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**THE CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW WAS FINALLY APPROVED DESPITE CONCERNS OVER THE CAPACITY OF AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPERVISION AND INSPECTION**

P4

**TROUBLED THE 13 HOTEL GOES INTO VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION**

P2

**A TOTAL OF 19 OUT OF 22 NOMINATION LISTS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTORAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION**

P3



**Hong Kong** The final edition of Hong Kong's last remaining pro-democracy paper sold out in hours yesterday, as readers scooped up all 1 million copies of the Apple Daily, whose closure was yet another sign of China's tightening grip on the semi-autonomous city. Across the densely populated metropolis, people lined up early in the morning to buy the paper, which in recent years has become an increasingly outspoken critic of Chinese and Hong Kong authorities' efforts to limit the freedoms. The paper was gone from newsstands by 8:30 a.m.



**Japan** A more than 40-year-old nuclear reactor in central Japan which suffered a deadly accident has resumed operation after being taken offline for a decade after the March 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, as Japan pushes to meet its carbon emissions reduction goal. Kansai Electric Power Co. said the Mihama No. 3 reactor in Fukui prefecture went back online Wednesday after workers removed control rods inside the reactor.



**Indonesia** An influential firebrand cleric was sentenced to another four years in prison in Indonesia yesterday for concealing information about his coronavirus test result. The three-judge panel at East Jakarta District Court, which was under heavy police and military guard, ruled that Rizieq Shihab had lied about his Covid-19 test result, which made contact tracing more difficult.

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# EASED CROSS-BORDER MEASURES ON THE TABLE

P3



## HERD IMMUNITY THE ONLY HOPE FOR HK-MACAU TRAVEL BUBBLE, SAYS EXPERT

P5



# SOUTH SHORE PUTS BELEAGUERED THE 13 HOTEL INTO VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION

HONEY TSANG

**N**EW Concordia Hotel Limited — operator of the long-dormant 13 Hotel, owned by Hong Kong-listed South Shore Holdings Limited (Group) — has gone into voluntary liquidation.

The decision was announced by the Group on June 23. The Group's aim is to sell off its subsidiary's assets and settle outstanding financial obligations to pay back its shareholders. "The Board will assess and seek further and appropriate legal advice on the impact of the Voluntary Liquidation," chairman of the Group Peter Lee Coker Jr. said in the release.

New Concordia Hotel Limited — incorporated in Macau in 2009 — is an indirect wholly-owned company owned by the Group. It ran the ultra-luxurious The 13 Hotel, located on the southern



tip of the Cotai Strip. Service at The 13 Hotel has been suspended since February 15, 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the Group's 2021 Interim Report, the Group regis-

tered an aggregate loss of HKD429 million attributable to the company owners for the six months ended September 30 last year.

The hefty financial loss was predominantly due to the

HKD513 million loss reported following the close of The 13 Hotel for that period. The loss breaks down to: HKD298 million in lost income, HKD 186 million in depreciation charges, and HKD 29

million in hotel operation costs. Despite a huge toll on its finances, the final tally represented a 15% improvement, year-on-year, from the HKD 507 million in the same period in 2019, thanks to "the decrease of administrative expenses due to the suspended operations of the hotel and the wage subsidies from government."

The Group has also engaged in construction business through its subsidiary Paul Y. Engineering Group Limited in Hong Kong. This, in contrast, posted a 3% increase in revenue up to HKD 5.36 billion for the six months.

The conglomerate did not pay a dividend to its shareholders during the reported period. Earlier, the Group was asked by its creditor to pay up a debt of HKD 3.28 billion within three weeks via a statutory demand issued on May 31, or it would be faced with a winding up petition.

## Wynn Macau optimistic about Summer Holiday visitor numbers

**T**HE return to control of the Covid-19 situation in Guangdong, as well as the improved conditions in Hong Kong, both indicate a prosperous trajectory for the Summer Holiday tourist arrivals, Linda Chen, vice-president and executive director of Wynn Macau Ltd. said.

She added that upcoming events will help boost tourist arrivals in Macau. The events that Chen mentioned include Art Macao, which will be held in July.

Chen revealed that the resort has recently seen about 20% fewer overnight tourists from mainland China. She hoped that conditions will continue improving so that more tourists will consider visiting Macau.

It is only with tourists coming to Macau that all industries in Macau can revive, the executive said. In her opinion, gambling, hospitality, retail and other service industries in Macau are interdependent.

She also revealed that the resort operator's various expansion plans are now being fine-

AP PHOTO



-tuned to suit Macau's projected development aims.

There will be two new restaurants and "approximately 7,000 square feet of additional retail space" at the Wynn Macau as part of its Lakeside Casino expansion, the gambling concessionaire stated.

The resort operator has also reiterated that the Lakeside Casino project had two phases — the first of which opened in November 2019, featuring 44 mass market gambling tables and a refurbished high-limit slot area.

The company previously announced that the lawn on the south side of its Cotai property, the Wynn Palace, will be the base from which they will launch expansions, such as a complex shaped like a lotus flower.

The complex will include "an array of non-gaming amenities such as event spaces, interactive entertainment installations [and] food and beverage offerings," the report stated.

There will be extra hotel rooms as part of the expansion, according to the resort operator. **AL**

## ONE SHOT NEWS

LYNZY VALLES



Local residents lined up at a newspaper stand yesterday to grab the last issue of Apple Daily. The newspapers were sold out in several minutes and many queuers failed to obtain a copy.

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COVID-19

# Eased cross-border measures for vaccinated people under consideration

HONEY TSANG

**T**HE Macau and mainland governments are in negotiations to examine the possibility of granting fully vaccinated people an extended validity period for their certificates of negative Covid-19 test results.

Dr. Tai Wa Hou, coordinator of the Health Bureau's Covid-19 Vaccination Operation, remarked on this discussion when asked the chances of such a relaxation at yesterday's press conference.

"[We] have to continue to monitor the Covid-19 situation. The pandemic in Guangzhou has displayed signs of abating. However, new cases have started to emerge in some other places," he stated.

There are, emphatically, no specific indicators that the government is moving to enable the easing of cross-border measures, he added.

From June 8, the government has shortened the validity period for negative SARS-CoV-2 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test results from seven to two days for arrivals entering Macau from Guangdong Province, as a control measure to minimize contagion risks.

The new measure has put cross-border workers under greater financial pressure, and also cooled the desire of main-



land travellers to travel to Macau.

Recently, the pandemic has been kept in check by the municipal governments in Guangdong Province.

According to the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, the mainland reported no locally-transmitted cases on June 23,

while registering a total of 16 imported cases.

Guangdong Province has not seen any locally transmitted cases for two days as of June 22 to the present.

