



TWO LOCAL RESIDENTS AGED 32 AND 91 WERE FOUND DEAD AT HOME, WHILE ANOTHER SENIOR CITIZEN WAS FOUND FLOATING ON THE SHORELINE

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G2E ASIA: FACIAL RECOGNITION AND AI CAN IMPROVE GAMING PATRONS EXPERIENCE

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A FORMER EMPLOYEE OF THE LABOUR AFFAIRS BUREAU WAS SENTENCED FOR CORRUPTION AFTER REQUESTING FOR MOP50,000 IN BRIBE MONEY

P2

AP PHOTO



Japan The government yesterday was quick to deny a U.S. warning for Americans to avoid traveling to Japan would have an impact on Olympians wanting to compete in the postponed Tokyo Games. U.S. officials cited a surge in coronavirus cases in Japan caused by virus variants that may even be risky to vaccinated people. They didn't ban Americans from visiting Japan, but the warnings could affect insurance rates and whether Olympic athletes and other participants decide to join the games that open on July 23.

AP PHOTO



Malaysia A collision between two light rail trains in Kuala Lumpur that injured more than 200 people was caused by a train driver's negligence, according to a preliminary investigation, Malaysia's transport minister said yesterday. A fully automated metro train carrying 213 passengers collided with a vacant train that was being driven manually in a tunnel near the Petronas Towers, the world's tallest twin towers.

AP PHOTO

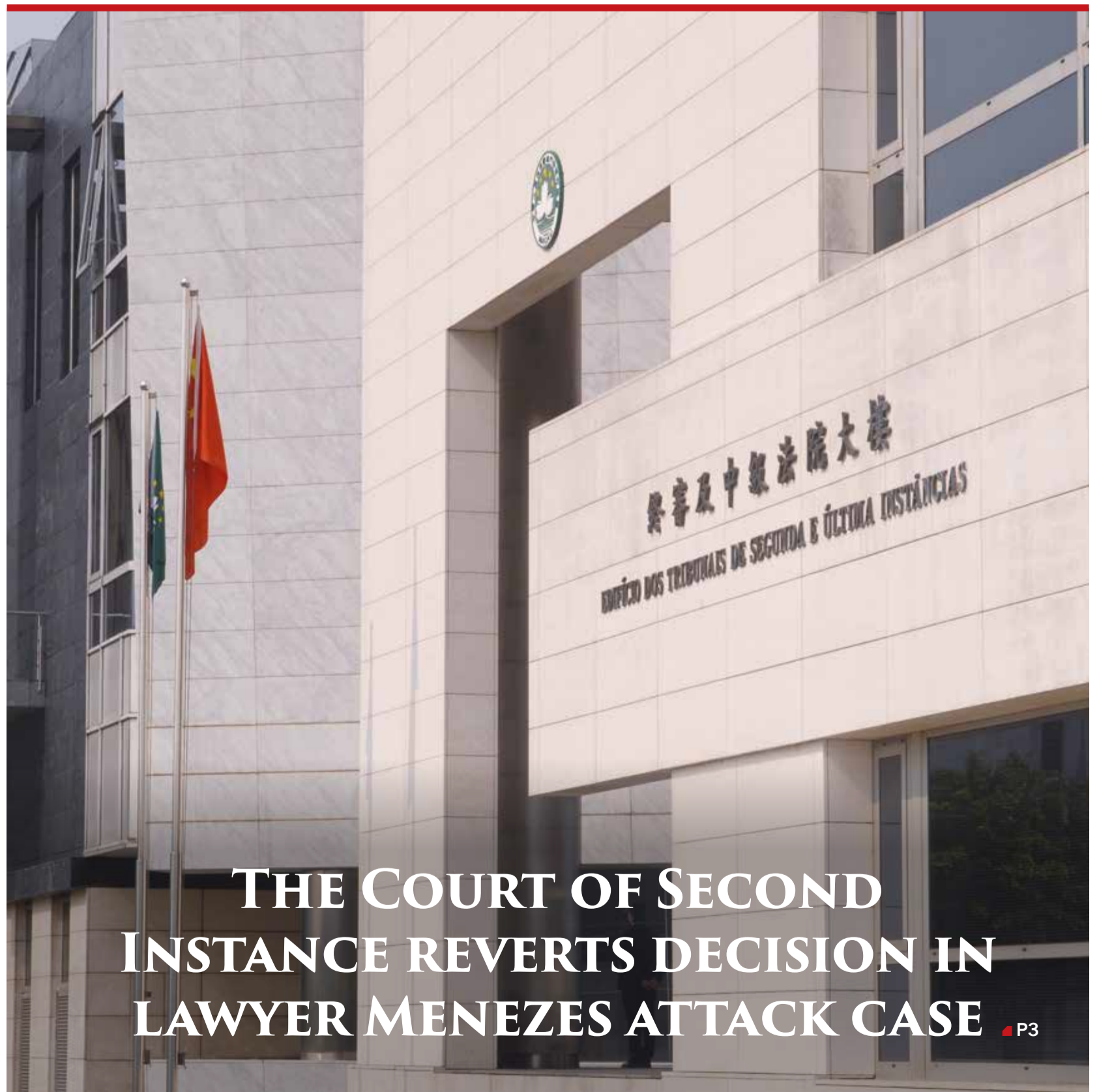


India Tens of thousands of people were evacuated yesterday in low-lying areas of two Indian states and moved to cyclone shelters to escape a powerful storm barreling toward the eastern coast. Cyclone Yaas is set to turn into a "very severe cyclonic storm" with sustained wind speeds of up to 177 kilometers per hour, the India Meteorological Department said. The cyclone is expected to make landfall tomorrow in Odisha and West Bengal states.

More on backpage

BANNED, AGAIN

The government banned the June 4 vigil - this time, citing as reasons, offense against public power and Covid-19 control. P2



THE COURT OF SECOND INSTANCE REVERTS DECISION IN LAWYER MENEZES ATTACK CASE

P3

POLICE BAN JUNE 4 VIGIL ON GROUNDS OF LIBEL, DEFAMATION

ANTHONY LAM

In his capacity as a member of the Macau Union of Democratic Development, lawmaker António Ng Kuok Cheong announced that the Public Security Police Force (PSP) has banned the group's right to hold this year's June 4 vigil.

The union has been the organizer of June 4 related events in Macau for the past 33 years, including in 1989.

Ng made the announcement on his social media platform, saying that the police have "declined [the application for] the June 4 Vigil, citing alleged offense against public power and Covid-19 control as an excuse."

He pledged that the group will "file an appeal with the Court of Final Appeal as soon as possible."

Telephoned by the Times to verify the matter, lawmaker Au Kam San, who is also a member of the union, confirmed the existence of the PSP ban.

He was asked to reveal the actual reason listed in the dispatch issued by the PSP, since Ng's social media post was terse and appeared to be abridged as a result of rephrasing.

Au explained that the PSP ci-



ted several laws as grounds for barring the vigil. "They said the vigil is [thought] to violate Articles 177, 181 and 298 of the Penal Code, as well as the Principal of Goodwill of the Code of Administrative Procedure," Au revealed.

Laws related to political assemblies in Macau ban assemblies with themes or topics pros-

cribed by other Macau laws.

Ng, meanwhile, stated that "it is a political persecution when the law has not changed and the event has been held since the start of the SAR," noting that current Penal Code was passed in 1995.

When questioned about the matter by the Times, lawyer Vítor

Tang described the articles cited by the PSP as "serious stipulations." "Article 298 of the Penal Code is an extremely serious crime," he said. "It is related to instigation of overthrowing an established system."

The aforementioned article is closely related to its preceding article, which is a statute concer-

ning the devastation, alteration or subversion of the political, economic and social systems in Macau.

Inciting people to the acts listed in Article 297 (which is the core of Article 298) incurs a liability of imprisonment for one to 10 years, depending on the severity of the crime.

Meanwhile, Article 177 is related to crimes of libel and defamation, as well as the dissemination of libelous and defamatory materials. Furthermore, Article 181 stipulates the punishment for the assertion or dissemination of information sufficient to violate the credit and prestige of certain entities, including, but not limited to, the public administration entities.

Former journalist Roy Choi Chi Chio expressed his pessimism on his social media account. "Simply put, Hong Kong and Macau can no longer voice out for China's democracy," he wrote.

He called the decision "political" and looked forward to the result of the appeal.

Lawmaker Sulu Sou was confused at the decision. "It was unheard of and unprecedented," he said.

Academic Eilo Yu, on the other hand, pointed out that it is a phenomenon that Beijing would apply pressure on the Special Administrative Regions when "it sees something that it doesn't want to."

