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**THE GOVERNMENT IS ENFORCING NEW RULES FOR THE BOOKING OF QUARANTINE HOTELS FOR THE UPCOMING SUMMER SEASON**

**LABOR BUREAU ASSURES SUPERVISION ON NON-LOCAL WORKFORCE SIZE**

**SOME SHANGHAI BUSINESSES TO REOPEN TODAY: OFFICIALS**



**North Korea** on Saturday reported 21 new deaths and 174,440 more people with fever symptoms as the country scrambles to slow the spread of Covid-19 across its unvaccinated population. The new deaths and cases, which were from Friday, increased total numbers to 27 deaths and 524,440 illnesses amid a rapid spread of fever since late April. North Korea said 243,630 people had recovered and 280,810 remained in quarantine. State media didn't specify how many of the fever cases and deaths were confirmed as Covid-19 infections.



**Australia's** embattled prime minister yesterday officially launched his conservative party's campaign less than a week before elections, highlighting the nation's early success in containing the pandemic and its strong economic recovery. Prime Minister Scott Morrison's (pictured) coalition trails the center-left Labor Party opposition in most opinion polls as the administration seeks a rare fourth three-year term in elections on Saturday.



**India** yesterday said it would keep a window open to export wheat to food-deficit countries at the government level despite restrictions announced two days earlier. India's Commerce Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam told reporters the government will also allow private companies to meet previous commitments to export nearly 4.3 million tons of wheat until July. India exported 1 million tons of wheat in April. India mainly exports wheat to neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

More on backpage

# SATELLITES SAVED!



**Satellite casinos to operate in a similar manner as gov't withdraws venue ownership rule, while stocks rally following deliberation of tax reduction if operators attract foreign players**

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**ECONOMY**  
**ASSOCIATION: LOW GROWTH FROM MAY TO JULY**

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**CE ORDERS INVESTIGATION ON CULTURAL FUND**

P2

# LABOR BUREAU ASSURES SUPERVISION ON NON-LOCAL WORKFORCE SIZE

ANTHONY LAM

**L**AWMAKER Ron Lam was assured by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) that it would closely monitor the size of non-local workforce and prioritize jobs for local residents.

Signed by the bureau's director, Wong Chi Hong, the reply to the lawmaker's inquiry emphasized that the bureau has been closely complying with the government's policy of considering non-local workforce "of a provisional and supplementary nature."

Wong added that "under all circumstances, [employers] should hire local residents for positions desired by and fit for local residents."

Recapping job-matching data from two years ago, the bureau director explained that the DSAL had streamlined the procedure of job-matching and eventually migrated the service online.

From September 2020 to March 2022, the Subsidized Training Program has trained 8,592 people, of which 1,466 people mana-

RENATO MARQUES



ged to gain employment, equating to about 17% of those who completed the program.

In his inquiry, Lam asked the government about actual policies that it would implement to secure employment for local residents, such as requesting gambling

concessionaires to cut non-local workforce and hire local residents as replacements. He also voiced doubt over the effectiveness of entrepreneurial financial support.

In response to this, Wong reiterated the series of measures the

government had implemented to try and support local business operators. These measures were in fact the entrepreneurial financial support mentioned in Lam's inquiry.

As for Lam's question on gambling concessionaires' efforts in

hiring local people, Wong explained that his bureau approves or declines applications for non-local workers following consideration of several factors, such as the economic circumstances and prospects, the scale of the concerned industries and enterprises, the demand-supply situation in the labor market, as well as the number of locals employed by the enterprises.

Wong added that the DSAL has regularly referred local job-seekers to enterprises with non-local employees to encourage the companies to hire local residents who are qualified for the job vacancies.

This act, Wong elaborated, did not concern only the six gambling concessionaires but all enterprises in similar circumstances.

Another question Lam asked was if the government had plans to use its fiscal reserves to set the foundation for improved development in the future.

On this, while citing comments from the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM), Wong noted that measures amounting to a value of MOP100 billion are in effect. Meanwhile, the AMCM is supportive of the local banking sector offering more loans to the business sector amid a general economic downturn.

# CE orders investigation on cultural fund

**A**FTER the revelation of malpractices in the Cultural Industry Fund (FIC), Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng has ordered an investigation on the matter, the government announced over the weekend.

At an Executive Council (ExCo) press conference, ExCo spokesperson and Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong disclosed that his superintendent had made the aforementioned decision.

Last week, the Commission of Audit (CA) – the government's auditor – unearthed a series of malpractices committed in the FIC, such as renting a property for the



use of a cultural incubation facility, the management of which is part of the tenant company of the property.

Despite the CA's report that revealed the allegations, members of the pu-

blic expressed online that they were not convinced anybody would be held accountable.

At the press conference held to announce the Bill for the Legal System governing Enterprises of

Public Capital, the Secretary was questioned on how the government could ensure adequate supervision of these enterprises following the CA report.

The Secretary said that the government takes the CA report seriously, as well as the problems revealed within the report. Elaborating on the matter, he disclosed that the CE had ordered the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) to commence an investigation into the allegations.

Commenting on the alleged lease fraud, the CA accused the FIC in its report of "having never handled any related party transactions that saw conflicts of interests." The lack of records of the execution of relevant mechanisms is also a failing of the FIC's management, the CA added. **AL**

# VOCATIONAL COURSES REGISTER GROWTH IN 2021

**A** total of 1,436 courses were organised in 2021, an increase of 6.9% year-on-year, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The total number of participants also rose by 3.4% to 63,361.

Last year, there were 52 institutions offering vocational training courses.

Analysed by course type, Business & Administration courses had the highest number of participants, at 18,819 (29.7% of total); meanwhile, there were 7,917 participants (12.5%) in Tourism & Leisure courses and 4,315 participants (6.8%) in Information & Communication Technology courses.

The number of participants in Arts & Design

courses surged by 61.7% year-on-year as did those in Hotel & Catering Services courses, which had a growth of 56.9%. On the other hand, the number of participants in Language courses showed a decrease of 41.3%.

Vocational training courses organised for enterprises or institutions increased by 0.3% year-on-year to 660, accounting for over 45% of the total.

Yet, the total number of participants in vocational courses dropped by 1.9% to 32,953. Most participants took Business & Administration courses at 34.9% (11,500), followed by Tourism & Leisure courses at 18.2% (5,982), and Language courses at 9.3% (3,053). **LV**

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GAMING

# Gov't drops casino venue ownership rule to save satellites

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE government has amended the contentious rule that aimed to establish that all casinos would mandatorily be located in venues owned by the concessionaires. The amendment was part of a series of adjustments made to the new gaming law that is under analysis by the members of the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

Aiming to address the problem of so-called satellite casinos, this change is the main aspect of the proposed amendment that was under scrutiny by the Committee on Friday.

The topic had been under heated discussion since the first version of the new gaming law was presented, which would potentially force the majority of casinos operating under an extension of the license of one of the gaming concessionaires to be located in different venues across the city.

In some cases, these casinos were located within the premises of the main concessionaire, but were operated by other companies from the same group, an arrangement that the new law would seek to prevent.

With the change now included in this second version of the law,



the government has withdrawn from such a restrictive measure, effectively allowing satellite casinos to continue to operate in a similar manner to the current state of affairs. The second version of the law is subject to ongoing analysis with the aim of receiving approval from the plenary before the end of the next month.

The matter had been raised on multiple occasions by legal, gaming, and economics specialists as a potential source of major disruption in the market, having the ability to directly affect many companies and the jobs of thousands of local residents who are already suffering from the eco-

nomnic fallout from the measures imposed to prevent and control the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sources close to the discussion have told the Times that a large number of lawmakers have previously expressed to government officials that, if the rule remained, the probability of the Article being voted down in the plenary meeting to finally approve the law would be very high, potentially causing a significant delay in the approval of the law.

