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SHANGHAI AUTHORITIES TO TAKE SOME MAJOR STEPS TODAY TOWARD REOPENING THE CITY AFTER A TWO-MONTH COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

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IN COMMONWEALTH, QUEEN'S JUBILEE DRAWS PROTESTS AND APATHY

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AP PHOTO



Philippines The government announced yesterday a new diplomatic protest against China over disputes in the South China Sea, a long-thorny issue that has flared anew as the next Philippine president prepares to take office next month. The Philippines has filed hundreds of diplomatic protests against Beijing in recent years for what it considers acts of aggression in the disputed waters, despite improved ties between Beijing and Manila under outgoing President Rodrigo Duterte, whose six-year term ends on June 30.

AP PHOTO



Lebanon's longtime parliament speaker who has held the post for 30 years, was reelected yesterday for a seventh four-year term with the minimum number of votes required and despite multiple crises plaguing the nation. Still, the slim majority in favor of Nabih Berri was a reflection of a significant shift in public opinion in the crumbling economy on the verge of bankruptcy. His reelection was practically guaranteed — even though more than a dozen new lawmakers won seats running on a reform platform.

AP PHOTO



European Union In the most significant effort yet to punish Russia for its war in Ukraine, the EU agreed to ban the overwhelming majority of Russian oil imports after tense negotiations that tested how far the bloc is willing to go to ostracize Moscow. From the moment Russia invaded on Feb. 24, the West has sought to make Moscow pay economically for its war. But targeting the lucrative energy sector was seen as a last resort in Europe and has proved hardest since the bloc relies on the country for 25% of its oil and 40% of its natural gas.

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Lei Wai Nong: City's tourism industry needs repositioning

ANTHONY LAM

MACAU'S tourism industry must foster change and improvement, Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, said at a parliamentary plenary.

During the long discussion, where even the parliament's president made his voice heard in seeking a conclusion on the topic, Lei for once again threw out punchlines, as he said, "A past map may not point out future destinations."

At the same occasion, several lawmakers asked questions related to tourism. For example, lawmakers Wong Kit Cheng and Angela Leong asked about revising the industry, while Pereira Coutinho asked about Japan's risk classification on Macau.

In response to these questions, Lei, citing his superintendent, reiterated that the city is not only too homogenous in tourism products, but also in the tourism source market.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, during his last parliament question session in April, blamed the tourism industry for what he considered its excessive focus on Chinese tourists and instructed industry practitioners to attract greater numbers of foreign tourists after Covid-19.

Lei said that he has revisited the tourism arrival figures from

ANTHONY LAM



2014 to 2019 and concluded of the total visitors, that the city had welcomed 78% mainland tourists, 18% Hong Kong tourists and the remainder came from other places.

He said tourism industry practitioners should take this "quietness" as an opportunity to consider how the city can become more attractive to non-Chinese tourists.

In fact, some academics have pointed out that Macau's heavy reception of 40 million tourists a year and having departed somewhat from leisure tourism, the city is no longer attractive to foreign tourists, who usually are more financially ample and tend to explore experiences of higher quality.

As the plenary session transitioned to an adjournment, the parliament's head made his remarks, describing the topic as so wide that the discussion could be virtually endless. He encouraged fellow lawmakers to not refrain from giving suggestions to the government in the future.

"It seems to me that the oral inquiry session has expanded to study Macau's drive to transforming into an international tourism destination," Kou Hoi In, president of the parliament, concluded.

ON COMMODITY PRICES

During the same plenary meeting, the senior official was also questioned about the stability of commodity prices, with particu-

lar focus on consumer gasoline prices.

Prices of consumer gasoline across the city have risen to MOP13.47 at the lowest and MOP15.79 at the highest for unleaded gasoline, and MOP15.49 to MOP15.96 for diesel gasoline, according to data from the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED). Retailers offer privileges to regular customers, however.

Members of the public have made complaints in various arenas that retailers started raising commodity prices even before the latest round of the consumption stimulus scheme, which will commence today, began.

On these questions, Lei blamed

global conditions for the price hikes. He reiterated the common knowledge that Macau, being an external-facing economy, requires imported food and other commodities.

Under the Covid-19 pandemic, Lei continued, transport costs have also risen. Alongside impacts from the Russia-Ukraine war, food shortage and other incidents, inflation is nearly unstoppable.

On the matter of controlling gasoline prices, Lei referred to free-market practices and competition theories to note that the government is unable to do much. The justification has been offered for quite some time before this recent plenary.

Lei's answer infuriated Coutinho, who angrily noted in his follow-up question to the senior official that the EU, also a free market, levies control measures on gasoline prices.

He also complained, together with lawmaker Leong Sun Iok, about the senior official not actually answering to any of the questions that Leong raised in his oral inquiry. "I don't know how I can follow-up with your response," Coutinho told Lei.

On accusations that Macau's gasoline prices are too high, Tai Kin Ip, director of the DSED, told irate lawmakers by comparing the prices in Zhuhai, Hong Kong and Macau. "The prices in Macau is relatively low," Tai said.

Regarding control over prices of other commodities, Wong Hong Neng, president of the Consumer Council of Macao (CC), said that the government has been in touch with suppliers to encourage them not to raise prices, an answer which has been used to answer written inquiries previously sent by lawmakers.

City expects 15 MICE events this summer

MACAU is expecting to see some 15 MICE events with a combined 100,000 estimated participants this coming June and July.

In an announcement, the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) said that it would organise and follow up various MICE events, including the 13th International Infrastructure Investment and Cons-

truction Forum (IIICF), 2022 Guangdong & Macao Branded Products Fair (GMBPF) as well as a specific "murder mystery game" MICE event.

Also known as jubensha, the game has gone viral among China's youth. The game is essentially a role-playing murder mystery game, which only requires a few people, a room, table and chairs, and a script to play.

Reports note that there are over 9.4 million people playing this mystery-game.

The game is popular in the mainland and will be first held in Macau this summer.

Other approaching MICE events encompass a wide range of areas including information technology, big health industry, tourism, culture, arts, business and trade, the IPIM stated.

Recent data shows that

that the income of MICE exhibition surged by 64.1% year-on-year to MOP10.19 million in the first quarter of this year. Of this, 86.5% was generated from the rental of exhibition booths, and 13.0% represented financial support from government/organisations.

The number of exhibitors soared by 64.8% year-on-year to 692 in the first quarter, 96.1% of whom were locals. LV



Murder mystery game

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SANDS CHINA: EXPATS STILL NEEDED IN THE SAR

LYNZY VALLES

AMID the deteriorating employment status in the SAR, Sands China has affirmed that there is still a need for expats in the region.

The pandemic has taken a toll on the economy, leaving thousands of local residents still jobless. Several lawmakers are calling for the jobs of Macau ID holders to be safeguarded.

Recent data from the govern-

ment shows that some 13,300 are still unemployed.

Speaking to the press on the sidelines of an event, Sands China president, Wilfred Wong, said the gaming operator had not renewed the contracts of some foreign workers.

However, "there is always a need for expatriates," the top official of the gaming operator said.

"We have let go of some employees with foreign passports.

I think this is probably the right thing to do. The unemployment situation has deteriorated in Macau but there are still jobs that probably local people are not interested in," Wong explained.

He added that the gaming operator has participated in job fairs organized by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) to cater to local residents seeking employment.

Recently, several lawmakers

have called for clearer contract cessation of the non-local workforce, noting that many companies are in fact major non-local workforce employers, despite operating government tenders or contracts.

On Monday, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong defended the government, arguing it cannot cancel all quotas for non-resident workers to solve the unemployment problems in Macau.

For him, reducing the number of quotas will not solve the city's unemployment issue, implying that a skill-mismatch is at work in the region.

"The exit of non-resident workers does not mean that we will be able to solve the unemployment problem in Macau [...] if we cancel all their quotas, this does not mean that our residents will be able to enter their respective jobs and that is a loss for both parties," he explained.

Recent official data shows that the number of non-resident workers as at the end of April plunged by 29,927 compared with the end of 2019.

Late last year, the Chief Executive himself encouraged workers to "adjust their mentality, so as to try a different profession according to their own aptitudes."

THE LONDONER AWAITS TOURISM REBOUND FOR FULL OPENING

SANDS China's USD2.2 billion investment, The Londoner Macao, is awaiting the resumption of strong tourist arrivals before the full opening of the integrated resort officially takes place. "We're waiting for the completion of everything, right now the only thing still under construction and in the final stages of tuning is the 6,000-seat arena, which we expect to be ready in the second half of the year," said Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China. Also, he hopes that Macau's quarantine period for Hong Kong arrivals will be shortened from 14 to 10 or seven days to attract more tourists from the neighboring region.

The president admitted that the pandemic situation in Beijing and Shanghai has impacted the sector as the city has mostly only been receiving visitors from Guangdong.

"There is a lot of demand for holidays and I think really a lot depends on how restrictive the government in China is imposing on traveling," he added. LV

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JAPAN'S 'YELLOW ZONING' MACAU BASED ON RISK EVALUATION

The Japanese Consulate-General in Hong Kong has explained that the upcoming immigration measure adjustments were determined based on the country's understanding of the Omicron variant, infection status in various jurisdictions, the risk of the virus entering Japan, as well as the efficacy of vaccines, among other factors. In addition, the country will continue evaluating internal and external factors before making further adjustments, if any, in the future. Under the upcoming immigration measure adjustments, Macau residents will have to have received three vaccinations in order to have test-on-arrival and quarantine requirements waived, a condition unique to Macau across the Chinese-speaking world.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS RECORD DECREASE

The number of traffic accidents in April decreased by 9.8% year-on-year to 922, with three persons killed and 362 persons injured. From January to April, there were 3,909 traffic accidents, which resulted in four deaths and 1,363 injuries. Cross-border vehicular traffic in April fell by 10.6% year-on-year to 340,675 trips, according to recent data. In the first four months of 2022, cross-border vehicular traffic (1,252,697 trips) decreased by 12.4% year-on-year. Arriving and departing commercial flights totalled 657 trips in April, a decline of 53.7% year-on-year.

SANDS SHOPPING CARNIVAL TO BE 'BETTER THAN BEFORE' IN JULY COMEBACK

SANDS China Ltd. is bringing back its annual signature event, the Sands Shopping Carnival, at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo for a third year. The carnival will run from July 21 to 24.

The four-day shopping event, which provides a free business platform for local SMEs and Sands retailers, will see booth capacity of over 580, while increasing the number of SME booths to 300.

"This year's shopping carnival will be even better than before in terms of scale, layout of the exhibition area, and range of activities," said Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China, in a press conference yesterday.

"Over the past two years, the carnival has attracted 210,000 visits – an impressive achievement only made possible by the collective efforts of local SMEs, Sands retailers, local residents and tourists," he added.

Local firms can register for free until June 4 using a portal,



which has now launched.

In addition to shopping, some of the features of the family-friendly Sands Shopping Carnival include an international-cuisine food court area, lucky draws, activities and games for children, and the newly added Healthy Lifestyle and Sport

Accessories areas.

Meanwhile, present at the event was Fred Ma Chi Ngai, president of the Macao Chamber of Commerce, who stated that the Sands Shopping Carnival has become "one of the largest sale events in Macau and a signature event in the local retail industry."

As the co-organiser of this event, the Macao Chamber of Commerce hopes that it can make a contribution to the growth and promotion of Macau's SMEs while expanding domestic demand and stimulating spending amid economic uncertainty. LV

AD

A large advertisement for the Times newspaper's 15th anniversary. The background is a light blue and white geometric pattern. At the top left, the Times logo is displayed with the MacauDaily tagline. In the center, a large pink number '15' is set within a pink pentagon, with the words 'YEARS' and 'congratulations' below it. To the right, there is a yellow flower graphic and the text 'CESL Asia 盛世集團' followed by the slogan 'How to grow a city. 悉心共樹新城市.'



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COVID-19

Shanghai moves toward ending two-month lockdown

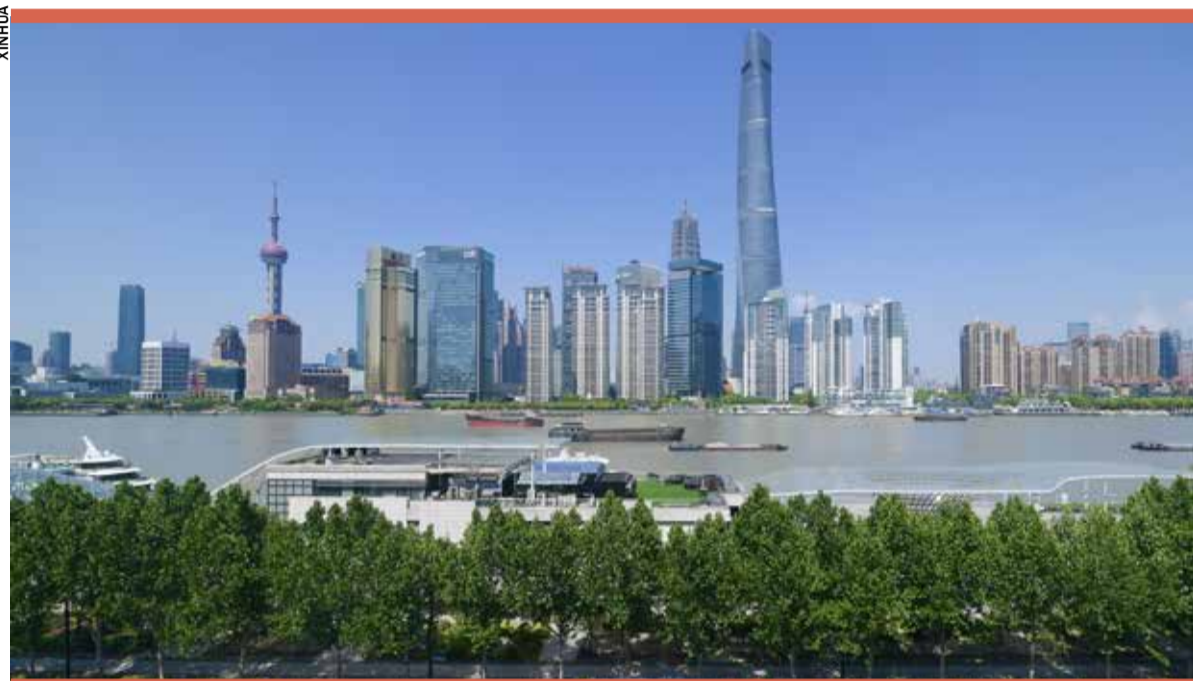
SHANGHAI authorities say they will take some major steps today toward reopening China's largest city after a two-month COVID-19 lockdown that has throttled the national economy and largely bottled up millions of people in their homes.

Full bus and subway service will be restored as will basic rail connections with the rest of China, Vice Mayor Zong Ming said yesterday at a daily news conference on the city's outbreak.

"The epidemic has been effectively controlled," she said, adding that the city will start the process of fully restoring work and life today.

Schools will partially reopen on a voluntary basis for students and shopping malls, supermarkets, convenience stores and drug stores will continue to reopen gradually with no more than 75% of their total capacity. Cinemas and gyms will remain closed.

Officials, who set June 1 as the target date for reopening earlier



in May, appear ready to accelerate what has been a gradual easing in recent days. A few malls and markets have reopened, and some residents have been given passes allowing them out for a few hours at a time. In online chat groups,

some expressed excitement about the prospect of being able to move about freely in the city for the first time since the end of March, while others remained cautious given the slow pace and stop-and-go nature of opening up so far.

Shanghai recorded 29 new cases on Monday, continuing a steady decline from more than 20,000 a day in April. Li Qiang, the top official from China's ruling Communist Party in Shanghai, at a meeting was quoted as saying that

the city had made major achievements in fighting the outbreak through continuous struggle.

The success came at a price. Authorities imposed a suffocating citywide lockdown under China's "zero-COVID" strategy that aims to snuff out any outbreak with mass testing and isolation at centralized facilities of anyone who is infected.

However, the latest economic data showed that Chinese manufacturing activity started to rebound in May as the government rolled back some containment measures.

Schools will reopen for the final two years of high school and the third year of middle school, but students can decide whether to attend in person. Other grades and kindergarten remain closed.

Outdoor tourist sites will start reopening today, with indoor sites set to follow in late June, the Shanghai tourism authority said. Group tours from other provinces will be allowed again when the city has eliminated all high- and medium-risk pandemic zones.

Beijing, the nation's capital, further eased restrictions yesterday in some districts. The city imposed limited lockdowns, but nothing near a citywide level, in a much smaller outbreak that appears to be on the wane. Beijing recorded 18 new cases on Monday. **MDT/AP**



A freight train loaded with 50 containers goods made in China departed from Nansha port's South Station in Guangzhou on Monday for destinations in Europe

TRADE

First freight train departs Guangzhou for Europe

A freight train loaded with 50 containers of air conditioners, LCD screens, lamps, lanterns and related items made in China departed from Nansha port's South Station in Guangzhou, Guangdong province,

on Monday for destinations in Europe. The train, which will leave the country via Alashankou port in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, is expected to arrive in the inland area of Europe

in 15 days, according to a statement released by the Nansha district government on yesterday.

It is the first freight train to depart from Nansha port, at the mouth of the Pearl River, for Europe, further

promoting the development of foreign trade and logistics industries and helping construct an international ocean-rail intermodal transportation hub in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the statement said.

It will also help inject new momentum into the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative in the years to come, it said.

"With the China-Europe freight trains, the time for shipping goods from Nansha port to Europe will be shortened by at least two days, reducing customs transit links and saving time and the cost of container transfer and storage," said He Wang, a local logistics company manager.

Nansha port is a world-class transportation hub in southern China. The China-Europe freight trains originating there will benefit local manufacturers, foreign trade companies and logistics companies in the area, he said.

MDT/CHINA DAILY

TAIWAN

US SENATOR VISITS ISLAND AS CHINA UPS MILITARY THREAT

On a visit to Taiwan, U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth reiterated support for the island amid rising Chinese threats.

Duckworth met with leader Tsai Ing-wen yesterday and emphasized the close economic, political and security relations between Taipei and Washington.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory to be annexed by force, and sent 30 military aircraft into airspace close to the island Monday. Taiwan's Defense Ministry said it responded by scrambling jets, putting air defense missile systems on alert and issuing radio warnings.

In her remarks to Tsai, Duckworth said she wanted to "emphasize our support for Taiwan security."

"I do want to say that it is more than just about military. It's also about the economy," Duckworth, a former Army helicopter pilot and lieutenant colonel in the National Guard, told Tsai.

Duckworth also cited

strong bipartisan backing for a bill she has put forward promoting cooperation between Taiwan's armed forces and the National Guard.

Tsai thanked the U.S. government and Congress "for the importance they place on peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," as well as Duckworth herself for "keeping a close watch on Taiwan related security issues."

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has put China's threats against Taiwan under new focus, prompting increased backing for arms sales and political support from Democrats and Republicans.

China upped the ante further in May, reaching out to the Solomon Islands and nine other island nations with a sweeping security proposal that, even if only partially realized, could give it a presence in the Pacific much nearer Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand and on the doorstep of the strategic American territory of Guam. **MDT/AP**

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Distress in Singapore as Malaysia bans chicken export

DINERS in Singapore are bracing for prices of their national chicken-and-rice dish to soar as neighboring Malaysia prepares to block exports starting today to increase supplies in its own markets and hold down surging prices.

Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob announced last week that, beginning June 1, Malaysia will ban exports of 3.6 million chickens a month until domestic prices and production stabilize. The move is felt most in Singapore, which sources a third of its poultry from Malaysia.

Almost all the chickens are imported live to Singapore, where they are slaughtered and chilled. Singapore consumers have been rushing to stock up on fresh chicken ahead of the ban, with local media reporting that shelves in some wet markets and supermarkets have been cleared of poultry.

The Singapore Straits Times said chicken sellers predicted the cost of chilled chicken could rise by up to 30%, sending chicken

AP PHOTO



A seller prepares freshly butchered chickens at the Kampung Baru wet market in Kuala Lumpur

dish prices soaring. The Singapore government has urged consumers to switch to frozen chicken and other alternative meats, and is exploring new markets for fresh

chicken.

But there is concern over the fate of the ubiquitous chicken rice that is sold everywhere from hawker stalls to top hotels. Po-

pular eatery Tian Tian Hainanese Chicken Rice, which gets its poultry entirely from Malaysia, reportedly said it will introduce pork and seafood dishes instead

of using frozen chicken if it fails to find new suppliers.

Malaysia's ban comes as countries worldwide grapple with soaring food prices, fueled partly by the Ukraine war. Ukraine is a major exporter of corn and grains that are key components of chicken feed.

India also moved to protect its markets, restricting sugar and wheat exports, while Indonesia temporarily halted — and then lifted — palm oil sales abroad.

Apart from the export ban, Malaysia also abolished import permits for chicken and other foods to boost food supply and curb prices amid public anger. It has earlier capped chicken prices and allocated subsidies for farmers squeezed by rising cost of chicken feed, partly caused by a weakening Malaysian currency.

The move came as a surprise by Ismail's government, which took power in August and faces a general election next year. The government is also investigating claims that cartels are controlling the price and supply of chicken.

The ban not only caused alarm in Singapore but also troubled smaller Malaysian poultry farmers who supply to Singapore to help keep their operations afloat. The government didn't say how long the export ban will last, but officials expect supply and prices to normalize within a month. **MDT/AP**

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Denmark holds referendum on EU defense amid Ukraine war

JAN M. OLSEN, COPENHAGEN

HISTORICALLY skeptical about European Union efforts to deepen cooperation, Danish voters today will choose whether to abandon the country's decision three decades ago to opt out of the bloc's common defense policy.

The Danish referendum comes as the latest example of European countries seeking closer defense links with allies in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It follows Sweden and Finland's historic bids to join NATO — something to be taken up at a summit next month.

Denmark joining the EU defense policy would have a relatively modest impact on Europe's security architecture, particularly compared to Sweden and Finland joining NATO. But Christine Nissen, a researcher with the Danish Institute for International Studies, said both moves are "part of the same story," and would strengthen military cooperation on a



Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen (center) speaks to people while on an election campaign, in Holbaek

continent stunned by the war in Ukraine.

She said the main effect of abandoning the opt-out decision would be that Danish officials could stay in the room when EU colleagues discuss defense topics and Danish forces could take part in the bloc's military operations.

Denmark, a founding member of NATO, has stayed on the sidelines of EU efforts to build a common security and defense policy in parallel with the trans-Atlantic alliance. It was one of four opt-out moves that Danes insisted on before adopting the EU's Maastricht Treaty, which laid the

foundation for political and economic union.

The 1992 waiver means Denmark hasn't participated in the EU's discussions on defense policy, its development and acquisition of military capabilities and its joint military operations, such as those in Africa and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Danes also opted out of EU cooperation on justice and home affairs, the common currency and citizenship. The opt-out decision on citizenship, which said European citizenship wouldn't replace national citizenship, has since become irrelevant as other members later adopted the same position. But the other provisions remain intact despite efforts by successive governments to overturn them.

In a 2000 referendum, Danish voters decided to stay outside the eurozone, and 15 years later they voted to keep the exemption on justice and home affairs.

This time, however, Danes appear ready to say goodbye to opting out of common defense.

Social Democratic Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen called for the referendum on March 8, less than two weeks after Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24. She called on citizens to vote "yes" to abolishing the exception, saying to do so "will strengthen our security."

"I am voting in favor of abolishing the opt-out" decision, said Peter Jakobsen, a 61-year-old pharmacist in Copenhagen. "We must not stand outside. We are in the EU and we must be involved. We must make a difference."

But Sanne Michelsen, a 52-year-old shopper in Copenhagen, said she didn't see the point of suddenly joining the EU's defense policy after years on the outside.

"This is a referendum about an opt-out that has never caused us any problem," she said in her native Danish, before turning to English to add. "If it ain't broken, don't fix it."

The "yes" side has had a clear lead in polls, with about 40% in favor of dropping the exemption and 30% against. About a fourth of voters say they are still undecided.

There is widespread support for dropping the defense opt-out decision in Parliament. Only three small parties want to maintain it, two on the right and one on the left. **MDT/AP**

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AP PHOTO



In Commonwealth, queen's jubilee draws protests and apathy

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

AFTER seven decades on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II is widely viewed in the U.K. as a rock in turbulent times. But in Britain's former colonies, many see her as an anchor to an imperial past whose damage still lingers.

So while the U.K. is celebrating the queen's Platinum Jubilee — 70 years on the throne — with pageantry and parties, some in the Commonwealth are using the occasion to push for a formal break with the monarchy and the colonial history it represents.

"When I think about the queen, I think about a sweet old lady," said Jamaican academic Rosalea Hamilton, who campaigns for her country to become a republic. "It's not about her. It's about her family's wealth, built on the backs of our ancestors. We're grappling with the legacies of a past that has been very painful."

The empire that Elizabeth was born into is long gone, but she still reigns far beyond Britain's shores. She is head of state in 14 other nations, including Canada, Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Bahamas. Until recently it was 15 — Barbados cut ties with the monarchy in November, and several other Caribbean countries, including Jamaica, say they plan to follow suit.

Britain's jubilee celebrations, which climax over a four-day holiday weekend starting tomorrow, aim to recognize the diversity of the U.K. and the Commonwealth. A huge jubilee pageant through central London on Sunday will feature Caribbean Carnival performers and Bollywood dancers.

But Britain's image of itself as a welcoming and diverse society has been battered by the revelation that hundreds, and maybe thousands, of people from the Caribbean who had lived legally in the U.K. for decades were denied housing, jobs or medical treatment — and in some cases deported — because they didn't have the paperwork to prove their status.

The British government has apologized and agreed to pay compensation, but the Windrush scandal has caused deep anger, both in the U.K. and in the Caribbean.

A jubilee-year trip to Belize, Jamaica and the Bahamas in March by the queen's grandson Prince William and his wife Kate, which was intended to strengthen ties, appears to have had the opposite effect. Images of the couple shaking hands with children through a chain-link fence and riding in an open-topped Land Rover in a military parade stirred echoes of colonialism for many.

Cynthia Barrow-Giles, professor of political science at the

University of the West Indies, said the British "seem to be very blind to the visceral sort of reactions" that royal visits elicit in the Caribbean.

Protesters in Jamaica demanded Britain pay reparations for slavery, and Prime Minister Andrew Holness politely told William that the country was "moving on," a signal that it planned to become a republic. The next month, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne told the queen's son Prince Edward that his country, too, would one day remove the queen as head of state.

William acknowledged the strength of feeling and said the future "is for the people to decide upon."

"We support with pride and respect your decisions about your future," he said in the Bahamas. "Relationships evolve. Friendship endures."

U.K. officials hope countries that become republics will remain in the Commonwealth, the 54-nation organization made up largely of former British colonies, which has the queen as its ceremonial head.

The queen's strong personal commitment to the Commonwealth has played a big role in uniting a diverse group whose members range from vast India to tiny Tuvalu. But the organization, which aims to champion democracy, good governance and human rights, faces an uncertain future.

As Commonwealth heads of government prepare to meet in Kigali, Rwanda, this month for a summit delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, some question whether the organization can continue once the queen's eldest son, Prince Charles, succeeds her.

"Many of the more uncomfortable histories of the British Empire and the British Commonwealth are sort of waiting in the wings for as soon as Elizabeth II is gone," royal historian Ed Owens said. "So it's a difficult legacy that she is handing over to the next generation."

The crisis in the Commonwealth reflects Britain's declining global clout.

Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth under its authoritarian late President Robert Mugabe, and is currently seeking readmission. But many in its capital of Harare have expressed indifference to the queen's jubilee, as Britain's once-strong influence wanes and countries such as China and Russia enjoy closer relations with the former British colony.

"She is becoming irrelevant here," social activist Peter Nyapedwa said. "We know about (Chinese President) Xi (Jinping) or (Russian President Vladimir) Putin, not the queen."

Sue Onslow, director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London, said the queen has been the "invisible glue" holding the Commonwealth together.

But she says the organization has proven surprisingly durable and shouldn't be written off. The Commonwealth played a major role in galvanizing opposition to apartheid in the 1980s, and could do the same over climate change, which poses an existential threat to its low-lying island members.

"The Commonwealth is reflective of global trends," Onslow said. "So if you think about the creeping authoritarianism that has happened in non-Commonwealth countries ... this is happening in Commonwealth countries too. Progress towards greater democracy and good governance is definitely under pressure and there has been regression."

But she said the Commonwealth has also shown resilience.

"The Commonwealth has shown a remarkable ability to reinvent itself and contrive solutions at times of crisis, almost as if it's jumping into a telephone box and coming out under different guise," she said. "Whether it will do it now is an open question." **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1979 END OF WHITE RULE IN RHODESIA



Rhodesia has formally ended nearly 90 years of white minority rule and declared it will now be known as Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

In the absence of any official ceremony crowds of revellers, mainly black, gathered in the streets of Salisbury and surrounding townships at midnight to mark the change.

But although the name may have changed and there are 12 black faces in the cabinet under a new, black prime minister - Bishop Muzorewa - much will stay the same.

The man in overall command of the military will remain in his post, as will those in charge of the army, air force and police.

The jobs of top civil servants - all white - are protected under the new constitution.

At his final news conference in the top job Mr Smith said the less change there was the better, setting himself at odds with new Prime Minister Muzorewa, who said he hoped changes would be "very fast" in coming.

Mr Smith warned that "pushing people forward simply because of their colour, irrespective of merit, would be most unfortunate and would of course lead to disaster".

He continued: "It would mean that Rhodesia would then develop into a kind of banana republic where the country would in no time be bankrupt."

Mr Smith, who has moved from his official residency to a more humble abode, said he would be asleep during the changeover.

The new government has yet to be officially recognised by Britain and the United States.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The interim state of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia lasted little more than six months, before the country became a British colony once again.

Zimbabwe's independence on 18 April 1980 was internationally recognised. A violent campaign supported by President Mugabe to seize white-owned farms began in 2000.

The European Union imposed sanctions on the country in 2002 and Mr Mugabe's re-election was condemned as seriously flawed by international observers.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

<p>ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19</p> <p>Don't let your emotions interfere with moneymaking deals. Being unappreciated by your boss could make it hard to do your work effectively. Don't get involved in other people's problems.</p>	<p>TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20</p> <p>Don't vacillate about asking for assistance if you need it. You may find yourself caught in the middle of an argument that has nothing to do with you. You will be tempted to shop till you drop.</p>
<p>GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21</p> <p>You'll be tempted to spend extravagantly today. Don't let your emotional upset interfere with your professional objectives. Payoff all your debts before you go out and celebrate.</p>	<p>CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22</p> <p>Love could develop with someone of a different cultural background. Family talks may get a little combative. Quarrels will erupt if you get into philosophical debates with friends.</p>
<p>LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22</p> <p>Do not get upset about situations you cannot change. Your lover may not understand your needs so you must figure out a way to communicate them.</p>	<p>VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22</p> <p>Be on your best behavior. Financial gains can be made through wise investments. Try not to get involved in other people's problems.</p>
<p>LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22</p> <p>Get promises in writing or you will be disappointed. Difficulties at an emotional level may be likely. Do not overexpand if you have your own business. Sit tight.</p>	<p>SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21</p> <p>Your goals will be in reach if you direct your energy wisely. Do your own research and be prepared. Don't think the worst if you hear something negative about your partner.</p>
<p>SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21</p> <p>You may be in love today, but who knows what tomorrow may bring. You have been going through a period of change that no doubt caused problems with your loved ones.</p>	<p>CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19</p> <p>Travel will be fun and entertaining. Be careful when dealing with superiors. Your changing philosophies may lead you into new circles and open doors that will give you a unique outlook on life.</p>
<p>AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18</p> <p>Your high energy will help you through this rather hectic day. Put your energy into self-improvement programs that promise to make you into a better you. Limitations at work might set you back.</p>	<p>PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20</p> <p>You will have no trouble getting things to fall into place. Work diligently and you will get ahead today. Your need to put great detail into everything you do may cause you to miss the overall picture.</p>

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	15	33	fine
Changchun	11	21	cloudy
Chengdu	20	29	cloudy
Chongqing	21	32	fine
Fuzhou	23	30	rain
Guangzhou	25	32	thunderstorms
Guiyang	15	26	cloudy
Haikou	26	33	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	20	30	rain
Harbin	10	21	thunderstorms
Hefei	17	30	overcast
Nanjing	18	29	cloudy
Shanghai	20	28	cloudy
Taipei	24	27	rain
Wuhan	22	30	rain
Hong Kong	28	31	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	14	23	overcast
Frankfurt	8	23	overcast
Paris	11	23	overcast
London	8	18	showers
New York	18	21	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Employs; 5- The ___ Valley is a Californian wineland; 9- Jazz org.; 12- Edible corm; 13- Last Greek letter; 15- Extreme reverence; 16- Traditional prayer ending; 17- Dimensions; 18- Irritate; 19- Elevations; 21- East African nation; 23- Animal pelts; 24- 100 yrs.; 25- Interstellar cloud; 28- Wet weather wear; 33- Florida citrus center; 34- Distinctive quality; 35- Ticklish doll; 36- Literary monogram; 37- Ford flop; 38- Wall St. debut; 39- Fill to surfeit; 41- Mines; 42- Coral island; 44- Infinite time; 46- Entertains; 47- Polish off; 48- School founded by Henry VI; 49- Tranquil; 53- Tedium; 57- Med school subj.; 58- Breakfast fruit; 60- Become dim; 61- Strikes; 62- French school; 63- Apartment, e.g.; 64- Draft choice; 65- Knot in wood; 66- Actress Turner;

DOWN 1- Mormon state of western USA; 2- Just the ___; 3- ... saw Elba; 4- Melodious; 5- Cosa ___; 6- Wrong; 7- Dispenser candy; 8- Aeons; 9- Singer Sedaka; 10- ___ Ha'i; 11- Region; 14- Reclusive; 15- Republic in W Europe; 20- Dance that tells a story; 22- More than one male; 25- Scandinavian; 26- Dazzling display; 27- Moistest while cooking; 28- Out of practice; 29- Son of Zeus; 30- Mixed bags; 31- More than sufficient; 32- Implements; 34- Mine entrance; 37- Embodiment; 40- Establishes; 42- Cupid; 43- Melodious; 45- Negative vote; 46- Yom Kippur observer; 48- Deadly virus; 49- Gag reflex?; 50- Natural blue dye; 51- Overdue; 52- Bottle part; 54- Comedian Carvey; 55- Thor's father; 56- Intro to physics; 59- Chaney;

Yesterday's solution

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

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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	
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FOOTBALL

France blames ticket fraud for Champions League final chaos

ROB HARRIS, PARIS

FRENCH authorities defended police yesterday [Macau time] for indiscriminately firing tear gas and pepper spray at Liverpool supporters at the Champions League final, while blaming industrial levels of fraud that saw 30,000 to 40,000 people try to enter the Stade de France with fake tickets or none at all.

UEFA ordered an independent report that it said would "examine decision making, responsibility and behaviors of all entities involved in the final" and be made public.

After a meeting into Saturday's chaos, the French ministers of the sport and the interior shifted responsibility onto the Liverpool fans while not providing details on how they were sure so many fake tickets were in circulation. People with legitimate tickets bought through Liverpool and UEFA reported struggling to access the stadium.

"There was massive fraud at an



French Sports Minister Amélie Oudéa-Castéra (left) and French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin attend a press conference in Paris

industrial level and an organization of fake tickets because of the pre-filtering by the Stade de France and the French Football Federation, 70% of the tickets were fake tickets coming into the Stade de France," Interior minister Gérald Darmanin said. "Fifteen percent of fake tickets also were after the first filtering ... more than 2,600 tickets were con-

firmed by UEFA as non-validated tickets even though they'd gone through the first filtering.

The French sports ministry provided no evidence for its claims and it did not respond to a follow-up email after hosting a combative news conference.

"A massive presence of these fake tickets of course was the issue

why there were delays," Darmanin said. "Three times the beginning of the match was delayed."

The final, which Liverpool lost 1-0 to Real Madrid, kicked off 37 minutes late.

Liverpool chief executive Billy Hogan said it was "completely inappropriate" for the French authorities to be forming conclusions and commenting on numbers so early.

"At this stage I think it's just not responsible to be making comments before we've actually gathered all the information," Hogan said. "How can (the number of fans without tickets) be quantified at this stage, before we've had an independent and transparent investigation? There's also been quotes about people with fake tickets. But, again, how do we know all the facts until we've had an investigation?"

Hogan said Liverpool was "reviewing legal avenues" on behalf of supporters.

"The Champions League final should be one of the finest spectacles in football and it resulted

in one of the worst experiences of many supporters' lives. So, I would say that all politicians and agencies involved in this event need to wait until a full and independent investigation is concluded before attempting to shift blame."

Tear gas and pepper spray was targeted at Liverpool fans, impacting children — a tactic defended by Darmanin to prevent deaths.

"I'd like to thank the forces of law and order, also those who worked in the stadium because they were very calm and they were able to avoid drama and so thank you for organizing the pre-filtering but lifting it when there was too much pressure to avoid a drama," Darmanin said. "That was a decision made by the prefecture to avoid any kind of deaths or seriously injured."

French Sports minister Amélie Oudéa-Castéra blamed fans arriving at the stadium late for the crowd control issues, but did not say when they should have arrived at the stadium on the outskirts of Paris.

"We have seen, we have to improve in risky matches certain aspects with regard to managing the flows, first filtering, second filtering, and we have to make sure we look at electronic ticketing as closely as possible so we can avoid fraud as far as ticketing is concerned," Oudéa-Castéra said. "That is something which is absolutely essential." **MDT/AP**

AD

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Times

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OPINION

Editorial

Paulo Coutinho



THE COVIDIAN ERA

Well into year 3 of the Covidian Era, Macau Daily Times today marks 15 years of uninterrupted publication which should be a date of celebration and joy. It still is, but it is hard to ignore what's going on out and about.

We could not foresee in 2019 that we would be living in a dystopian world caused by a deadly pandemic – breaking health systems, economic markets and disrupting the daily life of virtually everyone on earth. Last year, in 2021, we could not foresee that on top of that, there would be a war raging in the heart of Europe, the invasion of Ukraine by Putin's Russia, with global implications in terms of geopolitics, trade, finance and basic resources.

Just today, the people of Denmark are voting in a referendum to possibly revert a decision made decades ago not to participate in the European common defense policy, after neutral Finland and Sweden had submitted their applications to become NATO members.

In the course of 15 years, we have witnessed and reported many stories of hate, murder and human rights violations – all over the world. But nothing compares to now.

Now, a newly-shaped Cold War is back in a world of polarized interests and blocks which erect walls and barriers after historians and philosophers not so long ago declared the “end of history” and that the world was “plain” – leveraged through globalization, accelerated by technological breakthroughs and, naturally, the advances of the internet.

Metaverse – an alternative reality, a world 2.0 – is around the corner as much as a return to the dark ages is. Simultaneously, we can leap forward to an era of knowledge, fairness, equality and liberty; or fall back to a medieval-kind of rage, war and famine.

