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

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15 Jun 2022



“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

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LAWMAKER JOSÉ PEREIRA COUTINHO IS AGAIN INSISTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT CLARIFY THE HIGH NUMBER OF NON-RESIDENT WORKERS IN THE CITY P2

PROSPERITY INDEX ESTIMATED TO RUN LOW FROM JUN TO AUG P2

WALL STREET SINKS INTO A BEAR MARKET P10



AP PHOTO



NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and a small group of leaders from alliance countries are meeting in the Netherlands to discuss Russia's war in Ukraine and to prepare for a summit in Spain later this month. The informal gathering is being held Tuesday evening at Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte's official residence at The Hague and co-hosted by Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen. The other leaders attending were Romania's president, and the prime ministers of Belgium, Poland, Portugal and Latvia.

AP PHOTO



Russia Allies of imprisoned opposition politician Alexei Navalny sounded the alarm yesterday, saying the Kremlin critic is missing from the prison where he was serving his time. Most likely he is being transferred to another prison, his close associates say, but in Russia prison transfers take days, if not weeks, and are shrouded in secrecy. "All this time that we don't know where Alexei is, he is left alone with the system that has already once tried to kill him," Navalny's spokesman Kira Yarmysh said on social media.

AP PHOTO



Poland has replaced a controversial body that disciplined judges with a new accountability panel — the latest twist in a long-running dispute with the European Union over the country's judicial independence — and Poland's leading politician said yesterday he hoped the EU would have a "proper" reaction to the move. The EU has frozen billions of euros of pandemic funds for Poland over criticism of its rule of law record.

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END OF AN ERA

A landmark floating restaurant that fed Cantonese cuisine and seafood to Queen Elizabeth II, Tom Cruise and millions of other patrons was towed from the Hong Kong harbor front yesterday P6



AP PHOTO

TOURISM CHIEF SHORTENED QUARANTINE WILL NOT IMPACT VISITOR INFLUX P5

AP PHOTO



MAINLAND CITY MAYOR APOLOGIZES OVER LOCKDOWN RESPONSE P6

CONTAMINATED INFANT FORMULA NOT IMPORTED IN MACAU

The Pharmaceutical Administration (ISAF) has clarified that, following the inspection of the Abbott infant formula milk sold in Macau, they did not find any contamination of the product. The investigation came about after the U.S.' Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) investigation into child deaths allegedly due to the consumption of contaminated milk. ISAF stated that, according to the investigation, the formula milk imported into Macau was from Ireland and Spain, and that the affected formula milk had not been sold in Macau. The ISAF said they would regularly check formula milk being sold in Macau.

FAMILY WORKSHOP CONTINUES TILL END OF YEAR

The Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) is hosting "Young Family Club - Children's Fun Time," which features themed activities for parents and children to experience together. From February to April, the bureau has already held a total of 12 workshops. The workshop is held every Saturday from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. till the end of the year, with the sessions held in Cantonese, Mandarin, English and Portuguese. Targeting children aged between 3 and 12, together with their parents, each session can accommodate 12 pairs.

CPCS VISITS CHINA'S LARGEST MEDICINE MANUFACTURER

The Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs (CPCS) recently visited a pharmaceutical plant located at Ilha Verde to learn about the development of the Chinese medicine industry in the city. The representatives of Guangzhou Pharmaceutical Holdings Ltd (GPHL) introduced the factory systems, production lines, pharmaceutical process and the future development plans. Furthermore, the CPCS also visited the vocational training center of the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) at Ilha Verde. The center provides courses for Macau residents in electrical technology, enhancing their employability.

ECONOMY

PROSPERITY INDEX ESTIMATED TO RUN LOW FROM JUNE TO AUGUST

ANTHONY LAM

BASED on a series of factors, the Macau Economic Association (MEA) has estimated that the city's Prosperity Index will be dissatisfactory between June and August.

Justifying the estimates, the MEA cited the change of modes of tourism and spending as key factors having a significant impact on the index.

It pointed out that the structure of tourist arrivals has seen a transformation. Recently, nearly 40% of tourists in the city have been from Zhuhai, meaning their need for overnight hotel stays was small, the association explained.

Worse still was that 70% of the city's tourists were not staying overnight.

Meanwhile, there were 8% more tourists in Macau in the first quarter of this year than the same quarter last year. However, the city's retail revenue slipped downward by 0.6% year-over-year, while gross gambling revenue (GGR) plunged by 24.8%.

Although March tourist arrival counts were better than the

ANTHONY LAM



previous month, it accounted for only about 20% of pre-Covid levels, with metrics such as GGR, casino operators' stock prices and hotel occupancy declining as a result.

Internally, the city is faced with a falling trajectory of consumer confidence in mainland China. In April, the mainland recorded a

Consumer Confidence Index that was 28.6% lower than the same month last year. The index this April stood at 86.7 points. It fell by 23.4%, even when compared with the March index this year.

The April index was the lowest since the first wave of Covid-19 outbreak in early 2020.

Furthermore, the city's M2

money supply has recorded a six-month continuous fall. Compared with April last year, the city saw MOP24.2 billion less in M2 money supply in April this year. The supply of the US dollar fell by 21.5%.

The fall in M2 puts this criterion within the dissatisfactory level for the first time.

The city's unemployment rate, which recently retained a 10-year low of 4.5%, is seeing no improvement whatsoever.

According to the MEA, the only criteria recording better conditions were cargo import and consumption prices.

With this said, it is unclear whether the city will face stagflation soon.

Externally, the MEA pointed out, the city is experiencing the impact of serious inflation in developed economies, tighter monetary policies, unsettled geopolitical conditions and global economic slowdown, among other factors.

The Prosperity Indices for April and May, meanwhile, have been confirmed as 2.0 and 2.1 respectively.

Lawmaker questions gov't on high number of migrant workers

LYNZY VALLES

LAWMAKER José Pereira Coutinho is again insisting that the government clarify the high number of non-resident workers in the city, citing that half of the working population are migrant workers.

In his interpellation, Coutinho considered the 170,000 non-resident workers to constitute an "astonishingly high proportion" of the workforce, slamming the government for not implementing labor laws to prioritize local workers' employment.

RENATO MARQUES



Official government data shows that the city's unemployment rate for residents has hit a record high of 4.5%, the highest rate since 2009.

He called on the government to optimize the

mechanism for evaluating the number of such workers to ensure that workforce quotas are equitable and reasonably distributed.

"A large number of undifferentiated migrant

workers are infiltrating the luxury retail, real estate, service sector, industrial and commercial sectors, hotel and hospitality sector, financial sector and education sector, all of which are considered to be well-paid," he claimed.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Macau has lost some 30,000 migrant workers to layoffs or non-renewal of contracts, as firms were affected by the economic fallout caused by the pandemic.

The majority of the workers were from hotels and restaurants.

Several lawmakers have already called for clearer

contract cessations in the non-local workforce, noting that many companies are in fact major non-local workforce employers, despite operating government tenders or contracts.

In response, the Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong defended the government, arguing that it cannot cancel all quotas for non-resident workers to solve Macau's unemployment problems.

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.

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

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

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí DESIGNER_Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

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

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

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

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RENATO MARQUES

NAMED officially in the Macau Urban Master Plan (UMP) as “Taipa’s Northern Area 1,” the project of the new landfills comprising Zone C and D had its construction approved by the Central government in November 2009, together with three other areas (Zones A, B, and E) comprising a total development area of 350 hectares.

While Zone C (33 hectares) started to undergo construction in 2018, very few developments or projects have been worked on for Zone D, which is almost double in size (59 hectares) and to be built in front of the land plot known as the former “Ocean World” land plot.

More recently, and since the government has reclaimed the land, in November 2020, when the debated Taipa land plot was originally slated for the “Ocean World” theme park, local Public Works authorities expressed their intention of potentially abandoning the idea of building Zone D, in exchange for authorization from Central government to extend Zone A, filling in the existing water corridor between the Peninsula and the Zone A landfill.