Labor bureau investigator sentenced for corruption

ANTHONY LAM

The Court of Second Instance (TSI) has decided to uphold the judgment made previously by the Court of First Instance (TJB) to sentence a then-investigator with the Labour Affairs Bureau to imprisonment on accusations of corruption.

The convicted person was sentenced to four years and six months in prison by the court, which was upheld by the appeal court.

The second-level court analyzed the evidence presented to both courts. It added that the base court had heard the statements given to the court by the



chief suspect. It also heard statements from the witnesses, apart from viewing

documents presented at the hearings.

The TSI saw that the

base court had objectively analyzed all the evidence presented and had judged

on the principle of evaluation of evidence itself by inner conviction.

"Actually, the suspect was calling into question the recognition of facts by the judge at the Court of First Instance, through which the suspect was [attempting to doubt] the judge's freedom of conviction," the TSI noted in a statement. "This is not permitted by law."

The TSI added that the judge at the base court did not violate any principle or experiential rule. Therefore, the suspect could not have tried to overturn the conviction delivered by the court on the grounds that the judges were exercising their personal judgment.

The convicted person was on an inspection assignment when he discovered that a certain company was not paying its non-resident workers the MOP500 residential allowance required by the local law.

The company was also found to be assigning jobs to its non-resident workers outside their ambit of responsibilities under the law.

Later, the convicted person met with the company's owner in Zhuhai to ask for MOP50,000 in bribe money so that the misconduct of the company would not be recorded. The owner refused the proposal and filed a complaint to the Commission Against Corruption.

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DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles SENIOR WRITER_Honey Tsang
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS_Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, Bloomberg, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua
SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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RENATO MARQUES

THE Court of Second Instance (TSI) has ruled on an appeal filed by the assault victim, lawyer Jorge Menezes, amending a previous decision by the Court of First Instance (TJB) and reverting the acquittal of one of the assailants.

In July 2019, the TJB acquitted one of the two assailants, Feng Weize, who attacked the lawyer on a street in Macau and sentenced the other, Yan Yongming, to one year and nine months imprisonment.

This assault occurred in 2013, when the lawyer was attacked by the two men armed with bricks in public.

Refusing to accept this decision, Menezes appealed to the TSI.

The acquitted was then given a three-year jail sentence.

Questioned by the Times on the new ruling for the case, Menezes said, "It is the first fair assessment of the case. I accept the judges' reasoning and agree with the judgment even regarding those issues that the court decided against me. The judgment is very well-grounded. I am also thankful that it was written in Portuguese," he said.

"I am still utterly disappointed with the public prosecutors'

TSI amends decision on the attack upon lawyer Jorge Menezes

services (except for the prosecutor at the TSI) [as] they did not investigate the person who ordered the attack. They tried to clear one of the attackers, did not seek to prevent the attacker who was detained at the border from leaving Macau, did not appeal and even fought against my appeal, which is astonishing. This is utterly disappointing and should raise serious questions," he added.

For Menezes, more important than being able to receive a fair hearing of his case at a higher court is the possibility of justice slipping away when one of the suspects was released from custody and then vanished to the mainland. Consequently, it has not been possible to bring him to the justice of the courts or through him, bring to justice the person who had ordered the attack or find out why he ordered it.

"Justice ended the day one of the attackers was set free and [had] left for China. Also, justice

required the prosecutors to investigate who ordered the attack. Interestingly, they never wanted to commence this investigation," Menezes said, adding also that he felt disappointed with the pre-trial judge and the TJB.

"I had to fight through the whole system, against the prosecutor's and judge's decisions to obtain a fair judgment," he remarked.

Speaking to the Times, Menezes explained further that the law does not allow the TSI to change the penalty given to the second attacker because the prosecutor did not appeal. "Nevertheless, the TSI showed courage and integrity in punishing the [first] attacker with nearly twice the jail time handed down by the TJB [to the second assailant]," he said, noting that the TJB's judgment was flawed because it was inconsistent.

The first assailant was acquitted by the TJB with the court considering his identification "questionable."



THIRD STIMULUS

GOV'T REMINDS RETAILERS TO MAINTAIN PRICE STABILITY ON E-VOUCHER LAUNCH

THE SAR government reminds the business sector to abide by the regulations of the consumption subsidy scheme set to roll out on June 1.

Recently, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDT) and the Consumer Council (CC) met with the chambers of commerce, suppliers, and retailers yesterday to remind them to abide by the rules of using "electronic consumer discounts" and operate with "integrity, and to maintain product supply and price stability."

During the meeting, the bureau also stated that in recent inspections, it was discovered that retailers have launched various discount price activities to attract consumption, and called for more merchants to provide preferential discounts.

"The DSEDT and the CC will continue to monitor prices, pay close attention



to price changes, and quickly follow up cases reported by the public," according to a joint statement.

With the launch of the scheme in May last year, some supermarkets were criticized by netizens for allegedly taking advantage of the e-voucher scheme by raising the price of their merchandise.

For example, one viral photo circulating last year

on social media showed the price of a bottle of corn oil, that was originally worth 129 patacas, had increased to 178 patacas, which caused outrage among netizens. The authorities have acknowledged that they had received a high number of complaints from the public concerning unreasonable price hikes at supermarkets. LV

RETAIL SALES ALMOST MOP19B IN Q1

THE value of the SAR's retail sales for the first quarter totaled MOP18.75 billion, up 68% year-on-year, the region's statistics department revealed yesterday.

The latest report from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) showed that among the major retail trade activities, the sales values of communication equipment, leather goods and watches, clocks and jewelry saw notable year-on-year increases of 182.4%, 150.5% and 123.4% respectively, whereas sales value of supermarkets dropped by 17.9%.

Regarding the sales volume index, the indices of communication equipment, leather goods and watches, clocks and jewelry registered significant growth, while the index of supermarkets declined.

The value of retail sales in the first quarter of 2021 rose 3.1% compared to the revised figure of MOP18.19 billion in the

fourth quarter of 2020.

The sales value of communication equipment rose markedly, whereas sales values of motor vehicles and adults' clothing dropped.

Moreover, the sales volume index grew by 4.2% quarter-over-quarter.

Concerning retailers' comments, 43.4% of retailers expected the sales volume to remain stable year-on-year in the

second quarter of 2021, 41.6% anticipated a decrease and 15.0% forecast an increase.

As for retail prices, 58.7% of retailers predicted that they would remain steady year-on-year in the second quarter, 30.2% foresaw a decrease and 11.1% expected an increase.

Compared to the first quarter of 2021, about 45.7% of retailers saw sluggish business in the second quarter, whereas 54.3% expected either a stable performance or a more favorable outlook. MDT/XINHUA



GOV'T TO STUDY ALLOWING ANCHORED YACHT OFF FROM HAC-SA COAST

The Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) has agreed to study the possibility of allowing yachts to anchor off Hac-Sa Beach for leisure purposes. Director of the bureau, Wong Soi Man, pointed out that the bureau understands the need for yacht anchorage in that location. The director also reminded boat pilots to cruise safely at sea. Yacht owners have also expressed their opinions to the bureau on matters such as permission for cruising at night and the convenience of departure and arrival.

MACAU PARTICIPATES IN WHA VIRTUALLY

As part of the Chinese delegation, Macau attends World Health Assembly (WHA) events via video-conference. This WHA focuses on all-population health coverage, oral health, antimicrobial drug resistance, preparedness for unforeseen health events, poliomyelitis and Covid-19, among other matters. Tedros Adhanom, director-general of the WHO, observed that the world is currently in "a very dangerous condition". Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao leong, Health Bureau director Alvis Lo and two other officials attended the opening video-conference yesterday.

FULL LUNAR ECLIPSE TONIGHT

A full lunar eclipse lasting three hours will be viewable in Macau tonight, the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau has advised. The best direction for viewing is towards the East and Southeast. The phenomenon will commence early evening and will last for about three hours, although the moon will rise being eclipsed. Peak eclipse will happen between 7:10 p.m. and 7:29 p.m. The eclipse will end at 9:52 p.m. Meanwhile, there will be a supermoon tonight, the moon appearing 7% larger than normal. On November 19, there will be a partial lunar eclipse.

PJ FINDS THREE DEAD BODIES, TWO AT HOME

RENATO MARQUES

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) has been called to investigate the discovery of three dead bodies in Macau in just over 24 hours, the PJ reported.

According to the reports, two bodies have been identified belonging to local residents aged 32 and 91, who were found dead at home. The third body was found floating on the Macau shoreline around the Fai Chi Kei area on Sunday evening.

The body recovered from the water appears to be that of a woman around 68 years old, though due to the lack of identifying documents on the corpse, it has not yet been identified.

