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CTM 40th ANNIVERSARY

A 65-YEAR-OLD MAN IS ACCUSED OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AFTER HE ALLEGEDLY REPEATEDLY ABUSED HIS WIFE WHO HAS ALREADY ATTEMPTED SUICIDE TWICE

P6

COMMENTATORS SLAM HEALTH CODE REQUIREMENT IN MOST ESTABLISHMENTS

P2

TAIWAN SAYS IT WILL CONTINUE OPERATING ITS DE FACTO CONSULATE IN HONG KONG IN SPITE OF VISA DIFFICULTIES FOR ITS STAFFERS

P7



Japan A sharply limited number of fans will be allowed to attend the Tokyo Olympics, organizers announced yesterday as they tried to save some of the spirit of the Games where even cheering has been banned. Organizers set a limit of 50% capacity — up to a maximum of 10,000 fans, all of whom must be Japanese residents — for each Olympic venue, regardless of whether it is indoors or outdoors.



Indonesian health authorities announced the country's largest one-day jump in new coronavirus infections yesterday, as the number of confirmed cases since the pandemic began crossed 2 million. The Health Ministry reported 14,536 new infections and 294 deaths, bringing the country's total confirmed fatalities to more than 54,950. Both the total cases and total deaths are the most in Southeast Asia.



Iran's sole nuclear power plant has undergone an unexplained temporary emergency shutdown, the country's state TV reported. An official from the state electric company Tavanir, Gholamali Rakhshanimehr, said on a talk show that aired on Sunday that the Bushehr plant shutdown began on Saturday and would last "for three to four days." Without elaborating, he said that power outages could result. This is the first time Iran has reported an emergency shutdown of the plant in the southern port city of Bushehr.

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28-DAY TARGET

The Hong Kong-Macau border may open to eligible travelers if Hong Kong sees no further Covid-19 cases between now and July 5 P3



CHINA ADMINISTERS NEARLY 1.03 BILLION VACCINES



P7

COVID-19

HEALTH BUREAU HEAD BYPASSED QUESTIONS ON MACAU-TAIWAN COMMUNICATIONS

ANTHONY LAM

DR. Alvis Lo, director of the Health Bureau (SSM), said yesterday that the local authority's regular public release of information should be sufficient for other entities to evaluate the situation of imported cases.

Lo was asked at yesterday's Covid-19 press briefing whether the health authorities in Macau and in Taiwan have a "smooth communication channel."

He did not directly offer an answer, but referred to his bureau's release of information to the public and said that foreign authorities could make use of the information.

"Clinical and epidemiological data of all Covid-19 patients in Macau have been released as much as [privacy protection allows], in order to maintain the clarity and transparency of our information [release], so that health authorities in any other places can take them into account," the health official said. "I believe this is effective."

Nonetheless, he stressed that the amount of informa-

tion released is not unlimited, as the restrictions are in line with protecting the personal privacy of individuals.

"Of course, we need to strike a balance between public interests and personal privacy. We cannot make abundant disclosure," Lo stressed. "Considering public health requirements, we have released what should have been released."

However, the press requested a clarification, noting that the question was about the communications between Macau and Taiwan.

Lo then reiterated that the current manner in which information is released is a reliable means of communication.

"I think in my perception, such a transparent manner of information release for each case is a means of communication," he said. "I believe all people, including the journalists here and all other residents, have been seeing clear messages about the time of arrival and the movement in Macau of an imported case."

He added, "This is a very good mode of communication."

LISANTO



PATIENT 53 ELIGIBLE TO ENTER MACAU

The press briefing yesterday was mainly concerned with how Patient 53, who entered Macau on June 17 and failed to declare that he had been to India, could be punished or prosecuted by the administration.

Dr. Leong Iek Hou, doctor in Public Health at the SSM, confirmed that the patient spent 21 days between exiting India and

entering Macau.

Currently, non-local residents are banned from entering if they have been to any countries outside the Greater China Region in the 21 preceding days.

She stressed that the Taiwanese national was honest with regards to his travel history in the 28 days prior to his entry into Macau. He only failed to declare at the hospital his travel history in India between February and

May this year.

The medical doctor stressed that for similar cases, the patient will only be prosecuted if they are a threat to public health.

As a result, Leong reminded all individuals to make an honest and complete declaration of travel history when questioned by the authorities on the grounds of epidemiological investigations.

Commentators slam Health Code requirement

LAWMAKER Au Kam San voiced the opinion that the government's strategy on the two-day Covid-19 test validity period and expanded requirement on the Health Code was "illogical", while commentator Larry So expressed the belief that these measures are driven by "ulterior motives."

From June 9, a Green Health Code is required, in theory, when entering most establishments such as restaurants, shopping malls and supermarkets. It has caused trouble across the city, particularly for small children and the elderly, who either have no access to smart devices or do not know how to produce the code.

RENATO MARQUES



Although automatic code generators and printers are available in 16 po-

lice stations on a 24/7 basis, these aforementioned demographics will still face

challenges during their use. When commenting on the matter to local media

Chit Pou, lawmaker Au blamed the government for completely omitting those groups of residents. Considering the government's plan to release an itinerary tracing app, he said those groups of residents might be restricted in where they can go if this happens.

The lawmaker expressed confusion over the government's decision to allow Yellow Code bearers at work but not on public transport, because "the policy is restricting those who should not be restricted."

He also voiced dissatisfaction with the local government restricting the movements of locals, but not those from across the bor-

der. He noted that barring mainland entrants based on their mainland health codes would be a more effective measure.

Commentator So was straightforward in pointing out the real intention of the government. He stated that these new measures that restrict local residents and make life inconvenient are designed to encourage people to get vaccinated.

Although not against the vaccination program, he stressed that Macau residents are facing anti-pandemic fatigue.

He also pointed out that the government's hasty ruling-out of connections between the job and adverse events following immunization has further discouraged residents from taking the vaccine. **AL**

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SARs to reopen border if Hong Kong sees no local case for another 14 days

