

14
Y·E·A·R·S
A-CHANGIN'
Double Down!
ADVERTISE WITH US
+853 287 160 81

MacauDaily 澳門每日時報®
Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Geldenhuys EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

CTM
Smart Life for Elderly
Mainland China - Macau Offer
\$38 / 3GB per month
☎ 8891 5377
Note: Customers of the above promotions are bound by the respective service agreement.
CTM

N.º 4004 THURSDAY T. 22/ 28 Air Quality Moderate
05 May 2022 ☁️ 😊

“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

MOP 8.00
HKD 10.00 2305 4271

TOURISM ARRIVALS CONTINUED TO DECLINE FOLLOWING THE PEAK ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE HOLIDAY TO 19,188 VISITORS YESTERDAY P2

TAIWAN'S LIBERALIZED RESIDENCY PLAN FOR MACAU, HK STILL IN LIMBO P3

LAVROV: FROM PEERS' ADMIRATION TO PUBLIC HATRED P8



AP PHOTO



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met with Pope Francis and top Vatican officials in talks yesterday about the need for “a world free of nuclear weapons,” the Vatican said. The meeting came as nuclear-armed Russia pressed its war in Ukraine and after North Korea launched a ballistic missile toward its eastern waters and vowed to speed up the development of its own nuclear arsenal.

AP PHOTO



India's central bank yesterday raised its key interest rate to 4.4% from 4% to try to contain fast-rising inflation. Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das said after an unscheduled meeting of the bank's monetary policy committee that the central bank would maintain an “accommodative” stance to help support the economy while keeping inflation in check. India's consumer price index surged to 7% in March from 6.1% in February, largely reflecting higher costs for imports of coal, oil and food.

AP PHOTO

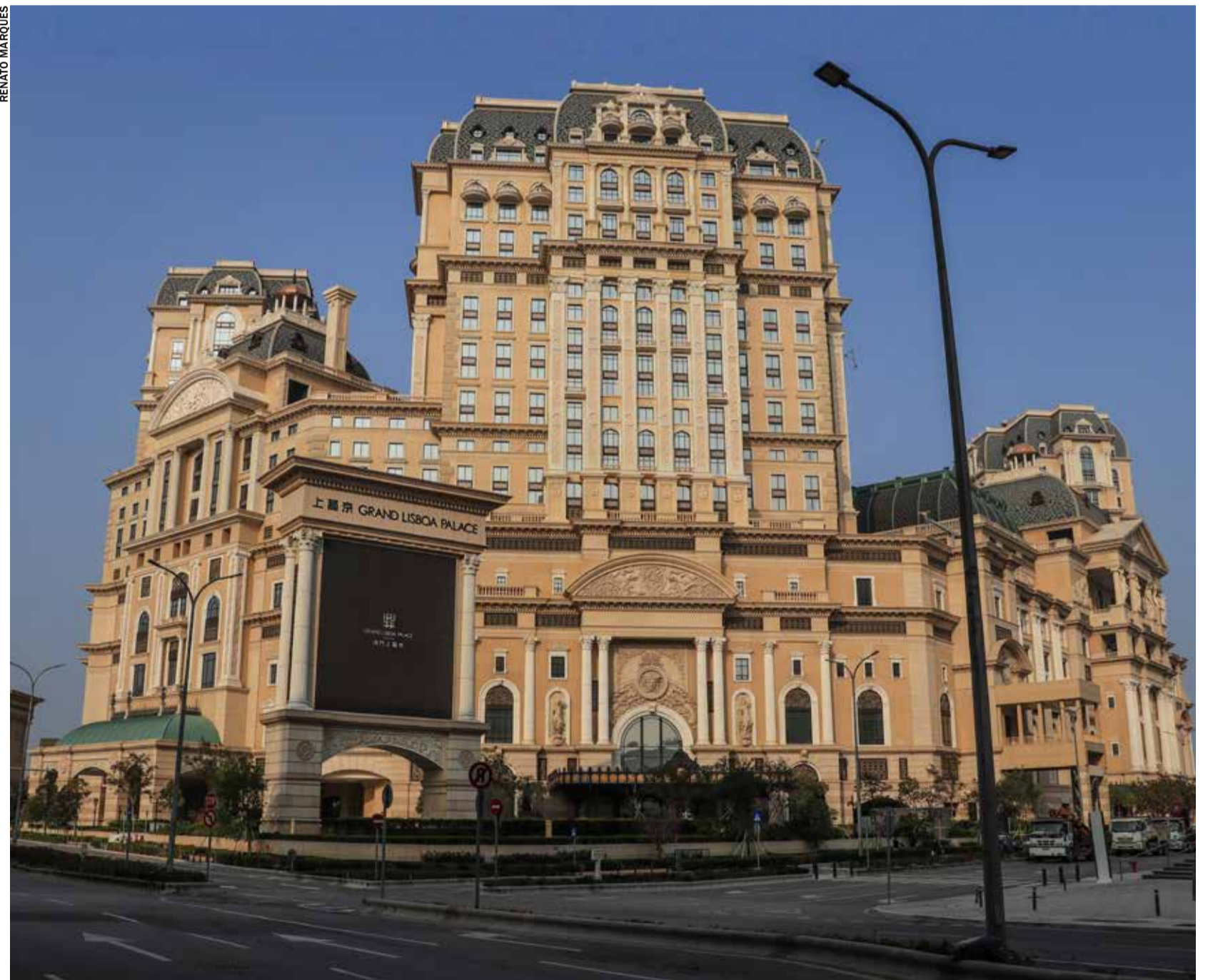


European Union's top official yesterday called on the 27-nation bloc to ban oil imports from Russia and target the country's biggest bank and major broadcasters in a sixth package of sanctions over the war in Ukraine. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, addressing the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, proposed having EU member nations phase out imports of crude oil within six months and refined products by the end of the year.

More on backpage

GRAND CRISIS

SJM suffering cash bleed, reports Q1 losses of HKD1.3b P2



RENATO MARQUES

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DOUBLES TO 81 CASES IN 2021 P3

GBA VACCINE TRANSFORMATION CENTER OPENS IN GUANGZHOU P2

GAMING

SJM SUFFERING CASH BLEED, REPORTS Q1 LOSSES OF HKD1.3B

LYNZY VALLES

SJM is suffering a continual cash bleed with brokerage firm Sanford C. Bernstein warning that the gaming operator is in "critical" need of boosting its financial liquidity, in view of the losses the company is suffering.

In a note, the consultancy warned that continued delays in the refinancing of SJM's bank debts are raising concerns, recalling that the management has indicated a standby loan facility of up to HKD5 billion from STDM. No further details on the refinancing were given.

In an earnings report, SJM Resorts recorded losses of HKD1.3 billion in the first quarter, significantly down from the HKD 647



million losses recorded during the same period in 2021. The adjusted EBITDA of the

group in the first quarter was negative HKD474 million, as compared with negative HKD319 million in

the first quarter last year. Also, SJM Resorts reported gaming revenue at HKD2.3 billion, as

compared with HKD2.4 billion in the first three months of last year.

Bernstein has noted that the opening of the Grand Lisboa Palace last year has led to a "continued cash bleed that will not let up in the near term."

Gross revenue of the group's first Cotai property in the first three months of this year was HKD271 million, including gross gaming revenue of HKD156 million and non-gaming revenue of HKD115 million. After adjusting for pre-opening expenses totaling HKD132 million, its Adjusted Property EBITDA was negative HKD216 million.

Meanwhile, analysts at Bernstein have noted that SJM's management "faces some liquidity risk if the business environment does not improve materially in the near term."

In a note, analysts Vitaly Umansky and Louis Li have warned that the company currently has liquidity on hand that could last for three to four months.

CONFIRMATION WITH NAT BOOKING LINKS TO BE SENT TO ENTRANTS

Due to a new measure to be come into force on May 8 which requires quarantined visitors to pay for their own SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid tests (NATs), prospective visitors who have booked their quarantine hotels will receive updated confirmation letters with links for booking the paid tests. The Health Bureau (SSM) pointed out that the new confirmation letters are being sent as of yesterday. After settling the payments, the prospective visitors will need to take a screen shot of the payment confirmation page for boarding facilitation. Incoming students who wish to apply for a discount may do so using the same payment platform. Discounts will be refunded if approved.

VICTIMS OF COLOANE FIRE NOW HOUSED AT ILHA VERDE RELIEF FACILITY

Victims of Tuesday's rooftop fire in a low-rise residential building – also known as tong-lau in Cantonese – are being accommodated temporarily at the Ilha Verde Disaster Relief Center, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) announced. A total of five victims are currently housed in the facility. The fire damaged some miscellaneous items and pieces of furniture but did not cause any injuries or deaths. Preliminary investigations of the Fire Services Bureau (CB) pointed to a short circuit in an extension socket as the source of the blaze.