This idea was not only intended to facilitate and accelerate the construction of the road links between the Peninsula and Zone A, but also to save financial resources, as the works to be done would be far less technically complex.

Since this idea was almost immediately rejected by the Beijing authorities, the plan for Zone D continues, with the plot seeing most of its area being assigned in the UMP as a residential and commercial area.

ZONE C

According to the most up-to-date information published by the Public Works Bureau (DSOP), the Zone C landfill was completed last month.

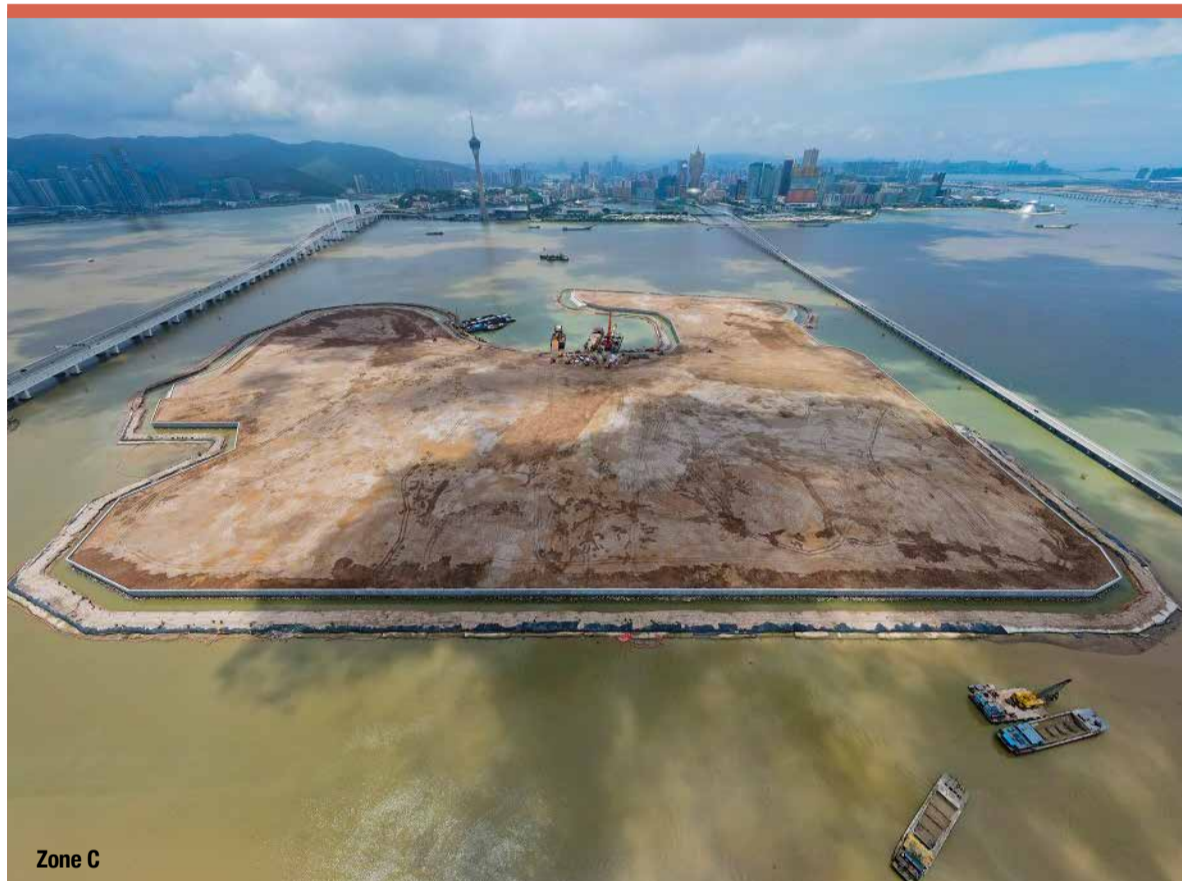
Currently, the new land plot is undergoing a necessary pause on works for the natural settlement of the soil.

The DSOP also added that, since the land needs to settle, there is not yet a concrete timeline for the start of the construction of the access links.

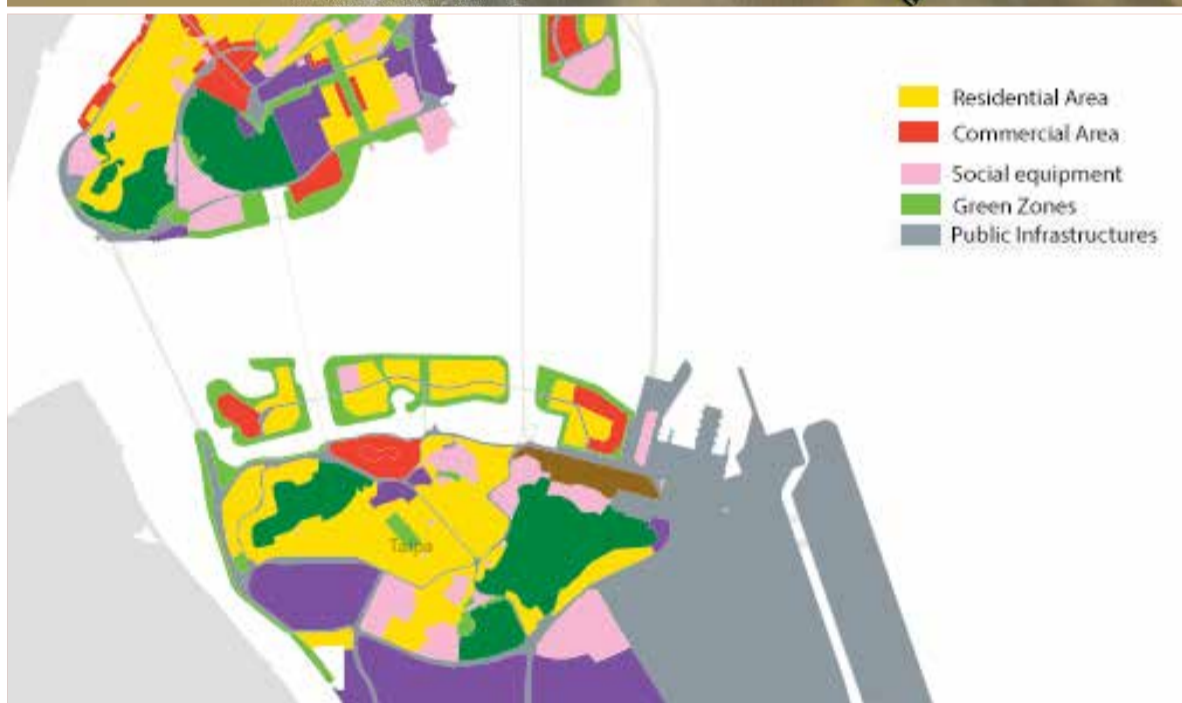
The only works currently being performed on this area relate to the demolition of the temporary dikes that supported the construction and the removal of sludge created during the construction around the new area.

When questioned by the Times on the details regarding the access links to be built between the Zone C and Taipa coastline, the DSOP declined to respond, calling on the media outlet to instead refer to the

The new ‘Taipau’ area: Developments, doubts, and constraints



Zone C



public information to be posted on the topic on the official webpage of the Bureau.

An analysis by the Times of relevant documentation published on the topic by both the DSOP as well as by the Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) revealed that at least one road link connecting Zone C to the Taipa coastline via a bridge is planned, as well as a second link of the same style that would link Zone C to Zone D over the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge.

In some documentation, the link between Zone C and Taipa is a double access point, with two bridges – one located in the southwest quadrant of Zone C

and another located in the southeast quadrant.

The review of the same documentation also revealed that the government intends to build a “green coastal corridor” in both landfills’ areas. The corridor will not only connect the residential and the commercial neighborhoods but also follow a pattern of regional integration, as with those currently being developed in the Hengqin area to harmonize the environment.