## SECTOR PLEASSED WITH THE CHANGE

The news was well received by the gaming sector, in particular

those that have been at the forefront of the operation of satellite casinos.

Melinda Chan, the recently re-appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Macau Legend Development Ltd – one of the larger operators of satellite casinos – said to TDM that the news was very well received by the sector, describing it as a “relief for the sector.”

Nonetheless, Chan reaffirmed that this is not the only problem with the new gaming law nothing that “there are still other issues that demand debate between the government, the gaming concessionaires, and the future satellite casino operators.”

Chan was referring to the rule that states that the operation of these casinos is subject to a service contract in which the operator is considered a management provider. Such contracts need the approval of the Chief Executive.

In the new Article, these management companies cannot benefit from the profits generated by the casinos, but instead can only receive a “fixed fee” payment that needs to be stipulated in the contract. This requires such arrangements to operate under similar legal conditions as the junkets, including the need for an exclusivity contract with just one of the concessionaires.

## BABY ABANDONED NEAR BORDER GATE

The Judiciary Police (PJ) disclosed yesterday afternoon that it had been notified about the discovery of a baby that had allegedly been abandoned next to a trash bin near the Border Gate. Reports arrived at the PJ at 8:31p.m. on Saturday from the Fire Services Bureau and the Public Security Police Force. The PJ added that the baby had been transported to the public hospital for an immediate medical check-up and was, as of press time, in a stable condition. The PJ did not announce any details of the baby, such as its sex or ethnicity.

## DSEDJ RECORDS DOZENS OF VIOLATIONS IN CURRENT PHASE SUBSIDY

Deputy Director Wong Ka Ki of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau recently disclosed that his bureau had recorded several dozen violations in the current round of the Continuing Education Subsidy Scheme. These violations were discovered after over 5,000 spot checks at educational entities or institutions. Wong added that most violations were about courses not operating in compliance with the originally proposed plans. Elaborating on the matter, Wong believes that the reason behind the recorded violations was due to participants' getting used to the mode of the scheme. Text messages were also sent regularly to operators to remind them about relevant regulations.

GAMING

# Casino stocks rally as gov't considers tax reduction if operators bring foreign players

LYNZY VALLES

**C**ASINO stocks in the U.S. trading market rallied on Friday following the SAR government's announcement that it is considering lowering the gross gaming revenue (GGR) taxes by up to 5% if casinos are able to bring players from outside China.

As the market closed on Friday, gaming operators Las Vegas Sands Corp. and Melco Resorts & Entertainment Ltd saw their share prices rise up to 15%. Another U.S. gaming operator Wynn Resorts jumped 13%.

The president of the parliamentary Standing Committee, Chan Chak Mo, raised in the meeting that there is a goal of exploring



foreign markets other than focusing on mainland China.

According to the lawmaker, prior to the pandemic, nearly 80% of gam-

blers hailed from mainland China, 10% from Hong Kong and 5% from Taiwan, implying the rest came from foreign markets.

Chan also expressed that

the enactment of Article 303 of the Mainland's Criminal Law may affect the source of tourists from the mainland; hence, there is a need to attract a different source market.

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, has sanctioned an amendment to the national criminal law criminalizing anyone who “organizes citizens of mainland China to participate in gambling outside the country (or border), which involves a hefty sum or cases with serious consequences.” The amended law came into force on March 1, 2021. The law foreshadows that anyone who “organizes” gambling trips or activities

for mainland citizens to Macau will be considered to be breaking the law. It stipulates that a person who commits the gambling offence will be subject to imprisonment of a minimum of five years and a maximum of 10 years.

For the committee's president, he hopes to exempt part of the taxes as an incentive to encourage operators to attract more overseas customers – given the stricter rules for mainland gamblers.

However, with the current closure of borders to foreign arrivals, which have been in place since March 2020, such a goal has a long way to go.

The SAR government taxes casinos in Macau 39%

of gaming revenue — which includes a direct tax of 35% and other types of taxes for social and welfare purposes.

In the government's current budget plan for the fiscal year, it aims to gather some MOP50 billion from gaming revenue, which means that the city should acquire a total of nearly MOP4.2 billion in taxes per month.

Late last year, the government has estimated MOP130 billion in GGR, which implies MOP50 billion in taxes.

However, with the ongoing downturn in the sector, this prediction is unlikely to be realized.

Gaming tax revenue was down by 4.8% year-on-year during the first quarter.

Data from the Financial Services Bureau shows that the city has collected MOP8.73 billion in fiscal revenue from direct taxes on gaming in the first three months of the year.

HAO VS LVS

# AAEC DISMAYED WITH COURT'S DENIAL OF EXTENSION APPEAL FOLLOWING LANGUAGE HITCH

LYNZY VALLES

**T**he Court of First Instance (TJB) has denied the 30-day extension request filed by the Asian American Entertainment Corp Ltd (AAEC), following the court's decision in favor of Las Vegas Corp.

The request for extension came as the 99-page ruling was sent to AAEC representatives in Chinese, without also providing a full sentencing decision in Portuguese.

"We were not expecting such a decision. We thought the court would respect the fact that is not possible to review a 99-page Chinese judgment by a non-Chinese speaker in 10 days," the source close to the plaintiff told the Times.

The source has taken this decision as confirmation that the AAEC is "not receiving justice as it aspired to in these court proceedings," expressing their disa-



RENATO MARQUES

appointment with the court's decision to not provide their judgment in a language that the plaintiff's representative is proficient in.

"The court argues that not knowing Chinese does not entail

not knowing the content of the judgment. This is perplexing: one cannot understand a Chinese judgment if one does not know the language. We can't get the court's point. How can the court imply

that one can read a judgment in a language that one does not master?" the source questioned.

"The court states the right to individual liberty in choosing the language. But fundamental rights

are granted to citizens against authorities, not to authorities against citizens. Courts do not have individual rights! This argument is extraordinary," they added.

The plaintiff is seeking a compensation claim of around MOP60 billion on the grounds that the LVS subsidiaries replaced AAEC with Galaxy Entertainment Group as their business partner at a very late stage in the public tender for the gaming licenses in Macau.

AAEC's Marshall Hao considers that LVS' move has caused severe damage to his company and business prospects, claiming that he is entitled to a large share of the profits earned by LVS through its Macau operations for the past two decades.

Earlier this month, it was disclosed that AAEC will lodge an appeal and will bring several matters of concern to the attention of relevant U.S. authorities.

COVID-19

## Health authorities allow quarantine hotel bookings until August

RENATO MARQUES

**T**AKING into account the arrival of the summer season, the government is enforcing new rules for booking quarantine hotels in Macau, the representative of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Liz Lam said during the latest press briefing of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center.

Questioned about the number of rooms available and ensuring that it is possible to accommodate all residents arriving from abroad (primarily students, as well as others traveling to meet their families during the period), Lam said that the authorities are coordinating with the quarantine hotels to allow pre-booking of rooms up to August, and any necessary adjustments will be made according to the number of reservations and demand for rooms.

The response comes after media sources reportedly found that hotels were only accepting quaran-



ne room reservations for the month ahead, and not allowing residents to make bookings further out than that.

Dr Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention, also announced that all those arriving from the mainland and who need to undergo quarantine in Macau due

to arriving from high-risk zones do not need to book their quarantine rooms in advance.

"Those people coming from the mainland do not need to book the quarantine hotels. If, upon arrival in Macau, they need to undergo a medical observation period in quarantine, they will be redirected automatically to a hotel

by the local health authorities," she said. She noted that this measure aims to alleviate the pressure on the booking of quarantine hotel rooms by people who may potentially not need them.

### ANTIVIRAL DRUGS ARRIVING

Of the two antiviral drugs that the government has ordered, one has already arrived and the second should arrive soon.

"The drug from the German company [Merck] has already arrived but we have not made any use of it yet because we have not had anyone with severe disease symptoms," Leong said, adding, "As for the Pfizer antiviral drug, it will arrive in the third quarter (July to September) of this year."