MAY GOLDEN WEEK

Arrivals on last day of holidays fall to 19,000

LYNZY VALLES

MACAU'S tourism arrivals have continued to decline on the last day of the May Golden Week holidays, recording a total of only 19,188 visitors as of 9 p.m. yesterday.

Provisional data from the Public Security Police shows a total of 135,795 arrivals from April 30 to May 4.

Following the 41,544 arrivals recorded on April

30 – the highest daily number of arrivals so far this year – the average number of arrivals for the holiday period now stands at about 27,160

Prior to the holiday, the tourism bureau released an estimate for the average tourist arrivals during the holiday period of about 30,000 per day. Following the boost of arrivals on the first day of the Golden week, the expectation was lifted to 35,000.

However, as the latest outbreak has affected two thirds of provincial-level regions in China, people have mostly chosen to stay at home.

During the five-day holiday starting from Saturday, citizens were expected to follow local policies on restrictions, reducing outings to avoid infection of the more contagious Omicron variants.

Amid the new Omicron clusters, on Saturday the Chinese capital city



announced more intensive restrictive measures against Covid-19 to reduce the spread.

According to the Mi-

nistry of Transport, China is expected to see notable drops in tourist traffic for the holiday with the measures to contain Covid-19.

GBA

VACCINE TRANSFORMATION CENTER ESTABLISHED IN GUANGZHOU

A vaccine technology transformation center has recently been established in Guangzhou, the provincial capital of the neighboring Guangdong Province, the city's government announced.

A statement posted on

a website of the Guangzhou government announced that the center will be officially known as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) Innovative Vaccine Technology Industry Transformation Center.

The statement pointed out that the center is responsible for accelerating the discovery of technologies for large-scale production and providing demonstration application platforms for vaccines.

Moreover, it will help build and integrate existing high-tier pilot platforms and production resources, as well as promoting the GBA's development of most vaccine-types, including subunit vaccines, nucleic acid vaccines and viral vector vaccines.

The transformation center is chaired by Academician Xu Tao at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

After Covid-19 intensified into a pandemic, the vaccine industry became the focus of a new round of global biomedicine and health industries in China and around the world. According to the statement, in order to achieve fast breakthroughs in key vaccine technologies, the focus of the center will be on joint pharmaceutical development in the GBA and the industrialization of innovative vaccines. AL

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

REACHING OUT!

+21,000

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes

MacauDaily 澳門每日時報

Times

DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Alex Torrao, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, Jing Wu, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS_Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua
SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephone: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

Advertisement advertising@macaudailytimes.com

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

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Domestic violence doubles to 81 cases in 2021

LYNZY VALLES

MACAUI has recorded 81 cases of suspected domestic violence in 2021, an increase of over 100% compared to data from 2020, when 38 cases were recorded.

According to the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS), reasons for the increase include more time spent with family members during the pandemic, additional pressure on parents in the education of their children and increased conflict between spouses relating to the education of their children.

In the "2021 Annual Report of the Central System for the Registration of Domestic Violence Cases," of the suspected cases of domestic violence in 2021, 38 were cases of marital violence, 30 of violence against children, six of violence between family members, six of violence against the elderly and one of violence against a disabled person.

Regarding the types of acts of



domestic violence, the report revealed that that they were mainly cases of physical violence, amounting to 53 cases (65.4%). Eight were cases of psychological offenses (9.9%), seven were cases of sexual abuse (8.6%), five were cases of inadequate care (6.2%) and eight were cases related to violence/multiple offenses (9.9%).

The IAS advised that whenever a suspected case of domestic violence is reported, psychological counseling agents and social

workers from the IAS and non-governmental organizations will hold meetings to define the nature of the cases.

This is in accordance with the guidelines for treatment of domestic violence procedures, and in line with professional and multidisciplinary judgment. IAS also stated that it will draw up welfare plans and provide adequate services to people in need, not according to the criminal classification of the acts in question.

TAIWAN'S LIBERALIZED RESIDENCY PLAN FOR MACAU, HK STILL IN LIMBO

TAIWANESE politicians' efforts to push forward a set of less stringent residency regulations for Macau and Hong Kong residents have not yet resulted in any agreement, news reports on the island said.

During a meeting discussing the matter, members called for a halting of the proposed relaxed residency requirements, which should have commenced May 1, judging by similar plans, some of which are currently in force, as cited in the English section of the Central News Agency.

On April 29, the Mainland Affairs Council of Taiwan announced a halt to the implementation. A main reason for doing so was security concerns raised by the island's

lawmakers.

A major highlight of the new regulations is that Macau and Hong Kong residents would be eligible to apply for permanent residence in Taiwan after working there for five consecutive years. In addition they would have to earn double the local minimum wage in the fifth year.

Existing regulations permit Macau and Hong Kong residents to apply for residency on the island provided that they meet certain criteria, such as making an eligible investment of NTD6 million (approx. MOP1.65 million).

Amendments to regulations do not have to be passed by the Taiwan legislature, but the legislature is vested with the power to intervene. AL

THOMAS TUCKER



AD

PRESENTED BY
銀河娛樂集團
Galaxy Entertainment Group

BRITCHAM'S PUNK BALL

CHAOS TO COUTURE

SATURDAY 18TH JUNE 2022
SUNWORLD HOTEL

7:00PM TILL LATE
DINNER & FREE FLOW DRINKS

DRESS CODE: PUNK CHAOS OR COUTURE
TICKETS: MOP/HKD 1600 EACH
TABLES OF 6 OR 8 OR MULTIPLES THEREOF

CONTACT WINNIE WONG +853 6331 1124
WINNIE.WONG@BRITCHAMMACAO.ORG

PAIRED PINK DIAMOND CROWNS:

DIAMOND CROWN:

RUBY CROWN:

Jardines

MGM 英高梅

DSL lawyers

Times

CRIME

WOMAN EXTORTS MOP150,000 IN REPEATED SHAM MARRIAGES

ANTHONY LAM

A local man has allegedly “rented” out his partner on two occasions to attempt to obtain Macau residency for five mainland residents, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) disclosed yesterday.

The main suspects are Kou, a male, and Chiu, a female. They were previously in a relationship before being arrested. Another suspect, Liang, a former colleague of Kou, was originally a mainland resident but managed to secure Macau residency in 2020 after marrying Chiu in 2006.

In 2011, Liang and Chiu divorced, but not before Chiu gave birth to Kou's son. In addition, Liang's real partner, Lai, a woman from the mainland, bore a son to Liang, before the divorce took place.

From this sham marriage, Kou and Chiu secured MOP30,000 in remuneration.

Liang and Lai married in 2012 and subsequently had two children, one in the same year and one in 2015. Lai obtained her Macau residency in 2021.

SANDY MILLAR



In the light of their previous successful con, Kou and Chiu decided to repeat the “rental”, only with a larger price tag.

Last year, Chiu received a sum of 100,000 Chinese yuan from Liu, a mainland man, for another sham marriage. After they married, an application for Liu's Macau residency, as well as that for two of Liu's sons by another woman, was filed.

The police disclosed that, according to the suspects, Liu promised Kou and Chiu that if the sham

marriage was successful and Liu, as well as his two sons, had secured Macau residencies, Chiu would receive another 100,000 Chinese yuan in payment, boosting the price tag of the sham marriage to 200,000 Chinese yuan.

However, the alleged sham marriage was discovered before the deal was sealed.

As of the time of arrest, according to the PSP, Liu and his two sons had not yet obtained their Macau ID cards, so they had no ri-

ght of residence in Macau.

Kou, Chiu and Liang have been arrested by the police. Liu, on the other hand, is at large. The PSP is currently searching for Lai and Liu's two sons.

Unlike many other similar cases, this case was discovered when the PSP initiated general investigations into this type of crime.

In another case, the Judiciary Police (PJ) revealed that a local man had allegedly taken his new friend's cash, stored in a hotel room safe.

The cash amounted to HKD400,000.

According to the police, the suspect, a local man 26 years old, has been arrested and delivered to the Public Prosecutions Office on a charge of aggravated theft.

The victim is a mainland male resident. When on a trip to Macau mid-April, he became friends with the suspect and thereafter remained in contact using a messaging app.

April 25, the victim returned to Macau and spent some time late at night in a hotel room rented under the name of the suspect. For security reasons, the victim stored his cash in the hotel room safe in front of the suspect.