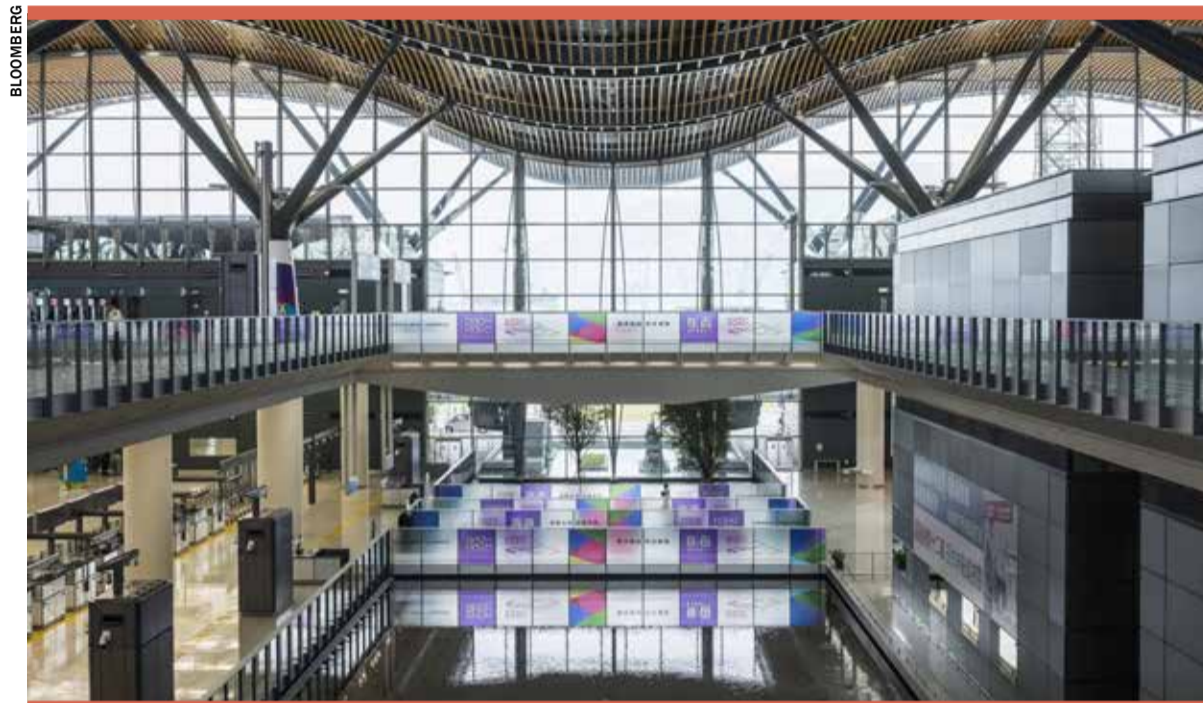
HONEY TSANG

ELIGIBLE visitors and returnees entering Macau from Hong Kong may soon be exempt from undergoing mandatory quarantine, provided that Hong Kong has no locally transmitted cases for 28 consecutive days, Dr. Alvis Lo, director of the Health Bureau (SSM), announced yesterday at the Covid-19 media briefing.

This is the first time the Macau government announced the particulars for the possible re-opening, albeit partial, of the Hong Kong-Macau border.

Yesterday marks the 14th consecutive day Hong Kong has not registered any Covid-19 cases within its community. It means that the border between the two cities can be open to eligible people if Hong Kong sees no further related cases between now and July 5.

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Ao Ieong U, had a virtual meeting with Hong Kong's Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau yesterday afternoon to outline the framework for the tra-



vel facilitation measures between the two cities, Lo said.

Given the absence of medical observation, the authorities from both sides agreed on a set of prerequisites which aspiring travelers must fulfill, with a bid to safeguard public health.

The preconditions include re-

quiring individuals to be fully vaccinated, and multiple Covid-19 tests conducted before and after entering Macau. Travelers will also be barred from participating in "community activities" until they test negative across all the required tests, although this restriction does not apply to day-trippers.

"We will implement the relaxation measures progressively in phases. There will be quotas set for each phase," Lo stressed.

Exceptions will be granted to those who can provide valid proof that they could not be inoculated due to their age or medical condition, Lo stressed.

On the same day, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet Ngor, together with Secretary for Food and Health, Sophia Chan, also announced the details about the potential relaxed measures on Hong Kong-Macau travel in a press conference.

Lam said that it is difficult for the control points in both cities to accommodate a large number of passengers at the present. As such, there must be an initial quota set for daily travelers, which will start with a small amount and be increased progressively.

A "Circuit Breaker Mechanism" — a system to halt cross-city travel if there is a spike of cases in either city — will also be put in place to protect residents.

The Come2hk Scheme, designed to enable mainland travelers to travel into Hong Kong without the need to observe quarantine, was originally scheduled to launch in May but was postponed due to instances of community transmission. The scheme may kick off after the outbreaks in Guangdong Province are under control, she hinted.

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FAOM SURVEY FINDS 45% EMPLOYEES HAVE EXPERIENCED PAY CUT

A survey conducted by Federation of Macao Workers' Associations (FAOM) and Macao Economic Association showed that more than 45% of respondents' income decreased compared to the pre-pandemic period. According to the survey, more than half of the respondents' income remained the same. Only 4.3% saw an increase in their income, but the 45% whose income decreased was a far higher figure than the 3.7% whose income decreased in 2019. The cause of this was attributed to the pandemic. In addition, nearly 60% of respondents believed that the expatriate employees policy lacks a system to prioritize local employees and prevent foreign workers from replacing local employees.

50 APPROVED FOR CATERING BACKEND DIGITIZATION FUNDING SCHEME

The "Catering Backend Digitization Funding Scheme" has stopped accepting applications due to the overwhelming number of applicants on the first day. So far, of the 230 merchants who have submitted applications, 50 have been approved. The scheme was organized by The United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macau (UAFBMM) and implemented by the Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Center (CPTTM). CPTTM said they will submit a report on the effectiveness of the program to the SAR government after the first phase is completed. The government will decide whether to launch the second phase of the program based on the merchants' responses and the report.

HIGH PREMIUM THRESHOLD DISCOURAGES SMES FROM ENROLLING IN CATASTROPHE INSURANCE

HONEY TSANG

The Small and Medium Enterprise Natural Catastrophe Property Insurance (SME NatCat Property Insurance), designed to cover financial damage to local shops caused by severe natural disasters, may not receive widespread support from owners owing to red tape and a high premium threshold.

A TDM report quoted a shop owner operating a stall at Inner Harbour, which is one of the places in Macau that is most prone to severe flooding, who expressed a low inclination to enroll in the insurance plan due to the costly annual premium.

The scheme was founded in 2019 to provide financial aid to those who experience financial or property loss due to natural disasters, including the fourth level storm surge warning and tropical cyclone signal No. 8.

Through the insurance program, would-be insurants can sign up for one of the three annual premium plans, valued at MOP25,000, MOP50,000 and MOP75,000 respectively.



The insurance amount for these plans will be four times their premium figures, at MOP100,000, MOP200,000 and MOP300,000 respectively.

The premium is considered a hefty amount for local SMEs. Some even claim that policyholders may as well just pay the financial loss incurred from such events themselves rather than take out the policy across several years.

Some owners also stated that the scheme has rigorous preconditions to meet before they can receive the insurance payout.

This year's insurance program commenced its application period yesterday on June 21.

From 2019 to 2020, a total of 37 applications were approved through this insurance scheme. The claimants cover a wide range of industries, ranging from food to retail to wholesale.

Local SMEs can enroll in the scheme through the city's four participating insurance companies. The scheme applies the same premium to the businesses, regardless of their locations in Macau.

It also provides discounts on premiums for current policyholders who have not made any claim so far. For instance, they can enjoy 20% off from the original premium if they sign up for the package for the second year.

To encourage more SMEs to enroll in the program, the Macau Monetary Authority (AMCM) and the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDT) jointly launched a subsidy scheme to offer eligible SMEs a subsidy capped at MOP30,000, or valued at 50% of the premium.

Nearly 18,000 applications approved for helicopter tour

STAFF REPORTER

A total of 17,982 residents have been deemed eligible for this round of helicopter and yacht tours, according to the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO).

The electronic lots for the second phase of the "Stay, Dine and See Macao" helicopter and yacht tours were drawn yesterday.

MGTO deputy director, Cheng Wai Tong, collaborated with representatives of the Task Force, comprising the Macau Travel Agency Association, Association of Macao Tourist Agents and Travel Industry Council of Macau.

