin Islands. The transaction, initially reported in a December 2023 filing, stated MLD Laos, a subsidiary of Macau Legend, intended to sell the resort to Japanese national Shundo Yoshinari for USD39 million. The expected gain before tax was estimated at HKD47 million. An earlier filing, dated June of the previous year, indicated both parties had agreed on a sale price of USD45 million.

RENATO MARQUES



PORTUGAL ICONS BEAT GBA FLYING DRAGONS 11-4 IN EXHIBITION MATCH

RENATO MARQUES

SPORTS events have finally returned to the East Asian Games Dome, Macau's largest public indoor sports facility.

The "Portugal Icons," a team of former international Portuguese players, beat the Greater Bay Area (GBA) Flying Dragons, a team consisting of players and former players from the mainland, Hong Kong and Macau, in a five-a-side match, by 11-4.

The Portuguese stars were the captain Luís Figo, goalkeeper Vitor Baía, Nuno Gomes, Bosingwa, Dimas, Maniche, Tiago, Ricardo Quaresma, Ricardo Carvalho, Pauleta and Hélder Postiga.

The GBA Flying Dragons star-

red names such as Natalis Chan, Eddie Ng, Frankie Lam, Eddie Cheung, Danny Chan, Chan Chi Hong, Leslie George Santos, Wong Chin Hung, Chan Tat Sun, Che Chi Man, Emmanuel Noruega, Hoi Man Io, Wu Qunli, Hu Zhijun and Lu Lin.

A highlight during the 40-minute match, which featured numerous substitutions from both teams, was Portuguese player Postiga scoring a hat trick.

Figo and Gomes also scored two goals each.

The spectators found in the match the perfect Sunday entertainment, with many families and several generations watching the match side-by-side.

The crowd cheered the goals and near misses as well the spe-

cial tricks from the stars, Figo and Quaresma, who performed skilled moves that drew extra applause from the crowd.

On Saturday, the Portuguese players not only toured Macau in an open-top bus but also held a training session with younger players in an activity named "Legends of Tomorrow - Football Camp."

After the match, Postiga, Maniche, and Carvalho spoke to the media and highlighted the welcoming reception they had received over their two days in Macau and the way they "felt a little at home."

Maniche said the match was fun and entertaining, and expressed hopes the crowd supporting the Portuguese side

also enjoyed it.

He also said people far from their country find in these types of events a way to reconnect and feel closer to their roots, something he said he understood well from years traveling abroad.

Carvalho also noted the attention from everyone who cheered and supported them, adding that Macau has a special place in the hearts of the Portuguese, particularly those who have visited it, as he has.

Previously, Figo had also noted the warmth with which fans and people in general had received the players with many addressing them in the Portuguese language, which he said was "very pleasing."

Daycare cameras await privacy guidelines

STAFF REPORTER

THE Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has reached an agreement with daycare centers on installing surveillance cameras but is awaiting privacy guidelines, an official has said.

Speaking to reporters recently, IAS director Hon Wai said meetings with facilities have built consensus for installing cameras after a four-month-old's death at a Taipa nursery in October.

But operational de-

tails must respect privacy, Hon added.

"Cameras must observe special situations, but privacy of the children must also be ensured," Hon said as cited in a TDM report.

"Under what circumstances can cameras be

turned on? We reached some consensus but need solutions if parents disagree."

The shuttered nursery's space has been returned, though low local birth rates have authorities considering reuse for daycare.

Privacy guidelines from the Office for Personal Data Protection are needed before camera use is finalized.

Following the death of the infant at the Fong Chong Nursery, lawmakers have called for the government to

review and amend regulations governing nursery facilities in Macau.

Lawmakers have highlighted concerns that the child-to-caretaker ratio in Macau's childcare facilities is much higher than the global average and exceeds that of neighboring regions, resulting in inadequate care and attention to the children.

Sands Macao Celebrates 20 Years in Macao

A five-part series on the growth of Sands China since 2004



SPARING NO EFFORT TO NURTURE TALENT

Sands China deeply understands the importance of nurturing talent, especially when facing an ever-changing society. In 2008, Sands China opened the Adelson Advanced Education at The Venetian Macao as a dedicated training venue; and through cooperating with local and international universities and government entities, the company created the Sands China Academy as a platform to help foster professional talent in the Macao community. The number of training hours increases year by year; in 2023, each team member received an average of 88.3 training hours, higher than the 40.6-hour standard set by the Association for Talent Development (ATD).

In line with the Macao government's policy of "building Macao with talent," Sands China has gradually replaced traditional teaching methods with advanced, innovative measures. By working closely with local and international tertiary institutions, government bureaus and various educational institutions, a series of diverse, high-quality and efficient training programs have been launched, covering several areas such as language, technological applications, production information, premium service, and leadership. This has succeeded in attracting the younger generation to join the tourism industry and facilitate Macao's development as a tourism education training base in the Greater Bay Area. Over 500 people have participated in such training and over 440 of them have successfully graduated. To date, the company has established eight sub-academies under the Sands China Academy in line with its operational needs. Industry representatives are invited to share their experiences and professional insights, thereby creating a well-rounded developmental platform for team members and industry professionals in the Greater Bay Area to enhance their diverse development in a variety of fields.