Five days later, when the victim wanted to retrieve the cash from the safe, he found it gone. His backpack, containing his clothes and travel documents, which was in the room, had also disappeared.

His attempts to contact the suspect were fruitless.

Close to midnight on the night of April 30/May 1, the suspect told the victim he was in a Northern District park. The police were notified right away and the suspect was arrested. He confessed to stealing the cash by pretending to have forgotten the passcode of the safe. He claimed to have lost all the cash, but the backpack was found at his place of residence.

AD

ACCURATE, TIMELY & COMPETITIVE TRANSLATIONS

Languages:
ENGLISH, CHINESE,
PORTUGUESE, JAPANESE,
KOREAN, SPANISH,
FRENCH, ARABIC,
RUSSIAN

Services
TRANSLATIONS,
PROOFREADING, COPYWRITING,
DATA INPUT, NEWS MONITORING

We translate +10,000 words a day

K **KTRANZ**
TRANSLATIONS LIMITED

Contact: Ms. Amy Yang
Email: amy@ktranz.com.mo
Tel: +853 2871 6081/2 Fax: +853 2871 6084

Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR

RENATO MARQUES

GAMING AMENDMENT

Legality of casinos accepting mixed deposits in doubt

THE lawmakers of the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) have expressed doubts about the legality of the gaming concessionaires accepting deposits from players in a mixture of cash and gaming chips, the president of the committee, lawmaker Chan Chak Mo said yesterday in the press briefing after the committee meeting.

At issue is the discussion of the bill aiming to enact new rules for the activities of the gaming promoters, also known as junkets, which is discussed separately from the new gaming law.

The question of the legality of deposits at casinos was raised as a consequence of this new bill, which establishes that the junkets are banned from accepting any deposits from gamblers in both cash and gaming chips.

The issue was introduced into the debate during the discussion of the provision of Article 39 which regulates the "illicit deposit acceptance."

This article states that the gaming promoters, management companies, employees, or any other person who, on behalf of the game promoter, management company, or employees' requests, raises, or accepts, directly or through third parties, cash deposits, gaming chips or other funds provided by others through any means, is liable for a penalty that can range from two to five years imprisonment.

The provision raises questions for the lawmakers as to what these "third parties" are, and whether or not they include the gaming concessionaires.

On this point, Chan said that the Committee has already sought advice from AL's Legal Advisory to clarify whether the gaming concessionaires can receive deposits from gamblers as well as from the government on whether they are included as "third parties".

"We want the government to clarify whether it is really 'any person' who is barred from receiving deposits as well as the reference made to 'third parties'. As the gaming concessionaires have not been listed this might indicate that they can accept deposits [...] there is this doubt that we are calling on our legal advisors to clarify," he said, adding, "We know they [gaming concessionaires] can issue loans but whether they can receive deposits is not clear."

Another issue that drew questions from the lawmakers has to do with the penalties to be enforced on the junkets not-complying with the rules established by this new law. This concerns the maximum ceiling for the earning of the promoters, as well as the non-reporting of contract alterations between junkets and conces-

ANTHONY LAM



President of the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly, Chan Chak Mo

sionaires as well as swapping of concessionaires, the Committee president said.

He noted that the matter was prompted by the AL's Legal Advisors, who "found that the bill had some unreasonable aspects."

"The problem is that if they fail

to comply there is a fine targeting the junkets ranging from 100,000 patacas to 500,000 patacas, but it seems like the rules only punish one side of the contract," Chan said, adding, "The penalties are always aimed at the [gaming] promoters but never on the con-

cessionaires' side. Concessionaires also have responsibilities because in this case scenario both sides are violating the law. So, we need to ask the government to clarify this matter."

During yesterday's meeting, lawmakers analyzed the bill as far

as Article 59, Chan said, noting that since there are only a few further articles to discuss (the law has a total of 65 Articles), the first round of analysis will be completed this Friday when the Committee will meet again to discuss the same topic.

LAWMAKERS ALARMED AT LIMITED INSPECTION POWERS

INSPECTION powers to be given to the Financial Services Bureau (DSF) by the new junket operations bill and the limits to the duty of concerned parties to cooperate with the inspection authorities, have raised serious questions and a few red flags from lawmakers on the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL).

While discussing the provisions of the bill, lawmakers found that besides the common inspection duties normally assigned to the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ), the new bill also assigns inspection duties to the DSF.

This is in spite of the lack of clarity in any of the legal provisions as to the duties and scope of the different Bureaus concerning inspection of the junkets and gaming concessionaires.

The committee president, Chan Chak Mo, noted that several lawmakers highlighted the abnormality of including the DSF as an inspector together with DICJ but found no provisions that hint at the different powers to be shared between the two Bureaus. This is a matter that lawmakers believe needs clarification.

Raising even more eyebrows is a rule in

Article 56 of the bill which states that "Any person or entity must collaborate with the MSAR government and provide all necessary support, providing DICJ and DSF with the necessary documents, information, elements or evidence when requested, even if these are documents, information, and elements subject to the duty of secrecy."

This raised several concerns among lawmakers as, according to the bill, those who fail to comply will incur the crime of failing to comply with statutory directives.

Lawmakers need further information as to whether the rule can be enforced in this manner without a warrant from a judge as is required in the case of general laws.

They also expressed concerns over the professional confidentiality privileges of certain professionals such as lawyers, accountants, and others who might be caught between the need to comply with this rule or to comply with their professional obligation of privacy.

"Normally the authorities need a warrant from a judge to request this type of information such as confidential documents, bank statements, [etc.] but this law does not

state any of this, which leads lawmakers to question why is it so simple now to enforce such a rule, as well as what justifies the attribution of such a broad power," Chan said.

"We need to ask the government why the rule is like this," he added noting that the committee is not against or in favor of this regulation, but instead is seeking proper clarification of the legal intention.

The committee president noted that the main issue raised by the lawmakers is the fact that the rule has any exceptions or limitations, stating only "Any person or entity must collaborate."

"This is an issue because it does not exclude people, professions, or places safeguarded by professional secrecy laws such as lawyers' offices and others that are covered by very specific laws. We know that are other laws that might have precedence over this but we need clarification," he said.

Questioned as to whether any provisions stated penalties in the case where authorities violate the secrecy of documents while conducting inspections, Chan admitted he did not know of any, pointing out to a potential regulation of the matter through the Statute of the Civil Servants. **RM**

AP PHOTO

COVID-19

BEIJING CLOSES 10% OF SUBWAY STATIONS TO STEM VIRUS SPREAD



BEIJING yesterday closed around 10% of the stations in its vast subway system as an additional measure against the spread of coronavirus.

The subway authority in a brief message said only that the measure to shut 40 mostly downtown stations was being taken as part of epidemic control measures. No date for resumption of service was given.

Beijing has been on high alert for the spread of COVID-19, with restaurants and bars limited to

takeout only, gyms closed and classes suspended indefinitely. Major tourist sites in the city, including the Forbidden City and the Beijing Zoo, have closed their indoor exhibition halls and are operating at only partial capacity.

A few communities where cases were discovered have been isolated. People residing in "controlled" areas have been told to stay within city limits, including 12 areas deemed high-risk and another 35 considered medium-risk.

City residents are required to undergo three tests throughout the week as authorities seek to detect and isolate cases without imposing the sort of sweeping lockdowns seen in Shanghai and elsewhere. A negative test result obtained within the previous 48 hours is required to gain entry to most public spaces.

Beijing yesterday recorded just 51 new cases, five of them asymptomatic.

The subway closings should have relatively little impact on

city life, with China observing the Labor Day holiday this week and many commuters in the city of 21 million already working from home.

In one downtown neighborhood categorized as high-risk, the streets were practically deserted apart from a few delivery drivers on scooters and the occasional pedestrian and car.

All businesses were shut except for supermarkets and fruit and vegetable stores. Outsiders generally avoid high-risk areas to avoid the

possibility of their presence registering on the tracing apps installed on virtually all mobile phones, creating potential problems for future access to public areas.

While taking a lighter touch in Beijing, China has overall stuck to its strict "zero-COVID" approach that restricts travel, tests entire cities and sets up sprawling facilities to try to isolate every infected person. Lockdowns start with buildings and neighborhoods but become citywide if the virus spreads widely.

That has caused the most disruption in Shanghai, where authorities are slowly easing restrictions that have confined most of the city's 26 million people to their apartments, housing compounds or immediate neighborhoods for close to a month, and in some cases longer.

Shanghai reported another 4,982 cases yesterday, all but 260 of them asymptomatic, along with an additional 16 deaths. That continues a steady decline in China's largest city which recorded a daily peak of 27,605 new cases nearly three weeks ago on April 13.

