



**JP MORGAN IS EXPECTING THE NEW PUBLIC TENDER FOR GAMING LICENSES TO COMMENCE IN LATE JULY OR AUGUST**

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**200 NON-LOCALS STAGE PROTEST URGING EMPLOYERS TO PAY FOR QUARANTINE FEES**

P5

**AFGHANISTAN QUAKE KILLS 1,000 PEOPLE, DEADLIEST IN TWO DECADES**

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AP PHOTO



**Indonesia** President Joko Widodo is planning to meet the leaders of Russia and Ukraine following the Group of Seven summit in Germany later this month. Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said yesterday that Widodo will travel to Kyiv and Moscow after attending the G-7 summit in the Bavarian village of Elmau on June 26-27.

AP PHOTO

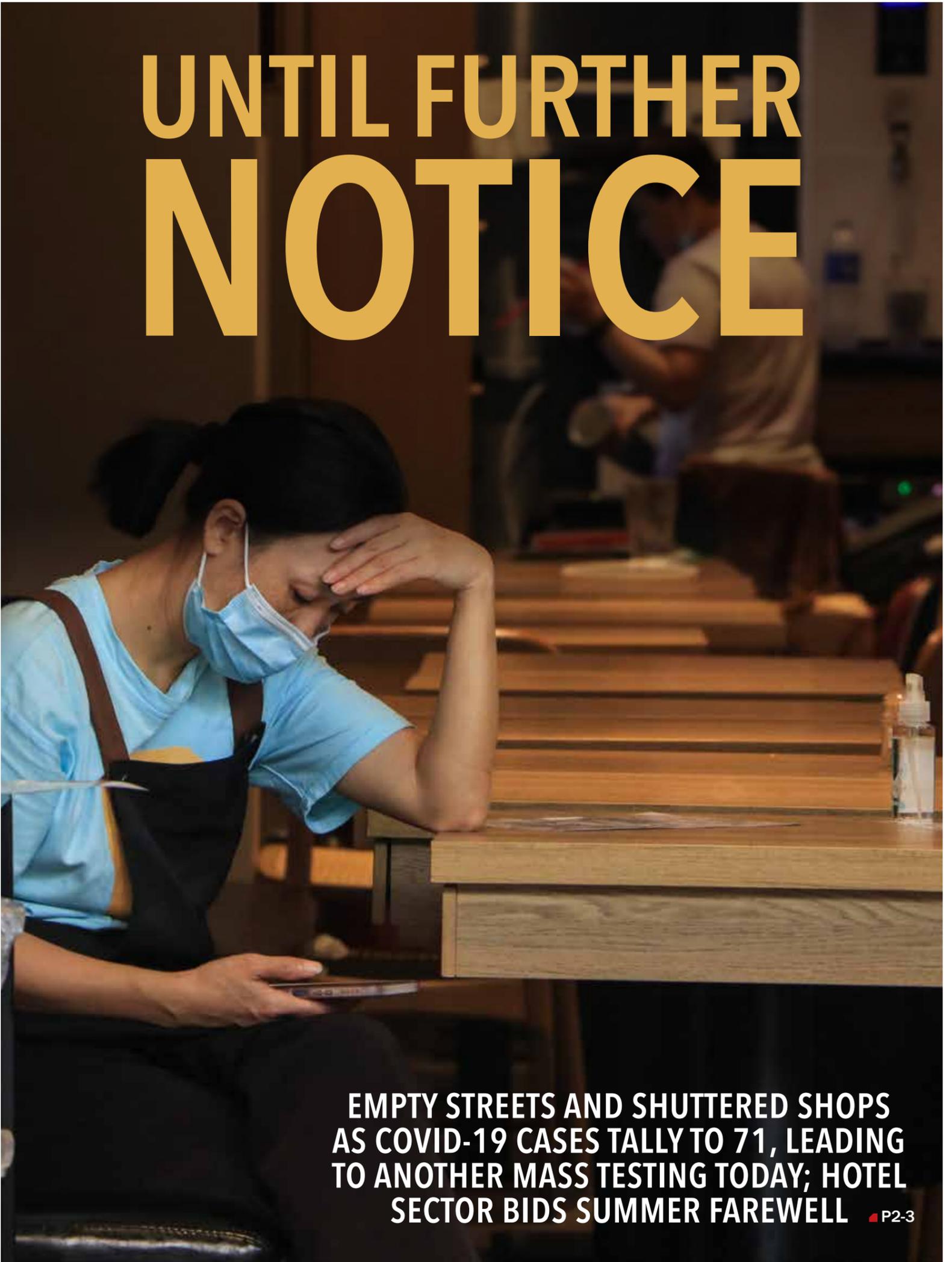


**Australia** The state of Victoria has become the first in the country to pass a law banning the public display of Nazi swastikas, as concerns grow about the rate at which local young people are being radicalized. The Parliament of Victoria, Australia's second-most populous state, passed laws late Tuesday that set penalties of 22,000 Australian dollars and 12 months in prison for displaying the Nazi swastika, or Hakenkreuz.

