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MELCO INTERNATIONAL, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AGILE GROUP, IS SLATED TO DEVELOP A PREMIUM RESIDENTIAL, ENTERTAINMENT AND HOSPITALITY COMPLEX IN ZHONGSHAN

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LVS VS HAO: WITNESS SAYS 'EXPERIENCE' CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT IN LICENSE AWARDING

P2

THIS YEAR'S INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EXPO WILL RELY EVEN FURTHER ON THE ONLINE COMPONENT WITH ENHANCED 'CLOUD SERIES' EVENTS

P3



Pakistan A powerful car bomb went off near the residence of a jailed anti-India militant leader in the eastern city of Lahore yesterday, killing at least three people and wounding 15 others, police and rescue officials said. The blast happened in the Johar Town neighborhood, provincial police chief Inam Ghani told reporters. He said officers were still trying to determine whether it was a suicide bombing or the bomb was remotely detonated.

Iranian authorities have thwarted what they called a "sabotage attack" targeting a civilian nuclear facility near the country's capital, state TV reported yesterday, as details about the incident remained scarce. The attempted attack against a building belonging to Iran's Atomic Energy Organization "left no casualties or damages and was unable to disrupt the Iranian nuclear program," Iranian state television reported, adding that authorities were working to identify the perpetrators.



US authorities seized a range of Iran's state-linked news website domains they accused of spreading disinformation, the U.S. Justice Department said, a move that appeared to be a far-reaching crackdown on Iranian media amid heightened tensions between the two countries. The Justice Department said 33 of the seized websites were used by the Iranian Islamic Radio and Television Union, which was singled out by the U.S. government last October for what officials described as efforts to spread disinformation.

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CENTENARY PARTY

Beijing's preparations for the Centennial of the Communist Party of China is underway; Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng declares without CPC, there would be no 'new China' P6,7



LISBOETA'S ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES TO OPEN ON JULY 17

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P7

USD12 BILLION CASE

EXPERIENCE CONSIDERED 'KEY FACTOR' IN AWARDING GAMING CONCESSION

HONEY TSANG

CARLOS Lobo, one of the legal consultants for the Macau Gaming Commission (Commission) responsible for selecting the winning bidders to be awarded gaming concessions in the early 2000s, told the court yesterday that Commission members prioritized tenderer's gaming experience as the most important factor to be considered.

Lobo took the witness stand at the Court of First Instance (TJB) on June 23, which marks the third day of hearings of the USD12 billion court case filed by Asian American Entertainment Corp Ltd against Las Vegas Sands Corp (LVS).

When presented with one exhibit — the table of statistics representing tenderers' overall capabilities drafted by the former commissioner for legal affairs of the Commission Jorge Oliveira and submitted by Lobo — the witness recalled that the "experience factor" was considered the most important of all the criteria considered by the commission, being placed at around 54% of the weight of the decision between the bidders.

To his recollection, the LVS team made a pitch for the gaming right by submitting a presentation to the Commission in January 2002, during which the representatives of LVS suggested applying its operational model in Las Vegas directly to Macau.

The Commission "liked such a concept very much as they think

BLOOMBERG



it's a good idea for Macau," Lobo said.

The presentation and the Commission's feedback are still vividly remembered by Lobo, who recalls that the "renowned figure," the late founder of LVS, Sheldon Adelson, was also present at the occasion.

"We [the Commission] wanted to find the best solution for Macau [in this matter of the tender] until the closure of the tender process," he added.

The defendant's legal team also presented Lobo with several other documents as exhibits. One was a partnership request jointly filed by Asian American and another

European corporation, which was ultimately rejected by the Commission

Lobo told the court that the Commission members, including Jorge Oliveira, were shocked upon receiving this request, considering this collaboration was not "logical."

When asked by the judge as to why such a proposed partnership astonished the Commission, Lobo said in response that the firm which Asian American suggested to partner with was a "relatively small-scale European corporation."

Furthermore, Lobo was shown one tender document compiled

by the Commission, which stated that the ties between Asian American and the Venetian Venture Development LLC ended on January 15, 2002.

Lobo did not know on which day the two conglomerates officially terminated their partnership. However, he revealed that after learning of their separation, Jorge Oliveira understood the huge importance for the Commission to explain why it approved the application filed by Venetian and Galaxy Galaxy Casino SA, but not that made by Venetian Venture and Asian American.

In the previous court, Jorge Menezes, the plaintiff's lawyer,

submitted as an exhibit a letter from the Venetian Venture Development LLC to the Macau Gaming Commission, delivered on February 1, 2002. The letter was an announcement made by the company informing the Commission of the termination of its ties with Asian American.

This evidence prompted the Judge to question Lobo as to whether the ties between Asian American and Venetian Venture officially ended between January 15 to February 1 in 2002. However, the witness responded, "I don't know where their ties stand [during this period of 15 days]."

The morning session in the court was spent in arguments as to whether Lobo was qualified to be a witness in the case. Jorge Menezes, the plaintiff's lawyer, suggested the judge withdraw Lobo's witness status since he worked for The Venetian resort in Macau from 2010 to 2015.

However, the judge said that this period did not coincide with the tender application period from 2001 to 2002, and thus ruled that Lobo is a valid witness in this case.

Asian American Entertainment Corp Ltd filed a lawsuit against LVS, accusing the company of violating the contract for a casino license in Macau in the period from 2001-2002.

Asian American, led by Taiwanese mogul Marshall Hao, is seeking damages of approximately 70% of Sands Macau's profits from 2004 to 2022, a sum amounting to around USD12 billion.

The legal dispute between Asian American and LVS has been fought since 2007, when the lawsuit against LVS was first filed in the U.S. It was later dismissed for exceeding the statute of limitations and other procedural reasons.

Melco to develop residential, entertainment complex in Zhongshan

STAFF REPORTER

MELCO International, in partnership with Agile Group, has won a bid for a mixed-use complex at Zhongshan, Guangdong province, the firm announced in a press release yesterday.

The two companies plan to develop a mixed-use premium residential, entertainment and hospitality complex in the city.

According to Melco, the site is located at the heart of Zhongshan with total floor area of over 750,000 square meters. The two

companies will develop the site through a joint venture to be managed by both parties.

"Melco is committed to being an active participant in the formidable development of China, in particular the Greater Bay Area, and is pleased to take

an important step towards the long-term planning and development in Zhongshan through this project," the statement read.