The announcement informed that all eligible applicants in Phase I and Phase II were each randomly assigned a number by electronic lottery. Appli-



cants numbered 1 — 648 were given two quotas for joining the local tour in July and August. The list of No. 1 — 1,000 is now published on the MGTO's website.

"If listed applicants cannot complete the application requirements within the period, they will be deemed to give up their quotas. The rest of the

applicants numbered 649 and onwards on the list will take up the quotas in order, awaiting subsequent notification from the travel agencies concerned," the announcement said.

19 local tour itineraries were launched for the second phase of the "Stay, Dine and See Macao" project, with applications open since June 17.

SUCCESS UNIVERSE TO BE GUARANTOR FOR NEW LOAN FACILITIES TO ASSIST PONTE 16

HONEY TSANG

Hong Kong-based Success Universe Ltd (Group) proclaims that it will offer financial aid in the form of loan facilities to Pier 16 — Property Development to help finance the operation of Ponte 16 Resort.

Success Universe, which owns a 49% interest of Pier 16 - Property Development Limited which operates Ponte 16 Resort, announced the plan via a statement published on June 18.

According to the statement, the group is set to ink the "Amended and Restated Facility Agreement" with the lender, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Macau) to help Pier 16 — Property Development weather financial hardship

which has arisen from the Covid-19 pandemic.

In doing so, the group will play the role of guarantor on these revised loan facilities, which will be "in the aggregate amounts of HKD500 million and MOP273 million" to be made available to Pier 16 — Property Development.

The loans are intended to help Pier 16 — Property Development refinance its existing loans, provide it with general working capital, and finance its land premium payment, the release states.

The existing loan payments are due on June 29, 2022, whilst the maturity date for these revised loan facilities will be scheduled for 24 months after the new agreement is inked.

Across 2020, the group's shared loss for the asso-

ciates relating to Ponte 16 Resort stood at around HKD145.7 million, when compared to a profit of HKD116.8 million in the preceding year.

The huge loss was ascribed to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the group's annual result published in March this year.

"As Pier 16 — Property Development is a 49% owned associate of the group, the directors consider that the provision of the 2021 Financial Assistance, which will facilitate the development and operation of Ponte 16, will be beneficial to the group," the statement said.

The remaining 51% shareholding in Pier 16 — Property Development Ltd is held by SJM Holdings Ltd.

Sands China Garner Special Olympics' Highest Honour for Health Partners



SANDS CHINA LTD. considers it part of its corporate social responsibility to give back to the local community and to promote social inclusion. With its extraordinary efforts toward fulfilling the goals, values, and mission of Special Olympics' global health programme, the company was presented with "The Golisano Health Leadership Award 2020," the highest honour for health partners or individuals that Special Olympics awards, at the "2021 MSO Flag Day Prize Ceremony and Bocce Experience" on 30 May.

Established in 1968, Special Olympics is a global organization that serves athletes with intellectual disabilities, working with hundreds of thousands of volunteers and coaches each year, offering them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship.

Prior to the award presentation, Sands Cares Ambassadors played bocce with some 100 students and Macau Special Olympics (MSO) service users on the lawn next to The Venetian Macao, in hopes of driving social inclusion through this healthy and simple game for all to enjoy.

"We are delighted to learn that our long-term cooperation partner, Sands China, has won the 2020 Golisano Health Leadership Award," said Hetzer Siu, National Director of MSO. "The award is in recognition of the work of Macau Special Olympics and Sands China in improving the health of people with intellectual disabilities over the past years." In fact, Sands China has worked with MSO to promote social integration through various initiatives at the local level since 2005. They hit a key milestone in 2014, when Sands China started its sponsorship and support to the MSO Healthy Athletes Program, which provides free medical examinations and screening services to identify health issues for 5,000 MSO service users; 500 children and young adults with intellectual disabilities have enjoyed follow-up treatments fully funded by the programme to date. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sands China has striven to promote MSO service users' physical and mental health since last year by engaging in a number of outreach activities, such as a tour to the Giant Panda Pavilion and a parent-child health carnival. Not only has this initiative improved the health of these individuals, but also enhanced their families' quality of lives.

"Corporate social responsibility is an integral part of our company's core values," Sands China Ltd. President Dr. Wilfred Wong remarked. "We are very pleased to be recognised for making changes to the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and helping build an inclusive community. Our thanks go to the volunteers from the company and Macau Special Olympics for coming together for this very worthwhile cause."



**Golisano Health
Leadership Award
2020**

Presented to:

Sands China Limited

This prestigious award is presented in recognition of your outstanding leadership in Special Olympics Macau health programming and your ongoing commitment to advancing inclusive health for people with intellectual disabilities.



B. Thomas Golisano
B. Thomas Golisano, Chair, Golisano Foundation

Mary Davis
Mary Davis, CEO, Special Olympics, Inc.



CRIME

MAN ACCUSED OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FOR THREATENING WIFE

RENATO MARQUES

A 65-year-old man, a local resident working as a driver, is being accused of domestic violence after he allegedly repeatedly threatened and abused his wife, the Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson informed yesterday during the regular joint press conference of the police forces.

According to the report, the case was brought to the attention of the PJ via a communication from the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) from whom the 45-year-old woman requested help.

To IAS first and then to the PJ, she said she had been continuously mistreated and threatened by her husband, including several instances of physical violence.

The couple, who live in Ma-

cau, married in the mainland back in 2008. They have two daughters aged 12 and 10 years old.

According to the wife, her husband's ongoing mistreatment has been long term, leading her to attempt suicide twice in 2013 and 2017. Apparently, the IAS is monitoring the case and providing her with psychological support.

The breaking point is believed to have occurred on May 1, when the woman went to the mainland to seek a job to try and move away from her husband.

According to her statements to the PJ, when she returned to Macau, her husband became aware of her plan and threatened her by pushing a bottle of a corrosive liquid used to unclog pipes against her face and threatening to pour the contents over her. She said that he also confiscated

her identification documents to prevent her from leaving Macau.

During this incident, the woman called the police, but when they arrived at the scene, she refused their help.

The woman said that on other occasions, her husband threatened her with a kitchen knife.

After the situation deteriorated, she called the IAS for help on June 18, which led to them becoming aware of the case.

The man was detained on that day at the couple's home in the Northern District and presented to the Public Prosecutions Office the next day to be accused of domestic violence.

The PJ said that they searched the couple's home, where they found a kitchen knife and several bottles of the unclogging liquid that she had mentioned in her testimony.

CRIME

Bad Taobao purchase goes up in flames

RENATO MARQUES

A group of three youngsters became involved in a case of arson after one of them decided to burn a pair of sneakers he had bought online.

The case was disclosed by the Judiciary Police (PJ) yesterday who did not divulge details on the identity

of the individual, who is studying at a school located in the Central District, because they are under the minimum age of criminal responsibility.

According to the police, after purchasing the shoes online for RMB17, they were unhappy with the quality of the shoes and decided to burn them.

Two of his schoolmates participated in the incident near the school at a square that gives access to the parking lot of the Praça de Ferreira do Amaral.

Surveillance camera footage showed the owner of the shoes setting fire to the shoes with the assistance of one of his schoolmates, while a third

member of the group was looking out for any passersby who might see them.

The PJ said that an undisclosed person saw the fire and called the fire services who attended the location where the incident occurred. Since the fire was not of natural causes, they informed the PJ of the case in line with protocol.

