



LVS IS GOING TO SHIFT ITS FOCUS TO ADVANCING DIGITAL GAMING TECHNOLOGIES PRIMARILY WITHIN THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS SECTOR

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WEATHER BUREAU DEFENDS TIMING OF RAINSTORM WARNING ISSUANCE

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A NON-RESIDENT WORKER WAS FOUND DEAD IN A STORAGE ROOM OF A HOTEL IN COTAI AFTER COMMITTING SUICIDE, THE PJ REPORTS

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China Rescue workers were digging through the remains of a collapsed hotel in eastern China looking for any survivors of a disaster that has killed at least eight people and left nine missing, authorities said yesterday. The workers in the city of Suzhou searched through the night, using rescue dogs, cranes, ladders and metal cutters, after the building collapsed Monday afternoon, the city government said in social media posts. [More on p6](#)



China yesterday denounced an appeal by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen for a U.S.-European "unified front" against Chinese "unfair economic practices" and human rights abuses. "China strongly deplors and rejects Treasury Secretary Yellen's remarks," said a Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian. Yellen issued the appeal yesterday during a meeting with European Union officials in Brussels.



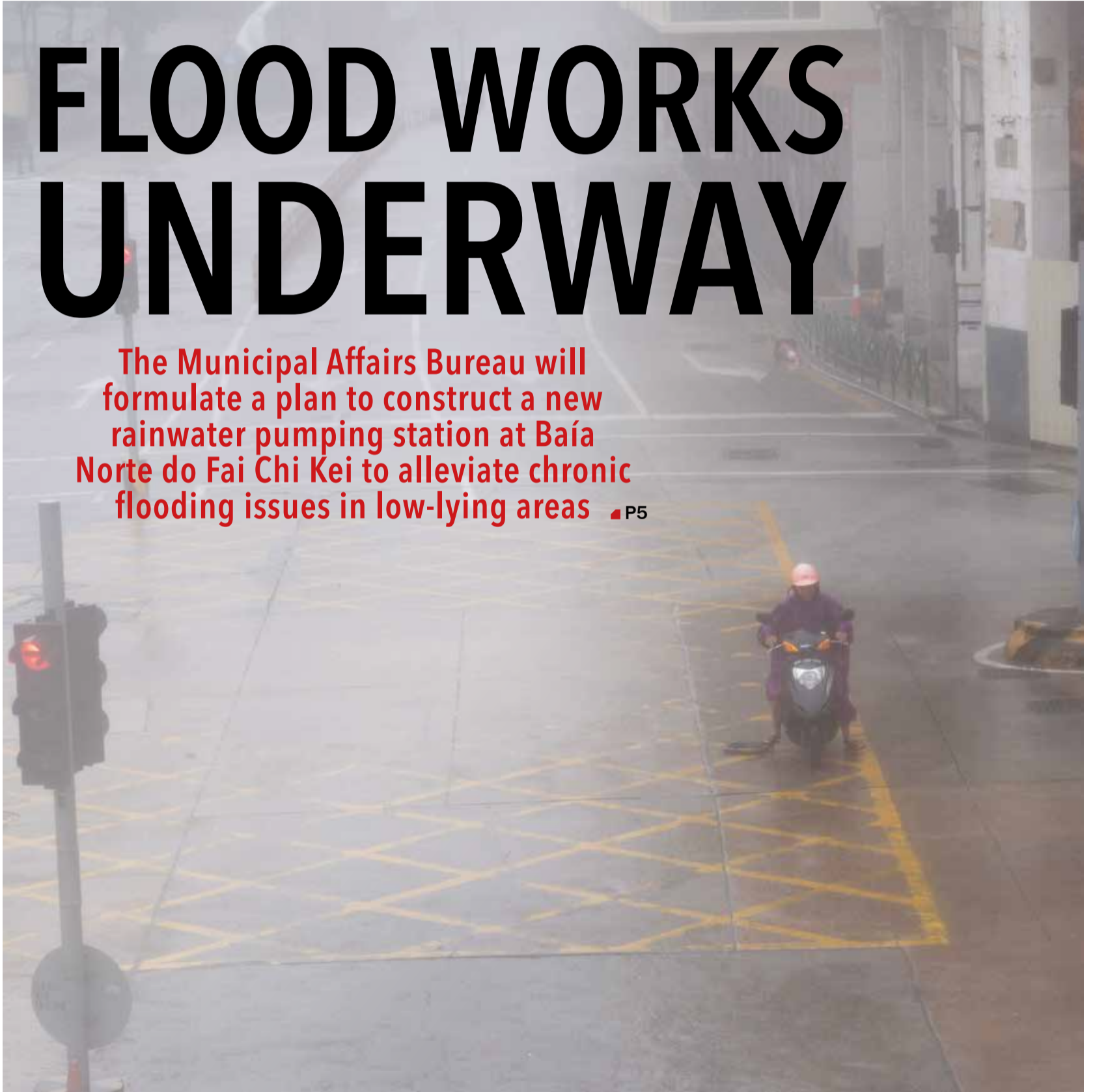
Iraq The death toll from a catastrophic blaze that erupted at a coronavirus hospital ward in southern Iraq the previous day rose to 64 yesterday, Iraqi medical officials said. Two health officials said more than 100 people were also injured in the fire that torched the coronavirus ward of al-Hussein Teaching Hospital in the city of Nasiriyah on Monday.

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FLOOD WORKS UNDERWAY

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WEATHER BUREAU DEFENDS TIMING OF RAINSTORM WARNING ISSUANCE

ANTHONY LAM

BOTH Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário and director Leong Weng Kun of the Meteorological and Geophysics Bureau (SMG) stressed the unpredictability of rainfall levels at the parliament.

The SMG held an orientation session at the Legislative Assembly on Monday to explain and conduct a "meteorological education" session for the lawmakers, with a sole emphasis on rainstorms and typhoons.

At the session, both officials reiterated the irregularity of rainfall levels that present a significant amount of uncertainty for the forecast of whether heavy rainfall is expected, and if so, how heavy it will be.

Last month, the city saw extremely heavy rainfall twice near the start of school time, requiring rainstorm warnings to be issued which triggered the school-suspension mechanism.

On one of the two occasions, the single-day precipitation level broke the city's record. The new record also surpassed the city's average June rainfall level.

Parents, guardians and care-



takers slammed the weather bureau for not issuing the warnings earlier, based on the fact that their children had either already arrived at school soaked or were already on the way.

In response, the SMG head told participating lawmakers that heavy rainfalls in Macau normally last for about 80 minutes, meaning that peak precipitation normally concludes within that

amount of time.

Moreover, the city's small size presents a greater challenge for the SMG to make timely forecasts on rainfall.

"For example, on June 28, the precipitation level in Macau was 116mm and in Coloane it was 14mm," Leong recalled. As such, Leong hinted that an individual in Coloane will need a black rainstorm warning, which indicates

a forecast rainfall level of 80mm within an hour, but this would be incongruent with the rainfall within that area.

Another critical factor, according to the SMG head, is that Macau relies on forecasts when issuing rainstorm warnings. Alongside Rosário, Leong reiterated current technology is not capable of making a 100% accurate forecast on rainfall, let alone precise precipitation levels.

Some schools reportedly asked parents to take their children home after the warning was issued, which is forbidden by regulations.

On this matter, Rosário emphasized that the weather bureau is only authorized to forecast and monitor the weather, as well as to issue corresponding warnings. "As to how the warnings are interpreted by different entities, [the bureau] is in no position to give orders or instructions," the senior official said.

Both officials also reminded the public to stay vigilant even when the lowest yellow warning level was issued because the conditions may deteriorate drastically within a short period of time.