PART 1: Sands China proactively nurtures diverse tourism elites

As the city's first international integrated tourism and leisure enterprise, Sands China has been rooted in Macao for 20 years now, since the opening of Sands Macao in 2004. After introducing Las Vegas Sands' successful integrated resort model to Macao – combining entertainment, retail, MICE, food & beverage, and accommodation all under one roof – the company continues to invest and actively contribute to the development of Macao into a world centre of tourism and leisure.

As Macao's largest private employer, Sands China has developed a professional team of over 26,000 team members, while creating 1,400 new types of jobs and 90,000 diverse job opportunities for the city. The company has always committed itself to elevating local talent. The number of Macao residents promoted to management positions continues to rise. The percentage of local team members in management positions is at 92% currently, after starting out at 20% in 2004. A full 45% of Sands China's management professionals are women, highlighting the company's efforts over the years to create a workplace with equality and acceptance while nurturing diverse talent. Meanwhile, Sands China actively promotes horizontal development that provides team members with opportunities to explore new career paths.

This includes the introduction of the My Way Program in 2016 – the first career development program of its kind in Macao to be implemented on such a large scale, which has attracted participation from 3,000 team members and counting.

By the end of 2024, over 15,000 team members will have reached their 10-year service anniversary milestones; among them, more than 6,600 and 1,500 will have served the company for more than 15 and 20 years, respectively. All of this testifies to the company giving back to the local community that it calls home and developing Macao's human resources.

CONTINUOUSLY OPTIMISING BENEFITS

Sands China has a team rich with diverse cultures. Respecting cultural differences and taking care of the needs of di-

fferent groups is an essential aspect of the company's work culture. For this reason, Sands China is ever-determined to provide comprehensive benefits by both introducing and continuously optimising various team member facilities and services to take care of their needs and create a harmonious and positive workplace. Accordingly, Sands China deeply values team members' physical and mental health and is committed to boosting their well-being. Some measures taken include introducing the first 24-hour team member clinic of its kind in Macao to raise awareness of occupational safety and health, organising various parent-child activities to extend benefits beyond the workplace

for team members' families and to encourage a lifestyle of work-life balance. In addition to paid annual leave, team members are able to carry forward their unused sick leave to the following calendar year – another first in the local industry.

In addition, the company has continually launched new benefits for team members, especially in creating a fair and secure workplace for female team members in protecting their rights. For instance, the company offers comprehensive support to postnatal mothers; during the first 30 calendar days after resuming work, postnatal mothers can reduce their daily working hours by one hour and shift workers can also enjoy fixed working hours.

"A successful company is built upon exceptional team members. Throughout the years, the unwavering commitment of over 26,000 employees at all levels has played a vital role in the company's current achievements. Among them, more than 1,200 founding team members have remained dedicated to the company since the inauguration of Sands Macao, braving the challenges and celebrating the triumphs of the past two decades together."

DR. WILFRED WONG
EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN OF SANDS CHINA LTD.

WHAT THE FOUNDERS SAY:



"Looking back at the past 20 years, I have witnessed the company's contribution in introducing richer and more diverse entertainment, rewriting the history of entertainment development in Macao. Today, the company boasts two arenas and four theatres, providing world-class performance venues with over 26,000 seats. The company offers a pleasant work environment with challenging tasks, and my colleagues feel very fulfilled."

Manuela Palmer, Senior Manager of Entertainment Operations



"I vividly remember the day Sands Macao opened, and all my colleagues were prepared and eager for the smooth commencement of the grand opening ceremony. My role at the time was to manage the crowd flow, and facing an unprecedented number of guests queuing for entry, I felt quite nervous. I am grateful for such a rare experience, as it has greatly assisted me in making future work decisions."

Marco Che, Security Duty Manager



"By 2018, I was promoted to vice president, experiencing seven promotions within 14 years. I believe that the multiple promotions were made possible by Sands China's prominent role in the gaming liberalisation of Macao and the rapid development of the industry, which provided more opportunities for team members. Additionally, I am grateful for the guidance and support from my superiors, who recognised my abilities and strengths and assigned me suitable positions."

Raymond Ho, Vice President of VIP Gaming Operations



"I spent 18 years in the gaming sector and transferred horizontally to the facilities department in 2022, where I currently hold the position of Chief Engineer. It was during the pandemic that I transitioned to a different field, through the company's horizontal development programme "My Way." Not only was I able to learn new skills and broaden my horizons, but the new position requires interaction with different colleagues, effectively enhancing my communication skills and interpersonal relationships."

Terry Cheong, Chief Engineer

Putin concludes trip to China by emphasizing its strategic and personal ties to Russia

HUIZHONG WU & EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA, BEIJING

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin concluded a two-day visit to China on Friday, emphasizing the countries' burgeoning strategic ties as well as his own personal relationship with Chinese leader Xi Jinping as they sought to present an alternative to U.S. global influence.

Putin praised the growth in bilateral trade while touring a China-Russia Expo in the northeastern city of Harbin. He met students at the Harbin Institute of Technology, known for its defense research and its work with the People's Liberation Army.