The Guangzhou Municipal Health Commission also released an announcement yesterday, stating that the status of Baihe-

dong Street at Liwan District has been modified from a high-risk to low-risk area.

Meanwhile, the Shenzhen Municipal Health Commission mounted a briefing to announce that the city has achieved great success in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic — reporting no cases for 17 consecutive days.

## DISHONEST RESIDENT NOT IDENTIFIED AS CLOSE CONTACT

A Macau resident who entered Macau on June 23 and concealed his previous travel history to Yuexiu District over the past 14 days is not considered a close contact of any confirmed patient. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are thus not required to disclose the individual's whereabouts, said CDC coordinator Leong Iek Hou yesterday.

The individual was admitted to the quarantine facility to undergo mandatory medical observation, as he had been to Yuexiu District, a medium-risk area for Covid-19.

According to the official information, the individual is a Macau resident living in Zhuhai, who went to Yuexiu District to seek medical treatment from June 2 to 11. He returned to Zhuhai on June 11 and entered Macau through Hengqin port on June 23.

It is suspected that the individual had not declared this travel history precisely while applying for the city's health code upon arrival, to avoid the mandatory quarantine.

Leong called on the public to disclose their whereabouts honestly so as to help safeguard public health.

ELECTIONS 2021

# CAEAL approves 19 lists

ANTHONY LAM

**A** total of 19 nomination lists have been confirmed by the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL), the commission announced yesterday after its regular meeting.

During the nomination period, the CAEAL has received a total of 22 nomination lists. Four of them were required to supply additional information prior to the CAEAL's confirmation. The other 16 have been confirmed. Two groups have withdrawn from the election.

The four that required additional information included Wui Cheng Peng Toi,

Macau Justice, Macau Basic Law Promotion and Marketing Work Union and Grassroots Mutual Assistance.

The former three were recently confirmed by the CAEAL after having supplied supplementary information under request by the CAEAL.

The remaining list has been refused by the CAEAL as they did not manage to supply enough nominations. It supplied only about 100 nominations, according to Justice Tong Hio Fong, president of the CAEAL.

According to election laws, the threshold for running in the direct election constituency in a Legislative Assembly Election

is 300 nominations.

Tong reminded the 19 lists to submit their election platforms on or before July 5.

This means that if all lists manage to submit their election platforms on time and the platforms are accepted by the CAEAL, this election will see a maximum of 19 lists.

In addition, Tong disclosed that 42 voters have made multiple nominations. Later on, the CAEAL will pass their details on to the Public Security Police Force for investigation.

Submitting multiple nominations is a criminal offence.

Disease control measures were also on the agenda

of yesterday's meeting. The CAEAL discussed guidelines such as mask wearing, maximum capacity of each voting station, and social distancing.

Tong said that the guidelines will be delivered to the Health Bureau for the latter's review and

confirmation.

All candidate lists will be required to comply with current Health Bureau guidelines.

As for violations, the CAEAL president said that the bureau has so far not received any "obvious complaints", but he admitted that a formal complaint was received last week.

Earlier this month, the Jiangmen Communal Society took the chance to celebrate the Centenary of the Communist Party of China

by distributing disease control resources, which are of actual monetary value. Meanwhile, the streets surrounding the association's headquarters were packed with people.

The organization is linked to one of the lists running in this election, Macau-Guangdong Union. Complaints have been received on the matter. The CAEAL said it would pass the case to the Commission Against Corruption for further investigation.

## Ho Ion Sang confirmed to run in indirect election

**INCUMBENT** lawmaker Ho Ion Sang will run in the indirect election constituency this year. He will be running in the Social Service and Education Sector. "Promoter Union for Progression", a list in which Ho ran in in the Election in 2017, submitted its candidate list yesterday. The list will focus on housing, transport, environmental protection, urban planning, economic issues

and Greater Bay Area development, among other areas. The list consists of eight candidates, with Leong Hong Sai topping the list, followed by Ngan Iek Hang, Cheong Sok Leng, and five others. Ng Sio Lai, representative of the list, noted that Ho changed to indirect election as part of an overall strategy.



CONSUMER RIGHTS

# LAWMAKERS CONCERNED ABOUT ADEQUACY OF OVERSIGHT AND PENALTIES

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Consumer Protection Law was finally approved yesterday at the Legislative Assembly (AL). Although the new law garnered the unanimous support of lawmakers, some expressed concerns over the capacity of the agencies responsible for supervision and inspection to perform those roles. They also deplored the fact that, in some cases, non-compliance with the law carries no penalties.

The interrogation of the law headed by Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, was initiated by the pro-democracy lawmakers, who questioned both the scope and applicability of this new law.

The first critiques came from lawmaker Sulu Sou, who posited the law has not addressed some of the crucial matters that led to its creation in the first place.

Sou was concerned about the fact that potential abuse from companies that have a privileged position in the market, and who engage in cartel practices, were not targeted in the final version of the bill submitted for approval.

"These practices were mentioned at the time of the public



consultation but the new law notes nothing on this matter," Sou said. He remarked that other unfair commercial practices such as hoarding "were also left untouched by this law."

"This new law does not [address] these problems, but previously these issues were the reason and part of the idea to produce the bill," he continued.

Sou also took this opportunity to express dissatisfaction with a study ordered by the government

related to the law, which concluded that there is no need for Macau to enact laws to prevent market monopolies.

"This study was a 'secret' study. We did not have access to any part of it, we were just presented with this conclusion," he claimed.

Lawmakers José Pereira Coutinho and Au Kam San also expressed concerns regarding particular aspects of the bill. Secretary Lei asserted that these were matters covered by either other articles of

this law or by other laws in force with which this new law will match with to establish a more complete framework.

In response to lawmakers' inquiries about potential flaws in the bill, Lei said that he believes that the main principles that regulate the market are good faith and goodwill between parties.

The Secretary said that the main goal of the bill is to maintain the legal relationship between consumers and operators

in a fair and just manner. He also said he believes that Macau, as a close and small community, is a society in which people know one another, and transactions are normally done in a friendly manner. He emphasized that he considers the law as the last resort.

"We need to ensure balance and ensure that mutual trust prevails, and that the law is the last resort," Lei said, noting that the government believes that commercial entities are always more concerned with maintaining their reputation.

Replying to another inquiry from lawmaker Sou on manpower for supervision and inspection, Lei said that is not expected that this law's approval will be paired an increase of the workload for the Consumer Council.

"At the moment, the Consumer Council receives about 3,000 complaints per year, of which over 90% are resolved through mediation," he said, noting that the current workload is not low and is not likely to grow significantly.

Following the opinion of the first standing committee of the AL, where the bill was analyzed in the specialty, the government has specified January 1, 2022 as the date the new law comes into force.