Following concerns expressed to the Times by residents regarding the fate of Taipa’s coastal leisure area, which includes a cycling and jogging path, the Times sought more

detailed information from government entities on how the construction of the access links would affect this area. However, these questions also did not receive an answer from any of the departments contacted, including the DSOP, the DSSCU and the Office of the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário.

Non-official information gathered by the Times hinted at the possibility of the existing cycling and jogging paths being detoured into Zone C, as well as being extended to circle the whole coastal area of Zone C.

ZONE D

As mentioned previously, Zone D of the new landfills is moving forward, since the government launched a public tender in 2019 for its construction.

Zone D will have an area of approximately 570,000 square meters and will be located in the north of Taipa and the maritime area away from the Estrada Nordeste da Taipa; that is, in the area between the Amizade Bridge and the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge.

The land plot will be used mainly for housing purposes, according to the assignment in the UMP.

The DSOP also said, in response to the request of the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA), that sands and other materials to be used for filling the land will be selected and supplied by DSPA for some Zone D areas.

According to the tender, the maximum execution period for the construction has been set to 1,450 working days (about four years).

Information from DSOP also noted that the contract for the start of this construction has not yet commenced, so no works are currently being undertaken regarding this landfill.

The landfill is expected to cost almost 2 billion patacas.

GOV'T FINING ZONE C CONTRACTOR FOR DELAYS

THE conclusion of the construction works of Zone C did not comply with the deadline originally stipulated in the contract when the adjudication of the works took place, the government has acknowledged at several points during construction. Now the DSOP says that the process of imposing a fine on the contractor for delays in the conclusion of the works is already underway. Back in November 2021, the government stated that the contractor had requested an extension of the deadline to execute the work. While the extension was granted,

the government noted that the reasons given by the contractor for the delays were considered unreasonable. According to the information published on the status of the public works with a value of over 100 million patacas, Zone C suffered a delay of around 35% of the agreed term when compared to the deadline initially set by the tender contract (645 days). The budget of the construction has also increased by 0.3% from the initial tender price, to a total of 816.2 million patacas.

LYNZY VALLES

ART

AMAGAO GALLERY UNVEILS EXHIBITION TO CELEBRATE PORTUGUESE ARTISTS

AMAGAO Gallery has unveiled its new art exhibition 'Lusografia' at Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau, featuring a total of 70 art works from 24 Portuguese artists.

The exhibition shines a spotlight on the Portuguese art scene, and also highlights the celebration of Portugal's National Day.

In this exhibition, works of Portuguese artists such as Paula Rego, Vieira da Silva, Júlio Pomar, Cruzeiro Seixas, Graça Morais, are all represented.

Amongst the artists featured in the Lusografia exhibition, Rego is an important cultural figure in Portugal, who is known for her unsettling images.

She died just last week at her home in North London, at the age of 87.

da Silva is a famous pioneer of European Abstract Expressionism, renowned for her obsession with perspective.

"We would say that putting the masterpieces of these influential Portuguese artists together in one space is precious, simply amazing. It is also an extraordinary way to celebrate the National Day of Portugal, and its arts and culture," said José I. Duarte, managing partner of Amagao Gallery.

Meanwhile, commenting on the launch of the exhibition, Rutger Verschuren, general manager of Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau, noted,



"As a hotel in love with the arts, heritage and culture, we welcome all art lovers, locals and tourist-alike, to

explore and experience this unique exhibition with us this summer." Following the previous exhibi-

tion 'Color Lusofonia', Lusografia has opened June 9 and will run to September 4, offering a glimpse

into the world of arts and graphics from the perspective of influential artists back to 1978.

AD

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COVID-19

No entry permit required for foreigners arriving from the mainland

LYNZY VALLES

FOREIGNERS who hold a temporary residency permit or a special permit to stay in the SAR will be allowed to enter the city from the mainland without having to acquire a special entry permit from the Health Bureau (SSM).

As part of a move of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center to further relax entry measures that have long been strict, the new measure took place today at 12 a.m.

Arrivals from the mainland will be required to present a negative nucleic acid test (NAT) certificate, which is valid for seven days.

The center noted that the move is to assist foreign students enrolled in the city's higher education institutions and foreigners who have to commute dai-



ly between Macau and the neighboring region.

Today also marks the implementation of the "10+7" measure, which allows foreign arrivals from outside mainland China to undergo a quarantine period of 10 days – four days shorter than that previously in place.

These returnees may only leave the hotel on the 11th day of their stay at the hotel, as their arrival is counted as day zero.

However, in a statement issued last night, the gover-

ment said that Covid-19 test operators will collect samples early on the 10th day so they will be able to start check out procedures immediately if they have negative results

Until now, with Macau's compliance with Beijing's zero-Covid strategy, only foreign domestic workers, foreign students and families of resident workers could apply for an entry permit from the SSM to enter Macau, as well as Portuguese nationals.

MGTO expects no tourist influx amidst '10+7' quarantine shift

ANTHONY LAM

NO great influx of tourists is anticipated, despite the city shortening quarantine-upon-arrival from today, the city's head tourism official said yesterday.

On the sidelines of a tourism seminar, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), was asked for her views on the new quarantine period length.

In response, Senna Fernandes said that despite the shorter quarantine period, she did not expect there to be a sudden influx of tourists.

"After all, the quarantine will still last for 10 days. I don't believe tourists will be willing to take that," she said. "However, it will be good news for those whose trips to Macau are inevitable."

In addition, ahead of the shortening of the quarantine period, the tourism chief pledged that her team would monitor the situation closely in order to promptly react to the



demand for quarantine hotel rooms.

Recently, various countries have announced reopening to tourists, including Thailand, the UK, South Korea and Japan. Many of them have even lifted the requirement that tourists be vaccinated – whether partially or completely.

Today, Taiwan will see its mandatory quarantine period for entrants shortened to three days, unless their tests-on-arrival yield positive results, which

will then lengthen their quarantine period to seven days.

Comparatively, it is still shorter than that which applies in Macau.

Senna Fernandes was questioned as to whether Macau will be less competitive from a tourism perspective with stricter entry requirements. She recapped the stance of maintaining safety and keeping in line with mainland requirements.

She added that a gradual

opening is key to maintaining confidence in the city among tourists.

In fact, the strict border restrictions have deterred trade shows such as the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) Asia, as well as international racers who wanted to return to the Guia Circuit but found the quarantine requirement unattractive.

The MGTO will run marketing roadshows in Qingdao, Wuhan and Changsha in China from August to October.

GOV'T WARNS OF UNAUTHORIZED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) alerts the public that Indo Market, Global Indonesia Market and Loja de Conveniência lao Kei are not authorized to carry out regulated financial activities in the SAR. Pursuant to the law, only authorized financial institutions are allowed to carry out regulated financial activities in Macau. Engaging in these activities by any persons or entities without authorization constitutes a "serious violation" and is subject to a fine of up to MOP5 million. AMCM reiterates that the public should conduct financial activities through authorized institutions in order to avoid being scammed and incurring unnecessary losses.

GOV'T TO TIGHTEN MOTORCYCLES' EXHAUST EMISSION REGULATIONS

The government is set to tighten regulations governing motorcycle exhaust emissions from July 1, following review by the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) and Transport Bureau (DSAT). It was proposed to narrow the emission limits of exhaust pollutants from motorcycles and scooters. The SAR government separately said it is promoting the control of volatile organic compounds (VOC) in an orderly manner to mitigate ozone and photochemical pollution. The government will prohibit the import and the transport of paints which exceed volatile organic compound limits from September 11.

MACAU RETURNEES MAY FIND FEW FLIGHTS VIA TAIWAN

IT may not be easy for returnees to Macau to find flights back home via Taiwan, despite Taiwan's reopening to international transit.

Although the local aviation authority's website showed 39 weekly flights between Taipei and Macau in June, the actual situation varies significantly.

For example, yesterday, three flights from Taipei to Macau were registered. However, only a flight operated by Starlux Airlines actually flew to Macau and landed at 2:20 pm, according to the website of the Macau International Airport.