Leong also said that the authorities are now seeking to confirm whether there is any further need to place any additional orders for these drugs, especially given that Macau has not seen any patients with severe symptoms that would justify the use of the antivirals.

COVID-19

## SECOND PHASE OF FOOTPRINT RECORD SYSTEM TO CONCLUDE THIS MONTH

RENATO MARQUES

**H**EALTH authorities' bid to place footprint recording location QR codes as a Covid tracking mechanism in as many locations as possible is approaching the conclusion of its second phase, authorities announced.

After the conclusion of the first phase targeting mostly government buildings and public services, schools, restaurants, and other venues highly frequented by the public, the government will now enforce the check-in scans within a large series of private facilities including associations, offices, and private companies, among others, under the second phase of the scheme, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center announced.

According to Dr Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention, among the new locations to be included are utility

companies such as telecommunications, water, and electricity supply companies. Supermarkets and food and beverage takeaway establishments will also be part of this second phase.

The same government official noted that scanning the location QR codes of the venues at all times, "must be a habit to be enforced among the population," she said, adding that she hopes that citizens can do it more often and of their own initiative.

"We hope citizens will scan the location codes all the time and not just when there is an outbreak or a high risk of one," Leong said, advancing that the government hopes to have this second phase concluded by the end of May.

For the time being, she said that footprint recording codes have been installed in over 30,000 locations across Macau, a number that will increase during the coming weeks.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

ANTHONY LAM

# Group expects economy to run slow from May to July

**M**ACAU Economic Association (MEA) forecast the city's economy to experience a low growth in the months from May to July, with the Prosperity Index expected to score between 2.2 and 2.4.

The scores remain within the range considered as "depressed."

Despite the forecast, the group estimates that the economy will see some growth during the aforementioned three months.

The main reason behind the forecast could be the consumption stimulus put forward by the government, which will kick in at the start of June, as the MEA pointed out in a statement that the stimulus would help to boost internal consumption and economic performance, as well as improve the overall atmosphere of the market.

The group additionally highlighted data from the government's Statistics and Census Service about the first quarter's registered capital of new business establishments, which rose by 60 fold year-on-year to reach the figure of MOP13.5 billion.

This, according to the MEA, is a reflection of the business sector's confidence in the city's economic development and prospects.

In terms of challenges, judging against the background

ANTHONY LAM



of hampered external demand, limited internal demand and rising operating costs, the group sees that Macau's small and me-

diu sized enterprises (SMEs) will continue to face heavy operative stresses and a restrained ability to resist risks.

It further pointed out that in March, 82 companies were dissolved, marking the highest number in nearly a year. The sec-

tors where this predominantly took place was the wholesale and retail as well as industrial and commercial service industries.

About 70% of dissolved companies in Macau during the first quarter of this year were those with registered capital smaller than MOP50,000, generally referred to as small and micro sized enterprises.

The group warned that the local unemployment rate may continue to rise as the operating pressure of various industries in Macau is still significant due to the combined influence of the Covid-19 pandemic and various other uncertainties.

Looking back, the group concluded that the Prosperity Index scores for March and April were 2.2 and 2.1 points, which also fall within the depressed range.

A reason for the weak performance in the two preceding months is that Chinese Consumer Confidence Index plunged to 113.2 points in March, almost reaching the trough of 112.6 points recorded in early 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic started.

The simultaneous and further contraction of money supply and employment vitality has also pressed hard on the economy. The group pointed out that stock prices of the six casino operators remained weak in March and April.

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# G7 WARN OF UKRAINE GRAIN CRISIS, ASK CHINA NOT TO AID RUSSIA

FRANK JORDANS,  
WEISSENHAUS

**T**he Group of Seven leading economies warned Saturday that the war in Ukraine is stoking a global food and energy crisis which threatens poor countries, and urgent measures are needed to unblock stores of grain that Russia is preventing from leaving Ukraine.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who hosted a meeting of top G-7 diplomats, said the war had become a "global crisis."

She said up to 50 million people, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, would face hunger in the coming months unless ways are found to release Ukrainian grain, which accounts for a sizeable share of the worldwide supply.

In statements released at the end of the three-day meeting on Germany's Baltic Sea coast, the G-7 pledged to provide further humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable.

"Russia's war of aggression has generated one of the most severe food and energy crises in recent history which now threatens those most vulnerable across the globe," the group said.

"We are determined to accelerate a coordinated multilateral response to preserve global food security and stand by our most vulnerable partners in this respect," it added.

Canada's foreign minister, Melanie Joly, said her country, another major agricultural exporter, stands ready to send ships to European ports so Ukrainian grain can be brought to those in need.



Annalena Baerbock, Foreign Minister of Germany, walks to the closing press conference of the summit of foreign ministers of the G7 group of leading democratic economic powers in Weissenhauser Strand, Germany, Saturday

"We need to make sure that these cereals are sent to the world," she told reporters. "If not, millions of people will be facing famine."

Russia dismissed the claim that it was responsible for worsening global hunger and driving up food prices.

"Prices are rising because of sanctions imposed by the West under pressure of the USA," said Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova. "Failure to understand this is a sign either of stupidity or intentional misleading of the public."

The G-7 nations also called on China not to help Russia, including by undermining international sanctions or justifying Moscow's actions in Ukraine.

Beijing should support the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, and not "assist Russia in

its war of aggression," they said.

The G-7 urged China "to desist from engaging in information manipulation, disinformation and other means to legitimize Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine."

The grouping, which comprises Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, also reiterated its stance that the territories seized by Russian forces need to be returned to Ukraine.

"We will never recognize borders Russia has attempted to change by military aggression," they said.

The meeting in Weissenhaus, northeast of Hamburg, was billed as an opportunity for officials to discuss the broader implications of the war for geopolitics, energy and food security, and ongoing international efforts to tackle cli-

mate change and the pandemic.

In a series of closing statements, the G-7 nations also addressed a wide range of global problems from the situation in Afghanistan to tensions in the Middle East.

On Friday, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba appealed to friendly countries to provide more military support to Kyiv and increase the pressure on Russia, including by seizing its assets abroad to pay for rebuilding Ukraine.

Kuleba said his country remains willing to talk to Russia about unblocking grain supplies stuck in Ukraine's silos and also about reaching a political agreement to end the war itself, but had so far received "no positive feedback" from Moscow.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in an interview published Saturday that he had not detected

any change in Putin's stance recently.

Scholz, who spoke at length by phone with the Russian leader Friday, told German news portal t-online that Putin had failed to achieve the military objectives he set out at the start of the war while losing more Russian soldiers than the Soviet Union did during its decade-long campaign in Afghanistan.

"Putin should slowly begin to understand that the only way out of this situation is through an agreement with Ukraine," Scholz was quoted as saying.

One idea discussed at the G-7 meeting was whether Russian state assets frozen abroad can be used to pay for the reconstruction of Ukraine.

"Russia bears responsibility for the massive damage resulting from this war," Baerbock said. "And that's why it's a question of justice that Russia should have to pay for this damage."

But she added that, unlike in Canada — where legislation allows for seized funds to be repurposed — the legal basis for doing so in Germany is uncertain.

"But that's precisely what such meetings are for, to have an exchange about how to resolve these legal questions," Baerbock said.

Many of the foreign ministers traveled straight on to an informal meeting of NATO diplomats in Berlin on Saturday and Sunday.

That gathering will consider moves by Finland and Sweden to join the military alliance amid concerns about the threat from Russia, as well as ways in which NATO can support Ukraine without being drawn into the conflict.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who was unable to attend the G-7 meeting after recovering from a COVID-19 infection, was expected at the NATO gathering. **MDT/AP**

## COVID-19

# Some Shanghai businesses to reopen today, officials say

HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

**S**UPERMARKETS, malls and restaurants in Shanghai will be allowed to open in a limited capacity starting today, officials said, even while it remained unclear whether residents would be let out from their homes.