The surprisingly low death toll amid an outbreak of more than 400,000 cases in the city that is home to China's main stock market and biggest port has sparked questions about how such deaths are tallied.

The rigid and widely derided restrictions have led to shortages of food and medical aid along with a wider — though likely temporary — impact on the national economy. Desperate, outraged citizens have confronted authorities at barricades and online, screamed out of their windows and banged pots and pans in a sign of their frustration and anger.

Communist authorities have sought to scrub such protests from the internet and blamed the protests, including the banging of cooking implements, on agitation by unidentified "foreign anti-China forces." **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

Economy shrinks 4% under anti-virus controls

HONG KONG's economy shrank by 4% compared with a year earlier in the quarter ending in March after the Chinese territory shut restaurants and other businesses to fight a spike in coronavirus infections.

Growth plunged from the previous quarter's 4% expansion, government data showed this week. Exports of goods

fell 4.5% from a year earlier while consumer spending sank 5.4%.

Hong Kong closed amusement parks and imposed curbs on restaurants and other businesses in response to an outbreak that infected 1.2 million of its 7.4 million people.

The government eased restrictions in late April after the outbreak appeared to fade and

ended a 2-year-old ban on non-resident visitors flying into the territory. But Hong Kong faces pressure due to weak global trade and a lack of visitors from China's mainland.

"Although there are signs that activity is rebounding, we expect the recovery to prove weak," Sheana Yue of Capital Economics said in a report. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



KOREAS

North fires ballistic missile amid rising animosities

HYUNG-JIN KIM, KIM TONG-HYUNG & MARI YAMAGUCHI, SEOUL

NORTH Korea launched a ballistic missile toward its eastern waters yesterday, South Korean and Japanese officials said, days after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to speed up the development of his nuclear weapons "at the fastest possible pace" and threatened to use them against rivals.

The launch, the North's 14th round of weapons firing this year, also came six days before a new conservative South Korean president takes office for a single five-year term.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the missile was fired from the North's capital region and flew to the waters off its eastern coast. It called North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches "a grave threat" that would undermine international peace and security and a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions banning any ballistic launch by the North.

The statement said that Won In-Choul, the South Korean JCS chief, held a video conference about the launch with Gen. Paul LaCamera, an American general who heads the South Korea-U.S. combined forces command in Seoul, and they agreed to main-



tain a solid joint defense posture.

Japan also detected the North Korean launch and quickly condemned it.

"North Korea's series of actions that threatens the peace, safety and stability of the international community are impermissible," Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters during his visit to Rome.

Kishida said he'll discuss the launch when he meets Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi later yesterday. "Naturally, we will exchange views on the regional situation in the Indo-Pacific and East Asia, and I will thoroughly explain the reality of the region including the North Korean missile launch today, to gain understanding about the pressing situation in the East Asia," he said.

Japanese Vice Defense Minister

Makoto Oniki said that the missile was believed to have landed in waters outside of the Japanese Exclusive Economic Zone. There has been no report of damage or injury reported from vessels and aircraft in the area.

It wasn't immediately known what missile North Korea launched. South Korea's military said the missile flew about 470 kilometers at the apogee of 780 kilometers, while Oniki of Japan said it traveled about 500 kilometers (310 miles) at the maximum altitude of 800 kilometers.

Observers say North Korea's unusually fast pace in weapons testing this year underscores its dual goal of advancing its missile programs and applying pressure on Washington over a deepening freeze in nuclear negotiations. They say Kim eventually aims to

use his expanded arsenal to win an international recognition of North Korea as a nuclear state that he believes would help force the United States to relax international economic sanctions on the North.

One of the North Korean missiles tested recently was an intercontinental ballistic missile potentially capable of reaching the entirety of the American homeland. That missile's launch broke Kim's self-imposed 2018 moratorium on big weapons tests.

There are signs that the North is also preparing for a nuclear test at its remote northeastern testing facility. If made, the nuclear bomb test explosion by North Korea would be the seventh of its kind and the first since 2017.

Last week, Kim Jong Un showcased his most powerful nuclear-

-capable missiles targeting both the United States and its allies during a massive military parade in capital, Pyongyang. During a speech at the parade, Kim said he would develop his arsenal at the "fastest possible pace" and warned that the North would preemptively use its nuclear weapons if its national interests are threatened.

North Korea has previously unleashed harsh rhetoric threatening to attack its rivals with its nuclear weapons. But the fact that Kim made the threat himself and in a detailed manner have caused security jitters among some South Koreans. Taken together with North Korea's recent tests of short-range nuclear-capable missiles, some experts speculate North Korea's possibly escalatory nuclear doctrine would allow it to launch preemptive nuclear strikes on South Korea in some cases.

Yesterday's launch came before the May 10 inauguration of South Korean President-elect Yoon Suk Yeol, who has vowed to boost Seoul's missile capability and solidify its military alliance with Washington to better cope with increasing North Korean nuclear threats.

North Korea has a history of raising animosities with weapons tests when Seoul and Washington inaugurate new governments in an apparent bid to boost its leverage in future negotiations.

Yoon's power transition office called the latest North Korean launch "a grave provocation" and urged Pyongyang to stop acts that raise tensions and threaten international peace. It said in a statement that the Yoon government will strongly respond to North Korean provocations in close cooperation with the international community. **MDT/AP**

SRI LANKA

Foreign reserves at record low, politics in crisis

SRI Lanka's economy is in dire straits with its usable foreign reserves down to less than \$50 million, the country's finance minister said yesterday.

Ali Sabri was speaking to Parliament after returning to Sri Lanka from talks with the International Monetary Fund. He said any IMF rescue program, including a rapid financing instrument needed to urgently resolve shortages of essential goods, would depend on negotiations on debt restructuring with creditors and would take six months to implement.

Sri Lanka is on the brink of bankruptcy and has suspended payments on its



Mahinda Rajapaksa (left) and his brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa

foreign loans. Its economic miseries have brought on a political crisis, with the government facing a protests

and a no-confidence motion in Parliament.

The country is due to repay \$7 billion this year

of the \$25 billion in foreign loans it is scheduled to pay by 2026.

"There is a severe risk in front of all of us," said Sabri. He said Sri Lanka's reserves stood at \$7.6 billion at the end of 2019 and fell to \$5.7 billion by the end of 2020 as payments outpaced inflows of foreign currency amid the pandemic.

The reserves declined to \$3.1 billion by the end of 2021, and to \$1.9 billion by the end of March, he said. With foreign currency in short supply thanks to less tourism and other revenues, official reserves were tapped to pay for importing essentials including fuel, gas, coal and medicines be-

ginning in August 2021.

The bulk of Sri Lanka's remaining reserves — including a \$1 billion equivalent SWAP facility from China, are not usable for settling dollar-denominated payments, he said.

Sabri's comments came a day after the country's main opposition party issued a no-confidence motion aiming at ousting Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and his Cabinet.

The opposition United People's Force blames the government of failing in its constitutional duty to provide decent living standards. It accuses top government officials of excessively printing money,

hurting farm production by banning chemical fertilizers to make the production fully organic and minimize import costs, failing to order COVID-19 vaccines in a timely manner and buying them later at higher prices.

A date has not yet been announced for a vote on the no-confidence motion.

The foreign currency crisis has limited imports and caused severe shortages of essential goods like fuel, cooking gas, medicine and food. People must line up for hours to buy what they can and many return home with little, if any, of what they were seeking.

"This is an economic crisis. The economic crisis has created a political crisis. It is important to resolve the political crisis in order to find solutions to the economic crisis," Sabri said. **MDT/AP**

HITLER ORIGINS

Israel lashes out at Russia over Lavrov's Nazism remarks

TIA GOLDENBERG,
TEL AVIV

ISRAEL lashed out at Russia over “unforgivable” comments by its foreign minister about Nazism and antisemitism — including claims that Adolf Hitler was Jewish. Israel, which summoned the Russian ambassador in response, said the remarks blamed Jews for their own murder in the Holocaust.

It was a steep decline in the ties between the two countries at a time when Israel has sought to stake out a cautious position between Russia and Ukraine and remain in Russia's good stead for its security needs in the Middle East.

Asked in an interview with an Italian news channel about Russian claims that it invaded Ukraine to “denazify” the country, Sergey Lavrov said that Ukraine could still have Nazi elements even if some figures, including the country's president, were Jewish.