Early yesterday morning, around 7 a.m., the PJ received a notification from the Emergency Department of the public hospital, stating that a 91-year-old woman has been taken to the hospital by an ambulance belonging to the Fire Services. The woman was pronounced dead after resuscitation efforts failed.

Upon investigating, the PJ found



nd that the deceased lived with her daughter's family and a domestic helper in a residential unit at Avenida do Ouvidor Arriaga.

Around 6:30 a.m., the son-in-law woke to the sound of falling objects coming from the deceased's bedroom. He found her lying on the floor at the bedside panting. There was also blood on the bed.

Upon examination of the corpse, the PJ investigators found that a rubber tube connected to the upper right chest of the deceased had been cut and was leaking blood. No other suspicious injuries or marks were found.

According to the deceased's family members, the woman suffered from a long-term illness and

the tube connected to her right chest was used for dialysis.

Family members said that they suspected the deceased of using a pair of scissors to cut the tube herself.

Inspecting the unit, the PJ investigators found that the deceased's bedroom had already been cleaned and discovered the disconnected dialysis tube in the kitchen trash can.

The PJ temporarily listed the case as the discovery of a dead body. The exact cause of death is yet to be determined by forensic examination.

In a separate case reported on Monday evening, the PJ was called to investigate the discovery of a corpse of a 32-year-old man in a residential building located at Areia Preta district.

The dead man was found lying on his bed after the building cleaning staff reported a strong odor coming from his unit.

On inspecting the corpse, the PJ did not find any obvious fractures or scars. Based on the state of decomposition of the body, it is believed that he had been dead for a couple of days.

As in the other cases, the exact cause of death will be determined by a forensic medical examination.

The PJ will continue to follow up their investigations.

Number of admitted hospital patients decrease

LYNZY VALLES

THE number of in-patients in local hospitals fell by 13.0% year-on-year to 54,000, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

With an increase in the number of in-patient beds and a decrease in total hospital stays of in-patients, the occupancy rate of in-patient beds dropped by 12.1% year-on-year to 66.2%.

Hospital out-patient attendances decreased by 150,000 (-7.9%) year-on-year to 1,742,000, main-



ly due to a fall of 82,000 consultations (-26.4%) in Internal Medicine and a decline of 65,000 (-46.7%) in Pediatrics/Neonatology.

Analyzed by medical department, Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation accounted for 13.3% (232,000) of out-patient

attendances, followed by 13.2% (229,000) for Internal Medicine and 10.9% (191,000) for Chinese Medicine.

Emergency attendances declined 30.0% year-on-year to 342,000, with those on the Macau Peninsula (278,000) and in Taipa (64,000) falling by 27.3% and 39.8% respectively.

Meanwhile, about 18,000 cases of surgical operations were performed in 2020, down by 6.8% year-on-year; surgical operations in Ophthalmology (2,788 cases) fell by 30.2%.

Also, in 2020, a total of

1,909,000 nucleic acid tests for the novel coronavirus were conducted in hospitals and primary healthcare establishments.

The number of blood donations rose by 7.1% year-on-year to 16,541 in 2020, with 3,110 first-time blood donors.

According to administrative data provided by the Health Bureau, the number of doctors in Macau dropped by 1.1% year-on-year to 1,789 in 2020, while that of nurses rose by 3.1% to 2,568. There were 2.6 doctors and 3.8 nurses per 1,000 population.

IC TO HOST CHINA CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE DAY ACTIVITIES

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) will host a series of activities as part of the "China Cultural and Natural Heritage Day" which will be held on June 12.

The highlight of the event is "Genesis and Spirit - Showcase of Anhui Intangible Cultural Heri-

itage," an exhibition presenting the cultural heritage of Anhui Province.

During the duration of the event, workshops and concerts will be held and some World Heritage sites will be open to the public with free admission.

A number of workshops will also be

held at IC's cultural facilities, including the Workshop of Conservation of Cultural Relics at the Macao Museum on June 12, the Workshop of Clay Dragon Boat Making at the Museum of Taipa and Coloane History, Intangible Cultural Heritage Series of World

Heritage Youth Education Base - Workshop of Dragon Boat Dough Sculptures Making at the Mandarin's House, and the Workshop of Dragon Boat Festival Sachet Making at the Lou Kau Mansion, which will be held on June 12 and 13.

In addition, the Ma-

cao Orchestra (OM) will stage the concert "Piano Chamber Indulgence" at the World Heritage listed Dom Pedro V Theatre at 8 p.m. on June 19 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of the composer Camille Saint-Saëns. The OM will also present the concert "The Enduring Memories of Paris" at the University Hall of the University of Macau at 8 p.m. on June 12. LV

G2E ASIA

AI can improve experience for gaming guests, expert says

RENATO MARQUES

THE combination of facial recognition cameras and Edge Artificial Intelligence (Edge AI) applications can help Integrated Resorts (IRs) better understand their guests and help them provide a service that caters to their guests' interests, as well as improve their experience and security, Claude Hochreutiner, Internet of Things expert, said at an online conference held yesterday as part of the program of the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) Asia.

Hochreutiner explained that there are several applications in which this technology can work positively for IRs, giving the example of the gaming rooms, in which he said that operators are suffering from the same lack of customer data as in the retail industry.



"Like retail, physical stores lack knowledge about the consumers, what they pick or like, etc. While in the online market, operators know pretty much everything about their clients. Through this technology, it is possible to analyze posture, expression, and body language (for example) that can lead to a better understanding of what the guests want or are more comfortable with," Hochreutiner said. "It is also possible to track guest's behavior at

the gaming floor and understand how they behave," he noted.

Added advantages also can come from the use of the technology in the dashboard cameras of shuttle buses and other IRs vehicles, monitoring drivers' safety on the road.

"The system can identify the driver but, more than that, it can detect if he is eating, smoking, or using his phone while driving, as well as to detect states like drow-

ness and others that can pose a risk in [almost] real-time," he said, noting that such factors can also contribute to the improvement on the experience offered to the IRs guests and namely those from the VIP market share.

Questioned on what he believes will be the next major development related to AI technology, Hochreutiner said that upcoming developments in audio detection, recognition and use, which will soon be unveiled, will represent a major step forward not just in voice-controlled devices but also in conversation detection and noise cancellation and filtering, he said.

In his introduction, the speaker noted that since the revolution caused by closed-circuit television systems and more recently, the use of IP cameras, AI cameras will be the next innovation to disrupt the market.

DISTRIBUTION OF CASH SUBSIDY WRAPS UP

LYNZY VALLES

THE distribution work of 2021 Wealth Partaking Scheme has concluded five weeks earlier than it did last year.

The distribution of the annual cash handout started on April 12 and concluded on May 21.

Residents born between 2014 and 2020 were among the last to receive the subsidy.

The handouts this year benefited approximately 690,000 permanent residents and approximately 46,000 non-permanent residents.

According to data from the Financial Services Bureau, during implementation, 484,824 beneficiaries had received the cash premium

via bank transfer, accounting for MOP4,732,560,000, while 244,599 crossed checks had been mailed, amounting to MOP2,387,078,000.

Hitherto, 126,311 checks have been honored, representing 51.6% of the total number of checks issued.

During the distribution period some 10,733 enquiries had been handled, 8,156 (or 75.9%) of which were made by telephone hotline.

This year's cash handout was implemented early as part of the government's stimulus package.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the SAR government customarily distributed cash handouts to individuals during the summer period.

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Governo da Região Administrativa Especial de Macau
Direcção dos Serviços de Identificação

Requerimento para a emissão do certificado de associação para efeitos das eleições para a Assembleia Legislativa – 2021

A Direcção dos Serviços de Identificação (DSI) solicita a atenção das associações e organizações, que pretendam requerer o certificado de associação para efeitos das eleições para a Assembleia Legislativa – 2021, para o seguinte:

- O prazo para a apresentação do certificado de associação à CAEAL para a apresentação da relação dos votantes da pessoa colectiva no sufrágio indirecto termina no dia 29 de Julho de 2021. Caso as associações e organizações queiram solicitar o certificado de titulares dos órgãos sociais para efeitos das eleições para a Assembleia Legislativa – 2021 no intuito da apresentação da relação dos votantes da pessoa colectiva no sufrágio indirecto, devem formalizar atempadamente o requerimento junto da DSI. Aos requerimentos apresentados já com todos os documentos necessários no dia 20 de Julho de 2021 ou antes desta data, será garantida a emissão do respectivo certificado antes do dia 29 de Julho de 2021.
- Para os requerimentos apresentados depois da data acima indicada ou com documentação incompleta, a DSI vai acompanhá-los com o maior esforço.
- Do certificado a emitir constará somente a relação dos titulares dos órgãos sociais em efectividade de funções em **8 de Março de 2021**. Caso a acta da reunião apresentada no requerimento do certificado demonstre que os actuais membros do corpo gerente das associação ou organizações iniciaram as suas funções depois de 8 de Março de 2021, a respectiva acta será considerada inaplicável.
- O pedido para emissão do certificado sobredito faz-se mediante:
 - Apresentação dos seguintes documentos à DSI, sita no 1.º andar do Edifício "China Plaza" (os balcões n.ºs 2 a 6 são destinados ao atendimento dos pedidos de certificados de associações para efeito de eleições para a Assembleia Legislativa), ao Centro de Serviços da RAEM ou ao Centro de Serviços da RAEM das Ilhas:
 - Impresso próprio para "Pedido de Certificado de Associação" fornecido pela DSI (pode ser obtido através do website da DSI: <http://www.dsi.gov.mo>) devidamente preenchido, assinado pelo presidente da assembleia geral ou da direcção da associação requerente ou pelo seu procurador, e aposto o carimbo da associação;
 - Acta da sessão da assembleia geral para eleições dos titulares dos órgãos sociais;
 - Fotocópias dos documentos de identificação dos titulares dos órgãos sociais;
 - Procuração, quando o pedido for assinado pelo representante designado pelo presidente da assembleia geral ou da direcção da associação requerente.
 - Não é necessária a entrega dos documentos acima referidos se tenham já efectuado a actualização do registo dos mesmos na DSI, entretanto podem as associações ou organizações requerentes juntá-los novamente ao requerimento para evitar morosidade, caso hajam erros nos documentos anteriormente apresentados.
 - Requerimento *on-line* ou através dos quiosques de serviço de auto-atendimento, apresentado pelo presidente da assembleia geral ou presidente da direcção da associação requerente, se tenham já efectuado a actualização do registo dos documentos acima referidos na DSI.

Para mais informações sobre o requerimento do certificado de associação destinado às eleições para a Assembleia Legislativa, podem ligar para o número 83940581.

Direcção dos Serviços de Identificação, a 26 de Maio de 2021.

A Directora,
Wong Pou Ieng

Factory boss defiant as sanctions bite in

KEN MORITSUGU AND DAKE KANG, AKSU

A backlash against reports of forced labor and other abuses of the largely Muslim Uyghur ethnic group in Xinjiang is taking a toll on China's cotton industry, but it's unclear if the pressure will compel the government or companies to change their ways.

Li Qiang, general manager of the Huafu Fashion yarn factory in Xinjiang, told reporters that even though the company lost money in 2020 for the first time in its 27-year history, it bounced back by shifting to domestic orders.

"This is now in the past," Li said. "We've turned things around in the first quarter of this year."

Li blamed a sharp fall in foreign orders, as customers including Adidas and H&M cut ties, on "fake news" in a 2019 Wall Street Journal story that said brand name apparel makers and food companies were entangled in China's campaign to forcibly assimilate its Muslim population. Huafu also cited U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic.

In a crackdown since 2017 af-



Li Qiang

ter a series of militant attacks, the Chinese government has detained a million or more people in Xinjiang, a major cotton-producing region in China's northwest that is home to the Uyghurs and other

ethnic groups. Critics also accuse it of torture, forced sterilization and cultural and religious suppression.

Apart from cotton, much of the world's polysilicon for photovoltaic cells comes from Xinjiang. The

U.S. is now weighing sanctions over the alleged use of forced labor in the production of solar panels.

Xinjiang officials deny the charges and brush off Western criticism. They recently took about a

dozen foreign journalists to the sprawling Huafu complex in Aksu city, where 780,000 spindles churn out 100,000 tons of colored yarn annually for sportswear and other items.

The company said in a preliminary estimate last month that it earned 120 million-150 million yuan (about \$20 million) in the first three months of this year, after a 405 million yuan (\$63 million) loss in 2020 as sales fell 10 percent.

Evidence of forced labor comes from people who have left China and government documents, but it is difficult to prove definitively at specific factories since human rights experts and others are unable to investigate freely. Diplomats and journalists traveling independently to Xinjiang are followed, and most residents, wary of getting in trouble, are unwilling to talk critically.

"The government doesn't want information flowing out of the region and they've done a good job of making that difficult," said Scott Nova, the executive director of the Worker Rights Consortium in Washington.

An ethnic Kazakh woman from Xinjiang who fled to Kazakhstan

AD



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The houses are set in the heart of the World Heritage Site of the Douro Valley and its famous winery landscape where the worlds Ports are produced. Both restored relics overlooking the Rio Douro, these eight rooms houses have been blessed with gorgeous wooden floors, plush queen beds and marble baths; the best have dazzling river views. But it is the welcome that makes this place stand out from the crowd.



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n Xinjiang

said she was forced to work for a week sewing uniforms in a factory in 2018 after spending almost a year in detention.

Dina Nurdybai ran a clothing business with 30 employees before she was detained. She said the factory work was not voluntary. She was released after authorities realized she was not on a list of long-term detainees.

"If they say they are taking you to a factory, you say 'yes,'" she said. "If you don't go, they'll say you have problematic thoughts and persecute you."

Others also have said they or their relatives were coerced to work in factories.

The government says such testimonies are fabrications. One worker, Paziliya Tursan, said above the hum of spindles at Huafu that reports of forced labor are nonsense. As officials listened in, she said people at the factory stick together like pomegranate seeds, echoing a metaphor used by President Xi Jinping to describe ethnic unity in China.

The U.S. decided last year that the evidence was strong enough to ban imports of clothing, cotton, hair products and computer parts from about a half dozen companies. In January, it expanded the ban to all cotton and tomato products from Xinjiang, which produces processed foods such as tomato paste and about one-fifth of the world's cotton.

U.S. customs denied a request this month from Japanese retailer Uniqlo to release a shipment of men's shirts that had been stopped at a southern California port under the sanctions.

Guixiang, a Communist Party spokesperson in Xinjiang, said companies may lose customers in the short run but eventually become stronger as they and their employees work harder and find new markets. "In some sense, the stress can be transformed into a driving force for the companies," he said.

China has a huge domestic market and demand is growing in Southeast Asia, the Mideast, Africa and Eastern Europe, said Peng Bo, a senior vice president at Founder CIFCO Futures, a financial derivatives firm in Beijing. Chinese manufacturers also have gained market share as the pandemic hobbled competitors in other countries.

"Though the international market is important to domestic brands, it is not irreplaceable, particularly the European and American markets," he said.

On top of import bans, the

U.S. Commerce Department has blocked the sale of U.S. technology and parts to more than two dozen companies linked to human rights abuses in Xinjiang, including Huafu. That adds to pressure to stop dealing with the company.

Technology companies have also been targeted. Commerce added Nanchang O-Film Tech, whose customers have included Apple and Lenovo, to the blacklist last July. The company has employed Uyghur workers from Xinjiang, some 3,000 kilometers away, under restrictive conditions.

Its parent OFILM Group said it lost 1.9 billion yuan (\$300 million) last year because overseas customers dropped contracts. It did not say which customers.

The forced labor allegations extended to cotton picking late last year with a BBC story and a report by U.S.-based researcher Adrian Zenz. His study, based largely on publicly-available Chinese government documents, found "strong indications" of coercion and concluded that "it must be assumed that any cotton from Xinjiang may involve coercive labor, with the likelihood of coercion being very high."

China accused Zenz and the British public broadcaster of anti-China bias. Foreign journalists were taken to a 40-hectare cotton field that was being planted by machine, and officials said mechanization has eliminated the need for most workers.

Picking cotton is more difficult than planting it, though, and where it is mechanized in Xinjiang, it often depends on American technology in the form of John Deere machines. Deere said in a statement that U.S. sanctions have affected its business but declined to provide specifics.

The government says 70% of harvesting is mechanized, but that varies from place to place. Use of machine picking is more common in the north. In southern Xinjiang plots tend to be smaller and more scattered, with 53% of total acreage harvested by machine in 2020, up from 35% in 2019, according to the government. It acknowledged that farmers still plant and harvest by hand in many places.

Nova of the Workers Rights Consortium said companies should not buy from Xinjiang because of the "substantial risk" of forced labor at any factory and the inability to conduct a proper inspection. **MDT/AP**

CHINA DENOUNCES PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL ON ALLEGED XINJIANG ABUSES

CHINA yesterday denounced plans for a people's tribunal in Britain on allegations of genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslim people in Xinjiang region.

The spokesman for the northwestern region's government, Xu Guixiang, said China "condemned and despised" the hearings, which are expected to draw dozens of witnesses when they begin in early June.

The tribunal, which does not have government backing, is to be chaired by prominent lawyer Geoffrey Nice, who led the prosecution of ex-Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and worked with the International Criminal Court.