**Russia** A drone strike caused a fire at a refinery in southwestern Russia near the border with Ukraine yesterday, but no one was hurt and the blaze was contained quickly, officials said. The fire engulfed industrial equipment at the Novoshakhtinsk oil processing plant in the Rostov-on-Don region. The authorities said that dozens of firefighters extinguished the flames in a half-hour and no one was hurt. The refinery said in a statement that the fire was caused by a strike carried out by two drones, describing it as a "terrorist" act. It didn't give further details, but the state news agency Tass said that two Ukrainian drones flew over the plant and one of them slammed into a heat exchanger, triggering the fire.

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RENATO MARQUES



**EMPTY STREETS AND SHUTTERED SHOPS AS COVID-19 CASES TALLY TO 71, LEADING TO ANOTHER MASS TESTING TODAY; HOTEL SECTOR BIDS SUMMER FAREWELL**

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COVID-19 OUTBREAK

# The quietest day of the year

RENATO MARQUES

**Y**ESTERDAY was probably Macau's quietest day of the year so far, with the city coming virtually to a standstill.

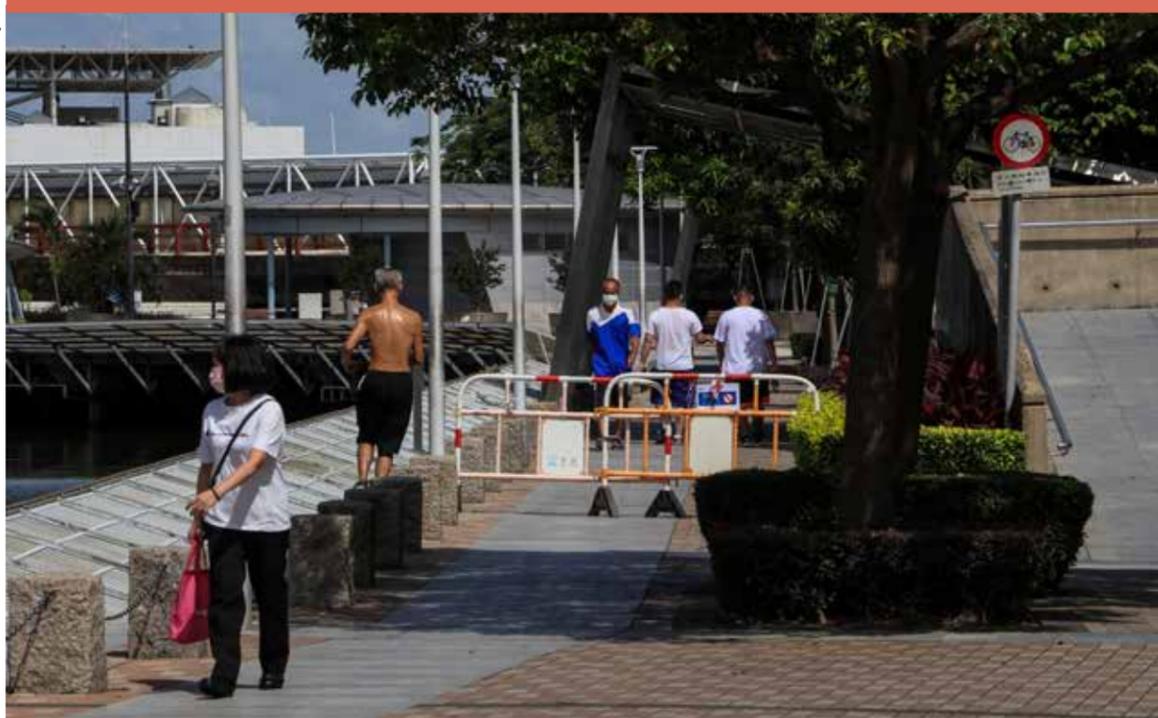
Following the guidelines laid out by the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center at Tuesday's press briefing, most companies and businesses closed their doors for the day, with some even posting signs stating that they intend to be closed until June 24 (Friday) at least.

As the Times strolled around the city observing the traffic, or lack thereof, the number of closed gates in local stores became innumerable.

On the other hand, the number of people walking on the sidewalks was so reduced that it almost became quantifiable: a strange scene for a mid-weekday during rush hour.