Macau, this little-big town of ours, agonizes in its isolation, economic hardship, and restrictions of movement.

Following basically a health policy of zero-tolerance towards Covid, the government succeeded in withstanding the initial impact of the coronavirus pandemic and we are almost free of cases; one of a kind.

But what was our strength became a threat: people by the thousands left or are leaving Macau. Because they lost their jobs or because they can't cope with the isolation anymore, while watching the economy collapse with no opportunities in sight.

Today, the third consumption subsidy scheme (the MOP5,000+3,000 vouchers) enters into effect putting money in residents' pockets in an attempt to revitalize the weakened local small and micro enterprises. But this measure, although modified to include basics needs like water and electricity, brings inflation to the market and when the cards are exhausted the inflation stays and people have already spent their “grant,” according to local entrepreneurs heard by the Times. And as economist José Isaac Duarte said recently in an interview to TDM TV, “there has been no study done yet” to measure the real impact of the consumption scheme on the sustainability of businesses. Economy and Finance Secretary Lei this week admitted possible adverse effects of the program, at a time when a new line of support aimed at lowering the unemployment of locals was announced.

On the frontier front, Macau has also responded with baby steps to allow non-resident relatives and foreign labor to enter the city, and lowered the quarantine period.

Perhaps this is too late to stop the exodus, as much damage has already been done to a vision built on the back of gaming and tourism. That was wiped off and we haven't replaced it with anything else. The globe is shifting in all directions, yet Macau is left without a new foothold to pivot from.

HIT BY PANDEMIC CURBS, INDIA'S QUARTERLY GROWTH SLOWS TO 4%

THE BUZZ

India's economic growth, hit by pandemic curbs and price increases, slowed to 4.1% in the January-March quarter, according to figures released yesterday by the government.

It was the slowest pace in the financial year that ended in March, following 5.4% growth in the previous quarter.

Overall, India's economy grew by 8.7% in the 2021-22 financial year, slower than the 8.9% estimated by a government survey in February.

India's economy, Asia's third largest, was recovering from a pan-

demic-induced slump when a surge in omicron-fueled coronavirus cases starting in January prompted authorities to bring back some virus-related restrictions.

A month later, Russia's invasion of Ukraine pushed up retail inflation, which hit an eight-year high of 7.8% in April.

Earlier this month, the federal government restricted wheat and sugar exports and cut fuel taxes in an attempt to control inflation and keep commodity prices in check.

India's economy contracted by 6.6% in the 2020-21 financial year.



Foreign Minister Wang Yi is welcomed on the tarmac by officials on his arrival in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, yesterday

CHINA'S FOREIGN MINISTER ARRIVES IN TONGA ON PACIFIC TOUR

NICK PERRY, WELLINGTON

CHINA'S Foreign Minister Wang Yi arrived in Tonga yesterday as he continued his regional island-hopping tour a day after failing to ink an ambitious deal with 10 South Pacific nations.

While Wang didn't manage to get consensus on the multilateral security and economic plan at a meeting in Fiji after several nations voiced concerns, he has been notching up smaller wins by signing bilateral agreements with the countries he's been visiting, and he signed more deals in Tonga.

His tour comes amid growing international concerns about Beijing's military and financial ambitions in the region.

Tonga is continuing to recover from a massive volcanic eruption and tsunami in January which killed three people locally and destroyed hundreds of homes. The tsunami also cut the nation's internet connection to the rest of the world when it severed an undersea cable which took five weeks to repair.

In Tonga, Wang met with King Tupou VI and Prime Minister Siaosi Sovaleni and signed several agreements with Sovaleni that covered everything from disaster management to a royal tomb improvement project.

“The relationship between China and Tonga is a shining pearl.”

CAO XIAOLIN CHINESE AMBASSADOR

Chinese Ambassador Cao Xiaolin said in a statement the two countries already had close ties in a number of areas including trade, infrastructure and clean energy. He said China had provided various training programs to about 1,200 Tongan government officials and people.

“The relationship between China and Tonga is a shining pearl,” the ambassador said in his statement.

Tonga's government said the two sides had “fruitful talks” and thanked China for sending two military planes and two naval ships to

deliver supplies after the tsunami.

Wang's tour is causing consternation among some Western nations that see themselves as traditional partners with the South Pacific. Australia last week sent new Foreign Minister Penny Wong to Fiji in an attempt at counter-diplomacy.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a speech last week that China posed an even more serious long-term threat than Russia.

“China is the only country with both the intent to reshape the international order — and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it,” he said.

At a news conference Monday in Fiji, Wang said China had long championed developing nations both in the Pacific and around the world, addressing how “some have been questioning why China has been so active in supporting Pacific Island countries.”

“My advice for those people is: Don't be too anxious and don't be too nervous,” Wang said. MDT/AP



Netherlands Representatives of a group of nations working together to investigate war crimes in Russia's invasion of Ukraine met in The Hague amid ongoing calls for those responsible for atrocities to be brought to justice. Yesterday's coordination meeting at the European Union's judicial cooperation agency, Eurojust, of members of a Joint Investigation Team and International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan came as Russian forces continue to pound Ukrainian towns.



Turkey's president highlighted the activities of the Kurdistan Workers' Party as part of his country's objections to Sweden and Finland joining NATO and said both nations doing so would carry security risks for Turkey. The group known as PKK has waged a 38-year insurgency against Turkey that has led to tens of thousands of deaths. It is designated a terrorist entity by the United States and the European Union, including Sweden and Finland.



Germany Authorities raided the offices of Deutsche Bank and its subsidiary DWS yesterday following claims that it was exaggerating the sustainable credentials of some of the products it sold. German news agency dpa quoted Frankfurt prosecutors saying the probe focused on allegations of investment fraud, but no specific suspects had been identified yet.