Harbin, capital of China's Heilongjiang province, was once home to many Russian expatriates and retains some of that history in its architecture, such as the central St. Sophia Cathedral, a former Russian Orthodox church.

Underscoring the personal nature of the relationship, Putin said the Harbin institute and his alma mater, St. Petersburg State University, will open a joint school for 1,500 students. "I'm sure that it will become a flagship of the Russian-Chinese cooperation in science and education," he said.

Speaking to reporters, Putin praised his talks with Xi as "substantive," saying that he spent "almost a whole day, from morning till evening" with the Chinese leader and other officials in Beijing the previous day. As he departed Beijing, the two leaders embraced.

The partnership between China and Russia "is not directed against anyone," Putin said in a veiled reference to the West. "It is aimed at one thing: creating better conditions for the development of our countries and improving the well-being of the people of China and the Russian Federation."

But he still had a backhanded rebuke for the U.S., and others who oppose the Moscow-Beijing relationship, saying an "emerging multipolar world ... is now taking shape before our eyes."

"And it is important that those who are trying to maintain their monopoly on decision-making in the world on all issues ... do everything in their

AP PHOTO



power to ensure that this process goes naturally," he said.

Both Russia and China have frequently spoken of the "emerging multipolar world" in response to what they view as U.S. hegemony.

Joseph Torigian, a research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institute, said the message being sent by China and Russia was clear: "At this moment, they're reminding the West that they can be defiant when they want to."

In Washington, White House national security spokesman John Kirby played down the importance of the meeting, saying that although the two countries are acting in ways that are contrary to U.S. interests, they don't have a long history of trusting each other.

Kirby noted that a U.S. intelligence assessment released last month indicates that China has surged sales to Russia of

machine tools, microelectronics and other technology Moscow uses to produce missiles, tanks, aircraft and other weaponry. "But they're also two leaders that don't have a long history of working together, and officials in both governments that aren't necessarily all that trustful of the other," Kirby said.

Experts say the Moscow-Beijing relationship offers strategic benefits, particularly when both have tensions with Europe and the US

"What they have in common is a desire to challenge the international rules based order," and to challenge alliances and partnerships involving the U.S., Kirby said.

Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu addressed Putin's visit in an interview with The Associated Press, saying Western powers should continue to support Ukraine as part of

sending a message that democracies will defend one another.

"If Ukraine is defeated at the end, I think China is going to get inspired, and they might take even more ambitious steps in expanding their power in the Indo-Pacific, and it will be disastrous for the international community," Wu said.

Putin this month began his fifth term in power and Xi began his third last year. The Russian leader's trip "is an example of the two big authoritarian countries supporting each other, working together with each other, supporting each other's expansionism," Wu added.

Russia has become isolated globally following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. China has a tense relationship with the U.S., which has labeled it a competitor, and faces pressure for continuing to supply key components to Russia needed

for weapons production.

Putin began the day by laying flowers at a Harbin monument to fallen Soviet soldiers who had fought for China against the Japanese during the second Sino-Japanese war, when Japan occupied parts of China.

At the trade exhibition in Harbin, Putin emphasized the importance of Russia-China cooperation in jointly developing new technologies.

"Relying on traditions of friendship and cooperation, we can look into the future with confidence," he said. "The Russian-Chinese partnership helps our countries' economic growth, ensures energy security, helps develop production and create new jobs."

A joint statement on Thursday described their world view and expounded on criticism of U.S. military alliances in Asia and the Pacific. The meeting was yet another affirmation of the friendly "no-limits" relationship China and Russia signed in 2022, just before Moscow invaded Ukraine.

Talks of ending the fighting featured frequently in last week's remarks, although Russia has just opened a new front by launching attacks in Ukraine's northeastern border area. The war is at a critical point for Ukraine, which had faced delays in getting weapons from the U.S.

China offered a broad plan for peace last year that was rejected by both Ukraine and the West for failing to call for Russia to leave occupied parts of Ukraine.

Since the invasion and subsequent Western sanctions on Moscow, Russia has increasingly depended on China for technology and some consumer imports while exporting cheap energy. Trade between the two countries increased to \$240 billion last year.

European leaders have pressed China to influence Russia to end its invasion, to little avail. Experts say the Moscow-Beijing relationship offers strategic benefits, particularly when both have tensions with Europe and the U.S.

"Even if China compromises on a range of issues, including cutting back support on Russia, it's unlikely that the U.S. or the West will drastically change their attitude to China as a competitor," said Hoo Tiang Boon, who researches Chinese foreign policy at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University. "They see very little incentive for compromise."

Xi and Putin have a longstanding agreement to visit each other's countries once a year, and Xi was welcomed at the Kremlin last year. **MDT/AP**

Kim's sister denies North Korea has supplied weapons to Russia

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

THE influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un again denied Friday that her country has exported any weapons to Russia, as she labeled outside speculation on North Korea-Russian arms dealings as "the most absurd paradox."