Melco said that the Zhongshan project is part of their strategy to invest in non-gaming assets. The new project will in-

clude residential, commercial, recreational and entertainment elements, featuring residential complexes, office areas, hotels, service apartments, wellness centers, shopping malls and a theme park. They expect the bulk of the project to be completed by 2025.

Lawrence Ho, group chairman and CEO of Melco International said, "Over the past 15 years, Melco has been creating, developing and operating

world-class entertainment facilities in Macau and globally. In doing so, we created a distinctive model of integrating quality leisure, culture and entertainment. We have developed incredible brands that have great growth potential beyond our existing properties. We are determined to play an active role in the development of the Greater Bay Area, and to leverage the incredible expertise of the group in non-gaming activities."

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RENATO MARQUES

Travel Expo to further rely on online component

THE Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo (MITE) will continue to host its activities both on-site and online this year. Following the experience of last year, and due to continuing Covid restrictions, the ninth edition of the Expo will rely even further on the online component with enhanced "Cloud Series" events, the director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, said yesterday in a press conference presenting the event.

In her address, Senna Fernandes noted that this year's MITE will once again feature a "confluence of cloud virtual and physical exhibitions to connect Macau's travel trade and related sectors with their international counterparts."

Speaking about the enhancement of the online component, she explained that the event has extended its "Cloud B2B" period from two days last year to two full weeks this year, creating a longer period for exhibitors to encounter potential buyers.

The "Cloud Series" also has additional features such as live broadcast and the ability to formalize agreements through the "Cloud Contract-signing." These features mitigate the disadvantages of the physical absence of many of the usual participants.

The Expo will also make virtual connections between the global travel trade with the on-site exhibition through live interaction in the "Cloud Live Promotion" session, which will also be live-streamed on MITE's official website during the event.

Besides the added functionalities of the online component, the MITE also selected the expansion



of the local tourism economy as a major highlight, dedicating a larger area to the "Macao Street" where exhibitors can promote and sell their products to attendees (a majority of which are expected to be local), including local tours, dining packages, and hotel staycations.

MITE is also doing more to promote local cuisine, with the inclusion of a Gastronomy Pavilion commensurate with UNESCO's classification of Macau as a creative city of gastronomy.

The highlights conclude with the cultural and creative products and the continued promotion of Distinctive Shops.

For the first time, the event will be jointly organized by the Macao Travel Agency Association. During his address, Alex Lao, the presi-

dent of the association, noted this fact, justifying it with a new three-party bid on event hosting inclu-

ding the government, the sector, and the market.

Lao also noted the growth in

TOURISM BUREAU EXPECTS MORE VISITORS FOR MITE

THE organizers of the Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo (MITE) expect the number of on-site visitors to grow from last year's exhibition, the director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, said. "I hope the total number of visitors [to MITE] will increase but we still have restrictions. Last year we had around 23,000. I can say we are expecting much more," she said, advancing an expected figure of around 30,000.

Questioned on the pandemic situation in the Guangdong province, the director said that organizers expect that the representatives from the diffe-

rent cities comprising the Guangdong exhibition area will still be able to come to Macau.

"We hope that Guangdong exhibitors can come but if not, we have a Plan B with local staff that will help to provide information at their booths. They have a total of 15 booths which is just 3% of the exhibition area so it won't make a huge difference if they cannot come at all," Senna Fernandes said, adding, "The pandemic situation is dynamic and conditions change often and quickly but we are prepared for that."

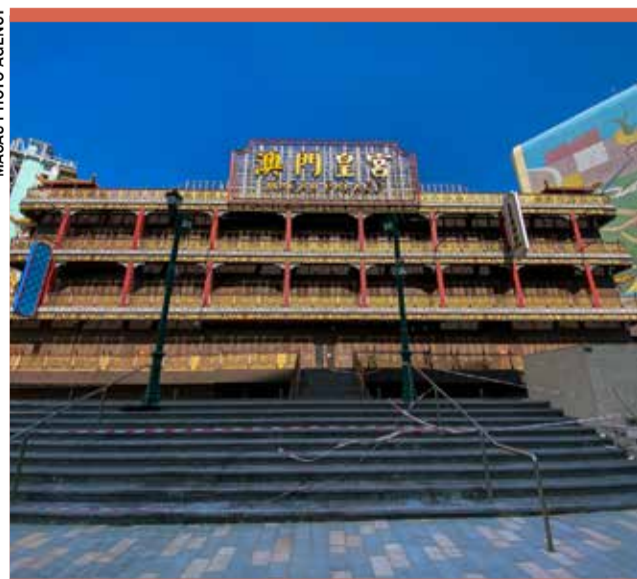
As for visitors, she said that it is expected that these will be mostly local. **RM**

Lisboeta's entertainment facilities to open on July 17

SEVERAL non-gaming entertainment and leisure facilities located at the Lisboeta Macau will open to the public on July 17, the Macau Theme Park and Resort (MTPR), the company that owns the development, has announced in a statement.

The facilities to be opened from July 17 include GoAirborne Indoor Sky-Diving, ZIPCITY, and the Lisboeta night market area, located next to the Macau Palace.

The announcement was initially made on Monday at MTPR's matching session with local Small and Medium Enterprises



(SMEs), an event which attracted over 100 local company representatives.

At the event, Connie Kong, director of MTPR said, "Lisboeta Macau is

set to partially open of few shopping and attraction facilities from July 17, 2021, allowing a new option for locals to enjoy during the Summer Holiday. We will still be supporting the government to operate the Optional Medical Observation Hotel, while the attraction facilities are independent of the hotel tower which allow visitors to enjoy the facilities."

In the statement, the MTPR said the entertainment area aims to be a destination with collective memories of Macau. The design concept of the facility is inspired by the Old Macau. It is open to guests of all ages.

These facilities that combine leisure, entertainment, and food will operate from Thursday to Sunday, between 2 p.m and 10 p.m. **RM**



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Announcement

Sociedade de Jogos de Macau, S.A. changes name to SJM Resorts, S.A.

We are pleased to announce the change of our company name from Sociedade de Jogos de Macau, S.A. to **SJM Resorts, S.A.** ("SJM"), with immediate effect. The new name better reflects our prominent position in the tourism and leisure business and our dedication to the development and operation of integrated resorts in Macau, further underscoring our continued support to Macau's role as a "world centre of tourism and leisure".

ELECTIONS 2021

NG KUOK CHEONG, SI KA LON SUBMIT CANDIDATE LISTS

ANTHONY LAM

YESTERDAY, António Ng Kuok Cheong and Si Ka Lon, both incumbent lawmakers, submitted their lists of candidates.