After stopping over in Macau for two and a half hours, the aircraft departed the city at 4:50 pm the same day.

Three other flights that were registered to depart Macau for Taipei, operated by Starlux and Tigerair Taiwan, Taiwan's low-cost carrier, were cancelled.



Local flag carrier airline Air Macau did not run any flights between the two jurisdictions yesterday.

For the time being, it is unclear whether the reopening of transit services in Taiwan will help boost flight frequency between Macau and Taipei, considering many Macau students who are studying in the Americas may seek to take this route to return home during the summer

holidays.

Authorities in Taiwan have given the green light to international transit passengers. The service will resume today. Prior to this, the service was halted for more than a year (since May 2021).

As it reopens to international transit, Taiwan will also shorten quarantine-upon-arrival requirements to three days from today. **AL**

GOV'T STRESSES MONITORING REPAIR WORK OF GUIA HILL LANDSLIDE

LOCAL authorities said that relevant services have contacted the tenants of the affected units caused by the landslide that occurred near the back of the Ka On Kok building, located along Estrada de S. Francisco.

Residents of the neighborhood where last Thursday's Guia Hill landslide happened have criticized the government for not heeding their warnings that such an incident could occur.

The landslide took place behind the public hospital's future infectious disease building, where construction was underway.

In a statement, the Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) and the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) said that they had begun the "urgent cleaning and protection work and directly contacted the respective owners."

"With a view to stabilizing the slope and providing access for the machines to the lower part of the slope,



the government is carrying out the backfill work at the adjacent private construction site, in order to carry out the slope consolidation work and ensure the safety of the execution of the later works," the joint statement read.

At the same time, the bureaus have also begun cleaning and sealing the damaged areas. The works are reportedly "progressing

rapidly, according to plan, which may be adjusted according to the safety of the site and meteorological conditions."

Bearing in mind that a section of the old city wall, classified as a heritage site, is located at the place where the landslide took place, the relevant government services are coordinating further work in order to ensure the safety of residents. **LV**

THE mayor of a northeastern Chinese city on the North Korean border that has been under lockdown for more than 50 days has apologized for failures in his administration's work amid widespread — but often disguised — dissatisfaction over the government's heavy-handed approach to handling the pandemic.

Dandong Mayor Hao Jianjun gave no specifics, but said government work and basic services had been “unsatisfactory,” for which he offered his apologies, according to a statement issued by the city government late Monday.

It is highly unusual for a ranking Communist Party official to publicly concede errors, particularly regarding the hardline “zero-COVID” policy that has been repeatedly endorsed by top officials under President and party leader Xi Jinping.

Despite reporting only a handful of cases, Dandong has seen one of the strictest lockdowns in China.

In his reported comments at a meeting with residents, Hao acknowledged the sacrifices made by the city's 2.4 million citizens, along with the “complaining voices” among them over the government's work. Dandong would now be moving into a stage of pandemic control that would be “more proactive, more active and more effective,” Hao said.

Unable to root out the source of new cases, Dandong officials took increasingly extreme measures, some of them of questionable scientific merit. That included recommending residents close their windows to prevent the virus being blown in from North Korea, even though its ability to spread through the air is extremely limited.

Authorities have also cracked

COVID-19

CITY MAYOR APOLOGIZES OVER LOCKDOWN RESPONSE



down on smuggling across the Yalu River with North Korea, offering cash incentives for information on those involved. China has long held that the virus is spreading through packaging and other surfaces, despite little evidence showing that is a significant factor.

Officials at one point also transported residents of an entire apartment block to quarantine in the city of Shenyang, about 250 kilometers (150 miles) north of Dandong. Upon their release, it was discovered the positive case sparking the move had been in a resident of a neighboring building, leading to an angry confrontation between the residents and authorities.

Residents have been permitted out to shop, but no word has yet been given on when normal work can resume, said Li Yueqing, the

owner of a wood processing factory in Dandong reached by phone. Rules still demand that any building where a positive case is found will be sealed off, Li said.

“We understand the epidemic situation in the city is still unstable. We don't know when exactly we will be allowed to resume production,” he said.

A restaurant worker said the 50 days of closure is majorly affecting incomes.

“Up to now, we still haven't received any instruction from the government on restarting business and our incomes have been affected by doing nothing,” said the worker, who gave only her surname, Guo.

A staffer at a maritime training academy who gave just his surname, Zheng, said they remained shuttered as a precautionary

measure.

“The government feels it is better for us to remain closed longer, given the large number of trainees we have had. We have no idea when we will reopen,” Zheng said.

Lengthy lockdowns have become the norm in China's COVID-19 response, with Shanghai's ongoing predicament gaining the most notoriety. Most of the 25 million residents of China's largest city and key financial hub were confined to their homes or immediate neighborhoods for two months or more and hundreds of thousands continue to remain under restrictions.

The severity of the Shanghai lockdown and the apparent lack of preparation by authorities prompted confrontations at checkpoints between residents and officials, and a series of nightly

sessions of banging pots and screaming from balconies. Criticisms of the government's policy were posted online, often in formats designed to thwart censorship software.

The relaxation of measures prompted an exodus from the city and foreign business leaders say confidence in its future as an international business hub remains in question.

The response in the capital Beijing has been more nuanced, possibly for political reasons, although many students have been forced to attend class online and a major shopping and nightlife district has been shut down following the detection of 287 cases linked to a nightclub.

Police said that two customers of the nightclub are under investigation after they allegedly ignored an order to isolate at home and went out using a ride-hailing service. They later tested positive, leading to more than 300 others being locked down.

In Hong Kong, daily coronavirus infections have been on the rise, with the city logging 752 new infections yesterday, up from 505 cases on June 1. The rising figure comes as the city prepares for the 25th anniversary of its handover from Britain to mainland China on July 1.

To combat rising infections in the city, health authorities have tightened policies, with its health minister stating during a news conference that residents who plan to visit bars and nightclubs from tomorrow must present a negative rapid antigen test result obtained in the last 24 hours. The new rules come as some 350 infections have been linked to bars and nightclubs since they were allowed to reopen last month.

MDT/AP

HONG KONG

Victim of pandemic, floating restaurant towed away

A landmark floating restaurant that fed Cantonese cuisine and seafood to Queen Elizabeth II, Tom Cruise and millions of other diners was towed from the Hong Kong harborfront yesterday after being closed by the pandemic.

The parent company of Jumbo Floating Restaurant couldn't find a new owner and lacked funds to maintain it after months of COVID-19 restrictions.

The massive floating restaurant designed like a Chinese imperial palace on Aberdeen Harbour was known for its Cantonese cuisine and seafood dishes. It received over 30 million guests since its establishment in 1976.



But Jumbo Floating Restaurant was forced to close in 2020 due to the pandemic, and all staff were laid off. Parent company Aberdeen Restaurant Enterprises

said it had become a financial burden to shareholders, as millions of Hong Kong dollars were spent on inspection and maintenance of the floating restaurant every

year even though the restaurant was not in operation.

“We do not foresee that (Jumbo Floating Restaurant) can resume business in the immediate future,” the company said. It said potential deals to keep the restaurant open were thwarted by the high operating costs.

Tugboats towed the restaurant away yesterday but it wasn't clear where it will berth next. The company planned to move it to a lower-cost site where maintenance could still be conducted.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam had previously rejected suggestions to bail out the restaurant, despite calls from lawmakers to preserve

the iconic landmark.

Lam said last month that the government had no plans to invest taxpayers' money into the restaurant as the government was “not good” at running such premises, despite calls from lawmakers to preserve the restaurant.

Some Hong Kong residents recalled the heyday of Jumbo Kingdom, and expressed disappointment in seeing the restaurant go. It was famed for its lavish banquet meals, with dishes such as roasted suckling pig, lobster and double-boiled bird's nest, a Chinese delicacy.

Wong Chi-wah, a boat operator in Aberdeen Harbour, said that in the glory days of the Jumbo Kingdom

in the 1990s, flocks of Japanese tourists would visit the restaurants.