The U.S., South Korea and others have steadfastly accused North Korea of supplying artillery, missiles and other conventional weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine in return for advanced military technologies and economic aid. Both North Korea and Russia have repeatedly dismissed that.

Foreign experts believe North Korea's recent series of artillery and short-range missile tests were meant to examine or advertise the weapons it was planning to sell to Russia.

Kim Yo Jong called outside assessments on the North Korean-Russian dealings "the most absurd paradox which is not worth making any evaluation or interpretation."

AP PHOTO



Kim Yo Jong

"We have no intention to export our military technical capabilities to any country or open them to the public," she said in a statement carried by state media.

She said North Korea's recent weapons tests were purely performed as parts of the country's five-year arms buildup plan launched in 2021. She added that the recently tested weapons are designed to at-

tack Seoul, the South Korean capital.

"We don't conceal the fact that such weapons will be used to prevent Seoul from inventing any idle thinking," Kim Yo Jong said.

South Korea's Unification Ministry responded later Friday that it is fully ready to repel military threats by North Korea in step with its military alliance with the U.S. Deputy

ministry spokesperson Kim Inae also said that "illegal" arms dealings between North Korea and Russia must be stopped immediately.

Any weapons trade with North Korea would be a violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions that Russia, a permanent U.N. Security Council member, previously endorsed.

In March, South Korean Defen-

se Minister Shin Wonsik said North Korea had shipped about 7,000 containers filled with munitions and other military equipment to Russia since last year. In return, Shin said that North Korea had received more than 9,000 Russian containers likely filled with aid.

In January, U.S. National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said North Korea-supplied missiles had been fired on Ukraine. At the time, Ukraine officials also said an investigation of the debris of a missile found in its northeastern Kharkiv region showed the weapon likely was from North Korea.

In May, the White House also said Russia was shipping refined petroleum to North Korea at levels that exceed U.N. Security Council limits.

The deepening North Korean-Russian ties come as both countries are locked in separate confrontations with the United States — North Korea over its advancing nuclear program and Russia over its protracted war in Ukraine.

Since 2022, North Korea has conducted a provocative run of missiles tests, prompting the U.S. to expand its military drills with South Korea and Japan. Foreign experts say North Korea likely thinks an enlarged weapons arsenal would boost its leverage in future diplomacy with the United States.

MDT/AP

CEM NOTICE

Temporary traffic arrangements for cable, water pipe and pipeline laying and drainage connection works at Pátio do Piloto and Rua do Almirante Sérgio

Due to the cable, pipeline and water pipe laying and drainage connection works by CEM, Macao Water, CTM and private companies, temporary traffic control measures will be implemented in the Pátio do Piloto and Rua do Almirante Sérgio areas starting from 20 May (Monday). Details can be found in the attached table. During the construction period, bus services will not be affected.

Temporary Traffic Measures	Date and time	Affected Roads
No Parking	20 May - 13 June	Motorcycle parking spaces and loading/unloading areas near Edif. Fu Wa on Pátio do Piloto
Road Closure		Pátio do Piloto
Limited Traffic	20 - 29 May, 30 May - 13 June from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm daily	A section of Rua do Almirante Sérgio near Pátio do Piloto

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Open Tender Notice

1. Company:	CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd.
2. Scope of Services:	Renovation of the Sterile Corridor at Macau International Airport Passenger Terminal Building (RFP/E&M/03/24)
3. Request for Tender Document:	The interested Bidders shall call the Senior Secretary of the Engineering and Maintenance Branch (E&M) of the Airport Operations Department of CAM at (853) 88982386 and collect the tender document at the following location until 31 May 2024 before 13:00 (Macau Local Time). Location for collecting the tender document CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Macau International Airport Engineering and Maintenance Branch E&M Building 1st Floor, Office 41020 Taipa, Macau For any enquiry regarding the Tender Procedure, please reach our Engineering and Maintenance Branch at (853) 88982386.
4. Location for Submission of Proposals:	CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Av. De Wai Long CAM Office Building, 4 th Floor Reception Taipa, Macau Attention: Mr. Chu Tan Neng – Executive Director
5. Tender closing time and date:	At 12:00 (noon) on 17 June 2024 (Macau Local Time)

CAM reserves the right to reject any Proposal in whole or in part without stating any reason.

AD

JULIAN ASSANGE

WikiLeaks founder facing pivotal moment in long fight to stay out of US court

BRIAN MELLEY, LONDON

THE host of a news conference about WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's extradition fight wryly welcomed journalists last week to the "millionth" press briefing on his court case.

Deborah Bonetti, director of the Foreign Press Association, was only half joking. Assange's legal saga has dragged on for well over a decade but it could come to an end in the U.K. as soon as today.

Assange faces a hearing in London's High Court that could end with him being sent to the U.S. to face espionage charges, or provide him another chance to appeal his extradition.

The outcome will depend on how much weight judges give to reassurances U.S. officials have provided that Assange's rights won't be trampled if he goes on trial.

Here's a look at the case:

WHAT ASSANGE IS CHARGED WITH

Assange, 52, an Australian computer expert, has been indicted in the U.S. on 18 charges over Wikileaks' publication of hundreds of thousands of classified documents in 2010.