Both lawmakers had their nominations confirmed by the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Committee (CAEAL).

In previous elections, Ng topped the lists as first candidate. However, this time advocate Scott Chiang will run in the first spot, while Ng will run behind the younger candidate. It is believed that the stratagem has been adopted to stir up the public's intention to vote for the list because more votes will imply a greater chance for Ng to get in.

Running under the name Democratic Macau Prosperity Association, Chiang said the team will focus on post-pandemic economic recovery, safeguarding employment for local residents and improving government transparency, among other issues.

He refrained from making any forecast how many seats his team will win.

Chiang is a father of two



RENATO MARQUES

and has been a househusband for several years. He said that he is interested in education and promoting the multifaceted development of future generations.

It is worth noting that despite not running in this election, incumbent lawmaker Au Kam San was present at the submission of the candidate lists yesterday.

Also in yesterday's events, incumbent lawmakers Si Ka Lon and Becky Song submitted their own candidate list under the name of Association of United Resident of Macau.

Similar to their lists in previous elections, which

had larger numbers of candidates, Si and Song's list for this year's election has 13 candidates.

Si and Song are the first two on the list, followed by Lei Leong Wong and Chan Bing Bing. Lei works in an association and Chan is a social service worker.

Speaking to the media, Si appeared cautious, saying that the competition this election is especially tight, although this year will see fewer lists running.

To support his claim, Si said that this election will see nearly 30,000 first-time voters. He added that he anticipates a struggle to retain two seats in the parliament

despite being confident. However, the team will strive to "retain two and strive for three" seats.

According to Si, the team will focus on post-pandemic economic recovery, safeguarding employment and improving government's efficiency. The team will also call for yearly application for subsidized housing.

In the last election, Si and Song ran on separate lists. They first won seats in the parliament in 2013, running with retired lawmaker and businessman Chan Meng Kam. It was the first time in the history of the Macau SAR that a list has won three seats.

Health Bureau has consulted experts and scholars from mainland China to update certain definitions within the bill. For example, the term "Chinese medical extracts" refers to products used as mediums that have been manufactured from plants, animals or minerals, or their by-products. "Natural medicines," meanwhile, refers to medicinal products that are derived from nature.

Ho further disclosed that the bill proposes more lenient punitive measures for first-time violations. If the violator is a first-time offender who has not committed a breach in the previous two years and did not create serious public risks with the violation, the "highest leader of the supervisory entity" has the power to reprimand the violator.

Ho did not say whether the Health Bureau or the proposed drug administration body will be the supervisory entity. **AL**



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have six years of patent protection covering data from pharmacology, toxicology research and clinical trials. Upgraded medications will have four years of patent

protection covering self-researched data generated from pharmacology, toxicology research and clinical trials.

Ho disclosed that the

Drug administration to be established in 2022

A public drug administration entity will be established in 2022 alongside the promulgation of the bill governing the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine, which is currently under discussion at a parliamentary committee.

The committee held a discussion on the bill Tuesday. Bringing the future law into effect will require a public drug administrative body. Government representatives told the committee that it aims for the law to take effect in 2022.

With regard to patents issued for medications, lawmaker Ho Ion Sang, president of the committee, revealed that only self-researched data will be protected. The bill proposes that new medicines will

COVID-19

HEALTH AUTHORITIES REPORT FOURTH SEVERE AEFI

A 29-year-old local man was diagnosed with thrombocytopenia also called Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP) days after being inoculated with a Covid-19 vaccine, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center has announced.

Since the condition manifested two days after the inoculation, the case has been recorded as a potential adverse event following immunization (AEFI).

The symptoms were blood rashes on the skin of the lips and limbs, called petechiae, appeared on June 18, two days after he took the first dose of Sinopharm's inactivated virus vaccine at a public healthcare center.

After seeking medical treatment at the healthcare center, the man was transferred to the emergency department of the Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre where he remains hospitalized.

The case has been classified as a severe AEFI and was referred to Health Bureau's special working group for further assessment.

The ITP condition occurs due to a drop of platelets in the blood. The platelets are responsible for blood clotting, which stops bleeding.

According to the medical research conducted hitherto, thrombocytopenia has many causes and while the medical community does not know exactly what causes primary ITP, they know that it happens when the immune system does not function correctly and the antibodies, which are supposed to attack infections, confuse blood platelets for intruders and mistakenly destroy them.

According to medical literature, secondary ITP usually occurs due to other health conditions such as viral or bacterial infections. **RM**

LOAN PLATFORM IS OPERATING IN MACAU ILLEGALLY: AMCM

A loan brokerage platform that does not have authorization to operate in Macau has recently been observed operating on several social media platforms, the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) revealed yesterday.

According to the authority, the platform, with a Chinese name that translates literally as "Easy Hong Kong-Macau Loan," has recently been observed operating on social media platforms such as Facebook and WeChat.

The authority said that the platform is peddling loan services to potential customers. The AMCM has issued a statement, explaining that "the operator has not obtained the permission

to operate any financial activities in the Macau Special Administrative Region."

"In order to safeguard public interests, the AMCM reminds members of the public to access legal financial services from permitted institutions, so as to avoid being defrauded and suffering any losses," the regulator added.

Furthermore, the authority noted that, pursuant to local laws, including the Decree-Law no. 15/83/M and no. 32/93/M, the operation of unlicensed financial services in the city is a punishable offence carrying a maximum penalty of the monetary amount of twice the interest obtained from those services. **AL**

Alien Invasion



Vying for the Best Costume Prize. From left to right: Glenn McCartney, Amelia Stein, Pedro Cortés, Keith Buckley, Meredith Beaujean, Ben Goldsworthy, Joana Freitas, Francisco Sá da Bandeira, Olivier Bonard, Adriana Lucas, Maggie Chan, Laranja Vera, Michael Jackson and Liz Lycette



Mick Ridley with Team MARVEL-ous

An Alien Invasion occurred at Starworld Hotel, Macau during the evening of Saturday 12th June, when the British Chamber of Commerce held its Sci Fi Ball, in celebration of the Chamber's 15th Anniversary. Presented by Galaxy Entertainment Group, the Ball was a fantastical interplanetary gathering of 220 guests, the majority of whom took full advantage of the Sci Fi fancy dress theme. Olivier Bonard won the best dressed competition for his interpretation of Mad Max. Proceeds from the Sci-Fi Ball will be channeled towards Britcham's CSR Fund which provides financial assistance to local students without the necessary wherewithal to continue sections of their education. Chairman Keith Buckley was pleased to announce that over Mop 60,000 was raised from the event for this purpose.