“The streets were full of parked vehicles as visitors arrived in big groups,” he said.

Encore Sin, 71, said Hong Kong was losing something unique.

“If the restaurant leaves today, there is definitely a sense of loss, not just for people who live around this area but for the whole of Hong Kong,” said Sin.

“Over the past few decades, I've been to many places around the world to take photographs, but where else in the world are there such floating restaurants? I don't think there are any left.”

MDT/AP

CAMBODIA

Court convicts lawyer, dozens of others of treason

SOPHENG CHEANG,
PHNOM PENH

A Cambodian American lawyer and dozens of members of a now-dissolved opposition party were convicted of treason yesterday in a trial that was the latest move to tame all opposition to the long-running rule of Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Lawyer Theory Seng and most of the other defendants had been charged over a failed attempt by the leader of the defunct Cambodia National Rescue Party to return from exile in 2019. Cambodian authorities blocked Sam Rainsy's return and alleged the 60 defendants were involved in organizing his trip, which Theory Seng and the others have denied.

Cambodian courts are widely believed to be under the influence of Hun Sen, whose authoritarian style of rule has kept him in power for 37 years. The Cambodia National Rescue Party was his party's biggest rival before it was disbanded by a court ruling just ahead of national elections in 2018 that resulted in a clean sweep by Hun Sen's Cambodia People's Party.

"The mass trials against political opposition members are really about preventing any electoral challenge to Prime Minister Hun Sen's rule, but they have also come to symbolize the death of Cambodia's democracy," Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director of New York-based Human Rights Watch, said in an emailed statement. "By crea-

AP PHOTO



Cambodian-American lawyer Theory Seng (foreground) dressed in the Lady Liberty, talks to the media outside the Phnom Penh Municipal Court

ting a political dynamic that relies on intimidation and persecution of government critics, Hun Sen demonstrates his total disregard for democratic rights."

The Phnom Penh Municipal Court found Theory Seng and most of the others guilty of conspiracy to commit treason, defense lawyer Choung Chou Ngy said. Theory Seng was sentenced to six years in jail, and the others received sentences of five to eight years.

Many of the 60 defendants earlier fled into exile or went into hiding, and it wasn't immediately clear how many appeared in court for the verdict yesterday. According to Human Rights Watch, 27 of the defendants who are in exile

were tried in absentia.

Theory Seng stood outside the court as the verdict was announced, saying she wanted her arrest to be public and "not in the shadow." Media saw at least three police officers approach Theory Seng, hold her hand and body, and push her into a waiting police truck shortly after the verdict came.

She was garbed as Lady Liberty, in a light green gown and a crown with "Freedom" written on it, and from time to time, she raised up her imitation torch and shouted "free the political prisoners." She has worn thematic costumes to her court sessions to publicize her belief that Cambodia is not a democratic nation

and the trial is unfair.

She told reporters she was ready for a "sham" guilty verdict.

"I am ready and prepared to go to the notorious Cambodian prison for my political opinions, for my beliefs, for my belief in democracy, for my belief in freedom," she said. "I am ready to pay the price of prison in order that I live out my conscience and my belief in freedom and justice."

Choung Chou Ngy, who represents Theory Seng but not the other defendants, said he plans to file an appeal. He said the defendants who got five-year terms had their sentences suspended, but those with sentences of six to eight years were ordered jailed, and the judge ordered police to find

those who were sentenced in absentia so they could face justice.

U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia W. Patrick Murphy said on Twitter that the sentencing of Theory Seng and the others was deeply troubling.

"Freedom of expression and association, and tolerance of dissenting views, are vital components of democracy," he wrote. "We call on Cambodian authorities to release her and other human rights activists from unjust imprisonment."

The disbanding of the Cambodia National Rescue Party, its removal from the ballot, and a government crackdown on media and independence voices paved the way for Hun Sen's party to sweep the 2018 elections and claim every seat in the National Assembly. He has repeatedly stated his intention to stay in office until 2028 and has endorsed one of his sons to succeed him.

Sam Rainsy, Hun Sen's main political nemesis, has been in exile since 2016 to avoid serving prison sentences on defamation and other charges he says are politically motivated.

The trial of Theory Seng and her co-defendants began in 2020 but was suspended until December 2021 due to coronavirus restrictions. Initially, nearly 130 defendants were named and the proceeding was split into three trials for manageability.

In a related case in March, the court convicted 21 people of treason and related charges for their nonviolent political opposition to Cambodia's government. Seven exiled leaders of the Cambodia National Rescue Party, including Sam Rainsy, received 10-year prison terms in absentia. Another 13 defendants were ordinary party supporters whom the court ordered to serve more than three years. **MDT/AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Worries about economy grow amid truckers' strike

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's prime minister warned yesterday that the disruption of cargo transport could cause "irrecoverable" damages on the country's economy, as a nationwide truckers' strike entered its eighth day.

About 6,800 truckers were rallying Monday at various sites across South Korea, continuing to trigger a delay in the shipment and delivery of key items like steels, cement, petrochemicals and tires, the Transport Ministry said in a statement.

The statement said some steel and cement-related

AP PHOTO



factories halted their operations. It accused some striking truckers of obstructing cargo transports at

some major southeastern ports.

During a Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Han

Duck-soo, South Korea's No. 2 official, called the reported transport obstruction "illicit activities" that he said will never receive public support, according to Cho Yong-man, the 2nd vice culture minister who serves as a government spokesperson.

Cho cited Han as saying that the disruption of cargo transport could pose "a big irrecoverable blow" to South Korea's economy, which already faces other difficulties.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy said in a statement Monday that the first six days of the strike

caused an estimated 1.6 trillion won (\$1.2 billion) in damages.

Striking truckers are calling for an extension of temporary measures guaranteeing minimum wages amid soaring fuel prices. They met with government officials several times but each meeting ended without any breakthroughs.

In a statement Monday, the Cargo Truckers Solidarity said the Transport Ministry lacked the resolve and capacity to narrow differences over the truckers' demand. The Transport Ministry said that the sides were to meet again yester-

day evening.

Police said Monday morning that they had detained 44 striking truckers but released most of them except for two who were formally arrested. Two additional truckers were detained yesterday, the Transportation Ministry said.

South Korean officials and experts say the strike's damage has so far been limited to the country's domestic industry, though a prolonged strike may undermine the global supply chains already hit by Russia's assault on Ukraine and China's COVID-19 restrictions. There have been no reports of substantial disruptions of key South Korean export items such as semiconductors and automobiles yet, Industry Ministry officials said. **MDT/AP**

War isn't funny but humor helps Ukrainians cope with trauma

JOHN LEICESTER, KYIV

BECAUSE he'll shortly be deployed as a soldier on the battlefields of Ukraine, Serhiy Lipko and Anastasia Zukhvala chose to marry first, like a growing number of couples being torn asunder by war with Russia.

Like others, their nuptials were rushed and smaller than they would have been during peacetime, with just a few dozen close friends and family. She wore a simple crown of blue flowers in her hair. And then, because laughter can be medicinal and because Lipko was building a career as a comic before the defense of his country called, they headed to a stand-up comedy club in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv.

There, with his new wife watching from the wings, he took the stage in olive-green fatigues and soon had the crowd in stitches with close-to-the-bone humor about army and married life. He joked that military training with NATO instructors had been a great opportunity for him to practice his English, and how nervous he'd been about handling expensive military gear, for fear of breaking it.

The war isn't remotely funny, but Ukrainians are learning to laugh about the awfulness of it all. Not necessarily because they want to, but because they have to — to stay sane in the brutality that has killed tens of thousands of people, is upending Ukraine, millions of lives and the world order as it rages on front lines in the east and south of the country.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his troops, especially dead and wounded ones, are favorite targets of dark Ukrainian wartime humor. But there are red lines: Ukrainian dead aren't laughed about and the grimest battles, among them the brutal siege of Mariupol and the port city's Azovstal steelworks, are far too raw for jokes. The same is true of atrocities in Bucha and elsewhere.

"Tragedies cannot and will never be the object of humor," said Zukhvala, who also works as a stand-up co-



People attend Serhiy Lipko's stand-up comedy show in Kyiv

mic, as she and Lipko hugged with the tenderness of newlyweds after his show and scooped up armfuls of bouquets, wondering aloud how they'd find space for them at home.

"This is an absolutely crazy time, beyond ordinary experience," she said. "Our life now is made of paradoxes, and it can even be funny."

Ukraine's most famous comedian is Volodymyr Zelenskyy, now the country's president, elected in 2019. In the TV comedy series "Servant of the People," the former stand-up comic and actor played a lovable high school teacher who accidentally becomes president — before he later actually became one for real. But Zelenskyy hasn't had much cause for comedy since the Feb. 24 invasion thrust him into the role of wartime leader. His daily video addresses to the nation are often grim and forceful.

But while he works to rally international support and soldiers fight with tanks, artillery and tons of Western-supplied armaments, Ukrainians away from the front are using jokes and humor as weapons — against war-time anxiety and moroseness, against Russia and to feel as one, both laughing and crying together in their sorrow and anger.

Yuliia Shytko, 29, said she

felt in far higher spirits after chortling loudly with the rest of the crowd through Lipko and other comedians' routines in the basement comedy club, the vast majority of their jokes revolving around war-related themes.

"Laughing and stuff, that's how you cope," Shytko said.

Lipko and Zelenskyy crossed paths in comedy before war utterly altered their trajectories. The future president, then still an entertainer, was a juror in 2016 on the TV game show, "Make a comedian laugh." Lipko was a contestant. He wore camouflage fatigues because he was in the midst of military service and rattled off jokes about his army experiences. He made Zelenskyy laugh by quipping that he'd buy a PlayStation if he won the top prize — which he eventually did. They spoke in Russian then; they both stick to Ukrainian in public now.

Lipko is still riffing off army life, even as he prepares within days to leave behind his bride to fight. The army gave him a day off to tie the knot, a quick in-and-out of a marriage office where their comedian friends ruffled the registrar's feathers by joking around.

"We laughed a lot," said stand-up comic Anton Tymoshenko, who attended

and also performed later that night at the club.

Lipko's nickname in the army is "the comedian." During his routine, he joked that some things his fellow soldiers say and do are so funny he can't help but use them as fodder for his stand-up, despite having told them he wouldn't. Afterward, he said his comic outlook should help him endure in battle.

"I am a comedian who temporarily became a serviceman," he said. "I have plans and creative projects for after the war. There are things to live for."

Zukhvala said she tells herself that "we will win and everything will be fine." She wants a big wedding celebration when peace returns.

Tymoshenko said he and their other comedian friends will look after her while Lipko is away.

But he has worries of his own: He has been trying to persuade his parents to leave their village in the south that he feels is too close to the Russian advance, but to his dismay they're laughing off the danger. His mother quipped that should Russian missiles churn up her potato plot, that would spare her the spade work.

"My mother never joked before the war," he said. "They use my weapons against me ... and that's unfair." MDT/AP

this day in history

2000 BRITISH MARINES LEAVE SIERRA LEONE



The major contingent of the British military task force sent to help restore order in the West African state of Sierra Leone has left the country.

The departure of the prestigious Royal Marines was overseen by British Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, who said his government was proud of what they had done to restore stability.

Britain, the former colonial power in Sierra Leone, is handing responsibility for security to the United Nations.

About 300 UK troops and support staff will stay on in the war-torn African country for the next six to eight weeks to help establish a UK military advisory training team.

Most people in Freetown would prefer to see the British military continuing their confidence-building street patrols, but British ministers always insisted their mission to help the UN forces there was a short-term one.

Brigadier David Richards, commander of the British forces in Sierra Leone, told BBC Radio's Today programme: "The UN have a much stronger resolve now and are clearer about their mandate and have shown that they have the resolve to fight."

"When we arrived here about six weeks ago, they did appear on the verge of collapse. Today they have been transformed."

At the core of the continuing British effort will be the retraining of the demoralised Sierra Leone army.

Many of its soldiers — some of whom are children — are poorly trained and equipped.

Sierra Leone continues to face horrendous problems. A war is being fought in the countryside about which there is little reliable information.

The UN says that one million people have been affected.

The rebels hold the main diamond-producing area, which deprives the government of revenue and, it is alleged, attracts support for the rebels from neighbouring Liberia.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Sierra Leone's civil war saw nearly half the country's 4.5 million population displaced. At least 50,000 people died in the fighting and there were an estimated 100,000 victims of mutilation.

The economy was left in ruins and the country's infrastructure collapsed.

British troops entered Sierra Leone because a peace deal between government and rebels had broken down and rebel forces were scoring successes against the Sierra Leone army and the UN peacekeeping force.

In 2002 more than 17,000 foreign troops disarmed tens of thousands of rebels and militia fighters. The country now faces the challenge of reconstruction.

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
They will not be in the right frame of mind to put up with tactless comments. It will be important that you have your priorities straight.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
You must look into your options. You can make gains if you look at long-term investments. Travel may be confusing. Build on friendships.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Confusion regarding other people's money and joint ventures will come to a head. Your home environment may be volatile if precautions aren't taken.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Make alternate plans just in case you need to make a career shift. Avoid any erratic behavior or it could cause isolation at home. Take action.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
This is not the best day to visit relatives who get on your nerves. You would be wise to consider attending lectures that will broaden your awareness.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Take the whole family and make it an enjoyable outing. You will enjoy lavish forms of entertainment and should consider making arrangements early.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You can make money if you are wise in your choices. You are best not to nag or criticize. You need a break from your daily routine.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Problems with fire, gas, or oil may cause disruptions and annoyances. Direct your energy wisely. Try to keep a low profile.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
You must not lead someone on or show interest in them for the wrong reasons. Your courage and willpower will enable you to get rid of destructive habits as well.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Your suggestions for fund raising events will be well received. Secret affairs may be brought out in the open. You will reap the benefits if you put money into upgrading your residence.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You should channel your efforts into getting rid of bad habits. It might be best to work on your own; if possible, do your job out of your home today.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You will benefit through hidden assets and property investments. Get out and rub shoulders with people in high positions if possible.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

7	6	2						
						3	1	
			8					
		6	2				7	
	4	3						
	1		5	3	4			
				1				
6								

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	18	27	rain
Changchun	16	23	rain
Chengdu	20	31	overcast
Chongqing	21	31	cloudy
Fuzhou	23	25	rain
Guangzhou	24	27	rain
Guiyang	17	24	cloudy
Haikou	26	33	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	19	30	rain
Harbin	16	22	thunderstorms
Hefei	20	32	thunderstorms
Nanjing	20	30	rain
Shanghai	20	27	rain
Taipei	23	28	cloudy
Wuhan	21	32	fine
Hong Kong	27	29	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	13	21	overcast
Frankfurt	16	31	clear
Paris	16	31	clear
London	13	27	overcast
New York	18	28	overcast