Prosecutors say he conspired with U.S. army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to hack into a Pentagon computer and release secret diplomatic cables and military files on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He faces 17 counts of espionage and one charge of computer misuse. If convicted, his lawyers say he could receive a prison term of up to 175 years, though American authorities have said any sentence is likely to be much lower.

Assange and his supporters argue he acted as a journalist to expose U.S. military wrongdoing and is protected under press freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Among the files published by WikiLeaks was video of a 2007 Apache helicopter attack by American forces in Ba-



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange being taken from court, London, 2019

ghdad that killed 11 people, including two Reuters journalists.

"Julian has been indicted for receiving, possessing and communicating information to the public of evidence of war crimes committed by the U.S. government," his wife, Stella Assange, said. "Reporting a crime is never a crime."

U.S. lawyers say Assange is guilty of trying to hack the Pentagon computer and that WikiLeaks' publications created a "grave and imminent risk" to U.S. intelligence sources in Afghanistan and Iraq.

WHY THE CASE HAS DRAGGED ON SO LONG

While the U.S. criminal case against Assange was only unsealed in 2019, his freedom has been restricted for a dozen years.

Assange took refuge in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London in 2012 and was granted political asylum after courts in England ruled he should be extradited to Sweden as part of a rape investigation in the Scandinavian country.

He was arrested by British police after Ecuador's government withdrew his asylum status in 2019 and then jailed for skipping bail when he first took shelter inside the embassy.

Although Sweden eventually dropped its sex crimes investigation because so much time had elapsed, Assange has remained in London's high-security Belmarsh Prison while the extradition battle with the U.S. continues.

His wife said his mental

and physical health have deteriorated behind bars.

"He's fighting to survive and that's a daily battle," she said.

A judge in London initially blocked Assange's transfer to the U.S. in 2021 on the grounds he was likely to kill himself if held in harsh American prison conditions.

But subsequent courts cleared the way for the move after U.S. authorities provided assurances he wouldn't experience the severe treatment that his lawyers said would put his physical and mental health at risk.

The British government authorized Assange's extradition in 2022.

WHAT THE LATEST HEARING IS ABOUT

Assange's lawyers raised nine grounds for appeal at a hearing in February, including the allegation that his prosecution is political.

The court accepted three of his arguments, issuing a provisional ruling in March that said Assange could take his case to the Court of Appeal unless the U.S. guaranteed he would not face the death penalty if extradited and would have the same free speech protections as a U.S. citizen.

The U.S. provided those reassurances three weeks later, though his supporters are skeptical.

Stella Assange said the "so-called assurances" were made up of "weasel words."

WikiLeaks Editor-in-Chief Kristinn Hrafnsson said the judges had asked if Assange

could rely on First Amendment protections.

"It should be an easy yes or no question," Hrafnsson said. "The answer was, 'He can seek to rely on First Amendment protections.' That is a 'no.' So the only rational decision on Monday is for the judges to come out and say, 'This is not good enough.' Anything else is a judicial scandal."

THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

If Assange prevails, it would set the stage for an appeal process likely to further drag out the case.

If an appeal is rejected, his legal team plans to ask the European Court of Human Rights to intervene. But his supporters fear Assange could possibly be transferred before the court in Strasbourg, France, could halt his removal.

"Julian is just one decision away from being extradited," his wife said.

Assange, who hopes to be in court Monday, has been encouraged by the work others have done in the political fight to free him, his wife said.

If he loses in court, he still may have another shot at freedom.

President Joe Biden said last month that he was considering a request from Australia to drop the case and let Assange return to his home country.

Officials have no other details but Stella Assange said it was "a good sign" and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the comment was encouraging. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1965 BRITISH POLICE TO BE ISSUED WITH TEAR GAS



Britain's police are to be armed with tear gas guns and grenades to be used against armed criminals or dangerous individuals.

The Home Secretary, Sir Frank Soskice, made the announcement in the House of Commons today.

He assured MPs the gas caused only temporary discomfort with no long-term side-effects. "Non-toxic tear smoke" already used by the police in the Colonies would be stored at 40 police centres in England and Wales and at six in Scotland.

It is the first time British police are being issued with the "non-lethal weapon" - although London's Metropolitan Police and four other forces have been able to obtain supplies from the military in emergency cases.

Sir Frank made clear the chemical would be used only "in dealing with armed criminals or violently insane persons in buildings from which they cannot be dislodged without danger or loss of life".

He said the gas would have no long-term effect on people who came into contact with it.

Sir Edward Dodd, the Chief Inspector of Constabularies, told the BBC tear gas would under no circumstances be used for crowd control.

"The Secretary of State has asked chief constables to report to him the circumstances under which weapons are used whenever it is necessary to use them," he said.

He envisaged it would be used only "two or three times a year".

CS gas was developed at the Chemical Defence Experimental Establishment at Porton in Wiltshire.

It is delivered in a grenade or cartridge and has an immediate effect - victims experience watering eyes and blurred vision which wears off as soon as they leave the area affected.

The idea of allowing issue of tear gas to police was first recommended by a working party in 1962.