Best Costume won by Mad Max aka Olivier Bonard



Peta Houghton and Matt Humpreys alight the USS Enterprise with their crew



Dressed for an interplanetary gathering. From left to right: Constantino Mousinho, Maria Sá da Bandeira, Francisco Sá da Bandeira, Carlos Álvares, Catarina da Costa, Laura Mousinho, Jessica Leão, Carlos Simões, António Menano, Jaclyn Ho, Luisa de Bragança, Mafalda and Maria Melo



Ruby Sponsor, Jardine Matheson show their strength & team spirit



Ruby Sponsor BNU and guests - cameras at the ready! From left to right: Sam Tou, leong Kim Man, Rui Gomes, Laura Mousinho, Constantino Mousinho, Catarina da Costa and Carlos Álvares



The Force is strong with ICBC, Ruby Sponsor



Britcham Vice Chair, Eileen Stow casts an alien light over Jewel in the Crown sponsor, Galaxy Entertainment Group. From left to right: Gordon Tan, Alexei Berejnoi, Jason Li, Joanne Hoi, Jeff Cheng and Will Fu



Cheers & congratulations to Ruby Sponsor CTM, celebrating their 40th Anniversary

CE ENCOURAGES YOUNG PEOPLE TO VISIT EXHIBITION TO LEARN CPC HISTORY

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng yesterday encouraged young people to familiarize themselves with the history of the Communist Party of China (CPC) through the photo exhibition celebrating the centenary of the party.

The gala exhibition was opened yesterday at the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex and will remain open to the public at the venue until July 15.

In his speech, the head of government described the photos on exhibition as "vivid and active." He added that they will allow "the multitude of Macau residents, particularly the younger generations, to understand deeply the hundred years of struggle of the Communist Party of China."

He stressed that the "secret to the party's hundred years of prosperity lies in its commitment to foster



happiness for the people of China and revival of the Chinese ethnicity."

Meanwhile, Ho also called on members of the public to recognize that supporting and safeguarding the leadership of the CPC are the "basis and the core means by which the successful implementation of the 'One country, two systems' principle in Macau can be

maintained.

"Without the CPC, there would be no new China; and without the CPC's leadership, there would not be the prosperity and stability enjoyed in Macau under the 'One country, two systems' principle", the CE added.

Also officiating at the ceremony was Fu Ziyang, director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's

Government in the Macau SAR, who said that "history is the best textbook."

He added that "the Centenary of the Communist Party of China is the chapter in the modern and contemporary histories of China that elicit the most compliments and sadness."

The exhibition has four sections, covering different stages of the CPC. **AL**

STUDIES ON AIRPORT EXPANSION ALMOST COMPLETE

THE report on the proposed expansion of the Macau International Airport is almost complete, Chan Weng Hong, president of the Civil Aviation Authority (AACM) announced yesterday.

The proposed expansion will be built upon reclaimed land. The studies have examined flight negotiations, the environment and flood prevention. The AACM head revealed that the bureau is coordinating with other government departments to fine-tune the report. It is expected to be complete by the end of this month.

When the report is ready, Chan said, it will be delivered to the Central Government as part of the application procedure.

Although Macau has been authorized by Beijing to govern 85 square kilometers of marine area, any land reclamation must be approved by the Central Government.

Moreover, the local government has announced that it will convert part of the Taipa Maritime Terminal into an auxiliary terminal for the airport. According to the plan, the auxiliary terminal will operate similar to the budget terminal in other airports.

For the time being, the government has announced that the auxiliary terminal will house low-cost carriers Scoot and Tigerair Taiwan.

On this project, Chan revealed yesterday that the design phase has concluded. The authority is now working on realizing the project. There will be slight adjustments, Chan said, due to the pandemic.

The conversion will take about a year, but for the time being there is no timetable. **AL**

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Gov't prepares for Communist Party centenary in secret

CHINESE authorities have closed Beijing's central Tiananmen Square to the public, eight days ahead of a major celebration being planned to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the ruling Communist Party.

The square, which normally attracts tourists from around the country, was barricaded yesterday and will remain closed until July 2. Rows of yellow seats and heavy machinery could be seen on the open plaza that also houses the mausoleum of Mao Zedong, the founding leader of communist China.

The party will showcase the country's rise from civil war and disastrous political campaigns in the early years of communist rule to market reforms that have created the world's second largest economy, with a superpower status rivaled only by the United States.

Old habits die hard, however, and arrangements for the July 1 anniversary remain shrouded in secrecy. Around Tiananmen



Square, the Forbidden City former palace complex and other scenic sites are also closed. Flyovers by air force squadrons suggest an aerial review is in the planning, but authorities have yet to release details.

Around Beijing and throughout the country, signboards

have been erected and commemorative activities held, accompanied by the deployment of additional police and paramilitary forces.

The ruling party was established in secrecy in 1921, following the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1912. It held its

first session at a girl's school in Shanghai, and later moved to a lake boat to evade agents of the local warlord.

The party has built its reputation on resistance, first from Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists, then Japanese invaders and culminating in its seizure of power in 1949. Chiang fled to Taiwan, which has since evolved into a democracy that Beijing threatens to annex by force, while the communists' military wing asserted control over Tibet and other outlying regions.

Mao's death in 1976 brought a gradual end to orthodox Marxist economics, even while the party retained its authoritarian Marxist-Leninist governing structure.

Having weathered the collapse of communism in the Soviet bloc, and the 1989 pro-democracy movement that it crushed with tanks and troops, the party has endured by delivering economic growth while stifling dissent.

"For 100 years, our party has always adhered to Marxism,"

Zhong Shiyi, a deputy director at the party's Institute of Party History and Literature, told foreign journalists Wednesday. "The Soviet Union in the Gorbachev era advocated democratic socialism and practiced pluralism [...] and therefore it failed."

Since the rise of party leader Xi Jinping in 2012, China has grown increasingly assertive over its territorial claims in the South China Sea and in its drive to expand internationally through the Belt and Road initiative, which has built ports, power stations, train lines and other infrastructure overseas.

Underscoring China's rise in technology, Xi spoke Wednesday with three astronauts aboard the country's newly launched space station, praising their mission as a "a pioneering contribution to the peaceful use of space by mankind."

Beyond the party anniversary, Xi has already set new targets for China reclaiming what it considers its former role as the cultural, economic and political center of power in east Asia. The Xinhua News Agency and other state media have been highlighting plaudits to Xi from home and abroad.

