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VACCINATION AGAINST COVID-19 WILL BE REQUIRED FOR TRAVELERS ENTERING MACAU AGED 12 AND OVER FROM APRIL 3

▲ P3

EDUCATION BUREAU STUDY TO EXAMINE 'WHAT GOES ON IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINDS'

▲ P4

UKRAINIAN TROOPS RECOVER CITY

▲ P8



AP PHOTO



Australia's government presented a range of economic measures yesterday such as halving the tax on gasoline to help cushion the impact of high inflation and win votes at elections due by May. Inflation fueled by the Ukraine war, the pandemic's disruption to supply chains and widespread flooding disasters across central and eastern Australia is expected to reach 4.5% in the current fiscal year which ends on June 30.

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare rejected concerns that regional safety would be jeopardized by a security treaty between the South Pacific island nation and China. The U.S., Australia and New Zealand are among the nations that have voiced concerns over a leaked draft of the bilateral agreement. Sogavare told his national parliament that negotiations had concluded but the treaty had not yet been signed.

AP PHOTO



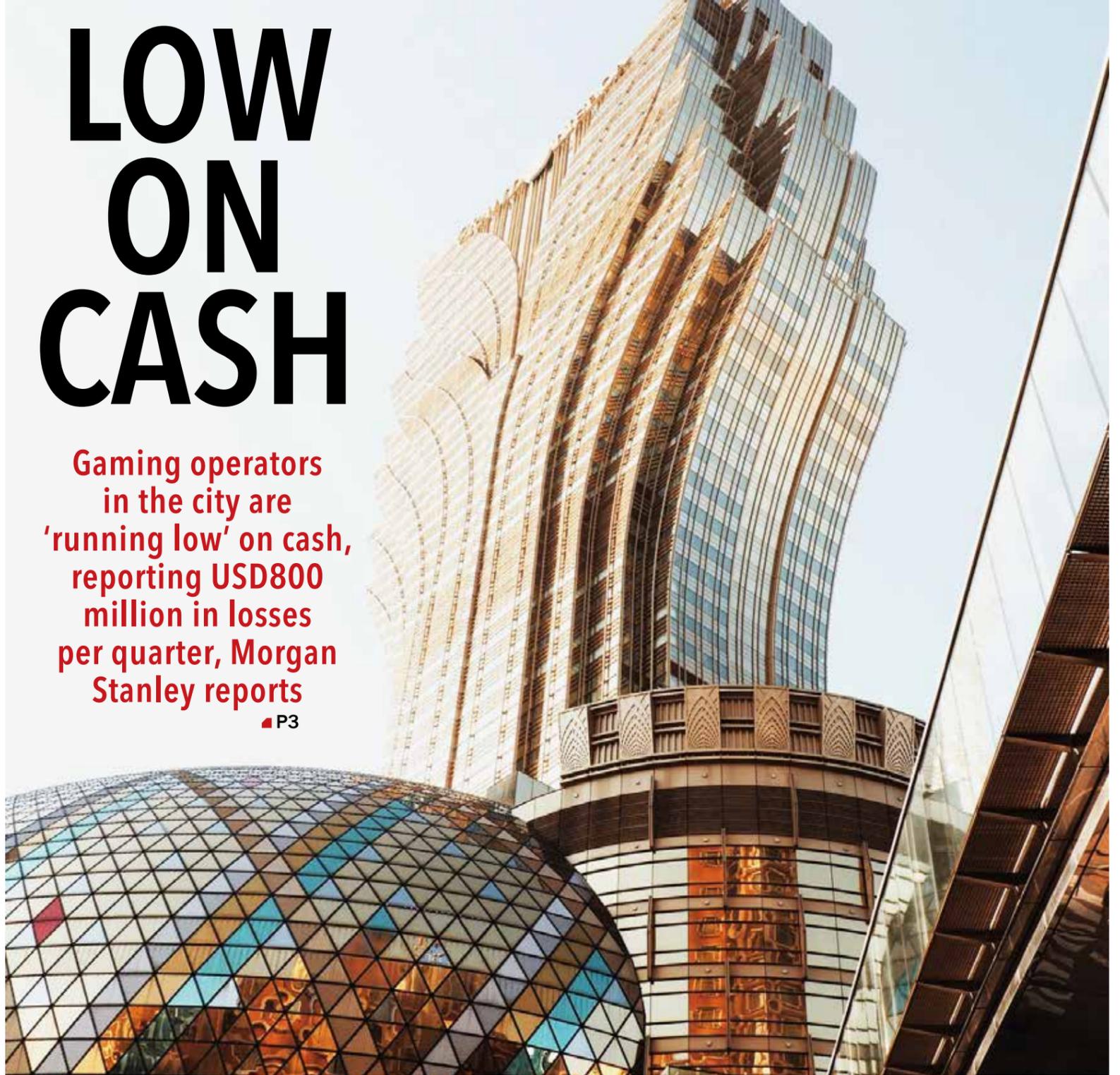
Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong (pictured) will visit President Joe Biden at the White House to highlight a strategic relationship that administration officials hope will pay dividends as Biden faces challenges in both hemispheres. Biden and Lee would discuss several issues when they meet today [Macau time], including the war in Ukraine and "freedom of the seas" a key issue in the South China Sea.

More on backpage

LOW ON CASH

Gaming operators in the city are 'running low' on cash, reporting USD800 million in losses per quarter, Morgan Stanley reports

▲ P3



DANGEROUS LIAISONS

AUD76 million deposited through Macau banks for The Star

▲ P2

AP PHOTO



SHANGHAI LOCKDOWN TESTS 'ZERO-COVID' LIMITS

▲ P7

**PHILIPPINES
PLEDGES TO CONTINUE
REPATRIATION FLIGHTS**

The Philippine Consulate General will continue organizing repatriation flights until the Macau government has declared it safe to allow international commercial flights to operate again, according to the Philippines' Department of Foreign Ministry (DFA). In a statement, the DFA said that it had transported the remains of three Filipinos who passed away in Macau as part its 29th repatriation flight on Friday. The Philippine government has brought home a total of 5,761 Filipinos. Up to now, no flights have been operating to the Philippines due to strict border and entry measures in place in the SAR.

**IPIM CALLS FOR
PARTICIPANTS FOR
SHANGHAI IMPORT EXPO**

The Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) is calling upon local enterprises to participate in the 2022 China International Import Expo (CIIE) with applications open until April 15. The CIIE will be held in the National Exhibition and Convention Centre (Shanghai) from November 5 to 10. During the event, the IPIM will organize Macau enterprises, agents of Portuguese-speaking countries' food and beverage products, and local firms providing professional services (in translation, legal and accounting fields) related to the Portuguese-speaking markets to exhibit at the 5th CIIE, with pavilions set up in the "Food and Agricultural Products" and "Trade in Services" zones.

GAMING

**AUD76 MILLION DEPOSITED THROUGH
MACAU BANKS FOR THE STAR**

LYNZY VALLES

WEALTHY Chinese gamblers have allegedly been encouraged to deposit millions of dollars into a junket operator's Macau bank account, a red flag in respect of money laundering controls, an Australian regulatory inquiry heard yesterday in the latest chapter of the Star Entertainment Group saga.

The gaming operator of The Star has allegedly endorsed the affluent Chinese players to deposit to the account given its own bank would not touch the funds, as cited in a report issued by The Sydney Morning Herald, through an agreement with a person who worked for the "junket."

Present at the hearing is The Star's general manager of finance and commercial, Michael Whytcross, who testified that at least AUD76 million (around MOP460 million) had been transferred to the casino through a back channel over a period of nine months back in 2018 and 2019.

This revelation comes following The Star NSW regulatory manager David Alois's testimony Monday, which expressed concerns about money laundering, as he said that he had learnt of an AUD60,000 cash play in the VIP room, where the "Suncity



Cage" is located.

Yesterday, the existence of the back channel was disclosed, which allowed the transfer of large cash deposits as Macau banks would not accept significant amount of cash deposits. This back channel was created as Bank of China closed The Star's Macau bank account for "compliance reasons."

Through Kuan Koi, former employee of a junket that was not mentioned in the inquiry, Chinese high-rollers were brought to the Star, and acted as a middle man whereby clients would

deposit tens of millions of cash into his Macau bank accounts, which would later be transferred to The Star from an Australian bank account.

Koi, according to Whytcross, has no agreement with The Star that would oblige him to follow standard anti-money laundering processes, and has refused to register with Australia's anti-money laundering agency, ASIC.

The ongoing inquiry was sparked by investigations by Australian news outlets Sydney Morning Herald, The Age and 60 Minutes last October, which

alleged that the operator of the Australian casino had allowed Suncity to run a high-roller gambling business in the private room.

With the cancellation of numerous contracts between Suncity and casino regulators following the scandals surrounding the recent arrest of its CEO Alvin Chau, a senior executive of The Star admitted before an inquiry last week that the promoter to ultra-wealthy Chinese gamblers "was still operating at the Star, albeit not under the Suncity banner."

Gov't describes provisional Red Market's first day as 'smooth'

ANTHONY LAM

YESTERDAY, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) said the first day of operations of the Provisional Almirante Lacerda Municipal Market had been smooth, with over 2,000 visitors in the first three hours.

The visitor flow between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. yesterday, which marked the first three hours of operations, was similar period-over-period to that of the Almirante Lacerda Municipal Market.

The provisional facility is about 1km from the now-closed market. The origi-

nal facility located at the lower tip of Avenida de Horte e Costa is closed for refurbishments. The revamp is expected to take about two years, as per the IAM's previous announcement.

To cater to users of the original market, a free-of-charge shuttle bus line is also in operation between the Horte e Costa District and the provisional market. It is operated every 15 minutes between 9 a.m. and 12 noon and between 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Stops along the shuttle bus line include the Horta Costa / Coelho Do Amaral public bus stop, the Kun

Iam Temple, the road shoulder opposite China Plaza on Avenida de Sidónio Pais, the "Red Market" bus stop and the provisional market.

Although welcomed by many grocery-shoppers, local media Exmoo cited some passengers as commenting that the shuttle bus departure times are too far apart. Some vendors told the same media outlet that competition is expected to be strong as another municipal market is only about 50 meters away.

The two-floor provisional facility, which was used during the reconstruction of the Patane Wet Market

from 2013 to 2018, has 127 stalls. The facility is accessible, with elevators and accessible washrooms.

More commonly known as the Red Market, the Almirante Lacerda Municipal Market made it onto the List of Macau Relics. It was built in 1936. With five towers of no practical use, the building is considered to be in the Art Deco style.

After being used for nearly a century, a revamp is required. The IAM has pledged to retain the exterior of the building. The structure will be reinforced but the interior will be overhauled.



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A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

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For subscription and general issues: general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

LYNZY VALLES

GAMING

Casinos 'running low' on cash: Morgan Stanley

GAMING operators in the city are "running low" on cash, reporting USD800 million (MOP6.4 billion) in losses per quarter, according to a report issued by Morgan Stanley. "Without a meaningful uptick in visitation (easing travel policies) and mass revenue, companies (excluding Galaxy) will remain free cash flow negative, driving net debt higher and book value lower," said the note by the investment banking firm.

Furthermore, other casinos are losing USD250 (MOP2 billion) million per quarter in cash flow leakage.

With such figures, Morgan Stanley has reduced its estimates for 2022 and 2023 as the conditions extend on like a "long dry highway with no end in sight."

Previously, the firm forecast a total of USD18.5 billion (MOP121.4 billion) in gross gaming revenue for 2022.

However, with the losses the casinos are experiencing amid the pandemic and quarantine measures for arrivals from high-risk regions in mainland China, Morgan Stanley is now expecting re-

MDT ARCHIVE



venues to tumble to USD11 billion (MOP88 billion), far below the market consensus.

The firm further stressed that, in the long term, it remains confident in the sector, however,

looking at the casino stocks chart, survival is key.

On March 15, gaming operators

saw their shares plunge by up to 13%, following the tightened quarantine requirements for some travelers from the mainland, amid the new surge of Covid-19 cases in China.

Further, Morgan Stanley forecasts that Melco Resorts & Entertainment and Wynn Resorts could run for five to six quarters, while Sands China and MGM China run for about three to four quarters.

Galaxy Entertainment Group, meanwhile, remains free cash flow positive.

As reported by the Times yesterday, the anticipated revival of the gaming sector is again receding into the distance, with no recovery expected for at least six months.

Gaming insiders have admitted that the casino sector's financial situation is set to worsen in the next six months, especially given that casinos have paid tens of millions to renew their concessions.

The insiders expressed concerns about possible additional financial pressure coming from the closure of at least seven satellite casinos in ZAPE and Taipa, as operators would have to pay the salaries of dealers in the closing casinos.

Taxi group leader advises using taxi recorder to investigate complaints

ANTHONY LAM

KUOK Leong Son, executive director Macao Taxi Driver Mutual Association, hopes that the government can use taxi recorder data to help verify complaints that have been made against drivers.

The Transport Bureau (DSAT) has recently published statistics on cases related to taxis that it received last year. The bureau received 2.5 fold more complaints about drivers' service attitude compared with the previous year.

When commenting on the figures and comparisons, Kuok felt "reserved" about them, as it explained to local newspaper Macao Daily News. In contrast, he



suggested the government conduct a selective review on complaints received by DSAT.

All taxis in Macau are required to have a taxi recorder – equipment that incorporates the functions of taxi meter, receipt printer, GPS system, voice and video recorder, as well as emergency alarm – installed.

By retrieving data from the taxi recorder, Kuok thinks DSAT can verify complaints on taxi drivers and determine if drivers' attitude was really dissatisfactory or if there were misunderstandings.

Kuok said, when a taxi recorder was not mandatory, some drivers may have been a little rude to passen-

gers. As taxi recorders became mandatory in 2020, Kuok thinks the device may be used to verify complaints, which he finds fair to both complainants and defendants.

Furthermore, Kuok said, more passengers have expressed in the recent two years that they saw improvements in taxi services. Some were willing to offer tips to drivers if they experienced satisfactory services.

Kuok also finds merely announcing figures without disclosing details unfair to taxi drivers. As such, he finds it best to make use of technological skills to review complaints, which will eventually help improve service quality.

Data issued by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) revealed that 14 cases of refusal of service had been received in the first two months this year. Kuok suspects it might have been caused by change of shifts, when taxi drivers are not supposed to take passengers.

The car roof lamp, he said, cannot be turned off unless the taxi is off or is carrying passengers.

ONLY VACCINATED TRAVELERS ALLOWED ENTRY FROM APR. 3

VACCINATION against Covid-19 will be required for travelers entering Macau aged 12 and over from April 3, the government yesterday announced in a statement.

Travelers entering Macau who are aged 12 and over will need to be vaccinated with two doses of Covid-19 vaccine and the course needs to have been completed for at least 14 days.

Those aged 18 and over need to have received the second dose of the vaccine in the past seven months, and must provide proof that they

have taken a booster shot.

According to the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, a certificate from a doctor is needed if the traveler has been incapable of receiving the vaccine in the past two months.

The certificate must be approved by the local government for international travel purposes.

In addition, the current measures require 14 days of quarantine for medical observation in Macau.

Latest data from the government shows that general vaccination rate of Macau rose to 78%. LV



OVER HALF OF LAST YEAR'S TAXI COMPLAINTS CONCERN DRIVER ATTITUDES

LAST year, 63% of complaints related to taxi received by the Transport Bureau (DSAT) concerned the service attitude of taxi drivers. The bureau received a total of 780 complaints in 2021. Amounting to 493 complaints, the number of complaints on drivers' service last year has risen dramatically from the previous year's

number, which was only 198. Meanwhile, 52 complaints were filed regarding taxi equipment, particularly taxi meters. Seventeen suggestions were received. The remainder were categorized as "other" comments. Unlike previous years, last year the DSAT did not disclose the number of cases discovered by its officers.

DSEDJ STUDY TO EXAMINE 'WHAT GOES ON IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINDS'

RENATO MARQUES

THE Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) will conduct a study to understand what goes on in the minds of younger generations, Cheong Man Fai, chief of the DSEDJ's Department of Youth, said yesterday in a press briefing after a Youth Council's plenary meeting.

"We hope that through these new indicators [about youth in Macau] we can understand the mindset of young people," Cheong said, adding, "We want to understand views on international matters and perspectives as well as their views about [...] regional cooperation," she concluded.

This idea of studying the mindset of young people in depth comes from the "System of Indicators about the Youth in Macau" which, according to DSEDJ, was discussed in the Youth Council meeting and prompted the inclusion of new indicators such as the relationship between parents and children, the competitiveness of young people, regional cooperation and diversified inclusion.

The DSEDJ explains the inclusion of these topics as "facilitating the global knowledge of young people's development."

According to DSEDJ, after this new adjustment to the indicators that inform youth policies, the system now has a total of 80 indicators in 11 different areas.

As for the Social Study of the Indicators about Youth in Macau, this will take place periodically, every two years, with the aim of collecting more accurate data for the indicators system and to allow better understanding of the course and trends of youth development.

Questioned by the media as

RENATO MARQUES



to how these indicators could produce an effect in regards to tackling problems such as the mental health situation of students following the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, Cheong said, "We have discussed the mental health of students [in the meeting] and we received some suggestions."

"We have added indicators such as the relationship between parents and children. [...] Also, due to this issue, the survey we recently conducted shows that most students feel pressured, specifically in family life," she added.

In the future, the bureau pledged that it will take further steps and dedicate more attention to family education.

As for the direct impact of the pandemic on students, the same

official said that the DSEDJ has been cooperating with school institutions and associations to understand whether there are problems requiring immediate attention.

According to Cheong, citing the absence of any reports from school psychologists and counselors, "For the time being we have not detected any problems," she said, advancing that the DSEDJ is "trying to communicate with families to understand the extent of issues regarding unemployment and others that might be related with the impacts of the pandemic."

Cheong also noted in the meeting that the interdepartmental follow-up group for Youth Policy has launched over 400 programs to implement this policy, which has reached an optimum result.

long ago and that is still unknown," the Division head of the DSEDJ's Department of Youth, Io Lok Fong, said. "We will conduct surveys on this topic because, for the time being, we don't have much data on the matter," she continued. Io added that the survey would focus of the topic of "love for the country" and also on the extent of students' knowledge about the country, as well as the country's standing in several aspects and major national development and plans.

PANDEMIC PREVENTION VOLUNTEERING PRAISED

Another of the topics on the agenda from the Youth Council meeting related to the volunteering work undertaken by students and schools in recent times with special praise to be noted for the work developed by the "young volunteers" on tasks related to pandemic prevention.

Special mention went to the work done during the population nucleic acid mass testing events and regarding the promotion of vaccination against Covid-19, in which, according to the Council, "young volunteers showed dedication, voluntary spirit and concern about the wellbeing of the population," which "injected positive energy in the society and obtained recognition and praise by several sectors of society."

EXTENT OF PATRIOTIC FEELINGS STILL UNKNOWN

Another aspect in which the DSEDJ wants to improve the Policy for Youth 2021-2030 concerns the promotion of patriotic feelings among young people.

"This is an area we added not

EXODUS OF FOREIGN TEACHERS DOES NOT CONCERN YOUTH COUNCIL

THE media questioned the DSEDJ whether there was any discussion in the meeting on the recent exodus of foreign teachers, specifically from international schools, as a result of the pandemic policies adopted by Macau. The officials noted that this topic was off the

table at the meeting and not under discussion, as "it does not concern youth policies." Nonetheless, DSEDJ officials present at the press briefing said that they would take note of the problem and try to respond at a later opportunity.

Hotel guests near 500,000 in February

LYNZY VALLES

THE number of guests at hotel establishments in February increased 29.3% year-on-year to 493,000, with the number of mainland guests (396,000) and local guests (68,000) rising 30.9% and 25.1%, respectively.

Data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows that hotel occupancy has increased despite the slight downturn of tourist arrivals last month, despite the Chinese New Year, which re-

corded a decrease of 5.6% month-on-month in visitor arrivals, which totaled 655,505 last month.

The average length of stay of guests grew by 0.1 night year-on-year to 1.8 nights.

The number of guests grew 20.9% year-on-year to 1,007,000, and the average length of stay extended by 0.2 night to 1.9 nights.

In February, there were 6,600 visitors joining local tours and a total of 3,600 Macau residents purchased outbound services (in-

cluding booking for transport, accommodation and sightseeing tours) through travel agencies.

In the first two months of 2022, the average occupancy rate of guest rooms of hotel establishments rose 6.8 percentage points year-on-year to 46.2%.

Meanwhile, the number of visitors joining local tours surged by 317.1% year-on-year to 9,200, while that of Macau residents purchasing outbound services through travel agencies dropped by 13.7% to 7,800.



Sands China works with traditional SME to boost eco-friendly printing

IN order to promote the latest products and services, Sands China has invested significantly in printing, and has set strict quality requirements. Accordingly, the integrated resort operator naturally looks for experienced, highly professional candidates when selecting a printing supplier.

Established in 1993, San Hip Wo printing factory has had a time-honored history as a local printing factory for nearly three decades, utilizing printers from Germany to ensure expert quality and efficiency.

Sands China began collaborating with San Hip Wo in 2018. The local printer was already well known for its competitive pricing and quality printing, and at that time, San Hip Wo's primary work was in printing dining and shopping coupons for The Venetian Macao. After the opening of the first phase of The Londoner Macao in 2021, the two organizations expanded their cooperation, including producing hotel room promotional posters, letterhead, envelopes and reminder cards.

"San Hip Wo printing factory has been rooted in Macao for nearly 30 years and has its own plant and equipment, so it can quickly respond to the services that Sands China needs," said Sands China's procurement and supply chain senior manager, Candy Kan.

Its professional printing skills make the business stand out from its rivals. The quality and specifications of the products meet the procurement requirements, said representatives from Sands China. "We only need to do sampling once before putting it into batch production. They are a reliable supplier."

When the two sides have di-



fferent opinions on a printing job, the SME takes the initiative to communicate. "They point out which areas could not meet the requirements, or make alternative suggestions," management from Sands China recalled. Sands China commented positively on the communication process with San Hip Wo and suggested that other suppliers could emulate them

in proactively making suggestions and communicating with clients.

TALENT IS THE CORE ASSET

Dicky Wong, production manager at San Hip Wo, explained that the accuracy of colors is essential in the printing industry. However, the color of a design layout can vary through different screens. "Colors of Sands China's

logo are special and unique; therefore, no mistakes or deviation are acceptable," he said.

San Hip Wo has been absolutely committed to the fine details of printing since its cooperation with Sands China. The SME has made continuous efforts in leveling up requirements in colors, sizes, and so on.

The company prioritizes quality and only supplies products

with suitable materials according to the requirements of their clients. And with Sands China valuing environmental protection, San Hip Wo also offers environmental friendly paper and ink.

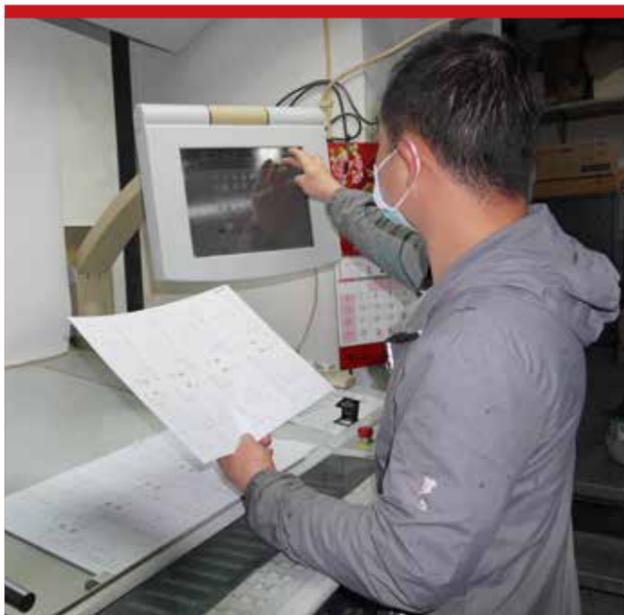
Meanwhile, Wong revealed: "Talent is the most illustrious and essential asset of the company." The company has more than 20 employees, many of whom are senior technicians who have worked at the printer since the establishment of its factory. "They are very sensitive to color accuracy. What's more, they are familiar with the entire printing process, so they can operate the machines efficiently and accurately," according to the manager.

IMPROVING BY LEARNING

For San Hip Wo, partnering with Sands China means more than just business profits. To help suppliers become familiar with the procurement process, Sands China sets up courses for their suppliers to learn how to use a one-stop e-procurement system.

The ongoing pandemic has caused economic shock waves across the globe, and SMEs are particularly vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19. Sands China maintains its partnerships with SMEs and provides them with business opportunities. Wong appreciates the company's SME Expedited Payment Programme, which was launched by Sands China to provide relief to SMEs by reducing payment terms from 30 to seven days.

It seems that both parties are in sync regarding the future of their partnership. "It is believed that the [greater] use of environmentally friendly materials will be the general trend. Sands China has always been committed to minimizing its environmental impact, and San Hip Wo hopes to maintain a cooperative relationship to promote the development of [both] low-carbon emissions and environmental protection," said Wong. Sands hopes the SME will explore more green options in the future to continue their joint drive for environmental protection.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FOUR MACAU RESTAURANTS ON ASIA'S 100 BEST RESTAURANTS LISTING

ANTHONY LAM

MACAU, a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, has seen four of its restaurants ranked among Asia's 100 best restaurants.

The four restaurants are namely Wing Lei Palace, ranked 47; Golden Flower, 84; Jade Dragon, 89; as well as The Eight, 97. Not only are all four located in a hotel or resort, but they are also owned by their respective hotel or resort operators.

It signifies that Macau's restaurant accolades and ranking are still a high-end operation focusing on hotel and resort offerings. This is unlike the situation at Macau's counterpart or rival destinations, such as Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Tai-chung, where many independent or street-side restaurants received places on the list.

It is worth noting that Chef Tam Kwok Fung of the Wing Lei Palace led the culinary team of the now Michelin 3-star Jade Dragon at the City of Dreams for a period of time, before being invited to head the kitchen of the



now Michelin 2-star Cantonese restaurant in Wynn Palace.

Despite attaining the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy

title on the basis of its legacy in preserving and faming Portuguese food – whether or not the restaurants are characterized by

Asian, and particularly Macau, influences – Macau has not seen any Portuguese or Macanese restaurant making the listing.

The main list involving Asia's 50 Best Restaurants was unveiled yesterday afternoon.

The top place of the list was claimed by Den, a contemporary Japanese restaurant in Tokyo, Japan, headed by Chef Zaiyu Hasegawa, who boasts contemporary kaiseki that incorporates elements from other cuisines.

In Taipei, Taiwan's Mume (pronounced MU-meh) attains this year's Sustainable Restaurant Award for his extensive use of seasonal local ingredients since its opening in 2014. The restaurant uses local ingredients in 90% of the dishes on its menus and adopts a zero-waste strategy.

Mainland China counts four restaurants in the ranking, including two new entries. Chef Christopher Kostow's Shenzhen restaurant Ensue made an impressive debut at rank 19 while fellow newcomer Da Vittorio came in at 28. In Shanghai, Fu He Hui climbed 10 places to 12 while Ultraviolet by Paul Pairet made a welcome return to the list at 39.

There were six restaurants from Hong Kong secured places on the Asia's 50 Best list.

Asia's 50 Best Restaurants was launched in 2013 to celebrate gastronomy across the region and to provide diners around the globe with local insight and culinary recommendations.

AD

32nd MACAO
第三十二屆澳門藝術節 20 22
Arts Festival
32^o festival De Artes De Macau

Tickets will be on sale simultaneously through the Macau Ticketing Network outlets, telephone and online booking from 10am on 3 April (Sunday).

Ticketing arrangements at the Macau Ticketing Network outlets on the first day of ticket sales:

- In order to facilitate epidemic prevention and control measures, members of the public who want to purchase tickets personally at the outlets from 10am to 1pm on that day are required to register through the online reservation system of the Macau Ticketing Network in advance.

Registration → Select the location and ticketing slot → Present electronic code at the outlet

Registration time: from 10am on 31 March
Online reservation platform: <https://www.macaoticket.com/2022FAM>

Those in need of assistance to reserve a ticketing slot through the online reservation system can visit any Macau Ticketing Network outlets during business hours within the system's opening period and make the registration with assistance of the staff.

Booking time slots are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Telephone and Online Booking (Pre-registration not required)
Ticketing hotline (853) 2855 5555
Website www.macaoticket.com

Early Bird Discount up to 30% from 3 to 10 April
Various types of discounts are available

Shanghai lockdown tests 'zero-Covid' limits, shakes markets

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

A two-phase lockdown of Shanghai's 26 million people is testing the limits of China's hard-line "zero-COVID" strategy, which is shaking markets far beyond the country's borders.

China's largest city yesterday entered the second day of the lockdown's first phase, which includes the Pudong financial district and adjacent areas on the east side of the Huangpu River that divides the center of finance, manufacturing and trade.

The measures confining Pudong residents to their homes, closing nonessential businesses and requiring mass testing are to be lifted Friday. At that time, the vast Puxi area on the opposite side of the river will go under lockdown.

With public transport suspended and bridges and tunnels connecting the two sides of the city closed, usually bustling city streets — including the fabled riverside Bund in Puxi with its century-old historic buildings — were unusually quiet.

Zhang Meisha, a 39-year-old freelancer taking a morning jog along the Bund, said she was trying to get as much sunshine as possible before Puxi goes under lockdown.

"I hope the Shanghai spring can wait for us," Zhang said.

Shops along the nearby Nanjing Road pedestrian shopping street were mostly closed, with few people out and about. Restaurants were offering only takeaway service and a long line formed outside a McDonald's of people awaiting their orders.

The shutdown adds to anxiety

AP PHOTO



in financial markets over Russia's war on Ukraine, the U.S. Federal Reserve's effort to cool surging inflation by raising interest rates and other economic challenges.

Market reactions including Monday's 7% drop in oil prices in London don't reflect the "true reality of the situation," but investors already were uneasy about China and the global economy, said Michael Every of Rabobank.

"We have a whole mountain of problems to worry about, and this is just one foothill among many," he said. "If that's all it is, a COVID lockdown, it's not difficult to look in recent history books and see how it plays out. But this interfaces with a lot of other issues."

The new omicron BA.2 subvariant is widely blamed for bringing a new surge in cases to Shanghai, which had suffered relatively little

effect from the pandemic that was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019.

Elsewhere in China, new cases have continued to decline in Hong Kong following a recent wave that has led to more than 7,000 deaths. The semi-autonomous city recorded 7,680 new cases, with no immediate word on whether authorities plan to proceed with mass testing of all of its 7.4 million people.

In Shanghai, panic buying struck markets and some residents have reported shortages of meat and vegetables, including on online platforms. Authorities are working to ensure food supplies and have converted gymnasiums and exhibition centers to house patients, most of whom show no symptoms.

Government workers in haz-

mat suits, joined by about 68,000 volunteers, have fanned out and are stationed at checkpoints around residential compounds walled off with traffic dividers and improvised barriers.

Shanghai recorded 4,477 new cases on Monday, all but 95 of them asymptomatic. Despite a nationwide surge, numbers of new COVID-19 deaths have remained low, with two more added on March 20 for a total of 4,638. The low number of deaths and total of 145,808 cases since the start of the pandemic are a fraction of the toll in the U.S. and other countries, and are touted by China as evidence of the wisdom of its approach.

The Shanghai lockdown stands to become the largest of any city in China's campaign against the virus, in which millions have been

confined to their homes for weeks at a time in cities across much of the country.

Despite calls for a more targeted approach and some tweaking of the system, conditions in Shanghai show the government's continuing reliance on extreme measures, regardless of the social and economic costs.

Authorities say the two-phase approach was designed to reduce disruptions, and unlike in past situations, definite end dates have been given for the lockdown in Shanghai. Asymptomatic patients are being quarantined in facilities outside hospitals to free up limited medical resources.

"China should be able to contain the virus in the next few weeks, as lockdown is effective," global financial services firm Macquarie Group said in a report.

"But COVID does pose substantial growth downside risk in the rest of this year, as lockdown is also very costly," the report said, adding that consumer businesses and the property sector were set to take the biggest hits.

The Shanghai lockdown indicates China will stick with its hard-line COVID-19 strategy at least until the ruling Communist Party holds its once-every-five-year congress this fall or winter, the report said.

Xi Jinping is expected to be granted an unprecedented third five-year term as party leader at the congress. Authorities have promoted the need for stability above all in the runup to the event.

"Zero-COVID" has been credited with preventing mass nationwide outbreaks and China boasts a vaccination rate of around 87%. However, that percentage is much lower among seniors who are the most likely to be sickened by the virus.

Wang Hui, who runs a shop near the Bund, said high rents and a lack of customers could cost him his business.

"I don't know how much longer we can last," Wang said. MDT/AP

BRI

India plans power project in Sri Lanka after China's shelved

INDIA has signed an agreement to set up hybrid power projects on northern Sri Lankan islands in a deal seen as a strategic victory in its competition with China for influence in the Indian Ocean.

Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, who is in Colombo for bilateral meetings, witnessed the signing, along with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Gamini Peiris, the Indian Embassy said yesterday [Macau time].

In December, China announced the suspension of its own project to build power plants on three Sri Lankan islands due to security concerns involving a "third party."

An Indian official said he couldn't confirm if the plants in the new agreement are to be built on the same islands earmarked for the Chinese project. The power source and other details on the projects weren't available.

India considers Sri

Lanka, just across the narrow Palk Strait off India's southeastern coast, to be in its sphere of influence. The island nation in the middle of a key sea route connecting the east and west also is important to China's ambitious "Belt and Road" global infrastructure initiative.

"It is kind of a substantial victory for India," said Lynn Ockersz, a senior journalist and foreign relations analyst in Sri Lanka.

"Overall it will be in a great position to influence

Sri Lanka when it comes to policy issues affecting India," he said.

Had the Chinese power plant project been realized, it would have placed China next to India's southern coast. India and China already have running border disputes in other regions.

Jaishankar is also taking part in the BIMSTEC summit, a meeting of Bay of Bengal nations Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand for economic coope-

ration.

India also signed agreements on providing a maritime rescue coordination center and building fisheries harbors in Sri Lanka.

The agreements come as Sri Lanka is suffering its worst economic crisis in recent memory with shortages of medicine, fuel and milk power and daily power outages lasting for hours.

Sri Lanka has approached both India and China for help. India provided a \$1 billion credit line to buy

essentials following a previous \$500 billion to buy fuel. China is considering a request for \$2.5 billion in economic assistance.

Infrastructure projects that were built using Chinese loans but don't make money are blamed for its debt crisis. Sri Lanka's foreign reserves are dwindling but it has to repay \$7 billion in foreign debts this year.

China has been noncommittal to a request for debt restructuring. MDT/AP

PUTIN'S WAR

After Russian forces pull back, a shattered town breathes

ANDREA ROSA & FELIPE DANA, TROSTYANETS

THE bodies of two Russian soldiers lie abandoned in the woods. Ukrainian forces piled atop a tank flash victory signs. Dazed people line up amid charred buildings to reach for aid. These are the sights in a Ukrainian town that has seized back control from Russian forces, at least for now.

Arriving in Trostyanets shortly after Ukrainian forces announced the northeastern town near the Russian border had been retaken following weeks of Russian occupation, The Associated Press yesterday [Macau time] saw a civilian landscape that has seen some of the worst of war.

The hospital was damaged, its windows jagged with broken glass. The train station had been shot up. Residents stepped carefully, wary of mines. They rode their bicycles past craters in the road and past the ruins of homes. It is not yet clear how many civilians have been killed.

Russian tanks lay burned, twisted, left behind like the soldiers in the woods. One of the soldiers had a red band around his leg. The other had an arm flung over his head as if napping on the leaves in the late afternoon light. A Ukrainian soldier nudged him with his toe.

A red "Z" marked a Russian truck, its windshield fractured, near stacked boxes of ammunition. Hundreds of the boxes, including ones with artillery shells, had been stacked around the town. Curious residents peered into an open box of shells.

It is not clear where the



Residents lining up for aid watch as Ukrainian soldiers ride atop a tank in the town of Trostyanets, Ukraine

Russian forces went, under what circumstances they fled or whether the town will remain free of them in the days ahead. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his overnight address emphasized that the situation remains tense in Ukraine's northeast around Kharkiv, the nearest large city, and other areas.

But the returned presence of Ukrainian forces in Trostyanets is a relief to a country that hopes some Russian forces, under fierce resistance, are pulling back.

A senior U.S. defense official said Washington believes the Ukrainians have retaken Trostyanets. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss U.S. intelligence assessments, said Russian forces largely remained in defensive positions near the capital, Kyiv, and were making little forward progress elsewhere in the country.

Late last week, with its forces stalled in parts of the country, Russia seemed to scale back its war aims, saying its main goal was gaining control of the Donbas in the east.

In Trostyanets, after weeks of occupation and intense fighting, some residents appeared to have lost all sense of normal.

"Personally, I have not seen much," said one resident, Vitali Butski. And yet three missiles struck his home. Many buildings beyond the railway station are damaged, he said.

Bundled up against the freezing wind, he and others ventured out to see what had been left behind.

Unexploded ordnance littered the square in front of the train station. Trenches and berms lined the square in a sign that Russian forces tried to defend their position. In a bunker under the station, with thick walls and door, rooms were full of army uniforms and boots.

On the walls were patriotic messages including drawings signed by children in Russian reading "Thanks for the peace, soldier." Another room had been used as a clinic, with unused drips ready and desks turned into beds, although there was no sign of blood.

Packets of Russian food

rations were seen amid the debris. But residents indicated that the soldiers were still hungry.

"In the evenings they came to us, to our houses and our basements, and stole our pickles, potatoes, lard and cucumbers," said one resident who didn't give her name.

She called the Russians "orcs," or goblin-like creatures. Militias from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions were there as well, she said. The entire town had been occupied.

Now, for residents, there is some space to breathe. In line for aid, they waved to passing Ukrainian tanks.

"As you can see, there were battles here over the past month. Projectiles were flying over, and people were saying they were frightened," said Evgeni Kosin with the emergency services. "They were left without food and water. There was a horrible humanitarian situation. Now that there are no flyovers or shelling in the last three days, perhaps it is getting better."

MDT/AP

this day in history

1981 PRESIDENT REAGAN IS SHOT



President Ronald Reagan has been shot and wounded after a lone gunman opened fire in Washington.

He is currently undergoing emergency surgery at George Washington University Hospital but there are unconfirmed reports he walked in unaided.

Initial reports claim he may have a punctured lung.

Five to six shots were fired as he left the Washington Hilton Hotel where he had been addressing a union convention, about one mile from the White House.

A man, firing at close range, also wounded White House Press Secretary James Brady in the head.

A Secret Service official and a Washington policeman were also injured before the gunman was pushed to the ground by police.

The president had appeared from the hotel smiling and walked towards his limousine turning momentarily to acknowledge calls from the waiting press.

A burst of gunfire was then heard before the president was bundled into a bullet proof limousine and whisked away.

First Lady Nancy Reagan is understood to be on her way to the hospital to visit her 70-year-old husband.

The attacker is described as being in his twenties and blonde.

He was pinned to the wall by secret service agents and he has now been arrested.

The assassination attempt has sent shock waves around the country where memories of the murder of president John F Kennedy remain vivid.

President Reagan has only been in office for 69 days and the attack leaves the running of the country in some confusion as his vice-president George Bush is currently on his way back from Texas.

Until the arrival of Vice-President Bush it is unclear who is in charge.

The American Stock Exchange has stopped trading and the Academy Awards have been postponed until tomorrow night in the wake of the attacks.

Courtesy BBC News

UKRAINE, RUSSIA HOLD NEW TALKS AIMED AT ENDING THE FIGHTING

THE first face-to-face talks in two weeks between Russia and Ukraine began yesterday in Turkey, raising flickering hopes there could be progress toward ending a war that has ground into a bloody campaign of attrition.

An adviser to the Ukrainian president said the mee-

ting in Istanbul was focused on securing a cease-fire and guarantees for Ukraine's security — issues that have been the focus of previous unsuccessful negotiations.

Ahead of the talks, the Ukrainian president said his country was prepared to declare its neutrality, as Moscow has demanded, and was

open to compromise over the contested eastern region of Donbas — comments that might lend momentum to negotiations. But he warned the "ruthless war" continued, and even the negotiators assembled, Russian forces hit an oil depot in western Ukraine and a government building in the south.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told the two sides that they had a "historic responsibility" to stop the fighting.

Putin's aim of a quick military victory has been thwarted by stiff Ukrainian resistance — but still hopes were not high for a breakthrough. Reflecting skepticism among Ukraine's Western allies, British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said she thought the Russian president was "not serious about talks." MDT/AP

IN CONTEXT

The president initially appeared to have escaped serious injury, but had been hit by a ricocheting bullet as he was bundled into his limousine by Secret Service Agents.

He was operated on and made a fast recovery. Mr Brady suffered severe head injuries, and policeman Thomas Delahanty and Tim McCarthy of the Secret Service were also injured.

John Hinckley, 25, the son of an affluent oil industry executive, was charged with trying to assassinate the president fuelled by an obsession with actress Jodie Foster and a desire to impress her. The following June, Hinckley was found not guilty by reason of insanity and was committed to hospital.

Ronald Reagan went on to win a second term in office by a wide margin almost four years later. He died in June 2004, aged 93, after suffering from Alzheimer's disease for 10 years.

YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You can convince anyone of anything. Sudden romantic encounters will set your head spinning. You can make a huge difference to children if you are able to put yourself in their shoes.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Your persuasive nature will win the heart of someone you've had your eye on. Work on legitimate financial deals that may enable you to bring in some extra cash.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 You need adventure and excitement in your life. Consider a trial separation if you and your mate just can't come to terms. You must look into your options.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Opportunities for romance are present. There's a good chance that they won't come back. Don't take sides if you wish to remain on good terms with both parties.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Raise your self esteem and your confidence if you want to get back into the mainstream again. Don't delay; go to your physician or dentist and get to the bottom of the discomfort.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 You may want to put your creative thinking cap on. Try to curb your tongue and let others at least get a word in. Be careful what you say. Joining organizations will provide you with romantic contacts.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 You will be able to get good advice if you listen to close friends or relatives you respect. Relatives may play an important role in your social activities. Be careful not to exaggerate when interacting with your lover.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 You will be able to get to the bottom of things today. Mingle with those who can further your goals. Purchases will be well worth it and they will last a long time.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You need to start planning that vacation. Opportunities for romance may develop through dealing with groups that have a purpose. You will meet new friends and enjoy a multitude of new activities.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Refuse to get involved in idle chatter; it will only make you look bad. Be prepared to take care of the issues at hand. Get busy on projects that improve your own image; you'll have the discipline to succeed.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You can avoid hassles by sticking to your work and refusing to get involved in gossip or idle chatter. Work quietly on your own. Your emotional state will vacillate.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Travel for pleasure will be enticing. Compromise will be necessary. Don't force your opinions on friends or relatives unless you are prepared to lose their favor.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	9	13	rain
Changchun	0	8	rain
Chengdu	13	19	overcast
Chongqing	6	12	cloudy
Fuzhou	11	20	overcast
Guangzhou	14	22	rain
Guiyang	10	17	overcast
Haikou	19	26	rain
Hangzhou	7	20	cloudy
Harbin	1	8	rain
Hefei	8	20	cloudy
Nanjing	7	21	cloudy
Shanghai	8	18	cloudy
Taipei	18	23	overcast
Wuhan	10	22	fine
Hong Kong	23	26	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-7	3	snow
Frankfurt	3	11	rain
Paris	4	10	rain
London	2	13	rain
New York	6	8	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Journalist Pyle; 6- As ___ resort; 11- Tree syrup; 14- Born yesterday, so to speak; 15- Brainy bunch; 16- Ivy Leaguer; 17- Discourage; 18- Building addition; 19- First name in horror films; 20- Not ___ many words; 22- Bay; 24- Lounges; 28- Entry; 30- Anxiety; 31- Chucked weapon; 32- Not moving; 33- Boxes material; 37- Canterbury can; 38- Golfer with an army; 39- Regulus's constellation; 40- Indispensable; 43- Throw with force; 45- Chip dip; 46- Blowhard; 47- Foot part; 49- Dexterously; 50- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 51- Infatuated; 52- Shelter; 53- Charged; 56- Shades; 61- Animal pouch; 62- Aggregate of qualities that make good character; 63- O. Henry device; 64- Good ___ boy; 65- Tied; 66- Part of the large intestine;

DOWN 1- Stop; 2- ___ Dawn Chong; 3- It may be picked; 4- "___ had it!"; 5- Most strange; 6- Gather together; 7- Jester Jay; 8- Richards of Texas; 9- Compass pt.; 10- Public passenger vehicle; 11- Vends; 12- Healing plants; 13- Liquid measure; 21- Society page word; 23- Pianist Peter; 24- Connected series of rooms; 25- Bandleader Skinnay ___; 26- Mall frequenters; 27- Pitch; 28- Month of showers; 29- Sign over; 31- Capital city of Yemen; 33- Brittle; 34- Cover story; 35- Pertaining to the kidneys; 36- Pet term for man's best friend; 38- Salt tree; 41- Being, to Brutus; 42- Word before beauty or bridge; 43- Zealot; 44- Acid; 46- Choke; 47- Role model; 48- Family tree member; 49- Despised; 50- What's more; 51- Fence opening; 54- First name in Notre Dame football; 55- Japanese computer giant; 57- Acapulco gold; 58- Cambodia's Lon ___; 59- Brian of rock; 60- Equivalent wd.;

Yesterday's solution

J	A	C	K	O	D	A	R	T	S	Y	R	E
A	L	O	O	N	U	L	T	R	A	H	E	E
Y	A	R	N	S	E	O	S	I	N	I	A	N
H	O	L	I	T	T	A	R	R				
P	E	R	I	O	D	S						
A	S	M	O	R	E	C	R	A	F	T		
S	T	O	N	E	C	O	N	C	E	I	T	E
T	E	D										
E	R	A	D	I	C	A	T	E				
A	L	O	R	S	C	E	N	E	S			
S	K	I	L	L	S							
T	O	R	S	O								
E	L	O	G	I	Z	M	O					
S	E	N	I	D	I	O	T					
T	S	E										
C	O	P	S	E								
T	E	E										

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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FINANCIAL SANCTIONS

EU WANTS TO END GOLDEN PASSPORT SCHEMES, TARGETS RUSSIANS

SAMUEL PETREQUIN, BRUSSELS

AP PHOTO



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

THE European Commission recommended that EU nations end golden passport schemes that allow wealthy people to buy their way into the bloc's citizenship, and urged them to assess whether Russian oligarchs linked to the Kremlin or who support the war in Ukraine should be stripped of citizenship rights previously granted.

The European Commission launched infringement procedures against Cyprus and Malta in 2020 about their golden passports schemes, and the Russian war in Ukraine has put an increased focus on the topic.

The Commission warned yesterday [Macau time] that some Russian or Belarusian citizens who are among the 877 individuals targeted by asset freezes and travel bans imposed since 2014, or who support the Russian invasion of its neighbor, might have acquired EU citizenship or had access to the Schengen area via these schemes.

The EU's executive arm said the countries should now consider whether they should with-

draw golden passports issued to such individuals. In addition, it recommended immediately taking away residence permits that have been granted under an investor scheme to Russian or Belarusian citizens supporting the war or subject to sanctions.

Malta and Bulgaria currently have citizenship by investment plans in operation, while Cyprus which scrapped its own program

in November 2020 is only processing applications submitted before that date. Bulgarian lawmakers recently backed a decision to end its golden passport program.

Cyprus cancelled the program after an undercover TV report allegedly showed the parliamentary speaker and a powerful lawmaker claiming that they could skirt rules to issue a passport to a fictitious Chinese investor who

had supposedly been convicted of fraud at home.

A 2021 report found that more than half of a total 6,779 passports were issued unlawfully to relatives of wealthy investors over the program's 13-year run that generated over 8 billion euros. The report said the government had incorrectly interpreted the law on issuing passports to relatives and also found that nearly 770

foreigners were wrongly granted citizenship primarily because of inadequate vetting.

Cyprus' Interior Minister Nicos Nouris confirmed to The Associated Press that there are four Russians who have been sanctioned and received a Cypriot passport under the island nation's investment scheme.

According to the EU Parliament, twelve EU countries operate residence by investment schemes. The minimum investment levels range from 60,000 euros to 1,250,000 euros.

"European values are not for sale. We consider that the sale of citizenship through 'golden passports' is illegal under EU law and poses serious risks to our security," said Didier Reynders, the Commissioner for Justice and Consumers. "It opens the door to corruption, money laundering and tax avoidance."

The commission's recommendation came after European lawmakers called earlier this month for an end to the sale of citizenship through investment schemes, and for a better regulation of residence by investment programs.

In addition to its call "to immediately repeal any existing investor citizenship schemes," the commission also urged EU countries to conduct strict checks before issuing any residence permit for investors. **MDT/AP**

AD

虎年運程預測
Predictions for the
Year of the Tiger

PHOTOGRAPHER - PEDRO ANDRÉ SANTOS @LUCKY13PHOTOGRAPHY

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

BOXING

Usyk leaves Ukraine, preparing for rematch with Joshua

WORLD heavyweight champion Oleksandr Usyk is preparing for a rematch with Anthony Joshua after leaving his native Ukraine, where he was helping his country in the war with Russia.

Usyk "is already in Europe" to start training for a second fight with Joshua that could take place in June, the champion's promoter, Alexander Krassyuk, said.

Krassyuk said locations for the fight are being discussed.

"Late June is also the timing we are considering now," he told Sky Sports yesterday [Macau time].

"Many things will depend on how fast we manage to ink the papers."

Saudi Arabia is reportedly one of the places looking to host the fight. Joshua regained his WBA, IBF and WBO belts by beating Andy Ruiz Jr. in the kingdom in December 2019, only for the British fighter to lose them last September by unanimous decision after being outboxed by Usyk in London.

The rematch was expected to



Oleksandr Usyk of Ukraine celebrates after his unanimous decision victory over Anthony Joshua of Britain, last September

take place in the spring but has been disrupted by the war.

The 35-year-old Usyk returned to Kyiv in February to help defend Ukraine from the invading Russians. He was pictured carrying an automatic rifle, flanked by three other armed men in the Kyiv Territorial Defense force.

Usyk said he had the support of his friends and family in his bid to return to the ring and beat Joshua for a second time.

"In this way, I can help my country more and better than I would by being in the Territorial Defense and running around Kyiv with a machine gun," he said in a video message on Instagram in which he spoke mostly in Russian.

Usyk, who made the step up from cruiserweight where he was the unified world champion, is from Crimea and chose to stay with Ukraine after Russia annexed the peninsula in 2014. **MDT/AP**



FOOTBALL

BELGIAN CLUB GOALKEEPER VAN DAMME DIES FROM LEUKEMIA AGED 28

CERCLE Brugge goalkeeper Miguel Van Damme has died following a long fight against leukemia, his club said on Tuesday. He was 28.

Van Damme started in the Belgian first division in 2014 but played less than 50 games as his career was disrupted by the disease.

He was diagnosed with leukemia in 2016. He recovered but relapsed and announced in September 2020 that his treatment was no longer effective.

"Words are not enough to describe what we feel, even though we knew that things had not gone well for a while," Cercle Brugge said in a statement. "Miguel, your perseverance and strength to go for it over and over, setback after setback, was admirable. You are an example of positivism, persistence and fighting spirit. A source of inspiration for everyone who fights."

Van Damme is survived by his wife Kyana and his daughter Camille. **MDT/AP**

AD

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Galaxy Entertainment Group

BRITCHAM'S

PUNK BALL

CHAOS TO COUTURE

18TH JUNE, 2022

SAVE THE DATE

A photograph of a small chihuahua dog. The dog has a bright pink mohawk hairstyle on its head and is wearing a black collar with silver spikes. It has a small tattoo on its chest. The background is a dark, textured wall with graffiti.

OPINION

World Views

Richard Forno, University of Maryland
 MDT/The conversation



LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ATTRACTIVE TARGETS FOR HACKERS

Local governments in the U.S., like schools and hospitals, are particularly enticing “soft targets” – organizations that lack the resources to defend themselves against routine cyberattacks, let alone a lengthy cyber conflict. For those attacking such targets, the goal is not necessarily financial reward but disrupting society at the local level.

From issuing business licenses and building permits and collecting taxes to providing emergency services, clean water and waste disposal, the services provided by local governments entail an intimate and ongoing daily relationship with citizens and businesses alike. Disrupting their operations disrupts the heart of U.S. society by shaking confidence in local government and potentially endangering citizens.

Local governments have suffered successful cyberattacks in recent years. These include attacks on targets ranging from 911 call centers to public school systems. The consequences of a successful cyberattack against local government can be devastating.

I and other researchers at University of Maryland, Baltimore County have studied the cybersecurity preparedness of the United States’ over 90,000 local government entities. As part of our analysis, working with the International City/County Management Association, we polled local government chief security officers about their cybersecurity preparedness. The results are both expected and alarming.

Among other things, the survey revealed that nearly one-third of U.S. local governments would be unable to tell if they were under attack in cyberspace. This is unsettling; nearly one-third of local governments that did know whether they were under attack reported being attacked hourly, and nearly half at least daily.

Lack of sound IT practices, let alone effective cybersecurity measures, can make successful cyberattacks even more debilitating. Almost half of U.S. local governments reported that their IT policies and procedures were not in line with industry best practices.

In many ways, local governments are no different from private companies in terms of the cybersecurity threats, vulnerabilities and management problems they face. In addition to those shared cybersecurity challenges, where local governments particularly struggle is in hiring and retaining the necessary numbers of qualified IT and cybersecurity staff with wages and workplace cultures that can compare with those of the private sector or federal government.

Additionally, unlike private companies, local governments by their nature are limited by the need to comply with state policies, the political considerations of elected officials and the usual perils of government bureaucracy such as balancing public safety with the community’s needs and corporate interests. Challenges like these can hamper effective preparation for, and responses to, cybersecurity problems – especially when it comes to funding. In addition, much of the technology local communities rely on, such as power and water distribution, are subject to the dictates of the private sector, which has its own set of sometimes competing interests.

Large local governments are better positioned to address cybersecurity concerns than smaller local governments. Unfortunately, like other soft targets in cyberspace, small local governments are much more constrained. This places them at greater risk of successful cyberattacks, including attacks that otherwise might have been prevented. But the necessary, best-practice cybersecurity improvements that smaller cities and towns need often compete with the many other demands on a local community’s limited funds and staff attention.

There’s no quick or foolproof fix to eliminate all cybersecurity problems, but one of the most important steps local governments can take is clear: Implement basic cybersecurity. Emulating the National Institute of Standards and Technology’s national cybersecurity framework or other industry accepted best practices is a good start.

I believe government officials, especially at the local level, should develop and apply the necessary resources and innovative technologies and practices to manage their cybersecurity risks effectively. Otherwise, they should be prepared to face the technical, financial and political consequences of failing to do so. [Abridged]

COPPOLA, PACINO, DE NIRO SAY ‘VIVA UKRAINE!’ AT OSCARS NIGHT DURING ‘THE GODFATHER’ HOMAGE

THE BUZZ

The Godfather’ film trilogy director, Francis Ford Coppola and stars Al Pacino, and Robert DeNiro went on stage at the 2022 Oscars this week to celebrate the award-winning classic’s 50th anniversary.

Coppola, 82, Pacino, 81, and DeNiro, 78, walked on stage together, where the director praised the “legends” who made The Godfather possible decades ago.

“I feel moments like this should be sincere

and brief, and I’m so grateful for my wonderful friends to come here to help me celebrate with you,” Coppola said of DeNiro and Pacino.

“So I’m going to only thank two from the bottom of my heart,” Coppola added, personally thanking Mario Puzo, author of the Godfather novels, and late producer Robert Evans.

“Thank you. Viva Ukraine!” Coppola concluded.



Volunteers store medicines at a Ukrainian volunteer center in Mykolaiv, southern Ukraine

GUTERRES LAUNCHES EFFORT FOR UKRAINE HUMANITARIAN CEASE-FIRE

THE United Nations chief launched an initiative yesterday [Macau time] to immediately explore possible arrangements for “a humanitarian cease-fire in Ukraine” in order to allow the delivery of desperately needed aid and pave the way for serious political negotiations to end the month-long war.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he used his “good offices” and asked Undersecretary-General Martin Griffiths, the head of the U.N.’s worldwide humanitarian operations, to explore the possibility of a cease-fire with Russia and Ukraine. He said Griffiths has already made some contacts.

“I hope that he will be able to go to both Moscow and Kyiv as soon as that becomes possible,” Guterres said. “It’s very important to establish a serious dialogue with both parties in relation to the possibility of this humanitarian cease-fire.”

The 193-member U.N. General Assembly, by an overwhelming majority of about 140 nations, has called for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Ukraine twice -- on March 2 and on March 24 -- and Guterres told reporters he thinks “this is the moment” for the United Nations “to assume the initiative.”

Since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, the secretary-general said, there has been a “senseless loss of thousands of lives,” displacement of 10 million people, systematic destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and other essential infrastructure, “and skyrocketing food and energy prices worldwide.”

Over the past month, U.N. humanitarian agencies and their partners have provided nearly 900,000 people, mainly in eastern Ukraine, with food, shelter, water and hygiene supplies, and the U.N. World Food Program is scaling up to reach 1.2 million people by mid-April, he said.

Osnat Lubrani, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator in Ukraine, said that U.N. agencies were able to bring food, medical supplies and household items to the besieged northeastern city of Kharkiv. The Ukrainian Red Cross will deliver them to the most vulnerable communities there as well as other hard-to-reach areas, she said.

But Guterres stressed that “the solution to the humanitarian tragedy is not humanitarian -- it is political.”

“I am therefore appealing for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire

to allow for progress in serious political negotiations, aimed at reaching a peace agreement,” he said.

A cessation of hostilities will allow humanitarian aid to be delivered and people to move safely, the secretary-general said, and “it will save lives, prevent suffering, and protect civilians.” He expressed hope that it would also help address the global consequences of the war, including the existing “deep hunger crisis” in many developing countries from the COVID-19 pandemic, which is now compounded by soaring food and energy costs.

Guterres said he has been in close contact with Turkey, Qatar, Israel, India, China, France and Germany, “that have been talking to the parties at the highest level in order to explore the different forms of mediation leading to a political solution.”

“And it is my belief that all these efforts are essential in order to create the conditions to allow for, finally, this war to come to an end,” he said.

“I strongly appeal to the parties to this conflict, and to the international community as a whole, to work with us for peace in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and across the world,” the U.N. chief said. **MDT/AP**



Afghanistan Taliban hardliners are turning back the clock in Afghanistan with a flurry of repressive edicts over the past days that hark to their harsh rule from the late 1990s. Girls have been banned from going to school beyond the sixth grade, women are barred from boarding planes if they travel unaccompanied by a male relative. Men and women can only visit public parks on separate days and the use of mobile telephones in universities is prohibited. International media broadcasts — including the Pashto and Persian BBC services — are off the air as of the weekend. So are foreign drama series.



Sudan The U.N. envoy for Sudan warned the east African nation is heading for “an economic and security collapse” unless it addresses the political paralysis following October’s military coup and moves toward resuming a civilian-led transition. Volker Perthes told the U.N. Security Council that the military’s “violent repression” of protests against the coup is continuing and the absence of a political agreement on returning to a transitional path has already led to a deteriorating economic, humanitarian and security situation in the country.



Oscars Will Smith has apologized to Chris Rock after he slapped him at the Oscars, saying his behavior was “unacceptable and inexcusable”. “I would like to publicly apologize to you, Chris,” he said in a statement. “I was out of line and I was wrong,” he admitted after the Academy condemned Smith over the incident and announced a formal review. The star slapped Rock in the face on stage after the comic made a joke about the actor’s wife, Jada Pinkett Smith.