## Four debate proposals from Pereira Coutinho thrown out

RENATO MARQUES

**F**OUR debate proposals from lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho have met with the same fate — all were voted down by his peers at the Legislative Assembly (AL).

The lawmaker was responsible for four of the five topics on agenda yesterday. He presented debate proposals on: amendments to Labor Law to better protect workers; the granting of an individual special bonus to frontline civil servants; the quality of construction of public housing building Ip Heng; and the varying terms for the retirement of civil servants.

All of the proposals were voted down by the majority of the lawmakers that comprise the plenary. Pereira Coutinho only able to get 10 to 12 votes in favor of his proposals, while the plenary gathered 17 to 19 votes against.

The proposal that



prompted a broader discussion was the one calling for an amendment to the Labor Law.

Pereira Coutinho proposed a debate about how the law might be amended so as to better protect the interests of local workers

— namely those working in casinos, hotels and other industries that, by having been more severely hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The effects of the pandemic have caused some to lose part of their income and spend long periods

laid off. Some have been fired without just cause.

On the topic, lawmaker Ma Chi Seng quickly led the opposition to dismiss the proposal, remarking: "This problem has to do with the pandemic and not with the Labor Law. It is useless to propose a review of the Labor Law."

Ip Sio Kai followed, adding that "since the return to the motherland, the [relationship] between employees and employers has always been harmonious under this Labor Law." He said that, in his opinion, the problems arising from the pandemic situation "can be discussed by the Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs."

Ip reaffirmed his stance against the proposal, saying the debate "will contribute to creating division and conflict in the [community]."

Also against Pereira Coutinho's proposal, was

Mak Soi Kun, who said that such debate would not result in any real action that would help any worker.

Mak took the opportunity to say: "As a lawmaker, I have been providing this kind of help, and I already helped some workers, namely those suffering from work-related incapacities, to get their lawful compensation. We do not need any trade unions to do this job."

Zheng Anting noted the timing as an important aspect, saying: "We are in the last period of this legislative term — we can't just propose to review the law randomly like this."

Zheng added that the government has already launched a series of measures to help local workers overcome this period and, as lawmakers, "[they] should present suggestions for more support measures instead."

Sulu Sou sided with Pereira Coutinho, saying that, after hearing the reasoning

of the other lawmakers, he thinks their rejection of the proposal comes from their lack of understanding of what a debate proposal is.

Sou noted that, contrary to what several lawmakers expressed, the existing issues are not just related to the pandemic. "[These issues] just got more highlighted [amidst] the pandemic. The Labor Law has flaws and there is space for improvements. We already realize this. The government lacks information on layoffs and so can't take measures. We already understood this," he concluded. Other proposals, such as the bonus to civil servants, were framed as unreasonable and as a populist move.

It is claimed that they would be highly discriminatory to many other professions that had "fought the same battle" as the civil servants during the pandemic while being completely disregarded.



# Travel bubble has limited buoyancy, says expert

HONEY TSANG

**T**HE plan for the Hong Kong-Macau travel bubble has come crashing down again, after the neighboring city detected a locally transmitted case on June 23, bringing a harsh end to its 16-day record of zero local cases.

The incident once again offers convincing evidence that “until such time as both Hong Kong and Macau have sufficiently high rates of vaccination, any travel bubble would be unlikely to be stable,” said Ben Lee, managing partner of IGamiX Management & Consulting.

The emergence of the first locally transmitted case in Hong Kong indicates that the Hong Kong-Macau travel bubble scheme will again return to square one.

Aspiring intercity travellers, businesspeople and family members are left with



no choice but to wait for another 28 days — again — for Hong Kong to record no local cases.

In an interview with the Times yesterday, Lee said: “We expect that [only when] all sides achieve the desired herd immunity will the authorities then relax cross border travel.”

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, Macau has administered a total of 311,919 doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. There are 220,215 people in Macau who are inoculated, 127,176 of whom have received their

first shots, while another 93,039 are fully vaccinated. The numbers are still a long way from those necessary for Macau to secure herd immunity, when stacked against the city's total population of 682,500.

The Macau government also stated clearly yesterday at the Covid-19 media briefing that the absence of local cases in Hong Kong for 28 consecutive days remains the basic precondition for the two cities to resume quarantine-free travel. The delayed Hong Kong-Macau travel

bubble has prompted Lee to lower the expectation for Macau's gaming and tourism performance during the coming peak season, the summer holiday.

The minute local cases are reported, the gate may come down again, leaving people either stranded or requiring quarantine retrospectively [even after the border reopens with Hong Kong],” he suggested.

“We don't expect much from the coming summer holidays given the above uncertainties,” he said, adding that “bureaucratic yo-yoings” also complicate the situation.

Before Hong Kong reported the first local case, JP Morgan already scaled down its gross gaming revenue (GGR) forecast for the third and fourth quarters of this year to 43% and 58% of pre-pandemic levels, vis-à-vis the earlier prediction of 50% and 66% respectively.

## CTM EARNES 17% LESS REVENUE LAST YEAR

**L**OCAL telecom service provider CTM earned 17% less in revenue last calendar year, the company announced in a financial statement recently.

Public service providers are obliged by the law to publish its financial status on the Official Gazette.

In terms of actual revenue earned, the telecom company generated MOP3.5 billion last calendar year, compared to MOP4.2 billion in 2019.

CTM attributed the drop to the fall in sales in mobile and other devices. Comparing last year's performance in this area with that of the previous year, the telecom company recorded a 42% drop. A 2% drop was recorded in revenue from service provisions.

Capital costs invested last year by CTM amounted to MOP625 million — MOP385 million more than in 2019.

Last year, the telecom company mainly focused on the construction of 5G networks, the expansion of Internet and exclusive line services, and the development of the customer service management system.

The city saw nearly 10,000 fewer landlines last year. As for cellphone services, CTM had 720,000 cellphone customers last year, amounting to a 37% drop from the previous year. There were 8% more mobile Internet service customers in year 2020, totaling 339,000.

CTM had 165,000 household fiber broadband users, 24% of which converted to fiber-optic connection last year. **AL**

AD

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# GOV'T CONDEMNS US IMPOSING SANCTIONS ON CHINESE ENTERPRISES

**C**HINA strongly condemns the United States imposing sanctions on Chinese companies based on lies and disinformation, according to a spokesperson for China's foreign ministry yesterday.

Spokesperson Zhao Lijian also said that China will take all necessary measures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies.

Zhao made the remarks at a press briefing when responding to a query that the United States would impose import restrictions on products of companies in Xinjiang's photovoltaic industry.