Under Xi's leadership, the party will "embark on a new, splendid journey in the next century," Xinhua said. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

Embattled Apple Daily says it will close

ZEN SOO & MATTHEW CHEAN, HONG KONG

HONG Kong's pro-democracy Apple Daily newspaper will stop publishing today, following last week's arrest of five editors and executives and the freezing of \$2.3 million in assets under the city's year-old national security law.

The board of directors of parent company Next Media said in a statement yesterday that the print edition and online edition will cease due to "the current circumstances prevailing in Hong Kong." The paper later said today's edition will be its last.

The silencing of a prominent pro-democracy voice is the latest sign of China's determination to exert greater control over the semi-autonomous territory after huge protests in 2019 shook the government. Since then, Beijing has imposed a strict national security law to curb dissent



and revamped Hong Kong's election laws to keep opposition voices out of the legislature.

The Apple Daily announcement coincided with the start of the city's first trial under the national security law, which is being closely watched as a barometer of how strictly the courts will interpret it.

The widely expected

move to close Apple Daily followed last week's arrests of the five editors and executives, who were detained on suspicion of colluding with foreigners to endanger national security. Police cited more than 30 articles published by the paper as evidence of an alleged conspiracy to encourage foreign nations to impose sanctions on Hong Kong

and China.

The police action against Apple Daily was the first time the national security law had been used against journalists for something they had published, in an intensifying crackdown by authorities in a city long known for its freedoms.

Apple Daily reported that its management made the decision out of concern for employee safety and staffing issues.

Police also yesterday arrested a 55-year-old man on suspicion of foreign collusion to endanger national security. According to Apple Daily, which cited unidentified sources, the man writes editorials for the newspaper under the pseudonym Li Ping.

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.

The paper has in recent years come under increasing scrutiny over its pro-democracy stance. Its founder, media tycoon Jimmy Lai, is facing charges under the national security law for foreign collusion and is currently serving a prison sentence for his involvement in unauthorized assemblies in 2019, during a time of massive anti-government protests in the city.

It was the freezing of assets that spelled the paper's demise. The board of directors had earlier this week written to Hong Kong's security bureau requesting the release of some of its funds so the company could pay wages.

The police operation against Apple Daily drew criticism from the U.S., the E.U. and Britain, which say Hong Kong and Chinese authorities are targeting

the freedoms promised to the city when the former British colony was returned to China in 1997.

Chinese and Hong Kong officials have said the media must abide by the law, and that press freedom cannot be used as a "shield" for illegal activities.

The national security law imposed last year criminalizes subversion, secession, terrorism and foreign collusion.

The first person to stand trial under the law, Tong Ying-kit, pleaded not guilty Wednesday to charges of terrorism and inciting secession by driving a motorcycle into police officers during a 2019 rally while carrying a flag with the slogan "Liberate Hong Kong, the revolution of our times." Several officers were knocked over and three sustained injuries.

His trial will set the tone for how Hong Kong handles national security offenses. So far, more than 100 people have been arrested under the security law, including prominent pro-democracy activists such as Lai, Apple Daily's founder. **MDT/AP**

Rights group: Facebook amplified Myanmar military propaganda



AP PHOTO

BARBARA ORTUTAY

FACEBOOK'S recommendation algorithm amplifies military propaganda and other material that breaches the company's own policies in Myanmar following a military takeover in February, a new report by the rights group Global Witness says.

A month after the military seized power in Myanmar and imprisoned elected leaders, Facebook's algorithms were still prompting users to view and "like" pro-military pages with posts that incited and threatened violence, pushed misinformation that could lead to physical harm, praised the military and glorified its abuses, Global Witness said in the report, published late Tuesday.

That's even though the social media giant vowed to remove such content following the coup, announcing it would remove Myanmar military and military-controlled pages from its site and from Instagram, which it also owns. It has since enacted other measures intended to reduce offline harm in the country.

Facebook said Tuesday its teams "continue to closely monitor the situation in Myanmar in real-time and take action on any posts, Pages or Groups that break our rules."

Days after the Feb. 1 coup, the military temporarily blocked access to

Facebook because it was being used to share anti-coup comments and organize protests. Access was later restored. In the following weeks, Facebook continued to tighten its policies against the military, banning all military entities from its platforms and saying it would remove praise or support for violence against citizens and their arrest.

"Once again, Facebook shows that it's good at making broad sweeping announcements and bad at actually enforcing them. They've had years to improve their work in Myanmar but once again they are still failing," said Sophie Zhang, a former Facebook data scientist and whistleblower who found evidence of political manipulation in countries such as Honduras and Azerbaijan while she worked there.

The struggle between the military regime that deposed Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government and those opposing it has sharpened in recent months.

Soldiers and police have killed hundreds of protesters. Last week, the United Nations' office in Myanmar expressed concern about escalating human rights abuses after reports that a group opposed to the junta may have executed 25

civilians it captured and allegations that troops had burned down a village.

Myanmar, also known as Burma, had over 22.3 million Facebook users in January 2020, more than 40% of its population, according to social media management platform NapoleonCat.

Global Witness said its findings show that Facebook fails to uphold the "very basics" of its own guidelines

"What happens on Facebook matters everywhere, but in Myanmar that is doubly true," the report says. As in many countries outside the Western Hemisphere, mobile phones in Myanmar often come pre-loaded with Facebook and many businesses do not have a website, only a Facebook page. For many people in the country, Facebook effectively is the internet.

On March 23, just before the peak of military violence against civilians, Global Witness said it set up a new, clean Facebook account with no history of liking or following specific topics and searched for "Tatmadaw", the Burmese name for the armed forces. It filtered the search results to show pages, and selected the top result — a military fan page whose name

translates as "a gathering of military lovers."

Older posts on this page showed sympathy for Myanmar's soldiers and at least two advertised for young people to join the military — but none of the newer posts since the coup violated Facebook's policies. However, when Global Witness's account "liked" the page, Facebook began recommending related pages with material inciting violence, false claims of interference in last year's election and support of violence against civilians.

A March 1 post, for instance, includes a death threat against protesters who vandalize surveillance cameras.

"Those who threaten female police officers from the traffic control office and violently destroy the glass and destroy CCTV, those who cut the cables, those who vandalize with color sprays, [we] have been given an order to shoot to kill them on the spot," reads part of the post in translation, according to the report. "Saying this before Tatmadaw starts doing this. If you don't believe and continue to do this, go ahead. If you are not afraid to die, keep going."