According to the PJ, the company that manages the parking lot did not wish to pursue any charges over the case as it did not cause any damage to the facilities.

F&B SECTOR REGISTERS 9% DROP IN APRIL, POSITIVE OUTLOOK FOR MAY

RESTAURANTS and similar establishments (F&B) have reported a month-on-month drop of 9% in their business in April this year when compared to the previous month, information from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows.

According to the same release, despite the drop, April 2021 was still a positive month when compared year-on-year to April last year, with the Business Performance Index (BPI) of the sector scoring 79.6 points.

This figure indicates that, in general, business for the sector in April fared better compared to the same month last year by about 29.6%. An even business performance would indicate a score of 50 points on BPI.

Recording less business in

April this year when compared to March were mostly the sub-sectors of Japanese & Korean Restaurants and Western Restaurants, for whom business dropped 31% and 15% respectively.

As usual, the industry survey also included the business expectations for May. Some 56% of the interviewed F&B establishments said they expected their receipts to increase significantly month-on-month from April.

Leading the positive outlook are the Chinese Restaurants, who expect a business increase of 60% month-on-month for May this year, while Japanese & Korean Restaurants also expected to recover with a 27% increase. **RM**

NG KUOK CHEONG CALLS FOR INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION ON TDM CENSORSHIP



ACCORDING to lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong, an independent investigation led by credible social icons and scholars in journalism studies should be commenced on the alleged self-censorship of public broadcaster TDM. Ng's urging came in a recent written inquiry.

It was reported last week that the public broadcaster had removed part of its Portuguese commentary program "Contraponto."

The withdrawn part featured two guest commentators expressing their views on the police's ban on this year's June 4 vigil.

Although the TV station stressed that the delisting of the

program's section was due to opinion on a then-ongoing legal procedure, Ng cited public opinions that the commentators' criticisms were the real reason.

Ng stressed that the matter is worth discussing across society because the sudden ban on the vigil concerns the upholding of the Basic Law and the "One country, two systems" principle.

The lawmaker admitted that the government, despite being a shareholder of the broadcaster, should refrain from intervening with newsroom operations.

In a report released previously by the government, transparency and accountability were deemed part of the core of the TDM's administration. **AL**

China administers 1 billion Covid-19 vaccine doses

NEARLY 1.03 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in China as of Sunday, the National Health Commission said yesterday, as the country pushes ahead with the largest vaccination drive in the history of New China.

It took the country just five days to hit its most recent 100-million dose increase, according to daily updates by the National Health Commission (NHC).

Since late March, China has been accelerating the pace of free COVID-19 vaccinations for the whole nation. It took China 25 days to climb from 100 million doses to 200 million doses, 16 days to increase from 200 million to 300 million, and six days from 800 million to 900 million.

The large-scale vaccination campaign carried out across China has shown that Chinese COVID-19 vaccines are safe, said Zeng Yixin, deputy head of the NHC, noting that the incidence rates of common side effects and abnormal reactions caused by the vaccines were both below the average figures reported by various vaccines included in the country's regular vaccination plans in 2019.

According to Zeng, at least 70 percent of the target population in China is expected to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by the end of this year.

A total of 21 COVID-19 vaccines have entered clinical trials in China since last year. So far, four have been granted conditional marketing approval and three have been authorized for emergency use within the country.



JOINT EFFORTS FOR HERD IMMUNITY

Equipped with 21 inoculation desks on three floors of a building, the inoculation site of the Guangyi International E-Commerce Industrial Park is the largest one in Haizhu District of Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province, which has seen a resurgence of locally transmitted COVID-19 cases recently.

About 8,000 residents come to

the site daily on average, with as many as 10,000 doses administered in a single day, said Yang Huiyan, a head nurse in charge of the site. Nine local hospitals have sent medics there to help with inoculations.

"Concerted efforts are needed to achieve herd immunity," said Yang. "Vaccination benefits all of us, so we must work together."

As of 6 p.m. Saturday, Guangdong had vaccinated nearly 66.7

million people, with a total of 99.23 million doses administered. Many of them received two doses.

WIDER COVERAGE

China's nationwide vaccination campaign is open to people aged over 18. The oldest vaccine recipient is over 100.

Tan Fang, 77, received the second jab on Saturday at a health service center in the Danan Resi-

dential Community in Shenyang, capital of northeast China's Liaoning Province.

"Now that the two doses have been administered, I can go out for some sightseeing," said Tan.

Li Zhe, head of the center, said that, compared with concentrated makeshift vaccination sites, health service centers in communities see more elderly people coming for their shots.

"The elderly people and those with disabilities are given priority for vaccination," she said.

The country has also approved the emergency use of domestic inactivated vaccines on people aged 3 to 17. Detailed policies will be formulated for the inoculation of this age group based on the specific COVID-19 situation.

The country now has two of its vaccines validated for emergency use by the World Health Organization. It has supplied more than 350 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines abroad, consisting of donations to more than 80 countries and exports to over 40 countries, official data from early June shows.

Mao Junfeng, an official from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said that, so far, three Chinese enterprises have carried out joint vaccine production with eight countries, with discussions taking place on cooperation with 10 countries.

"Chinese vaccines are playing an increasingly greater role as the country works to fulfill its commitment of making COVID-19 vaccines a global public good," said Zhong Nanshan, China's top epidemiologist. **MDT/XINHUA**

Taiwan to maintain Hong Kong office despite visa problem

HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

TAIWAN says it will continue operating its de facto consulate in Hong Kong in spite of visa difficulties for its staffers while also providing consular services online.

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Hong Kong has been unable to get new visas for its staff after the Hong Kong government in 2018 began requiring that Taiwanese personnel at the office sign a statement accepting the "one-China principle," Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council said. The office currently has just one staffer left in Hong Kong whose visa is due to expire next month.

The one-China principle holds that Taiwan is part of China and the Communist government in Beijing is China's sole legitimate go-



vernment. Taiwan has refused to sign the statement.

The Hong Kong government also required the

heads of Taiwan's trade office and tourism bureau in the city to sign a similar statement, the head of the

Mainland Affairs Council said yesterday.

The Hong Kong government did not impose such

requirements in the past, Chiu Tai-san said. "The goal is to belittle our country and force our staff to bow their heads to the Beijing authorities," he said.

Self-rule Taiwan has called the move "political suppression" and strongly condemned the Hong Kong government's action.

Ma Xiaoguang, the spokesperson of the Taiwan Affairs Office, which falls under China's Cabinet, said in a statement Sunday that exchanges between Hong Kong and "Chinese Taiwan" must be based on the one-China principle.

Taipei has had a quasi-diplomatic presence in Hong Kong since Taiwan's split with mainland China during a civil war in 1949 through Hong Kong's handover from British colonial rule to Beijing's control in 1997.

Macao, a semi-autonomous Chinese region, shut its representative office in Taipei last week. Hong Kong closed its office in Taipei in May, saying that Taiwan had provided assistance to "violent protesters."

Taiwan has quietly helped Hong Kong pro-democracy activists seeking asylum as many started to flee the city after China imposed a tough new national security law in June 2020 which laid the groundwork for a crackdown on protests.

Since the election of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen in 2016, China has stepped up diplomatic, economic and military pressure on Taiwan, poaching its diplomatic allies and, starting last year, sending military planes near it on a near-daily basis. **MDT/AP**



British FM heads to Southeast Asia looking for closer ties

DAVID RISING,
BANGKOK

BRITAIN'S foreign minister headed to Southeast Asia yesterday on a three-nation visit as his country looks to promote closer ties and trade with the region following the U.K.'s exit from the European Union.