"China strongly condemns the United States imposing sanctions on Chinese companies based on lies and false information," Zhao said. "The so-called 'forced labor' and 'genocide' in Xinjiang are the



biggest lie of the century. The United States abused its "entity list" to suppress Xinjiang's photovoltaic industry, based on fabrications. Such actions not only violate international trade rules and the principles of the market economy, but also undermine the glo-

bal industrial and supply chains," he said.

From cotton to the photovoltaic industry, and from agriculture to industry, the United States uses human rights as a disguise to do all it could to cripple the industrial development in Xinjiang, Zhao said.

"What the United States does is detrimental to Xinjiang people's rights to subsistence and development, and also exposes that what they are after is not facts, truth or Xinjiang people's well-being, but to create 'forced unemployment' and 'forced poverty' to mess up Xinjiang and contain China's development," Zhao said.

"We also remind the United States that it is the United States itself which is the real perpetrator of genocide and forced labor," the spokesperson said.

Zhao said U.S. politicians should reflect more on the country's history of genocide against Native Americans and African Americans in Tulsa, and think more about how to solve human rights problems such as racial conflicts and forced labor in the United States. **MDT/XINHUA**

# DUTCH GROUP LAUNCHES DATA HARVESTING CLAIM AGAINST TIKTOK

**MIKE CORDER, THE HAGUE**

**A**Dutch consumer group is launching a 1.5 billion euro (\$1.8 billion) claim against TikTok over what it alleges is unlawful harvesting of personal data from users of the popular video sharing platform.

The Consumentenbond and a foundation called Take Back Your Privacy demanded yesterday that TikTok pay damages to 1.2 million to 1.6 million Dutch children who use the app.

"The conduct of TikTok is pure exploitation," Consumentenbond director Sandra Molenaar said in a statement. "The company earns hundreds of millions per year on the backs of children. And that while privacy law prescribes that children should receive additional protection."

TikTok is hugely popular with teenagers and young adults, who use it to post and watch short-form videos.

The consumer organization and privacy foundation are demanding that TikTok pay damages to Dutch children and delete what they call unlawfully collected personal data. They say if TikTok does not comply, they will take the company to court.

TikTok responded in an emailed statement saying the company is "committed to engage with external experts and organisations to make sure we're doing what we can to keep people on TikTok safe."

It added that "privacy and safety are top priorities for TikTok and we have robust policies, processes and technologies in place to help protect all users, and our teenage users in particular." **MDT/AP**

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THAILAND

# Pro-democracy activists march against government

CHALIDA  
EKVITTAYAVECHNUKUL,  
BANGKOK

**P**RO-DEMOCRACY protesters took to the streets of Thailand's capital on yesterday, marking the anniversary of the overthrow of the country's absolute monarchy by renewing their demands that the government step down, the constitution be amended and the monarchy become more accountable.

The protesters defied a ban on large gatherings instituted to fight a coronavirus surge that shows little sign of abating. It was their first large protest after a hiatus of about three months caused by the pandemic and the jailing of protest leaders, who have since been released on bail.

The government of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha is facing widespread criticism that it botched pandemic recovery plans by failing to secure adequate vaccine supplies.

On June 24, 1932, a group of progressive army officers and civil servants proclaimed constitutional rule and the transition to parliamentary democracy, ending Thailand's



absolute monarchy. The anniversary in recent years has become an occasion for pro-democracy rallies.

Protesters gathered early yesterday by Bangkok's Democracy Monument, a traditional demonstration venue, to light candles and read out the 1932 proclamation of the end of the absolute monarchy.

Several hundred then marched to Parliament, which is due to vote on several amendments to the constitution. The proposed changes, however, fall far short of those sought by the protesters, which include restoring more power to political parties and elected office holders.

"We come out today to insist on the principle that the constitution must come

from the people," said Jatupat Boonpattaraksa, a protest leader also known as Pai Dao Din.

The student-led pro-democracy movement sprung up last year, largely in reaction to the continuing influence of the military in government and hyper-royalist sentiment. The army in 2014 overthrew an elected government, and Prayuth, the coup leader, was named prime minister after a 2019 general election put in power a military-backed political party. Critics say the constitution enacted during military rule skewed election rules to favor the army's proxy party.

The movement was able to attract crowds of as many as 20,000-30,000 people in Ban-

gkok in 2020 and had followings in major cities and universities. However, a coronavirus surge late last year caused it to temporarily suspend activities and lose momentum.

The movement became controversial as its leaders focused on the monarchy in their speeches and activities. They charged that the king holds power and influence beyond that allowed under the constitution.

Since becoming king in 2016, Maha Vajiralongkorn has gained more direct control over the vast fortune of the royal palace — estimated to exceed \$30 billion — as well as command of some key military units in the capital.

During the same time, memorials, statues and other symbols associated with the 1932 revolution have been removed.

The monarchy is widely considered to be an untouchable bedrock element of Thai nationalism. Defaming key royals is punishable under a lese majeste law by up to 15 years in prison per count. Many people still revere the monarchy, and the military, a major power in Thai society, considers its defense a key priority.

The government responded to the protesters' criticism of the monarchy by charging leaders under the lese majeste law.

Parit Chiwarak, among those jailed, said yesterday the protesters are standing by their original demands but perhaps shifting their focus.

"We still demand the monarchy's reform. But this year Prayuth must be ousted," said Parit, who is better known by the nickname Penguin. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1970 NEW PEACE PLAN FOR MIDDLE EAST



The United States has launched its latest plan to bring peace to the Middle East.

US Secretary of State William Rogers announced his initiative to encourage the Arabs and Israelis to stop shooting and start talking at a news conference in Washington.

Mr Rogers said he hoped the plan would be carried out under the guidance of United Nations mediator Dr Gunnar Jarring and in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions.

The peace effort will attempt to resolve the so-called "war of attrition" which has been raging between Israel and Egypt along the Suez Canal since the Six Day War in 1967.

Recent strategies by the US Secretary of State to end conflict in the region have been rejected by all sides.

Mr Rogers said the objective of the initiative was "to encourage the parties to move to a just and lasting peace".

He refused to give details of any military assistance which might be offered to Israel or to divulge any further details of the plan.

But the US later confirmed it was pressing for a cessation of hostilities for at least three months and wished negotiations to be based on the UN resolution 242 - passed at the end of the Six Day War.

Under this declaration, Egypt and Jordan should acknowledge Israel's right to a secure existence behind recognised borders.

In return, Israel should accept the principle of withdrawing from occupied territory.

The Israeli authorities have not commented on the proposals, but Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser is reported to have been scathing of the plans.

Courtesy BBC News

MYANMAR

# Junta leader attends military conference in Moscow

**T**HE leader of Myanmar's military junta on Wednesday attended an international conference in Moscow, an appearance that reflected Russia's eagerness to develop ties with the junta despite international criticism.