ELECTIONS 2021 CAEAL UPDATES CANDIDATE LISTS IN NEW POST

THE Legislative Assembly's Electoral Affairs Committee (CAEAL) updated the candidate lists for the 2021 elections yesterday. Five candidate lists were removed as the majority of candidates were disqualified.

At the Public Administration Building, it was shown that total of 20 candidates from six different lists were deemed ineligible.

All members of the Macau Democratic Prosperity Association, led by incumbent lawmaker António Ng Kuok Cheong and advocate Scott Chiang Meng Hin; the New Macau Progressives, which include incumbent lawmaker Sulu Sou Ka Hou; the New Macau Progressive Association, with former lawmaker Paul Chan Wai Chi taking the lead; and the Macau Justice, led by labor rights advocate Lei Sio Kuan, were disqualified.

CAEAL deemed these candidates to be in violation of the duty to be faithful to Macau.

Other disqualified candidates included Lo Chun Seng from Macau Victory and two candidates from the Gaming New Macao list, Cloee Chao and Lei Man Chao.

Two candidates from the Macao Righteousness list, labor rights activist Lee Sio Kuan and Kuok Nai Neng were also disqualified. However, the list was still allowed to run for the elections since it still included at least four eligible members.

CAEAL approved the remaining 138 candidates from 14 lists running for the direct elections. LV

LVS to build on digital gaming technology

HONEY TSANG

LAS Vegas Sands Corp (LVS), the parent company of Sands China Ltd (Sands), is going to shift its focus to advancing the group's digital gaming technologies primarily within the business-to-business sector, the casino conglomerate stated in a release published on July 12.

Within this business proposition, the group declared its resolution to be "a strategic investor" in such an area.

"Sands is determined to grow its leadership position within the industry and is committed to doing that through strategic steps [that] we think best



position the company for future growth," Robert Goldstein, LVS's chairman and chief executive officer, stated in the release.

To this end, LVS is currently establishing an investment team in the digital gaming sector. Investment veteran Davis Catlin

will be appointed as the leader of the team.

According to the statement, before joining LVS, Catlin worked for a leading investment firm for 14 years. In this position, he played a leading role in making investments in both public and private

companies in digital gaming.

"Digital gaming and other related offerings are still very much in the early stages of development, and we believe there is an outstanding opportunity for us to invest in the technologies being developed,"

Goldstein said.

Earlier in January, a Bloomberg report quoted people "familiar with the situation" who stated that the group is intending to venture into sports betting, which was expected to necessitate investment in digital technologies for online gambling.

However, the late founder and CEO of LVS, Sheldon Adelson, had long objected to online gambling, stating that the practice made it too easy for betters to lose money.

The late mogul launched public campaigns against online gambling in 2012, and recruited lawyers and lobbyists to petition the United States Congress to ban online gambling.

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

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

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

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

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

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CE eyes closer ties with Zhejiang universities to nurture more talent

HONEY TSANG

MACAU'S Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng acknowledged that he is eyeing closer ties with higher institutions in Zhejiang province in order to nurture more local talent in the wellness, financial, technology and culture industries, and speed up the city's economic diversification.

Ho's remark was delivered in a closed-door meeting with Ren Shaobo, Secretary of the Communist Party Committee of the Zhejiang University on July 12.

During the meeting, both parties exchanged ideas about higher education and talent cultivation.

The CE stressed the emergence of the pandemic has made economic diversification all the more important for the city. However, he admitted that Macau has a shortage of local talent in the four aforementioned industries.

As such, Ho told Ren that he is hoping to foster closer cooperation with higher institutions in Zhejiang province to cultivate talent in the information technology (IT) and management fields.

Zhejiang University has stood as a major university in the mainland, having nurtured many talented alumni for the nation and Macau.

In response, Ren affirmed a commitment to forge a stronger collaborative relationship with Macau's higher

institutions. He said that the Zhejiang University has been embarking on a new partnership with other enterprises to build a better connection between academics and industries, and foster talent in related fields.

Ren also expressed admiration for Ho's leadership, which has played a pivotal role in fostering social development and keeping the pandemic in check.

Other key authorities also attended the meeting, including Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Ao Ieong U, and Chief-of-Office of the Chief Executive's Office-designate Hoi Lai Fong. Some academics from the Zhejiang University were also present at the meeting.

Non-resident worker found dead at workplace

RENATO MARQUES

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) informed that on the morning of Monday, July 12, they received notifications from both the Emergency Department of the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center and the Fire Services Bureau (CB) that a man was found in a storage room of a hotel in Cotai.

According to the report, the first responders, who attempted to resuscitate the 33-year-old non-resident worker from the Philippines, suspected the man's cause of death was suicide.

Following the confirmation of death, the PJ was asked to send inspectors to the scene to investigate



the case.

After the investigation, the PJ found that the deceased, who was an employee of the hotel, had started work at 7:30 a.m., shortly after which time he dis-

appeared.

Noticing his absence, co-workers started looking for him and realized that the storage room he often went to was locked.

After the department

manager opened the door and found him unconscious, they called the emergency number for help.

After a preliminary inspection, PJ inspectors did not find any suspicious injuries or signs of a struggle that would generally indicate a crime had been committed. Additionally, the police reported that a suicide note was found at the scene and logged this as evidence.

The case has been temporarily classified as a dead body discovery, and is awaiting the cause of death to be determined by forensic examination.

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) encourages residents to be conscious of their psychological and emotional state as well as those of their relatives and friends. If in need, residents can call Caritas' Life Hope hotline (28525222) or the IAS counselling hotline (28261126).

MAINLAND TRAVEL AGENCIES SUSPENDED FOR RUNNING CROSS-BOUNDARY TOURS

TWO Guangdong cities have ordered the suspension of two travel agencies that caused a Macau resident to come into contact with an asymptomatic Covid-19 patient from Guangzhou.

Between March and May this year, Beijing ordered the suspension of cross-boundary group tours across the country, meaning that mainland travel agencies could not operate tours catering to Macau residents.

However, it was discovered that the Zhuhai Airlines International Travel Agency and the Qingyuan City Happy Holiday Travel Agency (Xuri Branch) had violated the order by taking 28 residents from Macau for group tours.

One of the Macau residents, when touring an attraction in

Qingyuan City in the northern part of Guangdong, shared travel routes with an asymptomatic patient from Guangzhou.

This has necessitated the Macau resident's mandatory quarantine back in Macau. The other members of the group were also required to self-monitor for symptoms.

The mainland authorities also discovered that the two agencies took both mainland and Macau residents in the same tour coach, "[presenting] risks to the disease control and prevention work and causing a public health and tourism [incident]," the two governments noted in a statement.

In response to the violations, the authorities have ordered the two travel agencies to close for two months. **AL**

CIGARETTE SALES TO UNDERAGE INDIVIDUALS SUBJECT TO MOP20,000 FINE

THE Health Bureau (SSM) stressed that selling cigarettes or related products to individuals under the age of 18 is a punishable offence with a maximum fine of MOP20,000.

The announcement comes in response to a recent case referred to the SSM by the Public Security Police Force when last month, two police officers witnessed a minor purchasing a pack of cigarettes in an Areia Preta shop.

It was later discovered that the buyer was only 13 years old. The shopkeeper admitted that the buyer's ID was not checked. The police also noted that no warning against the sale of tobacco products to minors was displayed in the shop.

As such, the shopkeeper has violated the law governing the sale of

tobacco products to underage consumers and requirements to post the relevant warnings.

The SSM reminds members of the public who sell cigarettes and related products that the sale of such products to underage consumers is illegal. In the event of any uncertainty, sellers should request legal identification documents from buyers. If customers cannot produce identification, the sellers should consider them underage and refuse sale.