"This is a total violation of international law and order, a serious desecration of the victims of real genocide, and a serious provocation to the 25 million people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang," Xu told reporters at the latest in a series of briefin-



Xu Guixiang, a spokesperson for the Xinjiang northwestern region's government

gs in Beijing intended to counter growing criticism of China's policies in Xinjiang.

The region has become a major foreign policy headache for China, which is accused of locking up more than a million Uyghurs, Kazakhs and members of other minority groups in re-education camps where they are forced to denounce their traditional culture and swear fealty to China's ruling

Communist Party and its leader, Xi Jinping.

Women from the region have also testified that they have been forced to undergo contraceptive measures, children have allegedly been taken from their incarcerated parents and claims of forced labor have prompted multinational companies to cut ties with Xinjiang's key cotton industry.

China says it has merely been providing job training

and counseling to de-radicalize those influenced by jihadist propaganda following years of violent outbursts against Chinese rule in the region.

While the tribunal's judgment is not binding on any government, organizers hope the process of publicly laying out evidence will compel international action to tackle the alleged abuses in Xinjiang.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared before he left office that China's policies against Xinjiang's Muslims and ethnic minorities constituted crimes against humanity and genocide. His successor, Antony Blinken, reiterated the statement on his first day in office.

The Associated Press reported last year that the Chinese government was systematically forcing sterilization and abortion on Uighur and other Muslim women, and sent many to camps simply for having too many children. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

'Life goes on:' Lam says SAR still good for businesses

HONG KONG leader Carrie Lam yesterday defended Hong Kong as an attractive place for businesses, after a recent survey found foreigners were considering leaving the longtime Asian business hub.

Hong Kong has long been seen as one of the best places to do business globally, highly regarded for its skilled workforce, business-friendly legal system and ease of movement.

However, a survey by The American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong earlier this month found that 42% of expatriates polled were planning or considering leaving the city. More than half saying they were uncomfortable with the city's national security



law, which took effect last year and is widely seen as a tool for Beijing and local authorities to suppress dissent in the city after months of anti-government protests in 2019.

Other factors cited by those looking to leave included Hong Kong's strict quarantine measures for COVID-19 and concerns about Hong Kong's competitiveness and the quality of education for their children under the new security situation.

Lam said yesterday

during a regular news conference that while surveys provide some reference, one has to look at "what is actually happening on the ground."

"We have 9,000 mainland and overseas companies based in Hong Kong, including many of them which are using Hong Kong as a regional headquarters and regional offices," she said.

"We have not seen any significant outflow of capital, the securities markets are doing very

well, the banking sector is very stable and generally, life goes on."

Lam said that in her meetings with business chambers in Hong Kong and overseas, the "initial concern and anxiety" about the national security law have subsided, and that there was interest in policies that could make doing business easier.

Sam Cochrane, a finance professional who left Hong Kong this month, said the pandemic and travel restrictions were the main reasons he decided to return home to Australia after three years.

However, Hong Kong's deteriorating political situation was also considered.

"It made me worry and question what the future would look like for Hong Kong, and whether it would still have the same feel that it had in the past," he said. "I value independent journalism and democratic processes." **MDT/AP**

MYANMAR

UN envoy warns of possible civil war, seeks talks

EDITH M. LEDERER,
UNITED NATIONS

THE U.N. special envoy for Myanmar warned yesterday [Macau time] of possible civil war in the country, saying people are arming themselves against the military junta and protesters have started shifting from defensive to offensive actions, using homemade weapons and training from some ethnic armed groups.

Christine Schraner Burgener told a virtual U.N. news conference that people are starting self-defense actions because they are frustrated and fear attacks by the military, which carried out a coup on Feb. 1 against the democratically elected government, and is using "a huge scale of violence."

A civil war "could happen," she said, and that's why for the past three weeks from her base now in Thailand she has discussed with many key parties the idea of starting an inclusive dialogue that would include ethnic armed groups, political parties, civil society, strike committees and the army, known as the Tatmadaw, as well as a small group of witnesses from the international community.

"Clearly it will not be easy to convince especially both sides to come to a table, but I offer my good offices ... to avoid more bloodshed and civil war which would last a long time," Schraner Burgener said. "We are worried about the situation and clearly we want that people on the ground ... decide how they want to see the country going back to normal."

Calling the situation in Myanmar "very bad," she pointed to more than 800 people killed, over 5,300 arrested, and more than 1,800 arrest warrants issued by the military.

The U.N. envoy also cited reports of unconfirmed deaths, injuries, and damage to houses and civilian property in the town of Mindat in western Chin state, where the junta declared martial law because of armed resistance to military rule. She also pointed to new repor-



Aung San Suu Kyi

ts of increased violence in Kayah state — also known as Karenni state — in eastern Myanmar and in southern Shan state.

Myanmar for five decades had languished under strict military rule that led to international isolation and sanctions. As the generals loosened their grip, culminating in Aung San Suu Kyi's rise to leadership in 2015 elections, the international community responded by lifting most sanctions and pouring investment into the country. The coup took place following November elections, which Suu Kyi's party won overwhelmingly and the military contests as fraudulent.

Suu Kyi appeared in court in person for the first time since the coup on Monday on a variety of charges, amid threats by the military to disband her National League for Democracy party which won 82% of the vote in November's election. Her lawyer, Min Min Soe, said Suu Kyi wanted to tell Myanmar's people that the party was founded for them, and "the NLD will exist as long as the people exist."

Schraner Burgener called the military's attempt to ban the NLD "unacceptable" and said, "I also hope the NLD will survive because this is the will of the people."

The U.N. envoy had an hour-long meeting with the junta's military commander, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, on the sidelines of

a meeting last month of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, known as ASEAN, which includes Myanmar. ASEAN issued a five-point action plan that calls for stopping violence, constructive dialogue, appointment of an ASEAN special envoy as mediator, humanitarian aid and the mediator's visit to Myanmar.

But Schraner Burgener said a day later general Hlaing said he would consider the five points when the situation in Myanmar is stable. And on Sunday he reportedly said in an interview with Chinese television "that he doesn't see those five points can be implemented."

"So clearly it's up to ASEAN how to react," she said. "Clearly, we should be aware that time is ticking and we have not a lot of time to see action on the ground, because time will just play in the hands of the military junta."

Schraner Burgener said the Tatmadaw declared on Sunday that it had changed the rules for the retirement age of the commander-in-chief which means Hlaing "could stay for life in this position."

After her meeting with general Hlaing, which they agreed to keep private, the U.N. envoy asked to go to Myanmar to continue the discussion, but she said he replied "still it's not the right time." She said she isn't gi-

ving up her efforts because she believes people would probably be encouraged by her presence. She still has an office in the capital, Naypyitaw, and said she receives daily reports from many people in the country.

Schraner Burgener has been holding talks with regional leaders and individuals and groups in Myanmar. She said she is flying to Japan to meet the foreign minister. She said she is also ready to talk to Chinese officials.

Schraner Burgener stressed that the U.N. is trying to stop the violence, which started with the military coup.

"Clearly it's sad to see that people have to use arms," she said.

Local citizens have formed a so-called People's Defense Force with the National Unity Government, which "must try and bring them under a single command structure," Schraner Burgener said, and protesters are shifting to offensive actions. Every day, she added, "explosions" happen anywhere, which is scaring the people.

Schraner Burgener said ethnic armed groups told her in meetings that they support the people and now have "a common enemy," but she said it's difficult to see how their mainly home-made weapons can go up against "a very strong army who have a lot of lethal weapons." MDT/AP

this day in history

1998 VETERANS REJECT JAPANESE 'SORROW'



Emperor Akihito of Japan has spoken of his "deep sorrow and pain" over the suffering inflicted by his country during World War II, but did not apologise for the treatment of prisoners in work camps.

Addressing a state banquet at Buckingham Palace, attended by the Queen, Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Mother and 11 other senior Royals, the Emperor said he could "never forget" the many kinds of suffering experienced by so many.

War veterans said that Emperor Akihito had not gone far enough and demanded a "real, meaningful apology."

They are angry with Japan over its refusal to offer more substantial compensation and a full apology for their suffering during the war.

Earlier, in a gesture of contempt, former prisoners of war turned their backs on Emperor Akihito and whistled the wartime anthem Colonel Bogey as he rode with the Queen in a Royal carriage down The Mall.

Later, outside nearby Westminster Abbey where the emperor laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a memorial to the dead of World War I, around 500 protesters repeated their protest, turning their backs and humming Colonel Bogey again.

Under the post-war Japanese constitution, Emperor Akihito is a non-political figurehead and, as such, cannot formally apologise for the suffering inflicted by the Japanese imperial army.