The military in Myanmar ousted the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1, claiming her party's landslide victory in an election last November was due to massive voter fraud. It has not produced credible evidence to back its claim.

Myanmar's security forces have brutally suppressed widespread popular protests against the military takeover, killing hundreds of protesters and carrying out waves of arrests.

The junta's leader, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, claimed in Wednesday's speech that it was trying to consolidate a democratic system in the country that has "degraded."

"Currently, Myanmar is striving for political stability," he said at the conference organized by Russia's Defen-

se Ministry. "The previous government mocked democracy by rigging the election. Due to the dishonesty of the NLD government, our current government has taken steps to restore integrity to democracy."

He rejected international criticism, charging that "some countries are constantly trying to influence other political systems and ideologies in a variety of ways" and adding that "they also want to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states on the pretext of democracy and

human rights."

On Tuesday, Min Aung Hlaing met with Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, who hailed the strong military cooperation between the countries.

"We pay special attention to this meeting as we see Myanmar as a time-tested strategic partner and a reliable ally in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region," Shoigu said.

He added that "cooperation in the military and military-technical field is an important part of relations between Russia and Myanmar" and praised Min Aung Hlaing for strengthening the country's military.

Shoigu said Russia would work to expand ties with Myanmar based on "mutual understanding, respect and trust." **MDT/AP**

## IN CONTEXT

The "war of attrition" halted on 7 August 1970, but guerrilla action by Palestinian activists opposing the peace initiative continued along the Suez Canal.

These actions - including the hijacking of five planes in September 1970 - contributed to the Rogers plan failing.

Egypt and Syria were not able to regain territory they had lost in the 1967 six-day war by diplomatic means and in 1973 launched a major offensive against Israel.

They initially retook key positions lost in 1967, but the Arabs eventually buckled under a sustained Israeli counter-attack. Most hostilities ceased on 22 October. Both sides suffered very heavy losses.





## TASTE OF EDESIA

# Impeccable Jazz

**J**AZZ lovers are invited to The St. Regis Bar to the first 'Jack's Club' live jazz evening showcasing a catalogue of Macao's finest artists this Saturday, June 26.

Named in honor of the St. Regis founder John "Jack" Jacob Astor IV, the inaugural monthly event will see guests treated to live performances by resident musician Aaron Lo, and vocalist Jandira Silva, as well as a special band appearance by the Tomos Griffiths' Trio.

Lead singer Tomos Griffiths is set to bring a lifetime of vocal artistry to the Jack's Club evening, having performed in London's prestigious West End in world famous productions including Chess, The Far Pavillions, and the lead role in Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical masterpiece -Phantom of the Opera.

The Tomos Griffiths' Trio, complete with keyboardist Joao Mascarenhas and bassist Ivan Pineda together with Aaron and Jandira are set to create an unforgettable celebration of jazz

in the elegant surroundings of The St. Regis Bar.

Daniella Tonetto, General Manager of Sales & Marketing at The St. Regis Macao, said the first Jack's Club cements The St. Regis Bar as the premier jazz venue in Macao.

"Jazz music is synonymous with the St. Regis brand and we are excited to bring this catalogue of world class jazz talent together at The St. Regis Bar, the perfect platform to highlight the best jazz music in town," she added.

The next Jack Club event will be held on Saturday, July 31, when a group of talented jazz artistes known as Macau Vibe will make a special appearance.

Jack's Club showcases are scheduled on the last Saturday of each month over the summer on August 28 and September 25, culminating in a poolside gathering on October 30 at the St. Regis Pool Deck featuring special band appearances, vocalists and resident musicians for a celebration of jazz and fine food and beverage.



## Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu, MDT



### THE HEBE HAVEN 1050 METRES SAND

2021-06-25|Fri|19:40

A good chance is given to Pat Lee's consistent galloper **Diamond Moonlight** in Friday's evening sand meeting. 3 wins under his belt in 1050 metres sand, you can ignore his last run in 1200 turf, which he ran too keen in the early stages but still managed to stay in the fourth place. This time his trainer to back him up in his pat distance 1050 metres sand, he also engage L. Corrales to take up the ride for **Diamond Moonlight**. Everybody knows that L. Corrales is very good in taking good tactic position from the starting gate, even **Diamond Moonlight** drawn in eight barrier not to worry he will find his way out. It actually give L. Corrales to hold him back in the early stages and save up his energy in fighting a strong finish to cross the line. His prep is also good as you can see from the videos. Maybe this barrier draw in eighth may pay well for us. He is my NAP of the week.

**Race 2 Horse No. 1 Diamond Moonlight Win & Place bets**





YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

The greatest test of your patience today will not come from the usual source. Instead, your own wishes will be causing you to strain against your self-imposed leash.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

A day spent at the spa, a splurgy shopping trip, an extra nice bottle of wine at dinner - these are all things that offer you good, old-fashioned fun. Any guilt you feel at treating yourself should be set aside!



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

The obstacles in your life right now are minor ones - no more than little speed bumps along a very happy road. They're actually going to be a bit fun for you to navigate.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Your charm is stronger than ever today, and you can use it to your advantage in the many different situations during the day. Socially, you might not be the one making all the plans and driving all the action.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

In a close friendship or a romantic relationship, you may find that the two of you have reached an impasse today. You just can't come to an agreement, no matter how hard both of you try.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

When was the last time you experienced something truly foreign? Today, make a bigger effort to expand your horizons. This is an ideal day to research travel plans, especially if they involve travel outside of the country.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Your magnetic charms will earn you a lot of attention - and a lot of new friends today. The problem is, you might not have enough time to give all these new people the attention you would like to.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You and someone else in your life are separating more in your ideas and positions. This distance could grow to a near polarity if you do not make a strong effort today to understand where they are coming from.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Reaching out to other people will be especially easy for you today - your communication skills are good, and you will be given several opportunities to strike up an interesting conversation with a stranger or two.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Put out the right signals today, and you will get a lot of positive response. Smile a bit more. Hold eye contact just a little bit longer than you normally would. Send those nonverbal signals that can get a conversation going!



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Get some insight from the people in your life who you know will tell you the truth as they see it. Trust them to tell you what they believe to be right. Be prepared to hear things you don't want to hear.

