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AP PHOTO



Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga officially expanded and extended the nation's coronavirus state of emergency yesterday, as government advisers recommended legal changes that would allow penalties for violations. The measures, approved by a government task force, add seven prefectures to the six areas already under a state of emergency and extend it to Sept. 12.

AP PHOTO



New Zealand's government took drastic action yesterday by putting the entire nation into a strict lockdown for at least three days after finding a single case of coronavirus infection in the community. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern invoked some of the stirring rhetoric she used early in the pandemic by urging the "team of 5 million" — New Zealand's population — to go hard and early in trying to eliminate the latest outbreak.

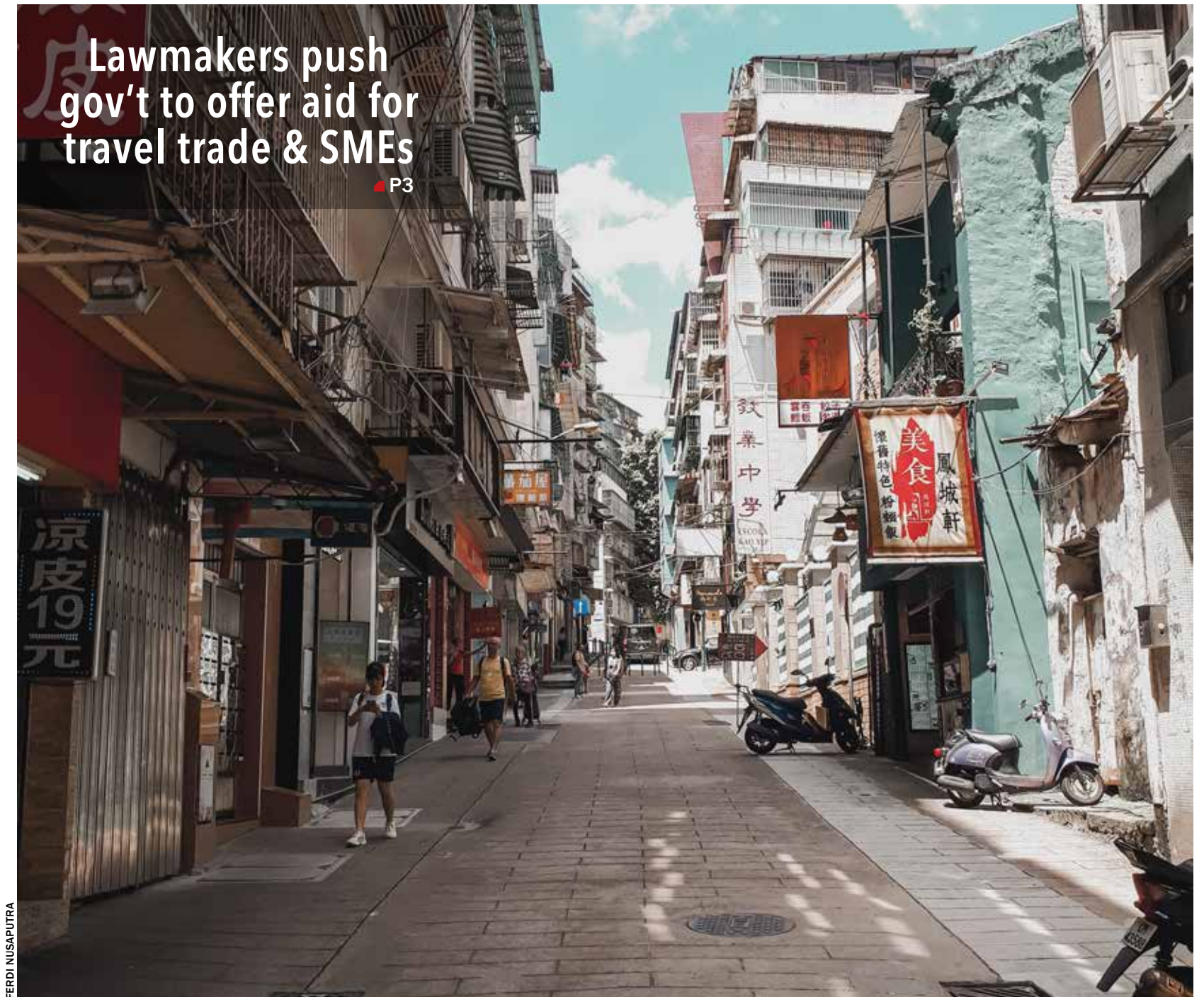
Israeli firefighters worked for a third consecutive day yesterday to contain a wildfire that has consumed a large swath of forest west of Jerusalem and threatened several communities. Israel Fire and Rescue Service said that 110 firefighting teams accompanied by eight aircraft were working to combat the fire that has consumed around 20 square kilometers of land, making it one of the largest wildfires in the country's history.

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FERDI NUSAPUTRA

**HERE'S AN IDEA
LAWMAKER
SI KA LON
SUGGESTS
'POPULATION
INVESTMENT
FUND'**



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AP PHOTO



CHINA BLAMES US OVER AFGHANISTAN, BUT SAYS WILL WORK WITH IT

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COVID-19

NO PLANS TO LOOSEN BORDER RESTRICTIONS: SSM

ANTHONY LAM

DR Leong Iek Hou, coordinator of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, has stressed the importance of stability in Macau, hence tighter measures need to be put in place to ensure that the risks brought in by foreign entrants can be lowered or even eliminated.

If in the future, she added, data proves that most patients will see their onset within the first seven days of virus contraction, a review on the quarantine measures will be considered.

This comes after the official was questioned yesterday at the regular health press briefing on the possibility of shortening the quarantine period for returnees from outside of the Greater China Region.

She declined the suggestion, saying that entrants from outside of the Greater China Region can see the onset of symptoms even after two weeks of quarantine, citing global and mainland data.

It is unclear whether she was referring to entrants carrying the stronger variant types of the virus or merely those returning from abroad.

Leong also stressed that the policy of allowing fully vaccinated people to participate in large-scale events without getting a polymera-



se chain reaction (PCR) test is still in force, but did not explain the risks that it may pose on the community especially since two of the four newest patients were fully vaccinated.

SEVERE AEFI CASE RECORDED

A case of severe adverse event following immunization (AEFI) has been recorded by the Health Bureau (SSM) after a Covid-19 vaccination was administered, Dr Tai Wa Hou, medical director of the public Conde de São Januário Hospital, announced.

The SSM received the case yesterday.

A 27-year-old woman was vaccinated with the second dose of the Comirnaty mRNA vaccine on the afternoon of August 13. That night, she had a palpitation condition, meaning she could perceive her own heartbeat and was aware of her cardiac muscle contractions.

She developed chest pain or chest tightness the next day. Concurrently, she felt tired and had a shortage of breath after performing activities.

Two days later, she approached the private Kiang Wu Hospital for medical support. Blood tests were carried out, which showed an increased cardiac troponin T level, signaling myocardial damage.

The Kiang Wu Hospital team issued a diagnosis of Myocarditis, otherwise known as inflammatory cardiomyopathy, and the patient was admitted to the hospital. It has recently been reported that she has improved symptoms and in a stable condition.

Due to the short time between

her inoculation and the symptoms, her case was transferred to the SSM's dedicated taskforce to assess if there were any correlations, Tai concluded.

NO PLAN FOR SECOND ROUND OF MASS TESTING

The general public has been worried about the probable second round of citywide PCR tests. The concerns have arisen since the first round of tests caused unreasonably long queues across the city with members of the public waiting for hours under the sun and heavy rain to have their secretion samples collected.

Tai said there is no plan to commence a second round of the citywide testing because no infection has been discovered in the first round. Quarantine was also conducted on the community where the newest patients reside, hinting that an infection track may have been disconnected already, and it poses a lesser risk to the city.

In another matter, the SSM is now requiring local private pharmacists to ask buyers of antipyretics the reason of their purchase. If antipyretics is bought to reduce fever, the pharmacists should recommend the buyers to visit a private clinic.



New Covid-19 report system has pros and cons, medical experts say

HONEY TSANG

SOME medical practitioners at private clinics agree that the newly implemented mandate — which requires all public and private doctors to report any suspected Covid-19 case where the patient presents certain symptoms — may be a double-edged sword.

On one hand, it is effective in containing the pandemic, but on the other, it may deter residents from seeking the medical service they require if they are infected with Covid-19.

The Health Bureau (SSM) authorities unveiled the new regulation

on Monday, which became effective immediately following the announcement. It not only requires doctors to report the confirmed cases on a dedicated website but also alters the patients' health code status from green to yellow.

One private medical practitioner told TDM yesterday that several patients resist the medical service and left the clinic as they were worried about the odds of their health code being changed to yellow.

