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**THE GOV'T HAS COMPLETED LEGISLATION ON INSTITUTING ADVISERS TO THE COMMITTEE FOR SAFEGUARDING THE SAR'S NATIONAL SECURITY**

**SECRETARY LEI WAI NONG REJECTS CLAIMS OF SUNCITY BRINGING WOES**

**MORE LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE REPORTING THE LOSS OF LARGE SUMS THROUGH SEVERAL KINDS OF ONLINE SCAMS USING MOBILE APPS**



**China** An employee of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba who was fired after she went public with a sexual assault allegation says she is not encouraging other victims in China to come forward because doing so “will only cause them to suffer more hurt.” The employee, surnamed Zhou, had gone public in August with accusations that a fellow employee had sexually assaulted her during a business trip. The case prompted a public outcry over the handling of sexual assault cases in China.



**Australia** and South Korea signed a \$720 million defense deal yesterday as South Korean President Moon Jae-in became the first foreign leader to visit Australia since the pandemic began. Worth about AUD1 billion, the deal will see South Korean defense company Hanwha provide the Australian army with artillery weapons, supply vehicles and radars. It's the largest defense contract struck between Australia and an Asian nation, and comes at a time of heightened tensions between Australia and China.



**Indonesia** Fresh from delivering a stern new warning to Russia over Ukraine, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Indonesia yesterday to find a top aide to Russian President Vladimir Putin already in Jakarta for security talks. Blinken began a 48-hour visit to Indonesia with his plane parking in the shadow of that of Putin's national security adviser Nikolay Patrushev. Patrushev is considered the third most senior official in Russia's government.

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## INTERVIEW | KENNETH FENG

# GAMING LAW NEEDS IMPROVEMENTS, AMENDMENTS

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## ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION: 16% GROWTH LIKELY IN 2022

P4





# Financial Secretary rejects claims of Suncity bringing woes

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE public view that the closure of Suncity will bring trouble to the city's gambling industry was dismissed by Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, yesterday.

After several days' absence from the public, the financial official was interviewed on the sidelines of a public advisory body meeting yesterday.

He declined to comment on the event, citing the fact that the matter is now subject to judicial proceedings. Moreover, he refused to agree with the claim that the matter is bringing pain to the city, adding that it is normal to experience bumps during economic revivals.

Discussing the follow-up to the matter, Lei stressed that the Labor Affairs Bureau (DSAL) had set up dedicated counters to serve individuals affected by the closure of the junket company.

The junket company recently announced its closure as funds were frozen due to ongoing judicial proceedings.

The arrest of Suncity Group boss, Alvin Chau, by local police has had several follow-on effects. Several other junket operators have decided to close, suspend or cease operations at several casinos.

However, Lei said that the serial closure of these junkets' operations will not impact the employees of concessionaires; those who are employed by the junkets will be handled by the DSAL.

Lei was asked whether the government's previous outlook on next year's gambling revenue of MOP130 billion is still correct.

In response, the official resorted to his style of rhetorical quips, and asked the press: "If the public is not confident, how can they achieve a revival?"

He was asked again how many licenses should be expected after renewal. He reiterated that the information will be released in due course, adding that the law needs refinement to cope with the current global circumstances.

## Q&A KENNETH FENG PRESIDENT AND CHIEF STRATEGIC & FINANCIAL OFFICER MGM CHINA

# MASS PREMIUM MARKET: THE FOCAL AS IT ENHANCES OFFERINGS TO

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE gaming sector in the region has largely dealt with the blow of a global health crisis for the past nearly two years. However, the goal of diversifying Macau's offerings – despite global travel disruption – still remains.

MGM China has pushed on with the development of its luxurious accommodation portfolio following the Emerald Suites, Skylofts and The Mansion.

The move was aimed at offering its guests a diversity of experience across the new Emerald Villa.

While there are still no signs of borders easing to international arrivals, MGM is looking to lure clientele from Hong Kong, expressing hopes that the reopening of the mainland-Hong Kong-Macau border will bring a positive impact to Macau – as Hong Kong tourists entering the gaming hub would be the "strongest message" to help boost mainland arrivals.

Back in November, the company reported that its properties have cross-property EBITDAR breakeven levels, led by the recovery in the premium segments.

Therefore, while borders remain closed, MGM has said it will better its offerings to the premium segment, which the president believes is the future of Macau's gaming industry.

Kenneth Feng, president and chief strategic & financial officer of MGM China, sat down with the Times to speak about where the company puts its hopes amid the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

According to Feng, "This year is better than last year."

**Macau Daily Times (MDT) - With MGM's current wide variety of accommodation options, was there a need to develop the Emerald Villa?**

**Kenneth Feng (KF)** – When we opened Cotai in 2018, we had planned that we should

LYNZY VALLES



do something to complement our total hotel products portfolio. We developed and started this development process a year ago. It took us about a year to complete this entire project which consists of 28 villas, ranging from 30sqm to 360sqm. [...] Out of 28 villas, we [...] needed more villas to complement our premium mass customers. Our team has done a great job. We took a lot of green energy concepts into the entire design development process, from construction to materials and lighting management system. After successfully launching these products, we won two international awards in interior design [which are] from the SBID International Design Awards 2021 in the Hotel Bedroom & Suites Design category as well as the Platinum Winner at the

2021 MUSE Design Awards in the Interior Design (Hotels & Resorts) category. Two awards are the first ones in Macau. We're very proud of it. We have received tremendously good comments the past two months from our customers.

**"Gaming law needs certain improvements and amendments."**

KENNETH FENG  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF STRATEGIC & FINANCIAL OFFICER  
MGM CHINA

**MDT – What do you think led to the awards in such a short period of time?**

**KF** - We understand what our customers want. We had significant communication and briefing until the very end of the design and development process. We always thought of every detail based

on what our customers want. [...] Another function that we're proud of is the shower function. This is probably the first computerized-controlled shower that conserves water but [through a] smart-shower system. The team has done a great job. The direction is very clear – every team member knows what customers we want to receive.

**MDT - With the luxurious elements present in this new villa, does this reflect on the branding of the company?**

**KF** - Absolutely. [...] We really want to create an overall design that matches our branding standard.

**MDT – Will we see the trend of repeat-premium mass customers continuing?**

**KF** – I think so. We are going

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# POINT OF MGM SEGMENT



we are seeing about 40% of the number of visitors [compared to the peak] to our properties. Before the pandemic, the visitors at MGM Cotai were about 15,000 [per day]. Right now, we are seeing some 6,000 to 7,000.