The authority also encourages the general public to report any violations or suspected violations they observe. Sellers have a moral obligation to refrain from selling such products to underage individuals, the SSM stressed. **AL**

TEMPORARY HOUSING UNITS TO FOLLOW PRIVATE SECTOR CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

RENATO MARQUES

THE 2,803 temporary housing units to be built at Lot P of Areia Preta will follow design and construction standards from the private sector market, Macau Urban Renewal Limited (MUR) Senior Project Manager, Jacky Ng told the Times.

"The [temporary housing] apartments' design is functionality-based because we believe that people may be using them for two or three years when their houses are undergoing renovation, and that is why our design and construction are all based on standards in the private sector," Ng said in an interview on the sidelines of a media tour of the mockup apartments' exhibition. The exhibition opened to the public yesterday.

According to the same official, the rental price for the units will be formulated according to the urban renewal law and will take the rental prices of similar housing units in the area into account.

"At the moment, we are collecting opinions on how to formulate the rental prices but we will take into account factors such as the similarity in quality and area, as established by the government

RENATO MARQUES



guidelines," he said. He added, "Before we have completed the whole project, we will conduct an in-depth consideration of the rental price."

According to MUR, the whole project is expected to be completed by the end of 2024, comprising eight housing buildings that are 37 to 50-stories high.

According to the on-site ex-

planation of the project, it will also feature several recreational and leisure facilities, including outdoor recreational and sports areas, children's playgrounds, promenades, and a green area that accounts for over 50% of the buildings' podium areas.

Additionally, around 1,100 parking spaces for cars and about 590 spaces for motorcycles will

be created. Parking spaces for the apartment units will be available for rent only and cannot be purchased.

Ng also clarified that the apartment units to be provided through temporary housing and home swap housing under the Urban Renewal Scheme to property owners affected by urban renewal will be equipped with

basic appliances, including kitchen appliances such as a fridge, a cooking stove and water heater. Ng also said that the buildings will be powered with electricity and also be equipped with a centralized gas system.

Although the exhibition hall only features two types of apartment units (1-bedroom and 2-bedroom apartments), Ng clarified that the completed development will also include studio apartments and 3-bedroom apartments.

"In this display, we have only 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom apartments, but we are going to have four types of units including studios and 3-bedroom apartments. We chose to display these [1- and 2-bedroom apartments] because they account for about 80% of our 2,803 units," Ng explained.

Ng added that before letting out the apartments to tenants, the MUR "will make clear guidelines about what tenants can and cannot [change] in the unit."

The exhibition hall is located on the third floor of Mong-Há Public Housing – Mong Tak Building, located at the Rua de Francisco de Xavier Pereira, and will be open for visitors from Tuesday to Sunday between 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

ECONOMIC HOUSING

SENIORS' RESIDENCE MOCKUP PRESENTED, 1,815 UNITS WILL BE AVAILABLE

RENATO MARQUES

THE Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has revealed the final design of the public housing specifically designated for senior residents to the public. To be built at the Avenida do Nordeste, the housing will be constructed at one of the land plots of the former development known as Pearl Horizon.

The building will include 37 floors in total, 33 of which will be dedicated to 1,815 studio apartment units solely for senior residents, including those who currently live with mobility challenges and at present, reside in old buildings without elevators and appropriate accommodations for their needs.

The 1,815 units are all similar in size and design. These units only have the option of one large bed or two twin beds in the apartment.

According to the IAS, the apartments are intended to provide a barrier-free living space for senior residents and will include facilities such as electric powered cur-

RENATO MARQUES



tains, and an electric clothesline that can be raised and lowered with the touch of a button. The apartments will be equipped with other special amenities and safety features such as fall detectors and emergency assistance buttons.

The building comes with a garden area, a canteen, a communal area on the third floor, a daily care center on the second floor, and a health services center on the first floor.

According to the IAS walk-through of the venue, extra attention will be paid to the construction materials so that residents do not slip or hurt themselves.

Located on the third floor of Mong-Há Public Housing – Mong Tak Building at the Rua de Francisco de Xavier Pereira, the exhibition hall will be open to visits for those interested in inspecting the space and facilities from Tuesday to Sunday.

THREE NON-RESIDENTS ARRESTED FOR DRUG-RELATED CRIMES

STAFF REPORTER

THREE non-residents from the Philippines were arrested on Monday night (July 12) on allegations of drug use and trafficking, according to the Judiciary Police (PJ). Two were non-resident workers and one was unemployed.

Based on intelligence gathered from previous cases, the police learned of drug consumption at the Praça Ponte Horta area. They were deployed to the location to apprehend the man involved.

The man works as a hotel employee and was found with 0.21g of methamphetamine. The suspect admitted to drug use and said that he bought the drugs from another person for MOP2,000.

"Subsequently, the police intercepted the suspected drug seller in the San Kio area. He was found with a package of 4.86g of methamphetamine and his residence was found to contain multiple containers for drug use, miniature electronic

scales, and plastic bags for packaging. The woman involved in the case, who worked as a domestic helper, was also at the residence," the PJ said.

The male suspect admitted to selling the drugs for MOP2,000 per package.

Another suspect, who is a woman, refused to cooperate with the police. The police said they did not rule out her cooperation with the man involved in the drug sale.

The PJ said that they discovered five packets of methamphetamine weighing 5.07g collectively and valued at MOP15,000 during the operation.

The police are investigating the source of the drugs and whether the suspects were involved in other drug-related cases.

According to the PJ, they will be charged with drug use, and the second and third suspects will also be charged with drug trafficking and improper possession. They will be transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office for follow-up.

IAM urged to build long-overdue pumping station

HONEY TSANG

THE Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) will formulate a plan to construct a new rainwater pumping station at Baía Norte do Fai Chi Kei to alleviate flooding in the city.

According to a statement by the IAM, the construction is titled EP9. The infrastructure will be built with a box culvert, which will be used to divert rainwater to Baía Norte do Fai Chi Kei for discharge into the ocean.

The pumping station will help discharge excess rainwater into the ocean to mitigate chronic flooding issues in low-lying areas like Avenida de Horta e Costa, Fai Chi Kei and San Kio, IAM stated.

The IAM is now awaiting feedback on the technology for the construction from the relevant department.

According to an official



document, the IAM announced plans to erect a rainwater pumping station at Fai Chi Kei as early as 2014. However, the construction project has not been delivered so far.

The long-overdue project prompted lawmaker Lei Chan U to file a written interpellation questioning the authorities about the construction progress and timeline.

Lei's complaints came after a heavy rainstorm hit the city around midnight on June 1, leading most low-lying areas to become severely flooded and meaning many locals were wading in

the flood water on the streets in the early morning.

Following the storm, the Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng, said the unpredictable weather conditions were to blame for the flooding.

In the Macau Peninsula, around 90% of rainwater is discharged into the ocean through a system of about 100 drains. The remaining 10% is discharged via the three pumping stations into the sea, Lei added.

However, the new pumping station at Fai Chi Kei, had it been erected, would have helped to lessen the impact of the severe flooding

on June 1.

The city's chronic flooding was predominantly caused by the insufficient sewer discharge capacity in some old districts, such as Inner Harbor.

Lee asked the authorities whether there are other approaches to rectify the city's deficient drainage system in the pipeline.

In response to this, IAM said it has several plans to expand and decongest existing sewers.

The IAM also stressed that it has established a remote monitoring and control system for real-time observation of rainwater pumping stations and outlets. Meanwhile, IAM has launched a CCTV monitoring system to scrutinize the sewer conditions.

The IAM pledges to conduct the clearing works on sewers in phases, and will direct its focus on resolving the clogged sewers.

TOURIST PRICE INDEX IN Q2 DOWN 3.91% YEAR-ON-YEAR

HONEY TSANG

THE tourist price index (TPI) during the second quarter (Q2) of 2021 declined by 3.91% year-on-year to 116.93, predominantly dragged down by lower hotel room rates and falling airfares, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) said.