The practitioner is concerned that the patients who are uneasy about

the new regulation would abandon professional medical treatments and would prefer over-the-counter medicines, which will result in delayed treatment, and probably further deteriorate their health condition.

Meanwhile, private doctors commented that it is difficult for them to implement the protocol as there are no guidelines regarding detailed operations as yet. It is also hard for them to confirm whether the patient has taken the Covid-19 test within the 24 hours preceding the appointment, as claimed.

The government stated

that if a patient receives a Covid-19 test less than 24 hours before the medical appointment, they will be granted an exemption from taking the Covid-19 test after the appointment.

Some doctors suggest the government offer resources to enable private clinics to conduct quick nucleic acid testing so that the doctor can take samples from suspected cases on-site and promptly.

This not only offers convenience for both patients and doctors, but also helps reduce contagion risks during the patient's commute to the testing station for after visiting the doctor.

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Lawmakers push gov't to offer aid for travel trade & SMEs

HONEY TSANG

SEVERAL lawmakers called on the government to bring forward some sort of economic stimulus for the city's travel industry and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) — considered the industries hardest-hit by the Covid-19 pandemic — to ease their financial hardship during the Covid-19 resurgence.

Last week, lawmakers Lei Cheng I and Leong Sun Iok convened a meeting with several local travel industry leaders to assess the extent to which the resurgence in early August has undermined the travel industry.

Following the emergence of four Delta cases in Macau, the government suspended the domestic travel initiative "Stay, Dine and See Macao." The program was intended to offer job opportunities and stipends — albeit temporarily — to financially strapped tour guides who had been unemployed since the outbreak last year.

However, industry leaders agreed that the ongoing suspension results in local tour guides being forced to endure the grueling status of joblessness once again.



NATHAN JOHN

Chairman of the Macau Tourist Guide Association, Wu Wai Fong, was one of the representatives who attended the meeting. They suggested the Macau government learn from other governments to create some temporary positions for unemployed tourist guides to carry them through the current situation.

They also suggested ramping up the scope of the "Stay, Dine

and See Macao," and increasing tour frequencies, once the pandemic is stabilized locally, to help generate more income for the travel trade.

Lawmakers Lei and Leong said that this Covid-19 wave has dealt a blow to the already beleaguered tourism industry. Due to the unpredictability of the pandemic, the duo anticipated that it would take some more time for tourist

arrivals to rebound again.

Given this, they both suggest the government to emulate other governments by providing pandemic-related positions for tourist guides, such as temporary jobs at Covid-19 testing sites or vaccination centers, etc.

While the pandemic is being brought back under control, the government should foster the development of the tourism indus-

try and focus on job-matching endeavors to ensure tour guides find jobs best suited to their expertise, the two lawmakers urged.

In addition, Lei and Leong urged the government to formulate a plan in advance to reduce the financial burden on residents if the pandemic persists.

Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) suspended local tours under the "Stay, Dine and See Macao" program from August 4. The suspension was originally scheduled to last until August 17. However, the program will remain suspended until further notice.

SUPPORT FOR SME SUGGESTED

Another lawmaker Ho Ion Sang filed a written query to the government, urging it to launch some sort of economic stimulus targeted to throw a lifeline to local SMEs suffering from this wave of the pandemic.

Incumbent lawmaker Agnes Lam also stated that she received complaints from SMEs near the red and yellow zone areas which had been cordoned off for 14 consecutive days. They lamented that the resurgence led to reduced visitation to their stores, resulting in a decline in business.

Besides, people residing in red and yellow zones had no choice but to take unpaid leave as well.

Lam urges the government to tend to these concerned groups of people, and launch a special financial relief to assist affected individuals.

Lawmaker suggests gov't link 'cash handouts' to investment fund

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER Si Ka Lon has submitted an unusual proposal to the government calling for a complete overhaul of the system that currently regulates the government's wealth paring scheme.

In the proposal submitted through the Legislative Assembly at the close of this term, the lawmaker addressed the current situation of the so-called cash handout paid annually to all residents of Macau by the government, suggesting an alternative proposal.

Taking into account the events related to the economic impact caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted from an economy too dependent on a single activity, Si believes that it would be more beneficial if the government establishes a new investment fund,

which he called a "population fund" with all residents participating as shareholders.

The idea is for local people to start receiving earnings resulting from the investments made through the fund, instead of the cash handout by the government.

To establish the fund, the government detaches a sum of 100 billion patacas from the extraordinary reserve, apportioning not less than 100,000 patacas to each resident.

This would not only guarantee a better rentability for the residents but also an opportunity to "promote the development of Heng-qin, accelerate the investment for the diversification of industries and expand common platforms for sharing opportunities," he said.

Si claims that the idea of using a sum of 100 billion

patacas comes from several studies carried out by the Macau SAR investment development fund on the topic.

According to the figures quoted, at the end of last year, the Financial Reserve had a value of 616.1 billion patacas, of which 146.6 billion belonged to the basic reserve and 469.5 billion to the extraordinary reserve.

Si added that such an effort will also lead to an increased participation by local residents in the economic stimulation.

The lawmaker again quoted official figures to say that in the past few years, the government has been attempting to optimize the Financial Reserve's investment portfolio, through the increase in shares, bonds, and participation in the construction of the country, among others. It is the abi-

lity to "be able to increase the return on investment, in the last five years, to an average annual rate of 3.1 percent," he said.

With the idea of turning every resident into a shareholder of a Macau SAR investment fund, Si also hopes to help solve problems resulting from the shrinking of opportunities in the job market, especially for the sectors of tourism and gaming, conventions and exhibitions, and small and medium-sized enterprises as well as for the growing number of unemployed and underemployed residents.

The benefit of this proposal is that it will not be directly dependent on the government's annual tax income. The dividends will be distributed to residents on an annual basis, depending on the profitability of the investment portfolio.

RENATO MARQUES



The lawmaker also referred to the President Xi Jinping's speech, made during the Macau handover 20th anniversary celebration, noting that this fund would fulfill the idea of "accelerating the development of the economic diversification with a focus on assets and strengths." In addition, it will "create a channel for the population to participate in regional cooperation and to share opportunities for the development of industrial diversification so that development opportunities and re-

sults can benefit the entire population more broadly."

Concurrently, he also called for accelerated training of the staff which deals with the government's reserve funds and to upgrade to an ideal inspection mechanism which will be adjusted to the characteristics of a "public and universal company that would be under periodic supervision of the Legislative Assembly through the presentation of monthly or quarterly reports, as a form of accountability with the resident-shareholders."

SANDS CONTINUES TO LEAD GAMING MARKET WITH 24.9% SHARE IN Q2

RENATO MARQUES

SANDS China has continued to lead the local gaming market in the second quarter (Q2) of this year with a total share of 24.9%, as data published by German multinational investment bank and financial services company, Deutsche Bank, showed.

According to the same data release, Sands China's market share grew by 0.8% over the same period.

Coming in after Sands China was Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG), which scored a market share of 20.4% in Q2, a figure representing a decline of 0.8% when compared quarter-on-quarter with the first quarter of this year.

Melco Resorts held the third-largest share with 17.9%, followed by Wynn Macau with 13.7%, SJM Holdings, and MGM China, with shares of 11.7%, and 11.3%, respectively.

According to the data analysis made by Deutsche Bank, the results from Sands China are underpinned by the mass

RENATO MARQUES



market gaming sub-sector, where the gaming concessionaire also maintained its dominance with a 25.1% share. GEG came in after Sands China again, retaining 17.8% of the share.

The only sub-sector in which GEG overtook the earnings of Sands China was the VIP market, where the concessionaire dominated with a market share of as much as 28.1%, totaling to MOP6.25 billion. Sands China followed in this sub-sector scoring 22.5%.

Melco Resorts was the third largest in the VIP market, scoring 19.9%, a significant result that showed a 5.8% growth quarter-to-quarter.

Wynn Macau was fourth with 14.2% and MGM China and SJM Holdings completed the list of six, respectively with 9.2% and 6.1% of the market share.

In general terms, Q2 saw the results increase by 12.5% for the mass market, while the VIP market registered a drop by 5.2% quarter-on-quarter.

WEEKLY RESULTS CONTINUE TO PLUMMET

Following the first week of August where casino revenues reverted to the levels of September last year and registered a daily decline by as much as 48%, the second week did not show signs of recovery as results continued to plummet.

According to the weekly report from investment research and institutional asset management company, Sanford C Bernstein Ltd, the gross gaming re-

venue (GGR) for the period between August 9 to 15 was down by 37% week-on-week, registering the lowest weekly result since September 2020.

The brokerage company estimated that the average daily rate for the second week of the month stood at about MOP78 million recording the "lowest daily GGR since late September," analysts reported.