The city's Vice Mayor Chen Tong said yesterday at a daily press briefing that grocery stores, malls, convenience stores and pharmacies will be allowed to reopen while implementing measures that "reduce the flow of people."

Agriculture markets will

also be allowed to reopen while ensuring "no contact" transactions. Restaurants will be allowed to serve takeout.

However, Shanghai's transportation department said yesterday that all subway lines in the city had stopped operating. It was unclear when those services would restart.

City residents are waiting cautiously to see how the new measures will actually play out. Although the city's official total lockdown began at the end of March, many have been stuck in their homes for longer.

Shanghai officials have previously said the city of 25 million people would reopen in a limited way, only for restrictions to return even as cases wane.

Residents who have been allowed to return to work are put into a "closed loop" system similar to the one used for the Olympics. That means they cannot return home but have to live on site.

China reported 1,718 locally transmitted COVID-19 cases yesterday, with the vast majority being what authorities have categorized as asymptomatic infections. **MDT/AP**



JAPAN

# Okinawa marks 50 years of end to US rule amid protests

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

**O**KINAWA Governor Denny Tamaki yesterday urged Japan's central government to do more to reduce the U.S. military presence in the southern island group as it marked the 50th anniversary of its return to Japan after 27 years of American rule, amid frustration and bitterness over a lack of support from the mainland.

Tamaki said Okinawa has come a long way since the devastation of World War II and nearly three decades of U.S. rule, which ended when it reverted to Japan on May 15, 1972. But the tiny island group's yearslong demand for the mainland to share its security burden remains unresolved.

"I call on the central government to share with the entire nation the significance of Okinawa's reversion and the importance of permanent peace that Okinawans have long craved for," Tamaki said.

Ceremonies marking the anniversary were held simultaneously in two locations — one in the Okinawa city of Ginowan, home to a disputed U.S. air station, and the other in Tokyo. The separate ceremonies symbolize the deep divide in views over Okinawa's history



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, foreground, inspects the U.S. Marine Air Station Futenma from the city hall in Ginowan, Okinawa, Japan, yesterday

and ongoing suffering.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he takes Okinawa's concerns seriously and will make efforts to reduce the burden while still maintaining U.S. military deterrence on the islands.

Kishida and his minister in charge of the islands were in Okinawa, where hundreds of protesters staged a rally Saturday demanding a speedier reduction of U.S. military forces, as fears grow that Okinawa may become a front line of conflict amid rising China tensions.

More protests were held yesterday on Okinawa, including

one in the prefectural capital of Naha, where nearly 1,000 people renewed their demands for peace.

Resentment and frustration run deep in Okinawa over the heavy U.S. presence and Tokyo's lack of effort to negotiate with Washington to balance the security burden between mainland Japan and the southern island group.

Because of the U.S. bases, Okinawa faces burdens including noise, pollution, accidents and crime related to American troops, Okinawan officials and residents say.

Adding to Okinawa's fears is the growing deployment of Japanese missile defense and amphibious capabilities on Okinawa's outer islands, including Ishigaki, Miyako and Yonaguni, which are close to geopolitical hotspots like Taiwan.

Okinawa was the site of one of the bloodiest battles of World War II, which killed about 200,000 people, nearly half of them Okinawan residents.

Okinawa was sacrificed by Japan's imperial army to defend the mainland, and many Okinawans are skeptical that the Japanese military would protect them in future conflicts, experts say.

The U.S. military kept its troop presence on the island group for 20 years longer than most of Ja-

pan, until 1972, due to Okinawa's strategic importance for Pacific security to deter Russia and communism.

Many Okinawans had hoped that the islands' return to Japan would improve the economy and human rights situation as well as base burdens.

Today, a majority of the 50,000 U.S. troops based in Japan under a bilateral security pact and 70% of military facilities are still in Okinawa, which accounts for only 0.6% of Japanese land. The burden has increased from less than 60% in 1972 because unwelcomed U.S. bases were moved from the mainland.

Emperor Naruhito, in his online speech from his Tokyo palace, acknowledged "many issues" remain on Okinawa and said "I hope that the people, including the younger generation, will have a deeper understanding of Okinawa."

His abdicated father Akihito, devoted to atoning for scars of the war fought in his father Hirohito's name, was nearly hit by a Molotov cocktail during a 1975 visit as crown prince, but continued showing a special interest in Okinawa.

U.S. President Joe Biden, who is scheduled to visit Japan next week, praised the strong U.S.-Japan alliance and their shared values and vision.

"I am profoundly grateful for Japan's resolute support for democracy, freedom, and the rule of law and for Okinawa's contribution to advancing these ideals," Biden said in a statement. **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

# Allies of Marcos Jr. set to dominate Congress

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

**A**L-LIES of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the presumptive next president of the Philippines, appear set to dominate both chambers of Congress, further alarming activists after the late dictator son's apparent election victory restored his family to the seat of power.

Ongoing counts from last Monday's vote show they're set to capture most of the 300-seat House of Representatives and half of the 24-seat Senate that was up for election, and likely their top leaderships. Their family members and siblings have been also proclaimed winners in local posts, reflecting the strong grip of political dynasties on the Southeast Asian democracy despite a constitutional prohibition that was never enforced.



A Catholic nun clenches her fist as she joins protesters against presidential frontrunner Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos and running mate Sara Duterte, daughter of the current president, during a rally in Pasay, Philippines, Friday

"It's going to be problematic because an opposition is very much needed in a democracy," said Jean Franco, a political science professor at the state-run University of the Philippines. "There has to be alternative ideas and there has to be monitoring of what the executive is doing, otherwise, we will be like

North Korea."

The electoral triumph of Marcos Jr. and his allies is an astonishing reversal of the army-backed but largely peaceful "People Power" revolt in 1986 that forced his father out of office following years of massive human rights atrocities and plunder that his son never acknowledged.

Marcos Jr. had more than 31 million votes in the unofficial count in what's projected to be one of the strongest majority mandates for a Philippine president in decades. His vice-presidential running mate and daughter of the outgoing populist leader, Sara Duterte, appeared to have also won with a massive margin.

Aside from deciding the fate of the president's legislative agenda and budget proposal, Congress is a crucial oversight that investigates major government anomalies and decides on impeachment complaints. A new anti-terror bill opposed by human rights groups, for example, easily passed in both chambers that were dominated by allies of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Court cases and legal

issues still hound the late dictator's family, including payment of a huge estate tax, a 2018 corruption conviction of his widow, Imelda Marcos, which is on appeal, and full compensation of thousands of victims of torture, detentions, disappearances and other atrocities committed in the martial-law era when he was in power.

Monday's elections assured the political longevity of both the Marcoses and the Dutertes. A son of the presumptive president, Sandro Marcos, was elected to the House as a representative of their northern home province of Ilocos Norte and several relatives captured provincial posts.

Sara Duterte's brother, Sebastian Duterte, would succeed her as mayor of southern Davao city. Another brother, Paulo Duterte,

has been reelected to another congressional term.

Philippine elections have long been dominated by politicians belonging to the same bloodlines. At least 250 political families have monopolized power across the country, although such dynasties are prohibited under the constitution. Congress — long controlled by members of powerful clans targeted by the constitutional ban — has failed to pass the law needed to define and enforce the provision.

Duterte, the outgoing president, carved a political name starting in the 1980s as a longtime Davao mayor with his extra-tough campaign against criminality. It left hundreds of drug suspects dead and presaged similar killings on a wider scale that would follow him when he rose to the presidency in 2016 on an audacious but failed campaign promise to eradicate illegal drugs and corruption in three to six months. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

# Russians stymied in Ukraine; Finland favors joining NATO

OLEKSANDR STASHEVSKYI & DAVID KEYTON, KYIV

**A**LMOST three months after Russia shocked the world by invading Ukraine, its military faced a bogged-down war, the prospect of a bigger NATO and a defending country buoyed by its win in a hugely popular pan-European music competition yesterday.