The DSEC revealed the latest statistics for the tourism index yesterday. The index represents the price change of goods and services purchased by visitors in Macau.

The 3.91% drop in the second quarter this year was partly counterbalanced by increasing fees in restaurants and higher prices of clothing.

In terms of segments, the price index of the accommodation sector displayed a massive plunge of 30.23%, whilst that for the transport and communications sector dropped by 9.96% in Q2, year-on-year.

On the other hand, the price index of clothing and footwear increased by 5.61%, and restaurant services was up 4.44% from the same period last year.

Nonetheless, the TPI for Q2 represented an increase of 0.99% when compared to the preceding quarter.

When stacked against the first quarter of this year, researchers found that the price index of the clothing and footwear segment grew by 8.25%, due to the new arrival of summer clothing. Meanwhile, the food and alcoholic beverages and tobacco segment increased by 5.64%, owing to more expensive prices of local food products.

On average, the TPI for the last four quarters plunged by 11.67% from the previous period.

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ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

HONG KONG

HONG Kong's leader said yesterday that elected district councilors will still need to take an oath pledging allegiance to Hong Kong despite the resignation of dozens of councilors who are refusing to do so.

Some 170 district councilors, most of them supporters of the semiautonomous Chinese territory's beleaguered pro-democracy movement have resigned in the past week rather than take the oath following media reports that they may have to repay their wages if they are later disqualified from office.

The requirement that the city's more than 400 district councilors take the oath was introduced after a bill was passed in May. Previously, only lawmakers and government officials were required to take the oath and pledge allegiance to Hong Kong and the government.

A national security law imposed by Beijing last year has led to the arrest of many of the city's prominent pro-democracy figures, including Joshua Wong and media tycoon Jimmy Lai. A majority of such activists are currently behind bars or have fled abroad.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said at a regular news

DISTRICT COUNCILORS MUST TAKE OATH DESPITE EXODUS

conference yesterday that she is sure that given the security law, each district councilor will gauge their past behavior to check if they have "crossed a line."

"Individual incumbent district councilors of their own accord took some actions after seeing that there are certain legal requirements, that is, legal liabilities will have to be borne if they have violated certain rules and regulations," Lam said. "They decided to resign. This is out of our control."

Lam said that despite the exodus of district councilors, authorities will press on with the oath-taking because they "have to implement the law."

Hong Kong's district councilors largely take care of municipal matters such as organizing community building activities and ensuring that public facilities are in order. Their election has taken on greater importance, however, since Hong Kong was rocked by pro-democracy protests for much of 2019. MDT/AP



CARRIE LAM CALLS ON PUBLIC TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE STRENGTHEN SENSE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

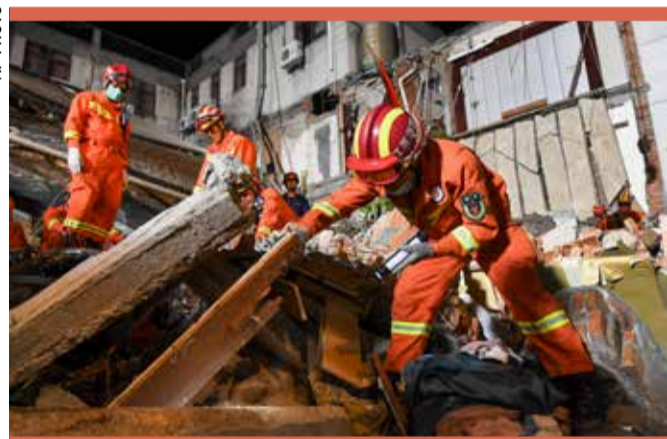
CARRIE Lam, chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Monday called on the public to give young people proper guidance, help them develop positive values, strengthen their sense of national identity so that they can become pillars of the country and Hong Kong.

Lam made the remarks at the prize-giving ceremony of 2021 Hong Kong Outstanding Teens Election organized by Hong Kong Playground Association, a local non-governmental organization.

She said that the HKSAR government has been striving to create a safe and favorable environment for the development of young people, allowing them to focus on their studies and grow up healthily.

Furthermore, the HKSAR government will continue to support non-governmental organizations to hold activities beneficial to the young people's body and mind, and to nurture them into future masters of the society with a sense of national identity, an affection for Hong Kong as well as an international perspective, she added. MDT/XINHUA

At least eight dead in hotel collapse in city in eastern China



RESCUE workers were digging through the remains of a collapsed hotel in eastern China looking for any survivors of a disaster that has killed at least eight people and left nine missing, authorities said yesterday.

The workers in the city of Suzhou searched through the night, using rescue dogs, cranes, ladders and metal cutters, after the building

collapsed Monday afternoon, the city government said in social media posts.

Photos showed orange-suited rescuers with helmets working through the ruins of the building, which had been reduced to girders and rubble. The cause of the collapse is under investigation.

At least 23 people were trapped when then hotel

collapsed. Six people were rescued and eight people were confirmed dead, leaving nine people unaccounted for.

Authorities said 18 of those trapped were identified through check-in records, apparently hotel guests. The identities of the other five was unclear.

The 54-room Siji Kaiyuan Hotel opened in 2018, according to Ctrip,

a Chinese online booking app.

More than 600 people including earthquake rescue teams and 120 vehicles were mobilized for the operation, the city government said.

Suzhou, a city in Jiangsu province near Shanghai, is a popular tourist destination known for its historic canals and traditional Chinese gardens. MDT/AP

Safety precautionary measures for Tropical Cyclones

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AP PHOTO



Military says it chased US warship out of disputed sea

CHINA'S military said it chased a U.S. warship out of a disputed area of the South China Sea on Monday after Washington warned an attack on the Philippines might activate a mutual defense treaty.

Beijing affirmed its claims to portions of the sea that also are claimed by Southeast Asia governments. It rejected the Biden administration's declaration of support Sunday for an international tribunal ruling in favor of the Philippines that threw out most of them.

China is increasingly assertive about pressing its territorial claims, which are fueling tension with neighbors including Japan, India, Vietnam and the Philippines.

The People's Liberation Army said it sent ships and planes after the U.S.S. Benfold entered waters claimed by Beijing around the Paracel Islands.

Chinese forces "warned them and drove them away," the military said on its social media account.

The islands are "China's inherent territory," the PLA said. "The ac-

tions of the U.S. military have seriously violated China's sovereignty and security."

The U.S. Navy, in a statement by the 7th Fleet Public Affairs office, rejected the Chinese statement as false but gave no details of a possible encounter with PLA forces.

" China firmly deplores and rejects the wrongdoings of the United States.

ZHAO LIJIAN
FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON

The Benfold carried out the operation "in accordance with international law and then continued on to conduct normal operations in international waters," the statement said.

The Chinese statement was "the latest in a long string of PRC actions to misrepresent lawful U.S. maritime operations and assert its excessive and illegitimate maritime claims," the Navy statement said.

On Sunday, the Biden administration affirmed its support for the 2016 tribunal ruling that re-

jected China's claims outside its internationally recognize territorial waters.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken accused Beijing of intimidating its Southeast Asian neighbors and threatening navigation through an important global waterway.

Blinken warned that an attack on Philippine vessels or aircraft "would invoke U.S. mutual defense commitments." A 1951 treaty obligates Washington and Manila to come to each other's aid in case of an attack.

The panel's ruling was "a political farce," said a Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian. He said China's territorial claims have "sufficient historical and legal basis."

"China firmly deplores and rejects the wrongdoings of the United States," Zhao said at

a regular news briefing.

A U.S.-based expert said Monday that swarms of Chinese vessels anchored in a disputed area of the South China Sea have dumped human waste and wastewater for years, causing algae blooms that have damaged coral reefs and threatened fish in an unfolding catastrophe.

Satellite images over the last five years show how human waste, sewage and wastewater have accumulated and caused algae in the atoll, internationally known as Union Banks, said Liz Derr, who heads Simularity Inc., a software company creating artificial intelligence technologies for satellite imagery analysis.

At least 236 ships were spotted in the atoll on June 17 alone, she said at a Philippine online news forum on China's actions in the South China Sea.

Chinese officials did not immediately react to Derr's assessment of the environmental damage, but have said in the past that they have taken steps to protect the fisheries stock and the environment in the South China Sea. **MDT/AP**

ADVERTORIAL

GREAT TIMES

Awakening Palate at MGM

LION is always known as a symbol of courage and passion and is a synonymous to MGM. This summer, plan your gastronomic journey at MGM MACAU and MGM COTAI for rounds of lion-themed gourmet offerings. Relish quintessence Lingnan heritage through the flavors of the twin provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi, and Hainan.

THE FLAVORS OF LINGNAN

Shunde cuisine is well known by the characteristics of light and delicate in flavor, which accentuates the freshness of the ingredients, mainly seafood. **Chún** at MGM COTAI features Stir-fried dace fish noodle with milk which showcases the creative presentation and merge of flavors.

Imperial Court at MGM MACAU exemplifies Cantonese dining traditions with a modern twist and has specially recreated the almost-lost traditional Cantonese dish - Crispy fried duck foie gras rolls with caul fat and shrimp mousse, to tantalize your taste buds. This dish is particularly famous for its craftsmanship, which requires a lot of preparation work and techniques.



Be amazed by the specially made Steamed Lion Bun with Red Bean and 10 Years Tangerine Peel at **Chún** and **Imperial Court**. Other scrumptious dim sum such as Lava Custard Bun is available at **Hao Guo** and **Square Eight**. Don't miss out on these Instagram-able treats to wow the news feed!



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COVID-19

Malaysia shuts vaccination center after 204 staff infected

EILEEN NG, KUALA LUMPUR

MALAYSIA shut down a mass vaccination center in its worst-hit state yesterday after more than 200 medical staff and volunteers tested positive for the coronavirus.

The closure was the first of a vaccination center and came as the country's new confirmed infections breached five figures yesterday, hitting a record 11,079.

Science Minister Khairy Jamaluddin stressed that swift government action had contained the cluster at the Ideal Convention Center in central Selangor state.

Khairy, who is in charge of the national immunization program, said he ordered the testing of all 453 workers at the center after two volunteers were confirmed to have the virus. Khairy said the 204 whose results were positive had low viral loads, meaning the amount of virus in their bodies was small.

This could be because 88% or 400 of the workers have already been vaccina-



ted, he said.

The center was shut for deep sanitization and all its workers are being isolated. Khairy said it will reopen Wednesday with a new team of medical workers.

He urged people who were vaccinated at the center since Friday to isolate themselves for 10 days and be tested if they develop symptoms. He declined to say how many people had visited the center since Friday. It has the capacity to deliver up to 6,000 shots a day.

"This is the first time we had to shut down a (vaccination center) because of

positive cases but we acted fast. By shutting it down today and by taking corrective measures [...] we hope the disruption is only one day and that this will not hamper the vaccination process," Khairy said.

He said it would be safe to visit the center starting Wednesday for vaccinations.

Khairy said health measures at all other vaccination centers will be tightened, but didn't order other workers to be tested.

Selangor, the country's richest state bordering Kuala Lumpur, is the worst hit by the pandemic. It ac-

counted for nearly half of yesterday's new cases, partly because of increased virus screening amid a tight lockdown.

The government has struggled to contain the pandemic, which has worsened despite a lockdown since June 1. Total confirmed cases have soared by 50% since June 1 to 855,949, while deaths have more than doubled to over 6,200.

Hospitals especially in Selangor have been overwhelmed, with some patients reportedly being treated on the floor due to a lack of beds, and corpses piling up in mortuaries.

Vaccinations have picked up, with 11% of the population now fully inoculated. At least a quarter of the country's 32 million people have received at least one dose of vaccine.

The daily vaccination rate surpassed 420,000 doses on Monday, the national Bernama news agency quoted Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin as saying,

He expressed confidence that the fast pace of vaccination would help stem the outbreak. **MDT/AP**

But the country's vaccine rollout has been slow, which experts say has left the population particularly vulnerable to the delta variant. Fewer than 12% of the population older than 16 had been fully vaccinated by yesterday.

Australian-manufactured AstraZeneca had been recommended for all adults in Australia until a 48-year-old died of rare blood clots blamed on the vaccine in April. The clots are more common in younger people.

AstraZeneca was then recommended for adults over 50 years until a 52-year-old died of blood clots blamed on the vaccine in May.

The vaccine is now recommended for adults over 60. The only alternative registered in Australia is imported Pfizer which is in short supply. Most Australians under 40-years-old can't get Pfizer. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1991: UK FORCES WITHDRAW FROM KURDISH HAVEN



British troops protecting the Kurdish population in Iraq have begun to pull out of the region.

They had been part of a western relief effort - Operation Haven - to re-settle 450,000 Kurdish refugees who fled into the Turkish mountains when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein crushed their rebellion in March.

At its height the allied presence in northern Iraq - which began in May - numbered 20,000 men from 13 nations.

The decision for the remaining 3,300 soldiers to leave was announced in Washington two days ago.

Some Kurds have spoken of their fear of reprisals from Saddam Hussein as the allies withdraw and there have been peaceful demonstrations around the former headquarters.

All foreign troops - including American, French and Dutch - are on schedule to meet the withdrawal deadline of sunset tomorrow.

Local guerrilla leader Tawfiq Abu said: "It would be better for us if they stayed, so Europe would remember us. But they helped us at the right time. If they hadn't come we would all be dead."

A force of around 3,000 American, British and French - and possibly Italian and Turkish - troops will form a Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) in southern Turkey to preserve the Kurdish security zone 50 miles into north-western Iraq.

The allied command hopes this will provide enough support for the Kurdish leadership to reach agreement with Baghdad.

The Pentagon has warned Saddam Hussein no Iraqi aircraft are to fly over the Kurdish settlements north of the 36th parallel air exclusion zone and US planes will continue to fly over the region.

Most British soldiers will return to the UK but 400 will join the RRF in Operation Poised Hammer based at Silopi, Batman along the Turkish border and at In-cirlik in south-eastern Turkey's Adana Province.

Courtesy BBC News

COVID-19

Australia vows financial aid as Sydney lockdown continues

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

AUSTRALIAN government officials yesterday announced added financial support for businesses and households as Sydney appeared increasingly likely to enter a fourth week of lockdown due to coronavirus clusters.

New South Wales state Premier Gladys Berejiklian said she would announce on Wednesday whether Sydney's 5 million residents would remain locked down beyond the three-week mark on Friday.

She had said the 24-hour record of 122 new cases re-

corded on Sunday made lifting the lockdown on Friday "almost impossible."

No one knew how long the lockdown would last, Berejiklian said.

"What we do know is that we have the financial support there so that individuals and families and businesses don't have to stress and they know that for the duration of the lockdown, the support will be there," she told reporters.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the presence in Sydney of the delta variant, which is thought to be more contagious, had escalated the pandemic danger.

"The New South Wales

outbreak has proved to be more severe, more dangerous, and it's in the national interest that we now put in place an upgraded set of arrangements for cooperation with the states and territories," Morrison said of the disaster funding deal.

The daily infection tally in New South Wales dropped to 89 yesterday, but authorities remain concerned that 21 of those infected with the delta variant had been in the community while contagious.

Australia has been relatively successful in containing COVID-19 clusters and there have only been 912 deaths since the pandemic began.

IN CONTEXT

Between 1975 and 1990 4,200 Kurdish villages in Iraq were demolished and countless Kurdish people were killed in mass executions by the regime. Saddam Hussein took over as Iraqi leader in 1979.

In October 1991 Kurdistan began a fragile self-rule for its population of 3.5m in three provinces of northern Iraq, with a no-fly zone assured by the Western allies.

Saddam Hussein responded in November with crippling sanctions against the Kurdish areas.

The Kurds held democratic elections in May 1992 and the two leading parties - the PUK, under Jalal Talabani and the DPK under Masoud Barzani - formed a coalition government in July of that year.

But fierce fighting between the two main factions in the mid-1990s led to the effective partition of the Kurdish region.

In May 2006 the Kurdish parliament approved a single administration, uniting the two rival parties.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Today's cosmic landscape is something like being lost in a heavy fog. The sun and moon both align with spaced-out Neptune, creating a hazy atmosphere that honors imagination over realism.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Prioritize pleasure over productive action, as you're in need of a pick-me-up rather than a weigh-me-down! Luna's stimulating link with Mercury makes conversation and charisma run especially smooth.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Your career has been in an evolving transitory stage. Reality-bending Neptune has been eroding that which needs letting go, allowing a new focus to slowly emerge in its place.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

It's easier to float along than force yourself to swim upstream today, Cancer. The sun and moon both reach out to inspirational Neptune today, creating a deliciously day-dreamy atmosphere.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Slow your pace with the arrival of Wednesday's skies, Leo. Your ruling planet, the life-giving sun, locks into a sweet and supportive alignment with mystical Neptune.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

The sun and moon hook up with reality-dissolving Neptune today, creating an "inspired but tired" atmosphere. It's an ideal day to tune into your body, get into a meditative practice, and put your needs first.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You make your own best company today, Libra. Wednesday's skies are deeply dreamy and unrealistic, as the sun and moon simultaneously sync up with reality-blurring Neptune.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Let yourself drift into a world of imagination and tap into the richly creative energy being offered up. Save any practical affairs that require a realistic outlook for a less hazy day.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Save any big decisions that require clarity of mind for another time, as this dreamy energy encourages inspiration and idealism over rational choices. This aspect allows for deep healing on the intimacy front.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

This intense pairing is likely to bring unexpressed feelings or issues to the surface in partnerships. Elsewhere, the first quarter moon hints at changes needing to be made in your career approach.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Today's skies are ripe with creative energy, Aquarius. The sun and moon lock into a simultaneous alignment with illusory Neptune today, bringing an inspirational energy to your workflow.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

It's easy to get swept up into a dreamworld today, Pisces. The sun and moon find themselves intertwined with reality-bending Neptune, making for an inspired but low-energy day.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

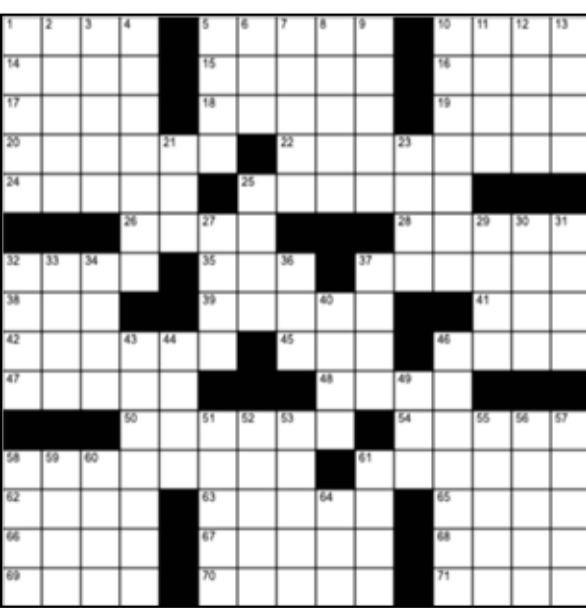
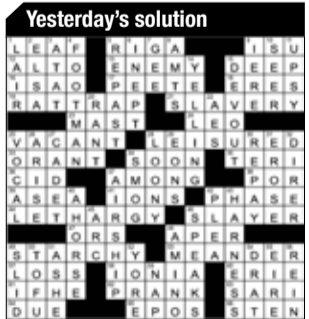
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	33	cloudy
Harbin	25	29	thunderstorms
Tianjin	28	37	fine
Urumqi	25	33	showers
Xi'an	27	37	cloudy
Lhasa	22	27	rain
Chengdu	27	36	cloudy
Chongqing	26	35	thunderstorms
Kunming	28	36	cloudy
Nanjing	22	30	cloudy
Shanghai	26	34	thunderstorms
Wuhan	27	37	fine
Hangzhou	25	31	thunderstorms
Taipei	27	34	fine
Guangzhou	21	36	cloudy
Hong Kong	26	35	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	22	34	overcast
Frankfurt	16	22	rainy
Paris	16	19	rainy
London	15	23	overcast
New York	21	26	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Leaf tool; 5- Prospect; 10- ___ Crunch; 14- Ancient Greek coin; 15- Hitching post?; 16- Double curve; 17- Delhi wrap; 18- Incline; 19- Manitoba Indigenous People; 20- Criticize severely; 22- Strong inclination; 24- Ancient region of Asia Minor; 25- Attack; 26- Switchblade; 28- Mock, annoy; 32- H.S. exam; 35- McCartney title; 37- Navy builder; 38- Amazement; 39- Each partner; 41- ___ the land of the free...; 42- Ringlike formation; 45- Metal container; 46- ___ sapiens; 47- Quick and nimble; 48- Final Four org.; 50- Invertebrate creature; 54- Some beans; 58- Offhand; 61- King of pop; 62- Clasp for a door; 63- Hiding place; 65- Masked critter; 66- Comics canine; 67- Japanese three-line verse; 68- Second hand, took advantage of; 69- Fleshy fruit; 70- President Garfield's middle name; 71- Dick Tracy's love;

DOWN: 1- Martin's partner; 2- Bahamian island; 3- Sacred text of Islam; 4- Snob; 5- Still life subject; 6- Laid up; 7- Halts; 8- Ribbons; 9- Concert venue; 10- Spiral-shaped passage of the inner ear; 11- Pearl Mosque city; 12- Hammer head; 13- Nairival; 21- So there!; 23- Quote; 25- Tel ___; 27- Got it; 29- Peek follower; 30- Appear; 31- Architect Saarinen; 32- Tailless rodent; 33- Gulp from a flask; 34- Ethereal; Prefix; 36- VCR button; 37- Match up; 40- Tirade; 43- Sailing vessel; 44- Grant temporary use of; 46- Butch, e.g.; 49- According to; 51- Figure skater Cohen; 52- Cornerstone abbr.; 53- Committee head; 55- Bullwinkle, e.g.; 56- Healing plants; 57- Transmits; 58- Hit the mall; 59- Put aboard; 60- Bhutan's continent; 61- Buddy; 64- Jamaican popular music;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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Ref: 2106 6004 1,979 ft² 3 2 2

FOR RENT

Taipa Village HKD 10,900/mth
740 ft² 1 1 1
Ref: 1910 1006

Rain Dance Property
"We dance until it's SOLD!"

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

AD

AP PHOTO



MUSK ON TRIAL: DEFENDS SOLARCITY, CALLS LAWYER 'BAD HUMAN'

PAUL WISEMAN & TOM KRISHER, WILMINGTON

FOUNDER Elon Musk took to a witness stand yesterday [Macau time] to defend his company's 2016 acquisition of a troubled company called SolarCity against a lawsuit that claims he's to blame for a deal that was rife with conflicts of interest and never delivered the profits he'd promised.

And to the surprise of no one, the famously colorful billionaire did so in the most personally combative terms.

"I think you are a bad human being," Musk told Randall Baron, a lawyer for shareholders who was pressing Musk to acknowledge his mistakes in helping engineer the acquisition of SolarCity, a manufacturer of solar panels.

"I have great respect for the court," Musk later added, "but not for you, sir."

The long-running shareholder lawsuit asserts that Musk, who was SolarCity's largest stakeholder and its chairman, and other Tesla directors breached their fiduciary duties in bowing to Musk's wishes and agreeing to buy the company. In what the plaintiffs call a clear conflict of interest, SolarCity had been founded by Musk and two of his cousins, Lyndon and Peter Rive.

In the Delaware Court of

Chancery, Baron sought to establish that Musk has sought to run Tesla without interference and therefore bears responsibility for any failures. The lawyer showed a video clip in which Musk said he liked running his own companies because he doesn't want anyone to make him do what he doesn't want to do.

As an example of what he characterized as Musk's imperious management style, Baron mentioned that the CEO once declared himself "Technoking of Tesla" and gave his chief financial officer the title "master of coin" — a reference to HBO's "Game of Thrones" — in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The hostility between the billionaire CEO and the plaintiffs' lawyer dates to at least 2019 and a deposition in which Musk insulted Baron and questioned his professionalism. Baron played clips from that deposition to try to portray Musk's stance toward what he might regard as criticism.

Pushing back, Musk insisted that "I don't want to be the boss of anything."

"I prefer to spend my time on design and engineering," he said.

Musk, who is well-known for rejecting skepticism of himself or his company, insisted that he welcomes criticism:

"If I'm mistaken," he said on the witness stand, "I view critical feedback as a gift."

Musk said his off-beat titles and other quips simply reflect his sense of humor.

"I think I'm funny," he offered.

What's more, he said, the resulting media attention often plays to Tesla's benefit.

"If we're entertaining, people will write stories about us," and the company can save on advertising."

Regarding Tesla's all-stock acquisition of SolarCity, Musk asserted that he had nothing to gain financially from it because he owned shares of both companies.

Musk also argued that SolarCity's failure to meet aggressive sales forecasts and its loss of market share were only temporary setbacks. He said they reflected his decision to divert Tesla resources toward salvaging production of the Tesla Model 3 electric car — and then running "headlong into a pandemic."

The effort to salvage Tesla 3 was "all-hands-on-deck" operation — so desperate that even the company's lawyers were enlisted in the effort, Musk said, drawing laughter in the court.

Musk's defense noted that SolarCity had been in Tesla's plans as early as his 2006 master plan for the electric carmaker. In

saying so, he asserted that the joining of the companies 10 years later wasn't an emergency bailout as the plaintiffs have alleged.

But Baron pointed out that the 2006 document mentioned only a potential marketing arrangement, not a full-fledged merger or acquisition, between Tesla and SolarCity.

Baron repeatedly pressed Musk about evidence that SolarCity had been in trouble — short of cash, unable to obtain financing, in danger of violating the terms of an existing loan agreement — before the Tesla buyout.

Musk conceded nothing. He argued that SolarCity could have raised money, if it wanted to, by issuing shares of stock. And he noted that fast-growing young companies, including Amazon and Tesla itself, often bleed cash in their early years before achieving success later.

Why, Baron asked, did another Musk company, Space X, waive its own investment guidelines to buy risky SolarCity bonds? Musk replied that those bonds offered a better payout than did bank accounts that paid little more than zero.

"I had faith," Musk said, "in the future of SolarCity."

Baron tried to pin down whether Musk had recused himself from Tesla-SolarCity negotiations to avoid a conflict of interest.

"I had no material role," Musk said.

"What's is a 'material role?'" Baron fired back. "That sounds like a wiggle word to me."

"You're the expert in wiggle words," Musk countered.

The trial that began yesterday marks the culmination of seven shareholder lawsuits, consolidated into one, that alleged that Tesla directors breached their fiduciary duties in bowing to Musk's wishes and agreeing to buy SolarCity. Last August, a judge approved a \$60 million settlement that resolved claims made against all the directors on Tesla's board except Musk without any admission of fault.

That left Musk, who refused to settle, as the sole remaining defendant. The trial that began yesterday had been scheduled for March of last year but was postponed because of the viral pandemic.

Daniel Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, has called the acquisition a "clear black eye" for Musk and Tesla, in large part because SolarCity has failed to turn a profit.

"It basically was putting good money after bad," Ives said. "For all the successes and all of the unimaginable heights Musk has achieved, this is one of the lowlights."

Even if the trial ends with Musk having to pay personally for the whole SolarCity deal, \$2.5 billion won't much hurt the world's third-wealthiest person. Forbes magazine has estimated that Musk is worth roughly \$163 billion. **MDT/AP**



EURO 2020 IN REVIEW

The best, worst and downright strange

A review of the best, worst and downright strange at this year's European Championship: AP PHOTO

BEST MOMENT

It was beautiful, touching and uplifting, so soon after a near-tragedy. Shaken fans inside the Parken Stadium were waiting for updates after Denmark midfielder Christian Eriksen collapsed on the field during the game against Finland when supporters from the Finnish contingent broke the eerie silence.

"Christian! Christian!" they chanted.

Danish fans gave their own booming response that reverberated around the venue: "Eriksen! Eriksen!"

Within seconds, supporters from both teams united in a huge roar when the stadium announcer said Eriksen was "stable and awake."

Soccer, as a whole, gave a collective sigh of relief after one of the scariest incidents in the tournament's history, one which brought the best out of Eriksen's teammates as they tended to him and shielded him but also out of the fans of both teams involved that day.

TOP PLAYER

Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma might have been named UEFA's player of the tournament, chiefly because he saved the decisive penalty in the shootout in the final. But it's hard to look beyond Simon Kjaer. After all, the Denmark captain might have saved a life.

It was Kjaer who secured Eriksen's neck, ensured his airways were cleared, and started chest compressions before medics arrived. Kjaer then organized the formation of a protective ring around Eriksen with his teammates and comforted Eriksen's partner when she came onto the field.

Kjaer took his role as a captain way beyond the field of play, addressing his team's shaken players after that distressing game against Finland and leading them on an emotionally charged journey out of the group and all the way to the a semifinal match against England.

OK, he scored an own-goal for England's equalizer, but that was unfortunate as much as anything else. It was no surprise that it was Kjaer consoling Denmark's distraught players after the extra-time loss at Wembley Stadium.



BEST GOAL

It resembled a golf shot more than a soccer shot.

As the ball rolled loose and just across the halfway line into Scotland's half, Czech Republic striker Patrick Schick took aim from 49.7 meters and managed to curl the ball high and from left to right, straight into the goal vacated by goalkeeper David Marshall.

It was outrageous — by more than 10 meters the longest goal in the tournament's history — and some time in the making, with Schick later saying he'd noticed Marshall coming off his line previously and was waiting for the moment.

Making the goal better was the back-pedaling Marshall's desperate dive in a forlorn bid to stop the ball from going in. He got nowhere near and ended up tangled in the netting.

It will go down as perhaps the tournament's greatest goal and helped give the Czechs a 2-0 win at Hampden Park in the group stage.

BIGGEST FLOP

When Kylian Mbappe saw his penalty pushed aside by Switzerland goalkeeper Yann Sommer to end the shootout and consign France to a round-of-16 exit, it capped an underwhelming — some might say disappointing — tournament for a player widely regarded as the new superstar of world soccer.

The striker didn't score in four games at Euro 2020, which he started uncomfortably after he went public on Day 3 of the tournament about a feud with teammate Olivier Giroud. He didn't get any better.

Mbappe, the breakout star of the 2018 World Cup, surely will be back but he won't fondly remember his first European Championship experience.

BIZARRE MOMENT

France coach Didier Deschamps was in his technical area, waiting for his team's group match against Germany to start, when he was forced to duck into his dugout and put his hands over his head as debris fell from above.

bris fell from above.

A protestor for environmentalist group Greenpeace had just glided into the stadium on a parachute, lost control and struck wires for an overhead camera attached to the roof. That made him veer away from the playing area toward the stadium's main grandstand and he barely cleared the heads of spectators.

Several spectators were treated for injuries in the hospital because of the falling debris.

BIGGEST SURPRISE

Reaching the semifinals didn't appear beyond the Danes at the start of Euro 2020. It certainly did, however, after losses in their first two group games and with their most important player, Eriksen, out of the tournament while he recovered from cardiac arrest.

How amazing it was, then, to see Denmark — thrust into the role of every neutral's favorite team — get out of its group with a 4-1 rout of Russia at an atmospheric Parken Stadium and then advance to the denouement of the tournament

in London with a 4-0 win over Wales and a 2-1 victory over the Czech Republic.

A repeat of Euro 1992, when Denmark was added to the tournament at late notice because of Yugoslavia's disqualification, suddenly couldn't be discounted. But a 2-1 loss to England in the semifinals, following the contentious awarding of a penalty in extra time, ended the fairytale.

Denmark's players headed home distraught but as heroes to many soccer fans.

NICE TOUCHES

The match ball being delivered to the center circle for kickoff aboard a small remote-control car proved a neat addition to proceedings, and certainly generated excitement on social media.

As did the stirring rendition of "Nessun Dorma" at the opening ceremony by Andrea Bocelli.

Italian tenors and tiny cars, it appears, should be regular fixtures at every soccer tournament. **MDT/AP**

OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

ORIGIN-TRACING SHOULD ADOPT GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE AND NOT BE POLITICIZED

The Lancet published a report on Monday authored by a group of experts from different countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, which offers some food for thought.

In the first place, the authors rightly state that clues from new, credible, peer-reviewed evidence in the scientific literature indicate that the novel coronavirus evolved in nature and the conjecture that the virus leaked from a lab is scientifically invalid.

They also rightly go on to say that such speculation is of no help to identifying the source of the outbreak as it does not facilitate access to information and objective assessment of the origin of the virus.

But despite the neutral and scientific stance they present at the beginning of the report, they then urge the World Health Organization and partners across the world to "expeditiously move to continue and further extend their initial investigation with experts in China and the Chinese Government", alleging that the WHO's report in March must be considered the beginning of the probe in China.

As such, their intention is no different in effect from that of the US administration, which is trying to focus the scientific research into the origins of the outbreak on China.

One cannot help but wonder if it is just coincidence that the report has been released at this time. Evidence has been popping up recently indicating that the virus was spreading in different places in the United States prior to a cluster of infections being identified in China, and some have inferred that the virus might have been developed and leaked from the US Army's bio-lab in Fort Detrick, Maryland. It is certainly convenient for Washington that the report says no new clues substantiate the theory that the virus escaped from a lab while once again pointing a finger at China.

Those responsible for the report — biologists, ecologists, epidemiologists, physicians, public health experts — also strongly support the call of the recent G7 Summit for "a timely, transparent, expert-led, and science-based WHO-convened phase 2 COVID-19 origins study", which was nothing but a disguise for the politically driven smear campaign targeting China that has been engineered by Washington.

That explains why Wang Wenbin, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, pointed out in an unequivocal way on Wednesday that the conclusion of the WHO's report published in March on its experts' field research in China is authoritative and unchangeable.

The research was conducted transparently, professionally and objectively, and he stressed that the tracing of the virus' origins should adopt a global view and be extended to other countries, as required by its scientific nature. The world should be wary of the politicization of the virus origin research lest it be carried out in a more deceptive way under the banner of science and neutrality.

IOC President Thomas Bach appeared in public yesterday for the first time since arriving in Tokyo last week and with the pandemic-postponed Olympics opening in just 10 days.

Bach spent his first three days in isolation at the International Olympic Committee's five-star hotel in central Tokyo, and his movements are limited — like almost everyone entering for the Olympics — for the first 14 days.

His first stop was the headquarters of the organizing committee to deliver a pep talk with the beleaguered games set to go ahead

without fans in almost all venues.

"You have managed to make Tokyo the best-ever prepared city for the Olympic Games," Bach said in his opening remarks to organizing committee president Seiko Hashimoto and CEO Toshiro Muto.

Bach tripped over his words, referring to the "Chinese people" rather than "Japanese people."

"Our common target is safe and secure games for everybody; for the athletes, for all the delegations, and most importantly also for the Chinese people - Japanese people," Bach said, catching his mistake quickly.



SOUTH AFRICA

RIOTING, LOOTING CONTINUES, DEATHS UP TO 32

MOGOMOTSI MAGOME, JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa's rioting continued yesterday with the death toll rising to 32 as police and the military struggle to quell the looting and violence in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces.

Many of the deaths occurred in chaotic stampedes as scores of people looted food, electric appliances, liquor, and clothing from retail centers, KwaZulu-Natal premier Sihle Zikalala told the press yesterday.

"Yesterday's events brought a lot of sadness. The number of people who have died in KwaZulu-Natal alone stands at 26. Many of them died from being trampled on during a stampede while people were looting items," said Zikalala.

In Gauteng, South Africa's most populous province which includes the largest city, Johannesburg, six people have

died, said officials.

The deployment of 2,500 soldiers to support the South African police has not yet stopped the rampant looting although arrests are being made at some areas in Johannesburg, including Vosloorus in eastern Johannesburg.

The violence started last week as protests against the imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma, who began serving a 15-month sentence for contempt of court

Looting continued yesterday in Johannesburg shopping malls in township areas including Jabulani Mall and Dobsonville Mall in Soweto. There were also reports of continued looting in centers in KwaZulu-Natal.

The violence started in KwaZulu-Natal last week as protests against the imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma,

who began serving a 15-month sentence for contempt of court. He was convicted of defying a court order to testify before a state-backed inquiry probing allegations of corruption during his term as president from 2009 to 2018.

The sporadic pro-Zuma violence spiraled into a spree of criminal theft in poor, township areas of the two provinces, according to witnesses. So far the lawlessness has not spread to South Africa's other nine provinces.

The Constitutional Court, the country's highest court, heard Zuma's application to have his sentence rescinded on Monday. Zuma's lawyer presented his arguments that the top court made errors when sentencing Zuma to prison. After 10 hours of testimony on Monday, the court judges said they would study the arguments and announce their decision at a later date. **MDT/AP**

Iran's government spokesman said yesterday that talks with the United States about a prisoner exchange are still ongoing, two months after Washington denied an Iranian report that deals had been struck. The official IRNA news agency quoted Cabinet spokesman Ali Rabiee as saying the swap negotiations are based on humanitarian interests.



Russia has strongly warned the United States against deploying its troops in the former Soviet Central Asian nations following their withdrawal from Afghanistan, a senior diplomat said in remarks published yesterday. Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said that Moscow conveyed the message to Washington during Russian President Vladimir Putin's summit with U.S. President Joe Biden in Geneva last month.



Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday hosted the authoritarian leader of Belarus, who has increasingly relied on Moscow's support amid increasing tensions with the West. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko thanked Putin for a "very serious support from Russia" and pledged that the country would duly repay its loans.



UK All remaining lockdown restrictions will be lifted in a week despite a sharp rise in coronavirus cases. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed. He said it was "the right moment to proceed" as schools close for summer vacation but urged people to "proceed with caution." Johnson said although risks of the pandemic remain, legal restrictions will be replaced by a recommendation that people wear masks in crowded places and on public transport.