But in the banquet speech on Tuesday, delivered in Japanese, he came close to saying sorry.

"It truly saddens me, however, that the relationship so nurtured between our two countries should have been marred by the Second World War.

"The Empress and I can never forget the many kinds of suffering so many people have undergone because of that war.

At the thought of the scars of war that they bear, our hearts are filled with deep sorrow and pain. All through our visit here, this thought will never leave our minds.

We sincerely hope that such a history will never be repeated between our two nations."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Of the 50,016 British military personnel taken captive by the Japanese 12,433 died or were killed in captivity.

The survivors campaigned for years for extra compensation for the horrors they endured.

On 26 November 1998 a Japanese court ruled against them saying the issue was settled when Japan made a token payment of £76 (the equivalent of £1,200 today) to the servicemen in the early 1950s.

Two years later, the British government granted a total of £100m to 16,700 former PoWs or their widows "in recognition of the unique circumstances of their captivity".

The chairman of the Japanese Labour Camp Survivors' Association, Arthur Titherington, said the veterans would continue to seek a full apology from the Japanese emperor.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Give yourself ample room to navigate Wednesday's terrain, Aries. The first eclipse of the year arrives today, and with it comes a wildcard energy that requires flexibility.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

The full moon lunar eclipse emerges in big-hearted Sagittarius today, bringing with it a packed punch of insight into your current approach to intimate relationships.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

The full moon lunar eclipse in big-picture Sagittarius arrives this morning, bringing with it powerful revelations around the current reality of your relationships.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

As a Cancer, the moon's phases have a direct impact on your emotional landscape. Be especially mindful of this today, as the full moon lunar eclipse emerges in big-hearted Sagittarius.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

The full moon lunar eclipse arrives in bold Sagittarius, highlighting emotional issues concerning your creative power, sex life, and self-expression.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

The eclipses have arrived, Virgo! One of the most important moments of your year arrives today, as the full moon lunar eclipse emerges in far-reaching Sagittarius.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

As a Libra, you're perpetually trying to strike a balance with life. Lately, you've been devoting your focus to stepping back and examining the big picture trajectory of your current vision.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Today's skies have some emotional intensity in store, Scorpio. The first eclipse of the year arrives today, and with it comes wildcard energy and potent revelations.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You're stepping into the cosmic spotlight today, Sagittarius. Today's skies usher in the first lunar eclipse of the year, which happens to take place in your sign.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Give yourself ample space to process the emotions that come up, as this intense lunation works to reveal what self-sabotaging behaviors need releasing.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

The full moon lunar eclipse emerges in aspirational Sagittarius today, highlighting the emotional undercurrents present around your friend group and long-term goals.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Today's skies are bound to be emotionally intense, Pisces. The full moon lunar eclipse emerges in far-reaching Sagittarius today, unearthing a slew of feelings around your current career trajectory.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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	7		4		5			
5		7	8				2	
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	2		3					

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	19	32	cloudy
Harbin	17	30	clear
Tianjin	16	18	rain
Urumqi	17	25	overcast
Xi'an	20	28	cloudy
Lhasa	16	26	clear
Chengdu	23	30	rain
Chongqing	26	33	cloudy
Kunming	18	26	rain
Nanjing	15	19	showers
Shanghai	18	21	rain
Wuhan	15	25	cloudy
Hangzhou	15	21	rain
Taipei	10	22	rain
Guangzhou	18	27	cloudy
Hong Kong	27	37	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	16	25	rain
Frankfurt	7	17	rain
Paris	7	14	rain
London	6	16	rain
New York	17	30	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Thought-provoking; 5- Capri, for one; 9- Run away; 13- Pan's opposite; 14- Cursed; 16- Mutual fund fee; 17- Manipulator; 18- Radiolocation; 19- Farming prefix; 20- Computer list; 21- Hydrocarbon suffix; 22- Take as an affront; 24- Takes to court; 26- Course; 27- Bit of wisdom; 29- Paternal; 33- Hot stuff; 34- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 35- Jeff MacNelly comic strip; 36- Young man; 37- Room at the top; 38- ... mouse?; 39- On the main; 41- Ladies of Spain; Abbr.; 42- European viper; 44- Forgiving; 46- Dutch painter Jan; 47- Stuff; 48- Staff leader?; 49- Turmoil; 52- Second-century date; 53- Like the White Rabbit; 57- Linebacker Junior; 58- Eagle's home; 60- Fighting; 61- The Emerald Isle; 62- Bridges; 63- Legal wrong; 64- Mailed; 65- Skeptic's scoff; 66- Blunted blade;

DOWN: 1- Percussive instrument; 2- Smooth sailing; 3- Level; 4- Scrutiny; 5- Sharon's land; 6- Graceful birds; 7- Prospector's find; 8- Noteworthy period; 9- Flares; 10- Expensive seating area; 11- Pull down; 12- Prepare a book or film for release; 15- Unpredictable; 23- Biblical verb ending; 25- "Mentalist" Geller; 26- Seine spot; 27- Facet; 28- Duck with soft down; 29- Deadly; 30- ___ Island; 31- Sophia of the screen; 32- Age unit; 33- A type of bake; 34- Play chords; 37- To the extent that; 40- Narrative; 42- Consumed, usually food; 43- Puncture; 45- Roth ___; 46- Most cunning; 48- "Crazy" singer Patsy; 49- Employs; 50- French father; 51- Picnic spoiler; 52- Kvetch or whinge; 54- Perched on; 55- Air-filled rubber hoop, become fatigued; 56- Kitchen addition; 59- Center starter;



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- 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
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AD

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

GAMING

US Judge says Saipan casino builder must pay seven ex-workers USD5.4m

AUDREY MCAVOY, HONOLULU

A judge on the U.S. Pacific island of Saipan yesterday [Macau time] ordered a Hong Kong company to pay seven Chinese construction workers a total of \$5.4 million for forcing them to work long hours in dangerous conditions to build a casino, while they were denied medical care for injuries and threatened with deportation and death.

Chief Judge Ramona Manglona of the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory, said she issued her ruling after Hong Kong's Imperial Pacific International repeatedly failed to comply with court orders to exchange information with the lawsuit's plaintiffs.

The award covers lost income and future lost income for the workers, payments for emotional distress, pain and suffering as well as punitive damages.

Imperial Pacific International did not immediately return a message seeking comment sent to an email address on its website.

The plaintiffs sued Imperial Pacific together with Gold Mantis Construction Decoration (CNMI) LLC and MCC International Saipan, Ltd. The latter two companies settled with the plaintiffs previously.

Separately in 2018, U.S. officials announced settlements requiring Gold Mantis, MCC and two other Chinese construction firms to pay 2,400 workers on the casino project \$14 million in

back wages and damages.

U.S. officials said the companies, who were contracted by Imperial Pacific, brought workers to Saipan on tourist visas, paid them less than required by law and failed to secure proper work authorization by exploiting a visa waiver program that allows Chinese citizens to travel to the Northern Mariana Islands.

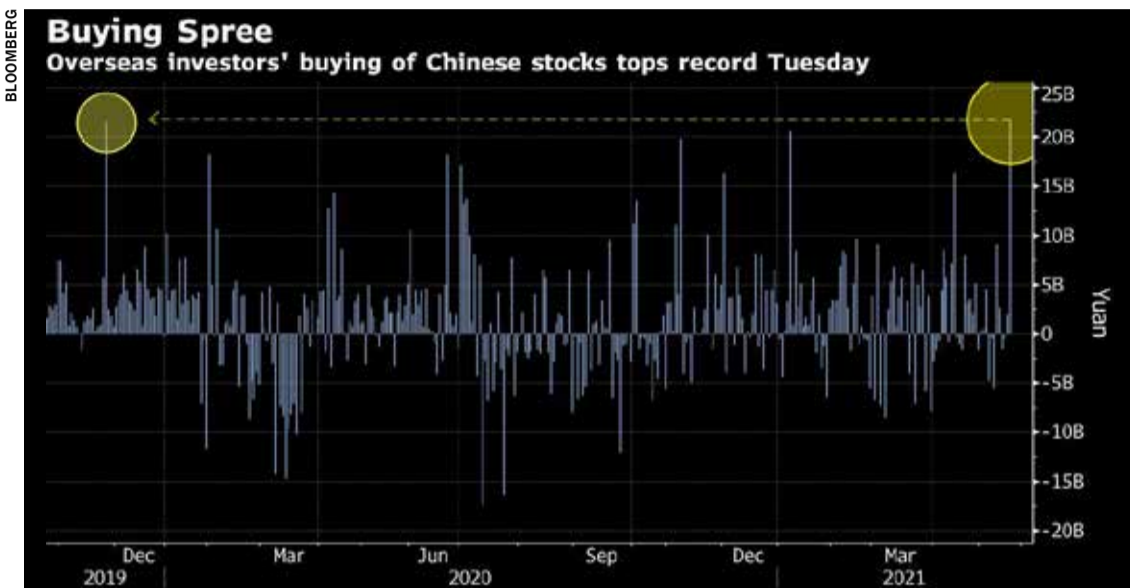
In yesterday's ruling, Manglona found plaintiff Tianming Wang suffered burns to his lower left leg when a spark ignited as he was cutting a metal barrel under the direction of his Gold Mantis supervisor. The supervisor told Wang he would be arrested if he went to the hospital and instead gave him two rolls of gauze. A doctor who later examined Wang said he suffered chronic pain and numbness and his left muscles had atrophied. Wang struggles to walk for more than 15 minutes and has been unable to work since returning to China, the judge said.