Top NATO diplomats, including U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, gathered yesterday in Berlin as Finland announced it would apply to join the Western alliance. Sweden's governing party plans to announce its position on seeking NATO membership later yesterday.

The two nonaligned Nordic nations becoming part of the alliance would pose an affront to Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has justified the war in Ukraine by claiming it was a response to NATO's expansion in Eastern Europe.

Western military officials said yesterday that Moscow's campaign in Ukraine, believed to have been launched with the goal of seizing Kyiv and toppling the Ukrainian government, had slowed to a snail's pace. They said the invading Russian army had lost up to one-third of its combat strength since February.

"The brutal invasion (by) Russia is losing momentum," NATO Deputy Secretary-General Mircea Geoana said. "We know that with the bravery of the Ukrainian people and army, and with our help, Ukraine can win this war."

Ukraine, meanwhile, celebrated a morale-boosting victory in the Eurovision Song Contest. The folk-rap ensemble Kalush Orchestra won the glitzy, televised Eurovision contest with its song "Stefania," which has become a popular anthem among Ukrainians during the war. Votes from home viewers across Europe cemented the victory.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed his nation would claim the customary honor of hosting the next annual competition.

"Step by step, we are forcing the occupiers to leave the Ukrainian land,"



A Ukrainian National Guard soldier takes a break in a house used as temporary base in a recently retaken village on the outskirts of Kharkiv, east Ukraine, Saturday

Zelenskyy said.

Russian and Ukrainian fighters are engaged in a grinding battle for the country's eastern industrial heartland, the Donbas. Ukraine's most experienced and best-equipped soldiers are based in eastern Ukraine, where they have fought Moscow-backed separatists for eight years.

Russia's forces, meanwhile, continues to suffer "consistently high levels of attrition" while failing to achieve any substantial territory, Britain's Defense Ministry said in its daily intelligence update Sunday.

"Russia's Donbas offensive has lost momentum and fallen significantly behind schedule," the ministry said on Twitter, adding that the forces are suffering "continued low morale and reduced combat effectiveness."

"Under the current conditions, Russia is unlikely to dramatically accelerate its rate of advance over the next 30 days," the ministry said.

The assessments of Russia's war performance by Ukraine's supporters came as Russian troops retreated from around Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, after bombarding it for weeks.

The largely Russian-speaking city with a prewar population of 1.4 million is only 80 kilometers southwest of the Russian city of Belgorod, and was a key military objective earlier in the war, when Moscow hoped to capture and hold major cities.

Ukraine's military has said Moscow is focused now instead on guarding supply routes, while launching mortar, artillery and air-

strikes in an attempt to deplete Ukrainian forces and destroy fortifications in the country's east.

Ukrainian troops are clearing villages on the outskirts of Kharkiv after pushing the Russians back, and some residents were returning.

"The war has shifted to a new level of distance artillery fighting -- we fire at them, they fire at us," said a Ukrainian commander who gave only his first name, Serhii.

Russia is also striking railways, factories and other infrastructure across Ukraine. A Russian missile hit "military infrastructure facilities" in the Yavoriv district of western Ukraine, near the border with Poland, early Sunday morning.

There was no immediate information on dead or injured, Lviv Regional Governor Maksym Kozytsky posted on the Telegram messaging app.

Russia has targeted rail facilities and other critical infrastructure in western Ukraine a major gateway for NATO-supplied weapons. Western officials have said despite the attacks there has been no appreciable impact on Ukraine's ability to resupply its forces.

After failing to capture Kyiv following the Feb. 24 invasion, Putin has shifted his focus eastward to the Donbas, aiming to seize territory not already occupied by the Moscow-backed separatists.

Airstrikes and artillery barrages make it extremely dangerous for journalists to move around in the east, hindering efforts to get a full picture of the fighting. But it appears to be a back-an-

d-forth slog without major breakthroughs on either side.

In his nightly address Saturday, Zelenskyy said "the situation in Donbas remains very difficult" and Russian troops were "still trying to come out at least somewhat victorious."

In the southern Donbas, the Azov Sea port of Mariupol is now largely under Russian control, except for a few hundred Ukrainian troops who have refused to surrender and remain holed up in the Azovstal steel factory.

A convoy of between 500 and 1,000 cars carrying civilians out of Mariupol reportedly was able to reach the Ukrainian-held city of Zaporizhzhia on Saturday. Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk had said authorities were negotiating the evacuation of 60 severely wounded troops from the steel plant.

Turkey's presidential spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, said the country had offered to evacuate wounded Ukrainian soldiers and civilians by ship from Azovstal, according to official state broadcaster TRT. Kalin said Russian and Ukrainian officials had not given Turkey a clear answer regarding the evacuation plan, but that it was still on the table.

The invasion of Ukraine has other countries along Russia's flank worried they could be next. The government of long-neutral Finland, which shares both a 1,340-kilometer land border and the Gulf of Finland with Russia, formally announced yesterday that it would apply for NATO membership. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1974 DOZENS DIE AS ISRAEL RETALIATES FOR MA'ALOT



Israeli planes have bombed seven Palestinian refugee camps and villages in southern Lebanon killing at least 27 people and leaving 138 injured.

The attack was in retaliation for yesterday's hostage crisis at a school in Ma'alot near the Lebanon border in which 18 teenagers were killed and 70 were wounded.

Worst hit by the Israeli fighter-bombers were the crowded refugee camps of Ein El Helweh near the city of Sidon and Nabatieh.

An official announcement from the Israeli Defence Force said the planes had been aiming at offices and training bases used by the Popular Democratic Front, led by Nayef Hawatmeh, and the Popular Front under Ahmed Jibril.

The PDF was behind the killing of the schoolchildren at Ma'a lot - and the Popular Front planned the shooting of 16 civilians in Kiryat Shemona on 10 April.

Two nights ago, three Palestinian Arabs dressed as Israeli soldiers took over the school at Ma'alot.

There were more than 100 children aged between 14 and 16 sleeping there on the floor after a day's hiking in the region. Some managed to escape through an open door.

The Israeli Government agreed to the hostage-takers' demands to release 26 political prisoners, including a Japanese national involved in the Lod airport massacre.

But negotiations fell apart when the hostage-takers did not receive a coded message they were waiting for from Damascus.

On 15 May at 1745 local time - 15 minutes before they had said they would kill all the children if their demands were not met - Israeli soldiers raided the school building.

Eighteen children and the three Palestinians were killed in a bloody gun battle.

There were emotional scenes today at the funeral of the children in their home town of Safed.

Many of the 10,000 mourners wailed and some shouted: "Death to the terrorists!"

The Ma'alot tragedy has severely hampered peace efforts by US Secretary of State Dr Henry Kissinger. He has flown from Jerusalem to Damascus to meet Syrian leaders in the hope of reaching some kind of compromise over Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

It was attacks like the one at Ma'alot that led Israeli troops to invade Southern Lebanon in 1978. They pulled back to a self-declared "security zone" in 1985 from which they withdrew in May 2000.

The Popular Democratic Front, now known as the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, continued its operations during the late 1970s, and saw a steady increase in its membership.

But it began to distance itself from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and continued to oppose any kind of peace process.

In the late 1990s its leader, Naif Hawatmeh, sought reconciliation with mainstream Palestinians. In February 1999, he shocked hardline Palestinians by shaking hands with the Israeli President Ezer Weizman at the funeral of King Hussein of Jordan.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
 You can win points with children if you take the time to show interest in their accomplishments. Control your emotions and everything will fall into place.

**TAURUS**  
 Apr. 20-May. 20  
 You can make a big difference to children if you are understanding of the difficulties they are experiencing. You may need the extra space, but you need the extra cash more.

**GEMINI**  
 May. 21-Jun. 21  
 Your partner may push buttons that infuriate you. After all, they may have valuable information to pass on. You will be full of good ideas, and your choice of activities may bring you enrichment.

**CANCER**  
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
 You need adventure and excitement in your life. Leave things as they are for the moment and focus on reaching your highest potential at work. Don't jump as quickly as you usually do.

**LEO**  
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
 Your emotional reaction will be dependent upon your partner's responsiveness. Your time, not your cash, will do a lot more for your relationship. Get involved in groups that are distinguished nature.

**VIRGO**  
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
 Don't let your mate bully you into thinking that you owe them your time and your life. Physical limitations are possible if you aren't careful. You should put in some extra hours developing your creative side.

**LIBRA**  
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
 Travel will promote new romantic encounters and additional cultural knowledge. You'll be angry if those you live with aren't pulling their weight. Think twice before you pursue an unrealistic endeavor.

**SCORPIO**  
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
 You can get the attention of important individuals but it might not be the time to get them to help or to back your ideas. Ignore colleagues who appear to be going in circles.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
 Deception is evident around you. Avoid any erratic behavior or it could cause isolation at home. Do not force your opinions on others the connections will be short lived.

**CAPRICORN**  
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
 You will find travel and lectures most stimulating. Your flair for dramatic appeal will unleash itself at social functions. You may find a rare antique today.

**AQUARIUS**  
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
 Take care of any pressing health problems. Drastic financial losses may be likely if you lend money. Older members of your family may try to take advantage of you.

**PISCES**  
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
 You can come up with ways of earning extra cash. Someone left a real mess for you to sift through. In-laws or older individuals may give you a bit of a hard time today.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	11	29	fine
Changchun	8	21	fine
Chengdu	12	24	cloudy
Chongqing	14	24	cloudy
Fuzhou	13	18	rain
Guangzhou	16	22	overcast
Guiyang	10	18	cloudy
Haikou	22	25	rain
Hangzhou	13	25	cloudy
Harbin	4	20	cloudy
Hefei	12	26	cloudy
Nanjing	14	25	cloudy
Shanghai	16	26	cloudy
Taipei	18	20	rain
Wuhan	11	26	cloudy
Hong Kong	21	22	rain
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	7	14	rain
Frankfurt	13	25	thunderstorm
Paris	16	26	overcast
London	12	22	overcast
New York	14	24	rain

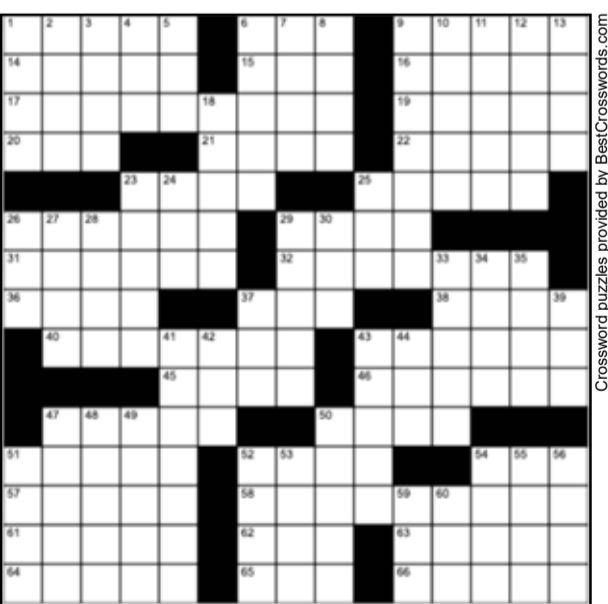
**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Sleep issue; 6- X; 9- Actor Delon; 14- Reduces speed; 15- Acapulco gold; 16- Pass into disuse; 17- Growing old; 19- Gross; 20- \_\_\_ kwon do; 21- Scottish Gaelic; 22- Meanies; 23- From a distance; 25- Loincloth worn by Hindu men; 26- Predaceous insect; 29- Assortment; 31- Methuselah's claim to fame; 32- Serving no function; 36- Coal-rich region; 37- Inc., overseas; 38- At hand; 40- Able; 43- From birth; 45- Othello villain; 46- Sickness at the stomach; 47- For \_\_\_ (cheap); 50- Opposed; 51- Pile; 52- 43,560 square feet; 54- President pro \_\_\_; 57- Marisa of "My Cousin Vinny"; 58- Eighty; 61- Composer Berg; 62- Umbrella part; 63- English royal house; 64- Jargon; 65- \_\_\_ roll; 66- Plain writing;

DOWN 1- Little helper?; 2- This can be guilty or not guilty; 3- Zilch; 4- Farm female; 5- Donkey; 6- \_\_\_ is human...; 7- Sea eagles; 8- Brief letter, paper money; 9- Intoxicating liquor; 10- Key \_\_\_; 11- Separated; 12- Japanese immigrant; 13- Scottish loch, home to a monster; 18- Discontinue; 23- Maker of Pong; 24- Cookie fruit; 25- Become an ex-parrot?; 26- Cal. pages; 27- Woe is me!; 28- Mont. neighbor; 29- Best; 30- Acid; 33- Boredom; 34- Wet septet; 35- Fill to surfet; 37- Human limb, section of a journey; 39- Stephen of "The Crying Game"; 41- Joining; 42- Trail the pack; 43- Type of sanctum; 44- Writer Hentoff; 47- Coral island; 48- Brazilian ballroom dance; 49- Body of salt water; 50- Island off Venezuela; 51- RR stops; 52- Bushy hairstyle; 53- Quarter, e.g.; 54- Commotion; 55- Son of Aphrodite; 56- Nothing more than; 59- The racer's edge; 60- Cad or heel;

**Friday's solution**

A	S	H	E	S	A	T	E	E	A	L	M	A
C	L	A	S	P	A	D	S	C	L	A	W	
A	I	M	E	E	O	R	A	L	C	A	V	E
R	P	M	C	D	R	O	M	T	U	N	E	S
E	L	I	O	T	R	I	S	O	N			
C	A	R	E	E	N	A	L	O	N	E		
A	T	T	A		T	I	N	A	N	E	R	U
P	R	O	F	E	S	S	I	O	N	A	L	I
N	A	E	A	M	I	S		E	V	I	L	
A	S	S	E	T		A	S	S	E	S		
A	S	S	E	T		S	N	E	E	R		
S	T	O	P	S		R	E	M	I	X		S
E	L	I	E		B	A	L	I		I	D	I
T	A	L	C		F	I	S	T		S	I	D
A	B	S	T		A	L	E	E		T	E	E



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PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300	
IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
Airport 59 888 88	