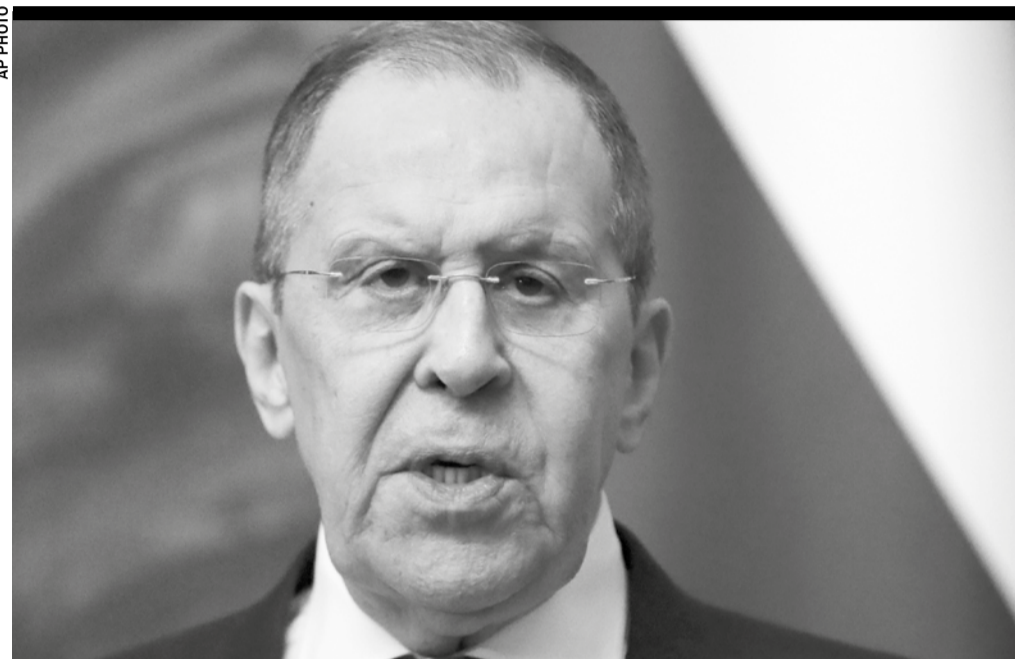
“So when they say ‘How can Nazification exist if we're Jewish?’ In my opinion, Hitler also had Jewish origins, so it doesn't mean absolutely anything. For some time we have heard from the Jewish people that the biggest antisemites were Jewish,” he said, speaking to the station in Russian, dubbed over by an Italian translation.

In some of the harshest remarks since the start of the war in Ukraine, Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid called Lavrov's statement “unforgivable and scandalous and a horrible historical error.”

“The Jews did not murder themselves in the Holocaust,” said Lapid, the son of a Holocaust survivor. “The lowest level of racism against Jews is to blame Jews themselves for antisemitism.”

Later, Lapid said Israel makes “every effort” to have good relations with Russia. “But there's a limit and this limit has been crossed this time. The government of Russia needs to apologize to us and to the Jewish people,” he said.

An Israeli official confirmed earlier this week that Russia's ambassador, Ana-



Lavrov: from peers' admiration to public hatred

toly Viktorov, was summoned to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss a diplomatic matter, said that Israel “stated its position” and that the sides agreed not to elaborate.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who has been more measured in his criticism of Russia's invasion, also condemned Lavrov's comments.

“His words are untrue and their intentions are wrong,” he said. “Using the Holocaust of the Jewish people as a political tool must cease immediately.”

Israel's Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem called the remarks “absurd, delusional, dangerous and deserving of condemnation.”

“Lavrov is propagating the inversion of the Holocaust — turning the victims into the criminals on the basis of promoting a completely unfounded claim that Hitler was of Jewish descent,” it said in a statement.

“Equally serious is calling the Ukrainians in general, and President (Volodymyr) Zelenskyy in particular, Nazis. This, among other things, is a complete distortion of the history and an affront to the victims of Nazism.”

In Germany, government spokesman Steffen Heibstreit said the Russian government's “propaganda” efforts weren't worthy of comment, calling them “absurd.”

Nazism has featured prominently in Russia's war aims and narrative as it fi-

ghts in Ukraine. In his bid to legitimize the war to Russian citizens, President Vladimir Putin has portrayed the battle as a struggle against Nazis in Ukraine, even though the country has a democratically elected government and a Jewish president whose relatives were killed in the Holocaust.

Ukraine also condemned Lavrov's remarks.

“By trying to rewrite history, Moscow is simply looking for arguments to justify the mass murders of Ukrainians,” Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Lavrov's remarks exposed the “deeply-rooted antisemitism of the Russian elites.”

World War II, in which the Soviet Union lost an estimated 27 million people and helped defeat Nazi Germany, is a linchpin of Russia's national identity. Repeatedly reaching for the historical narrative that places Russia as a savior against evil forces has helped the Kremlin rally Russians around the war.

Israel gained independence in the wake of the Holocaust and has served as a refuge for the world's Jews. Over 70 years later, the Holocaust remains central to its national ethos and it has positioned itself at the center of global efforts to remember the Holocaust and combat antisemitism. Israel is home to a shrinking population of 165,000 Holocaust survivors, most in

their 80s and 90s, and last week the country marked its annual Holocaust memorial day.

But those aims sometimes clash with its other national interests. Russia has a military presence in neighboring Syria, and Israel, which carries out frequent strikes on enemy targets in the country, relies on Russia for security coordination to prevent their forces from coming into conflict with one another. That has forced Israel to tread lightly in its criticism of the war in Ukraine.

While it has sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine and expressed support for its people, Israel has been measured in its criticism of Russia. It has not joined international sanctions against Russia or provided military aid to Ukraine.

That paved the way for Bennett to be able to try to mediate between the sides, an effort which appears to have stalled as Israel deals with its own internal unrest.

The Holocaust and the constant manipulation of its history during the conflict has sparked outrage in Israel before.

In a speech to Israeli legislators in March, Zelenskyy compared Russia's invasion of his country to the actions of Nazi Germany, accusing Putin of trying to carry out a “final solution” against Ukraine. The comparisons drew an angry condemnation from Yad Vashem, which said Zelenskyy was trivializing the Holocaust. **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1981 BOBBY SANDS DIES IN PRISON



Hunger striker Bobby Sands has died in prison 66 days after first refusing to eat.

The 27-year-old republican spent the last days of his life on a water bed to protect his fragile bones.

He had been in a coma for 48 hours before being pronounced dead by medical staff at the Maze prison in Northern Ireland.

Sands' parents, brother and sister were at his bedside when he died.

This was the second time Sands had been on hunger strike, the first was in 1980 when a number of prisoners in the Maze prison were demanding political status for republican prisoners.

Mr Humphrey Atkins, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland issued a statement shortly after the death.

He said: “I regret this needless and pointless death. “Too many have died by violence in Northern Ireland. In this case it was self-inflicted.

“We should not forget the many others who have died. “It is my profound hope and prayer that the people of Northern Ireland will recognise the futility of violence and turn their faces away from it.”

Three other republican prisoners at the Maze prison remain on hunger strike. There is grave concern for 25-year-old convicted murderer Francis Hughes, who began his strike 15 days after Sands.

Bobby Sands, who had served five years of a 14-year sentence for possessing a gun, began his hunger strike on 1 March.

He had softened his stance since the first strike and this time was making five main demands: that republican prisoners be allowed to wear their own clothes, that they be given free association time, visits and mail, that they should not have to carry out penal work and should be given back lost remission.

The Provisional IRA is now expected to launch a campaign of violence and destruction in response to Sands' death.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Bobby Sands was the first of 10 republican prisoners to die after hunger strikes. More than 60 civilians, police and soldiers also died in violence directly attributable to the hunger strikes. Three days after the hunger strikes came to an end on 3 October, the Ulster Secretary James Prior negotiated a package of concessions for the Maze prisoners — much to the fury of the loyalist community. He met two of the prisoners' demands — the right to wear their own clothes and the restoration of 50% of lost remission for those who obeyed prison rules for three months.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Plan to get together with someone special later in the day. You may be in an extremely passionate mood today. Get thinking about prolonging longevity.

TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

You can meet new friends who will let you know just how valuable you are. You will be extremely sensual; take precautions and don't take any risks.

GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Don't let friends convince you that you should contribute to something you don't believe in. Sudden changes regarding work and colleagues are apparent.

CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Lend an ear to a friend; it can make a difference. Added knowledge will give you the edge when dealing with peers. You are best to deal with those outside your family.

LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Opportunities to pamper yourself may unfold. False information from someone trying to start problems is likely. Someone you live with will be quite unreasonable today.

VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Be sure to keep communication open with those you live with. Don't let the moods of those you live with get you down. Opportunities for romance may develop through dealing with groups that have a purpose.

LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Be careful not to overexert yourself. Your intellectual charm will entice new love interests. You will get along well in social situations.

SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Your own small business on the side could ease your financial stress. Things are looking good for you, so open your eyes and get to it. You need more time to think this whole situation through.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You may find that your quick wit and charm will help you in obtaining allies. This may not be the day to get involved in risky joint financial ventures. Cutbacks at work will be a cause for worry.

CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Extravagance and overindulgence are not a cure if you're feeling sorry for yourself. You may experience setbacks due to additional responsibilities with loved ones.

AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

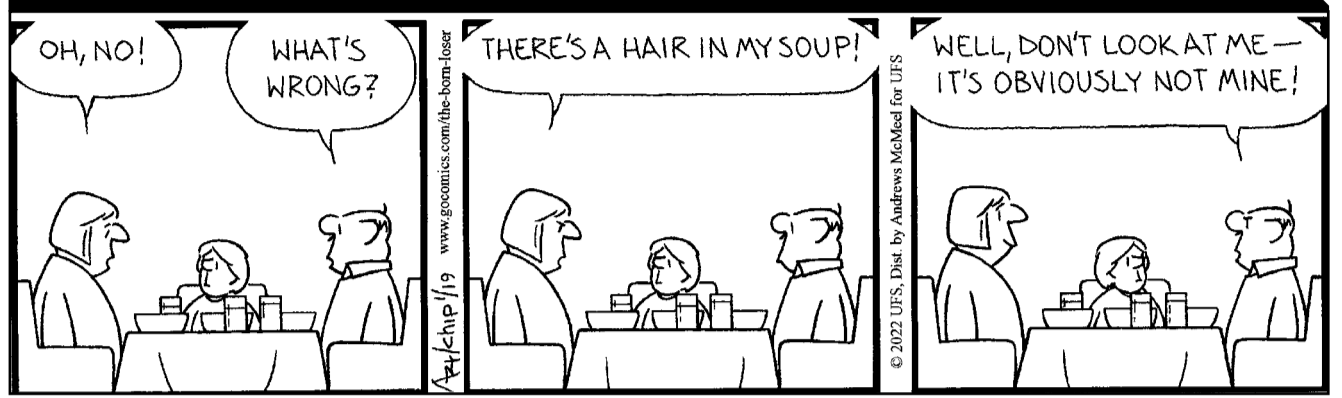
Your goals will be in reach if you direct your energy wisely. Property investments should payoff. Don't let your personal partner hold you back or slow you down.

PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You may find yourself in an emotional fix if you interfere in other people's problems. It may be a disappointing day emotionally. Make sure that you have covered yourself legally.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

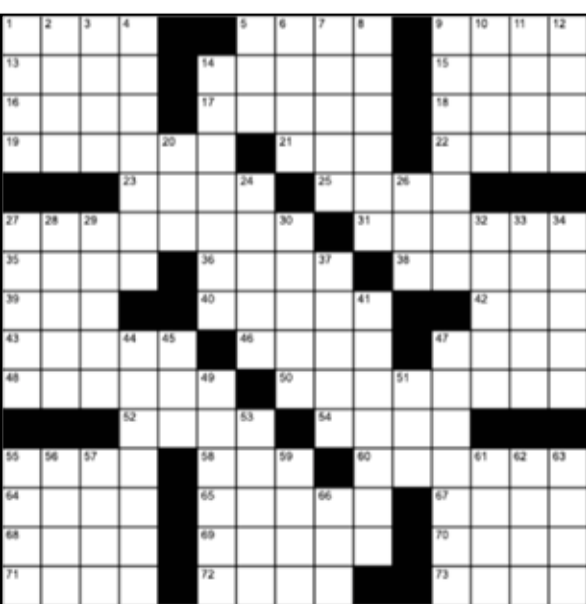
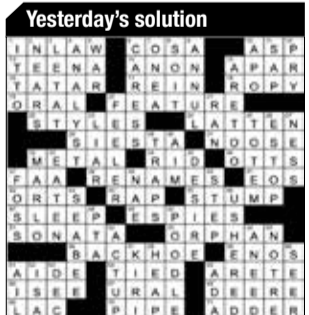
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	16	33	fine
Changchun	14	27	cloudy
Chengdu	12	27	cloudy
Chongqing	15	29	fine
Fuzhou	17	22	cloudy
Guangzhou	15	28	fine
Guiyang	12	24	cloudy
Haikou	19	25	cloudy
Hangzhou	13	27	cloudy
Harbin	10	26	cloudy
Hefei	13	29	fine
Nanjing	17	29	fine
Shanghai	16	26	fine
Taipei	21	25	rain
Wuhan	14	29	fine
Hong Kong	25	27	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	3	12	overcast
Frankfurt	8	20	overcast
Paris	9	20	overcast
London	9	21	overcast
New York	13	22	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- "A Jug of Wine..." poet; 5- Gillette brand; 9- Coal-rich region; 13- Gap; 14- Pale; 15- Prod; 16- Camaro model; 17- Loose coil of yarn; 18- Russian pancake; 19- Furry swimmers; 21- Bambi's aunt; 22- Sector; 23- Frozen treats; 25- "Twittering Machine" artist; 27- Defensive mounds; 31- Classified; 35- Quod ___ demonstrandum; 36- See ya!; 38- Snare; 39- Thrice, in prescriptions; 40- Snow conveyances; 42- Ed.'s pile; 43- Japanese immigrant; 46- Actor Stoltz; 47- Search; 48- Natural gas component; 50- Not a direct hit; 52- Hwys.; 54- It parallels a radius; 55- Starting on; 58- Stutz contemporary; 60- Walking; 64- Drum sound; 65- Angry; 67- Leg joint; 68- ___ breve; 69- Backing for an exhibit; 70- Richard of "A Summer Place"; 71- Jump; 72- Ceremonial act; 73- Deeply moved;

DOWN 1- Presidential battleground state; 2- "Beetle Bailey" cartoonist Walker; 3- Tons; 4- Proof of purchase; 5- Invite; 6- Of ___ I Sing; 7- Freshen, as a stamp pad; 8- Historical records; 9- Arctic; 10- Woody's son; 11- Not "fer"; 12- Actress Russo; 14- States; 20- Nipper's co.; 24- Old; 26- Many, many moons; 27- Knot again; 28- Give it ___!; 29- Cattail's locale; 30- Severe; 32- Marisa of "My Cousin Vinny"; 33- Much of Mississippi?; 34- Student tables; 37- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 41- Surgical knife; 44- Side covering on a hat; 45- CD earnings; 47- Dollar; 49- More spine-tingling; 51- Messenger ___; 53- Turkish palace; 55- Asian sea; 56- Flatfish; 57- Leaf with Sanscrit writing?; 59- Kiln for drying hops; 61- Swenson of "Benson"; 62- Type of tide; 63- Lady's escort; 66- Peg used on the first in golf;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



FOR SALE HKD 7,680,000
PROPERTY OF THE WEEK

3

SALE RENT

FOR SALE
TAIPA
Space & Light
LARGE FAMILY HOME ACROSS FROM CENTRAL PARK
HKD 12,880,000

FOLLOW US!
jmlproperty.com
@jmlproperty
jmlmacau
(853) 2835 2699

LICENSE NO. MI-10001398-6
有關樓宇廣告法定資訊資料請向職員查

F&B

STARBUCKS REPORTS RECORD Q2 SALES, ENHANCES WORKER BENEFITS

DEE-ANN DURBIN

STARBUCKS' sales climbed to record levels in its fiscal second quarter, but its profits took a hit from climbing labor costs.

And those costs are set to grow even higher in the coming months as Starbucks introduces new pay raises and other benefits to improve its employee experience – and head off a growing unionization movement.

The Seattle coffee company – which welcomed back former CEO Howard Schultz last month as its interim leader – said revenue rose 15% to a record \$7.6 billion in its 13-week quarter, which ended April 3. That was in line with Wall Street's estimates, according to analysts polled by FactSet.

But net earnings rose just 2% to \$674 million. Starbucks' adjusted earnings of 59 cents per share fell short of analysts' forecast of 60 cents.

Starbucks noted that it faced higher employment costs during the quarter. Last fall, the company announced a \$1 billion investment in employee wages and benefits in an effort to lift U.S. workers' pay to at least \$15 per hour by this summer.

Yesterday [Macau time], after a series of meetings with workers around the country, Schultz unveiled \$200 million in additional investments in worker pay and training. That includes raises for employees who have been at the company for at least two years as well as a near doubling in training time – from 23 hours to 40 hours – for new baristas and shift supervisors. Starbucks is also reintroducing a coffee mastery program for employees and consid-



ring other benefits like increased sick time.