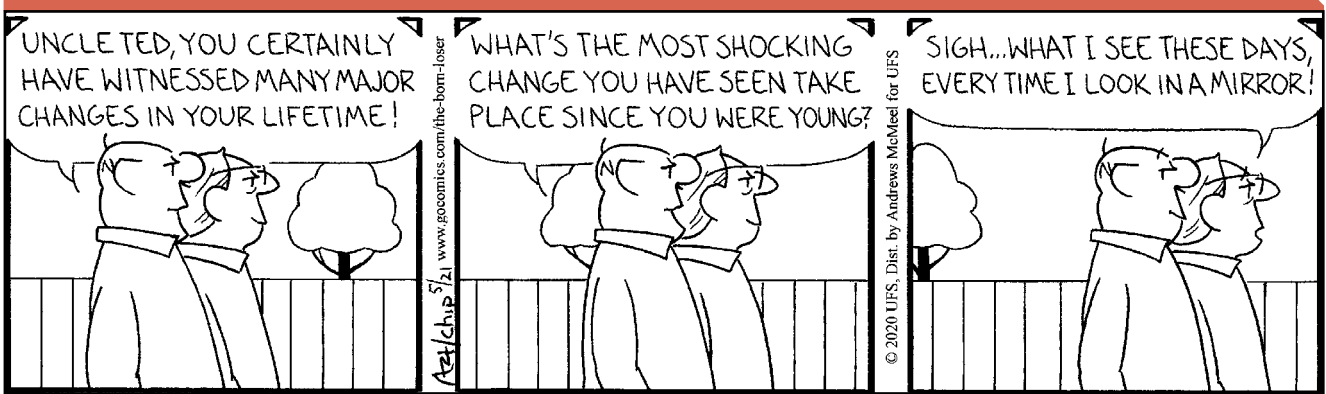


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

The universe is sending you sensitive energy today, which will give you quite a soft spot for art - in all its forms. Music, poetry, dance and visual art will offer you some new ideas today.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	22	36	clear
Harbin	16	23	thundershower
Tianjin	25	37	clear
Urumqi	24	36	clear
Xi'an	22	34	cloudy
Lhasa	14	25	shower
Chengdu	22	28	shower
Chongqing	25	36	cloudy
Kunming	17	27	shower
Nanjing	23	29	cloudy
Shanghai	22	26	drizzle
Wuhan	24	33	cloudy
Hangzhou	25	28	drizzle
Taipei	27	29	drizzle
Guangzhou	25	30	heavyrain
Hong Kong	26	29	rainstorm

WORLD

Moscow	14	20	drizzle
Frankfurt	15	27	clear
Paris	14	27	cloudy
London	11	22	cloudy
New York	20	32	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Deli side; 5- Crusty treat; 8- Fast fliers; 12- Hermit; 14- Long time; 15- Coup d' \_\_\_\_; 16- Old-womanish; 17- Ornamental fabric; 18- Broccoli \_\_\_\_ (leafy vegetable); 19- Hamlet resident; 21- Mob; 23- Bandleader Brown; 24- Freudian topic; 25- Sun. talk; 26- Dead Sea document; 30- Dress style; 32- Lout; 33- Astonishment; 37- Assistant; 38- Large wading bird; 39- Zeno of \_\_\_\_; 40- Swift dog; 42- Sing like Bing; 43- Brazilian dance; 44- Proverb; 45- Begley and Wynn; 48- Jazz org.; 49- Blackguard; 50- Established procedure; 52- Locate exactly; 57- Redolence; 58- Thought; 60- \_\_\_\_ salts; 61- Hitch; 62- Corn syrup brand; 63- Slight trace; 64- Kitchen addition; 65- CPR giver; 66- School founded in 1440;

DOWN 1- Croat, e.g.; 2- Burt's ex; 3- Indigo source; 4- Commendably; 5- Fleishy fruit; 6- Summer Games org.; 7- Electrify; 8- Balkan native; 9- Runs through; 10- Put off, as an agenda item; 11- Point in the desired direction; 13- 'It's true!'; 14- Draft picks; 20- Hair goop; 22- Top-notch; 24- Gnu cousin; 26- Smelting waste; 27- Coconut-husk fiber; 28- Sat on the back of a horse; 29- Follows orders; 30- Maytag brand; 31- Abrasive mineral; 33- Island off Venezuela; 34- "The Time Machine" race; 35- Light gas; 36- Strong taste; 38- Pectinate; 41- Mandlikova of tennis; 42- Floor covering; 44- Sky light; 45- Uneven; 46- Failed to; 47- European ermine; 49- So long!; 51- Yen; 52- Like a minx; 53- Mayberry moppet; 54- "\_\_\_\_ She Lovely?"; 55- Canceled; 56- Revenuers, for short; 59- Grand Coulee, for one;

Yesterday's solution

C	A	R	E	S	T	R	E	I	S	P	A	T
A	R	E	S	T	G	O	W	N	P	L	I	E
R	I	S	E	R	E	T	E	S	L	E	O	N
A	S	I	N	S	C	R	I	B	L	E		
T	E	N	S	P	O	T	L	O	S	E	I	T
B	A	T	T	I	G	U	A	N	A	L	A	O
A	M	A	S	S	A	N	T	S	M	A	C	K
A	P	R	A	F	R	E	S	H				
A	P	P	E	A	R							
G	R	A	N	D	M	O	T	H	E	R		
L	O	S	S									
E	P	E	E									
T	S	O	S									

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	







# RONALDO SCORES 2 TO TAKE A STEP CLOSER TO SCORING HISTORY

**C**RISTIANO Ronaldo's goals are adding up fast, and they are taking Portugal deeper into yet another tournament.

Ronaldo scored two penalties yesterday to help the defending champions secure a 2-2 draw with France and give the team a spot in the round of 16 at the European Championship. They also increased his total with the national team to 109 goals, tied for the all-time men's record with former Iran striker Ali Daei.

The Portugal great's Euro 2020-leading fourth and fifth goals also extended his overall tournament record to 14.

Karim Benzema scored both of France's goals, his first ever at the tournament after failing to find the target at Euro 2008 and 2012. They were also his first goals for the national team since October 2015. Soon after that, he lost his place in the team because of his role in a "sextape" scandal.

"Of course I was waiting for these goals," Benzema said. "There has been a lot of pressure on me, but I've never given up."

The Portuguese ended up in third place in the group, one spot

AP PHOTO



behind Germany. World Cup champion France, which had already qualified following a 1-1 draw with Hungary, finished first. The French will face Switzerland in the next round while Portugal will take on Belgium.

"This was a really tough group," France coach Didier Deschamps said. "Hungary proved that."

Ronaldo scored the opening goal in the 31st minute after France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris misread a free kick and punched Danilo's face. Lloris was shown a yellow card by Spanish referee Antonio

Mateu Lahoz, who then immediately signaled for medical assistance and awarded a penalty.

He then equalized from the spot in the 60th, after Benzema put the French ahead 2-1, when his cross from the left made contact with the hand of Jules Kounde.

It was Kounde's second international game and his first start, chosen by Deschamps specifically to stop Ronaldo.

Benzema first scored a penalty in first-half injury time after Nelson Semedo cut across Mbappe as he was running to meet a pass from

Paul Pogba. The decision stood following a quick video review.