Foreign Minister Dominic Raab's trip to Vietnam, Cambodia and Singapore comes the week after Britain announced the broad

outlines of a free trade deal with Australia, the first the country has negotiated from scratch since it left the EU.

That deal was expected to boost trade between the two nations, and the British government said it hoped it would also help it join a regional trade agreement which would open the door to increased trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

A recent British government review of defense and foreign policy recom-

mended that the U.K. "tilt" its focus toward the Indo-Pacific region in response to China's growing influence on the world stage.

Raab has said the shift includes a greater emphasis on common strategic interests in the region, which goes beyond trade to also include issues such as maritime security and climate change.

As part of the initiative, Britain earlier this year dispatched a strike group led by the Royal Navy's flagship aircraft carrier the

HMS Queen Elizabeth on a 28-week deployment to Asia that Prime Minister Boris Johnson insisted was not meant to be confrontational toward China.

"One of the things we'll be doing clearly is showing to our friends in China that we believe in the international law of the sea and, in a confident but not a confrontational way, we will be vindicating that point," Johnson said in May before the carrier group sailed from Portsmouth.

After arriving yesterday in Vietnam, Raab is to hold bilateral talks with Vietnamese officials Tuesday and speak at an event held by the 10-country Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN.

A meeting with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen scheduled for Wednesday was canceled after Hun Sen announced he had been indirectly exposed to COVID-19 and was quarantining as a precaution.

Raab is to meet with his Cambodian counterpart, however, along with other officials in a visit that the Cambodian Foreign Ministry said it hoped would strengthen bilateral ties, as well as help "multilateral cooperation within the ASEAN framework."

Raab's trip wraps up Thursday in Singapore, where he is to meet with the prime minister and other officials, as well as business leaders. **MDT/AP**

IRAN

President-elect says he won't meet with Biden

IRAN'S president-elect said yesterday he wouldn't meet with President Joe Biden nor negotiate over Tehran's ballistic missile program and its support of regional militias, sticking to a hard-line position following his landslide victory in last week's election.

Judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi also described himself as a "defender of human rights" when asked about his involvement in the 1988 mass execution of some 5,000 people. It marked the first time he's been put on the spot on live television over that dark moment in Iranian history at the end of

the Iran-Iraq war.

"The U.S. is obliged to lift all oppressive sanctions against Iran," Raisi said at the news conference.

Raisi sat in front of a sea of microphones, most from Iran and countries home to militias supported by Tehran. He looked nervous at the beginning of comments but slowly loosened up over the hourlong news conference.

Asked about Iran's ballistic missile program and its support of regional militias, Raisi described the issues as "non-negotiable."

Tehran's fleet of attack aircraft date largely back

to before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, forcing Iran to instead invest in missiles as a hedge against its regional Arab neighbors, who have purchased billions of dollars in American military hardware over the years. Iran also relies on militias like Yemen's Houthis and Lebanon's Hezbollah to counterbalance against enemies like Saudi Arabia and Israel, respectively.

On meeting Biden, Raisi simply answered: "No." His moderate competitor in the election, Abdolnasser Hemmati, had suggested during campaigning that he'd be potentially willing to

meet Biden.

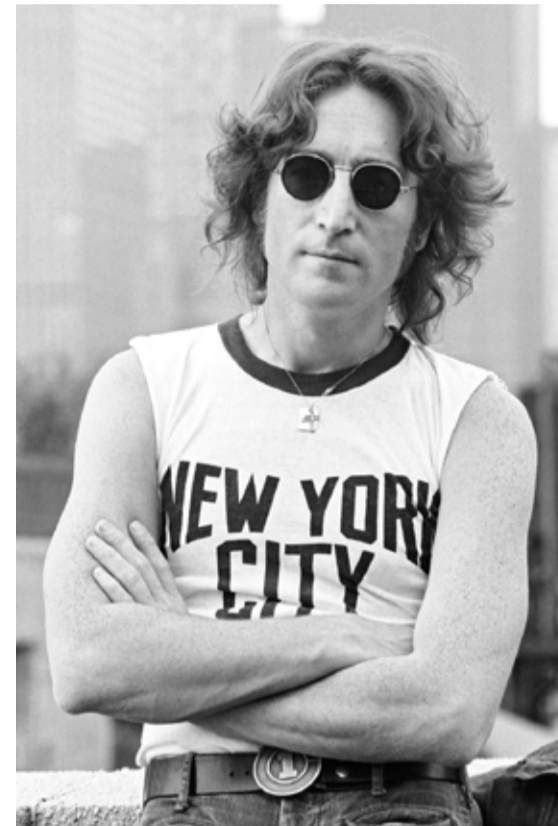
The White House did not immediately respond to Raisi's statements yesterday.

Raisi, a protégé of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has been sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass executions. His victory in the balloting last Friday came amid the lowest turnout in the Islamic Republic's history. Millions of Iranians stayed home in defiance of a vote they saw as tipped in Raisi's favor.

Of those who did vote, 3.7 million people either accidentally or intentionally voided their ballots, far beyond the amount seen in previous elections and suggesting some wanted none of the four candidates. In official results, Raisi won 17.9 million votes overall, nearly 62% of the total 28.9 million cast. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1981 CHAPMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO LENNON MURDER



A man has pleaded guilty to shooting dead former Beatle John Lennon in New York.

The court heard Mark Chapman dramatically change his plea to admit responsibility for the murder, saying God had told him to do so.

Even his own defence team were taken by surprise by the decision, and his lawyer has asked the judge to examine his client to ensure he is mentally fit to stand trial.

Appearing at a pre-trial hearing, Chapman said nothing in open court.

The drifter now faces a minimum of 15 years imprisonment, although the judge has indicated it will be more like 20.

Lennon, 40, was shot several times as he entered his luxury apartment building, the Dakota on Manhattan's Upper West Side, opposite Central Park, in December 1980.

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

Explaining that Chapman had decided to plead guilty after "God told him" to do so on June 8, his lawyer revealed he had "serious questions" over his client's sanity.

"I have asked that he be examined to determine whether or not he is fit to go to trial or to change his plea," he said.

The judge will receive a full report on the defendant before passing sentence in August.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Mark Chapman is serving 20 years to life in Attica prison near New York after he was deemed competent to plead guilty.

He said he had heard voices in his head telling him to kill the world-famous musician.

In 2000 the killer had his appeal for early release turned down, the same happened in October 2002 when he made another appeal for early release.

A third appeal was rejected in October 2004.

Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, has said she would not feel safe if Chapman were released, and experts believe it is quite possible he will stay behind bars for the rest of his life.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You could be your own worst enemy if you overreact to something you're told. Take time to talk things over. Travel for business or pleasure. A new you could help your attitude.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Opportunities for romance will flourish through travel. You can expect changes in your financial situation as well as in your status. Older members of your family may try to take advantage of you.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Try to control your irritability with your partner. Minor accidents may occur if you don't concentrate on what you're doing. Family outings should include visiting friends or relatives.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Friends may not understand your situation. Don't cause a scene, but when you get home let your partner know how you feel and why. Don't expect anything for nothing and you won't be disappointed.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 You can enhance your reputation if you treat family and friends with respect and dignity. If you address those in a position to grant you favors you should get the support you require.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Your magnetic, outgoing personality will capture hearts. Close deals that have been up in the air and move on to new ones that appear to be profitable. Mingle with those who can help you get ahead.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 You have bent over backward trying to help them and now it's time to let them stand on their own two feet. Go over their important documents and take the time to suggest alternatives.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Difficulties with children will surface if you try to break a promise you made. You can offer your help to others but back off if they appear to be offended by your persistence.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Emotional up and downs have caused doubts in your personal life. Don't overspend on entertainment, on children, or make poor investments. Don't let others know about your private affairs.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Do some research if you want to find information that you can apply against the opposition you face. You will be in the mood for competition, and your ability to lead a group will bring you popularity.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 You'll stay out of trouble if you pick projects that will benefit the whole family. Your main concern will be to spend as little as possible of your own cash in the process.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Unexpected bills may set you back. Your boss may not be in the best of moods today. You should consider getting your whole family involved in a project at home.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

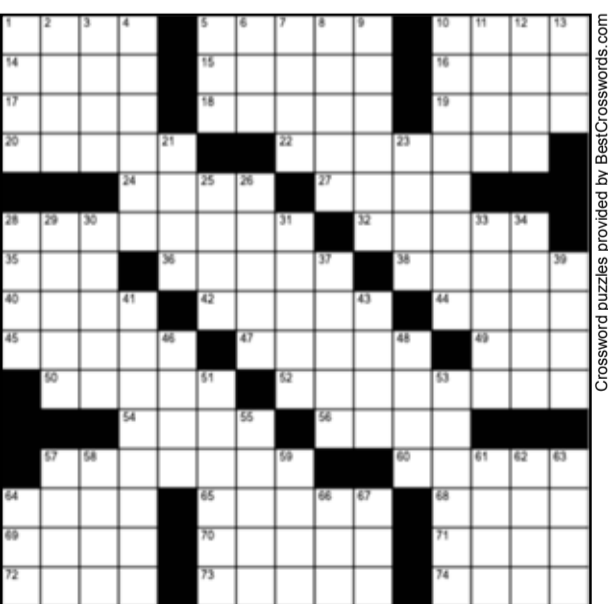
	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	21	35	cloudy
Harbin	15	23	thunderstorms
Tianjin	21	30	cloudy
Urumqi	21	31	cloudy
Xi'an	23	30	cloudy
Lhasa	18	27	fine
Chengdu	26	30	rain
Chongqing	28	34	thunderstorms
Kunming	27	31	rain
Nanjing	19	25	overcast
Shanghai	28	37	cloudy
Wuhan	20	27	fine
Hangzhou	14	24	fine
Taipei	19	30	cloudy
Guangzhou	18	29	cloudy
Hong Kong	25	35	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	13	24	cloudy
Frankfurt	18	32	cloudy
Paris	21	31	sunny
London	18	29	rain
New York	14	27	sunny

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Shake ____ (hurry); 5- Rodeo rope; 10- Sign over; 14- Actor O'Shea; 15- Exhorted; 16- Designer Cassini; 17- Hgt.; 18- Muse of poetry in Greek mythology; 19- Chinese dynasty; 20- Dutch painter Jan; 22- Christens anew; 24- First name in country; 27- Team; 28- Foolish person; 32- Twilled fabric; 35- Bobby of hockey; 36- Mournful sound; 38- Fish covering; 40- Excited; 42- Small assemblage; 44- Islamic chieftain; 45- Grannies; 47- Wreck; 49- Paris pronoun; 50- Like Loki; 52- Move; 54- Range; Abbr.; 56- Bristle; 57- Ragtime dance; 60- Steeple; 64- Point after deuce; 65- Creamy white; 68- Dos cubed; 69- Hot sandwich; 70- Noted Civil War biography; 71- High schooler; 72- Employs; 73- Construct; 74- Important times;

DOWN: 1- Spy Aldrich; 2- Rhythmic swing; 3- Gen. Robert ____; 4- Rule; 5- Bemoan; 6- Commit a faux pas; 7- Lab culture; 8- French beans?; 9- Handsome young man; 10- Trade; 11- Nobelist Wiesel; 12- Studies; 13- Ovum; 21- Bottle part; 23- Citrus quenchers; 25- Firecracker sound; 26- Vigilant; 28- Lament; 29- Church instrument; 30- Home of the Black Bears; 31- Elevator stop; 33- Type of ray; 34- Prufrock's creator; 37- Old stringed instruments; 39- Cleveland's lake; 41- Apparel; 43- "____ Rider" starred Clint Eastwood; 46- Fast fliers; 48- A great deal; 51- Full; 53- Truman of literature; 55- Cleave; 57- Lyric poems; 58- The world's longest river; 59- Tent stick; 61- Bakery worker; 62- Earthbound bird; 63- Seemingly forever; 64- ____ Darya (Asian river); 66- VCR button; 67- Nevertheless;

Yesterday'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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Traditional apartment **HKD 2,680,000**
 Ref: 2103 6001 788 ft² 2 1



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

SHAQIRI SCORES 2, SWITZERLAND BEATS TURKEY 3-1 AT EURO 2020

A lifeline for Switzerland. More misery for Turkey.

Xherdan Shaqiri scored two goals Sunday to give Switzerland a 3-1 victory over Turkey and a likely place in the round of 16 at the European Championship.

Winger Steven Zuber assisted all three Switzerland goals, with Haris Seferovic getting the first and Shaqiri putting in the next two.

Irfan Can Kahveci scored for Turkey, the only goal the team managed at Euro 2020.

"We reacted after the defeat with Italy," Shaqiri said, referring to the 3-0 loss in Rome on Wednesday. "We played like a unit and that was crucial today against this team. We knew that if we're good, we're going to create a lot of chances today against this team and we did."

Switzerland finished third in Group A and will likely qualify as one of the four best third-place teams. The Swiss will have to wait until other groups are finished for confirmation.

If Switzerland had scored two more goals, it would have overtaken Wales for second place in Group A and a guaranteed spot in



the next round. The Welsh lost to Italy 1-0 in Rome.

"I'm a bit disappointed with the goal we conceded. This is the only thing that I can say I'm not happy (about)," Shaqiri said. "We could score maybe one or two more goals for sure but at the end of the day it's important to win the game and we did that."

Boos echoed around the stadium at the end of the match as Turkey exited after losing all three of its games. The team's goal differ-

ence was minus-7, the worst since the European Championship expanded to a 24-team competition in 2016.

Seferovic put Switzerland ahead in the sixth minute and hushed what had briefly been a raucous crowd. Under pressure from the Swiss defense, Zuber turned and played a pass for Seferovic, who placed his shot low into the far bottom corner from the edge of the box.

Zuber had a hand in Shaqiri's

second goal as well in the 26th. Seferovic drew the Swiss defense to the left side of the box and played in Zuber, who found Shaqiri in the space created. The Liverpool winger had time to control the ball and curl it into the top-right corner, leaving the

goalkeeper no chance.

Kahveci got Turkey back into the game with his own spectacular curled shot in the 62nd — and was immediately substituted.

That woke up the pro-Turkey crowd in Baku, but Shaqiri soon broke away on a counterattack to restore the two-goal lead off Zuber's third assist.