For the last 10 years, police chiefs have expressed concern about the vulnerability of their officers and members of the public on rare occasions when criminals barricade themselves in buildings and there is no alternative but to send in armed officers.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Tear gas is widely accepted by police forces around the world as a means of controlling civilian crowds.

British police carry guns or tear gas to deal with sieges, armed robberies, terrorist attacks or diplomatic duties.

However, tear gas was often used against demonstrators at the height of the Troubles in Northern Ireland in the 1970s.

CS gas was used for the first time on the British mainland to control rioters in Toxteth, Liverpool in 1981, but rarely since then.

CS spray was cleared for use in 1996 as a safer alternative to police batons but three forces - Nottinghamshire, Northants and Sussex - still do not use it because of health concerns.

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Coordinate with your partner to adapt around unexpected changes. Clear confusion before proceeding. Listen to all considerations. Talk your way out of a sticky situation.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Staying busy keeps you out of trouble. Play by the rules. Don't overextend resources or energy. Make time to chill and recharge batteries.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Love blossoms in slow motion. Insight dawns gradually. A romantic barrier is becoming unimportant. Fun doesn't need to be expensive. Enjoy interesting company.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Manage domestic chores for family support. Don't do everything by yourself. Enlist help from housemates. Cook something delicious. Flowers and candles brighten the space.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Get into a creative learning phase. You may underestimate the amount of work involved. Don't overbook. An answer is within reach. Keep digging.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Focus on generating income. Don't waste time knocking on locked doors. Find other options. Strengthen foundational supports. Make marketing plans. Generate valuable exchanges.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You're especially confident and powerful. Figure out what you want. Prepare to launch a personal effort. Dream now for action later. Get inventive.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Slow down and let yourself dream. Don't take on anything new right away. Notice any emotional barriers or limitations. Keep a low profile.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Slow for sharp corners. Chaos and confusion temporarily swirl with a team project. Wait for better conditions to advance. Keep bargains and deadlines.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Professional obstacles slow the action. A change requires adaptation. There may be more work required than you thought. Find a workaround. Edit and revise.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You could reach a crossroad with an investigation. Don't fall for a con. Choose carefully. Stay in communication with itinerary shifts. Enjoy the scenery.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Research financial decisions and share what you discover. Avoid wild temptations and empty promises. Find a silver lining to an apparently dark cloud.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	17	28	fine
Changchun	4	21	fine
Chengdu	19	33	fine
Chongqing	21	29	overcast
Fuzhou	22	24	rain
Guangzhou	21	26	rain
Guiyang	17	24	cloudy
Haikou	25	29	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	20	29	cloudy
Harbin	6	21	fine
Hefei	20	30	cloudy
Nanjing	20	30	cloudy
Shanghai	20	28	overcast
Taipei	23	27	rain
Wuhan	22	28	rain
Hong Kong	24	26	thunderstorm
WORLD			
Moscow	12	24	sunny
Frankfurt	13	24	sunny
Paris	13	24	thunderstorm
London	9	21	cloudy
New York	14	22	sunny

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Like a he-man; 6- Poems, often used to praise someone or something; 10- Kind of D.A.; 14- Poppy product; 15- 1/100 of a monetary unit; 16- Prefix with conference; 17- Large wave caused by tidal flow; 18- Walking stick; 19- Hastens; 20- Song syllable; 21- Sky blue; 23- Transmits; 24- Less common; 26- Dressed to the ___; 27- Character actor Wynn; 29- Surgery souvenirs; 31- Cigar ending; 32- Brownish gray; 33- Weed whacker; 36- In spite of; 40- Inseparable; 41- Witherspoon of "Legally Blonde"; 42- Sleep like ___; 43- Corneous; 44- Hitching posts?; 46- Rice-___; 48- Campaign tactic; 49- Rips; 50- Specific geographical places; 52- Once ___ while; 55- "___ Brockovich"; 56- Together, in scores; 57- Capital of South Korea; 59- Get up; 60- Small bad; 61- Chopin piece; 62- Potatoes' partner; 63- Untidy condition; 64- Thorny flowers;

DOWN 1- Bubbly name; 2- On ___ with (equal to); 3- Fag; 4- Ben-___; 5- 1998 Masters winner Mark; 6- Happen; 7- Costly; 8- Feminine suffix; 9- Canonized mlle.; 10- Capital of Greece; 11- Paris divider; 12- Snow conveyances; 13- Mrs. Dick Tracy; 22- Meditative sect; 23- Seductively beautiful woman; 25- Once again; 26- The ___ Valley is a Californian wineland; 27- Lotto-like game; 28- Collar type; 29- Impertinent; 30- Adorable; 32- At that time; 33- Extremely funny; 34- ___ about (roughly); 35- Ova; 37- Wrinkle removers; 38- Hatcher of "Lois and Clark"; 39- Group of individual facts; 43- Large stinging wasp; 44- I ___ Rock; 45- Children of a ___ God; 46- High home; 47- Mikhail's wife; 48- Looks for; 49- Semester; 50- Zip-___-Doo-Dah; 51- Regrets; 53- Au naturel; 54- Stout relatives; 56- Give guns to;