**MDT – And this is a decent number for the company given the border restrictions?**

**KF** - Yes. I understand it's going to be a long way, it will take some time recover. But definitely, based on today's trend, we are seeing [recovery]. This year is better than last year.

**MDT - With the aim of diversifying offerings, how confident is MGM in terms of seeing a bounce back to pre-pandemic levels, and with China's zero policy, what are the plans on how to accelerate its recovery?**

**KF** - We are working on that. We are going to have a residency show, Awakening Lion [this month]. The first season has eight shows. Last month, we just held [the concert of] Jam Hsiao at the MGM Theater. We are definitely planning to have some non-gaming shows and events. We are going to announce it very soon. MGM has been [working] on this since Macau [borders] opened. We have quite a few signature events like Oktoberfest. It's hard to be profitable [with that event] but we're still doing it. We help to contribute to Macau's non-gaming diversification effort.

to see, not just repeat customers, but new faces. Customer experience is very special. We do see the trend – we are going to see new recurring faces in the premium mass segment.

**MDT – In a previous earnings call with analysts, the CEO of MGM Resorts, Bill Hornbuckle, pledged to continue its investment amid the blow of Covid-19 to the business. Are these villas a testament to the portfolio addition?**

**KF** - Absolutely. As I reported, I do have high confidence – which has already been proved across the past two months' performance. We are going to have a pretty decent return on investment.

This project cost us about USD80 million. We're really on budget and on schedule for this entire development.

**MDT - Are there any trends in MGM's consumer market in terms of hotel occupancy and foot traffic?**

**KF** - I think since the nucleic acid test (NAT) validity changed from 48 hours to seven days, the number of visitors went up. Right now, it's close to 30,000 [arrivals in Macau] per day. Before the pandemic, we saw daily visitors of 100,000, and [what we have now] is about 30% of that.

From MGM's perspective,

**MDT – Now to gaming revenues, is MGM expecting a positive close this year?**

**KF** - The entire market was very good in July. It was 50-60% of pre-pandemic levels. But the local cases in August impacted [the recovery] for a couple for months.

We do see customer [arrivals] pick up in November, but I personally think the major catalyst is going to be Hong Kong.

The upcoming border relaxation between Hong Kong, mainland and Macau is extremely important for Macau.

For Macau, we can travel to the mainland, unlike in Hong Kong. They have been living in their city for two years with nowhere to go. Hong Kong residents are famous for having the [desire] to travel. Pre-pandemic, [studies show they go on] five trips per year.

If Hong Kong comes to Macau, it's going to be the best TV commercial for mainland to travel to Macau because Hong Kong [residents] traveling to Macau is going to be major news.

I personally think we have high expectations about Hong Kong's [easing of] border policy.

I've said for a long time, Hong Kong's gaming revenue contribution is only 10 to 15% but its overall contribution factor is not only that. [...] it sends the strongest message across mainland China.

**MDT – All eyes are on the gaming renewal concessions, is MGM still currently talking with the government? Hornbuckle does not see any alleged tightening of the new amendments, where does MGM stand on this?**

**KF** - We submitted our comments to the government and have participated in the meeting. We

[have] always believed the gaming law – and after two decades of exponential growth, Macau's gaming industry – [needs amendments].

In 2000, gaming revenue was USD1.8 billion. In 2019, revenue was USD35 billion. Definitely, gaming law needs certain improve-

## Hong Kong tourists entering the gaming hub would be the 'strongest message' to help boost mainland arrivals

ments and amendments. We do believe the government is going to take a balanced and rational strategy and action on the gaming law.

After the amendment, I think Beijing, even the Chinese customers, will have confidence in Macau's future. We will support the government efforts; we believe this

entire process will position Macau well, and the operators well.

MGM is quite confident in its efforts. As I said, I was personally involved in the gaming concessions bidding in 2001. I came here on behalf of MGM - after 20 years, we are still here. We want to continue to follow the government's directions to give back to society, as we have been doing.

**MDT – Although there aren't any official ties with Suncity, how is MGM affected by the arrest of casino junket leader Alvin Chau?**

**KF** - I don't think what happened to Suncity will have a dramatic financial impact to us; definitely, it is manageable for us. MGM will continue to focus on what we are good at [such as attracting the] mass premium market. I think it's going to be the future of Macau's gaming sector; we will be focused on what we should do.

## MGM CO-LEADS ALLIANCE ON LOW CARBON GREEN HOTEL ALLIANCE

**DRIVEN** by a mission to reach carbon peak and carbon neutrality in line with the nation's climate goals, MGM China co-led the Low Carbon Green Hotel Alliance (LCGHA) in a bid to collaborate with and ride on respective edges of hotel, tourism and construction industries. Jointly founded by Macau's hotel and tourism industries, industry partners and professional alliances of the mainland and Macau, the alliance aspires to collaborate with and ride on respective edges of hotel, tourism and construction industries, to further deepen regional exchanges and raise the awareness of the importance of

low-carbon behaviors. The LCGHA — which is grounded in science and action-oriented — intends to map out various innovative, feasible measures to cut back on carbon emissions. Kenneth Feng, president and chief strategic & financial officer of MGM China, told the Times that through these kinds of engagements, the groups seeks to create a platform to deepen regional exchanges and raise the awareness of the importance of low-carbon behaviors. Co-chairperson and executive director of MGM China, Pansy Ho, is the founding chairperson of the LCGHA.





### 39 RESIDENCY APPLICATIONS IN H1

According to the statistics of temporary residency for approved investors, managements and technical personnel in the first half of 2021, the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute received a total of one new residence application based on "major investment" and a total of 38 new applications based on "management and technical personnel." Among the cases handled this year, one application under the category of "management and technical personnel" was approved while 24 were disapproved/cancelled.

### TAIPA VILLAGE PUBLIC LIBRARY TO CLOSE PERMANENTLY

The Wong Ieng Kuan Library in Taipa village will close its doors for good at the end of the year, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) announced in a statement. The library, which is located at the Rua do Regedor next to Taipa village market and has been in operation since 2005, will stop operating as part of a government initiative to integrate and better utilize public resources. The IC noted that the library is of limited use since the opening of the Taipa Central Park Library (located on the basement floor of Taipa Central Park), which has better reading facilities and more space. After the closure, the premises will move into possession of the Municipal Affairs Bureau.

ANTHONY LAM



## ASSOCIATION EXPECTS UP TO 16% ECONOMIC GROWTH NEXT YEAR

**T**HE city's gross domestic product (GDP) growth next year will fall between 5% and 16%, estimated Joey Lao Chi Ngai, director-general of the Macau Economic Association, speaking on the sidelines of a forum.

Lao explained that the estimate was made based on the results generated by a data model which made calculations in relation to the city's GDP performance and gross gaming revenue (GGR).

Based on the calculations, Lao expects the economy of the city to return to between 50 and 60% of pre-Covid levels, with the GGR likely amounting to between MOP95 billion and MOP140 billion. He stressed that the key factors affecting next year's economic recovery will still be the developments in the current pandemic and the environments of external economies.

For the time being, he is "cautiously optimistic" about the re-

covery's trajectory.

Lao also commented on the recent closures of VIP casinos and junket operators. Due to this development, he sees the possibility of negative year-on-year growth in economic data for the fourth quarter.

Despite the estimate's range, he said the annual growth could be in double digits, considering the city's "satisfactory" economic performance in the second and third quarters.

Making recommendations

to the government, Lao said that the city's tourism resources should be expanded and that the city should aim for wider sources of tourists. The government should also pick up the pace in constructing the city as a world center for tourism and leisure.

The academic says the city should also follow the national policy of "double cycle" and expand the scale at which it attracts investments and entrepreneurs, as well as welcoming talented workers who can take the lead in different trades.

In October, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) heavily downgraded its forecast for Macau's 2021 GDP growth to 20.4%, a drop of 40 percentage points from its April prediction of a 61% rebound.

The change in the fund's forecast follows the city's wave of Covid-19 infections in October, which led to the closure of government and entertainment venues, a third round of mass testing and a halt on travel due to the Zhuhai authorities' requirement that individuals arriving from Macau undergo 14 days of quarantine.

Although casinos remained open, Macau's GGR took a hit in October from these impacts. The GGR for the month was just MOP4.37 billion, down 25.8% compared with September. **AL/LV**

### CRIME

## Online scams continue to find victims among residents

RENATO MARQUES

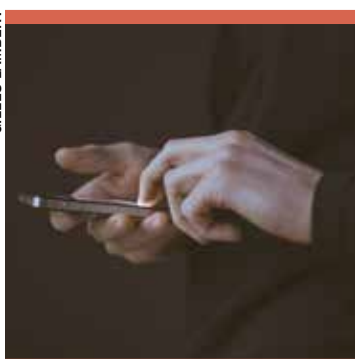
**S**EVERAL kinds of online scams using mobile communication applications (APPs) continue to target local residents, who are reporting the loss of large sums, the Judiciary Police (PJ) informed yesterday during the regular joint press conference of the police forces.

In two separate and unrelated cases, a local 18-year-old student reported a loss amounting to 161,100 patacas, while another man in his 50s declared he had lost as much as 1.3 million Hong Kong dollars.

In the first case, the teenager said they met a person online via a communication app used for same-sex encounters. This individual offered to provide sexual services for 800 patacas across three sessions.

On December 8, the victim went to Taipa as instructed to meet this person, but when he was in the vicinity of the arranged meeting, he received a phone call from a male telling him that he needed to provide pay-

GILLES LAMBERT



ment for a security fee.

After several requests and communications, the teenager lost contact with the man, having lost a total of 161,100 patacas in point coupons that he had been asked to acquire from convenience stores. Only then did he report the case to the PJ.

In the second case, the local resident also met a person through a communication app. However, this individual promised the man he could help him to make very profitable investments in cryptocurrency.

The local man accepted the conditions and transferred HKD41,500 to an account in Hong Kong as instructed.

Overnight he was told he had earned as much as HKD3,000, which lured him to continuing investing in the scheme.

Soon he invested another HKD70,000, which similarly provided almost instant profits.

He initially tried to withdraw the money invested and found he could do so without problems. The series of investments continued until the 'friend' informed him that he could get much more money if he invested HKD1.3M in the scheme. This time he would have to pay a 15% commission to his friend.

Due to the trust established by his previous experiences, the victim invested the money. However, after the profit was processed into his account and he tried to withdraw the cash, he was informed first that he could not do so due to a problem with the account and later told that the account had been frozen due to suspicions of money laundering.

Not being able to retrieve his money, the man filed a complaint to the PJ.

### EILEEN STOW

## LOCAL CUSTARD TART MAKER RECEIVES MBE

**E**IILEEN Stow, owner of the iconic Portuguese custard tart chain Lord Stow's Bakery, was recently appointed a member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the UK, the British Chamber of Commerce in Macao (BritCham Macao) announced in a social media statement.

Stow is also vice chairman of BritCham Macao.

The investiture ceremony was held in Windsor Castle, presided over by Prince Charles.

The announcement that Stow would be bestowed this title by the Queen, in recognition of her services to British Business Education and Culture, was made in January of this year.

The MBE is a British Order of Chivalry, rewarding contributions to the arts and sciences, work with charitable and welfare organizations, and public service outside the civil service. It was established on 4 June 1917 by King George V.

In her interview with the Times earlier this year, Stow said that she was "chuffed to bits" and felt "very, very proud."

Stow has supported the people of Macau in many ways. The Andrew Stow Memorial Fund was established in 2007 to honor Stow's brother, Andrew Stow, the late creator of the brand, who died following an asthma attack in 2006. **AL**







**A**S a leading integrated resort developer in one of the world's tourism hotspots, Sands China strongly believes in the power of community – upholding the company's unique approach in delivering a full array of offerings that address the needs of society.

Committed to giving back to the local community, the company has always prioritized working with different sectors to be responsive to the different needs of people from all walks of life.

Macau has been facing extraordinary challenges for nearly two years now due to the adverse effects of the pandemic, yet, Sands China has barely missed a beat in supporting the community during the most trying times.

The company has also made sure that its series of services and support initiatives are an answer to the government's call to support society.

To fully utilize and make use of its resources, Sands China has a strong team of volunteers who have given continual support to the company's community partners.

Back in August 2009, Sands China founded the Sands Cares Ambassador programme, and became the first integrated resort operator to establish a volunteer team in Macau. To better cope with the expansion of the company's volunteer service and the growth of its volunteer team, a Sands Cares Ambassador Working Committee was set up in 2020, aiming to organise more community activities with the overall goal of serving more people in the community.

After over a decade, membership in the programme now surpasses 3,300 volunteers from across all Sands China properties – Sands Macao, The Venetian Macao, The Plaza Macao, The Londoner Macao and The Parisian Macao.

Together, the empowered

# Sands China supports communities through hard times

team members have contributed more than 130,000 hours of voluntary community service since the programme's founding, having organised and participated in 500 community events to date.

Through this unique programme, team members have been giving up their free time to work tirelessly to help others, particularly society's more vulnerable groups.

The programme also gives Sands China team members a platform for serving the local community by organising community activities and initiatives that work toward creating a better Macau.

Sands China has cooperated with 520 non-profitable associations and private institutions to date, and by doing so, the company believes it can make an impact on society that will further promote social harmony. Sands Cares Ambassadors have organized and participated in a wide array of volunteer activities with these entities, such as helping distribute nearly 850 food hampers to disadvantaged families with the Macau Holy House of Mercy's Welfare Shop over nine consecutive years; assembling a total of 300,000 hygiene kits for Clean the World over eight consecutive years; packing and distributing typhoon emergency kits with the Macau Red Cross for three years; and supporting the Caritas Macau Charity Bazaar every year for eleven years.

Throughout the years, Sands China has delivered warmth and care to those who are in need and helped them integrate into society – not just in Macau but also in the mainland.

## SPREADING WARMTH BY UTILISING COMPANY RESOURCES

With its commitment to corporate social responsibility, Sands China has utilized the resources of its integrated resorts to organise a wide array of events and initiatives for team members to deliver care and warmth to the local community. For instance, Sands Cares Ambassadors hosted local disadvantaged groups at The Londoner Macao and at the teamLab SuperNature Macao interactive art space, aiming to promote family health and social inclusion. The company provided platforms for social enterprises to run booths featuring food, beverages and creative products at the Sands Shopping Carnival in both 2020 and 2021, creating an opportunity for the organizations' restaurants to gain exposure in the local commercial market and to create job opportunities for their members.

## COMBATING POVERTY IN CONGIANG

For the last three years, Sands China has procured a variety of agricultural goods from Congjiang county in Guizhou province, including mandarin oranges, chili sauce, mineral water, oranges, rice, mushrooms, and preserved meat.

The purchases are part of the company's ongoing product procurement support measures in mainland China, which began in 2018.

Sands China was the first integrated resort operator in Macau to purchase goods from Congjiang to help drive the local economy and the development of people's livelihood.

"Sands China is pleased to

learn that under the leadership of the Macau SAR government and the Liaison Office, Congjiang's poverty alleviation work has benefited from the concerted effort of all sectors of society and achieved significant results," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

And in September 2019, Sands China completed its installation of 560 solar-powered street lamps that it donated to five Congjiang villages, with the six-month project requiring MOP 1.6 million to accomplish.

## PARTICIPATION IN NAT DRIVES

The COVID-19 outbreaks of August and September led to a city-wide mass testing, resulting in a demand for public manpower. Sands China saw it as its duty to assist in the nucleic acid test (NAT) drives by providing The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo as a testing site.

This was to ensure that it could assist the government to respond quickly to the unprecedented health crisis.

At the testing station, over 2,400 Sands China team members, including Sands Cares Ambassadors, took shifts around the clock, offering 24-hour onsite assistance for a total of five days to those getting tested during the two consecutive testing drives in late September and early October.

Team members also volunteered to assist with the operation of the testing station at the Tap Seac Multi-sport Pavilion, and offered support to those needing special assistance, including seniors, pregnant women, those with children and infants, and people with disabilities there and at the Cotai Expo testing stations.

At its peak, there were 28 testing booths in operation at The Venetian Macao's station – including four dedicated lanes for community members needing special assistance. Around 65,000 tests were conducted at Cotai Expo during the two NAT drives.

## 4,000 ROOMS PROVIDED AS 'MEDICAL OBSERVATION HOTEL'

Sands China remains committed to playing its part in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

In support of the government's anti-pandemic efforts, Sands China provided a total of 4,000 rooms at the Sheraton Grand Macao at the peak of the "medical observation hotel" initiative. Since March 2020, Sheraton Grand Macao has been utilized as a medical observation hotel seven times.

## PRE-TYPHOON SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

In early October, Sands China donated 8,000 personal hygiene items to Caritas Macau to offer urgent support to its temporary shelter service at Vui Ieng Service Centre and Colégio Mateus Ricci, as Macau was threatened by tropical cyclone Kompasu.

The kits included body wash sets, toothbrushes, toothpaste and towels, providing immediate assistance to Macau locals who reside in mainland China, foreign workers, and other people with temporary accommodation needs.

As the typhoon approached the city, Sands China also proactively reached out to NGOs and arranged parking for rehabilitation vehicles at its properties to prevent potential damage to the vehicles.



# NEW POSTS ON COMMITTEE FOR SAFEGUARDING NATIONAL SECURITY OFFICALIZED

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE new posts of National Security Adviser and National Security Technical Adviser on the Committee for Safeguarding National Security in Macau have been officialized from yesterday with the publication in the government official gazette (BO) of the administrative regulation that amends the composition of the Committee, allowing the new posts.

Additionally, administrative regulation number 47/2021 defines the duties and responsibilities attached to the posts. The new administrative regulation will come into effect from today, the day following its publication.

In a statement following the publication of the administrative regulation, the local government acknow-



ledged the fulfilment of its constitutional responsibility in safeguarding national security, in line with the central government's decision to establish the new posts.

"Upon receiving the central government's approval regarding the establishment of those advisory posts, the MSAR [Macau Special Administrative Region] government diligently expedited

the gazetting of the above-mentioned administrative regulation, to provide local legal grounds for such appointments, and to provide assurance that the National Security Adviser and National Security Technical Advisers would be able to fulfill their duties and responsibilities," the statement reads. It adds that the government will fully support

these advisers in the fulfillment of their duties.

On the same day, Xinhua News Agency reported that, according to the central government's decision, the committee will have a National Security Affairs Adviser and a total of three National Security Technical Advisers.

As the Times reported earlier last week, the Liaison Office Chief Fu Ziyang will take the position of National Security Affairs Adviser.

Fu will be in charge of supervising, guiding, coordinating, and supporting Macau in safeguarding national security, ensuring that relevant amendments being prepared on by the local government will be drafted according to the guidelines established by China's central government, and follow the policies drafted for both the country and the MSAR.

# FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN MOUNTED TO IMPROVE TREATMENT FOR BIKE CRASH VICTIM

**T**HE workplace and school of the recent heavy motorbike crash victim are putting out a call on several social media platforms for public donations to facilitate a higher level of medical treatment.

Last Friday, the victim was riding his heavy motorbike in the New Urban Zone A when a concrete mixer truck allegedly failed to give way as required by traffic signs.

He was not breathing and did not have a heartbeat when he arrived at the hospital, but was resuscitated by medical staff. He is now receiving treatment in the ICU of Kiang Wu Hospital.

A social media post

stated that the hospital medical team acknowledged the need for external experts to perform a series of crucial operations on the victim to increase his odds of survival. However, his family may not be able to afford the cost of such operations.

As such, the City University of Macau Students' Union and the Pou Tai Youth and Family Service Complex are co-leading a fund-raiser, hoping to obtain financial support for the victim and his family.

The Public Security Police Force is calling for witnesses of the accident. Information can be provided through 2837 4214. **AL**

AD

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## 三城記

27.11 2021  
13.03 2022

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**C**HINA yesterday marked the 84th anniversary of the Nanking Massacre, in which hundreds of thousands of civilians and disarmed soldiers were killed by Japanese troops in and around the former Chinese capital.

A People's Liberation Army honor guard bearing large funeral wreaths marched slowly past a memorial showing the figure 300,000, China's official death toll in the events of December 1937, as solemn music played. Troops, students and 3,000 attendees then stood at rigid attention to observe a minute of silence.

Addressing the gathering, Chinese Vice Premier Sun Chunlan said they had come together to "learn from history and open up a new chapter of our future."

The ceremony aimed to "showcase our lofty commitment to a peaceful development path," said Sun, the only woman on the ruling Communist Party's 25-member Politburo.

In 2014, China's top legislature designated Dec. 13 as national day of remembrance for massacre victims. Survivors, just 61 of whom are still living, were among those observing the date.

The website of the official Xinhua News Agency appeared in black and white to mark the occasion, while popular online shopping and social media sites such as Taobao and WeChat displayed black backgrounds.

China frequently criticizes Japan for not showing sufficient contrition for the brutality of its expansionist campaign that swept across Asia during the first half of



PACIFIC WAR

# China marks 84th anniversary of Nanking Massacre

The Chinese national flag is flown at half-mast as officials preparing for the memorial

the 20th century. The ruling party has often allowed anti-Japanese sentiment to build domestically to shore up its legacy as a defender of China's sovereignty and national dignity.

In 1937 and throughout World War II, the Communists were based at Yan'an in northern China, far from the front lines, while most of the fighting and dying was

done by Chiang Kaishek's Nationalist forces backed by the U.S.

This year's commemoration comes at a time when relations with Japan are generally stable and criticisms have been muted, despite a major downturn in China's relations with Tokyo's key ally, the United States.

A 1946 international postwar tribunal concluded at least

200,000 civilians were killed by Japanese troops in a weeklong frenzy of murder, rape, looting and arson after Nanking — China's capital at the time — fell on Dec. 13, 1937, after bitter street fighting in Shanghai. The city's name is now spelled Nanjing under the pinyin romanization system.

Some right-wing Japanese politicians have downplayed the

death toll or denied outright that the Nanking atrocity happened.

Increasingly, it is China that has raised alarms in Asia with its more assertive military and diplomatic posture, particularly over territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas, along with its growing military harassment of Taiwan, the "renegade" island. **MDT/AP**

## HONG KONG

# Lai given 13 months jail for Tiananmen vigil

**A**Hong Kong court yesterday sentenced activist and business tycoon Jimmy Lai to 13 months in jail for urging participation in last year's banned Tiananmen vigil, amid a crackdown by Chinese authorities that has rolled back the semi-autonomous city's civil liberties.

The District Court convicted seven others on similar charges and handed out sentences of up to 14 months.

Hong Kong's government has banned the candlelight vigil for the past two years on pandemic control grounds, although it is widely believed the ban is intended to be permanent as authorities look to squelch the city's pro-democracy movement.

Lai, the founder of the now-shuttered pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily, has already been jai-

led for taking part in pro-democracy protests for which he will serve a total of 20 months.

In the latest case, he was convicted on Thursday of inciting others to take part in the unauthorized assembly to memorialize those killed in the army's bloody crackdown on student-led pro-democracy protests that centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Two other defendants convicted along with Lai, lawyer Chow Hang-tung and former reporter Gwyneth Ho, were sentenced to 12 and six months respectively for participating in the vigil. Chow was also sentenced for inciting others to join.

The trio had previously pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Others sentenced Monday included Lee Cheuk-yan, the former chairman



Democracy advocate cum media tycoon Jimmy Lai at the the Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal (file pic)

of the now-defunct Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China. Lee received 14 months for organizing last year's unauthorized assembly, during which thousands of people gathered to light candles and sing songs in Hong Kong's Victoria Park despite police warnings that they may be

breaking the law.

The remainder were given sentences ranging from four months, two weeks, to nine months.

The Hong Kong Alliance previously organized a candlelight vigil each June, the only large-scale public commemoration on Chinese soil of the 1989 crackdown in Beijing.

foreign interests. Leaders of the alliance categorically denied the accusations.

Lai, 73, is currently serving a separate 14-month jail term for other convictions earlier this year also related to unauthorized rallies in 2019, when hundreds of thousands repeatedly took to the streets in the biggest challenge to Beijing since the British handed over the city to Chinese control in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" framework.

Under that arrangement, Beijing promised that the territory could retain its freedoms not found on the mainland for 50 years, but has largely reneged on that pledge by severely curtailing free speech and barring pro-democracy politicians from office.

China last year passed a broadly defined national security law which has been viewed as codifying Beijing's repressive tactics, effectively ending Western-style civil liberties in Hong Kong. **MDT/AP**





People queue outside a school to vote in a referendum in Noumea, New Caledonia, Sunday

# New Caledonia votes to stay in France; separatists boycott

CHARLOTTE ANTOINE-PERRON, NOUMEA

**V**OTERS in the French island territory of New Caledonia chose overwhelmingly Sunday to stay part of France, in a referendum boycotted by pro-independence forces and closely watched around the South Pacific.

French President Emmanuel Macron hailed the result as a resounding confirmation of France's role in the Indo-Pacific, and announced negotiations on the territory's future status. Separatist activists expressed dismay, or resignation.

They had urged a delay in the vote because of the pandemic, and were angry over what they felt were French government efforts to sway the campaign. So they called on their supporters to stay away from voting stations.

And they did. Official results showed a staggering 96% of those who took part chose to stay in France. Overall turnout was less than 44% — barely half the numbers who showed up in a previous independence referendum last year, where support for breaking away was 46.7%.

"Tonight we are French, and we will stay that way.

It's no longer negotiable," said Sonia Backes, president of the Southern Province region and a fervent loyalist.

The vote was monitored by the U.N. and regional powers, amid global efforts toward decolonization and amid growing Chinese influence in the region. New Caledonia, colonized by Napoleon's nephew in the 19th century, is a vast archipelago of about 270,000 people east of Australia that is 10 time zones ahead of Paris — and hosts a French military base.

"Tonight France is more beautiful because New Caledonia decided to stay," Macron said in a national televised address.

He did not address the boycott. Noting that the electorate "remains deeply divided," Macron pledged "respect for all Caledonians," including those who voted to leave.

Sunday's vote was the third and last in a decades-long process aimed at settling tensions between native Kanaks seeking independence and those who want the territory to remain part of France.

The process does not end with the last referendum. The state, separatists and non-separatists now have 18 months to negotiate a new status for the ter-

ritory and its institutions within France.

"We are reaching a new stage," Macron said, calling for negotiations on new structures to handle health crises, boost the economy, improve women's rights and protect the environment from climate change — a major concern in this island territory.

Pro-independence party FLNKS threatened to seek international recourse to try to invalidate the results, and said it won't start negotiating until it has time to analyze next steps.

"The Kanak people's right to self-determination of the won't end Sunday night or Monday morning," Jean-Philippe Tjibaou, son of a slain separatist leader, told public broadcaster France-Info. Speaking from a town that voted 100% for independence in the last two referendums but boycotted Sunday's vote, he said, "We pursued the work of our elders. And our children will pursue it after us."

A tropical storm warning also dampened enthusiasm for the referendum. Lines snaked out of some polling stations, as winds whipped palm trees lining the streets of the regional capital Noumea. But turnout at others was

barely a trickle.

The campaign and voting day were unusually calm because of the boycott call, though the state deployed 1,750 police and security forces in case of unrest.

While support for a "yes" vote seemed to be growing, the region's first coronavirus outbreak in September threw the political debate into disarray. Until then, New Caledonia had been one of the few virus-free places left on the planet.

Indigenous groups felt they couldn't campaign out of respect for their dead, and demanded that the referendum be postponed. But pro-France groups insisted it should take place as scheduled, to end uncertainty over New Caledonia's future and boost its economic prospects.

Pro-independence activists announced they would refuse to take part, accusing the government in Paris of imposing the referendum date and violating neutrality by publishing a document seen as casting the consequences of independence in a negative light.

The vote to stay French is a boost for Macron both domestically — where he's expected to face a tough challenge from far-right nationalists in April's presidential election — and internationally.

France is trying to cement its presence in the Indo-Pacific region after it lost a multibillion-dollar submarine contract because of a partnership Australia formed with the United States and the U.K. The secretly negotiated submarine project, announced in September and aimed at countering Chinese ambitions in the region, was a huge blow to France.

Some countries in the region "could appreciate France's balanced posture in what you could call a Chinese-American cold war," said Caroline Gravelat of the University of New Caledonia.

Others see France's role in South Pacific as outdated.

The U.N. and the Pacific Islands Forum sent delegations to observe the vote. New Caledonia is among 17 former colonies worldwide that the U.N. still categorizes as "non-self-governing" and slated for decolonization efforts. The others are primarily islands administered by Britain or the United States. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 2003 SADDAM HUSSEIN CAPTURED



The ousted President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, is under arrest after he was captured by US soldiers.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we got him," US administrator Paul Bremer told journalists in Baghdad. "The tyrant is a prisoner."

Saddam Hussein was found hidden in a tiny bunker at a farmhouse about 10 miles (15 km) south of his home town, Tikrit.

A US military spokesman, Major-General Raymond Odierno, said the operation was launched soon after a tip-off from a member of Saddam Hussein's own extended family.

"Over the last 10 days we brought in about five to 10 members of these families, and finally got the ultimate information from one of these individuals," he said.

There was a \$25m reward offered by the US authorities for information leading to his capture.

A similar reward was claimed for revealing the whereabouts of Saddam Hussein's sons, Uday and Qusay, who were killed in a raid by US forces in the northern city of Mosul in July.

Saddam Hussein was found in a "spider hole" or cellar just big enough for a person to lie down in, and six to eight feet (1.8m to 2.5m) deep.

The entrance was topped with a polystyrene lid and covered with a rug, bricks and dirt. Saddam had been breathing through an air vent and extractor fan.

The former Iraqi dictator was armed with a pistol, but Major-General Odierno said he gave himself up without resistance.

He seemed "disoriented" and "bewildered", the Major-General said, and was arrested at 2030 local time (1730 GMT).

Two unidentified people said to be "close allies" of Saddam Hussein were also arrested. Weapons and more than \$750,000 in cash was confiscated.

Video footage was released by the US military showing a dishevelled Saddam with a long black and grey beard undergoing a medical examination.

The former president had not been seen since US forces entered Baghdad in April.

Despite one of the most intensive manhunts in history, he has evaded capture for eight months.

As the news spread throughout Iraq, people began celebrating in the streets of Baghdad and the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk by sounding their horns and firing into the air.

Saddam's stronghold towns of Tikrit and Fallujah, however, were sombre and quiet.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Saddam Hussein was transferred to the Iraqi authorities on 30 June 2004 following the handover of sovereignty to Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's interim government. His trial opened in Baghdad the next day.

Saddam Hussein was defiant. He challenged the legality of the proceedings, which he said were brought about by the "invasion forces".

In July 2005, the tribunal laid the first charges against Saddam Hussein and seven other former regime members for crimes against humanity against Shi'ites in the town of Dujail in 1982.

The case was chosen by prosecutors because they believed it would be the easiest to compile and prosecute.

Saddam Hussein pleaded not guilty when his trial opened in Baghdad on 19 October, 2005.

His co-defendants included Barzan al-Tikriti, Saddam Hussein's half-brother and former head of Iraq's intelligence service and Awad Hamed al-Bandar, former Revolutionary Court chief judge.

All three were sentenced to death by an Iraqi court on 5 November 2006 after a year-long trial.

The former president was executed on 30 December 2006 after Iraq's highest court rejected an appeal.

The Iraqi government filmed the event to prove that Saddam Hussein was dead. It stopped short of showing the actual hanging.







CINEMA | BOX OFFICE

# SPIELBERG 'WEST SIDE STORY' DEBUTS WEAKLY WITH \$10.5M

JAKE COYLE, NEW YORK

**D**ESPITE critical acclaim and two years-worth of anticipation, Steven Spielberg's lavish "West Side Story" revival made little noise at the box office, debuting with \$10.5 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates yesterday [Macau time] — a worrisome result for a movie industry struggling to recapture its finger-snapping rhythm.

A dazzling widescreen adaptation and Spielberg's first musical, "West Side Story" was one of the year's most eagerly awaited titles. With a script by Tony Kushner and Rita Moreno returning to her breakthrough film 60 years later, the \$100-million "West Side Story" epitomizes a grand-scale prestige film that Hollywood infrequently produces anymore. It hit theaters on a wave of glowing reviews and expectations that it could play a starring role in March's Academy Awards.

But "West Side Story" faced a challenging marketplace for both adult-driven releases and musicals. Audiences have steadily returned to multiplexes in the second year of the pandemic,



Ariana DeBose as Anita (foreground left) and David Alvarez as Bernardo in scene from "West Side Story"

but older moviegoers, who made up the bulk of ticket-buyers for Spielberg's latest, have been among the slowest to return.

If anyone could reignite moviegoing, the thinking went, it was Spielberg. Surely, one of the movies' dazzling craftsmen, a director synonymous with box office, could spark a fuller revival in theaters. "West Side Story," too, is among the most beloved mu-

sicals. The 1961 film, directed by Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise, made \$43.7 million (or about \$400 million adjusted for inflation) and won 10 Oscars, including best picture.

"West Side Story" can still be expected to play well through the lucrative holiday corridor, during which younger-skewing films like "Spider-Man: No Way Home" (expected to next weekend beco-

me the first pandemic release to open with \$100 million or more domestically) and "Sing 2" will likely be the top draws. Film executives are hoping the spreading omicron variant of COVID-19 doesn't set the box office back just as Hollywood is nearing its most profitable period.

But the muted reception for "West Side Story" will concern the industry. Hopes had long

been pinned on Spielberg, with his song-and-dance spectacular, to bring back some of the movies' mojo. Instead, little right now outside of Marvel releases is finding big audiences. Many moviegoers simply haven't returned yet.

That 2017 release launched with a modest \$8.8 million opening weekend before enjoying a rare, lengthy run that made it, with \$435 million worldwide, one of the highest grossing live-action musicals ever. During the pandemic, though, movies have faded quickly at the multiplex, and often been steered more quickly to streaming or home release.

Starring newcomer Rachel Zegler and Ansel Elgort as Maria and Tony, "West Side Story" took in \$4.4 million in 37 overseas territories. Because the film includes a transgender character, it was banned in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait.

David A. Gross, who runs the movie consultancy Franchise Entertainment, called the opening "soft."

Second place for the weekend went to Disney's animated "Encanto," which held strongly in its third week, dropping only 27% from the previous weekend. It grossed \$9.6 from Friday to Sunday, bringing its cumulative total to \$71.3 million domestically and \$80.5 million internationally. **MDT/AP**

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**SPEEDSKATING**

# Bowe, US men win titles at World Cup in Calgary

**B**rittany Bowe of the United States won the women's 1,500 meters at the World Cup speedskating meet in Canada, where the American men won the team pursuit yesterday [Macau time].

Bowe skated the distance in 1 minute, 52.05 seconds, edging Nana Takagi of Japan, who earned silver in 1:52.06 at the Calgary Olympic Oval.

"After seeing Nana's time I just put it in my mind I was going to go for it," said Bowe, who was second in the 1,000 on Saturday. "I don't feel bad taking that one after losing by a hair yesterday."

Ayano Sato of Japan earned bronze.

The U.S. team of Ethan Cepuran, Emery Lehman and Casey Dawson set a track record of 3:35.59 in winning the team pursuit for the second straight World Cup.

Joey Mantia, who won the 1,500 on Saturday, didn't participate in the team pursuit in Canada, a week after the Americans set a world record in winning in Utah.

The U.S. men secured the World Cup trophy for the season.

"I don't know if anybody was



Casey Dawson (left) of the United States, leads teammates Emery Lehman (center) and Ethan Cepuran during the men's team pursuit competition at the ISU World Cup speedskating event in Calgary

really expecting that," Dawson said. "The team started in the B group at the first World Cup, so who knows?"

Norway took silver at 3:36.24. Canada was third.

In the men's 500, Viktor Mush-takov of Russia took gold at 33.90

seconds. Yuma Murakami of Japan earned silver in 33.99. Laurent Du-breuil of Canada, who won the first 500 on Friday, finished third.

Zhongyan Ning of China won the men's 1,000 in 1:06.65. Jordan Stolz of the U.S. earned silver in

1:06.96. Mushtakov finished third.

In the women's mass start, Fran-cesca Lollobrigida of Italy conclu-ded the best World Cup weekend of her career with a victory. She earned gold in 8:29.51.

Lollobrigida, the 30-year-old

great-niece of 94-year-old Italian actress Gina Lollobrigida, won the 3,000 on Friday.

"It's just a dream," she said.

Ivanie Blondin of Canada took silver in 8:29.71. Elizaveta Golubeva of Russia earned bronze. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**CHINA ABLE TO DEAL WITH RESURGENCES OF VIRUS**

Thanks to effective zero-cases policy the country has been adopting, the latest round of COVID-19 resurgence in some provinces has barely affected normal economic activities and social life in places beyond.

The fact that China is now capable of containing sporadic regional outbreaks within a short time, even during the winter season when the novel coronavirus is highly transmissible, will inject confidence that the virus can be effectively controlled.

Over the past week, Zhejiang province registered 138 locally transmitted COVID-19 cases, of which 44 were reported in Ningbo, 77 in Shaoxing, and 17 in the provincial capital, Hangzhou. New cases were also reported in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region and Shaanxi province on Sunday. Which highlights the still severe anti-pandemic situation nationwide.

Yet compared with the early days of the pandemic, when detection of new cases sometimes stirred up panic among the public and even a rushed response on the part of public health workers, people now seem more at ease in the face of new infections being reported. This is mainly because a mature set of prevention and control measures is now in place. These include mass testing, contact tracing, targeted lockdowns and restrictions on travel and public gatherings, which can be activated whenever necessary.

The fact that more than 1.16 billion Chinese people have now been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 has also put the country in an advantageous position, even when dealing with the emergence of new variants.

China has so far not detected any cases related to the highly contagious Omicron variant, although it has spread to nearly 70 countries worldwide. This has enabled the country to have enough time to accelerate its research into vaccines and tests to better deal with any possible Omicron outbreaks in the future.

Yet despite the containment efforts, the country still faces immense pressure at its border, with several domestic outbreaks already triggered by infections imported via port cities. "The top priority for China's disease containment work focuses on ports," Mi Feng, a spokesman for the National Health Commission, said on Saturday.

Health officials must maintain full vigilance against any new cases, especially as New Year's Day and Spring Festival are approaching, which will likely increase the possibility of the virus spreading. One lesson that has been learned over the past two years is that any lapse in prevention and control efforts could be costly. It is imperative therefore that there is no loophole which the virus can exploit.

China and U.S. had a "very good year" for collaboration on dealing with climate change, but Washington is still pushing Beijing to adopt more ambitious carbon reduction goals, the top U.S. diplomat in China said.

David Meale, the American Embassy's No. 2 official, said that what China does on burning coal will be crucial to whether the world can meet its target of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century, as set by the 2015 Paris climate accord.

China, the world's largest energy consumer and biggest producer and consumer of coal, emits 27% of the world's carbon

dioxide, the most of any country.

So far, China has shown no intention of moving up its timeline to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2060 and for carbon emissions to peak by 2030 or before, said Meale.

The Senate has yet to approve President Joe Biden's nominee for ambassador to Beijing, former senior State Department official Nicholas Burns.

"It has been a very good year for our collaboration," Meale said, citing the close relationship and regular communication between climate envoys John Kerry and Xie Zhenhua. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Harnaaz Sandhu waves after being crowned Miss Universe 2021

**MISS UNIVERSE IS INDIA'S HARNAAZ SANDHU, 70TH WINNER**

ARIEL SCHALIT, EILAT

**H**ARNAAZ Sandhu of India was crowned the 70th Miss Universe yesterday [Macau time], topping a field of some 80 contestants in a pageant that was touched by politics and the pandemic.

The previously reigning Miss Universe, Andrea Meza of Mexico, crowned her successor, a Bollywood actress, in the Israeli Red Sea resort town of Eilat. The pageant was held in the middle of the night, wrapping up at 5 a.m. local time (10 p.m. EST) to accommodate the primetime schedule in the U.S.

Sandhu said she was feeling "overwhelmed because it's been 21 years since India got Miss Universe crown and it's happening right now."

The pageant included traditional displays of national costumes, swimwear and a series of interview questions to test contestants' public speaking skills. The top 10 showed off intricately be-dazzled full-length gowns in either gold, silver or bronze. The Philippines' Beatrice Luigi Gomez wore an asymmetrical cut dress with one sleeve, highlighting a new tattoo she said "celebrates her womanhood."

But the contest also drew attention in recent weeks for other reasons.

A grassroots Palestinian-led boycott had urged contestants to skip the event to protest Israel's treatment of the Palestinians.

In the end, only Malaysia, a predominantly Muslim country with close ties to the Palestinians, did not send a representative, citing the global COVID-19 situation. The South African government, which also strongly supports the Palestinian cause, withdrew support for the country's representative over her participation.

In an interview last month, Meza urged contestants to leave politics out of the pageant, saying the gathering was meant to bring together women from different backgrounds. "When you are in there you forget about politics, about your religion," she told The Associated Press at the time.

Sara Salansky, an official with the Israeli Tourism Ministry, said the country was selected to host the contest earlier this year because of Israel's successful coronavirus vaccination program.

The contest suffered a last-minute hiccup with

the arrival of the omicron variant, which forced Israel to close its borders to foreign tourists late last month.

Most of the Miss Universe contestants were already in the country before the new regulations came into effect. But those who came afterward were given special permission to enter, albeit with a mandatory 72-hour quarantine period.

Throughout the run-up to Sunday's contest, all contestants were tested for the coronavirus every 48 hours and required to obey strict mask requirements.

Amid all the safeguards, France's contestant, Clemence Botino, tested positive for COVID-19 shortly after arriving in Israel. After 10 days in quarantine, she was declared virus free last week and allowed to rejoin the competition.

Last year's pageant was delayed due to the pandemic before Meza was crowned in May for her abbreviated tenure.

Sunday's contest was hosted by U.S. TV personality Steve Harvey. Organizers said the pageant was expected to reach an estimated 600 million viewers via the FOX network in 172 countries. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



**England** The Group of Seven economic powers told Russia to "de-escalate" its military buildup near the Ukrainian border, warning that an invasion would have "massive consequences" and inflict severe economic pain on Moscow. Foreign ministers from the United States, Britain and the rest of the G-7, joined by the European Union's foreign affairs chief, issued in Liverpool a joint statement declaring themselves "united in our condemnation of Russia's military buildup and aggressive rhetoric towards Ukraine."

AP PHOTO



**Hungary** As coronavirus infections and deaths soar, the country's journalists and public health professionals are demanding more detailed data on the outbreak from the government, with some experts saying that greater transparency might boost lagging vaccination rates. Information is often hard to find in the country of over 9 million people, where infection rates have broken records and daily deaths per capita are among the highest in the world.

AP PHOTO



**Mexico** Vicente Fernández (pictured), an iconic and beloved singer of regional Mexican music who was awarded three Grammys and nine Latin Grammys and inspired a new generation of performers, including his son Alejandro Fernández, died on Sunday [today, Macau time]. He was 81.

AP PHOTO



**Hollywood** The Hollywood Foreign Press Association will announce nominations to the 79th Golden Globes today [Macau time]. But will Hollywood care? The press association, often ridiculed, even by its own hosts, this year went from punchline to pariah. After a Los Angeles Times' expose detailed some of the HFPA's unethical behavior and revealed that its 87 voting members didn't include one Black journalist, studios said they would boycott the Globes and more than 100 PR firms said their clients wouldn't participate until the HFPA swiftly implemented "profound and lasting change."