Swiss keeper Yann Sommer kept his team in front with four big saves in the first half, three off shots from fullback Mert Müldür. Sommer was playing two days after he rejoined the team following a trip to Germany for the birth of his second child.

Müldür, one of three changes made to the lineup by coach enol Güne, was Turkey's main attacking threat for much of the game as lone striker Burak Yilmaz missed chances and failed to connect with passes.

Shortly before halftime, Müldür ran the length of the field from his own penalty area, beating three Swiss players on the way, but his shot was stopped by Sommer again.

Granit Xhaka came closest to extending Switzerland's lead when he blasted a free kick off the post in the 77th. **MDT/AP**

LATEST RESULTS

Italy	1	0	Wales
Switzerland	3	1	Turkey



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

PREVIEW

Scotland looks to give fans something to cheer at Euro 2020

SCOTLAND is looking to give its boisterous fans something to really cheer about at the European Championship.

Not just a 0-0 draw. Euphoria set in among the Tartan Army after Scotland managed to hold England scoreless against expectations. The streets of Glasgow filled that Friday night with flag-waving supporters hanging out of car windows. Others danced in the streets as if the team had won the tournament.

But the result did little to cement Scotland's chances of advancing to the round of 16 at Euro 2020 after the team lost to the Czech Republic 2-0 in its first Group D game.

Now, Scotland has one last opportunity to harness the energy of its fans as the team faces Croatia at Hampden Park today. Both teams need to win to have any chance of advancing.

Scotland won't be the home team on paper, but it most certainly will have a home crowd of about 12,000 urging the players on.

"It's great to see that our performance and the point against



England brought a lot of confidence and smiles to the faces of the country," Scotland midfielder Stuart Armstrong said. "To build on that and to give them something to cheer about on Tuesday is our ambition and our focus."

And a 0-0 draw, or any draw for that matter, won't be enough.

"It's simple for both teams," Armstrong said. "They'll both be wanting to win. And a draw is not good to anyone. It's pretty straightforward thinking."

What hasn't been straightforward for Scotland is scoring. While the team worked hard in defense against England and even

in the loss to the Czech Republic, the finishing hasn't been there.

But Armstrong isn't worried, arguing that Scotland has narrowly missed scoring goals.

"It would be a problem if we weren't creating any chances," Armstrong said. "I think we have had quite a few chances, a lot of opportunities. So, it's just those

fine margins that will take us to the next level and get us a goal which we do need today."

The Scots will have to play without Billy Gilmour, however. The 20-year-old midfielder made his first start for the national team against England and was named player of the match by UEFA but will miss the game against Croatia

after testing positive for the coronavirus.

Croatia has had similar scoring problems at the tournament, losing its first match to England 1-0 and then salvaging its game against the Czechs with a 1-1 draw.

But unlike the Tartan Army's unwavering appreciation for Scotland's efforts at its first major men's soccer tournament in nearly a quarter-century, Croatia fans haven't been impressed with their team's display so far.

There had been so much expectation for the team after Croatia's incredible run to the 2018 World Cup final and the fact that captain Luka Modri won the Ballon d'Or that year.

The team, however, hasn't lived up to the hype. Modri, who has lit up previous tournaments as Croatia's main playmaker, was pushed so deep at times in the first two group matches that he was almost level with the back line.

And Croatia's only goal of Euro 2020 came after Czech Republic right back Vladimír Coufal slipped on the turf because he chose the wrong boots for the second half. That allowed winger Ivan Perišić the space to score an equalizer.

MDT/AP

UPCOMING GAMES

	Date	Time	Home	Away	City	ODDS
Wed	Jun 23	3:00	Czech Republic	England	London	H 8.4, D 3.7, A 3.3
Wed	Jun 23	3:00	Croatia	Scotland	Glasgow	H 2.35, D 3.9, A 3.3

ODDSCHECKER.COM

GROUP STANDINGS

Group A	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Italy	3	3	0	0	7-0	9
Wales	3	1	1	1	3-2	4
Switzerland	3	1	1	1	4-5	4
Turkey	3	0	0	3	1-8	0
Group B	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Belgium	2	2	0	0	5-1	6
Russia	2	1	0	1	1-3	3
Finland	2	1	0	1	1-1	3
Denmark	2	0	0	2	1-3	0
Group C	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Netherlands	2	2	0	0	5-2	6
Ukraine	2	1	0	1	4-4	3
Austria	2	1	0	1	3-3	3
North Macedonia	2	0	0	2	2-5	0
Group D	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Czech Republic	2	1	1	0	3-1	4
England	2	1	1	0	1-0	4
Croatia	2	0	1	1	1-2	1
Scotland	2	0	1	1	0-2	1
Group E	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Sweden	2	1	1	0	1-0	4
Slovakia	2	1	0	1	2-2	3
Spain	2	0	2	0	1-1	2
Poland	2	0	1	1	2-3	1
Group F	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
France	2	1	1	0	2-1	4
Germany	2	1	0	1	4-3	3
Portugal	2	1	0	1	5-4	3
Hungary	2	0	1	1	1-4	1

FRANCE FORWARD DEMBÉLÉ OUT OF EURO 2020 WITH KNEE INJURY

OUSMANE Dembélé has been ruled out of the European Championship because of a knee injury, the French soccer federation said yesterday.

Dembélé sustained the injury during a 30-minute appearance as a substitute before being replaced late in the team's 1-1 draw with Hungary on Saturday.

The French team said Dembélé had X-rays at a hospital in Budapest yesterday.

"The length of recovery time needed is incompatible with keeping him in the squad," the team said.

Teams can replace injured goalkeepers but not outfield players once they have played their first match in the tournament.

Dembélé's exit means France coach Didier Deschamps will have only 25 players to choose from for the rest of Euro 2020. France leads Group F and will next face Portugal in Budapest tomorrow.



Dembélé plays for Barcelona. The French federation said its doctors talked with staff at the Spanish club before making the decision to release him.

The 24-year-old Dembélé was a member of the France squad that won the 2018 World Cup.

MDT/AP

SCOTLAND MIDFIELDER BILLY GILMOUR POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS

SCOTLAND midfielder Billy Gilmour has tested positive for the coronavirus and will have to isolate for 10 days, the team said yesterday.

The Chelsea player will miss his team's final Group D match against Croatia today and a potential round-of-16 match.

Gilmour was UEFA's player of the match on Friday in a 0-0 draw against England at Wembley Stadium.

Players are regularly tested and are staying within team bubbles apart from when they are at matches. The Scottish Football Association said it had been liaising with Public Health England but did not announce if anyone else had been deemed a close contact and would have to also isolate.

Scotland has one point from its two Group D matches.

MDT/AP

OPINION

World Views

Nader Habibi, Brandeis University
 MDT/The Conversation

**CONSERVATIVE HARD-LINER
 ELECTED AS IRAN'S NEXT
 PRESIDENT - WHAT THAT
 MEANS FOR THE WEST AND
 THE NUCLEAR DEAL**

Iran's conservative rulers' effort to orchestrate the outcome of the June 18 presidential election triggered a voter boycott – but the result may still bode well for ongoing negotiations over the lapsed 2015 nuclear deal.

Iran's Interior Ministry on June 19 announced that the winner is Ebrahim Raisi, chief of Iran's judiciary and close ally of the supreme leader. He was all but assured of victory after the candidates who could have posed a serious challenge to him – including three reformists – were disqualified and prevented from participating in the election.