Benzema had missed his previous penalty for Les Bleus in his international comeback in a friendly against Wales earlier this month.

Ronaldo went to shake Benze-

ma's hand and even put his arm around him as they walked off smiling at halftime. The former Real Madrid teammates then swapped jerseys as they walked down the tunnel.

"It was a great pleasure to see him again. We achieved so much together when we played for Real Madrid, scored so many goals together," Benzema said. "We just wished each other good luck for the rest of the tournament."

Benzema's second goal came in the 47th after a run down the right to meet Pogba's pass from mid-field. He got in behind the defense and slotted the ball past Portugal goalkeeper Rui Patricio and in off the left post.

Pogba almost scored a winner for France midway through the second half, but Patricio made a superb one-handed save to tip the curling shot off the crossbar and then saved Antoine Griezmann's follow up shot.

The 36-year-old Ronaldo's historic run began 17 years ago when he scored his first goal for Portugal in a 2-1 loss to Greece during the group stage at Euro 2004. **MDT/AP**

## LATEST RESULTS

<b>Sweden</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Poland</b>
Slovakia	0	<b>5</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Hungary</b>
<b>Portugal</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>France</b>

AD

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伍福賢 Domingos Ng

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# Lineup set for round of 16 at Euro 2020

**T**HE lineup for the round of 16 at the European Championship has been completed with some standout matches.

England will play Germany at Wembley Stadium on Tuesday and defending champion Portugal will face top-ranked Belgium in Seville on Sunday.

World Cup champion France will play Switzerland in Bucharest on Monday, Spain will face Croatia in Copenhagen on Monday, the Netherlands will play the Czech Republic in Budapest on Sunday and Sweden will face Ukraine in Glasgow on Tuesday.

Two matches had already been set before the day's final group games. Italy will face Austria in London on Saturday and Wales will take on Denmark in Amsterdam on the same day.

Cristiano Ronaldo scored two penalties to tie the overall men's scoring record with 109 goals and give Portugal a 2-2 draw with France and a spot in the round of 16 of the European Championship.

Ronaldo scored in the 31st minute and then equalized in the 60th after Fran-

ce forward Karim Benzema netted twice in between for the World Cup champions.

They were Benzema's first goals at the tournament after failing to find the target at Euro 2008 and 2012.

France was already assured of a spot in the next round.

Leon Goretzka scored late to keep Germany in the European Championship with a 2-2 draw against with Hungary.

Ádám Szalai and András Schäfer both scored for Hungary. But Kai Havertz equalized for Germany the first time and Goretzka got the second.

A person with a rainbow flag ran onto the field and held it up in front of the teams during the Hungarian national anthem before the European Championship game against Germany.

The person was quickly tackled by stewards and pinned to the ground. The person was then led away to cheers and applause.

Buildup to the match has been overshadowed by a spat over the Munich city's council's request to illuminate the stadium in



## FINAL 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	3	2	1	0	4 - 2	7
Spain	3	1	2	0	6 - 1	5
Slovakia	3	1	0	2	2 - 7	3
Poland	3	0	1	2	4 - 6	1
Group F	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
France	3	1	2	0	4 - 3	5
Germany	3	1	1	1	6 - 5	4
Portugal	3	1	1	1	7 - 6	4
Hungary	3	0	2	1	3 - 6	2

rainbow colors. UEFA refused on the grounds that it was a political statement directly addressed against Hungary.

Hungary introduced a law last week that has been denounced as anti-LGBT discrimination by human rights groups.

Many German fans are carrying small rainbow flags that were distributed by activists before the game.

This year's European Championship is breaking tournament records for own-goals.

Two own-goals scored by Slovakia in Spain's 5-0 victory made it eight so far in the group stage at Euro 2020.

There had been only nine own-goals in 40 years from the 1976 tournament through Euro 2016. The previous record for a single tournament was three in 2016.

There also had never previously been a tournament game with two own-goals but there have been two in the past week. Portugal also scored two on Saturday.

The first goal of Euro 2020 was an own-goal. Turkey defender Merih Demiral intercepted a cross with his chest and the ball ricocheted into Italy's net in a 3-0 victory.

Two goals from Robert Lewandowski couldn't stop Poland from exiting the European Championship.

Viktor Claesson scored in stoppage-time to give Sweden a 3-2 victory over Poland and first place in Group E.

Sweden will play a third-place finisher in the round of 16. Poland has been eliminated.

Lewandowski scored in the 61st and 84th minutes. Emil Forsberg scored twice

for Sweden before that.

A bizarre own-goal by the goalkeeper put Spain on the way to a 5-0 victory over Slovakia and gave the team a spot in the round of 16 of the European Championship.

Martin Dúbravka saved an early penalty kick from Álvaro Morata but then clumsily knocked the ball into his own net a few minutes later after it ricocheted high into the air off a shot by Pablo Sarabia.

Dúbravka struggled to get into position as the ball started to come down. He jumped to swat the ball away but it instead rolled off his hand and into the net.

Aymeric Laporte added to Spain's lead before halftime and Sarabia, Ferran Torres and another own-goal in the second half made it five.

Emil Forsberg has scored the second quickest goal in

the history of the European Championship to give Sweden a 1-0 lead against Poland after 81 seconds.

Only Russia player Dmitry Kirichenko has scored a quicker goal. He scored after 65 seconds against Greece at Euro 2004.

Netherlands striker Luuk de Jong's European Championship is over.

The Dutch soccer federation says De Jong injured his knee in training on Tuesday and has left the team's training camp.

The Sevilla forward has played 38 times for the Netherlands. He did not start any of the team's Group C matches but came on as a late substitute in the first two games of Euro 2020.

Netherlands coach Frank de Boer started twice with Wout Weghorst next to Memphis Depay in a two-man forward line and once with Donyell Malen. MDT/AP

## UPCOMING GAMES

	Date	Time	Home	Away	City	ODDS
Sun	Jun 27	0:00	Wales	Denmark	Amsterdam	H 5.75, D 3.45, A 1.91
Sun	Jun 27	3:00	Italy	Austria	London	H 1.52, D 4.3, A 8.8
Mon	Jun 28	0:00	Netherlands	Czech Republic	Budapest	H 1.75, D 4, A 5.7
Mon	Jun 28	3:00	Belgium	Portugal	Bilbao	H 2.6, D 3.4, A 3.15



**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
Editorial, China Daily

**BELT AND ROAD  
INITIATIVE'S VITALITY  
STEMS FROM ITS  
INCLUSIVENESS**

State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi presided over the High-level Video Conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific on Wednesday.

Focusing on COVID-19 prevention and control cooperation in the region and the region's economic recovery, the conference provided a platform for the representatives of more than 30 countries and international organizations to pool their wisdom in addressing the challenges the region faces.