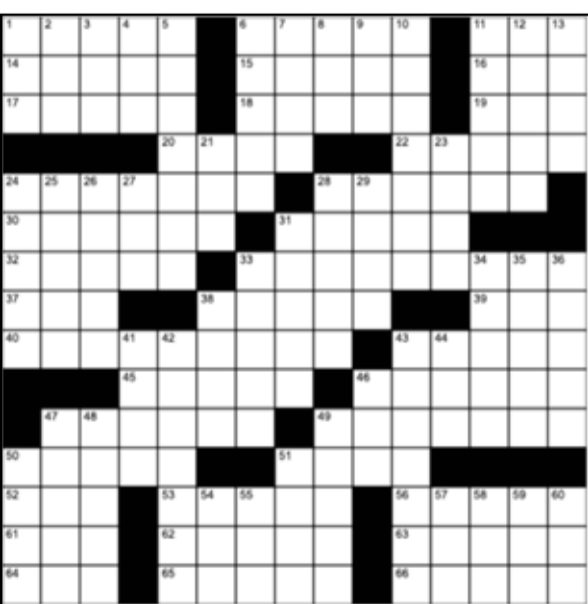
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Silly; 6- Horn-shaped bone; 11- Slangy negative; 14- Hit back, perhaps; 15- Rest atop; 16- Mil. address; 17- Onto; 18- As a companion; 19- Comic Margaret; 20- Cheerful; 22- Sensational; 24- Make a killing; 28- Brought about; 30- Linux variety; 31- Bundles; 32- Actor Ryan; 33- Airport; 37- Diarist Anais; 38- Divvy up; 39- Large body of water; 40- Bewitch; 43- Stomach woe; 45- Locale; 46- Relaxed; 47- Fix beforehand; 49- Went in; 50- Bird sound; 51- Cleveland's lake; 52- Awfully long time; 53- Astrologer Sydney; 56- Pardon; 61- Social connections; 62- Racket; 63- Muse of love poetry; 64- Drain-cleaning chemical; 65- Ventured; 66- Lure;

DOWN 1- 401(k) alternative; 2- Modern; 3- Penlight battery; 4- ATM maker; 5- Endless; 6- Fastening device; 7- Pinguin; 8- Stutz contemporary; 9- Smoking alternative; 10- Not pasted; 11- Mother-of-pearl; 12- Plant louse; 13- Timber; 21- Unsafe?; 23- The Beatles' "Back in the ___"; 24- Witchy woman; 25- Russian revolutionary leader; 26- Parades; 27- There you are!; 28- Christmas song; 29- Scads; 31- Pretty girl; 33- Aboriginal Alaskan; 34- Academy award; 35- 1980s attorney general; 36- Having auricular protuberances; 38- Skin disorder; 41- Finito; 42- Answer in words; 43- Spoke; 44- Levi's rival; 46- Singer DiFranco; 47- Fake; 48- Washer cycle; 49- Made a mistake; 50- Overlay with wood; 51- Gaelic language of Ireland or Scotland; 54- Extinct bird, once found in New Zealand; 55- Life support?; 57- Able was I ___ I saw Elba; 58- Brit's raincoat; 59- How was ___ know?; 60- Plaything;

Yesterday's solution

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



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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MARKETS

WORLD SHARES STEADY AFTER WALL STREET SINKS INTO BEAR MARKET

YURI KAGEYAMA, TOKYO

SHARES opened mostly higher in Europe yesterday and Asian shares recovered from the worst of their losses following Wall Street's tumble into what's called a bear market.

London and Frankfurt gained on the open but fell back slightly later in the morning. Shanghai advanced while Hong Kong ended flat. Tokyo and Paris declined.

On Monday, the benchmark S&P 500 lost 3.9%, taking it 21.8% below its peak. At the center of the sell-off is the U.S. Federal Reserve's effort to control inflation by raising interest rates. The Fed is scrambling to get prices under control and its main method is to raise rates, but that is a blunt tool that could slow the economy too much, causing a recession.

The retreat on Wall Street initially spooked investors across the world. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 skidded 3.6% after it reopened Tuesday from a holiday on Monday.

But global markets do not always move in lockstep with New



York, and in sharp declines some risk-hardy investors see an opportunity to snap up bargains.

Some economists are speculating that the Fed may raise its key rate by three-quarters of a percentage point when it meets on Wednesday. That's triple the usual amount and something the Fed hasn't done since 1994.

"Another day to digest the recent U.S. inflation data, and ano-

ther day closer to the June FOMC meeting, and global markets, we well as those here in Asia have been demonstrating that they don't like where the global economy sits right now," Robert Carnell, regional head of research Asia-Pacific at ING, said in a report.

Japan's Nikkei 225 shed 1.3% to 26,629.86. South Korea's KOSPI lost 0.5% to 2,492.97. Hong

Kong's Hang Seng was little changed, gaining less than 1 point to 21,067.99. The Shanghai Composite edged up 1.0% to 3,288.91.

Apart from jitters over inflation and what central banks are doing to temper surging prices, restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19 in China also have been weighing on market sentiment in Asia.

The shift by central banks, especially the Fed, toward higher interest rates has reversed the spectacular rise in share prices spurred by massive support for markets after the pandemic hit in early 2020.

Markets are bracing for more bigger-than-usual hikes, on top of some discouraging signals about the economy and corporate profits, including a record-low preliminary reading on consumer sentiment soured by high gasoline prices.

Investors are reconsidering what they're willing to pay for a wide range of stocks, from high-flying tech companies to industrial conglomerates. Tumbling in tandem with the S&P 500, the

Dow industrials sank 2.8% and the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite tumbled 4.7%.

One of the more reliable warning signals for an economic recession has been sounding. It involves Treasuries, the IOUs the U.S. government gives to investors who lend it money. The "yield curve," a chart showing how much in interest different Treasuries are paying, is watched for clues to how the bond market feels about the long-term outlook for the U.S. economy.

Yesterday, a closely followed part of the yield curve briefly lit up again for the second time this year. Two-year Treasuries traded at 3.39% while 10-year bonds were yielding 3.36%.

Usually, longer-term Treasuries offer higher yields than shorter-term ones, resulting in a chart with an upward sloping line. That's in part because investors typically demand higher yields to lock away their money for longer.

When yields for short-term Treasuries are higher than yields for long-term ones, market watchers call it an "inverted yield curve." When that chart has a downward sloping line, investors get nervous.

Another factor influencing inflation and investor sentiment is the price of oil. It remained near \$120 a barrel yesterday, about 60% up so far this year. **MDT/AP**

AD



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FOOTBALL

Costa Rica, New Zealand to play off for last World Cup place

STEVE MCMORRAN

GOVERNMENT workers in Costa Rica will be given extra time off for lunch to watch their national team take on New Zealand in a playoff to decide the last team to qualify for the World Cup in Qatar.

The edict from President Rodrigo Chaves allowing Costa Rican public sector workers to follow the broadcast in an extended lunch break today [Macau time] will come as something of a shock to the team from New Zealand, where rugby is the national sporting obsession.

When the playoff at the Ahmad bin Ali Stadium in Doha kicks off, in New Zealand it'll be 6 a.m. Wednesday local time.

World Cup qualifying campaigns have occasionally brought soccer to prominence in New Zealand. The so-called All Whites first qualified for the World Cup finals in 1982 through



Costa Rica's players sing the national anthem prior to a qualifying soccer match against the United States

gh a record campaign of 13 matches which saw them zigzag from China to Saudi Arabia.

In 2010 when they qualified to play in South Africa, where they were eliminated in group play after three draws, including one with Italy, public attention again spiked. The playoff mat-

ch against Bahrain brought in a record crowd, but soccer's time in the spotlight there was short-lived.

New Zealand reached this final qualifying match after emerging as the top team in the Oceania region, though their matches against mostly small Pacific Is-

land nations didn't break any TV ratings records. More recently, international friendlies against Peru, which New Zealand lost 1-0, and Oman, which ended in a 0-0 draw, have done little to build enthusiasm among those uninitiated in soccer's global appeal.

Costa Rica have been much more regular World Cup attendees, having qualified in 1990, 2002, 2006, 2014 and 2018.

The Costa Ricans finished fourth in a challenging CONCACAF qualifying campaign this time, but they go into today's match with wins from seven of their last nine games.

President Chaves, in recognition of the importance of the playoff, moved to ensure central government workers have the chance to see most of the match. He encouraged other employers to be similarly generous.

"June 14 [local time] is a very special day for all of us who love our 'Sele' and our Costa Rica,"

the President said. "More than 13,000 kilometers away there will be 11 warriors on the field to culminate a historic qualification."

Chaves said the extension to the lunch hour is designed "so that we can send all the good vibes and excitement of a people passionate about the most beautiful sport in the world."

Costa Rica, ranked 31st in the world, is known for the quality of its defense, and has Paris Saint Germain goalkeeper Keylor Navas at the back.