The unprecedented disqualifications outraged large groups of liberal and moderate voters, and many boycotted the election. As a result, the turnout was just 49%.

But who is Ebrahim Raisi, and how will his presidency alter Iran's domestic and foreign policies? As an economist and close observer of Iran, I believe we can start to answer these questions by exploring his past.

Loyal insider

Raisi is a loyal regime insider with a long career in Iran's judicial branch, which goes back more than four decades.

He was only 19 when the Islamic revolution deposed the shah in 1979. As a young Islamic activist, he caught the attention of several top revolutionary clerics, including Ali Khamenei, who became Iran's supreme leader a decade later.

Named the general-prosecutor of Kataj – a small city near Tehran – at age 20, Raisi quickly rose to more prominent positions. In 1989, when Khamenei replaced Ruhollah Khomeini as supreme leader, Raisi was promoted to chief prosecutor-general of Tehran.

This promotion reflected the high level of trust that Khamenei had in him. While serving in these positions, Raisi also attended seminary and religious studies under Khamenei and other influential religious leaders.

Executing dissidents and fighting corruption

During the first decade of his career, Raisi convicted a large number of dissidents and political opponents of the Islamic regime and sentenced many of them to death.

Regime critics and his political opponents have condemned his direct role in these executions, particularly the large number of political prisoners who were executed in 1988.

From 1994 to 2004, Raisi served as head of Iran's general inspector office, which is responsible for preventing abuse of power and corruption in government institutions. It was in this position that he developed a reputation as a crusader against government corruption. Even as he was appointed as the first deputy chief justice in 2004 and finally promoted to chief justice in March 2019, he continued his fight against corruption by prosecuting many government officials.

His critics have argued, however, that his fight against corruption has been highly politicized and selective. They claimed that he targeted individuals who were affiliated with his political rivals such as President Hassan Rouhani.

Raisi first ran for president in 2017 but was defeated by Iran's current President Hassan Rouhani, who after two terms is ineligible to run again.

Likely return to the nuclear deal

One of the institutional weaknesses of Iran's political system since the 1979 Islamic revolution is the potential for tension and disagreement between the elected presidents and the supreme leader.

That is, unlike in the U.S. system of government, the Iranian president's powers are extremely limited. For example, a reformist president may want to engage more with the West or stay out of a foreign conflict, but the supreme leader could overrule or simply ignore him.

As a protege and close ally of the supreme leader, Raisi is expected to support Khamenei's policies on both domestic and foreign policy – which means more coordination between the various branches of government. With the Parliament also dominated by Khamenei supporters, it also means that the conservatives will control all three branches of the government once again after eight years.

[Abridged]

A Russian man who worked at a German university has been arrested on suspicion of espionage for allegedly passing information to Russian intelligence, German prosecutors said yesterday.

The suspect, identified only as Ilmur N., was arrested on Friday, and his home and workplace were searched. Federal prosecutors said he worked as a research assistant for a science and technology professorship at a German university. They didn't identify the university or specify where in the country he was arrested.

The man is accused of meeting at least three times with a member of a Russian intelligence service, which prosecutors didn't identify, between October of last year and this month. In two of

those meetings, he is alleged to have handed over information on the university in exchange for an unspecified amount of cash.

A judge on Saturday ordered the man kept in custody pending a possible indictment.

Relations between Berlin and Moscow have been tense over recent years. Reasons have included allegations of Russian involvement in the 2015 hacking of the German parliament, a 2019 incident in which a Russian is accused of killing a Georgian man in downtown Berlin on Moscow's orders, and the poisoning last year of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. Navalny was flown to Berlin for treatment.

AP PHOTO



HONG KONG

**APPLE DAILY NEWSPAPER
 SAYS IT MAY SHUT DOWN**

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

Hong Kong's embattled pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily reported yesterday that its board of directors has asked authorities to unfreeze some assets so it can pay salaries and avoid labor violations, and that the board will meet again on Friday to decide if the newspaper will cease operations.

Police last week arrested five top editors and executives of Apple Daily under the city's tough national security law on suspicion of foreign collusion, searched its offices and froze \$2.3 million worth of assets of three companies linked to the newspaper.

The arrests and freezing of assets came as Hong Kong authorities crack down on dissenting voices as Beijing tightens control over the territory in what critics say is an erosion of freedoms it promised the city for 50 years when the former British colony was handed over to China in 1997.

Apple Daily has been outspoken in defending Hong Kong's freedoms,

and in recent years has often criticized the Chinese and Hong Kong governments for limiting the city's democratic freedoms as well as constricting the rights of free speech and assembly not found on mainland China.

Apple Daily said in an article on its website yesterday that if its board decides on Friday to cease operations of the newspaper, its website could stop publishing as soon as early Saturday morning, and Saturday's print edition of the newspaper would be its last.

Apple Daily said that it may challenge the decision to freeze its assets in court if the city's Security Bureau denies its request

An internal department memo sent to some employees at Apple Daily also stated that those who wish to resign immediately could do so.

Apple Daily said in an article on Sunday that it may challenge the decision to freeze its assets in court if the city's Security Bureau denies its request.

The Security Bureau said it would not com-

ment on the details of the case because legal proceedings were ongoing. It said endangering national security is a "very serious crime."

"We handle such crimes according to the law, targeting at illegal acts, and invoke the power to freeze offense-related properties based on need and the law," the bureau said in an English-language statement. "Secretary for Security will handle in accordance with the law any application related to the frozen property."

Last week, police identified over 30 articles published by Apple Daily that they said played a "crucial" role in a conspiracy with foreign countries to impose sanctions against

China and Hong Kong for undermining Hong Kong's autonomy.

The newspaper's founder, media tycoon Jimmy Lai, was convicted earlier this year for his involvement in unauthorized assemblies and is currently in jail. Two of the five people arrested last week have also been charged with collusion with foreign countries. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Israel yesterday eased some restrictions on the Gaza Strip that have threatened a fragile ceasefire, Palestinian officials said. Hamas, however, said the move was really Israel's attempt to pressure the militant group into making concessions. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media, said 11 truckloads of clothes were exported through Kerem Shalom crossing for the first time in 40 days. On Sunday, Israel said it will allow limited agricultural exports from Gaza.

AP PHOTO



Armenia Results released yesterday showed that the party of Armenia's acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan won snap parliamentary elections which he called to ease anger over a peace deal he signed with Azerbaijan. With all precincts counted, Pashinyan's Civil Contract party won 53.9% of the vote. A bloc led by former President Robert Kocharyan was in a distant second place with about 21%.

European Union foreign ministers will approve a fresh set of sanctions against scores of officials in Belarus and prepare a series of measures aimed at hurting the country's economy, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said. The EU has ratcheted up sanctions since President Alexander Lukashenko won a sixth term last August in elections slammed as fraudulent by the 27-nation bloc.

UK Dozens of people have ignored advice not to travel to Stonehenge for the annual summer solstice celebrations, which were cancelled yesterday due to coronavirus concerns. English Heritage, which looks after the Neolithic monument, had planned a live feed of the sunrise at Stonehenge for the second year in a row. But the organization said that program had to be interrupted because of safety concerns after "a number of people have chosen to disregard our request to not travel to the stones this morning."