According to last week's report, the company justifies the significant drop as a result of the aftermath of the travel restrictions imposed by both Macau and the neighboring regions to visit the Asian gaming Mecca after several Covid-19 cases had been detected in both Macau and the neighboring cities.

This is also confirmed by the average number of visitors registered by Macau during the second week of August, showing a decline of 78% from July's average.

Nevertheless, Sanford Bernstein also noted that after August 12, following the easing of border restrictions and the validity of the nucleic acid tests changing from 12 hours to 48 hours, the visitor numbers have gradually begun to recover. By the end of last week, numbers had risen to 50% below the July average.

PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS SURGE UP TO MOP16B IN APRIL-JUNE

LYNZY VALLES

THE total transaction value of building units and parking spaces rose by 37.4% and 52.0% respectively quarter-on-quarter, together amounting to MOP15.99 billion.

According to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), a total of 2,731 building units and parking spaces were purchased and sold in the second quarter of 2021 according to Stamp Duty records.

Purchase and sale of residential units increased by 623 quarter-on-quarter to 1,933 units, and the total value increased by 61.6% to MOP13.69 billion. The number of existing residential units transacted (1,807 units) grew by 53.3% and the transaction value of MOP12.70 billion swelled by 72.4%. On the other hand, the transaction volume (126 units) and transaction value (MOP0.99 billion) of pre-sale residential units dropped by 3.8% and 10.4% respectively quarter-on-quarter.

Recently in its Macau Mid-year Review 2021, real estate firm JLL reported that the transaction volume of residential sales in Macau picked up in the first half of the year (H1), with the market performing strongly until May.

JOSE MANUEL



The sales market slowed down in June due to the new wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in Guangdong province.

JLL previously recorded that most buyers were local first home-owners, leading to more than 70% of overall residential sales, and added that residential buyers have a greater bargaining power due to the pandemic.

With respect to the average price per square meter of usable area, the overall average price of residential units increased by 5.2% quarter-on-quarter to MOP105,412, with the average prices of those in the Macau Peninsula (MOP103,603), Taipa (MOP105,808) and Coloane (MOP119,127) rising by 5.9%, 2.1% and 10.5% respectively.

The average price per square meter of existing residential units rose by 7.9% quarter-on-quarter to MOP102,928. The transacted units were mainly in Baixa da Taipa (355 units), NATAP (244 units) and Areia Preta & Iao Hon (129 units), and the respective average prices per square meter were MOP107,059, MOP118,384 and MOP102,244.

With regards to construction in the private sector, there were 8,964 residential units in the design stage, 2,662 under construction and 443 under inspection as at the end of the second quarter. During the second quarter, 39 residential units were issued the construction permit with 38 of them located in the Macau Peninsula; studio flats accounted for 71.8% of the total.

CRIME

LOCAL MAN DETAINED FOR TAKING UPSKIRT VIDEOS OF PEOPLE IN STREETS

RENATO MARQUES

A man in his 40s has been detained by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) after being caught taking video footage up the skirts of women walking on the streets of Macau, the PSP reported.

The man, who is a staff member of a casino cage, was caught by one of his victims, a woman in her 30s. The victim noticed him taking pictures under her skirt while he was walking behind her on August 11 around 5 p.m. when she was walking along the street at Largo do Aquino in central Macau.

She confronted him and took him to the police station nearby.

At the police station, the man confessed to the crime, claiming to have momentarily lost his self-control because the woman was very attractive.

The police found four videos on the man's mobile phone of the woman who caught him red-handed.

A further investigation of his home identified that he had a collection of around 440 photos and 130 videos of unknown and unidentifiable women on a laptop.

Among this collection, 31 photos and 37 videos had been recorded in several locations in Macau. The man admitted to being the creator of these photos and footage.

However, he claims to have downloaded the rest of the media from several internet sources. According to the police report, the earliest footage was dated from mid-2018.

This is the second case of this nature discovered by the police in one week.

Last week, the PSP also arrested a local man in Taipa for conducting the same unlawful activity.

Authorities to investigate Galaxy incident as suicide

MURDER has been ruled out as the cause of the death of the non-resident worker at Galaxy Macau on Monday, the Judiciary Police (PJ) and the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) announced at a joint press conference yesterday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the police announced that it would continue to investigate the case as a suicide.

The PJ, citing the doctor from the Accident and Emergency Department, said that the victim had safety vests and belts on the body when he was delivered to the hospital, but was without pulse and breath.

The wounds found on the victim, the PJ said, are theoretically consistent with those that would be caused by a fall from height. No wound indicating that the fall might have been caused by a fight or attack was found.

Coworkers told the police that in the previous half



BULKAN EVGIMEN

month, the victim has been working on installing cables at the ground level. The reason why the victim climbed to the ceiling level, 28 meters from the ground, is still unclear.

Considering several factors, the PJ has ruled out murder as the cause of dea-

th. The police disclosed that there may be a connection with the victim's finances. No suicide note was found near the site.

A post-mortem is required to identify the actual cause of death, the PJ added.

On the other hand, the DSAL found that the over-

pass (a permanent installation for future maintenance) meets safety guidelines, but also that it was quite dusty. The railings show signs of being climbed upon. The authority stressed that no work in the area had been allocated to workers at the time of the incident. **AL**

1,561 SOCIAL HOUSING APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED

HONEY TSANG

The government has given the green light to a total of 1,561 applications for the social housing scheme since the permanent application method for the program was put in place in August 20 last year.

From August 20, 2020, to August 17, 2021, the government received a total of 3,695 applications for the social housing scheme.

Of all the applications, 3,144 of them filed with all the required documents. Of these, 1,561 were accepted by the government.

Of the accepted applications, 40% were one-person households. Another 35% were households with members aged 45 to 64.

Other 375 applications were rejected as they failed to meet the requirements.

Meanwhile, there are 168 applications subject to ongoing legal proceedings. As of August 13, a total of three households — of around 13,000 households — who had moved into social housing apartments were found to have breached the eligibility, as their aggregate household income more than doubled the capped limit.

From January to mid-August this year, around 117 social housing tenants were discovered to have household income exceeding the limit, an increase of 74 year-on-year. The government has retracted their social housing units.

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CHINA'S MILITARY CONDUCTS ASSAULT DRILLS IN SEAS NEAR TAIWAN

CHINESE fighter jets, anti-submarine aircraft and combat ships conducted assault drills near Taiwan yesterday with the People's Liberation Army saying the exercise was necessary to safeguard China's sovereignty.

China has stepped up military exercises around self-ruled Taiwan, which it considers its own territory.

Recent U.S.-Taiwan provocations severely violated Chinese sovereignty, Eastern Theater Command spokesman Shi Yi said in a statement.

The assault drills were held near Taiwan's southwestern



and southeastern waters.

Taiwan's defense ministry said in a statement it had fully grasped and assessed the situation in the sea and air and

was prepared to respond in each respect.

In June, China flew a record 28 fighter jets toward Taiwan.

Last week, officers from

the U.S. and Taiwanese coast guards met to discuss improving cooperation and communication.

The meeting followed the announcement of plans by the U.S. to sell 40 self-propelled howitzers to Taiwan in a deal valued at \$750 million that drew strong condemnation from Beijing.

The U.S. maintains only unofficial relations with Taiwan in deference to Beijing, but it is the island's key arms supplier and closest political ally. It has been boosting U.S.-Taiwan ties amid deteriorating relations with China. **MDT/AP**

IMPRISONED CITIZEN JOURNALIST NOT WELL, LAWYER SAYS

CHINESE citizen journalist serving a four-year sentence after reporting on the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic in the city of Wuhan is in ill health after staging a long-running hunger strike, according to a lawyer who spoke with her family.

Zhang Zhan was hospitalized on July 31 and now weighs less than 40 kilograms, according to a message sent by Zhang Zhan's mother to a group on Chinese social media. Authorities notified the family that she was in poor health and told them to come to the prison, said Peng Yonghe, a lawyer who spoke with Zhang's mother about the visit.

Her parents and brother went to Shanghai on August 2 but were only permitted to speak with her over the phone.

"We just hope that she can get out of jail, because her hunger strike is really worrying," said Peng.

Hospitals in Chinese prisons under generally poorly equipped, said Jane Wang, an activist with Humanitarian China, a U.S.-based group founded by Chinese dissidents. Wang helped share Zhang mother's message more widely.

"It's not a proper medical facility," said Wang.

Publication of her case has brought expressions of support for Zhang, including from Tan Binlin, who held a one-person demonstration on Aug. 4 in his town in Hunan province. Tan called on authorities to let her seek proper medical treatment.

Zhang's mother could not be reached for comment.

A Shanghai court sentenced Zhang last December over accusations of "picking fights and provoking trouble," a vaguely defined charge often used in political cases.

Zhang early on went on hunger strike, then began taking some food after her health declined, Wang said, citing one of Zhang's lawyers.

Calls to the office at Shanghai's Prison Administration went unanswered Tuesday.

Authorities detained Zhang in May of last year as China stepped up censorship to control the narrative about the pandemic, which was first detected in Wuhan. The government has faced accusations that it covered up early missteps and delayed the release of critical information that would have helped slow the spread of the virus.

Zhang had traveled to Wuhan shortly after the city was placed under strict lockdown in February last year, with millions of residents forbidden to leave.

She uploaded dozens of short, shaky cell phone videos to YouTube, showing deserted streets and other signs of life under lockdown.

One documented her visit to a police station where Dr. Li Wenliang had been reprimanded for spreading word about the outbreak where she tried to ask about his case. Another shows a security guard repeatedly batting away her phone and threatening her as she filmed a dispute. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

Groups crossing 'red lines' should disband: Lam

HONG Kong's leader Carrie Lam said yesterday organizations that cross "red lines" and disregard national security should disband and the government would not hesitate to cut ties with professional groups that turn political.

Authorities are conducting an ongoing crackdown on dissent in the city, arresting pro-democracy leaders and activists as Beijing seeks to keep Hong Kong in line after months of mass anti-government protests in 2019.

Lam made her comments after the Civil Human Rights Front, known for organizing annual July 1 protests and a key organizer of some of the biggest protests in 2019, said Sunday it could no longer operate due to the imprisonment of its leader Figo Chan and a



loss of members.

Its dissolution also came as Hong Kong police were reportedly investigating the group for breaking the law, with a police commissioner saying in an interview with local media that the group had not formally registered with the government.

Critics of Hong Kong's security legislation say it rolls

back freedoms promised to Hong Kong for 50 years when it was handed over by the British to mainland China in 1997. The legislation criminalizes subversion, secession, terrorism and foreign collusion, and has been used to arrest over 100 pro-democracy figures since it was implemented last June.

"There is no absolute freedom of an individual anywhere in the world. You enjoy it in accordance with the law," Lam said at a regular news conference, adding that there were many organizations who do not accept that their behavior and speech are regulated by the city's national security law imposed last June.

"In the past we have seen organizations and individuals crossing these red lines. In my

opinion, the only choice is at this time is disbandment," she said. "So it's nothing to do with exercising your right or your freedom."

Lam said that even if organizations disband of their own volition, it does not absolve them of criminal liability if they are found to break the law. Law enforcement agencies will continue to collect evidence and investigate, and any breaches of the law will be prosecuted accordingly, she said.

Professional groups who deviate from their original purpose and turn political will also be cut off from the Hong Kong government, she said.

The government last month severed ties with the Professional Teachers' Union, the city's largest union for educators. The union later disbanded, citing a changing political climate.

Lam warned that the Law Society — a professional association for solicitors in Hong Kong — could be next if they "let politics take over their professional mission." **MDT/AP**

CHINESE-CANADIAN POP STAR ARRESTED ON SUSPICION OF RAPE

CHINESE-CANADIAN pop star Kris Wu was arrested this week on suspicion of rape in a high-profile case that followed an accusation the singer had sex with a 17-year-old while she was drunk and lured young women into sexual relationships.

The prosecutor's office of the Beijing district of Chaoyang said in a one-sentence statement that Wu's ar-

rest was formally approved but gave no details of the charges.

Wu, 30, earlier denied the accusation by a teenager that he had sex with her while she was drunk. The accusation prompted an outpouring of sympathetic comments online for the teenager and criticism of Wu.

The teenager said seven women contacted her to say the former member of Korean

boy band EXO seduced them with promises of jobs and other opportunities. She said some were under 18 but gave no indication whether any were younger than China's age of consent of 14.

Wu, known in Chinese as Wu Yifan, denied having sex with partners under 14.

Wu was detained Aug. 1 while police conducted an investigation in response to

comments online that he "repeatedly lured young women" to have sex, according to a police statement at that time.

Wu grew up in Guangzhou in China and in Vancouver, British Columbia. Police have said he is a Canadian citizen.

The teenager publicized her accusations on social media and later in an interview with the internet portal NetEase. A day after that interview appeared, at least 10 brands including Porsche and Louis Vuitton broke off endorsement and other deals with Wu. **MDT/AP**

China blames US over Afghanistan, but says will work with it

CHINA has expressed a willingness to hold talks with the U.S. to promote a “soft landing” in Afghanistan, while heavily criticizing Washington and again demanding that the Biden administration halt its attacks on China.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi, in a phone call with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, blamed what he called America’s “hasty” military withdrawal the chaos accompanying the Taliban’s seizure of power in Afghanistan, according to a Foreign Ministry statement dated yesterday.

“China is willing to conduct communication and dialogue with the U.S. to promote the soft landing of the Afghan issue and avoid a new civil war or humanitarian disaster ... and not let it become a breeding ground and shelter for terrorism once again,” Wang was quoted as saying in the call.

Ahead of the final withdrawal of U.S. troops, the Taliban have topped the Afghan military and government, entering the capital, Kabul over the weekend.

Wang said that China and the U.S. should cooperate on global issues and regional hot spots, but that “the US cannot, on the one hand, deliberately curb and suppress China to damage China’s legitimate rights and interests, and on the other hand, count on China to offer support and coordination.”

A one-sentence State Department statement said that Blinken and Wang spoke about developments in Afghanistan including the security situation and respective efforts to bring their citizens to safety.

The Biden administration has been seeking China’s cooperation on issues such as climate change, while criticizing China over differences on trade and technology, security in the Asia-Pacific region and human rights.

Henry Storey, a political risk analyst based in Melbourne, Australia, said that Wang is trying to portray China as a responsible international stakeholder in contrast to America’s history of intervention in other countries.

“The reference to the U.S.’s ‘hasty withdrawal’ and Afghanistan being a ‘breeding ground and shelter for terrorism’ alludes to China’s clear anxieties around how instability in Afghanistan may impact China and the broader region,” Storey said in an email response to questions.

Wang and Blinken also each held talks separately with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov yesterday [Macau time].

Wang called for strengthened strategic cooperation and coordi-

nation with Russia to encourage the Taliban to adopt mild and prudent religious policies and build an open and inclusive political structure with all parties, a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said.

China has shown a willingness to engage with the Taliban, inviting leaders to a meeting with Wang in the Chinese city of Tianjin last month.

Wang urged the group to negotiate a peaceful end to the two-decade-old conflict and not shelter terrorists it says threaten security in its restive northwestern region of Xinjiang.

China, which shares a narrow border with Afghanistan, says the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, has been behind violent attacks in the past. It’s not clear what sort of presence the group currently has in Afghanistan. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar (left) and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during their meeting in Tianjin last month

EUROPE URGES UNITY ON TALIBAN BUT IS QUIET ON FAILED MISSION

EUROPEAN leaders said yesterday (Macau time) they will press for a unified international approach to dealing with a Taliban government in Afghanistan, as they looked on with dismay at the rapid collapse of two decades of a U.S.-led Western campaign in the country.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to French President Emmanuel Macron, stressing the need for a common stand, both on recognizing any future Afghan government and to prevent a humanitarian and refugee crisis.

Both leaders agreed to cooperate at the U.N. Security Council, and Johnson also said he will host a virtual meeting of the Group of Seven leaders on Afghanistan in the next few days. Johnson said on Sunday, “We don’t want anybody to bilaterally recognize the Taliban.”

German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s spokesman echoed that sentiment, saying the question of whether there can be a dialogue with the Taliban needs to be discussed internationally.

“We do not have any illusions about the Taliban and the essence of their movement,” said Steffen Seibert, the spokesman.

The French leader said in a speech to the nation that the fight against “Islamist terrorism in all its forms” would not end.

“Afghanistan cannot again become the sanctuary for terrorism that it was,” Macron said.

He stressed that the U.N. Security Council is the forum for a coordinated response, and added, “We will do everything so that Russia, the United States and Europe can cooperate efficiently because our interests are the same.”

Macron also raised fears of uncontrolled migration to Europe by Afghans, saying that France, Germany and other European countries would work to swiftly develop a “robust, coordinated and united response.”

As far as the crisis inside Afghanistan, Eu-

AP PHOTO



French soldiers prepare to board a military Airbus A400M to evacuate French citizens from Afghanistan

ropean leaders’ hands are tied in many ways: They have little leverage over the Taliban, and they are deeply reluctant to publicly criticize the withdrawal decision by the United States, their powerful NATO ally — or comment on their own role in the failed intervention.

NATO countries were left with little choice but to pull out the roughly 7,000 non-American forces in Afghanistan after President Joe Biden announced in April that he was ending the U.S. involvement in the war by September, 20 years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Malcolm Chalmers, deputy director-general of London’s Royal United Services Institute, said that Britain -- which for much for the war contributed the second-largest number of troops to the mission -- “was especially upset that the Biden administration didn’t consult it more fully about the decision to withdraw this summer.”

“That is water under the bridge, but the

fact that there wasn’t a coordinated alliance approach to the withdrawal makes it even more important now to coordinate a Western response — starting with the question of recognition” of a Taliban government, he said.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said last week that the Taliban “need to understand that they will not be recognized by the international community if they take the country by force.” EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has also warned that the militant group would face “isolation” and “lack of international support.”

Borrell is expected to chair an emergency meeting of EU foreign ministers to discuss Afghanistan today [Macau time], while NATO envoys will also hold talks.

Meanwhile, Russia’s envoy on Afghanistan said that Moscow will decide whether to recognize the new Taliban government based on its conduct. **MDT/AP**

SRI LANKA

Banks on vaccination to see it through delta surge

BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, COLOMBO

MANJULA Wijesuriya had COVID-19, but his friends and family say that's not what killed him.

When the 51-year-old tutor suffered a heart attack in late July, his loved ones rushed him to a nearby hospital in a suburb of Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo. But as his condition deteriorated over the next few hours, they found it impossible to get him a bed in an intensive care unit.

That's because a test confirmed Wijesuriya also had the coronavirus, and virus patients must be admitted to separate ICUs. All of them were occupied. The father to three died on Aug. 1 — a day after stepping foot inside the hospital.

"It was a tragic death," said his friend Tissa Jananayake. "Even though he had COVID, he did not die because of it. He died because he did not receive treatment for the heart attack; he died because he could not get an ICU bed."

Wijesuriya's death is a worrying sign of how the latest coronavirus surge, driven by the highly contagious delta variant, is swamping the Indian Ocean island nation.

"The delta variant is like a bomb," said Channa Jayasmana, state minister of pharmaceutical production, supply and regulation. "It exploded in ... London and India. Now it has exploded in Sri Lanka," he added.

In the last two weeks, Sri Lanka has seen an unprecedented rise in coronavirus patients and deaths. The country's latest wave of infections, which began in April, has been the most severe of the pandemic. Around 80% of the country's total deaths occurred during this current wave, which also accounts for the majority of confirmed cases since the pandemic began.

While the Health Ministry doesn't release data on how many COVID-19 beds are occupied, doctors and medical associations warn that ICU beds for coronavirus patients and morgues across Sri Lanka are rapidly nearing



maximum capacity.

In recent weeks, television channels and social media have been inundated with dramatic visuals of overrun and overburdened government hospitals, with patients forced to sleep on floors while waiting for treatment.

Daily confirmed cases have doubled to 3,000, while deaths have shot past 100 a day. Sri Lanka has confirmed over 358,000 cases since the pandemic began and more than 6,000 deaths.

Doctors and health officials say the delta variant has swept across the country with dizzying speed, and is quickly moving from cities and into the suburbs. The government has appealed to the public to stay at home except in an emergency.

The rise in infections has pushed oxygen demand to "unacceptably high levels" that are increasing by the day, said Dr. Padma Gunaratne, president of the Sri Lanka Medical Association.

The latest barrage of cases comes as restrictions were slowly being eased following a monthlong lockdown in May and June.

New restrictions have followed. A ban on all public gatherings began on Sunday while weddings receptions were banned since yester-

day. And a nighttime curfew began Monday that exempts only essential services.

The Health Ministry is also adding more hospital beds. Last week, the World Health Organization said it provided emergency medical equipment to 78 hospitals in Sri Lanka, including beds, oximeters, oxygen cylinders and concentrators.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa also changed his health minister on Monday. Keheliya Rambukwella, the media minister and government spokesman, takes over the Health Ministry, while predecessor Pavithra Waniarachchi was appointed as transport minister.

Starting Sept. 15, no one will be allowed to enter public places without a vaccination card. But the government has held off on imposing a new lockdown, fearing the damage to the already ailing economy.

Instead, Sri Lanka's leaders are banking on the vaccination drive to see them through the surge. It used more than 1 million AstraZeneca shots to begin its vaccination drive before supplies from neighboring India dried up. Sri Lanka then looked to China, whose Sinopharm vaccine has been the most widely used in the drive so far. Sri Lanka has also received do-

ses from Japan, Russia, the U.S. and through the U.N.-backed COVAX program.

Officials are confident they will receive enough doses to fully immunize 70% or 15 million people out of the 22 million population by the end of September. So far, 4 million have received both doses while 11.6 million got the first shot.

But "this is not enough to stop the current wave or the large number of deaths," said Dr. Ravi Rannan-Eliya, executive director of the Institute for Health Policy — especially since Sinopharm and other vaccines are not fully effective in blocking the delta variant's transmission.

Authorities will need to test more rapidly and make plans to vaccinate the remaining 30% of the population, who are mostly children, he added. "This target of inoculating 70% of the population that they (the government) are chasing is no longer enough."

Experts say the next few weeks are of immediate concern, with cases likely to escalate quickly, especially with no lockdown in place. "We need to pay attention, we need to do something," said Gunaratne of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. "We are at a very critical point." MDT/AP

this day in history

1969 WOODSTOCK MUSIC FESTIVAL ENDS



Thousands of young people are heading home after three days and nights of sex, drugs and rock and roll at the Woodstock music festival.

An estimated 400,000 youngsters turned up to hear big-name bands play in a field near the village of Bethel, New York state in what has become the largest rock concert of the decade.

About 186,000 tickets were sold so promoters anticipated that around 200,000 would turn up. But on Friday night, the flimsy fences and ticket barriers had come down and organisers announced the concert was free prompting thousands more to head for the concert.

Traffic jams eight miles long blocked off the area near White Lake, near Bethel, some 50 miles from the town of Woodstock.

Local police estimated a million people were on the road yesterday trying to get to Woodstock. They were overwhelmed by the numbers but were impressed by a good level of behaviour.

The festival's chief medical officer, Dr William Abruzzi told Rolling Stone magazine: "These people are really beautiful. There has been no violence whatsoever which is really remarkable for a crowd of this size."

Those who made it to the makeshift venue were treated to performances by Janis Joplin, The Who, Grateful Dead, Canned Heat, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Jimi Hendrix, Joan Baez and Ravi Shankar.

Rainstorms failed to dampen the spirits of the revellers, many high on marijuana, some dancing naked in the now muddy fields.

The main organiser, 49-year-old dairy farmer Max Yasgur, who provided \$50,000 and 600 acres of his land, addressed the crowds on the last day of the event.

"You have proven something to the world... that half a million kids can get together for fun and music and have nothing but fun and music."

There were however two deaths - a teenager was killed by a tractor as he lay in his sleeping bag and another died from a drugs overdose.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Woodstock, a holiday centre and artists' colony, had held an arts and music fair since 1906 but the 1969 Woodstock festival made the town world famous.

The final cost to the four sponsors - John Roberts, Joel Rosenman, Artie Kornfeld and Michael Lang - was \$2.4m. A film of the concert was released the following year and Woodstock became synonymous with flower power, the hippie culture and anti-Vietnam war protests that dominated the 1970s.

The "Woodstock generation" look back on the event with nostalgia and an anniversary Woodstock festival was held in 1994.

But the second - highly commercialised - anniversary concert in July 1999 ended in riots, fires and at least eight allegations of rape.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Union also provides you with ample energy to see and do it all; just be mindful of burning yourself out. Elsewhere, the ambitious Capricorn moon sends your focus towards career matters.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Take this opportunity to be forward about your feelings or to apply yourself artistically. Meanwhile, the grounded Capricorn moon helps you maintain a sense of security in the face of impulse.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You may find yourself feeling riled up under Wednesday's skies, Gemini. Your ruling planet, data-gathering Mercury, spends the day merged with self-motivated Mars.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Be mindful of your word choice under today's cosmic landscape, Cancer! Both your mind and tongue are equivalent to a sharpened knife today, as expressive Mercury merges with hot-headed Mars.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

This hyperactive pairing also makes it easy to burn yourself out on your workload. Meanwhile, the capable Capricorn moon encourages you to get serious about your productive efforts.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

As a Virgo, you're led by the wing-footed planet of intellect, Mercury. Wednesday's skies find Mercury cozied up with self-motivated Mars, both presently residing in your sign.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

The universe has been nudging you into major relationship changes. Today's skies highlight this ongoing narrative, as go-getter Mars locks into a supportive alignment with authenticity-craving Uranus.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Things are likely to get a bit heated in the social scene of your world, Scorpio. Communicator Mercury merges with fiery Mars today, creating an influx of dialed up energy in this arena.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Be on the lookout for direction-changing news on the career front, Sagittarius. Messenger Mercury spends the day merged with action-taking Mars, bringing energy and drive to apply to your ambition.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You're ready to re-enter the scene today, Capricorn. The moon slips forward into your sign, providing you with a boost of self-assertive energy and a desire to have your needs met and validated.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You're likely to be dealing with some uncomfortable truths that need acknowledging today, Aquarius. Rather than bury your feelings, aim to make room for them to breathe.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

The close relationships in your life are demanding clarity, Pisces. Today's skies witness the heated union of messenger Mercury and go-getter Mars, delivering an energetic punch to partnership matters.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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			6			2		
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					9	4		

HARD

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	2			5				
			5	8				
		7	4					
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1							6	

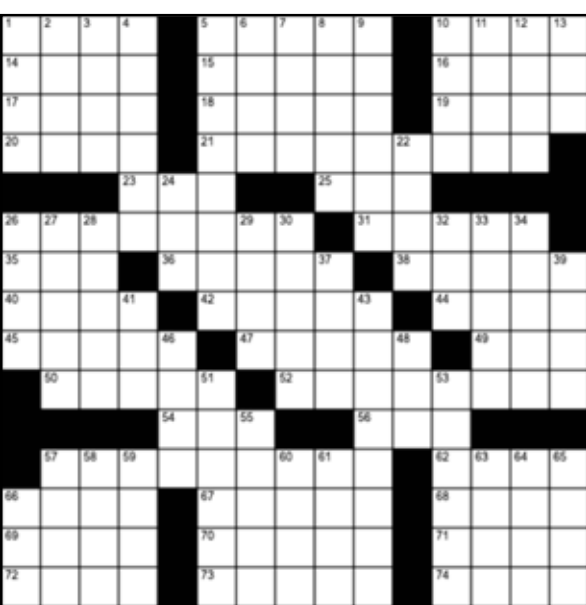
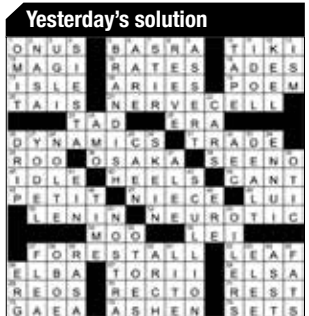
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	21	29	overcast
Harbin	17	27	cloudy
Tianjin	25	32	rain
Urumqi	23	27	showers
Xi'an	26	34	rain
Lhasa	21	27	cloudy
Chengdu	26	30	rain
Chongqing	26	35	thunderstorms
Kunming	25	32	showers
Nanjing	21	27	showers
Shanghai	24	34	cloudy
Wuhan	23	32	cloudy
Hangzhou	17	28	cloudy
Taipei	21	31	cloudy
Guangzhou	18	25	rain
Hong Kong	22	32	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	18	31	overcast
Frankfurt	13	19	cloudy
Paris	16	21	cloudy
London	14	21	cloudy
New York	23	27	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Responsibility; 5- Iraqi port; 10- Polynesian carving; 14- Biblical gift bearers; 15- Gives a 9.8, say; 16- Summer coolers; 17- Capri, for one; 18- Spring sign; 19- Composition in verse; 20- Mai ____; 21- Neuron; 23- Tiny bit; 25- Baseball stat; 26- The study of forces in motion; 31- Commerce; 35- Aussie hopper; 36- City near Kobe; 38- ____ evil...; 40- Doing nothing; 42- Backs of feet; 44- Pious platitudes; 45- Minor, in law; 47- Family tree member; 49- Him, to Henri; 50- Russian revolutionary leader; 52- Disturbed; 54- Cattle call; 56- Maui memento; 57- Anticipate; 62- Fall feller; 66- Exile isle; 67- Japanese gateway; 68- Socialite Maxwell; 69- Classic autos; 70- Right-hand page; 71- Break; 72- Greek goddess of the earth; 73- Sallow; 74- Goes down;

DOWN: 1- Pass over; 2- Mission control gp.; 3- Wrinkly fruit; 4- Midday nap; 5- Wave threateningly; 6- Swiss river; 7- Agitate; 8- Actor Christopher; 9- Declare; 10- Record; 11- Golden calf, e.g.; 12- Ship stabilizer; 13- Belief; 22- Bugs, clunkers, and rides, e.g.; 24- Latin 101 word; 26- Faucet problem; 27- Warble; 28- Nick of "Cape Fear"; 29- Normandy city; 30- Loose coil of yarn; 32- Former nuclear agcy.; 33- Passed out; 34- Affectation of sophisticates; 37- "Hard ____" (sailor's yell); 39- Auricular; 41- Ich bin ____ Berliner; 43- Kitchen servant; 46- Duration; 48- Before, of yore; 51- Cosa ____; 53- Edmonton team; 55- Siouan speakers; 57- Type of market; 58- Clarinet cousin; 59- Tabula ____; 60- Foot part; 61- Lo-cal; 63- Gen. Robert ____; 64- Helper; 65- Solid oils; 66- Energy unit;



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: 2108 6001

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Nam Long **HKD 8,380,000**
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Ref: 1909 6006

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

Traditional apartment **HKD 2,680,000**
788 ft² 2 1/2 1 1/2

Ref: 2103 6001

AD

COMMUNICATIONS

HUAWEI CFO'S LEGAL TEAM RESUMES DEFENSE IN CANADIAN COURT

JIM MORRIS, VANCOUVER

LAWYERS for a senior executive for Chinese communications giant Huawei Technologies told a court yesterday [Macau time] that there is no evidence she made any misrepresentations that resulted in a bank suffering a loss or put the bank at risk of suffering a loss.

Meng Wanzhou, who is the daughter of Huawei's founder and serves as the company's chief financial officer, was arrested at Vancouver's airport in late 2018 at the request of U.S. authorities. Her arrest infuriated Beijing, which sees her case as a political move designed to prevent China's rise.

The U.S. wants Meng extradited to face fraud charge, alleging she committed fraud by misleading the HSBC bank about the company's business dealings in Iran. It accuses Huawei of using a Hong Kong shell company called Skycom to sell equipment to Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions.

The lengthy extradition proceeding is entering the phase which involves arguments over the U.S. government's request to extradite Meng.

Defense lawyer Mark Sandler said the U.S. must prove that during a meeting with an HSBC executive, Meng made misrepresentations that put the bank at risk of violating sanctions.

"The requesting state has failed to establish any economic loss or risk of loss," San-



Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer of Huawei, leaves home to the court in Vancouver

andler said. "In any event any such loss . . . was not caused by Meng's alleged misrepresentations."

During the meeting, Meng said Huawei and Skycom continued to do business in Iran, Sandler said.

After the meeting it was HSBC's choice to take money deposited by Skycom and clear it through the U.S., he said.

"Any exposure to HSBC was its own doing and was not caused by anything represented to it by Ms. Meng," said Sandler. "There is no evidence that Huawei or Skycom had any role in how HSBC chose to clear the funds."

Canadian justice department lawyers have argued that during the meeting with the bank official, Meng was dishonest in not disclosing Huawei's relationship with Skycom and that put the bank at risk of violating U.S. sanctions against Iran.

Meng, who attended the hearing wearing an electronic monitoring device on her ankle, followed the proceedings through a translator.

Associate Chief Justice Heather Holmes isn't expected to rule on Meng's extradition until later in the year. Whatever her decision, it will likely be appealed.

Last week a Chinese court

sentenced Canadian entrepreneur Michael Spavor to 11 years in prison for spying.

Spavor and fellow Canadian Michael Kovrig were arrested in December of 2018 in apparent retaliation to Meng's arrest.

In another case, the Higher People's Court of Liaoning province in northeast China rejected an appeal by Canadian Robert Schellenberg, whose 15-year prison term on drug smuggling charges was increased to death in January 2019 following Meng's arrest.

Meng remains free on bail in Vancouver and is living in a mansion. **MDT/AP**

STAFF WANTED: JOB VACANCIES IN UK HIT RECORD HIGH

JOB vacancies in the U.K. have spiked to their highest recorded level, official figures showed yesterday, in a further sign that the British economy is rebounding by more than anticipated following the lifting of coronavirus restrictions.

With the unemployment rate falling further and the number of people on payroll rising further toward pre-pandemic levels, wage pressures are clearly building — a development that financial markets suggest will lead the Bank of England to raise interest rates sooner than previously thought, especially if it further stokes already-elevated inflation.

The Office for National Statistics revealed that the number of job vacancies rose by 290,000 between May and July from the previous three-month period, to 953,000. That's the highest level since records were started in 2001.

The increase in vacancies came during a period when most lockdown restrictions were lifted across the U.K. following the rapid rollout of vaccines. The increase in job vacancies was particularly evident in those sectors, such as arts, leisure and food service firms, that had suffered most during the multiple lockdowns in the U.K.

In further encouraging news, the agency said the number of people on payroll rose by 182,000 between June and July, taking the total to 28.9 million. Still the overall figure is still 201,000 lower than before the pandemic struck in March 2020.

"Today's figures show that the recovery continued to gain momentum through the spring as restrictions eased," said Tony Wilson, director of the Institute for Employment Studies. "Put simply, labour supply just can't keep up with employer demand."

The latest figures have raised hopes that the British government's decision to bring an end to a salary support scheme it introduced at the outset of the pandemic will not lead to big job losses.

Under the Job Retention Scheme, the government paid 80% of the salaries of those workers unable to work because of lockdown measures. The program, which is being phased out and is due to finish at the end of September, helped support over 11 million people but the number now is down below the 2 million mark as many sectors have reopened, notably hospitality. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Wynn launches new mooncake gift box design



To celebrate the arrival of Mid-Autumn Festival, Wynn has designed mooncake gift boxes combining tradition with innovation.

Inspired by mini suitcases, the mooncake gift boxes feature the iconic Wynn flower

and Wynn Palace's three-dimensional relief design of "graceful birds in flight toward the autumn moon."

The gift boxes come in two colors — celebratory red and chic silver.

The design weaves mo-

dern sustainability into a traditional mooncake box, by creating a handbag that features an adjustable leather shoulder strap.

This year, Wynn has partnered with October Fifth Bakery Macau to create mooncakes that are made with the local Macau flavors.

The Wynn Tea Classic Mooncakes are infused with fragrant and floral Osmanthus Oolong tea, while the Wynn Signature Mooncakes are made in three different flavors: Tea Classic, Lava Pineapple and Coffee.

The mooncakes are available at Wing Lei at Wynn Macau or Sweets at Wynn Palace.

Sands China trains new cohort of management professionals



A new group of Sands China team members are undergoing the nine-month Sands China Integrated Talent Development Programme, after attending an opening ceremony at the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) recently.

The management training initiative combines practical and sustainable learning methods and is facilitated by distinguished academics from across Asia. It aims to enhance the management quality of Sands China's management team members and nurture them as

future leaders.

Sean McCreery, Sands China's senior vice president of resort operations, said, "We hope this innovative program continues to help build the talent pool for both the company and the integrated resort sector in Macau."

Up to 60 management professionals from various departments, such as facilities, food and beverage, and hotel, will participate in this second round of the program after being identified as the company's future generation of leadership.

Of the group, 33 will take all seven modules of the program and receive a certificate upon completion.

RUGBY

Australian star Kefu recovering in hospital after home invasion

RUGBY World Cup winner Toutai Kefu is recovering in a hospital after surgery for abdominal injuries he sustained during a break-in at his home.

The 47-year-old Kefu, who won the 1999 Rugby World Cup and played 60 test matches for Australia, has been head coach of Tonga's national team since 2016.

Kefu and his wife, their 21-year-old son and their 18-year-old daughter received knife wounds after waking to the noise of intruders in their home in Brisbane at around 3 a.m. Monday.

Another daughter, Olivia Kefu, posted a message yesterday on Facebook to

AP PHOTO



say her father and brother were "recovering well" after surgery and her mother and sister were undergoing surgery yesterday.

"Thank you to everyone for all the kind messages

and support," she said. "It means the absolute world to us all."

Queensland state police have charged two teenage boys, 13 and 15, and another 15-year-old boy in custody in relation to

the incident.

The 15-year-old boy was charged Monday with attempted murder, assault causing grievous bodily harm, break and enter and other offenses. The 13-year-old boy was charged with burglary and wounding.

"This was a really horrific incident," Queensland police assistant commissioner Brian Swan said. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the Kefu family who I understand are still recovering in hospital."

The intruders allegedly stole a car before breaking into the Kefu home and were armed with knives and an axe. Police have said it didn't appear to be a targeted attack. **MDT/AP**

TENNIS

OSAKA SAYS SHE'LL DONATE CINCINNATI PRIZE MONEY TO HAITI

IN addition to donating prize money to relief efforts in Haiti following a deadly earthquake, tennis star Naomi Osaka said she plans to do more.

"I feel like I'm not really doing that much," Osaka said yesterday [Macau time]. "I'm trying to figure out what I can do. The prize money thing was the first thing I thought I could do that would raise the most awareness. I guess that is the reason I announced it."

A 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck the region on Saturday, with an estimated death toll of 1,400.

On Saturday night, Osaka tweeted her decision to donate her prize money from this week's U.S. Open tune-up tournament in Ohio.

Osaka, who has a Haitian father and Japanese mother, has an opening-round bye in Cincinnati. She will face the winner of Tuesday's match between Coco Gauff and

qualifier Hsieh Su-Wei.


When asked about Haiti during a news conference, Osaka became emotional and had to step away for a few minutes before returning to answer more questions.

Haiti is also dealing with the fallout from last month's assassination of president Jovenel Moise, and now the effects of a tropical storm which is hampering earthquake recovery efforts.



"It's really scary," Osaka said. "I see the news every day, and honestly the earthquake was kind of close to my parents' school there, so I'm honestly not really sure how that's doing and I haven't seen any pictures or video of it yet."

Osaka, who is ranked No. 2 in the world, won her second career Australian Open earlier this year, but withdrew from the French Open and Wimbledon because of mental health concerns. **MDT/AP**


AD



HOLIDAY RENTAL HOUSES

Lugar das Letras  Casa de Gouvães  Casa de Gouvães

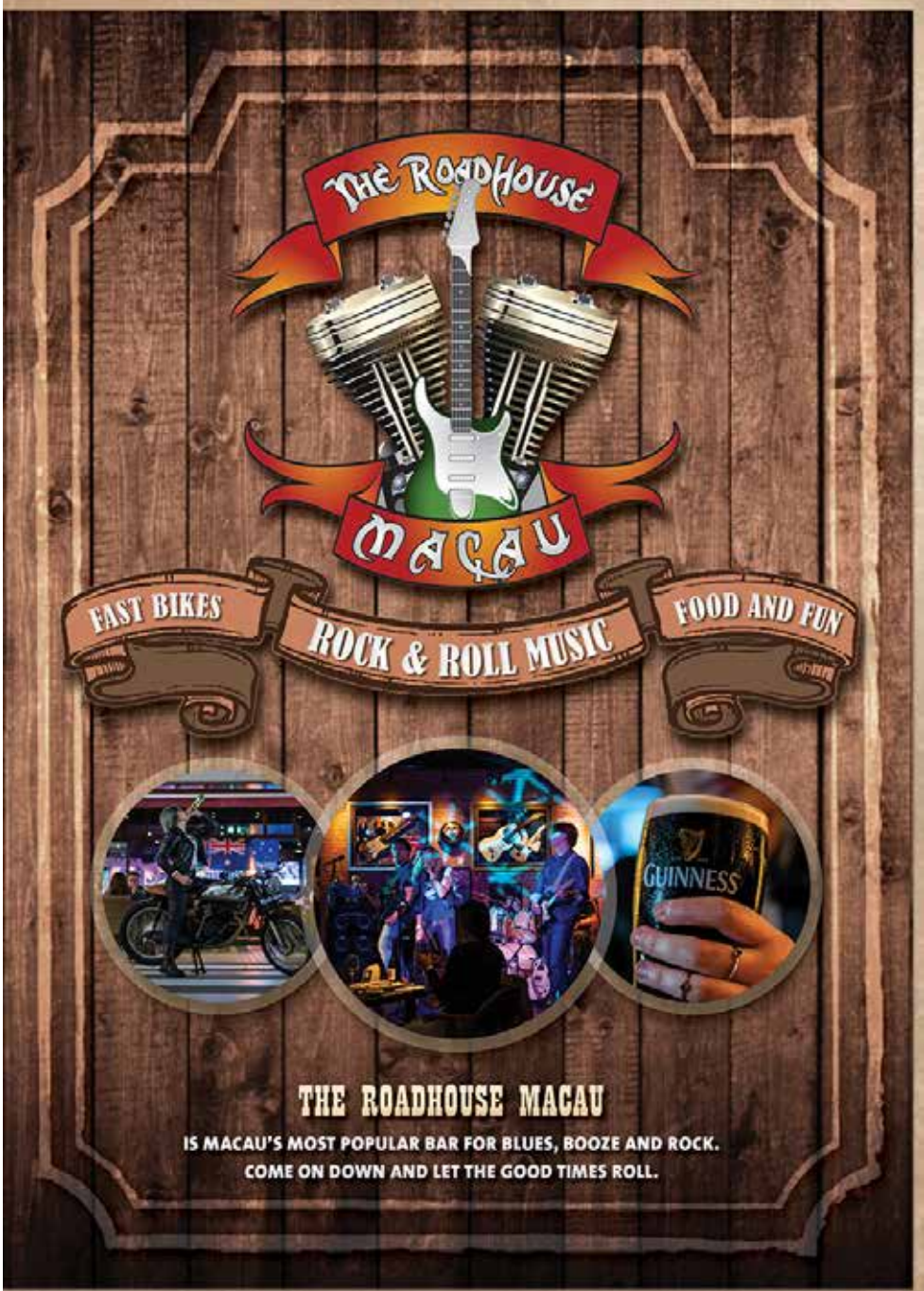
The houses are set in the heart of the World Heritage Site of the Douro Valley and its famous winery landscape where the worlds Ports are produced. Both restored relics overlooking the Rio Douro, these eight rooms houses have been blessed with gorgeous wooden floors, plush queen beds and marble baths; the best have dazzling river views. But it is the welcome that makes this place stand out from the crowd.



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OPINION

China Daily
 Kang Bing, China Daily

CHINESE COMPANIES MUST TREAD WITH CAUTION WHEN INVESTING ABROAD

Despite becoming the top source of foreign direct investment last year, China is a newcomer to the world of investment and still has a lot to learn in the field of global investment. When China began measuring its overseas foreign direct investment (OFDI) in 2002, its total OFDI amount was a mere US\$2.7 billion. In 2020, however, China's total OFDI had reached US\$133 billion, more than the United States'.

But with more countries eager to increase their OFDI, it's time Chinese companies focused on how to minimize the risks.

In the two decades since they started investing abroad, Chinese investors have suffered billions of dollars in losses because of the internal strifes in some countries and the change of regime in others, mostly in Africa and the Middle East. On many occasions, the Chinese investors had to not only abandon the almost completed or half-completed projects but also spend huge amounts to shift their workers and equipment from war-torn areas.

Given such setbacks, Chinese enterprises should pay greater attention to security and safety, rather than just focus on profits, before investing in other economies. These setbacks are not confined to African and Middle East countries, however. They are increasing in Asian and South American countries as well, as some foreign partners of the Chinese enterprises have canceled the agreements under political pressure or due to environmental protection concerns. And although the Chinese investors can appeal to seek damages, the compensation they would get, if any, would not be enough to cover their losses.

When doing business in the other countries, the Chinese investors have to abide by the local laws and regulations, and unless they have a sound understanding of those laws and regulations, they should be cautious about investing there.

When I visited a half-finished Chinese-invested automobile workshop in an African country a few years ago, the manager told me: "The project is at a standstill because the local construction material suppliers require us to use their products which are sub-standard, much lower in quality than imported products."

Yet local media outlets made a big fuss about the delay in the construction of the automobile factory.

Cao Dewang, president of Fuyao Group, the world's biggest automobile glass supplier that operates a number of factories in other countries including the US, has on many occasions complained about the disagreements with local supervisors and workers' unions in foreign countries. He has said that potential Chinese investors should not take anything for granted when investing abroad.

Having a good knowledge of the investment policies of different countries is necessary but it is not enough to guarantee success.

When Tongrentang, the leading traditional Chinese medicine company, established a TCM hospital in an African country, it found it difficult to get visas for Chinese doctors to work in the hospital. Many TCM practitioners have learned TCM from their masters instead of earning a degree in TCM from a university, and due to the lack of a higher education certificate, many of them cannot get a visa to practice TCM in other countries. As a result, Tongrentang's hospitals in Africa are facing a shortage of experienced doctors.

Since many of the Chinese investors are big companies, they have many channels to obtain the necessary information on the laws and sociopolitical conditions in the countries they want to invest in.

Business experience and hard work enabled many of them to achieve success abroad but some of them went bankrupt. After China announced its "go global" strategy, many more investors, big and small, decided to invest abroad.

Therefore, the central government should help establish investment consultation agencies in other countries, which would necessarily employ both Chinese and local experts, in order to help make Chinese investment safer and more fruitful.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg is blaming a failure of Afghan leadership for the swift collapse of the country's armed forces but says the alliance must also uncover flaws in its military training effort.

Stoltenberg says "the Afghan political leadership failed to stand up" and that "this failure of Afghan leadership led to the tragedy we are witnessing today."

His remarks came after he chaired a meeting yesterday of NATO envoys to discuss the security implications of the Taliban's

sweeping victory in Afghanistan in recent weeks.

NATO has been leading international security efforts in Afghanistan since 2003 but wound up combat operations in 2014 to focus on training the national security forces.

Referring to the way that the Afghan armed forces withered in the face of the Taliban offensive, Stoltenberg said that "was a surprise, the speed of the collapse and how quickly that happened."

He says "there are lessons that need to be learned" at NATO.

More on p7

OBITUARY

SUDOKU MAKER MAKI KAJI DIES AT 69

YURI KAGEYAMA

MAKI Kaji, the creator of the popular numbers puzzle Sudoku whose life's work was spreading the joy of puzzles, has died, his Japanese company said yesterday. He was 69 and had bile duct cancer.

Known as the "Godfather of Sudoku," Kaji created the puzzle to be easy for children and others who didn't want to think too hard. Its name is made up of the Japanese characters for "number" and "single," and players place the numbers 1 through 9 in rows, columns and blocks without repeating them.

Ironically, it wasn't until 2004 when Sudoku became a global hit, after a fan from New Zealand pitched it and got it published in the British newspaper The Times. Two years later, Japan rediscovered its own puzzle as a "gyakuyunyu," or "reimport."

Kaji was chief executive at his puzzle company, Nikoli Co., until July and died Aug. 10 at his home in Mitaka, a city in the Tokyo metro area.

Maki traveled to more than 30 countries spreading his enjoyment of puzzles. Sudoku championships have drawn some 200 million people in 100 countries over the years, according to Tokyo-based Nikoli.



Sudoku was also never trademarked except within Japan, driving its overseas craze, Nikoli said.

"Kaji-san came up with the name Sudoku and was loved by puzzle fans from all over the world. We are grateful from the bottom of our hearts for the patronage you have shown throughout his life," the company said in a statement.

Originally, Sudoku was called "Suji-wa-Dokushin-ni-Kagiru," which translates to, "Numbers should be single, a bachelor." In recent years, Sudoku, believed to be the world's most popular pencil puzzle, has come out in digital versions.

Born in the main northern island of Hokkaido, Maki started Japan's first puzzle magazine after dropping out of Keio University in Tokyo. He founded Nikoli in 1983, and came up with Sudoku

about the same time.

Yoshinao Anpuku, who succeeded Kaji as Nikoli's chief executive, said Kaji made friends easily and had a "unique and playful approach toward life."

"Our mission is to pursue Maki's vision and possibilities," Anpuku said.

Nikoli has provided original puzzles to more than 100 media companies, 10 of them foreign ones.

Major Japanese newspaper Mainichi in its obituary credited Kaji for starting the puzzle sections at bookstores, as well as introducing the word "Sudoku" into the Oxford English dictionary.

Kaji is survived by his wife Naomi and two daughters. Funeral services have been held among close family. A separate memorial service is being arranged by Nikoli, but details were still undecided. MDT/AP



Russia A prototype military transport plane crashed while performing a test flight outside Moscow yesterday, Russia's United Aircraft Corporation said. The new light military transport plane, Il-112V, crashed in a forested area as it was coming in for a landing at the Kubinka airfield about 45 kilometers west of Moscow, spokespeople of the corporation told the Tass news agency.

Poland has told the European Union that it will shut down a chamber at its Supreme Court devoted to disciplining judges, an issue that has been at the center of a dispute between Warsaw and Brussels. The Polish government said yesterday that it sent a letter to the European Commission on Monday, the deadline Warsaw faced for informing the EU's executive branch of how it would proceed with the Disciplinary Chamber after the EU's top court said the chamber undermined judicial independence and contravened EU law.



German rescue teams have recovered the body of a woman who was swept off a bridge by floods in Bavaria, the German news agency dpa reported yesterday. They are still searching for a second person who was also swept off the bridge by sudden floods in southern Germany on Monday. Eight other people caught up in the same flooding were rescued uninjured.

France Thousands of people were evacuated from homes and vacation spots near the French Riviera as firefighters battled a fire racing through surrounding forests yesterday, the latest of several wildfires that have swept the Mediterranean region. At least 22 people have suffered smoke inhalation or minor fire-related injuries in the blaze that started Monday evening about 40 kilometers inland from the coastal resort of Saint-Tropez, according to the top government official for the Var region.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

MDT/Eva Bucho



Souls money. A woman wearing an unorthodox hat (!) is burning fake notes to honor the dead in a very lively Areia Preta neighborhood.