"We are going to give it our all," Navas said. "We're looking forward to it with a lot of enthusiasm, with tranquility, with the desire to enjoy ourselves and hopefully things will work out for us and we can win that game."

New Zealand, ranked No. 101, will field Newcastle United striker Chris Wood, who will be making his 68th international appearance. Wood said he was glad to hear Costa Rica consider him a key player.

"It's nice to know that my career has come of something and people take notice," Wood told New Zealand media. "But ultimately I am happy that they are worried about me because it is a sign that if they give me half a yard I will score. They need to be ready for it. MDT/AP

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OPINION

China Daily
 China Focus, Xinhua

INNOVATORS SEE TWO-WAY BENEFITS FROM CHINA'S ENTRY TO INTERNATIONAL IP TREATY

Chinese enterprises are enjoying easier access to the international protection of their design work as China has joined the Hague Agreement, a global treaty to govern the registration of industrial design.

A treaty of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the Hague Agreement, covering 94 countries, took effect in China on May 5.

Smartphone maker Xiaomi was one of the 49 Chinese innovators submitting applications for design patents that day.

With more than 500 international design patents, Xiaomi has adhered to the Hague system since 2015. Before China acceded to the agreement, the company had to file and pay for separate design protection applications in each member country, taking a lot of time dealing with different languages, currencies, patent review requirements, and high agency fees.

The agreement eliminates these inconveniences, allowing designers to submit one international application in one language and pay in one currency to apply for design protection in multiple contracting countries.

"The Hague Agreement significantly cuts our costs in overseas patent planning and greatly improves the efficiency of registration," said Liu Zhen, a legal manager of Xiaomi.

Electrical appliance manufacturer Midea also welcomed the simpler route for international design registration and protection. Midea IP official She Yan said the company could only submit applications to the WIPO in the past. "Now we can do it directly via China's National Intellectual Property Administration (NIPA), significantly contracting our filing formalities."

Ren Shengce, a professor with Shanghai International College of Intellectual Property, Tongji University, said "China's accession to the Hague Agreement meets the demand of Chinese innovators for international development, and motivates them to join international competition through persistent R&D and innovation."

He believed the Hague Agreement would attract more advanced technologies and ideas from abroad, and speed up the development by Chinese innovators in the fields of international mass consumer goods and creative design.

WIPO data show that in 2021, global innovators submitted over 6,700 international applications for design patents in the Hague system, and applications from China ranked in the top 10.

This reflects how innovation entities are paying more attention to IP protection and highlights the vitality of Chinese innovation and creativity, said Wei Baozhi, head of the NIPA's patent office examination management department.

He also noted that China's entry into the Hague system shows its openness to participating in the global IP governance system and provides convenience for overseas enterprises to enter China's dynamic and broad market.

MEPs OBJECT TO INCLUDING GAS, NUCLEAR IN GREEN INVESTMENT

THE BUZZ

European lawmakers from the environment and economy committees objected yesterday to including fossil gas and nuclear in the EU's list of sustainable activities, in a blow to the bloc's executive arm.

The European Commission earlier this year proposed including nuclear energy and natural gas in its plans for building a climate-friendly future, dividing member countries and drawing outcry from environmentalists as "greenwashing."

But MEP's from the two committees adopted an objection to the proposal, with 76 votes to 62 votes and 4 abstentions.

The resolution will now be examined by the whole EU Parlia-

ment next month. The Commission will need to withdraw or amend its regulation if an absolute majority of lawmakers oppose it.

The green labeling system from the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, defines what qualifies as an investment in sustainable energy. Under certain conditions, gas and nuclear energy could be part of the mix, making it easier for private investors to inject money into both.

"MEPs recognize the role of nuclear and fossil gas in guaranteeing stable energy supply during the transition to a sustainable economy," the Parliament said.

AP PHOTO



CONGO MILITARY ACCUSES RWANDA OF INVASION; REBELS SEIZE TOWN

AL-HADJI KUDRA MALIRO & JUSTIN KABUMBA, GOMA

CONGO'S military accused Rwanda of "no less than an invasion" after M23 rebels captured a key town yesterday [Macau time]. The military vowed that Congolese forces would defend their homeland, marking a dramatic escalation in tensions between the two Central African neighbors.

The statement from Gen. Sylvain Ekenge, spokesman for the military governor of North Kivu province, came hours after the town of Bunagana fell into the hands of the M23.

"The Rwandan defense forces have this time decided to violate ... our territorial integrity by occupying the border town of Bunagana," the military said in a statement, adding that it constituted "no less than invasion of the Democratic Republic of Congo."

There was no immediate reaction from the government of Rwanda, but the government there has strongly denied accusations over the years that it supports the Congolese rebel group. Many of the M23 fighters are Congolese ethnic Tutsis and Rwanda's president is of Rwandan Tutsi descent.

In a statement, a spokesman for the rebel

group called on Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi to open direct negotiations with them and said they seized the town only to make it safe enough for civilians to return after they fled recent violence.

"In the event of a new threat against our positions or the civilian population, our movement's troops have received the order to follow and annihilate the threat no matter where it comes from," M23 spokesman Willy Ngoma said in the statement.

Relations between Rwanda and Congo have been fraught for decades. Rwanda alleges that Congo gave refuge to the ethnic Hutus who carried out the 1994 Rwandan genocide that killed at least 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The two countries have long accused each other of supporting various rival armed groups.

Late last month, Rwanda's military accused neighboring Congolese forces of injuring several civilians in cross-border shelling.

The M23 rose to prominence more than a decade ago when its fighters seized Goma, the largest city in Congo's east which sits along the border with Rwanda. After a peace deal, many of M23's fighters were integrated into the national military.

Then earlier this year the group appeared to make a

comeback, launching an offensive against Congo's military after saying the government had failed to live up to its decade-long promises.

The key town that was seized, Bunagana, is only 60 kilometers (37 miles) northeast of Goma, which also serves as a hub for international aid organizations and the U.N. peacekeeping mission known as MONUSCO.

Bunagana, near the border with Uganda, is also an important transit point for goods being imported into Congo from as far away as China.

In Uganda, police spokesman Fred Enanga said that more than 100 Congolese soldiers, fleeing fierce fighting with rebels, crossed the border and "surrendered" to Ugandan officials. He said the Congolese soldiers will be moved to Rutshuru, another eastern Congo town near the Uganda border.

While the rebels claimed they took the town of Bunagana in order to stabilize it, local leaders yesterday urged Congo's military to reclaim it.

"We deplore the M23 rebel attack and call on the Congolese government to track down and neutralize these rebel groups so that state authority can return," said Innocent Ndagije, a civic leader in Bunagana. **MDT/AP**

Austria The government yesterday presented a package of measures aimed at cushioning the impact of high inflation that includes 500-euro payments for all residents and a three-month delay to a new levy on carbon dioxide emissions. The government put the price of immediate measures at about 5 billion euros and said the package will cost a total of 28 billion euros through 2026.



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson defended his plan to send asylum-seekers of various nationalities to Rwanda just hours before the first plane was set to leave Tuesday, saying that efforts to block the flights were "abetting the work of criminal gangs" involved in smuggling people across borders. Johnson's government has reached an agreement with Rwanda to deport people who enter the U.K. illegally to the East African country in exchange for millions of pounds (dollars) in development aid.



Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon (pictured) launched her campaign for a second independence referendum yesterday, arguing that Scotland would be economically better off outside the United Kingdom. Sturgeon, who leads the Scottish National Party as well as the devolved government in Scotland, said it's the right time to revisit the case for Scotland to leave the U.K.

Mexico Thieves broke into a freight storage area at the Pacific coast seaport of Manzanillo and stole 20 freight containers loaded with partly refined gold and silver ore and television sets, the Mexican Employers Federation said. According to local press reports, about 10 armed thieves forced their way into a private freight dispatch yard near the port, subdued employees and then took several hours to search for the shipping containers they wanted.