Friday's solution



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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2 bed 1 bath
55.74 m² / 600 ft² | HKD2,600,000



VA FAT (Taipa Village)
2 bed 1 bath
77.10 m² / 830 ft² | HKD3,780,000



Nam Long (Taipa)
2 bed 1 bath
59.92 m² / 645 ft² | HKD3,650,000



Jade Garden (Taipa)
4 bed 3 bath
379.04 m² / 4,080 ft² | HKD 11,880,000



Grand Oasis Residence Amber (Coloane)
Studio
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BASEBALL

MLB is expected to investigate David Fletcher for gambling on sports

JOE REEDY

MAJOR League Baseball is expected to investigate former Angels player David Fletcher for gambling on sports with a bookmaker who also took bets from Shohei Ohtani's former interpreter, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Saturday because they weren't at liberty to discuss such impending matters.

ESPN reported Friday night that Fletcher placed bets with Mathew Bowyer, an alleged illegal bookmaker in Southern California. Federal prosecutors say Ipeei Mizuhara stole nearly \$17 million from Ohtani to pay off sports gambling debts during a years-long scheme, at times impersonating the Dodgers superstar to bankers.

Sources told ESPN that Fletcher, who currently is with the Braves' Triple-A affiliate, bet on several sports but not baseball.

AP PHOTO



Los Angeles Angels' David Fletcher

MLB declined to comment on the Fletcher report.

The league's gambling policy prohibits players and team employees from wagering on baseball, even legally. MLB also bans betting on other sports with illegal or offshore bookmakers. The penalty is at the discretion of the commissioner's office.

Fletcher was a teammate of Ohtani's during the Japanese two-way sensation's six years with the Angels. Ohtani signed a 10-year, \$700-million contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers last December while Fletcher was traded to the Atlanta Braves. He is now with the Triple-A Gwinnett Stripers.

Diane Bass, Bowyer's lawyer,

the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles and the Ballengee Group, Fletcher's baseball representation, declined to comment on the ESPN report.

Mizuhara pleaded not guilty Tuesday to bank and tax fraud, a formality ahead of a plea deal he negotiated with prosecutors and signed on May 5 in a wide-ran-

ging sports betting case.

In a March interview, Fletcher told ESPN he was present at a 2021 poker game in San Diego where Mizuhara first met Bowyer. Fletcher said he knew Bowyer was a bookmaker at the time, and added that he never placed a bet himself with Bowyer's operation.

MDT/AP

AD

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

WASHINGTON BREACHING ITS LEGAL COMMITMENTS

For a long time, the United States has openly claimed that preserving the “status quo” across the Taiwan Strait is in its, and every stakeholder’s, best interest. In the name of safeguarding peace, Washington has issued persistent warnings against any party seeking to “unilaterally change the status quo”.

The alarm is being raised again as the island prepares to inaugurate a new team of leaders on Monday. But this time it is Beijing’s turn to say that to Washington. Because what the latter has been doing may effectively make the present state of affairs across the Taiwan Strait status quo ante.

Each time when a representative of the Democratic Progressive Party becomes leader of the local authorities on the Chinese island, Beijing reiterates it will have no truck with independence seekers.

But such a warning carries greater weight this year with Washington openly pushing for far-reaching changes to the “status quo”.

The joint military drills the US conducted with Taiwan in April only provided an additional reason for Beijing to question Washington’s commitment to the three joint communiques the two governments have so far recognized as being the cornerstone of the China-US relationship. No matter how Washington interprets the US’ “one-China” commitment, it has a legal obligation to not develop official relations with the island.

Although the April drills were dubbed “unplanned sea encounters”, they were patently anything but. They reportedly involved a half dozen vessels, including frigates and supply and support ships, lasted for days, and covered operations from communications to searching for underwater targets. They certainly were not “I am dining in this restaurant, and you also happen to be here”, as some sources in Taiwan tried to spin them to be. Last month, the island’s “naval chief” visited the US to discuss how to boost cooperation. This month, the Taiwan armed forces “chief of general staff” attended the change-of-guard ceremony for the US’ “Indo-Pacific” Command in Hawaii.

Beijing has protested the increasingly brazen ties between the US military and the island’s armed forces, which are clearly intended to be a demonstrative snub of its communique commitments without crossing, technically, Beijing’s redline. Nonetheless, it is a betrayal of bilateral obligations and a violation of international law.

But Washington’s latest attempts at reinterpreting UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 are a more direct challenge, because they are aimed at the jurisprudential foundation of the one-China principle. Though the US’ proclaimed purpose is to facilitate Taiwan’s “meaningful participation” in international organizations, it is intended to do more than that, with US officials calling Taiwan’s status “undetermined” and calling for Taipei’s “meaningful participation” in the United Nations system.

Like the US’ recent claim that UN Security Council Resolution 2728 demanding an immediate cease-fire in Gaza is “nonbinding”, the US’ distorting of UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 shows its hubris in placing itself above international law. But no matter what it tries, the US cannot change the fact that Taiwan island is part of China.