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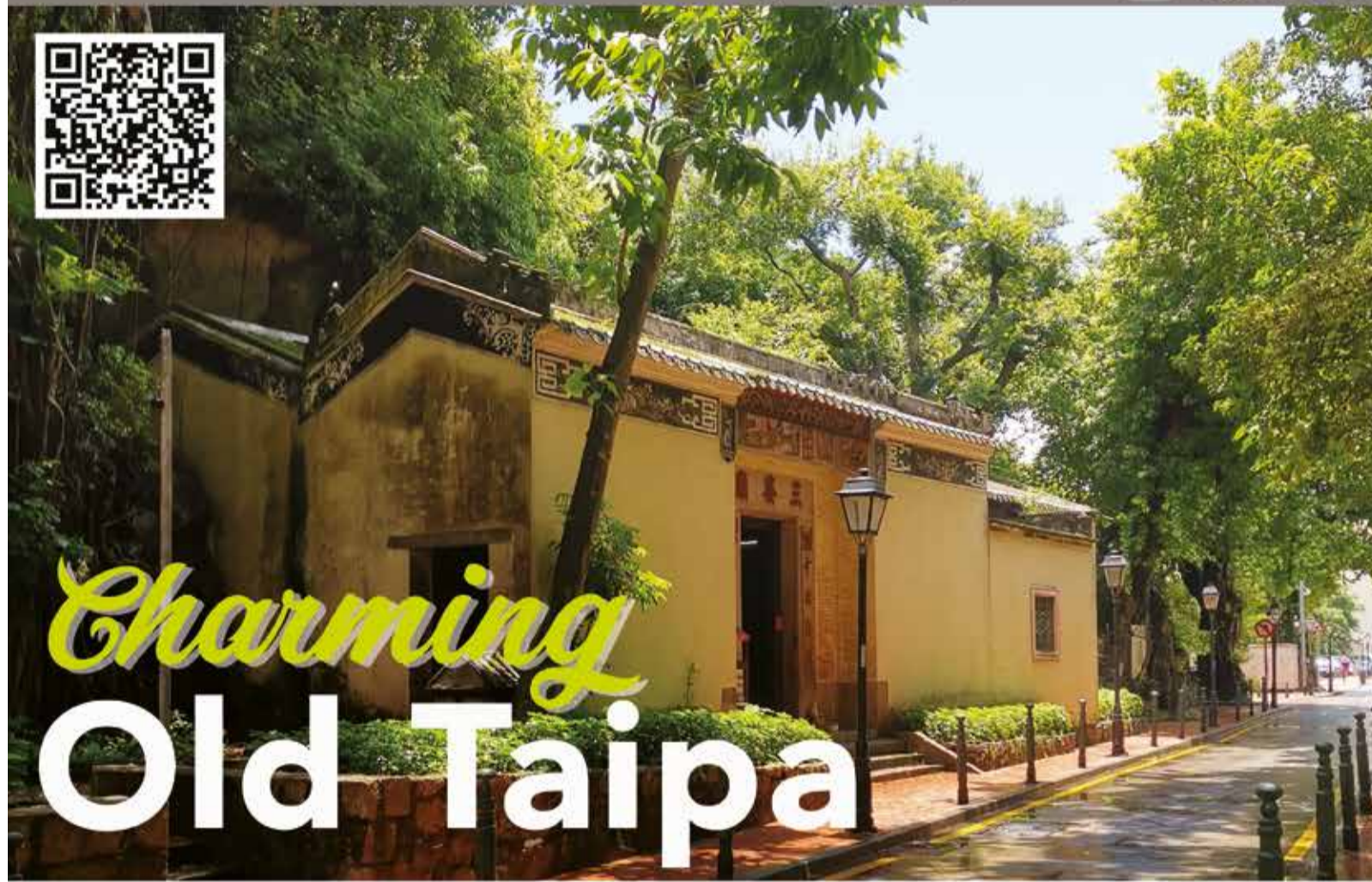
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# Liverpool beats Chelsea to win FA Cup, keeps quad bid alive

ROB HARRIS, LONDON

**A**DD the FA Cup to the collection. Jürgen Klopp has now won every major title for Liverpool.

A 6-5 victory over Chelsea on penalties in Saturday's final produced Liverpool's first FA Cup triumph since 2006 and kept it in contention for, potentially if unlikely, a quadruple of trophies.

Just like in the League Cup final in February, the FA Cup showpiece ended 0-0 through 120 minutes before Liverpool prevailed again. This time, the Reds were helped by Chelsea midfielder Mason Mason's penalty being saved before Konstantinos Tsimikas clinched the shootout win with his first-ever goal for the club.

"The small margins are again the difference and I cannot be more proud of my boys," said Klopp, who has emulated Alex Ferguson with Manchester United and become only the second manager to win the European Cup, Premier League, League Cup and FA Cup with the same English club.

In two weeks, Liverpool will be hoping to win the Champions League final against Real Madrid. Before then, Klopp has to hope Manchester City slips up in the final two rounds of the Premier League and Liverpool takes advantage to regain that trophy.

"That is part of the 'mentality monsters' as well, going to extra time and keeping the high level, performing well," Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker said. "It gives us even more confidence to keep on going for the Premier League and also the Champions League final. This is a fantastic moment and now we just need to enjoy it."



AP PHOTO

There was only more Wembley pain for Chelsea. Weeks of ownership turmoil for Chelsea are ending by becoming the first team to lose three consecutive FA Cup final appearances, having been beaten by Arsenal in 2020 and Leicester last year.

The final of world football's oldest competition had never gone to penalties before at Wembley. There hadn't even been a goalless final after extra time since it started being played at the national stadium in 1923.

But Liverpool's last FA Cup success in 2006 was in one of the two previous shootouts that settled the cup final that both happened

in Cardiff while Wembley was being rebuilt.

Saturday's final ended with one half of the stadium shrouded in a red haze of smoke after beginning under a cloud when Liverpool fans jeered the national anthem and the introduction of Prince William.

After the ceremony to mark 150 years of the FA Cup, the 141st final was more tense than turgid, just like in the League Cup final. There were 58 shots produced by the teams without finding the net over their two games at Wembley in 2022.

One chance did come early for Liverpool with Chelsea goalkee-

per Edouard Mendy saving from Luis Díaz. Then came Christian Pulisic's shot that crept wide on a frustrating afternoon for the Chelsea forward.

The first half was punctuated by injury delays for Liverpool players.

Alisson had to be treated after his shin took a knock while blocking Marcos Alonso's shot. The goalkeeper recovered but it wasn't long before Mohamed Salah went down. The forward couldn't continue due to a sore groin but he was able to walk off unaided when being replaced by Diogo Jota in the 33rd minute.

Liverpool missed the threat of

the Premier League's top scorer. Chelsea missed their chances to exploit that.

A blistering start to the second half by Chelsea saw Marcos Alonso shoot wide and send a free kick onto the crossbar around Pulisic's effort being repelled by Alisson's diving save.

A late flurry of Liverpool attempts couldn't prevent the game going into extra time with the post hit by Díaz from a tight angle and Andy Robertson from close range.

And for only the second time — after Arsenal's 2005 meeting with Manchester United in Cardiff — an FA Cup final ended 0-0 after extra time.

The shootout was going Liverpool's way after captain César Azpilicueta missed Chelsea's second penalty until Sadio Mané missed a chance to win it when Senegal teammate Mendy saved his kick.

After the teams converted another round of penalties, Mount was thwarted and Tsimikas produced his biggest moment since joining Liverpool in 2020. Now Liverpool has the eighth FA Cup it has been waiting 16 years to win, and another two titles to aim for this season.

"We have to celebrate hard," Tsimikas said. "Tomorrow is another day and we still have a lot to do."

For Chelsea's men, the season will end with no domestic titles but the FIFA Club World Cup and UEFA Super Cup and prospective new owners.

"We're disappointed and sad of course," Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel said, "but at the same time proud because we left everything that you need."

Since the League Cup final loss, Roman Abramovich has put Chelsea up for sale after being sanctioned by the British government over his links to Russia amid the war on Ukraine. The Russian oligarch has agreed to a buyout by a consortium fronted by American sports investor Todd Boehly. **MDT/AP**

# China cites pandemic and withdraws as host of 2023 Asian Cup

**C**HINA withdrew as host of soccer's 2023 Asian Cup on Saturday in the latest cancellation of the country's sports hosting duties during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Asian Football Confederation praised Chinese soccer officials for making "this very difficult but necessary decision in the collective interests of the AFC Asian Cup."

The 24-nation tournament was due to be played

in 10 cities in mostly newly built stadiums in June and July of next year.

China's withdrawal could let Qatar or Saudi Arabia step up as hosts while both are bidding in a contest to host the 2027 edition. India and Iran are also candidates for the 2027 edition with a decision expected early next year.

Qatar has stadiums in place to host the 2022 World Cup kicking off in November. However, a June 2023

start for the Asian Cup could be unlikely because of the extreme heat in the Qatari summer, making early 2024 a better option.