Facebook said its ban of the Tatmadaw and other measures have "made it harder for people to misuse our services to spread harm. This is a highly adversarial issue and we continue to take action on content that violates our policies to help keep people safe."

Global Witness said its findings show that Facebook fails to uphold the "very basics" of its own guidelines.

"The platform operates too much like a walled garden, its algorithms are designed, trained, and tweaked without adequate oversight or regulation," said Naomi Hirst, head of the digital threats campaign at Global Witness. "This secrecy has to end, Facebook must be made accountable." **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1983 US ASTRONAUT SALLY RIDE RETURNS



America's first woman in space has returned safely to Earth in the Challenger space shuttle after a successful six-day flight.

Sally Ride, aged 32, captured the media's attention over the weeks leading up to blast-off on 19 June as the public realised history was in the making.

Ms Ride, a former tennis champion, decided to become an astronaut in 1977 after she saw a Nasa advertisement in the campus newsletter while studying English and physics.

She was one of more than 1,000 women and almost 7,000 men to apply for just 35 places on the 1978 training programme and it was there that she met her husband, fellow astronaut Steve Hawley.

Before blast-off last week, flight commander Robert Crippen said she had been chosen to fly purely on her skills and not for her gender.

As flight engineer, Ms Ride's main tasks were to monitor the controls and make sure nothing went wrong on ascent and descent.

Up in space she also had to control a 50ft retractable arm - which she helped to design - to retrieve a satellite package of experiments.

It was the first time a satellite had been grabbed from space and paves the way for repairing satellites in orbit. "She is flying with us because she is the very best person for the job. There is no man I would rather have in her place," he said.

This was also the first time the shuttle carried five crew members, instead of the usual three. Along with Sally Ride and Robert Crippen were Rick Hauck, John Fabian and Dr Norman Thagard.

Ms Ride is the third woman to travel into space.

Today she received a telegram congratulating her achievement from the world's first female cosmonaut, Valentina Tereshkova.

America's first female in space would have received a much larger public welcome today had it not been for poor visibility that forced Challenger to change its point of arrival.

The crew of STS-7 were due to complete their mission at Cape Canaveral, in Florida. But cloud cover meant a change of plan and a landing at Edwards Air Force base in California, some 3,000 miles away.

Nasa had hoped for a Florida landing to reduce the expense and time taken to transport the shuttle back to Cape Canaveral for its next mission.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Two years later, tragedy struck when the Challenger space shuttle exploded on 28 January 1986, killing all on board including Christa McAuliffe, who was to be the first school-teacher in space.

Sally Ride is the only person to have worked on investigations into both the Challenger and Columbia shuttle disasters.

She remained an astronaut until 1987, when she resigned from Nasa and took up an academic post at Stanford University.

Two years later she moved to the University of California in San Diego to become professor of physics and director of the California Space Institute.

She has written several children's books about space exploration.

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Spend some time with people you love to laugh with, and take plenty of time today to talk about lighthearted matters. Forget about things you have no control over.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 One of the many good things about having so many people in your life right now is that you always have tons of feedback available at your fingertips. So why aren't you taking advantage of this abundance of honesty?

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 Either your flexibility skills are at an all-time high, or the changes you expected weren't so drastic. Either way, you can breathe a great big sigh of relief today.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Accept the whole person - the good and the bad. Ending a relationship because of one event or conversation is shortsighted. Embrace differing opinions and contrary viewpoints.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 There will always be obstacles in your life - that's just a fact. Your attitude will make all the difference, so put a shine on your outlook! Whenever you need a lift in life, just remember all the successes you've had.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Inspiration will flood over you today - enjoy having your curiosity tickled and excited. You are extremely open to new ideas right now, so why not try a few new things?

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 You may think that you are judged by the company you keep, but that is not necessarily true. Today, don't worry about people basing assumptions about you on whom you are with.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 If you are in a mood to hide from the world, then today will offer you the perfect opportunity. The people in your life are a bit distracted with other things right now.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Your daily life is currently being polluted a bit by someone whose maturity level leaves a lot to be desired. Luckily, you will find the right words today to help this person grow up a bit.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 You basically have all the time you want, especially right now - your schedule is under your exclusive control for a limited period of time, and you should make the most of it!

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 You feel strong, and you are strong - but you're vulnerable to a lot of potential problems that could pop up today if you aren't careful. Focus your energy on fixing up something around your house.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 To help yourself today, help other people - the overwhelming gratitude you'll receive from the people you've aided will lift your spirits higher than any retail therapy or self-indulgence ever could.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	21	32	cloudy
Harbin	14	27	fine
Tianjin	23	33	cloudy
Urumqi	23	29	cloudy
Xi'an	24	34	cloudy
Lhasa	19	26	cloudy
Chengdu	23	28	rain
Chongqing	24	28	rain
Kunming	25	32	showers
Nanjing	19	27	cloudy
Shanghai	27	35	thunderstorms
Wuhan	21	31	fine
Hangzhou	14	28	fine
Taipei	18	31	cloudy
Guangzhou	18	29	thunderstorms
Hong Kong	24	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- Ministers to; 6- ... saw Elba; 10- Squabble; 14- Give it ___; 15- Woman's dress; 16- Ballet bend; 17- Stair part; 18- French summers; 19- Boxer Spinks; 20- Faulkner's "___ Lay Dying"; 21- Mysterious; 24- Sawbuck; 26- Snap; 27- Collection; 28- Femoral region; 30- Inner layer of a quilt; 33- Large lizard; 35- Philosopher ___-tzu; 38- Collect; 40- As a female, you could be queen or worker; 41- Slap; 43- Spring mo.; 44- Anew; 47- Bad day for Caesar; 48- Thick slices; 49- Do one's part?; 51- Become visible; 54- Apparel; 58- Mum's mum; 61- Comedian Philips; 62- A pitcher may take one; 63- Brainchild; 64- Nose bone; 66- Piece of fencing?; 67- Roman emperor; 68- Tennis champ Chris; 69- General ___ chicken; 70- Openings; 71- Country singer Tucker;

DOWN 1- 3 grains troy weight; 2- Spring up; 3- Gum; 4- Wind dir.; 5- Skunk feature; 6- Discharge; 7- Campus mil. group; 8- Large jug or pitcher; 9- Hormone of the pancreas; 10- Spatter; 11- Common person of ancient Rome; 12- Garlic sauce; 13- Principle; 22- Words of denial; 23- Roman garments; 25- Fast fliers; 28- Melodies; 29- Panama and bowler; 30- Noise made by a sheep; 31- Roadie's burden; 32- Sailor; 34- Dress; 35- Fellow; 36- Hotshot; 37- Gives the go-ahead; 39- Dish of raw vegetables; 42- Baseball glove; 45- Practice of agriculture; 46- In fine fettle; 48- Faculties; 50- Warship; 51- Lace tip; 52- Stage items; 53- Stroll; 54- Pandemonium; 55- Macho guys; 56- Very hard mineral; 57- A bit, colloquially; 59- Ancient theaters; 60- Maryland athlete, for short; 65- Female gametes;

Yesterday's solution

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

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300	
IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
Airport 59 888 88	

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Sterling savior again: England beats Czechs 1-0 at Euro 2020

AT least England now knows it can rely on Raheem Sterling for goals.