But there's a catch: Workers who have voted to unionize or stores that have petitioned to hold a union election won't be eligible for the enhanced benefits announced yesterday. Instead, Schultz said U.S. labor law requires stores to negotiate their own contracts with Starbucks.

"We do not have the same freedom to make these improvements at locations that have a union," Schultz said.

Starbucks Workers United, the group behind the unionization effort, disagrees, and said it filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board against Starbucks. The group said the company is violating labor law for threatening to exclude unionized stores from receiving the new benefits.

"These benefits, including ones we've demanded since the beginning of our campaign, are a response to our organizing efforts and we should celebrate the hard work that partners who stood up to Howard Schultz's bullying put in to make this happen," the group said in a statement.

One-third of stores in China were closed or offering mobile ordering only at the end of the second quarter

As of yesterday, workers at more than 250 U.S. stores have filed petitions with the labor board to hold union elections, labor organizers said. At least 50 of those stores have voted to unionize with Workers United, a branch of the Service

Employees International Union.

Schultz opposes unionization. But he noted that employees are under "tremendous strain" due to strong customer demand and pandemic-related changes in the business, including a surge in mobile and drive-thru orders. Stores are built to serve hot drinks, for example, but 80% of U.S. orders are now cold drinks.

"These young people have completely valid concerns given today's uncertainty and economic instability. They look around and they see the burgeoning labor movement as a possible remedy to what they are feeling," Schultz said. "But compare any union contract in our sector to the constantly expanding list of wages and benefits we have provided our people for decades, and the union contract

will not even come close to what Starbucks offers."

Schultz said the new investments will improve employee recruiting and retention. Starbucks also plans additional changes it will outline at an investor meeting in September, including adding credit and debit card tipping in its stores and accelerating the rollout of new ovens and espresso machines.

"If we want to exceed the expectations of our customers, we have to exceed the expectations of our people," Schultz said.

Schultz bought the Starbucks chain in 1987, led it until 2000 and then led it again between 2008 and 2017. He returned as interim CEO and rejoined Starbucks' board in April after former CEO Kevin Johnson announced his retirement.

Schultz said the board is interviewing candidates and expects to name its new CEO in the fall. After training that person, Schultz said he plans to leave the company – but not the board – in early 2023.

Investors seemed glad to have him back. Starbucks shares were up 5% in after-hours trading Tuesday.

Schultz said customer demand for Starbucks remains strong despite several price increases over the last year.

Starbucks' same-store sales – or sales at stores open at least a year – rose 7% globally in the second quarter, surpassing Wall Street's estimate of 6.5%. That was largely on the strength of the business in North America, where same-store sales rose 12%.

International same-store sales fell 8%, largely due to coronavirus restrictions in China. China, which is Starbucks' largest market outside the U.S., saw same-store sales plummet 23% in the quarter, the company said. Roughly one-third of stores in China were closed or offering mobile ordering only at the end of the second quarter. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Melco partners with MGTO for 'Spring Rejoice' drone show



Melco Resorts & Entertainment has supported the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO)'s Light up Macao Drone Gala 2022 as one of the event's

partner entities to help deepen cross-sector integration of "tourism +".

Following MGTO's May 3 official event debut spectacle at the Nam Van Lake

area, the drone display supported by Melco was part of the event's themed session titled "Spring Rejoice". Combining an impressive fleet of 880 drones which dazzled and adorned the cityscape, Melco's display showcased images of its properties including the iconic Morpheus at City of Dreams, Studio City and Altira Macau.

"The event demonstrated Melco's belief in and support for the city's economic recovery and diversification and continued development as a world-class tourism destination," the gaming operator said in a statement.

Sands Resorts Macao launches Mother's Day treats



This coming Mother's Day, Sands Resorts Macao is offering an array of celebratory menus and exclusive spa promotion to spoil all mothers.

A total of 11 signature restaurants including Pin Yue

Xuan, Jiang Nan by Jereme Leung, Hiro by Hiroshi Kagata, La Chine, Lotus Palace, Brasserie, Churchill's Table, The Huaiyang Garden, North Palace, Golden Court and Copa Steakhous-

se will offer flavoursome dishes to treat all mothers.

In addition, Macao ID cardholders can enjoy an exclusive 25% off on dining at the participating restaurants of The Parisian Macao and Sands Macao as part of the 'Fabulous Dining Offers' promotion.

Also, from May 8 to 15, V Retreat at The Venetian Macao, Le SPA'tique at The Parisian Macao and Bodhi Spa at Conrad Macao are offering a special Mother's Day promotion 'Mother and Daughter Double Decadence.'

Guests can enjoy a "buy one, get one free" offer on any à la carte spa treatments and facials.

FOOTBALL

Diaz's dynamism, flair energizing Liverpool's quadruple bid

STEVE DOUGLAS,
MDT/AP SPORTS WRITER

VILLARREAL 2,
LIVERPOOL 3

THE January transfer market has often been cast as a place where desperate clubs trade in a bid to salvage their seasons.

Alex Ferguson, the former Manchester United manager, used to question its value, once saying "all the big transfers happen in the summer."

Liverpool might beg to differ.

The midseason arrival of Luis Diaz is a major factor behind the English club's ability to maintain its improbable charge toward an unprecedented quadruple of major trophies.

And nowhere was this exemplified more than in the Champions League semifinals yesterday [Macau time].

For once, Liverpool was in trouble, 2-0 down at halftime and playing so badly that when manager Jurgen Klopp asked his assistant, Peter Krawietz, to find an example of the players following pre-game tactical instructions, the reply was: "I can't find one."

Enter Diaz.

The sprightly Colombia winger brought energy to Liverpool, getting the team on the front foot with his direct running and incisiveness early in the second half. He scored one of three goals in a 12-minute span to turn the match around as the Reds won 3-2 and advanced, 5-2 on aggregate, to a third Champions League final in five years.

The outlay of 45 million euros (\$50 million) to bring Diaz from Porto is looking like a bargain.

"You don't expect miracles immediately from these kind of players," Klopp has said, referring to January signings like Diaz. "But he is not far away from doing exactly that."

It isn't just what Diaz is



Liverpool's Luis Diaz scores his side's second goal during the Champions League semi final last night

doing on and off the ball — his work rate is as impressive as his wonderful first touch and trickery — but also how his introduction to the side is impacting his teammates.

With Diaz becoming increasingly first choice on the left wing, Sadio Mane has been pushed inside into more of a mobile center forward and is in his best spell of the season. Indeed, Diaz and Mane are outshining Mohamed Salah, the most celebrated member of Liverpool's front three and the team's top scorer this season.

Andrew Robertson, who plays as an attacking left back behind Diaz, also is making the most of the space created by Diaz occupying defenders.

Diaz's energy is infectious, too. He seems an ideal fit for a high-pressing, hard-running approach favored by Klopp.

"I was talking to James Milner about the new lad, Diaz, and he said within seconds he was just up to speed," former Liverpool striker Michael Owen told BT Sport. "He watched, he looked around, as soon as he went down in training he was up and

closing down.

"He said he was just a Liverpool player straightaway, from the first training session."

Certainly Diaz's full debut, against Leicester at Anfield on Feb. 10, was one to savor, with some of his touches and flicks eliciting a "wow" from Liverpool fans.

Diaz is an entertainer. He brought down one long pass to him during the recent Merseyside derby against Everton with the instep of his right foot that he had tucked behind his left leg. For the clinching second goal that day, it was his acrobatic scissor kick that was turned in by Divock Origi.

A week earlier, Diaz had tormented Manchester City in a brilliant first-half display in Liverpool's 3-2 win in the FA Cup semifinals and then scored the opener in a 4-0 victory over Manchester United in the league a few days later.

Diaz's rise has coincided with a slight dip in performance by Diogo Jota, the Portugal forward whose arrival at the start of the 2020-21 season finally broke up the long-established front three

of Salah, Mane and Roberto Firmino.

Firmino, valued so highly by Klopp for his work rate, might now be down to No. 5 attacker at Liverpool such is the strength in depth in the squad.

The 25-year-old Diaz will finish this season having played more than 60 matches for club and country, beginning with his three appearances for Colombia at the Copa America in July.

He already has a League Cup winner's medal — having started the final against Chelsea that Liverpool won on penalties in February — and is highly likely to now start against Chelsea in the FA Cup final on May 14 and the Champions League final on May 28. And let's not forget Liverpool is challenging for the Premier League title, too, with Klopp's team a point behind City with four games left.