THE LAST PANDAS AT ANY US ZOO ARE EXPECTED TO LEAVE ATLANTA FOR CHINA THIS FALL

THE BUZZ

The last U.S. zoo with pandas in its care expects to say goodbye to the four giant bears this fall.

Zoo Atlanta is making preparations to return panda parents Lun Lun and Yang Yang to China along with their American-born twins Ya Lun and Xi Lun, zoo officials said last week. There is no specific date for the transfer yet, they said, but it will likely happen between October and December.

The four Atlanta pandas have been the last in the United States

since the National Zoo in Washington returned three pandas to China last November. Other American zoos have sent pandas back to China as loan agreements lapsed amid heightened diplomatic tensions between the two nations.

Atlanta received Lun Lun and Yang Yang from China in 1999 as part of a 25-year loan agreement that will soon expire.

Ya Lun and Xi Lun, born in 2016, are the youngest of seven pandas born at Zoo Atlanta since their parents arrived.



Supporters watch an ad showing then Taiwan Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate Lai Ching-te in a car driven by incumbent leader Tsai Ing-wen during a rally held in New Taipei, Taipei, Saturday

TAIWAN’S NEW LEADER INHERITS A STRONG FOREIGN POLICY POSITION BUT POLITICAL GRIDLOCK AT HOME

SIMINA MISTREANU & KEN MORITSUGU, TAIPEI

In a campaign ad for Taiwan’s leader-elect Lai Ching-te, incumbent leader Tsai Ing-wen was shown driving with Lai in the passenger seat, exchanging reflections on their years governing together. Tsai later turned over the driving to Lai, who was joined by running mate Bi-khim Hsiao.

The message was clear: Lai would steer the island in the direction set by Tsai, who after eight years in power was barred from running again.

Lai, 64, will take office today. Continuing Tsai’s legacy means aiming to strike a balance between cultivating Taiwan’s unofficial alliance with the United States and maintaining peace with China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory, to be retaken by force if necessary.

Lai is also expected to build on some of Tsai’s domestic reforms, despite political gridlock. Lai and Tsai’s Democratic Progressive Party has lost the majority in the legislature, making it hard for Lai to push through legislation, including the approval of crucial national defense budgets.

Tsai, 67, has been one of Asia’s few female leaders

who didn’t hail from a political dynasty. Her legacy will be tied to defending the island’s sovereignty from China while refashioning it as a credible partner for the U.S. and other democracies. She will also be remembered for overseeing the legalization of same sex-marriage, steering Taiwan through the COVID years and kickstarting the island’s military modernization.

She leaves office with high approval ratings. A recent poll by broadcaster TVBS showed 42% of respondents were satisfied with her eight-year performance. Her predecessor, Ma Ying-jeou, left office with approval ratings of around 23%.

Tsai’s popularity partly reflects a shift in Taiwan’s identity.

Tsai veered from the more China-friendly policies of the previous ruling party, the Kuomintang. By the end of Ma’s tenure, the frequent exchanges with Beijing were making many Taiwanese nervous, said Shelley Rigger, a Taiwan expert at Davidson College.

Beijing called Tsai a separatist after she refused to acknowledge the 1992 Consensus, an agreement which says Taiwan is part of “One China.” While pulling away from Beijing,

however, Tsai left a door open for communication.

“Tsai has always said that Taiwan, under her leadership, is happy, willing and eager to have dialogue with Beijing, just not on terms unilaterally imposed by Beijing,” said Wen-Ti Sung, a fellow with Washington-based think tank Atlantic Council.

During Tsai’s tenure, it intensified a campaign to lure away the island’s few diplomatic partners. During Tsai’s years in office, China poached almost half of Taiwan’s diplomatic allies, bringing the remaining number to 12.

Tsai pushed back by diversifying trade relationships and increasing military spending including submarine development. She also elevated Taiwan’s standing on the international stage, said outgoing Foreign Minister Joseph Wu.

“Her leadership style is very moderate, but at the same time very firm in dealing with any kind of international pressure,” he said.

“She strengthened awareness of Taiwan around the world and its ties with the international community,” said Bonnie Glaser, the director of the Indo-Pacific program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. **MDT/AP**



North Korea fired suspected short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast on Friday, South Korea’s military said, a day after South Korea and the U.S. flew powerful fighter jets in a joint drill that the North views as a major security threat. South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said the weapons launched from the North’s east coast Wonsan region traveled about 300 kilometers before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.



Afghanistan More heavy rains have triggered flash floods, raising the death toll to 84 in the country’s north following weeks of devastating torrents that had already left hundreds dead and missing, a Taliban spokesman said yesterday. The new round of heavy rains and floods hit four districts in Faryab province Saturday night, leaving 66 dead, five injured and eight missing. Another 18 people had died in floods on Friday.



Russia At least 10 people were reported killed in attacks in Ukraine’s war-ravaged northeast on yesterday as the country pushed ahead with its renewed offensive. In the Kharkiv region, the focus of the offensive, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said five people were killed and 16 wounded in a Russian strike on the outskirts of the regional capital, also called Kharkiv. He added that five more people were killed and nine wounded in an attack on the region’s Kupiansk district, southeast of the regional capital.