The scoring touch missing at his last three tournaments has been rediscovered on home territory, and it gave his team first place in its group.

It was Sterling's second goal at Euro 2020 and it secured a 1-0 victory over the Czech Republic on Tuesday in a match at Wembley Stadium between two teams that were already assured of their places in the round of 16.

"We have always felt we can't have all the scoring burden being with Harry (Kane)," England coach Gareth Southgate said.

The header at the far-post from Jack Grealish's cross in the 12th minute moved England onto a path where its only game away from Wembley will be a potential quarterfinal match in Rome.

Home comforts should certainly help Sterling, who grew up in the shadow of the Wembley arch and is proving to be England's game-changer.

How unlike the 2014 and 2018 World Cups, and Euro 2016, when Sterling was unable to find the net. This time, it was his goal that also clinched the opening win over



Croatia.

The Manchester City player is stepping up as Kane, the 2018 World Cup Golden Boot winner, endures a barren run in front of goal.

Kane at least managed his first shot on target of Euro 2020 against the Czechs after failing to do so against Croatia and in the 0-0 draw with Scotland.

"We kept the ball better today and there were more attacking options," said Sterling, who chipped goalkeeper Tomáš Vaclík but hit the post in the opening minutes.

Beyond Sterling's goal, there wasn't much for the pandemic-restricted crowd of about 20,000

to celebrate. What did get them cheering were goal updates being flashed on the big screens as Scotland lost to Croatia 3-1 and was eliminated as the last-place team.

The goals in Glasgow had big implications for the Czechs, who dropped from first place to third and are uncertain about where their last-16 game will be.

England now has a week off playing before hosting the runner-up from Group F on Tuesday. That opponent could be World Cup champion France, defending champion Portugal, Germany or Hungary, and the permitted crowd will be rising to 45,000.

"At some point you are going to have to face the best teams," Sterling said. "That's the whole point of being in the tournament, which is to challenge yourself."

Finishing at the top also allows time for backup left back Ben Chilwell and midfielder Mason Mount to complete their self-isolation on Monday after being deemed close contacts at last week's game with Scotland midfielder Billy Gilmour, who tested positive

for the coronavirus.#

The absence of Mount opened up new opportunities in the lineup with Grealish handed his first start of the tournament. Bukayo Saka made his first appearance and helped to inject some of the attacking impetus missing against Scotland.

"Saka and Grealish got in the pockets really well, turned and got on the ball," Sterling said, "and it's brilliant to have players around you who can create goals."

Saka, a 19-year-old Arsenal winger, was named UEFA's player of the match.

"Of course with us qualifying before the game we had a lot more freedom," Saka said.

There was also the return from injury for Harry Maguire after six weeks. And it was the central defender's long throughball that created the openings so-needed for Kane. But the captain's shot went straight at Vaclík.

Despite the lack of goals from the English, the three clean sheets are encouraging. The latest was protected by the only real moment of danger goalkeeper Jordan Pickford faced when he stretched to block a rising shot from Tomáš Holeš in the 28th minute.

"The finishing wasn't really great," Czech Republic coach Jaroslav Šilhavý said through a translator, "and England was stronger in that aspect." **MDT/AP**

LATEST RESULTS

Czech Republic	0	1	England
Croatia	3	1	Scotland

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	3	3	0	0	7-1	9
Denmark	3	1	0	2	5-4	3
Finland	3	1	0	2	1-3	3
Russia	3	1	0	2	2-7	3
Group C	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Netherlands	3	3	0	0	8-2	9
Austria	3	2	0	1	4-3	6
Ukraine	3	1	0	2	4-5	3
North Macedonia	3	0	0	3	2-8	0
Group D	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
England	3	2	1	0	2-0	7
Croatia	3	1	1	1	4-3	4
Czech Republic	3	1	1	1	3-2	4
Scotland	3	0	1	2	1-5	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

Wembley capacity increased for Euro 2020 semifinals, final

MORE than 60,000 fans will be allowed into the semifinals and final of the European Championship at Wembley Stadium after UEFA secured an agreement Tuesday with the British government on an increased capacity.

No details have been provided yet on how fans from overseas can potentially attend without having to quarantine after flying into London.

The government had already agreed to increase the current group-stage capacity of about 22,000 to at least 40,000 for one game in the round of 16 game and the final three matches of the Euro 2020 tournament at the 90,000-seat stadium.

Now Wembley will be allowed to be at about 75% capacity for the semifinals



and final.

"The last 18 months have taught us — both on and off the pitch — how integral fans are to the fabric of the game," UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said. "This tournament has been a beacon of hope to reassure people that we are returning to a more normal way of life and this is a further step along that road."

"I am grateful to the prime minister and the UK government for their hard work in finalizing these arrangements with us."

Tourists from all the non-British nations competing at Euro 2020 have to quarantine for at least five days upon arrival in the country under general pandemic regulations to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

UEFA said last week it was in talks with authorities in London about allowing fans in by staying in the country less than 24 hours and staying within bubbles. UEFA is also seeking quarantine exemptions for VIPs, including representatives of sponsors.

There are fears Britain is seeing the start of a third wave of coronavirus infections with cases rising to 68,449 over the last seven days. The resurgence is the result of the highly contagious delta variant first identified in India, sparking concerns among European leaders about the growing crowds at Wembley.

To enter Wembley, fans have to produce a negative lateral flow test result or show proof they have been fully vaccinated. **MDT/AP**

OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

EU SHOULD BEWARE US LEADING IT ASTRAY

Speaking at the European Parliament following the EU's decision to put the brakes on ratifying its investment deal with China, Mick Wallace, a member of the European Parliament from Ireland, asked how far the bloc was willing to go in being "led along by the nose" by Americans "who have a vested interest in challenging China at the moment".