The judge said Imperial Pacific "was deeply involved with selecting and supervising the contractors." She said Imperial Pacific knew its contractors' policies on work hours and punishments, carried out health and safety inspections, housed the workers and transported workers to and from construction site.

The judge awarded the seven plaintiffs \$5.9 million in damages from Imperial Pacific, but subtracted the amount Gold Mantis and MCC had already agreed to pay them from the total. **MDT/AP**

MARKETS

China stocks jump most since July amid record foreign purchases



JEANNYYU

CHINA'S equity benchmark rallied by the most since July as investors piled into stocks amid attempts by policymakers to contain commodity prices. The yuan also advanced to its strongest since 2018.

The CSI 300 Index closed 3.2% higher at its strongest since early March, driven by gains in consumer staples equities. The surge came as overseas investors net purchased 21.7 billion yuan (\$3.4 billion) worth of A shares via links with Hong Kong yesterday, the most ever.

Beijing's efforts to talk down commodity prices and impose more control over financial markets have sent investors into more defensive assets such as consumer stocks with steady cash flows. Liquor giant Kweichow Moutai Co., mainland's biggest stock, rose 6% after Chinese media outlets reported its parent company aimed to double revenue by 2025.

"Beijing's crackdown on com-

modity prices has forced more funds to seek shelter," said Zhang Gang, a Central China Securities strategist. "Stocks such as Moutai are attractive given its stable earnings outlook and relatively reasonable valuation following this year's correction."

Meanwhile, the offshore yuan climbed 0.2% against the dollar, breaching the 6.4 level. The gains spurred attempts by state-owned banks to slow its appreciation. At least three institutions were seen bidding for the dollar in onshore markets below the 6.4050 level, traders said. This followed earlier attempts in the day to slow the advance, traders said.

The Chinese currency has rallied more than 2.5% in offshore markets this quarter, making it the best performer in Asia. Foreign funds have piled into the yuan as the economy strengthened and as they sought higher yields. Recent comments by a central bank official in a state-backed magazine -- which was later retracted -- have also stoked

expectations that it could let the currency strengthen to offset higher commodity import costs.

"The strong buying of foreign investors in A-shares via the trading links has a lot to do with the stronger yuan," said Jackson Wong, Amber Hill Capital Ltd.'s asset management director. "There has been expectations that China may allow the yuan to strengthen a bit to counter the import inflation."

Financial stocks were also among the best performers yesterday, with a Bloomberg gauge of brokerage shares rising as much as 4.2%. The gains came as Shanghai announced plans to establish itself as an asset management hub. CSC Financial Co. rose by the daily 10% limit.

"Sentiment has stabilized and some heavyweight stocks have corrected from their intra-year highs," said Linus Yip, chief strategist with First Shanghai Securities. "It's not surprising that some long-term institutional investors will buy them at current levels." **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

CORPORATE BITS

Galaxy launches fund to support Portuguese culture promotion



Galaxy Entertainment Group Foundation launched the "GEG Cultural & Academic Fund" early this year to support the Portuguese Institute of the Orient (IPOR) in

organizing activities to promote Portuguese language and culture in Macau. The scheme aims to deepen the cultural exchanges between Macau and Portuguese-

speaking countries, cultivate talents for the related fields, highlight Macau's unique advantage as the bridge between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

The "GEG Cultural & Academic Fund" debuted with the launch of a literary and cultural festival, the "Alphabets & Friends' - Feet on Earth and Head in the Air", which covered various cultural, arts and environmental protection activities that were delivered in the Portuguese language.

According to the gaming operator, the festival attracted more than 5,000 participants, promoted the Portuguese language, culture and literature to children and people of all age groups.

Starbucks to launch summer menus



Starbucks Hong Kong and Macau will present its "Feel Good, Live Well!" vibe this summer as it launches a series of in-store and online

activities and promotions to nurture body, mind and spirit.

Starbucks is launching a series of rejuvenating cold

beverages featuring herbal ingredients and premium Teavana full-leaf tea, oat-based yogurts and wholesome light bites.

"The new Lychee Butterfly Pea Oolong and Lychee Butterfly Pea Cream Frappuccino will please both eyes and palates with their mindful ingredient pairings and graceful colors," said the firm.

The beverages will arrive at all Starbucks stores in Hong Kong and Macau today, while the food items will be available in all Hong Kong stores on the same day. The Cup Cooler Bag will be available for redemption starting June 1. The "21-Day Live Well Journey" website will be live on June 7.

ON THE ROAD TO EURO 2020

Virus poses financial, logistical challenges

ROB HARRIS, LONDON

A tournament intended to be a celebration of European soccer will instead reflect many of the uncertainties that have beset the sport during the coronavirus pandemic.

Just completing the European Championship a year later than planned — with teams flying around Europe to play games — will be a triumph on a continent trying to suppress new coronavirus variants.

UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin inherited a complex plan from Michel Platini that he has long held reservations about, even before the coronavirus outbreak added to the logistical complexities.

"It's quite a tough situation, a tough format by itself, and with COVID it's even tougher," Ceferin told The Associated Press. "So it's not easy but now it looks OK and I can't imagine that this crisis will be worse."

The risk of coronavirus infections is increased the more travel for the 24 teams there is, as well as



In this 2019 file photo, Polish fans cheer their team during the Euro 2020 a match in qualifying phase

adding to the workload on players after a pandemic-congested season.

"It actually makes it harder, because you have more travel, less recovery etc.," said Jonas Baer-Hoffmann, the general secretary of world players' union FIFPRO. "We have seen that travel is a substantial risk factor to any of the COVID protocols that professional sports have undertaken."

At least the number of UEFA member associations staging games was dwindled down from 13 to

11 after Belgium was cut before the pandemic and Dublin lost its games more recently because Ireland isn't able to guarantee having fans.

The event should still be the first chance for the widespread return of fans to stadiums around Europe since March 2020, assuming new restrictions aren't imposed. But not all supporters will be able to travel to games, impacting atmosphere and UEFA's revenue streams.

Ukraine, for instance, will play its group matches in Amsterdam

and Bucharest with fans from those countries in attendance.

"This is very sad news but we have what we have," Ukraine goalkeeper Andriy Pyatov said. "We should be stronger than before and play for our fans. They have cut our '12th man' in the Netherlands. We should show them how we are strong."

Travel conditions could change mid-tournament, however.

Playing the delayed tournament is essential for UEFA's cash flow, with about 2 billion euros

(\$2.5 billion) of revenue on the line after already incurring costs of 300 million euros (\$367 million) because of the delay. The governing body also released more than 235 million euros (\$288 million) to help its 55 member associations cope with the pandemic.

In a hosting plan that has posed so many challenges, selecting London for the climax is looking fortuitous because Britain has delivered the fastest vaccine rollout in Europe. There is still a hope that by the time the semifinals and final are played at Wembley Stadium all 90,000 seats could be filled, helping a sport where billions of dollars have been lost amid the pandemic.

"The whole football ecosystem, at professional, amateur and youth levels, has been heavily disrupted by the pandemic," Ceferin wrote in UEFA's recent report assessing the state of European soccer finances. "This requires concerted efforts and a coordinated response throughout the football pyramid. Solidarity, not self-interest, must prevail and will win the day." MDT/AP

AD

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FMCC Signature Event
How Does the Macau's Master Plan preserve Local Identity and Cultural Heritage?
Speaker: Mr. Carlos Marreiros, Chairman, MAA Marreiros Architectural Atelier Ltd.

Introduction:
Macau's new urban master plan (MP) will likely be approved and published late 2021, with the objective of clearly defining the strategies of a sustainable urban development of the Macau S.A.R. and its integration into the GBA. Will this MP take in consideration the local identity and urban heritage of Macau? Join us and hear from Architect & Planner Mr. Carlos Marreiros, sharing insights on the Macau's Master Plan, and showing how understanding of local heritage is key to preserve Macau's urban identity, during an exquisite and interactive dinner.

