



THE DRAFT LAW OF THE AMENDMENT TO THE TOURISM TAX REGULATION WILL INITIALLY COME INTO EFFECT JANUARY 1 NEXT YEAR

JACKSON CHANG BREAKS SILENCE FOR THE FIRST TIME, EMPHASIZED HIS INNOCENCE

SECRETARY LEI WAI NONG HAS ASKED THE PUBLIC FOR 'A LITTLE TIME' TO FINALIZE DETAILS FOR THE AWAITED CONSUMPTION SUBSIDY

AP PHOTO



Malaysia Two European divers were rescued by fishermen this weekend but a third, a 14-year-old Dutch, had died, four days after they disappeared off a southern Malaysian island and drifted some 70 nautical miles, authorities said. Alexia Alexandra Molina, 18, of France and Adrian Peter Chesters, 46, of Britain were found early Saturday in neighboring Indonesian waters and taken to a hospital.

AP PHOTO



Japan and the Philippines agreed to start talks toward a possible defense agreement that would allow closer cooperation between their militaries amid regional tensions with China and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In the security meeting the two sides agreed to begin formal discussions about a possible reciprocal access agreement — a defense pact that would allow their troops to visit each other's countries for training and to exchange defense equipment to increase interoperability and cooperation.

AP PHOTO



India began offering booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine to all adults yesterday but limited free shots at government centers to front-line workers and people over age 60. The doses, which India is calling a “precautionary” shot instead of a booster, are available to people nine months after they receive their second jab, the Health Ministry said in a statement. Those outside the two priority categories will need to pay for the shots at privately run facilities, the ministry said.

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BOOSTING TIES

Premier Li Keqiang: China is willing to increase cooperation with Lusophone countries in vaccines, medication and health; sets up communication center on epidemic prevention

P3



**RAMADAN
MACAU
'FEELS
LIKE
HOME'**

JING WU



P2

MACAU 'FEELS LIKE HOME' FOR MUSLIM COMMUNITY DURING RAMADAN

JING WU

WITH this year's Ramadan beginning from April 2 and ending May 2, the Muslim community in Macau has said to the Times that Macau "feels like home" during Ramadan, the holiest month in the Islamic calendar.

Macau has around 10,000 Muslims and a large percentage of the local Muslim community comes from Indonesia, but there is a considerable diversity which includes Muslim residents from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and African countries.

The leader of the Muslim community, Imam of the mosque Ding Shao Jie from Beijing, stated that many people left Macau to return to their own country due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, he still sees a large number of devotees regularly gathering at the mosque.

"Even if it is not Ramadan, they would also come, but more Muslims come to the mosque during



Ramadan because Ramadan is a more precious time for Muslims," he told the Times.

"In addition to coming to the

mosque during Ramadan, Muslims also practice their religion here and donate goods to the community or send the goods to

Indonesia," he added.

Meanwhile, Bilal, a Macau resident from Pakistan, who has been in Macau for almost 11 years and

works as a technician at one of Sands China's facility departments, expressed that the Muslim culture in Macau is diverse.

"Of course, people in Macau are from different countries, people from Pakistan react differently. I think it is human nature, people are proud of their country [...] We try to offer the best from our culture and what we find the best from the other culture."

Another devotee, Dwi, a blue card holder from Indonesia, who has been working as a domestic helper for four years in Macau said that she is satisfied with the living environment in Macau for Muslims.

"Muslims in Macau feel the same as in Indonesia, we are like a family here. Macau is good, we can pray, we can do everything. There are no difficulties here. The employer is good and government is also good. I really like Macau," Dwi expressed.

Ramadan or Eid, which is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community gatherings.

FINANCE SECRETARY ASKS FOR TIME TO PREPARE CONSUMPTION SUBSIDY

ANTHONY LAM

AFTER weeks of public anticipation on the consumption subsidy, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong has asked the public for "a little time" to finalize details.

April 1, the government announced its plans to run another round of consumption stimulus measures. Afterwards, at various occasions such as the parliament's plenary sessions, many have called on the government to reveal details promptly.

When questioned on the matter recently, Lei admitted that work is in progress, namely amending the Annual Budget and drafting the Executive Regulations. In addition, he promised that details will be announced as soon as they are available.

Tomorrow, Chief Executive



Ho Iat Seng will be present at the parliament's plenary meeting for a question-and-answer session. The public is hoping to get more details then.

When commenting on the speculation, Lei emphasized the importance of procedures, which includes the parliament passing the amended Annual Budget, among others, so that the government can utilize its funds.

The public is questioning whether the consumption subsidy will be

merely a scheme of consumption discounts or will be operated similar to last year, which came with a spending allowance, officially referred to as the Activation Fund.

On this, the financial secretary said the scheme is "a necessary measure to support the market" amid economic downturn.

Meanwhile, the Times has learnt that details have been discussed with the banking and financial industries. The only missing part of the puzzle is the commencement date.

EX-IPIM HEAD BREAKS SILENCE FOR FIRST TIME IN JUDICIAL PROCEDURE

FORMER president of the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), Jackson Chang, pleaded for the first time his innocence during the years-long procedure.

At a recent hearing for the retrial of his case, Chang broke his silence for the first time and emphasized his innocence. He hopes the court can uphold his innocence.

He told the court that he had been loyal and responsible during his three decades of service in the government. As president of IPIM, Chang said he was highly focused on the improvement of transparency and the eradication of bureaucracy.

Stressing his professional and family achievements, he denied any motivation for him to conduct illegal deeds.

Chang's job at IPIM,



which he served between 2012 and 2018, was to attract external investments to Macau. He described his service as enthusiastic.

The court would issue a judgement May 20.

His trial came to a phasic conclusion in October 2020 with the Court of First Instance ruling him guilty

of leaking confidential information to third parties, before the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) filed an appeal against his sentence in November the same year.

The Court of Second Instance then ruled the case return to the Court of First Instance for a retrial. AL

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FORUM MACAO

CHINA TO BOOST COOPERATION WITH LUSOPHONE COUNTRIES THROUGH NEW CENTER

ANTHONY LAM

CHINESE Premier Li Keqiang emphasized the flexibility and potential in the cooperation between China and Lusophone countries in his speech highlighting that the trade amount reached USD20 billion last year.

Yesterday saw the opening of the Special Ministerial Meeting of the China and Portuguese-speaking Countries Economic Cooperation Forum (Macao) (Forum Macao). The meeting is being held in the city. Li spoke in a video on behalf of the host country.

Describing global and regional situations as rough and unsettled, the Chinese Premier offered three suggestions.

First and foremost is to retain peace and stability, whilst promoting development and affluence. Li described China as the world's peacekeeper, adding that the country is willing to make collaborate with other countries.

Moreover, Li expressed China's willingness to push toward unity in collaboration. China is to step up its collaboration with Lusophone countries in the areas of vaccine, medicine, and healthcare. To achieve this, an Anti-epidemic Exchange Centre will be established in Macau, so as to facilitate a global healthcare system.

In addition, the official stressed that China would insist on opening up and cooperating. The country will promote economic recovery and an open economy. He said that integration is the objective of economic and social development.

Furthermore, he said, China will strive to improve freedom, access and connectivity of trade and investment, while promoting cooperation on green trade.

Ending his speech, Li stressed



Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and the director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the MSAR, Fu Ziyang, officiate at the unveiling ceremony of the plaque of the Anti-epidemic Exchange Centre

that China would uphold the principle of 'One country, two systems', Macau residents administering Macau and a high degree of autonomy in Macau.

At the same occasion, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng highlighted in his speech that the function of the Forum Macao had constantly been reassessed. The forum has now basically transformed to a space built upon trade cooperation, with scientific research, traditional Chinese medicine, culture, tourism and MICE, finance, as well as youth entrepreneurship on the peripheral.

Ho pointed out that with the strong support of the Central People's Government as well as the joint participation and efforts of all Lusophone countries, the economic and trade cooperation between China and the Lusophone world has achieved satisfactory results, besides cooperation in

various fields being continuously strengthened and deepened.

The Chief Executive recalled that when President Xi Jinping visited the Service Platform Complex for Trade Cooperation between China and Lusophone countries in Macau in 2019, Xi concluded that the China-Lusophone cooperation platform has transformed from concept to reality and from blueprint to actuality.

Building a service platform for commercial and trade cooperation between China and Lusophone countries is an important measure for the city to act upon its own strengths to serve the country.

The national 14th Five-Year Plan clearly proposes to expand the functions of the China-Lusophone countries platform. It fully reflects the central government's great concern and attention for the construction and development of the Macau-China-Portuguese pla-

form, and points out the direction of future construction.

Macau will continue to make full use of its unique advantages, seize opportunities such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, increase efforts to improve and enrich the functions of the China-Portugal platform, and effectively provide platform services.

The theme of this special meeting is "A World Without Pandemic for Common Development." Officials such as Vice Chairman Edmund Ho of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Director Fu Ziyang of the Central People's Government's Liaison Office in Macau and Commissioner Liu Xianfa of the Foreign Ministry's Commissioner's Office in Macau are attending Forum Macao.

The first Ministerial Meeting of the Forum Macao was held in 2003.

PROVISIONAL RED MARKET NOT VERY POPULAR AMONG SHOPPERS

The Provisional Almirante Lacerda Municipal Market (Red Market), located opposite the Patane Municipal Market, saw, at maximum, 30% of the business transacted at the original Red Market. Some vendors said they were surprised by how steeply revenue has gone down in the past 12 days of operation. It was said that many shoppers are still not familiar with the location of the provisional facility. As such, vendors suggest the government create street art or murals on the exterior walls of the provisional market to draw attention to it. More bus routes should also pass by the provisional market, along with the specific shuttle buses, transporting shoppers to the provisional market.

NO ABNORMALITIES IN RE-TEST OF COLD-CHAIN PRODUCTS

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) found no abnormalities in re-tests on cold-chain meat products imported from Brazil. This test comes after the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China recently announced that samples of the outer packaging of frozen meat products imported from Brazilian enterprises with registration numbers 4507 and 1751 tested positive for traces of Covid-19. Local businesses have been requested to immediately seal the products sourced from the involved enterprises, and samples have been collected for re-testing. No abnormalities have been found. IAM has immediately suspended the import applications of the products from the involved enterprises.

PROPERTY PRICE INDEX DECREASES SLIGHTLY

The overall residential property price index for December 2021 to February 2022 decreased by 0.5% over the previous period (November 2021 to January 2022) to 263.4. The indices for the Macau Peninsula (263.3) and Taipa and Coloane (263.6) dropped by 0.3% and 1.4% respectively, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The index for existing residential units (280.8) decreased by 0.8% from the previous period, while the indices for those in the Macau Peninsula (272.8) and Taipa and Coloane (312.1) fell by 0.5% and 1.6% respectively.

MICE

G2E Asia relocates event to Singapore

ONE of Macau's largest trade shows, G2E Asia, is set to be held in Singapore this August, replacing the previously announced trade event scheduled for August 30 to September 1 at The Venetian Macao.

The G2E Asia Special Edition: Singapore will be held on August 24 to 26 at The Marina Bay Sands, organizers

Reed Exhibitions and the American Gaming Association (AGA) revealed.

The decision to relocate is linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused Macau to exclude foreign entrants as part of its strict border measures.

Whereas the Singapore government has dropped nearly all restric-

tions for fully vaccinated international arrivals as long as they provide a negative nucleic acid test certificate prior to departure.

G2E Asia was postponed twice in 2020, until the show was canceled.

Organizers then set the event for May 2021 and postponed it to August and November, after which it was canceled. LV

LYNZEY VALLES



NEW LAW TO WIDEN TOURISM TAX SCOPE BY JAN. 2023

JING WU

THE draft law of the Amendment to the Tourism Tax Regulation will initially come into effect January 1 next year, the Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong presented Friday.

Lei said that the reason of amending the Law no. 8/2021 (the Hotel Industry Establishments Activity Law) is to establish a new legal regime for hotel industry premises and adjust the classification and designation of hotel industry and catering establishments.

"This law proposes an amendment to the Tourism Tax Regulation, approved by Law 19/96/M, of August 19, in order to include the services provided by these establishments in the scope of the tourism tax," he said.

Moreover, more than 25 years have passed since the Tourism Tax Regulation was implemented in 1996.

Following new industrial de-

MDT ARCHIVE



velopment in recent years, there is some controversy in practice regarding the scope of the Tourism Tax Regulation. "Therefore, this draft law recommends that the provisions on the application of the tourism tax be amended to more clearly define its application," Lei explained.

In other words, this bill provides that the scope of the tourism tax will change from "services rendered" by hotels, restaurants, karaoke bars, among others, to "goods and services rendered, directly or indirectly" by them, including "goods" in the scope of the tax.

The draft bill suggests a redefinition of the scope of the exemption from the tourism tax, to include goods and services provided by two-star hotels, low-cost accommodation; simple dining establishments, kiosks of the restaurant areas; drinking and eating establishments are exempt from

tourism tax.

It should be noted that this tax rule corresponds to the current practice of the taxation authorities, which is based on court decisions, and this proposed change is only aimed at clarifying the respective tax rule in legislative terms.

Lei said, the introduction of the rule on the effectiveness of the law aims to set aside an adequate period of time for the tax administration to promote widespread knowledge of the new law and compliance with the law by taxpayers [...], which "is considered more appropriate for the budgetary management of public finances."

Director of the Economy and Finance Iong Kong Leong added that the annual tourism tax revenue ranged from MOP808 million to MOP960 million from 2017 to 2019, and from MOP120 million to MOP160 million from 2020 to 2021.

He stated that in the past two years, tourism tax revenue was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the introduction of tax incentives. The balance of the Tourism Fund as of last year was initially calculated at about MOP16.3 million.

Electronic presentation of driving license approved

THE Legislative Assembly has approved the law which allows drivers to present driver's license and other required documents by electronic means. This will allow drivers to present their licenses through the standardized electronic platform (single account), dispensing with the need to provide physical documents.

Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong said, according to the law in force, when driving, the driver must always carry a number of documents, which are the

driver's driving license, vehicle identification document, vehicle registration title, as well as proof of civil liability insurance.

"If necessary, the driver must show the above documents for verification to law enforcement officers," he stressed.

He also said that to avoid the need to carry physical documents, the law proposes that the legal requirement will be fulfilled when the driver displays the driving license and proof of civil liability insurance through the standardized electronic platform.

The requirement for drivers to carry an owner's permit and vehicle registration when driving will also be abolished as online data sharing between law enforcement, traffic management, and vehicle registration departments will enable law enforcement officers to access vehicle registration information.

Cheong added that the bill does not fully digitise all the certifications, but that "physical documents also have value, for example, when a vehicle is sold, so the two coexist." JW

MUST SURVEY

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX DROPS SLIGHTLY IN Q1

JING WU

MACAU'S Consumer Confidence Index continued to drop in the first quarter of this year to a total score of 74.48, down 1.27 points (1.68%) compared to the previous quarter (75.75), according to a study by the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST).

The survey shows that compared to the previous quarter, the Employment Situation sub-index declined by 3.95% from the previous quarter (70.18) to 67.41; while the Local Economy sub-index was 72.31, down 2.55% from the previous quarter (74.20).

MUST explained that the decline is due to the Covid-19 pandemic, escalating international geopolitical conflicts, increasing complexity and uncertainty of the external environment, increasing frequency of Covid-19 outbreaks in the mainland, and economic development facing triple pressure of shrinking demand.

"In the short term, changes in the epidemic are still the most direct, unstable



and uncertain factors facing the Macau economy. It is necessary to proactively respond, stabilize domestic demand, restore economic resilience and boost confidence," the university said in a statement.

"Moreover, [it is necessary to] coordinate short-term responses and medium and long-term development, guide the transition of the industrial structure to one diversified around moderate economic diversification and deep regional cooperation, maintain stability, continuity and sustainability, manage market expectations scientifically and promote consumer confidence," the study suggested.

The Price Level sub-index declined the most to 71.12

this quarter, down 4.65% from the previous quarter (74.59), the Investment in Stocks sub-index was 73.92, down 2.78% from the last quarter (76.03); while the Living Standard sub-index is 84.42, down 0.92% from the previous quarter (85.20).

The Property Purchase sub-index was at 77.72, up 4.57% from the previous quarter (74.32).

Consumer Confidence Index is a composite indicator that quantifies consumers' perceptions of the strength or weakness of the current economic situation.

According to the design, the index score ranges from 0 to 200, where 0 means no confidence at all, 100 means average, no feeling, and 200 means completely confident.

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Upper left:
Pastries at Anytime and Pastry Bar

Upper right:
Coconut Custard Profiteroles at Coast

Center:
Afternoon Tea at Anytime and
Sunday Brunch at Aux Beaux Arts

Middle right:
Carrot Cake at Grill 58

Bottom left:
Easter Egg at Rossio

Bottom right:
Afternoon Tea Set at Rossio



MAKE EASTER Your Mini Spring Break at MGM

Just weeks before the school quizzes and exams, Easter is possibly the best holiday for family bonding ahead of the big summer break! Spend the weekend at MGM MACAU and MGM COTAI with a selection of delicious delights, such as Sunday brunch, leisurely lunch, afternoon tea, or an indulgent dinner, it's all about Easter.

Treat yourself with an Easter Brunch Extravaganza at **Aux Beaux Arts** with a classic French menu featuring *Bouillabaisse*, *Vol-Au-Vent*, *Gianduja Tartlet* and more. With the alfresco setting and view over the European-esque Grande Praça, delight in comfort food and live music with your family for a joyful afternoon.

Relish a rare gastronomic journey beginning from the south of France and all the way down to the southern Mediterranean Sea with the Sunday brunch at **Grill 58**. A few of the tempting selections on the menu include *Porchetta di Pancina* from Italy; *Merguez Skewers (lamb kebab)* from Morocco; *Za'atar Grilled Chicken Thigh*, a spice that possesses a biblical origin, and *Majhul Date Pudding* from North Africa.

Additionally, **Coast** is serving Easter Set Menu with an exclusive Tasting Platter that offers special touches such as *Braised Lamb Shank*, *Garlic Thyme Chicken Thigh*, *Grilled Harissa Prawn*, and *Coconut Custard Profiteroles*. While **Rossio** is offering a Portuguese themed Easter Set Menu and an afternoon tea set with Sangria, to be savored underneath the European-inspired atrium. **Pastry Bar** and **Anytime** also offer an array of adorable *Easter pastries*, *Eggs-tatic Café Gourmand*, and an *Egg-citing Easter Afternoon Tea Set* to satisfy everyone with a major sweet tooth.



Top: Grill 58, MGM COTAI
Bottom: Aux Beaux Arts, MGM MACAU

Creating Easter eggs is one of the fun traditions of Easter, but this year, you can make it even more delightful by participating in the *Chocolate Egg Painting Workshop* at **Anytime, MGM COTAI**. On April 16 and 17, bring along your little ones to put on their creative hat and bring home their DIY treats!

Spend your Easter holiday as a mini spring-time getaway with your loved ones at MGM MACAU and MGM COTAI, a quick recharge before the rest of the year unfolds! For more details, please visit mgm.mo





HONG KONG

EX-NO. 2 OFFICIAL TO STAND FOR LEADERSHIP POLLS

HONG Kong's former No. 2 official John Lee formally declared his candidacy for the upcoming leadership election Saturday, entering the race for chief executive viewed by many as Beijing's preferred candidate.

Lee said at an online news conference that he would stand for the election on May 8 after the Chinese government approved his resignation, which he submitted last week, as the city's chief secretary for administration.

He said a new government under his leadership would safeguard the rule of law and the "one country, two systems" framework in the city that allows Hong Kong to govern semi-autonomously and enjoy certain freedoms not found in mainland China.

"This decision is made out of my loyalty to my country, my love for Hong Kong, and my sense of duty to the Hong Kong people," Lee said.

Lee's candidacy comes after current leader Carrie Lam announced she would not run for a second term, following a rocky five years in power that spanned the COVID-19 pandemic, a crackdown on political freedoms and Beijing's rapid and growing influence over the territory.

Lee, 64, is a staunch advocate of the city's national security law, which has been used since 2020 to target pro-democracy activists, supporters and media, diminishing freedoms promised to Hong Kong during Britain's handover to China in 1997.

Experts in the city see a potential administration under Lee as a signal that Beijing could further tighten its grip on the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

The chief executive will be voted in by an election committee of about 1,500 people, a majority of whom are pro-Beijing. The new leader will take office on July 1.

Lee spent the early years of his civil service career as a police officer and steadily climbed the ranks. He became Hong Kong's security minister in July 2017 under Lam's administration, and last June was promoted to chief secretary for administration.

Lee was a key figure in proposing contentious legislation in 2019 that would have allowed suspects in Hong Kong to be

extradited to mainland China. He later oversaw a police crackdown on demonstrators after the proposed bill sparked months of massive anti-government protests in 2019.

After the protests were snuffed out, Lee was an outspoken supporter of the national security law imposed on the city, which outlaws subversion, secession, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces in the city's affairs and has been used to suppress dissent. Over 150 people have been arrested since the law was implemented.

In 2020, the U.S. sanctioned Lee, together with Lam and other Hong Kong and mainland Chinese government officials, for "undermining Hong Kong's autonomy and restricting the freedom of expression or assembly."

Next month's election will be the first since Hong Kong's electoral laws were amended last year to ensure that only "patriots" loyal to Beijing can hold office.

Hong Kong's leader is chosen every five years, although the selection process is carefully orchestrated behind the scenes by Beijing. The four chief executives selected since Hong Kong's handover have all been candidates seen as favored by Beijing.

Lee said he would focus policymaking on ensuring that Hong Kong remains competitive globally and "bolster its role as a gateway and bridge between our country and the world." **MDT/AP**

COVID-19

Shanghai to start easing lockdown after another mass testing

CHINA'S largest city of Shanghai will soon begin lifting lockdown in communities that report no positive cases within 14 days after another round of COVID-19 testing, authorities said Saturday.

The fresh round of testing comes as the city reported about 23,000 cases on Saturday, most of them asymptomatic. Large swathes of Shanghai, with a population of 26 million, have been under lockdown since March 28, leading to complaints from residents about shortages of food and basic necessities.

Separately, Guangzhou authorities announced that the city northwest of Hong Kong would also begin mass testing its 18 million residents, according to central broadcaster CCTV. The city reported only two confirmed infections on Friday.

Under the new measures, areas in Shanghai will be classified as "precautionary,"



"controlled" on "locked down," depending on the results of the latest round of testing, Shanghai Vice Mayor Zong Ming told a news conference.

The city has built over 100 makeshift hospitals [...] with over 160,000 beds

Residents in areas deemed to be "precautionary" with no infections within

led" areas, residents can move around in their nei-

ghborhoods, which are smaller than districts, while "locked down" areas will require everyone to stay at home.

During the news conference, Zong choked up with emotion, saying that she was moved by the efforts of residents and front-line workers. "There is still a big gap from everyone's expectations. We will do our best to improve it," she said.

The city has built over 100 makeshift hospitals to treat COVID-19 patients with over 160,000 beds.

But the harsh restrictions on movement have also tested residents' patience. Some have received government food packages containing meat and vegetables. Many, however, are struggling to obtain rice and other basics, with online vendors sold out and delivery services unable to keep up with demand.

China is facing one of its worst local outbreaks since

the pandemic began.

It is one of the only countries sticking to a "zero COVID" policy, taking drastic measures such as lockdowns and mass testing to identify and isolate every single case. China is still closed to international travel, even as most of the world has sought ways to live with the virus.

Meanwhile, three local officials in Shanghai have been sacked over a slack response to the COVID-19 outbreak in China's largest city, where residents are complaining of harsh lockdown conditions leading to shortages of food and basic necessities.

An official notice Friday gave no details of the allegations against the three officials, but said their failure to fulfill their duties in epidemic prevention and control had allowed the virus to spread, leading to a "serious impact" on efforts to control the outbreak. **MDT/AP**

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MGM and MYEIC Explore Green Development Opportunities with Young Entrepreneurs



The "MGM x MYEIC Young Entrepreneur Nurturing Program", co-organized by MGM, Parafuturo de Macau (PFM Macau) and Macao Young Entrepreneur Incubation Centre (MYEIC), extends into its second edition to continue nurturing local young entrepreneurs. First sharing session of this latest edition, themed "Go Green for Infinite Opportunities", introduced the emission reduction initiatives of an integrated resort hotel and its green purchasing needs to nearly 100 MYEIC members, young entrepreneurs, small and medium businesses (SME) owners and other participants. Comprised of a sharing session and a hotel back-of-house green tour, the event enabled participants to learn more about the sustainable development of integrated tourism and leisure enterprises.

The event took place at MGM COTAI, the only mega complex and hotel in Macau, first in Greater Bay Area (GBA) and second in Greater China to gain three-star certification in both Green Building Design and Operation Label. **Keith Lei**, Vice President of Low Carbon Green Hotel Alliance and Vice President of Human Resources of MGM, and **Herman Chan**, Executive Director of Facilities Management of MGM, were invited to introduce the sustainability belief of MGM, alongside the hotel's experience on implementing measures of environmental protection, carbon emission reduction and waste recycling. The session was to inspire local young entrepreneurs to explore new opportunities in the emerging green economy, through learning about the requirements, purchasing standards, facility management and supply chain of MGM. In addition, a networking session was also arranged prior to the event for participating young entrepreneurs to exchange ideas of their businesses with MGM team members.



The sharing session was followed by a green tour visiting green facilities at MGM COTAI, led by Simon Leong, Executive Director of Purchasing of MGM and Lam Ka Vai, CEO of MYEIC. Participating MYEIC members, whose start-up projects involve in green technologies, such as AI recycling tools, eco-friendly sanitization, and sanitizing robots, agreed that the session has been constructive.



"MGM x MYEIC Young Entrepreneur Nurturing Program" is a two-year incubation scheme jointly organized by MGM, PFM and MYEIC, and is honored to be supported by numbers of local youth associations. First introduced in 2020, the second edition of the Program continues to provide pragmatic support to local young entrepreneurs with a diverse range of events, including sharing sessions, site visits, outreach sessions and business matching sessions.

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South China Sea issues handled 'properly,' Xi tells Duterte

SEEKING to put a positive spin on a relationship that never quite produced the hoped-for benefits, Chinese leader Xi Jinping told outgoing Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Friday that the two nations have "properly" handled the sensitive issue of the disputed South China Sea.

Xi made his remarks in a phone conversation with Duterte, who nurtured closer ties with Beijing after taking office in 2016.

Despite cozier relations, however, sporadic territorial spats have persisted and Beijing has had limited success separating the Philippines from its treaty ally, the United States.

Xi made no mention of disputes, saying the sides "have adhered to the important consensus reached, adhered to good-neighborly and friendly cooperation, insisted on properly handling differences, and insisted on working together for common development."

"The proper handling of the South China Sea issue by both sides has provided an important foundation for China-Philippines friendly cooperation, benefited the two peoples, and effectively safeguarded regional peace and stability," Xi was quoted

as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency.

"China's policy toward the Philippines maintains continuity and stability, and [China] is willing to work with the Philippines to promote the continuous and sound development of China-Philippines relations and continuously advance to a new level," Xi said.

Xi also took a swipe at Manila's security pact with Washington, saying that recent developments showed that "regional security cannot be achieved by strengthening military alliances."

"China is willing to work with the Philippines and regional countries to adhere to the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security (and) firmly hold regional security leadership in their own hands," Xi said.

Duterte is limited to one term and the Philippines holds presidential elections on May 9.

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea, along with its rich fishing stocks and undersea mineral resources. That has locked it into an increasingly tense territorial standoff in the busy waterway with rival claimants the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



PUTIN'S WAR

More flee as Ukraine warns of stepped-up Russian attacks

ADAM SCHRECK
& CARA ANNA, KYIV

CIVILIAN evacuations moved forward in patches of battle-scarred eastern Ukraine on Saturday, a day after a missile strike killed at least 52 people and wounded more than 100 at a train station where thousands clamored to leave before an expected Russian onslaught.

In the wake of the attack in Kramatorsk, several European leaders made efforts to show solidarity with Ukraine, with Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson visiting Kyiv — the capital city that Russia failed to capture and where troops retreated days ago. Johnson met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a surprise visit in which he pledged new military assistance, including 120 armored vehicles and new anti-ship missile systems.

Zelenskyy noted the increased support in an Associated Press interview, but expressed frustration when asked if weapons and other equipment Ukraine has received from the West is sufficient to shift the war's outcome.

"Not yet," he said, switching to English for emphasis. "Of course it's not enough."

Zelenskyy later thanked Johnson and Nehammer during his nightly video address to the nation. He also thanked the European Commission president and the Canadian prime minister for



AP PHOTO

a global fundraising event that raised more than 10 billion euros (\$11 billion) for Ukrainians who have had to flee their homes. He added that democratic countries are united in working to stop the war. "Because Russian aggression was not intended to be limited to Ukraine alone. ... The entire European project is a target for Russia."

Zelenskyy repeated his call for a complete embargo on Russian oil and gas, which he called the sources of Moscow's "self-confidence and impunity."

More than six weeks after the invasion began, Russia has pulled its troops from the northern part of the country, around Kyiv, and refocused on the Donbas region in the east. Western military analysts said an arc of territory in eastern Ukraine was under Russian control, from Kharkiv —

Ukraine's second-largest city — in the north to Kherson in the south. But counterattacks are threatening Russian control of Kherson, according to the Western assessments, and Ukrainian forces are repelling Russian assaults elsewhere in the Donbas.

Ukrainian authorities have called on civilians to get out ahead of an imminent, stepped-up offensive by Russian forces in the east. With trains not running out of Kramatorsk on Saturday, panicked residents boarded buses or looked for other ways to leave, fearing the kind of unrelenting assaults and occupations by Russian invaders that brought food shortages, demolished buildings and death to other cities.

"It was terrifying. The horror, the horror," one resident told British broadcaster Sky, recalling Friday's attack on the

train station. "Heaven forbid, to live through this again. No, I don't want to."

Ukraine's state railway company said residents of Kramatorsk and other parts of the Donbas could flee through other train stations. Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said 10 evacuation corridors were planned for Saturday.

Zelenskyy called the train station attack the latest example of war crimes by Russian forces and said it should motivate the West to do more to help his country defend itself.

Russia denied responsibility and accused Ukraine's military of firing on the station to turn blame for civilian casualties on Moscow. A Russian Defense Ministry spokesman detailed the missile's trajectory and Ukrainian troop positions to bolster the argument. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1961 NAZI WAR CRIMES TRIAL BEGINS



The trial has begun in Israel of the man accused of helping Hitler in his plan to exterminate the Jews.

Adolf Eichmann faces 15 charges, including crimes against humanity, crimes against the Jewish people and war crimes.

He sat in a bullet-proof glass dock flanked by two guards specially chosen because their families had not suffered directly at the hands of the Nazis.

The three judges hearing the case in Jerusalem were all refugees from the Nazi regime in Germany.

The charges were read out in Hebrew by chief judge Mr Justice Moshe Landau and translated into German for the prisoner.

It took one hour and 15 minutes to list all the details of the charges against Adolf Eichmann during which time the 55-year-old stood stiffly in the dock.

The first issue the court dealt with was its competence to hear the Eichmann case at all.

His lawyer, Dr Robert Servatius, argued that as the state of Israel did not exist at the time of the alleged offences it had no jurisdiction.

Dr Servatius said that his client was "free of guilt" and was being prosecuted for things he was drawn into by the Nazi state.

Whatever the judgement, many say it is remarkable the case against Adolf Eichmann has even been brought.

After the end of the Second World War he escaped from a prison camp and avoided facing the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal.

In 1950 he arrived in Argentina which was a safe haven for many Nazi war criminals.

However, last year a team of Israeli secret agents abducted him and smuggled him to Israel.

Courtesy BBC News

Pope Francis denounces 'folly of war' in Palm Sunday homily

CELEBRATING Palm Sunday Mass before crowds in St. Peter's Square for the first time since the pandemic, Pope Francis said that the "folly of war" leads people to commit "senseless acts of cruelty."

Francis did not explicitly cite Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but the reference was clear and he has repeatedly denounced the war and the suffering brought to innocent people.

During his Palm Sunday homily, the pontiff said: "When we resort to violence ... we lose sight of why we are in the world and even end up committing senseless acts of cruelty. We see this in the folly of war, where Christ is crucified yet another time."

Francis lamented "the unjust death" of husbands and sons, refugees fleeing bombs, young people deprived of a future and "soldiers sent to kill their brothers and sisters."

After two years of celebrating Palm Sunday Mass inside St. Peter's Basilica without a crowd due to pandemic distancing measures, the solemn celebration returned to the square outside. Tens of thousands of pilgrims and tourists clutched olive branches and braided palms emblematic of the ceremony that recalls Jesus' return to Jerusalem.

Traditionally, the pope leads a Palm Sunday proces-

sion through St. Peter's Square before celebrating Mass. Francis has been suffering from a strained ligament in his right knee that has caused him to limp, and he was driven in a black car to the altar, which he then reached leaning on an aide.

Palm Sunday opens Holy Week leading up to Easter, which this year falls on April 17, and features the Good Friday Way of the Cross Procession. **MDT/AP**

IN CONTEXT

In December 1961 Adolf Eichmann was found guilty on all charges and sentenced to death. The following May he was hanged in a prison near Tel Aviv.

Eichmann's case was the highest profile Nazi trial since 1946 when 12 high-ranking Nazis were sentenced to death at Nuremberg in Germany.

Several other trials involving alleged Nazis have been held over the years in Israel, Germany and the UK.

However, in 1993 a court in Israel overturned the conviction of John Demjanjuk for being the notorious Nazi "Ivan the Terrible".

The court accepted Mr Demjanjuk, who had been stripped of his US citizenship, had been the victim of mistaken identity

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Social activity with friends and relatives will be most successful. Don't get depressed, get busy. You can accomplish a lot if you're willing to put in a little extra time.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Opportunities will come through behind the scenes activities. Opportunities to get ahead are evident. You may find out that someone is trying to undermine you.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Your sensitive, affectionate nature will capture the heart of anyone you are attracted to. Use your high energy and dynamic approach to win favors from superiors.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Talk to an older, established individual about your present situation. It might be time to do some of those chores at home. Stay out of other people's affairs.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Arguing won't help. You will have the getup and go to contribute a great deal to groups of interest. Your ability to put a deal together will surprise others.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 This is a wonderful day to look into courses or hobbies that interest you. Home improvement projects will enhance your residence and bring the family closer together.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Take time to deal with the concerns of children. You will have to make changes in order to eliminate the tension. Put your energy into behind the scenes activities.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 You can make drastic changes in your professional direction today. You could be quite erratic regarding your personal relationship. Try not to be too harsh with your mate.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Older family members will make demands on your time. Make sure that you have all the pertinent information before any reprisals or making any moves.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Socializing will be more than just entertaining. You can't do everything on your own. You can make career changes that may put you in a much higher earning bracket.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Get involved in the activities of children. It may not be the best day to confront employers or to present your ideas. Travel will be in your best interest.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 You may find that your anger stems from lending or borrowing money. Partners may try to argue with you; however, you must stand your ground.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	14	28	cloudy
Changchun	9	10	rain
Chengdu	18	25	rain
Chongqing	17	32	cloudy
Fuzhou	17	31	fine
Guangzhou	17	31	fine
Guiyang	14	23	cloudy
Haikou	19	29	cloudy
Hangzhou	17	32	fine
Harbin	4	14	cloudy
Hefei	15	31	fine
Nanjing	17	32	fine
Shanghai	18	31	cloudy
Taipei	20	25	rain
Wuhan	18	32	fine
Hong Hong	23	28	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	4	8	rain
Frankfurt	4	17	overcast
Paris	11	21	overcast
London	11	17	cloudy
New York	10	14	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Leg joints; 6- Place; 11- ___ Lingus; 14- "Who's there?" reply; 15- Dike, Eumonia and Irene; 16- To and ___; 17- Loincloth worn by Hindu men; 18- Gather; 19- Flight; 20- Deadens; 22- Boiling; 24- Jock; 28- Playground retort; 29- Ornamental vestment part; 30- Israeli desert region; 32- Scheme; 33- Ohio, e.g.; 35- Writer Bombeck; 39- Succulent; 40- Humphrey's costar in "The Barefoot Contessa"; 41- Get as a result; 42- "___ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 43- Designer Simpson; 45- Prefix with plasm; 46- Of the kidneys; 48- Easy gallop; 50- "Constant Craving" singer; 53- Distort; 54- Visit habitually; 55- Reckoning; 57- Barley bristle; 58- Silly; 60- More unfavorable; 65- Small cask; 66- Oscar de la ___; 67- As ___ resort; 68- British verb ending; 69- Gardening tool; 70- Gossipmonger;


DOWN 1- Josh; 2- ___ degree; 3- That, in Tijuana; 4- CPR giver; 5- Certain fisherman; 6- Ignominy; 7- Grave; 8- Important times; 9- Small batteries; 10- Long for; 11- Black key; 12- Muse with a lyre; 13- Lover of Juliet; 21- Salt Lake City hoopsters; 23- Deeply respectful; 24- Pomme or manzana; 25- Anklebone; 26- ___ Perot; 27- Like Wittenberg University in Ohio; 28- Word that can succeed old, ice and bronze; 30- Umbilicus; 31- Catchall abbr.; 34- I did it!; 36- Verso's opposite; 37- Alma ___; 38- To the left, at sea; 43- Film director Lee; 44- Environmental sci.; 47- Full; 49- Regardless; 50- Dull yellowish brown; 51- Coolidge's veep; 52- Sudden forward thrust; 53- Lucid; 55- Zingy taste; 56- Chip in; 59- Actor Beatty; 61- Corrida cry; 62- Operated; 63- Fast flier; 64- Greek H;

Friday's solution

A	S	H	E	S		P	L	E	B	E		T	D	S					
Y	E	A	R	N		E	A	T	E	N		K	E	L					
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		E	G	A		D		A	S	P	I	E							
N	A	T																	
A	M																		
D	O	S	E	D		M	E	S	S	A	G	E	R						
I	R	K				P	I	E	T			R	A	L					
R	E	S	I	D	E	N	C	E				S	H	O	R	N			
						G	I	R	T			S	T	O	V	E	S		
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						R	A	P	A	L	E	R	O		N	O	O	S	E
						E	N	E				T	E	N	O	N			
						A	G	E				F	R	O	N				
						M	A	F	I	A									

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PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
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PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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Loena Hendricks of Belgium, silver medal, left, Kaori Sakamoto of Japan, gold medal, center, and Alysa Liu of the U.S., bronze medal, at the Figure Skating World Championships in Montpellier, south of France, March 25, 2022

Olympics figure skater Alysa Liu retires at age 16

BARRY WILNER

ALYSA Liu, a 2022 Olympian and world championships bronze medalist, is retiring from competitive figure skating at age 16.

Considered the future of U.S. women's skating and already a two-time national champion, Liu

posted her decision Saturday on Instagram.

"I honestly never thought i would've accomplished as much as i did LMAOO i'm so happy," Liu said in her post. "I feel so satisfied with how my skating career has gone. now that i'm finally done with my goals in skating i'm going to be moving on with my

life. ... this skating thing has taught me a lot more about life than i anticipated. i'm really glad i skated."

And skated better than any American woman at such a young age.

Using the triple axel that few U.S. women have landed successfully, Liu won her first national

title in 2019 at age 13, and repeated the next year. She was too young to compete internationally on the senior level, however, and remained a force as a junior, getting comfortable with quadruple jumps as well.

But she lost to Bradie Tennell and Mariah Bell at the last two national championships, making the Olympic team despite having to withdraw from the trials in January when Liu tested positive for COVID-19.

Liu, of Richmond, California, recovered in time to skate in the Beijing Games, where she landed seven triple jumps in her free skate to finish seventh overall.

She then came in third behind Kaori Sakamoto of Japan and Loena Hendrickx of Belgium in a watered-down world championships with the Russian skaters not participating. It was the first medal at worlds for a U.S. woman since Ashley Wagner in 2016.

Now, Liu is done.

"I started skating when i was 5 so that's about 11 years on the ice and it's been an insane 11 years," she posted from Japan, where she was appearing in the Stars on Ice tour. "a lot of good and a lot of bad but (you know) that's just how it is. i've made so many friends, and so so sooo many good memories that i'll have for the rest of my life." **MDT/AP**

BASEBALL

STANTON HR 6TH STRAIGHT VS BOSTON, LIFTS YANKEES TO 4-2 WIN

GIANCARLO Stanton became the first player to homer against Boston in six straight games, hitting a tiebreaking, two-run drive in the sixth inning that gave the New York Yankees a 4-2 win over the Red Sox on Saturday.

Anthony Rizzo homered for the second straight day to start New York's comeback from an early deficit, a tying two-run drive in the fourth.

Luis Severino made his first start for the Yankees since the 2019 AL Championship Series as the Yankees improved to 2-0 for the first time since 2018.

Stanton broke a 2-2 tie when he drove an 0-1 slider from Nick Pivetta (0-1) into the first row of the left field bleachers, a 437-foot drive over Boston's bullpen.

Stanton's streak of six straight games with home runs against the Red Sox includes a drive in last year's AL wild card game, a 6-2 Yankees loss. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

Multipolar World

Jorge Costa Oliveira



INDIA AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE

The Republic of India is one of the countries that has taken a neutral position when it comes to the war in Ukraine. Indian neutrality stems from historical reasons. Russia's support of India on difficult occasions in the past has created a special relationship that has evolved into a "special and privileged strategic partnership", focusing on five areas in particular: political, defence, civil nuclear energy, counter-terrorism cooperation and space.

India's position on the Ukrainian war reflects the domestic public support Russia enjoys (compared to the US), evident in social media discussions. India's disenchantment with the US stance during the Cold War is still reflected in current popular memory (the US alliance with Pakistan and its support for Islamabad during the 1971 war against India continue to elicit significant discontent). Washington's failure to respond to India's calls for what it considers to be Pakistan's support for cross-border terrorism and continued US military assistance to Islamabad reinforces this perception.

In recent years, two new factors have entered the equation: (i) the close cooperation between China and Pakistan, where the Belt and Road Initiative's most advanced land corridor (CPEC) is located (in addition to the construction of the port of Gwadar); (ii) India's participation in the activation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), with the USA, Australia and Japan, as an instrument of China's "containment".

India is one of the countries that has benefited the most from globalization and the economic stability stemming from the liberal world order. This war is crating significant instability, disrupting logistic chains and causing a general increase in the prices of oil, gas, food and other commodities. High inflation has always triggered political volatility in India.

In 2020, bilateral trade between India and Russia was only c. US \$9 billion, 1.4% of India's total foreign trade. Agreements in recent years have set ambitious targets to increase trade between India and Russia to \$30 billion and bilateral investment to \$50 billion by 2025. The EU is India's third largest trading partner, accounting for 62.8 billion in trades in 2020, or 11.1% of total Indian trade, only behind China (12%) and the US (11.7%). The EU is the second largest destination for Indian exports (14% of the total) after the US. The EU's foreign direct investment stock in India amounted to 75.8 billion in 2019.

In order to overcome the financial sanctions imposed by the West on Russia, an agreement is being negotiated between the central banks of Russia and India to provide for payments of bilateral foreign trade in rupees and rubles.

In 2021, India was the country that made the most purchases of foreign military equipment. And while the Indian armed forces have weaponry mainly supplied by Russia, they have increased arms purchases from Western countries, including the US, and want to continue to do so.

India is at a complex crossroads. The relevance of their main economic partners (China, USA, EU) for their development and their military future in geo-strategic terms – namely the Quad – do not fit well with the popular memory of a special relationship with Russia.

POLICE: ARREST MADE IN SLAYING OF GIRL WALKING ON NYC STREET

THE BUZZ

A suspect was charged Saturday in the fatal shooting of a teen girl who was walking home from school when she was hit by a stray bullet during a street dispute in New York City.

New York Police Department officials announced the arrest of Jeremiah Ryan on charges of murder, attempted murder and criminal possession of a weapon in connection with Friday's shooting.

Police identified the girl killed in the shooting as 16-year-old Angellyh Yambo. Another 16-year-old girl was hit in the leg, and a 17-year-old boy was wounded in the buttocks. Both are expected to survive.

Prosecutors said Ryan, 17, would have a court appearance either later Saturday or on Sunday. They declined further comment.

It was not immediately clear if Ryan had an attorney who could speak on his behalf.

The shooting in the Bronx was the latest episode of headline-grabbing violence in the city amid a surge in crime during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Police had said the gunfire appeared to start after Ryan and another person were gesturing at each other across an intersection.

AP PHOTO



In this undated photo provided on Oct. 23, 2019, by the North Korean government, Kim Jong Un, center, visits the Diamond Mountain resort in Kumgang, North Korea

NORTH DEMOLISHING HOTEL THAT WAS SYMBOL OF KOREAN ENGAGEMENT

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

NORTH Korea is demolishing a South Korean-owned hotel at a North Korean resort that was one of the last symbols of inter-Korean engagement, according to Seoul officials who called for the North to stop the "unilateral" destruction.

South Korea built dozens of facilities at North Korea's Diamond Mountain resort to accommodate tourism by its citizens during a high period of engagement between the rivals in the 1990s. But North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in 2019 called the South Korean facilities there "shabby" and ordered them destroyed after months of frustration over Seoul's unwillingness to defy U.S.-led sanctions that kept the tours from resuming.

The North postponed the demolition work in 2020 as part of stringent measures to prevent COVID-19.

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said Friday that North Korea was proceeding with the demolition of the Haegumgang Hotel. The floating hotel, do-

cked at a coastal area of the resort, was a major property among dozens of facilities South Korea established to accommodate Diamond Mountain tours, which began in 1998.

Unification Ministry spokesperson Cha Deok-cheol said it wasn't clear whether the North also was destroying other facilities at the site. He said Seoul "strongly regrets North Korea's unilateral dismantlement" of the hotel and urged the North to engage in talks to resolve disagreements over the South Korean properties at the site.

Commercial satellite images indicate the demolition work has been underway for weeks. Cha said Seoul used inter-Korean communication channels to demand an explanation and talks on the issue, but the North has ignored the request.

The demolition comes amid heightened tensions over recent missile launches. North Korea conducted its first intercontinental ballistic missile test since 2017 on March 24, as Kim revives brinkmanship aimed at forcing the United States and other rivals to accept the North as a nuclear power and remove cri-

ppling sanctions.

South Korean tours to Diamond Mountain were a major symbol of cooperation between the Koreas and a valuable cash source for the North's broken economy before the South suspended them in 2008 after a North Korean guard fatally shot a South Korean tourist.

South Korea can't restart mass tours to Diamond Mountain or any other major inter-Korean economic activity without defying sanctions, which have been strengthened since 2016, when the North began accelerating its nuclear and missile tests. While U.N. sanctions don't directly ban tourism, they prohibit bulk cash transfers that can result from such business activities.

During their brief diplomacy in 2018, South Korean President Moon Jae-in met Kim three times and vowed to restart Diamond Mountain tours, voicing optimism that sanctions could end. But North Korea suspended cooperation with the South after diplomacy with the U.S. collapsed in 2019 and Seoul wasn't able to wrest concessions from Washington on its behalf. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Australia's prime minister has called for a May 21 election that will be fought on issues including Chinese economic coercion, climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic. Prime Minister Scott Morrison (pictured) yesterday advised Governor-General David Hurley as representative of Australia's head of state, Queen Elizabeth II, to set the election date. Morrison's conservative coalition is seeking a fourth three-year term. The date is the latest available to him.

UN urged donor nations last week to provide \$80 million for an emergency operation to remove a million barrels of crude oil from a tanker moored off the coast of war-torn Yemen since 1988 that could explode or leak causing a major environmental disaster in the Red Sea and beyond. David Gressly, the U.N. resident and humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, made the appeal saying the FSO Safer tanker is "a time bomb" because a major oil spill from it "would unleash a massive ecological and humanitarian catastrophe."

Turkey A powerful earthquake hit eastern Turkey this weekend but no casualties or serious damage were immediately reported, the country's disaster service said. The 5.2 magnitude quake struck the town of Puturge in Malatya province. The tremor was recorded at a depth of 6.7 kilometers.

AP PHOTO



France Polls opened across the country yesterday for the first round of the presidential election, where up to 48 million eligible voters will be choosing between 12 candidates. President Emmanuel Macron is seeking a second five-year term, with a strong challenge from the far right. France operates a manual system for elections: Voters are obliged to cast ballots in person, ones that will be hand-counted when the voting closes.