Liverpool is on the verge of delivering possibly the greatest season ever by a European club and Diaz, who has been at Anfield for less than four months, is at the heart of it.

AD

The Roadhouse Macau WELCOMES YOU!

FREE Limo Service from 5PM (Tues-Sun)

WE DELIVER!

FOOD / DRINKS / LIVE MUSIC

THE ROADHOUSE MACAU, R/C, SHOP E-G016-G019, BROADWAY HOTEL, ROTUNDA DO DIQUE DESTE, TAIPA

@theroadhousemacau PLEASE CALL US AT: 2875 2945 FOR RESERVATIONS

OPINION

World Views

Alex Domash, Harvard Kennedy School
 MDT/The Conversation



**HISTORY SUGGESTS
 US WON'T BE ABLE TO
 PREVENT A RECESSION**

With inflation surging to a new 40-year high and continuing to accelerate, the Fed is expected to lift interest rates by a half-percentage point at the end of its next meeting on May 4, 2022. It will be the second of seven planned rate hikes in 2022 – following a quarter-point increase in March – as the Fed tries to cool consumer demand and slow rising prices.

By raising interest rates, the central bank is hoping to achieve a proverbial “soft landing” for the U.S. economy, in which it’s able to tame rapid inflation without causing unemployment to rise or triggering a recession. The Fed and professional forecasters project that inflation will recede to below 3% and unemployment will remain under 4% in 2023.

Our recent research, however, suggests that engineering a soft landing is highly improbable and that there is a significant likelihood of a recession in the not too distant future.

That’s because high inflation and low unemployment are both strong predictors of future recessions. In fact, since the 1950s, every time inflation has exceeded 4% and unemployment has been below 5%, the U.S. economy has gone into a recession within two years.

Today, inflation is at 8.5% and unemployment is at 3.6% – suggesting a recession will be very hard to avert.

To bring down surging inflation, the Fed will now try to raise interest rates to curb consumer demand.

The resulting increase in borrowing costs can help slow economic activity by discouraging consumers and businesses from making new investments. But it would come at the risk of causing major economic disruptions and pushing the economy into a recession. This is the soft landing: Interest rates rise and demand falls enough to lower inflation, but the economy keeps growing.

The history of engineering soft landings is not encouraging, however. We found that every time the Fed has hit the brakes hard enough to bring down inflation in a meaningful way, the economy has gone into recession.

While some have argued that there have been several examples of soft landings over the last 60 years, including in 1965, 1984 and 1994, we show in our analysis that these periods had little resemblance to the current moment.

In all three episodes, the Fed was operating in an economy with significantly higher unemployment, lower inflation and lower wage growth. In these historical examples, the Fed also raised interest rates well above the inflation rate – unlike today, where inflation is at 8.5% and interest rates are projected to remain below 3% through 2023 – and explicitly acted early to preempt inflation from spiraling, rather than waiting for inflation to already be excessive.

One reason the Fed’s challenge is particularly difficult today is that the labor market is unprecedentedly tight, meaning the demand for workers is far outpacing the available supply of them. A tight labor market implies that companies need to raise wages to attract new workers.

The U.S. economy today is facing additional inflationary pressures from higher grain and energy prices due to the Ukraine war and more supply-chain disruptions as COVID-19 forces new lockdowns in China. These factors threaten to exacerbate inflation even more over the coming year.

In our assessment, the inflation problem facing the Fed today is substantial and unlikely to be resolved without a significant economic slowdown. Overall, the combination of an overheating economy, surging wages, policy delay by the Fed and recent supply shocks means that a recession in the next couple of years is certainly more likely than not.

[Abridged]

Shares were mostly lower in Asia yesterday, with markets in China, Japan and some other markets still closed for holidays.

Hong Kong and Seoul fell more than 1% and oil prices were higher.

On Tuesday, stocks closed modestly higher on Wall Street as investors waited for today’s [Macau time] decision by the Federal Reserve on interest rates.

The Fed is expected to raise its benchmark rate by twice the usual amount this week as it steps up its fight against inflation, which is at a four-decade high. It has already raised its key overnight rate once, the first such increase since 2018, and Wall Street is expecting several

big increases over the coming months.

“All eyes are peering toward the FOMC meeting and a rate hike is an absolute given,” Clifford Bennett, chief economist at ACY Securities, said in a commentary.

Market players might pick up bargains on the assumption that the rate increase has already been taken into account. But he added that “this excludes the on-going shock to consumers and particularly mortgage holders that will reverberate in an accelerating fashion throughout the economy. This ‘pain’ process will likely continue for the next one to three years in the real world.”



**AS US POISED TO RESTRICT
 ABORTION, OTHER
 NATIONS EASE ACCESS**

AS women in the United States find themselves on the verge of possibly losing the constitutional right to abortion, courts in many other parts of the world have been moving in the opposite direction.

That includes in a number of traditionally conservative societies — such as recently in Colombia, where the Constitutional Court in February legalized the procedure until the 24th week of pregnancy, part of a broader trend seen in parts of heavily Catholic Latin America.

It’s not yet clear what impact there will be outside the United States from the leaked draft opinion suggesting the U.S. Supreme Court could overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision.

But for women’s activists who for years have led grinding campaigns demanding open access to abortion, often looking to the United States as a model, it’s a discouraging sign and a reminder that hard-won gains can be impermanent.

“It is an awful precedent for the coming years for the region and the world,” said Colombian Catalina Martínez Coral, Latin America and Caribbean director for the New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights, which was among the groups that litigated the abortion case in Colombia’s high court.

Mexico’s Supreme Court held last year that it was unconstitutional to punish abortion. As the country’s highest court, its ruling bars all jurisdictions from charging a woman with a crime for terminating a pregnancy.

Statutes outlawing abortion are still on the books in most of Mexico’s 32 states, however, and nongovernmental organizations that have long pushed for decriminalization are pressing state legislatures to reform them. Abortion was already readily available in Mexico City and some states.

To the south in Argentina, lawmakers in late 2020 passed a bill legalizing abortion until the 14th week and after that for circumstances similar to those described in the Colombia ruling.

It’s also widely available in Cuba and Uruguay.

But expansion of abortion access has not extended to all of Latin America, with many countries restricting it to certain circumstances — such as Brazil, the region’s most populous nation, where it’s permissible only in cases of rape, risk to the woman’s life and certified cases of the birth defect anencephaly. Former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is seeking a new term in October, recently said he sees legalizing abortion as a public health issue, eliciting criticism in a country where few approve of the procedure.

Other places have total bans with no exceptions, such as Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Courts in the latter have given women long prison sentences for aggravated homicide even in cases where prosecutors suspect a miscarriage was actually an abortion.

Many African nations also maintain complete bans, but in October 2021, Benin legalized abortion in most circumstances up to 12 weeks. That significantly increased safe access to the procedure after the health minister reported that nearly 200 women were dying each year of complications from clandestine abortions. Previously abortion was permitted in cases of rape or incest; risk to the woman’s life; or severe fetal malformation.

Most European countries have legalized abortion, including predominantly Catholic ones. Ireland did so in 2018, followed by tiny San Marino in a voter referendum last fall. It remains illegal in Andorra, Malta and Vatican City, while Poland last year tightened its abortion laws.

It’s also been widely available in Israel since 1978 and relatively uncontroversial, allowed by law before the 24th week with the approval of hospital “termination committees” that consist of medical professionals including at least one woman. MDT/AP



Russian forces pounded targets across Ukraine, taking aim at supply lines for foreign weapons in the west and intensifying an offensive in the east. The Russian military said yesterday it used sea- and air-launched precision guided missiles to destroy electric power facilities at five railway stations across Ukraine, while artillery and aircraft also struck troop strongholds and fuel and ammunition depots.



UK A British parliamentary committee scrutinizing draft online safety legislation has invited Elon Musk to discuss his plans to buy Twitter and the changes he’s proposing for the social media platform. Musk said it’s too early to give an answer. “I am honored and thank the Parliament for their invitation, but it would be premature at this time to accept, given that there has not yet been a shareholder vote” to approve the deal.

Nigeria Islamic extremist rebels have killed at least seven people in an attack in northeast Borno state in Nigeria, witnesses told The Associated Press yesterday. The rebels attacked Kautukari village in the Chibok area of Borno. The attack happened at the same time that U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was in the state to meet with survivors of jihadi violence.

Ugandan police say 20 people have been killed after a passenger bus crashed into a tea estate off a highway in western Uganda. Police said at least seven of the victims in the accident are minors. There was no immediate information on what caused the accident, among the deadliest in Uganda in recent years. The bus was traveling from the city of Fort Portal to the Ugandan capital, Kampala.