Date: Thursday, 3 June, 2021
Time: 7:00p.m. - 9:30p.m. (Reception: 6:45p.m.)
Venue: Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau
Lotus Room, 2nd Floor

RSVP before 2 p.m. on 1 June
info@francemacau.com or Tel: (853) 6803 0673
www.francemacau.com

- 2021 FMCC members join @ MOP450*
- Guests and non-members @ MOP550*

* Price includes Western menu with wines.
Strict No-Show/ Late Cancellation policy applies for this event

Organiser: **FRANCE MACAU** Chamber of Commerce 法國澳門工商會
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OPINION

China Daily

Editors, Xinhua

INTL' TRADE FAIRS, EXPOS REAFFIRM CHINA'S DETERMINATION TO WIDER OPENING-UP

Under strict epidemic prevention and control protocols, China has recently held a series of international trade fairs and expos as a gesture to the world that the country will walk the talk on opening-up promises.

More than 4,100 companies and organizations from over 40 countries and regions participated in the recently concluded third Western China International Fair for Investment and Trade (WCIFIT) held in the southwestern Chinese municipality of Chongqing. A total of 359 deals worth 357.8 billion yuan (about \$55.6 billion) were signed there.

Western China has emerged to the frontier of opening up. The trade fair will further advance the region's opening-up, expand its circle of friends and build up its influence, said China's vice minister of commerce Wang Bingnan at the opening ceremony of the WCIFIT.

Once a hinterland, Chongqing is one of the many Chinese cities that have been striving to directly connect with the world and share development opportunities with other countries.

It positioned and built itself into one of the centers of operation of the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, a trade and logistics passage jointly built by Singapore and provincial-level regions of western China.

Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos and other countries along the trade corridor with Chongqing and other 13 Chinese provinces, autonomous regions and cities jointly released a cooperation initiative during the third WCIFIT.

According to the initiative, the parties should mobilize their strengths to facilitate trade, promote investment, improve industrial chains, optimize supply chains, enhance value chains and facilitate high-standard regional economic integration.

The corridor reduces the time and costs for the movement of goods and services between China, Southeast Asia and beyond.

"By leveraging on the corridor, our businesses will be even better placed to tap into the opportunities of trade and investment created by the continued growth and integration of economies," said Josephine Teo, Singapore's minister for communications and information.

Not only did the third WCIFIT witness China's persistent attempt to open up wider, but a number of international expos held recently have also accomplished encouraging results on global cooperation.

The fifth World Intelligence Congress, a major artificial intelligence (AI) event in China highlighting frontier AI technologies and applications, ended on Sunday in north China's Tianjin Municipality.

Over the past four years, more than 10,000 scientists, entrepreneurs, educators and financiers from home and abroad have participated in the event to discuss the trends and future of smart technology.

Other expos such as the 10th China Flower Expo that opened in Shanghai last Friday have wowed visitors with their great variety of displays.

More than 2,000 kinds of flowers and over 300 kinds of arbors took the stage of the flower expo with 180 outdoor exhibition zones and 64 indoor areas, including gardens of 12 of Shanghai's international sister cities and 10 international designers. The expo received over 20,000 visitors on its first day.

Central and local authorities have confirmed that the subsequent China International Big Data Industry Expo, China International Import Expo and other events will be held as scheduled, with a common aim to deliver the country's opening-up promises one by one.

"International expos will no doubt create new space for the development of all countries, share opportunities brought by China's economic revival and growth and inject impetus into global trade and economy which are in the grip of current challenges," Zhang Xiaotao, dean of the school of international economics and trade at Central University of Finance and Economics said.

BITCOIN SLIPS BELOW \$38,000 IN A RETREAT FROM MONDAY'S RALLY

THE BUZZ

Bitcoin traded lower yesterday as prices pulled back from a double-digit percentage rally, stoked by Elon Musk's effort to bolster the token's green credentials on Twitter.

The largest digital currency slipped 4% to trade at \$37,500 as of 6:21 a.m. in New York, following a 16% jump on Monday. The wider Bloomberg Galaxy Crypto Index and tokens including Ether also dropped.

The Tesla Inc. billionaire has roiled the token's price this month, triggering a selloff by criticizing its energy profile and sus-

pending Bitcoin payments. Heightened regulatory rhetoric on cryptocurrencies from China also pressured the sector.

"If the market continues to see wild swings based on Elon Musk tweets, it's going to be a big set back for this asset class," said Matt Maley, chief market strategist for Miller Tabak + Co.

Pledges to make the industry more green have picked up since Musk's criticisms. Several miners joined the Crypto Climate Accord, a private-sector initiative to decarbonize the crypto industry by 2030.



MALAYSIA'S WORSENING COVID-19 OUTBREAK SPILLS OVER INTO THAILAND

AN worsening coronavirus outbreak in Malaysia has sparked alarm and is spilling over into neighboring Thailand, which recently discovered a more infectious variant in its south believed to have come from Malaysia.

Malaysia has experienced a rapid climb in new cases since April that has strained its hospitals and prompted the government to impose a near lockdown until June 7.

But infections have not abated, with a record 7,289 new cases reported yesterday, pushing the country's tally to 525,889 — a five-fold increase since the start of the year. Deaths have spiked to more than 2,300. It is the third worst-hit country in Southeast Asia after Indonesia and the Philippines.

Health director-general Noor Hisham Abdullah warned that the country has to "prepare for the worst" amid signs that daily cases could spike further.

The government has shut all schools, prohibited dining in restaurants and banned social activities and inter-state travel, but has resisted calls for a full lockdown because of fears it would cause an economic catastrophe.

Instead, restrictions were tightened last Wed-

nesday with more people made to work from home, business operating hours shortened and consumers allowed to shop at malls for only two hours. The capacity and frequency of public transport have also been cut by half, causing longer lines and bigger crowds at bus and train stations.

Malay health director-general warned that the country has to 'prepare for the worst'

Malaysia aims to vaccinate 80% of its population by next year and has ramped up its inoculation program, with nearly 2.5 million of its 33 million people having received at least one dose of vaccine. Still, officials are worried about the rapid spread of the virus, especially clusters involving new variants originating in South Africa and India.

The outbreak has spilled into Thailand, which has locked down several southern villages along the Malaysian border after identifying infections involving the South African variant that is thought to be more con-

tagious. It was believed to have been spread by an infected person who crossed the border from Malaysia.

Thailand has also seen a recent surge, with confirmed cases rising to 135,439, including 832 deaths. It will begin its national vaccination campaign on June 7 and hopes to vaccinate 70% of the estimated 70 million people living in the country by the end of the year. It has administered 2.91 million doses so far, using vaccines from AstraZeneca and China's Sinovac.

Health officials have called on the government to quickly diversify its vaccine procurement. Only four vaccines have so far been authorized for use in Thailand and only two have been administered: AstraZeneca and Sinovac. The AstraZeneca vaccine is to be locally manufactured and play a key role in the inoculation effort.

Critics of Thailand's handling of the crisis say local business interests played a role in delaying and limiting vaccination efforts.

Food and Drugs Administration Secretary-General Paisarn Dankum said the government will consider later this week whether to approve a vaccine made by China's Sinopharm. **MDT/AP**

Australia is shutting its embassy in the Afghan capital later this week, citing security concerns ahead of the final withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops in what U.S. President Joe Biden has called the end of America's "forever war." Australia announced the temporary closure yesterday, and it is to take effect at the end of the week.

Iran named the hard-line cleric running its judiciary and six others yesterday as approved candidates in its June 18 presidential election, barring prominent candidates allied with its current president amid tensions with the West over its tattered nuclear deal. The announcement carried by state television puts judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi, who is linked to mass executions in 1988, in the dominant position for the upcoming vote.

Belarus' isolation deepened yesterday as commercial planes avoided its airspace, the European Union worked up new sanctions, and a senior U.N. official said he was concerned for the welfare of an opposition journalist arrested in Minsk after his plane was diverted there, apparently on the orders of the country's longtime strongman. After his detention, Raman Pratasevich was seen in a brief video clip shown on Belarusian state television, speaking rapidly to say that he was confessing to some of the charges authorities have leveled against him.



Germany The far-right Alternative has chosen two representatives supported by the hard-right wing of the party to lead it into the upcoming national election. The party announced yesterday that 71% of members in an online poll voted for co-chairman Tino Chrupalla and parliamentary co-leader Alice Weidel, beating a rival duo from the more moderate wing of the party.

UK Europe's top human rights court ruled yesterday that British mass surveillance and intelligence gathering practices breached human rights laws, in a partial victory for civil rights groups that had challenged the practices exposed by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden.