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CHINA'S MANUFACTURING GROWTH IN JULY SLOWED TO ITS LOWEST LEVEL IN 15 MONTHS AS EXPORT DEMAND WEAKENED

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LIGHT RAIL UNDER HEAVY FIRE FROM LAWMAKERS IN PLENARY SESSION

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PROMINENT HONG KONG SINGER AND PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST ANTHONY WONG WAS ARRESTED BY THE ANTI-CORRUPTION WATCHDOG

P6



**China** More than 300 people died in recent flooding in central China, authorities said yesterday, three times the previously announced toll. The Henan provincial government said 302 people died and 50 remain missing. The vast majority of the victims were in Zhengzhou, the provincial capital, where 292 died and 47 are missing. Ten others died in three other cities, officials said at a news conference in Zhengzhou.



**Malaysia** Police blocked opposition lawmakers from marching yesterday to protest a two-week lockdown of Malaysia's Parliament, which they consider another play for the embattled prime minister to dodge a no-confidence vote. With a crucial parliamentary session due, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin instead postponed it and Parliament will be shut for two weeks.



**Israel**'s Cabinet advanced a national budget yesterday for the first time since 2018 in a sign of stability for the country's fragile new government. The 120-member Knesset must still approve the two-year spending plan by November to avoid dissolving the government and new elections. A failure to agree on a budget was one of the factors that led to the collapse of the previous government, led by Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu.

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CRIME

# YOUNG BIKER CAUGHT DRIVING DURING SUSPENSION

ANTHONY LAM

A young man was apprehended by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) for driving during a suspension, the PSP announced yesterday.

The case was uncovered by accident on July 30 when the reportedly self-employed man, who is a motorcyclist in his 20s, made a turnback at a no-turning zone in Fai Chi Kei. His action was spotted by police officers patrolling nearby.

As a result, the officers intercepted the motorcyclist, intending to warn him about the violation they witnessed.

However, when the officers asked for the motorcyclist's license and insurance policy receipt, he could not provide either of them.

The officers checked with the control center and were told that the motorcyclist's license was suspended by a court for seven months, from March this year.

He was immediately apprehended by the officers. Charges of driving during suspension and aggravated disobedience were pressed against him.

In another traffic case, the



PSP arrested a married couple for scapegoating in a traffic accident.

The husband is in his 30s, from Brazil, and works in a hotel. The wife is of a similar age and works in the government.

Early last Thursday morning, the PSP received a report of a suspected car crash from an eatery in Taipa. Workers in the eatery told police that they heard a sudden loud bang outside their workplace. They went outside and saw a car that appeared to have crashed into the car parked in front of the eatery. The car left the scene

but the workers remembered the plate number.

Approximately 10 minutes later, the PSP received another report that a crashed car was on fire in Coloane. Officers attending the Coloane scene cross-referenced the plate number and confirmed that it was the same car involved in the Taipa crash.

Police officers in Coloane believed they smelled alcohol on the Brazilian national, who told the police that his wife was driving the car. The wife confirmed this.

However, the story did not seem to be true, as firefigh-

ters said the wife was not at the scene when they arrived.

After being repeatedly warned by the police, the couple admitted to lying. The man admitted to drinking at the dinner he had in Taipa earlier. However, he could not remember whether he had been in another crash prior to the Coloane accident.

They were both apprehended and charges were pressed against them.

In two separate phone scams revealed by the Judiciary Police (PJ), two victims lost a total of 39,000 Chinese yuan to scammers who impersonated mainland police. They told the victims that a son and a good friend were separately apprehended for paying for sex in China. The scammers asked for money to release the "suspects."

The victims transferred the money in line with the scammers' instructions, but the scammers immediately disappeared after the transfers went through. The victims then realized they had been scammed as they called their son and friend and found them completely safe. Investigations are still in action.

## TOURISM BOARD OPENS LOCAL TOUR COUNTERS AT HOTELS

In the hopes of boosting local tours, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) opened counters at six hotels and resorts to take enquiries and registrations for tours.

The counters will help promote the "Stay, Dine and See Macao" local tours, targeting local residents, and the Macao Highlight Tours, dubbed the "exquisite tours" by the MGTO.

The former runs from now until end of this year, taking interested local residents on tour around Macau with several itineraries. The MGTO hopes the scheme will "spur rises in domestic demand and spending in communities, leading to further revival of the tourism and related industries," the office said in a statement.

The latter scheme is tailor-made, focusing on tourists who are seeking a more exclusive experience. It can include historic sites, cultural landscapes, as well as private helicopter rides.

The six information counters are set up at the following locations: Grande Praça of MGM Macau, Business Center of Wynn Palace, Lobby of Macau Studio City, Lobby of Grand Lisboa, ground floor (near Tastes of Asia) of Galaxy Macau and West Lobby of the Venetian Macao. Their opening hours are from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., daily. **AL**

## SUNCITY'S ALVIN CHAU DONATES MOP3M TO HENAN

ALVIN Chau, the CEO and director of local junket and entertainment operator Suncity Group, donated MOP3 million to flood relief in the Henan province of China, the company recently announced.

In a statement, the junket operator noted that he is very concerned with the flood-stricken situation in Henan province and has personally pledged MOP3 million to support frontline flood relief, material aid buying, and prompt post-disaster reconstruction.

The donation will be delivered through the coordination of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macau Special Administrative Region.

Several weeks ago, Henan province was struck by torrential rain that caused massive floods across it, claiming several lives. In the statement, the group described a "flood disaster [that] has broken Chinese people's hearts across the country."

Chau recalled the scenes when Macau was hit in 2017 by Super Typhoon Hato and the city was devastated. He stressed that he could "fully relate" to the floods in Henan.

The six gambling concessionaires have each donated MOP10 million to rebuilding and relief in the province. Levo Chan, owner of another junket, Tak Chun Group, has announced a personal donation of 2 million Chinese yuan in association with his wife, artist Ady An. **AL**

# IC to hold martial arts film festival

STAFF REPORTER

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) is set to hold "The Shadow Of Katana•Guns•Swords—Martial Arts, Samurai and Western Film Festival" at the Cinematheque Passion from August 6 to September 18, featuring a collection of 25 classic films in the martial arts, samurai and Western genres.

The bureau said the classics were divided into five sections for screening: "The Aesthetics of Violence," "Literary Flavors in Action Films," "Western Guns and Eastern Swords," "Heroines" and



"Special Screenings." There will be two post-screening talks during the film festival.

The first post-screening talk will be held after the screening of the film Warriors from the Magic Mountain on August 28. In it, local scholar Professor Lei Kun Teng and

local writer Tai Pei will talk about literature and film.

For the second post-screening talk on September 5, local director Chan Nga Lei and local film reviewers Leng Wu Chio and Lei Ka Hon will take the audience to the world of martial arts heroes, cowboys

and samurais after the screening of the film Sukiyaiki Western Django.

"During the festival, a number of films will be screened, including Harakiri directed by the famous Japanese director Masaki Kobayashi, which received the Cannes Film Festival's Special Jury Prize, and Once Upon a Time in the West, an epic Spaghetti Western film, which allows the audience to review classical films and introduces outstanding pieces to young spectators from novel and interesting perspectives," the IC announcement reads.

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COVID-19

# 'Not the right time' to relax measures for fully vaccinated arrivals

HONEY TSANG

**T**HE government confirmed yesterday at the Covid-19 media briefing that now is not the right time for Macau to relax entry regulations for fully vaccinated arrivals, in a bid to best safeguard public health.

The above remarks were made by Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention — when asked by the media whether the Macau government considered emulating Hong Kong's loosened restrictions on entry measures, reducing quarantine days for fully inoculated arrivals from 14 days to seven days.

Macau's authorities decided to keep the current regime unchanged, after considering the fickle and highly contagious nature of the Delta variant, Leong explained.

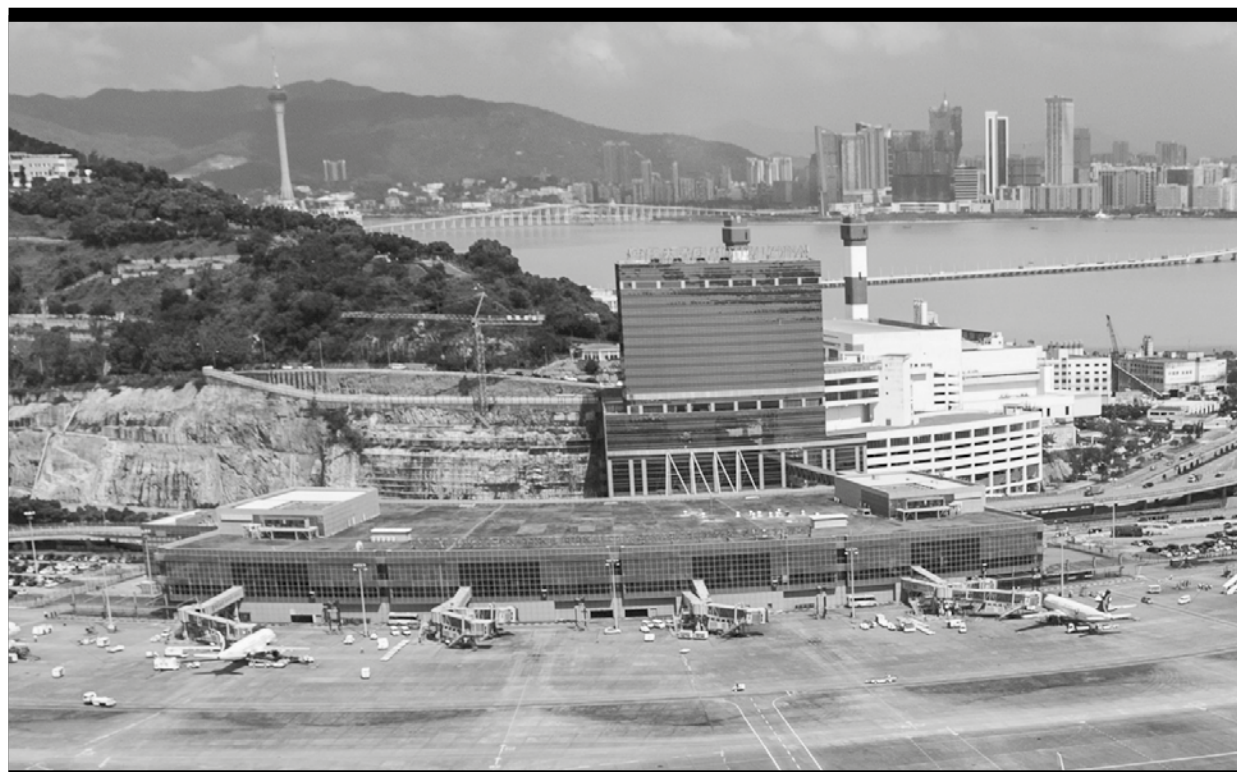
"We still don't know much about the Delta variant, like the efficacy of the vaccine against the Delta variant. And we don't fully know the odds for a fully vaccinated person to transmit the coronavirus to others," she emphasized.

The most crucial factor considered, she added, is that Macau's vaccination rate is still not "high enough" to achieve meaningful herd immunity. Local senior citizens and patients with chronic diseases still have not received any jabs due to their medical conditions.

Given this, reducing the time period of required quarantine days for arrivals may pose a hazard to the community, Leong said.

From June 30 onwards, Hong Kong has truncated the quarantine period from 14 days to seven days for fully vaccinated arrivals coming from high-risk or lower places, provided they can present positive results from a serology antibody test, which is used to show that they carry sufficient antibodies against Covid-19.

Yesterday, Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam announced that the city's fourth wave of Covid-19 had come to an end, and



thus enabled fully inoculated foreigners hailing from medium or lower-risk areas to enter Hong Kong again.

In Macau, all arrivals from foreign countries and regions, not including mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, are still required to observe at least 21-day quarantine and seven-day health self-management — regardless of their inoculation status.

In response to the divergence between entry regulations imposed by the two SARs, Leong said: "Different places have their own considerations [concerning the health regime]."

## AVOID UNNECESSARY TRAVEL

Regarding the Delta-driven resurgence in China, Tai Wa Hou, coordinator of the Health Bureau's Covid-19 Vaccination Operation, urged the public again to avoid unnecessary travel.

The government has also increased the tracking period of a confirmed case's whereabouts from two days to four days. The counting will start from the onset of the illness in each case. The extended coverage

is intended to better protect local residents.

To further reduce contagion risks, residents with yellow health codes or a fever can enjoy a free Covid-19 test from August 3. A new built-in function will be embedded onto the current online health code registration system for eligible individuals to make appointments.

## LOW VACCINATION RATE IN SENIOR CITIZENS

Yesterday also marks the first day for the city's people aged 60 or above to enjoy a walk-in inoculation service. Around 21 eligible individuals used the exclusive service within the first two hours of it coming into effect.

However, Tai said the vaccination rates among the elderly are still considered unsatisfactory, with only 21% for the elderly aged 60-69, 10% for those aged 70-79, and over 2% for those aged over 80.

In addition, the inoculation rate among civil servants is still not sufficient. Around 42% of them have received vaccinations. Tai voiced the opinion that civil servants have an obligation to get vaccinated. He

urged them to not only get a vaccination, but also to promote the service as soon as possible.

## WAITING IS INEVITABLE

Some returnees complained they had to endure a 10-hour waiting time upon arrival before being admitted to a quarantine hotel. They also expressed concerns that staying in a closed area for a long stretch with strangers would increase contagion risks.

Leong said the government has constantly been refining arrangements for arrivals, striving to reduce the waiting time as much as possible.

It normally takes five to six hours of waiting for a person to be sent to a hotel after their arrival. However, this time could be longer in some "special cases," such as a great number of flight passengers arriving at the same time, or if a positive imported case is discovered in the batch.

Leong hopes locals can understand that it requires a certain period of time for officials to conduct and examine nucleic acid tests and serology antibody tests.

## LOCAL GROUP, MAINLAND HOSPITAL TO JOINTLY TRAIN MACAU DOCTORS

The Macao Youth Federation and the 5th Hospital of the Zhongshan University have recently signed an agreement to confirm the latter's future input in training Macau medical graduates. The Youth Committee of the Macau Medical and Health Federation will take enrollment of recent medical graduates, who will receive regulated clinical training at the mainland hospital. The year-long training will be separated into four parts. The mainland hospital has a team of over 300 national or provincial level trainers. It is hoped that the initiative will help open more doors for local doctors.

## TOURISM BOARD REMINDS LOCAL AGENCIES NOT TO CROSS RED LINE

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) recently reminded local travel agencies about the mainland's current ban on cross-border group tours, meaning no mainland group tours from Macau should be organized. Previously, mainland authorities caught several violations of the ban where Macau residents were organized in cross-border grouped tours. So far, the MGTO confirmed that five group tours were organized in Macau and participants flew directly to mainland destinations. As for punishment, the MGTO noted that investigations are still ongoing.

ELECTIONS 2021

# CAEAL to draw list orders today

**F**OLLOWING its announcement of the 14 accepted lists in the upcoming parliamentary election yesterday, the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) will run a draw to determi-

ne the order of the lists.

According to the law, on the day following the publication of accepted lists, the CAEAL is required to conduct the drawing of lots to determine the order in which candidate lists will

appear on ballot papers.

The drawing will be done at noon today in the underground auditorium at the Public Administration Building.

After initially disqualifying 21 candidates from

six lists, the CAEAL has accepted 14 lists, with an aggregate of 128 candidates, for the direct election constituency and five lists, with a total of 12 candidates, for the indirect election constituency.

The disqualified lists and candidates were expelled on allegations of not upholding either the Macau Special Administrative Region, the Macau Basic Law, or both.

According to the schedule for electoral arrangements, the official campaigning period runs from August 28 to September 10, inclusive, and accepted candidate lists will only be

allowed to campaign within this period.

Yesterday, the CAEAL yesterday also ordered the removal of materials posted in any location that "aims to draw public attention to a particular candidate or candidates, and is targeted at encouraging voters, in an explicit or implicit way, to vote or not vote for a particular candidate or candidates." **AL**



# LRT UNDER HEAVY FIRE FROM LAWMAKERS

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Light Rapid Transit (LRT) system came under heavy fire from lawmakers at the Legislative Assembly (AL). In a plenary session dedicated to questions answered by the government on a range of topics, the focus on the present and future of public transport operations put the LRT system in the middle of much discussion.

Lawmakers Ella Lei and Agnes Lam were the first to raise questions over both the high expenditure and low efficiency of the LRT system, as well as its minimal contribution to the employment of local manpower.

Replying to the majority of questions was Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, who opened by saying that since the beginning of operations, the rate of local residents working for the LRT Company has been growing and has reached about 80%.

Rosário noted that when operations started, this percentage was only 60%, and he highlighted that the increase of 20% in such a short period is a very positive result.

"We are doing this step-by-step. We are following this path and reducing the number of non-resident workers (TNR), replacing them with local workers as much as possible. We already moved from 60% to 80% and will continue," he pledged.

Another criticism raised by lawmaker inquiries was the lack of commercial elements in the LRT stations which could assist in reducing the net fiscal loss at which the operation currently runs.

On the topic, the Secretary clarified that the government has plans to include shops and other commercial spaces when the LRT



East line is built to link the Pac On area in Taipa to Zone A of the new reclaimed land area and Border Gate.

"On East Line we are going to add more commercial elements, as this will be an area that will have a lot of people. So far, the LRT has not been profitable, we know this. In the past we did not have this idea of including more commercial elements. [...] But now we are considering including an underground 'commercial street' with shops," Raimundo confirmed.

## NO WAY TO AVOID LOSSES

Although the government admits that it has changed its initial view on introducing commercial elements to the LRT to increase its overall revenue, it is not expected that the balance sheet will move out of the red anytime soon, the government warned.

Several lawmakers including

Lam and Au Kam San called on the government to consider other ways to reduce the losses, such as reducing the frequency of LRT services, especially during the evening and off-peak hours.

In response, the Secretary recalled that it was known since the beginning of the project that the LRT system would be an expensive project and continuous investment in it would be required for many years, possibly even decades, as projected revenue over a significant initial period was low.

"To reduce frequency will not save a lot, so we hope to continue to operate in the same way and to try, instead, to attract [over time] more passengers to gradually use the system more instead of reducing the operations," Rosário said.

Replying to a question from lawmaker Song Pek Kei on the possibility of forming partnerships with private companies to

reduce the required high investment figure from the government, the Secretary added, "nobody wants to do that [invest in the LRT]. Private enterprises want to have profits. They only invest in things that have profit. At the moment, private companies do not even want to invest in vending machines for the stations. We did one public tender, just for one station to try and nobody wanted to join. To do this [reduce the losses] we need to link the lines to increase the number of passengers so the service can start to be profitable. This then can attract companies to invest."

Rosário requested more patience from the public and lawmakers, saying, "I need to ask you to be patient. LRT is to provide an alternative to reduce road traffic and traffic jams. We need time. A couple of years ago everyone wanted the LRT but now you call

it a 'White Elephant.' We need to be patient to see the results in the future. This is a long-term project and investment."

## GOV'T TO TAKE OVER SOME DUTIES BY 2024

Confirmed in yesterday's AL session was also the intention of the government to take over some of the operational duties of the LRT which are currently under a concession contract signed with Hong Kong's Mass Transit Railway (MTR) company, due to expire in 2024.

Questioned on the topic, Rosário said, "After the contract from MTR is finished, there will be a part of the services' operation that will be done by us. This I can assure you. We will not give it to a third party to manage anymore. This is the reason why we have been training local staff, to be able to perform these [duties] soon."

# Au Kam San points the finger as 'tailor-made' public tenders

RENATO MARQUES

**L**AWMAKER Au Kam San has called on the government to protect the interests of local residents and local companies, claiming that some public tenders are being crafted to benefit large corporations from the mainland.

Au's statements were delivered in a spoken inquiry during the period before the agenda of the Legislative Assembly plenary session of last Thursday afternoon.

According to the inquiry, the Health Bureau (SSM) recently launched a public

tender for the supply of security services. In the tender conditions, one of the requirements for the bidders is that they are able to supply a minimum ceiling of 90% of the security staff needed (358).

With this requirement, the lawmaker says that the SSM is purposely excluding almost all the local companies which have fewer staff members, and delivering the tender to the large corporations, namely those from the mainland, that have a large percentage of non-residents workers among their human resources.

For Au, this is an example of public tenders being "tailor-made" to benefit certain companies, and, consequently, harming local companies and local residents that are currently unemployed.

Au also questioned the government regarding how certain companies have not been affected by the policy restriction on the hiring of non-residents that, according to his calculation, reduced only less than 10%. He called on the government to fully hold commitment to the policy of locals providing priority access to the available job posts.





# Lawmakers seek responsibility for flooded vehicles in public car parks

RENATO MARQUES

**A**N initial inquiry from lawmaker Angela Leong prompted discussion over the responsibility for damage caused by floodwater on cars legally parked in public car parks.

In the inquiry, Leong asked the government about the lack of uniform enforcement of rules in some car parks during severe weather.

Leong explained that in some public underground car parks there is no timely placement of flood barriers and sandbags to avoid floodwater invading the car park, causing damage to numerous vehicles as recently occurred during heavy rainfall in the car park of Ferreira do Amaral Square.

In response, Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário said that in some situations there is insufficient time for the car park staff to perform the necessary tasks.

When asked about the car parks' management companies

RENATO MARQUES



shirking responsibility in dealing with the damage, Rosário said that "parking either in the car parks or on the streets is the same thing. If outside, and a tree or some other object falls on the car, it is the same, but we can't attribute responsibilities to anyone. It's an unfortunate thing. [...] This is the principle. To park cars in public car parks is no different from parking them in the street."

This opinion did not gather consensus within the hemicycle,

with several lawmakers expressing their disagreement with such a statement.

Leong Sun Iok was one of those calling for an amendment to the regulation of the facilities to "correct the flaw that allows the management companies to avoid responsibilities in cases of force majeure." He added, "I can't agree that parking in public car parks or in the streets is the same. These are different things and we know that if the companies assemble

the barriers as they should, this can save the assets of residents. I think there is space to improve these rules." Leong thus called for a mechanism to alert drivers of potential flooding in car parks.

Another lawmaker, José Pereira Coutinho, voiced the belief that there is a significant difference between Rosário's example of parking on the street or in a car park, explaining that when people enter a car park, there is a "contract with the parking com-

pany to secure the cars." Mentioning again the case at Ferreira do Amaral Square parking, Pereira Coutinho said he disagreed by saying that the reports of the incident issued by the management company are not public and only the government has access to the conclusions.

Mak Soi Kun took a very different approach, justifying the floods as divine punishment for a lack of environmental protection.

"Rain and floods are a punishment from God to us since we are not protecting the environment," he said, adding that to prevent damages people should contract insurance agencies instead of trying to appeal to car park management companies.

The lawmaker also voiced his lack of support for Leong's suggestion of a warning mechanism for car owners, explaining that such a warning would not come in time and could cause even more severe damage as people could lose their lives while attempting to save their cars. He recalled such occurrences during Typhoon Hato in 2017.

The government supported Mak's opinion, noting that a warning to people would potentially cause more harm than good, adding that there are extreme and rare cases which are impossible to predict, and that people should individually assume responsibilities for the damage.

AD

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ANALYSIS

# COVID-19 ORIGIN PROBE MUST BE IN RIGHT DIRECTION

YANG HAN, HONG KONG

**D**ETERMINING the origins of COVID-19 should be driven by science and solid facts, but the "lab leak" hypothesis should not be the focus of the investigation and politicizing the search won't help, experts said.

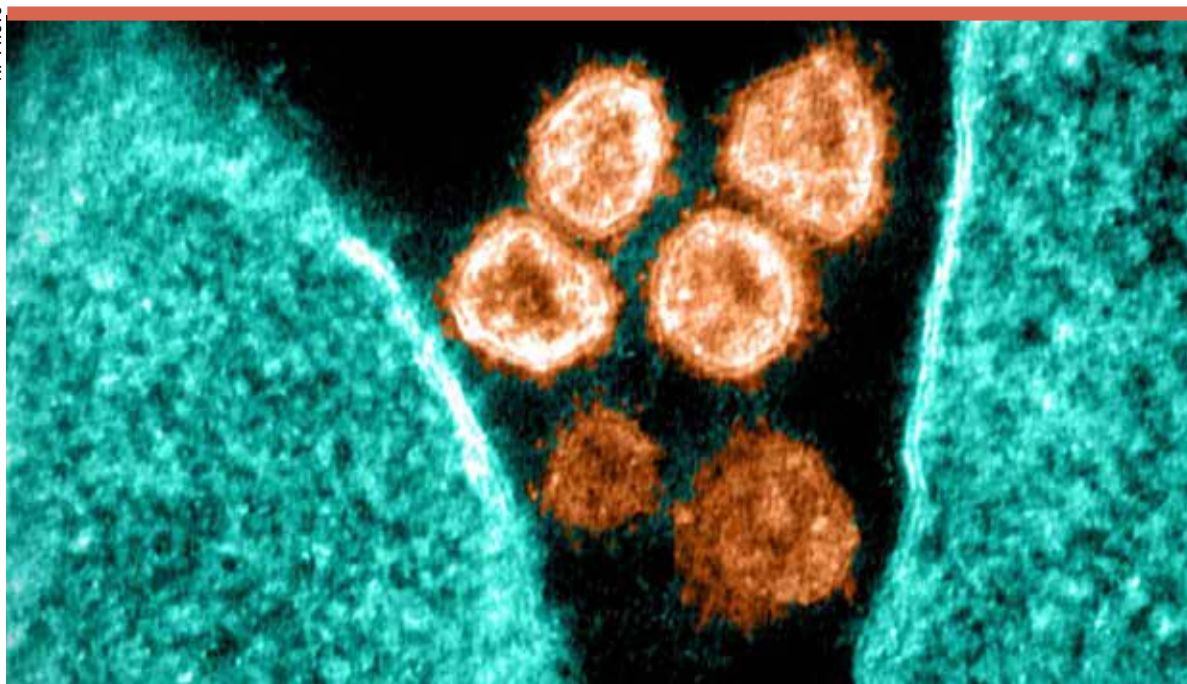
"I don't see any features in the (COVID) virus genome that do not occur in other coronaviruses," said Benjamin Neuman, chair of the Biological Sciences Department at Texas A&M University-Texarkana, in the United States.

He said some people have tried to use specific features of the SARS-CoV-2 spike gene as evidence that it is an artificial virus, but all these features can also be found on other coronaviruses.

Neuman, a member of the international committee that named SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind the COVID-19 pandemic, said the explanation that best fits the full set of data is that this new virus probably originated outside a laboratory in nature, like other known coronaviruses.

"I suppose it would be comforting, in a very human way, to be able to point to a person or an event that is responsible for all the misery of COVID-19, or any other virus for that matter," said Neuman. "In stories, that sometimes

AP PHOTO



happens, but not so much in nature."

In addition to the differences in the virus that have been the focus of many conspiracy theories, Neuman said, SARS-CoV-2 has hundreds of other mutations scattered throughout its genome. "These other mutations are distributed in roughly the same way as we might find in any naturally occurring coronavirus," he told China Daily.

"Without a time machine and possibly a magic wand, I don't know how a reinvestigation would be able to turn up anything different," Neuman said.

China has submitted a proposal to the World Health Organization for the second phase of the COVID-19 origin study in an effort to support and coordinate with the organization in tracing the origins of the virus globally, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Thursday.

A paper by 21 virologists, posted online in early June, reviewed the scientific evidence for the origin of the virus. It concluded that the virus' origin is overwhelmingly likely to have been zoonotic, transferred from an animal source to human infections, and that there is zero

evidence for a laboratory origin.

Lead author Edward Holmes, an evolutionary biologist and virologist at the University of Sydney, said careful and critical analysis of the available data provided no evidence that SARS-CoV-2 originated in a laboratory.

The paper said that focusing on a highly improbable lab origin distracts from the most urgent scientific tasks to "comprehensively investigate the zoonotic origin through collaborative and carefully coordinated studies".

Though there is no strong evidence yet on the origin of CO-

VID-19, there are many studies and publications on bat coronavirus related to SARS-CoV-2, said Alongkorn Amonsin, director of the Center of Excellence for Emerging and reemerging Infectious Diseases in Animals at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok.

Alongkorn said that more research needs to be done on the pre-COVID exposure in animal, wildlife and human populations to discover the novel coronavirus' origin.

Neuman, from Texas A&M, said it is very important to find the very close relatives of SARS-CoV-2.

"The closest that we have are a couple of bat viruses that are each around a thousand mutations different from SARS-CoV-2," said Neuman, who added the differences could represent perhaps 50 to 100 years of evolutionary distance. "I think there are, somewhere in nature, more viruses similar to this," he said.

The most important issue for dealing with the pandemic now is vaccination, because more variants have emerged, said Obli Rajendran Vinodh Kumar, senior scientist at the ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute's Division of Epidemiology.

China has repeatedly expressed opposition to attempts by some Western powers, particularly the United States, to politicize the virus origin probe by targeting a Wuhan research facility.

Beijing's position has been endorsed by many nations, with dozens of them recently writing to the WHO to denounce attempts at politicization of the issue and distortion of facts. **CHINA DAILY**

HONG KONG

## Pop singer, activist arrested on corruption charge

**A** prominent Hong Kong singer and pro-democracy activist was arrested by the city's anti-corruption watchdog yesterday over accusations that he broke the law by singing at a political rally three years ago.

The arrest of Anthony Wong in the latest official move against those who had been pushing for greater democracy in the semiautonomous Chinese territory.

Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption said Wong performed two songs at the 2018 rally and urged attendees to vote for pro-democracy candidate Au Nok-hin in a legislative by-election.

The watchdog also charged Au, who won the



Hong Kong singer Anthony Wong Yiu-ming

election, in part for publicizing the rally on social media and saying that Wong would be performing.

The watchdog said in a statement that providing others with refreshments and entertainment at an election event is "a corrupt conduct and a serious offence" and is

against the elections ordinance.

Local media reported that Wong was released on bail. Au, meanwhile, has been in jail since March. Au was one of the 47 pro-democracy activists arrested for alleged subversion over an unofficial primary election they held last year. **MDT/AP**

PMI

## JULY MANUFACTURING WEAKENS AMID EXPORT WEAKNESS

**C**HINA'S manufacturing growth in July slowed to its lowest level in 15 months as export demand weakened and factories coped with disruptions in supplies of raw materials and components, two surveys found.

A monthly purchasing managers' index released by Caixin, a business magazine, declined to 50.3 from June's 51.3 on a 100-point scale on which numbers above 50 show activity increasing. A separate PMI issued by an industry group and the Chinese statistics agency fell to 50.4 from 50.9.

China rebounded relatively quickly from the coronavirus pandemic, but manufacturers have struggled as they wait for supply chains to return to pre-pandemic activity and foreign markets are hin-

AP PHOTO



dered by renewed disease outbreaks.

Caixin's measure of new export orders fell to 50.3 from June's 51.3.

China's economy expanded by 7.9% over a year earlier in the three months ending in June, though that was magnified by comparison with early 2020, when factories and shops closed to fight the coronavirus pandemic. Output rose 1.3% compared with the previous quarter, up from the previous quarter's 0.6% growth

but one of the past decade's weakest readings.

Exports rose 32.2% in June over a year ago but the government warned that might weaken in the second half of the year.

"The latest survey readings reinforce our view that the economy will tread water during the second half of the year," said Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics in a report. "It shouldn't be cause for alarm given how strong activity has been recently." **MDT/AP**



JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

**S**OUTHEAST Asia's top diplomats were meeting yesterday to appoint a special envoy to help deal with the political crisis and violence gripping Myanmar and finalize an emergency plan to help control a coronavirus outbreak that many fear is spiraling out of control in the military-ruled nation.

The foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations were also expected to announce after their video meeting some progress in four years of painstakingly slow negotiations with China to craft a nonaggression pact aimed at preventing conflict in the disputed South China Sea.

The 10-nation bloc, frequently dismissed by critics as an ineffective talk shop, has been under increasing international pressure to act on the troubles unfolding in Myanmar, an ASEAN member where the military in February toppled the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The grouping, however, is hamstrung by its policy of noninterference in the domestic affairs of member nations as well as its requirement to reach a consensus among members.

In yesterday's online meeting the ministers were to decide who among at least three nominees from Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia should be designated as the bloc's special envoy to try to broker a settlement between the country's ruling generals and rival parties led by Suu Kyi, a Southeast Asian diplomat told the Associated Press.

Myanmar prefers the candidate from Thailand, former Thai ambassador to Yangon Virasakdi Futrakul, but it remains uncertain when its military lead-

# ASEAN diplomats discussing crisis envoy, aid to Myanmar

AP PHOTO



ers would decide to accept the envoy and if access to Suu Kyi, who has been detained with other political leaders and put on trial for a slew of charges, would be granted, said the diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of lack of authority to discuss the issue publicly.

More than 900 people have been killed by Myanmar authorities since the February takeover, according to a tally kept by the independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. Casualties are also rising among the military and police

as armed resistance grows in both urban and rural areas.

ASEAN leaders met in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta in April and called for an end to the violence and the start of a dialogue among contending parties to be mediated by an ASEAN envoy.

On Sunday, Myanmar's military leader Min Aung Hlaing repeated his pledge to hold fresh elections in two years and cooperate with ASEAN on finding a political solution. He said without elaborating that Myanmar "is ready to work on ASEAN cooperation within the

ASEAN framework, including the dialogue with the ASEAN special envoy in Myanmar."

Myanmar's troubles have deepened with its worst surge of the pandemic, which has overwhelmed its crippled health care system. Limits on oxygen sales have led to widespread allegations that the military is directing supplies to government supporters and military-run hospitals.

The ASEAN ministers were to looking to finalize a plan to bring in medicine and medical equipment to Myanmar through the regional bloc's disaster-

-response center with the military leaders' approval.

Greg Poling, an analyst on Southeast Asia for the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said it's critical for ASEAN to gain humanitarian access in Myanmar but added that the aid would not automatically mean the military leaders would accede to the bloc's political demands.

"ASEAN has no leverage with the junta," Poling said.

In addition to Myanmar, the other ASEAN members are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The ministerial meetings this week include the ASEAN Regional Forum, a security conference where North Korea attends along with the United States, China, Russia, Japan and South Korea.

On the South China Sea disputes, ASEAN ministers are expected to announce the completion of the preamble of a "code of conduct" that the bloc has been negotiating with China since 2017, according to two other Southeast Asian diplomats who also spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

The preamble calls for adherence to international law, said the diplomats, who expect the next round of talks to be stormy as rival claimants China, Taiwan and ASEAN members Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam tackle the most contentious issues. **MDT/AP**

## PAKISTAN

# Police say polio team attacked, policeman killed

RIAZ KHAN, PESHAWAR

**G**UNMEN yesterday shot and killed a police officer assigned to protect a polio vaccination team in northwestern Pakistan, an official said. It was the third attack in two days on Pakistani policemen assigned to protect polio workers.

The deadly attack took place in the town of Kolachi in the Dera Ismail Khan district. Officer Dilawar Khan was on his motorcycle, heading to escort polio workers taking part in a nationwide campaign aimed at making Pakistan

AP PHOTO



A police officer stand guard while a health worker administers a polio vaccine to a child in Peshawar

a polio-free state.

The gunmen fled the scene and a police search is underway, according to

Mohammad Aslam, a local police official.

Pakistani militants often target polio teams and

police assigned to protect them, claiming the vaccination campaigns are a Western conspiracy to sterilize children.

Two attacks targeted police working with polio teams on Sunday. In Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, gunmen killed a policeman returning home after security duty with polio workers. And a roadside bomb went off near a police van escorting a polio vaccination team in the district of South Waziristan, wounding an officer.

None of the medics on the polio teams were hurt

in these attacks. No one immediately claimed responsibility for any of the attacks.

Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan are the only two remaining countries in the world where polio is endemic, after Nigeria was last year declared free of the virus.

Last week, Prime Minister Imran Khan's government launched another polio vaccination drive in an effort to eradicate the crippling disease by the end of the year. According to authorities, as many as 23.6 million children are to be vaccinated in this la-

test anti-polio drive.

On Sunday, Aimal Khan, a spokesman for the anti-polio program in northwestern Pakistan, said the vaccination effort would continue despite the challenges with some 17,000 trained workers going home to home to administer the vaccines in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

According to Shahzad Baig, who leads the anti-polio effort, there has only been one reported case of polio so far in 2021 in Pakistan, compared to 66 during the same time last year. Yesterday, Baig appealed on the parents to get their children vaccinated to protect them from the crippling disease. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO



Krystsina Tsimanouskaya, of Belarus, is running away from persecution

TOKYO 2020

# Activists say Belarus sprinter plans to seek asylum in Poland

GRAHAM DUNBAR,  
TOKYO

A Belarusian Olympic sprinter plans to seek asylum in Poland after alleging that officials tried to force her home from Japan and that she feared for her safety, an activist group said yesterday.

Athlete Krystsina Tsimanouskaya is applying for a visa at the Polish embassy in Tokyo, according to Vadim Krivosheyev, of the Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation. He told The Associated Press that the group has bought her a plane ticket to Warsaw for Aug. 4.

The current standoff apparently began after Tsimanouskaya criticized how officials were managing her team. Tsimanouskaya, who was due to run in the Olympic 200-meter heats yesterday, said on her Instagram account that she was put in the 4x400 relay even though she has never raced the event.

Tsimanouskaya said in a filmed message distributed on social media that she was pressured by Belarus team officials and asked the International Olympic Committee for help.

"I was put under pressure and they are trying to

forcibly take me out of the country without my consent," the 24-year-old runner said.

Belarus' authoritarian government has engaged in a brutal crackdown on dissent after a presidential election a year ago triggered a wave of unprecedented mass protests. Authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko has relentlessly pursued dissidents, including recently allegedly diverting a plane to Minsk to have one arrested.

The sports foundation said government supporters targeted Tsimanouskaya, and the athlete contacted the group for help.

"The campaign was quite serious and that was a clear signal that her life would be in danger in Belarus," Alexander Opeikin, a spokesman for the BSSE, told the AP in an interview.

Tsimanouskaya summoned Japanese police at Haneda Airport and did not board a flight departing for Istanbul. Foreign ministry officials arrived later at the airport, Opeikin said.

Underscoring the seriousness of the allegations, several groups and countries say they are helping the runner. Poland and the Czech Republic offered help, and Japan's Fo-

reign Ministry said it was working with the International Olympic Committee and the Tokyo Olympics organizers.

The IOC, which has been in dispute with the Belarus National Olympic Committee ahead of the Tokyo Games, said it had intervened.

"The IOC [...] is looking into the situation and has asked the NOC for clarification," it said in a statement.

Many critics of Belarus' government have fled to Poland. Deputy Foreign Minister Marcin Przydacz said on Twitter that Tsimanouskaya has been offered a "humanitarian visa and is free to pursue her sporting career in Poland if she so chooses."

Czech Foreign Minister Jakub Kulhanek also tweeted that the Czech Republic has offered her asylum.

"If she decides to accept it, we'll do our maximum to help her," he wrote.

The Belarus National Olympic Committee has been led for more than 25 years by President Lukashenko and his son, Viktor.

Both Lukashenkos are banned from the Tokyo Olympics by the IOC, which investigated complaints

from athletes that they faced reprisals and intimidation in fallout from protests since last August after the country's disputed presidential election.

A spokeswoman for the Belarus Olympic team did not respond to a request for comment.

In May, Belarussian authorities were accused of diverting a passenger plane to Minsk in order to detain journalist and activist Raman Pratasevich and his Russian girlfriend.

The elder Lukashenko maintained that there was a bomb threat against the plane and that's why a fighter jet was scrambled to force it to land, but European Union leaders denounced it as an act of air piracy.

Pratasevich, who ran a channel on a messaging app used to organize demonstrations against Lukashenko's rule, left his homeland in 2019 to try to escape the reach of the Belarusian KGB and ended up in Lithuania.

Tsimanouskaya already competed for Belarus on the first day of track events Friday at the National Stadium in Tokyo. She placed fourth in her first-round heat in the 100 meters, timing 11.47 seconds, and did not advance. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1990 UK TEMPERATURES REACH RECORD HIGH



A weather station in Leicestershire has recorded the highest temperature ever known in Britain.

The figure of 37.1C, or 99F, recorded at a weather station in Nailstone, Leicestershire, is 1 degree Fahrenheit higher than the previous record set in 1911.

The new record has not been officially confirmed, weather experts have said it appears authentic.

Although the sweltering temperatures are being enjoyed by holidaymakers and sun seekers, they are not good news for everyone.

Fire crews are battling countryside fires in North Yorkshire and more than 100 square miles (259 square kilometres) of the Peak District National Park will be closed from midnight on Sunday to protect the moorland from careless visitors.

Penguins at Bristol zoo and a herd of rare pigs from Ludlow in Shropshire, are receiving daily cold showers of water to prevent them from dehydrating.

Many roads around the country are clogged as motorists make their way to coastal resorts and some intercity trains will be running at reduced speeds because of possible distortion of the rails in the intense heat.

Reservoir levels are also falling but officials are confident that supplies are not yet at risk.

Mr Mike Carey, from the Water Services Association, said: "Most people are still getting their full supply of water without any restrictions at all.

"In fact, 46 million people have no restrictions of any sort at the moment."

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The record was broken on 10 August 2003 - first when 37.9C (100.2F) was recorded at Heathrow Airport, then later by a temperature of 38.1C (100.6F) in Gravesend, Kent. Weather experts predict that over the next 80 years temperatures could reach 40C. Research is continually being carried out to try to establish why average global temperatures have risen significantly over the past century. Reports suggest it is a combination of human activity, solar activity and warmer oceans.



YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

The universe has been pushing you to become painfully clear about your direction. Today's skies double down on that narrative, as messenger Mercury locks into an unsettling encounter with breakthrough Uranus.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

It's not always easy for you to let your feelings flow freely. Today's skies loosen you up emotionally, as the mentally-sharp Gemini moon squares off with your ruling planet, lover Venus.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Tend to your own wellbeing beneath Today's skies, Gemini. The nurturing moon saunters into your sign, sending its supportive focus towards your health and physical body.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Messenger Mercury's bold square with erratic Uranus helps you have breakthrough conversations among outgrown friendships or community connections.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

It's no surprise to you that your career has been in a state of flux, Leo. You've been carving a path forward, regardless of the resistance you've been facing.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

As a Virgo, you're born with a mind that runs a mile a minute. You may feel as if your brain is operating on overdrive today, as your ruling planet, story-telling Mercury.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

The universe is pushing you to explore new terrain in your close relationships. That narrative is pushed further along today, as mental Mercury squares off with change-demanding Uranus.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

This time of year has you pushing ahead tirelessly. Embrace the moment away from the noise today, as the thoughtful Gemini moon squares off with bond-building Venus.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Messenger Mercury's squabble with electric Uranus pushes you to break the mold and mix it up. How are you to enjoy the dream of greener pastures if you keep playing it safe on fake grass?



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You're ready to hit the ground running today. You're likely to wrestle with some tension between your day job and dream job, as the giddy Gemini moon squares off with irritable Mars.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Look to your close relationships today. Important conversations and changes of plan in that arena are required for forward movement, as mental Mercury squares off with electric Uranus today.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Today's skies summon you homeward, Pisces. The moon drifts through mentally-sharp Gemini, turning your attention towards family connections and the state of your living space.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

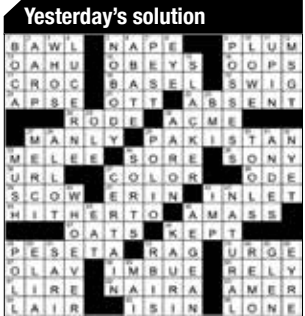
HARD

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Novelist Waugh; 5- Sallow; 10- Inner layer of a quilt; 14- Church court; 15- Norman Vincent \_\_\_\_; 16- "The Time Machine" race; 17- Graceful horse; 18- Give consent; 19- Barbie, e.g.; 20- Be unsuitable; 22- Name; 23- Satisfied sound; 24- Droop, sink; 25- Dog of mixed breed; 29- Become less dark; 33- Bed down; 34- I'd hate to break up \_\_\_\_; 36- Commotion; 37- Excavate; 38- Remain; 39- Circle of flowers; 40- Superior to; 42- Chipper; 43- Stalks; 45- More than two; 47- Remain longer; 49- \_\_\_\_ Lingus; 50- Little, in Lille; 51- Distributed cards; 54- Acuity; 60- He played Ricky; 61- Shorthand taker; 62- Shrinking sea; 63- Torah holders; 64- Rodeo rope; 65- "Give that \_\_\_\_ cigar!"; 66- Baseball's "Walking Man" Eddie; 67- Aquatic mammal; 68- News bit;

DOWN: 1- Composer Khachaturian; 2- Actress Singer; 3- JFK postings; 4- Garden vegetable; 5- Cochise, for one; 6- Utahilly; 7- Injure; 8- Gen. Robert \_\_\_\_; 9- Genealogy word; 10- Array; 11- Gobs; 12- Tribute; 13- One with a glazed look, perhaps; 21- 1994 Costner role; 22- Playground game; 24- Web locale; 25- Windows predecessor; 26- Martini garnish; 27- Israeli desert; 28- Trademark; 29- Brought on; 30- Flat sign; 31- Plant problem; 32- Clangorous; 35- Title of a knight; 38- On \_\_\_\_ with; 41- Pragmatic person; 43- Part of a process; 44- Large sea wave; 46- Not emp.; 48- Turmoil; 51- June 6, 1944; 52- Architect Saarinen; 53- Requests; 54- Editor's note; 55- Warmth; 56- Poker pot starter; 57- Quod \_\_\_\_ demonstrandum; 58- All there; 59- Close with force; 61- B-way hit sign;



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: 2103 6001 788 ft<sup>2</sup> 2 1 1



ENTERTAINMENT

# 'JUNGLE CRUISE' SAILS ATOP BOX OFFICE DESPITE COVID CONCERNS

JONATHAN LANDRUM JR.,  
LOS ANGELES

**D**ESPITE growing concerns over the delta variant, "Jungle Cruise" still drew moviegoers out to theaters during the film's opening weekend to sail atop the North American box office.

The Disney film starring Dwayne Johnson and Emily Blunt exceeded expectations by pulling in more than \$34.1 million over the weekend. The adventure movie was estimated to open with around \$25 million to \$30 million domestically, but it outpaced those numbers despite the surge in the coronavirus cases.

Globally, "Jungle Cruise" brought in a total of \$90 million, including \$27.6 million in the international box office and more than \$30 million from Disney Plus.

"In this pandemic-challenged market place, it overperformed," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "It didn't really seem like the streaming component hurt the box office in any significant way. The movie theater is still showing its resilience and appeal to moviegoers despite the fact that there's so much news everyday, most of it not moving in the right direction, in terms of the pandemic."

"Jungle Cruise" also earned five times more than "The Green Knight," which came in at No. 2 with \$6.78 million. The A24 film starring Dev Patel barely edged M. Night Shyamalan's "Old," which had \$6.76 million after scoring the top spot last weekend.

AP PHOTO



A scene from "Jungle Cruise"

"Black Widow" placed fourth after a past week of turmoil between Disney and the film's lead, Scarlett Johansson. The actor sued the studio over the film's streaming release, which she said breached her contract and deprived her of potential earnings.

Disney responded to Johansson's claim saying she received \$20 million in compensation and that she benefited from Disney Plus' revenue.

Matt Damon's "Stillwater" opened at No. 5 with \$5.1 million but faced criticism as well. The drama film was blasted by Amanda Knox, who spoke out last week about her name being associated with the new movie, saying any connection rips off her story without her consent at the "expense of my reputation."

Knox called out the film's director Tom McCarthy in a series of tweets for using her name to promote the movie.

"Space Jam: A New Legacy"

has progressively dropped to No. 6 after going No. 1 two weeks ago. "Snake Eyes" fell to seventh after the film starring Henry Golding as the warrior-in-training debuted No. 2 last week.

"F9: The Fast Saga" placed eighth at the box office. The film pulled in \$2.6 million and totaled more than \$168 million domestically after six weeks.

"Escape Room: Tournament of Champions" and "The Boss Baby: Family Business" rounded out the top 10.

Dergarabedian wondered how the news on coronavirus cases would affect moviegoers' decision to watch films at theaters. He thinks the appeal of the film like "Suicide Squad" — opening domestically on Aug. 6 in theaters and streamed on HBO Max — will play a role whether they go or not.

"If people feel comfortable and safe, and adhere to the protocols, I think we could see

a good number on that movie, even though its available at home," Dergarabedian said. "This market is being driven by the product."

## BOX OFFICE

1. "Jungle Cruise," \$34.1m
2. "The Green Knight," \$6.78m
3. "Old," \$6.76m
4. "Black Widow," \$6.4m
5. "Stillwater," \$5.1m
6. "Space Jam: A New Legacy," \$4.2m
7. "Snake Eyes," \$4m
8. "F9: The Fast Saga," \$2.6m
9. "Escape Room: Tournament of Champions," \$2.2m
10. "The Boss Baby: Family Business," \$1.3m

Note: Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included.

## SQUARE TO BUY INSTALLMENT PAYMENT FIRM AFTERPAY IN \$29B DEAL

**D**IGITAL payments company Square Inc. says it has agreed to acquire Afterpay, which provides a "buy now, pay later" option for merchants, in an all-stock deal valued at about \$29 billion.

Square allows retailers to process credit card transactions using devices that plug into tablets or smartphones. The San Francisco-based company said Sunday it plans to integrate Afterpay into its services, enabling merchants to offer customers the option to pay for goods later without relying on a credit card. Afterpay users would be able to manage their installment payments directly in Square's cash app.

"Square and Afterpay have a shared purpose," Square CEO Jack Dorsey said in a statement.

Some 70 million people use Square's cash app. As of June 30, Afterpay was serving more than 16 million users and nearly 100,000 merchants, including major retailers, the company said.

Installment plans are popular with retailers because they encourage customers to spend more money. And they enable customers with insufficient funds or credit at the time of purchase to walk out of a store with the item they want. Payments are made in multiple installments over time, without interest — unless customers are late, in which case additional fees or interest may kick in.

MDT/AP

## CORPORATE BITS

### Melco holds patriotic music session



To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, Melco Resorts & Entertainment recently hosted a patriotic music session as part of its "Splendors of China Passport" program. Melco

invited Professor Xu Qing, a former associate professor of the People's Liberation Army Academy of Art and Head Artistic Judge of Melco Star Youth Talent Competition 2021, to advocate a better understanding of Chinese

history and culture to more than 70 management and non-management colleagues through patriotic songs.

The session discussed the lyrics, poems and compositions of patriotic melodies to "explore various eras and historical milestones of the Communist Party of China's 100-year history." Songs introduced included, among others, "My Country, My People", "The Pearl of the Orient" and "Ode to Red Flag".

According to data from Melco, to date, more than 3,500 colleagues have participated in online courses, over 5,300 colleagues have attended seminars to learn about national conditions,

### Sheraton launches 'Stay and Dine' promo for summer season



Sheraton Grand Macao invites guests to celebrate the summer season in style with the 'Stay and Dine' hotel package available for stays from now until September 30, 2021.

The 'Stay and Dine' hotel pa-

ckage includes a one-night stay in a Deluxe king or twin room, HKD500 dining credit to spend at The Conservatory and a complimentary digital photo of the Black Cap Escape.

The Conservatory is SHERA-

ton Grand Macao's new food and beverage restaurant located at The Shakespeare's Hall which brings together three dining experiences under one roof. Guests can relish an array of British-inspired cuisine at Three Bottles, authentic Cantonese fare at Chaa and sweet delights at The Sweet Shop, as well as a Tea Room for guests to enjoy grab-and-go from breakfast till late.

Daniella Tonetto, general manager of Sales & Marketing for Sheraton Grand Macao, said the 'Stay and Dine' package includes "attractive benefits which encourages families and friends to gather together especially over a wholesome meal at The Conservatory."



EDDIE PELLIS, TOKYO

OLYMPICS | ATHLETICS

**T**HE 100 meters at the Olympics is the event that turns sprinters into kings: Jesse Owens, Carl Lewis, Usain Bolt.

On one of the most unusual nights the sport has ever seen, fans, experts, and even the racers themselves needed a lineup card.

The race that has long defined Olympic royalty went to a Texas-born Italian who hadn't cracked 10 seconds until this year. He's a 26-year-old whose best days before this came in the long jump. He's a man even the runner in the next lane didn't really know.

At the Tokyo Olympics, Marcell Jacobs is The World's Fastest Man.

"I think I need four or five years to realize and understand what's happening," Jacobs said.

The Italian crossed the line in 9.8 seconds yesterday night to capture the first 100-meter medal ever for the country better known for its soccer prowess. Pietro Mennea won the 200 at the 1980 Olympics in Moscow and Livio Berruti won that race at the 1960 Games in Rome.

Even in a contest with no clear favorites — American Ronnie Baker was a candidate and China's Su Bingtian ran a shocking 9.83 in the semis — Jacobs came from nowhere.

He topped America's Fred Kerley, a 400-meter runner who moved down in distance because he saw a medal chance, and Canada's Andre DeGrasse, who adds another 100-meter bronze to the one he won Rio.

Kerley finished second in 9.84 and DeGrasse was next at 9.89.

"I really don't know anything about him," Kerley said of the new gold medalist. "He did a fantastic job."

Jacobs' path was made that much clearer because of who wasn't in the race. The reigning world champion, Christian Coleman, is serving a ban for missed doping tests. The world leader in 2021 and the favorite to win the gold, Trayvon Bromell, didn't make it out of the semifinals.

Bolt, who has commanded the Olympic and every other sprint stage since 2008, is retired.



Lamont Jacobs, right, of Italy, wins the men's 100-meter final

He was a sure thing in all nine Olympic sprints he ran from the Beijing Games — a stretch of dominance that redefined track and field, but also left a gaping hole in the sport when he called it a career.

"He changed athletics forever," Jacobs said. "I'm the one who won the Olympics after him. That's unbelievable. But drawing comparisons, I don't think it's the time now."

Bolt's world record is 9.58.

Before Sunday, Jacobs' personal best was 9.95.

"I mean, 9.8 from the Italian guy?" DeGrasse said. "I didn't expect that. I thought my main competition would be the Americans."

Nope. The Italians.

Perhaps the only person at the track who really knew the new champ was the man who hugged him after he crossed the finish line. That was Gianmarco Tamberi, the Italian high jumper who tied Qatari's Mutaz Essa Barshim for gold.

Tamberi and Barshim ended their evening-long jump-fest in a dead heat — a rare result that appeared headed for a jump-off to decide gold and silver. But after huddling with an official who told them two gold medals were possible, Barshim -- the two-time world champion who won

silver in Rio and bronze in London - agreed to call it a tie for first.

Bedlam ensued.

Barshim ran up to the stands to celebrate. Tamberi covered his face with his hands and rolled on the ground. "I was in ecstasy," he said. He was clearly a man looking for someone to hug.

He found just the person a few minutes later when Jacobs crossed the line first. Tamberi leaped into the broad-chested sprinter's arms and curled his own arm around Jacobs' bald head.

"My heart was exploding," Tamberi said.

Only a night before, they'd been sitting in Jacobs' tiny room in the Olympic village playing video games.

"And we said, 'Can you imagine if we win?'" Jacobs said. "(We said) 'No, no, no. It's impossible. Don't think this.'"

Not long after the two golds were secure, Italy's premier, Mario Draghi, stated the obvious — "You're honoring Italy," he said — and announced he'd be inviting the athletes to his office, the Chigi Palace, when they return home.

Theirs was one of many beautiful moments on a most unusual Day 3 of the Olympic track meet. Another highlight came from Venezuelan Yulimar Rojas' toppling of a 26-year-

-old world record in the triple jump. Her new mark is 51 feet, 5 inches.

Other vignettes didn't involve medals.

Luca Kozak tripped

on a hurdle and looked over three lanes to see a Jamaican opponent, Yanique Thompson, had suffered the same fate. Kozak helped her back to her feet.

Later, in the men's 800 semifinals, American Isaiah Jewett got tangled up with Botswana's Nijel Amos and the two went tumbling to the ground. They helped each other up and jogged slowly together toward the finish line.

"I don't want any bad blood, because that's what heroes do -- they show their humanity through who they are and show they're good people," Jewett said.

The day's other gold medal went to Gong Lijiao of China, who bested American Raven Saunders of the United States.

Saunders, who is Black and gay, wears an "Incre-

dible Hulk" mask when she competes, closed out the medals ceremony by lifting her arms above her head and forming an "X" with her wrists.

"It's the intersection of where all people who are oppressed meet," she explained.

All memorable.

And then came the man hardly anybody knew.

Even though the run came in front of a nearly empty stadium, you could practically hear the collective "Who?" echoing across the seats. From all places, that is, except from the Italian contingent.

Quite an evening for Jacobs, who was born in El Paso — the son of an American father and an Italian mother. The parents split when Jacobs was 6 months old and he moved to Italy and never got to know his dad. **MDT/AP**

AD

An advertisement for Duffy's Irish Pub Macau. The top half shows the interior of the pub with patrons and a sign that reads "DUFFY'S IRISH PUB MACAU". The bottom half features a large image of a bartender pouring a drink into a glass, with the text "DUFFY'S IRISH PUB where everyone gets lucky!". Below this, there are several bullet points: "A GREAT PLACE TO HANG OUT FOR FUN &amp; HAVE GOOD TIMES WITH FAMILY &amp; FRIENDS", "WITH OUTDOOR SEATING &amp; A PRIVATE SNUG FOR INTIMATE GATHERINGS", and "HAS A GREAT SELECTION OF WHISKEY, GIN, BEERS, ETC.". At the bottom, it says "DUFFY'S IRISH PUB MACAU BROADWAY FOOD STREET AT GALAXY MACAU" and "TEL.: 2875 2945 OR 63281245".



OPINION

**China Daily**  
Editorial, China Daily

**FIRST LINE OF  
DEFENSE MUST  
BE REINFORCED**

The cluster of novel coronavirus infections at Lukou International Airport in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, which has been the fuse for the outbreak of Delta variant infections across the country, has been attributed to the airport staff's failure to strictly follow COVID-19 containment procedures.

And at a show in Zhangjiajie, Hunan province, where a number of tourists in the audience were infected and who then carried the virus to Beijing and several other places, there was little sign the pandemic was taken seriously, either by the theater operator or the audience. That the people watching the show were allowed to sit next to each other was on its own a violation of standard pandemic protocols.

In the Sixth People's Hospital of Zhengzhou, the outbreak of intra-hospital cross-infections was believed to have to do with staff neglecting to observe pandemic prevention and control protocols amid panic caused by the floodwaters that paralyzed parts of the city.

In Yangzhou, Jiangsu, many of the latest infections were traced to crowded mahjong joints, a favorite haunt for local residents. By Monday, 15 provincial-level regions had reported confirmed or asymptomatic cases in the latest wave of infections, nearly equivalent to the total of the previous five months.

And the chains of infections are far from being cut off. In the 24 hours of Sunday, eight provinces reported 55 confirmed local infections. The virus has spread at such speed that there is a prevailing feeling that unless a way can be found to suppress its current momentum, what was endured in the last nationwide round will need to be repeated.

Such fears are well-grounded. In the United States and several other countries where large-scale vaccination programs gave people considerable confidence to reopen and get back to normal life, local authorities, under pressure from substantial new upticks in infections, are reimposing restrictions such as mask-wearing. At home, neighborhood lockdowns have been put in place in more and more places. In Beijing, where the infections still remain single digit, municipal authorities have locked down a few neighborhoods, decided to upgrade control over the capital's two international airports, and tightened entry and exit controls.

There is ample scientific evidence that the Delta variant of the virus is more infectious, which means more effective precautions are needed to stop its current spread. The first line of defense and the most effective is continued vigilance, on both the collective and individual levels.

Hopefully, fear of the virus making a comeback will transform into renewed awareness of the importance of strictly implementing the prevention and control measures and maintaining personal safety protocols such as mask wearing and social distancing, and through joint efforts we can prevent a large-scale comeback of the virus.

**GIANT PANDA IN FRENCH ZOO  
GIVES BIRTH TO FEMALE TWINS**

A giant panda on loan to France from China gave birth to two female twin cubs yesterday, a French zoo announced.

The Beauval Zoo, south of Paris, said the twins were born shortly after 1 a.m. They weigh 149 and 129 grams.

Their mother Huan Huan and father Yuan Zi are at Beauval on a 10-year loan from China aimed at highlighting good ties with France. The twins are their second and third cubs after the first panda ever born in France, Yuan Meng, in 2017.

"They are are very lively, pink and plump," the zoo said in a state-

ment. "Huan Huan is taking care of them very well. She took them in her mouth to lick them and clean them. We can hear little cries."

The cubs will not be named before 100 days. They will spend a few years in France before being sent to China, the zoo said.

Other nations in Europe also have giant pandas, including Austria, Britain, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Finland.

There are about 1,800 pandas living in the wild in China and about 500 in captivity worldwide.

AP PHOTO



Claire Michel of Belgium is assisted by Lotte Miller of Norway after the finish of the women's individual triathlon competition at the Olympics on July 27

**AT AN EXTRAORDINARY  
OLYMPICS, ACTS OF  
KINDNESS ABOUND**

SALLY HO, TOKYO

A surfer jumping in to translate for the rival who'd just beaten him. High-jumping friends agreeing to share a gold medal rather than move to a tiebreaker. Two runners falling in a tangle of legs, then helping each other to the finish line.

In an extraordinary Olympic Games where mental health has been front and center, acts of kindness are everywhere. The world's most competitive athletes have been captured showing gentleness and warmth to one another — celebrating, pep-talking, wiping away one another's tears of disappointment.

Kanoa Igarashi of Japan was disappointed when he lost to Brazilian Italo Ferreira in their sport's Olympic debut.

Not only did he blow his shot at gold on the beach he grew up surfing, he was also being taunted online by racist Brazilian trolls.

The Japanese-American surfer could have stewed in silence, but he instead deployed his knowledge of Portuguese, helping to translate a press conference question for Ferreira on the world stage.

The crowd giggled hearing the cross-rival translation and an official thanked the silver medalist for the assist.

"Yes, thank you, Kanoa," said a beaming Ferreira, who is learning English.

Days later, at the Olympic

Stadium, Gianmarco Tamberi of Italy and Mutaz Barshim of Qatar found themselves in a situation they'd talked about but never experienced — they were tied.

Both high jumpers were perfect until the bar was set to the Olympic-record height of 2.39 meters. Each missed three times.

They could have gone to a jump-off, but instead decided to share the gold.

"I know for a fact that for the performance I did, I deserve that gold. He did the same thing, so I know he deserved that gold," Barshim said. "This is beyond sport. This is the message we deliver to the young generation."

After they decided, Tamberi slapped Barshim's hand and jumped into his arms.

"Sharing with a friend is even more beautiful," Tamberi said. "It was just magical."

Earlier, on the same track, runners Isaiah Jewett of the U.S. and Nijel Amos of Botswana got tangled and fell during the 800-meter semifinals. Rather than get angry, they helped each other to their feet, put their arms around each other and finished together.

Many top athletes come to know each other personally from their time on the road, which can feel long, concentrated, and intense — marked by career moments that may be the best or worst of their lives.

Those feelings have often been amplified at the pandemic-delayed Tokyo

Games, where there is an unmistakable yearning for normalcy and, perhaps, a newfound appreciation for seeing familiar faces.

Restrictions designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have meant Olympians can't mingle the way they normally do.

After a hard-fought, three-set victory in the beach volleyball round-robin final on Saturday at Shiokaze Park, Brazilian Rebecca Cavalcanti playfully poured a bottle of water on American Kelly Claes' back as she did postgame interviews.

The U.S. team had just defeated Brazil but the winners laughed it off, explaining that they're friends.

"I'm excited when quarantine's done so we can sit at the same table and go to dinner with them. But it's kind of hard in a bubble because we have to be away," said Sarah Sponcil, Claes' teammate.

For fellow American Carrissa Moore, the pandemic and its accompanying restrictions brought her closer with the other surfers.

Moore had flown to Japan with the U.S. team 10 days before the first heat, and soon adjusted to living in a home with the other surfers, including Caroline Marks, whom Moore considered the woman to beat.

Moore said she didn't know Marks well before the Tokyo Games but on the night she was crowned the winner and Marks came in fourth, her rival was the first to greet her. **MDT/AP**

**Germany** Berlin police say a 49-year-old man has died after being detained by officers during protests against the German government's anti-coronavirus measures. Police said yesterday that the man had complained of tingling in his arm and chest while officers checked his ID in the capital's Mitte district, where thousands of protesters had rallied despite an official ban on demonstrations.

**Germany** A German-Italian woman has been charged with espionage on suspicion of being an informant for Chinese intelligence for several years, German prosecutors said yesterday. Federal prosecutors say Klara K. is the wife of another suspect, Dr. Klaus L., who was arrested on suspicion of espionage last month following an indictment that they filed at a Munich court in May. The indictment against Klara K. was also filed in May, prosecutors said yesterday.

AP PHOTO



**Turkey** Firefighters were battling to control blazes that tore through forests near Turkey's beach destinations for the sixth day running yesterday, as water-carrying planes from the European Union prepared to join the containment efforts. The fires burning in parched conditions and strong winds since Wednesday have left eight people dead and forced residents and tourists to flee vacation resorts in boats. Many villagers lost homes and farm animals while a thick yellow haze hung in the air in the affected regions.

**UK** opened its borders to fully vaccinated travelers from the U.S. and the European Union yesterday as travel industry leaders urged the government to further ease restrictions and allow people to enjoy the benefits of a successful Covid-19 inoculation program. The new rules came into effect amid reports that Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government may add a new category to Britain's traffic light system of travel restrictions, a move industry officials say would make many people decide to stay home.