In all, 140 countries and 32 international organizations are participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, highlighting the great significance attached to it. With plentiful substantial achievements having been made since it was proposed in 2013, the initiative has provided the world with many global public products that manifest practical progress toward the realization of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus has served to highlight the initiative's practical benefits, as it has prompted countries to work together to protect public health and promote common development. Not only are essential medical supplies provided under the framework through mutual assistance programs but also the participants have never ceased their intensive exchanges on epidemic prevention and control work, and macro policy coordination. That demonstrates the vitality of the Belt and Road Initiative, which is an open and inclusive multilateral platform.

As Wang proposed in the conference, the quality of Belt and Road cooperation projects will be higher in the future, and although infrastructure constructions remain crucial, more attention will be paid to strengthen public health collaboration and ensure the reliability and security of supply chains, and enhance cooperation in innovation, technology and green development.

The active responses these proposals have received from the other participants in the conference reflect that they are highly consistent with the appeals of all countries in the region, which are looking to get their socioeconomic development back on the right track at an early date, build more responsive and efficient public health systems, and develop new growth engines through international cooperation.

Unlike the Build Back Better World initiative the United States proposed at the G7 Summit earlier this month, the Belt and Road Initiative starts from the practical needs of the participants rather than any single country's geopolitical ambitions. Functioning on the basis of joint construction, collective consultation and benefit sharing, instead of one participant telling the others what to do, it produces tangible benefits for the people.

It is the common will of the people in the region working together for a better world that enables the Belt and Road Initiative to stand the tests of such grave challenges as the COVID-19 pandemic, and continuously demonstrate robust vitality and strong adaptability.

**RUSSIA SAYS IT MAY FIRE TO HIT  
INTRUDING WARSHIPS**

Russia will be ready to fire to hit intruding warships, a senior diplomat warned yesterday in the wake of a Black Sea incident in which a British destroyer sailed near Crimea in an area that Russia claims as its territorial waters.

Russia said one of its warships fired warning shots and a warplane dropped bombs in the path of British destroyer Defender on Wednesday to drive it away from the area near Sevastopol, but Britain denied that account and insisted its ship wasn't fired upon.

The incident marked the first time since the Cold War that

Moscow acknowledged using live ammunition to deter a NATO warship, underlining the rising threat of military collisions amid Russia-West tensions.

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said that "the inviolability of the Russian borders is an absolute imperative," adding that it will be protected "by all means, diplomatic, political and military if needed."

He giped that the British navy should rename its destroyer from Defender to Aggressor and warned that "those who try to test our strength are taking high risks."

THE  
**BUZZ**

AP PHOTO



PHILIPPINES

**DEMOCRACY SCION,  
EX-LEADER BENIGNO  
AQUINO DIES**

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

**F**ORMER Philippine President Benigno Aquino III, the son of pro-democracy icons who helped topple dictator Ferdinand Marcos and a defender of good governance who took China's sweeping territorial claims to an international court, has died. He was 61.

Aquino's family told a news conference that he died in his sleep early yesterday due to "renal failure secondary to diabetes." A former Cabinet official, Rogelio Singson, said Aquino had been undergoing dialysis and was preparing for a kidney transplant.

Philippine flags were lowered at half-staff on government buildings.

"We are saddened by President Aquino's passing and will always be thankful for our partnership," U.S. Embassy Charge d' Affaires John Law said in a statement.

Aquino, who served as president from 2010 to 2016, was the heir of a family that has been regarded as a bulwark against authoritarianism in the Philippines.

His father, former Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., was assassinated in 1983 while under military custody at the Manila international airport, which now bears his name. His mother, Corazon Aquino, led the 1986

"people power" revolt that ousted Marcos. The army-backed uprising became a harbinger of popular revolts against authoritarian regimes worldwide.

A scion of a wealthy land-owning political clan in the northern Philippines, Aquino, who was fondly called Noynoy or Pnoy by many Filipinos, built an image of an incorruptible politician who battled poverty and frowned over excesses by the country's elites, including powerful politicians.

Aquino, whose family went into exile in the U.S. during Marcos's rule, had turbulent ties with China as president. After China seized a disputed shoal in 2012 following a tense standoff in the South China Sea, Aquino authorized the filing of a complaint before an international arbitration tribunal that questioned the validity of China's sweeping claims in the strategic waterway. Beijing claims virtually the entire South China Sea on historical grounds.

"We will not be pushed around because we are a tiny state compared with theirs," Aquino told The Associated Press in June 2011. "We think we have very solid grounds to say 'do not intrude into our territory.'"

The Philippines largely won. But China refused to join in the arbitration and

dismissed as a sham the tribunal's 2016 ruling, which invalidated Beijing's claims based on a 1982 U.N. maritime treaty. Aquino's legal challenge and the eventual ruling plunged the relations between Beijing and Manila to an all-time low.

Born in 1960 as the third of five children, Aquino never married and had no children. An economics graduate, he pursued business opportunities before entering politics.

One of Aquino's major successes was the signing of a 2014 peace deal with the largest Muslim separatist rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. It eased decades of fighting in the country's south, homeland of minority Muslims in the largely Roman Catholic nation.

Opponents pounded on missteps, including a Manila bus hostage crisis that ended with the shooting deaths of eight Chinese tourists from Hong Kong by a disgruntled police officer, and delays in recovery efforts in the disastrous aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

Time magazine named Aquino as one of 100 most influential people in the world in 2013, praising him for stabilizing a sputtering economy and for bravely confronting China over the South China Sea disputes. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



**EU** slapped economic sanctions on Belarus yesterday in response to what the bloc called the "escalation of serious human rights violations" including the detention of journalist Raman Pratasevich. The sanctions target the economy but are also aimed at hitting President Alexander Lukashenko and his allies.

AP PHOTO



**Germany** Officials say a vaccination center was flooded and five people were injured by hail during heavy storms in southwestern Germany overnight. All appointments for yesterday at the vaccination center in Tuebingen were canceled after the site was swamped by torrential rain late the day before.

AP PHOTO



**Danish** health officials have urged soccer fans who attended the European Championship game between Denmark and Belgium on June 17 to be checked for the coronavirus after they found at least three people who later tested positive for the delta variant. Danish Health Minister Magnus Heunicke wrote on Twitter that about 4,000 people sat near those who tested positive.

AP PHOTO



**Spain** John McAfee, the creator of McAfee antivirus software, was found dead in his jail cell near Barcelona in an apparent suicide, hours after a Spanish court approved his extradition to the United States to face tax charges punishable by decades in prison, authorities said. Security personnel tried to revive him, but the jail's medical team finally certified his death, a statement from the regional Catalan government said.