The quadrennial Asian Cup is traditionally played in January and February. Qatar (2011) and Australia (2015) hosted the tournament when it was played in January, while the 2019 event in the United Arab Emirates was held from Jan. 5 to Feb. 1.

Qatar is the defending

champion after it upset Japan 3-1 in the 2019 final to earn the country's first major soccer title.

China was due to host the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou in September but that was postponed along with nearly all international sports events in the country. China did host the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing though under a strict lockdown for athletes and officials with few fans able to attend. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



**OPINION**

**Multipolar World**

Jorge Costa Oliveira



**EUROPEAN INVESTMENT AND ENDLESS LOCKDOWNS IN CHINA**

On May 5, The European Union Chamber of Commerce in China, in partnership with Roland Berger, released a survey on the impact that China's policies on Covid-19 and Russia's war in Ukraine are having on European business in China. As a result of China's policy regarding Covid-19, 23% of those surveyed are now considering shifting current or planned investments to other markets - more than double the number that were considering doing so in early 2022 - and 7% are considering the same because of the war in Ukraine.

The introduction in 2022 of more stringent Covid-19 containment measures, with China imposing indefinite lockdowns in at least 45 cities (covering approximately 373 million people), is causing massive uncertainty for businesses. 75% of those surveyed say that the measures have had a negative impact on their operations, with special emphasis on logistics/ warehousing (94%), business travel (97%), and the ability to conduct face-to-face meetings (94%).

Supply chains have taken a pounding, both upstream and downstream, with 92% of companies being impacted by measures such as China's recent port closures, the decrease in road freight and spiraling sea freight costs. More than 25% of European businesses report headcount decreases because of China's Covid-19 policy, with this happening most in the education (80%), legal (46%), retail (43%) and cosmetics (40%) industries. It is worth mentioning other key findings from the survey:

- 60% of respondents have lowered their revenue forecasts for 2022.
- 78% of respondents feel that China is a less attractive investment destination as a result of its more stringent Covid-19 restrictions.
- The war in Ukraine has also made China a less attractive investment destination for 33% of those surveyed. The war is exacerbating the challenges businesses face as supply chains face disruption in the transportation of goods to and from Europe. In addition, rising material and energy costs are having a negative impact on 63% and 58% of respondents, respectively.

There are studies by Chinese academics referring to potentially significant drops in China's GDP in the case of simultaneous lockdowns of more than a month in some of its major metropolitan areas. However, the IMF still forecasts a 4.4% growth of China's GDP for 2022.

Since 1979, China has been a bastion of stability, which has contributed to significant foreign investment and capital inflows, including in innovation and technology, which China still needs in various domains. If the instability and unpredictability created by the zero-Covid policy and successive lockdowns of metropolitan areas continues, it is quite possible that foreign investment in China will decline. Besides the reduction in economic interdependence between China and Europe, this will be reflected in the economic growth of both; given the importance of the European and Chinese economies for the world economy and trade, the overall effects will be quite negative.

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**SUICIDE BOMBER KILLS SIX, GUNMEN KILL TWO SIKHS IN NW PAKISTAN**

THE BUZZ

A suicide bombing near a security forces vehicle killed three soldiers and three children in northwest Pakistan near the border with Afghanistan yesterday, while gunmen shot dead two minority Sikhs in Peshawar, officials said.

A military statement said the suicide bomber triggered his explosives-laden vest near a vehicle on security patrol in a village near the town of Mir Ali in the tribal district of North Waziristan.

The attack killed two soldiers in the vehicle on the spot and wounded another. Three children playing alongside the road

were also critically wounded. All of the wounded were rushed to a hospital in a helicopter but none survived, the statement said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. The military said security forces and intelligence officials were combing the area searching for the bomber's handlers.

The region has served as a safe haven for local and foreign militants for years. The military carried out a massive operation after militants attacked an army-run school in Peshawar in 2014 that left over 150 dead, mostly school children.



**EUROVISION WIN IN HAND, UKRAINE BAND RELEASES NEW WAR VIDEO**

**NICOLE WINFIELD & PAOLO SANTALUCIA, TURIN**

**U**KRAINIAN band Kalush Orchestra, fresh off its Eurovision victory, released a new music video yesterday of its winning hit "Stefania" that features scenes of war-ravaged Ukraine and women in combat gear, as the annual song contest took on ever more political tones.

The video was released hours after Kalush Orchestra brought Ukraine its third Eurovision win, pulling ahead of Britain in the grand finale thanks to a surge of popular votes from some of the estimated 200 million viewers from 40 participating countries.

Band members posed for photos and signed autographs outside their three-star Turin hotel yesterday, packing their own luggage into taxis en route to an interview with Italian host broadcaster RAI before heading home. They must return to Ukraine today after being given special permission to leave the country to attend the competition; most Ukrainian men between age 18 and 60 are barred from leaving in case they are needed to fight.

That stark reality made for a bittersweet moment yesterday in Turin, as Kalush vocalist Sasha Tab had to say goodbye to his wife Yuliia and two children, who fled Ukraine a month ago and are living with a host Italian family in nearby Alba. She and the children were at the band's hotel and she wept as Tab held his daughter in his arms before getting into the cab.

Russia was banned from the Eurovision Song Contest this year after its Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, a move organizers said was meant to keep politics out of the contest that promotes diversity and friendship among nations.

But politics nevertheless entered into the fray, with Kalush frontman Oleh Psiuk ending his winning performance yesterday night with a plea from the stage: "I ask all of you, please help Ukraine, Mariupol. Help Azovstal right now!" he said, referring to the besieged steel plant in the strategic port city.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed the victory, saying he hoped Ukraine would be able to host the contest next year and predicting the "victorious chord in the battle with the enemy

is not far off."

"Stefania" was penned by lead singer Psiuk as a tribute to his mother, but since Russia's invasion it has become an anthem to the motherland, with lyrics that pledge: "I'll always find my way home, even if all roads are destroyed."

The new music video features women soldiers carrying children out of bombed-out buildings, greeting children in shelters and leaving them behind as they board trains. The video credits said it was shot in towns that have seen some of the worst destruction of the war, including Bucha, Irpin, Borodyanka and Hostomel.

The video was clearly made before the band left Ukraine as it features band members and — presumably — actors performing in the rubble.

"Dedicated to the brave Ukrainian people, to the mothers protecting their children, to all those who gave their lives for our freedom," it said.

Ukrainians cheered the victory yesterday as a much-needed boost, and the national rail operator announced that the train that passes through Kalush, the birthplace of Psiuk, will be renamed the "Stefania Express." MDT/AP



**Emirates** Rulers in the United Arab Emirates on Saturday unanimously appointed Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (pictured) as the autocratic nation's president, signaling both unity and stability in this key energy-rich country that hosts Western militaries. The ascension of Sheikh Mohammed, 61, had been expected after the death Friday of his half-brother and the UAE's president, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, at the age of 73. The transition of power marks only the third time this U.S.-allied nation of seven sheikhdoms has selected a president since becoming an independent nation in 1971.

**Lebanese** voted for a new parliament yesterday against the backdrop of an economic meltdown that is transforming the country and low expectations that the election would significantly alter the political landscape. A new crop of candidates from the 2019 protest movement are running against the country's entrenched ruling class that is blamed for the collapse, hoping to unseat them.

**North Macedonia** Police said Saturday they have detained a group of 44 Pakistani migrants and will return them to neighboring Greece from where they are believed to have entered. Police spokeswoman Suzana Pranak said the migrants were discovered late Friday in a southern region near the Greek border. They were sent to a shelter pending deportation.



**Somalia** Legislators in Somalia are meeting to elect the country's president in the capital, Mogadishu, which is under lockdown measures aimed at preventing deadly militant attacks. Some 36 candidates are vying for the presidency, including incumbent leader Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed and two of his predecessors: Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. The leader of the regional state of Puntland, Said Dani, is also seen as a frontrunner.