Although Wallace has been outspoken in praising China's performance in poverty reduction, infrastructure construction and climate change mitigation, it is the European Union's interests that motivated his questioning of why the EU was "choosing an aggressive position with China? Why are we not choosing cooperation instead of aggression? Why are we not respecting the principle of state sovereignty and non-interference?" He said that it was in the EU's interests to be working for peace with China.

He is right in pointing out that it is Washington's anxiety about losing its financial supremacy to China that has prompted it to try to hype up the so-called China threats, and draw its allies to contain the rise of the country after failing to achieve that on its own under the previous Donald Trump administration.

A simple comparison between the war and aggression track records of the US and China can tell which country should be regarded as a threat to global peace and stability. The US' military spending has topped the world for decades, mostly for offensive purposes, and it has surpassed the combined total of the next nine highest military spenders for a long time. It has more than 800 military bases overseas at present, and it has only seen 16 years without war at home or abroad since it was founded in 1776.

While the US has repeatedly invaded and meddled in the affairs of other countries and regions, China has been striving to lift its people out of poverty and seek breakthroughs in technology and contribute to the common development of the world.

While the US exported its financial crisis and is seeking to bail out its economy by printing banknotes irrespective of the costs of doing so for other economies, China has stabilized the renminbi's exchange rate to help cushion the world from the repercussions of the US' loose monetary policy, and it is trying to boost its economy to drive global growth.

While the US is calling on the world to target China and the World Health Organization rather than the novel coronavirus, China has worked closely with the WHO and other countries to fight this common enemy, and it is the largest source of essential medical supplies to the world.

The simultaneous decay of Washington's spirit of multilateralism and willingness to abide by rules and its deteriorated sense of responsibility means the US regards countries as being either stepping stones to its own goals or not.

It is thus justified for Wallace to press the EU to be wary of relinquishing its independence of action and being led astray by the US.

COVID-19 VACCINE CREATORS WIN PRESTIGIOUS SPANISH PRIZE

THE BUZZ

Seven researchers whose work contributed to designing Covid-19 vaccines have won Spain's prestigious Princess of Asturias award for scientific research.

The award panel announced yesterday it had chosen Hungary's Katalin Karikó, Americans Drew Weissman and Philip Felgner, Germany's Ulf G. Kluge and Özlem Türeci, Canadian Derrick Rossi and Sarah Gilbert of the United Kingdom as this year's prizewinners.

The panel said the seven were "leading figures in one of the most outstanding feats in the history of science."

"With their long careers in pure research, they led the way to innovative applications such as obtaining, in an extraordinarily

short space of time, effective vaccines to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic," the citation said.

"Their work constitutes a prime example of the importance of pure research for the protection of public health the world over," it added.

The annual 50,000-euro (\$60,000) award is one of eight Asturias prizes handed out each year by a foundation named for Crown Princess Leonor. Other categories include art, sport and social sciences.

The awards are among the most prestigious in the Spanish-speaking world. An awards ceremony typically takes place in October in the northern Spanish city of Oviedo.

AP PHOTO



HUNGARY

PM USES SOCCER TO PUSH VISION OF RIGHT-WING EUROPE

JUSTIN SPIKE, BUDAPEST

POPULIST Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has long used soccer to advance his right-wing politics, and now widespread international criticism of a new law seen as targeting the LGBT community has turned this month's European Championship into a major stage for his challenge to Europe's liberal values.

Last week, as more than 60,000 soccer fans poured into Budapest's Puskas Arena, an emblem of Orbán's famous devotion to soccer, the Hungarian Parliament approved a controversial bill that bans sharing with minors any content portraying homosexuality or sex reassignment.

Human rights groups and liberal politicians in Hungary and from around Europe denounced the law as conflating homosexuality with pedophilia and as a draconian effort to push any representation of LGBT people into the shadows. Nearly half of the European Union's 27 member countries issued a statement calling it a "clear breach of (LGBT people's)

fundamental right to dignity," and officials are examining whether the legislation contravenes EU law.

In a direct rebuke to the law, Munich's mayor and city council called for its stadium to be lit up with rainbow colors in a show of support for tolerance and gay rights when Germany plays Hungary on Wednesday at Euro 2020.

The controversy has turned the game into a symbolic showdown between competing visions for the future of Europe, pitting Orbán's promotion of what he calls "illiberal democracy" against Western Europe's "liberal consensus."

UEFA, European soccer's governing body, said that while it understood the city's intention to send a message to promote inclusion, it denied the request because it considered it a political move. Other stadiums in Germany unaffiliated with the tournament will be allowed such displays and the team captain will wear a rainbow armband.

European Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas slammed the UEFA decision, saying yesterday he can't find

"any reasonable excuse" for UEFA to reject Munich's plans.

Orbán has been challenging the European consensus ever since he returned to power in 2010: frequently criticizing multiculturalism, curtailing media freedoms, and relentlessly campaigning against the EU itself, portraying Brussels as a modern heir to Soviet Moscow, which dominated Hungary for decades.

His message resonates with many Hungarians who resent interference and perceived condescension from the EU — and he has frequently shown himself adept at maneuvering around its policies, such as when he went out on his own to make Hungary the first EU country to procure Russian and Chinese COVID-19 vaccines not approved by European regulators.

The move — which has led Hungary to have the second-highest rate of vaccination in the EU — offered validation for his strategy of bucking the bloc's dictates, both increasing his power at home and challenging the EU's credibility and liberal values. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



US and Germany struggled yesterday to resolve a major dispute over a Russian gas pipeline even as the Biden administration seeks to improve relations with Western Europe that had been strained during Donald Trump's presidency. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his German counterpart Heiko Maas met in Berlin and extolled the depth and strength of U.S.-German relations, but there was no sign of progress in talks to overcome the impasse over the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

AP PHOTO



Germany and the United Nations are bringing together representatives of Libya with powers that have interests in the country at a conference which aims for progress toward securing elections in the North African nation and the removal of foreign fighters. The meeting at the foreign ministry in Berlin, with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken among participants, follows up on a January 2020 conference where leaders agreed to respect an arms embargo and to push the country's warring parties to reach a full cease-fire.

AP PHOTO



UK The government won't extend the June 30 deadline for European Union citizens in the U.K. to apply for permanent residency or risk losing their right to live and work in the U.K. Britain's departure from the EU last year ended the automatic right of people from the bloc to settle in the U.K., and of Britons to live in the 27 EU nations. As part of the divorce, both sides agreed everyone would keep the residence rights they had before Brexit.