On the streets, and besides public transport, operating with almost no passengers, most of the vehicles circulating were either scooters from local food and grocery delivery

RENATO MARQUES



companies or ambulances, police vehicles, and even some unmarked government vehicles, driven by people in full Personal Protective Equipment.

Also following the government's instructions, most of the Food and Beverage establishments were only accepting takeaway orders, almost exclusively picked up by the delivery

companies. Some establishments even opted to close completely to wait for a more profitable business day and some others decided to take advantage of the lull for deep

cleaning and disinfection to occupy their staff for the day.

With schools closed, some children were seen in the company of their parents, trying to convince



ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE city will see another round of mass SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid testing (NAT), in a shorter timeframe, from 9 a.m. today, a local health official announced yesterday.

At the regular health press conference, pulmonologist Alvis Lo, director of the Health Bureau (SSM), announced that the government will run another round of citywide NATs. This round will be completed in 39 hours, finishing at noon on June 24.

Directly after its release, the announcement attracted a staggering amount of criticism on social media and in various chat groups.

Yesterday, the entire city was required by the SSM to undertake a SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen test (RAT).

In this round of mass NATs, there will be 53 sample collection stations: 32

71 CASES

## GOV'T TO RUN ANOTHER – SHORTER – ROUND OF MASS NAT

common stations, 14 stations for paid tests, and seven stations for special-needs groups. Priority lanes will be set up at all common stations to cater to children under age three, elderly above age 70, disabled and pregnant individuals. These persons may be accompanied by a carer.

All test subjects at any common stations will need to make prior bookings. They will not be tested before or after their booking time.

The main difference in this round of tests is that stations for special needs groups will operate common stations between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. Non special-needs groups will be allowed to book at such stations

during these hours.

This move is understood to reduce the duration of the mass NAT.

Before the end of the press conference, Lo recommended all people take a RAT prior to their departure for the mass NAT. However, he emphasized that it is not a mandatory requirement. "Even if you can't do [the RAT], our stations will not bar you from entering," the health official emphasized.

Yesterday, the Macao Government Tourism Office also announced that an unopened hotel, the England Marina Club Hotel, located next to the Broadway hotel in a real estate complex, will serve as a new quarantine hotel to accommodate people with positive NAT results.

RENATO MARQUES



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tigen Tests, taken at home, yielded positive or inconclusive results; and at Hotel Fortuna, where health authorities, firemen, and police constantly entered and exited the building while successive ambulances arrived at the main door.

#### SOME NOT SO COMPLIANT

While most of the population seemed to comply strictly with the guidelines of the health authorities, others appeared to be unwilling to comply and decided to treat it as a normal day, even while signage, police lines, perimeters, or barricades stringently forbade the public from crossing.

At Guia Hill fitness walk, for instance, a few people were seen defying the instructions marking the venue as "Temporarily Closed" and continuing their jogging and physical exercises as usual.

A similar sight would have met anyone walking down to the Reservoir loop and the adjacent playground facilities, where several people were also continuing their regular fitness and leisure activities, taking advantage of the lack of security in the area.

In the name of truth and accuracy, it must be said that in both cases, not many people were seen defying the rules, and most of them were keeping an adequate distance from each other.

the adults that "it was okay" to pass under the taped line to play on the slides and other playground equipment. Nonetheless, the adults appeared unconvinced by such en-

treates and tried to distract them with other activities.

The ordinary hustle and bustle of the city yesterday seemed to have been limited to only a few localized

spots: the posts where the nucleic acid tests for specific categories of people were taking place, and above all, the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center (CHCSJ) and the

buildings that were classified as red zones of confinement.

Of those, the larger congregations were seen at CHCSJ, where many people were taken whose Rapid An-

## Hotel sector in yet another crisis, bids summer farewell

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE goal was concrete: To recover and see a boost in visitor arrivals this coming summer.

But now with the fresh outbreak facing the city, the hotel and tourism sector is bidding this summer goodbye.

The city has already been bitten by the lockdown in Shanghai and several districts in the Greater Bay Area, as well as the strict entry measures put in place to implement a zero-Covid strategy.

While most countries have been operating under their own variations of a "new normal," Macau is brought to a standstill by the 71 positive cases that were recorded after eight months of no local infection.

This led to nation-wide mass testing, another round of which commences today at 9 a.m. – in addition to the rapid antigen tests that the population complied with yesterday.

With such instances, travel sentiment has been damaged and regulations

FLORA TANG



imposed by the neighboring regions are discouraging travelers from entering Macau.

Moreover, the city is in a partial shutdown as restaurants are either closed or are only providing take-away services, while non-essential government services and banks have halted operations.

"It seems that the summer is gone," Rutger Verschuren, a hotelier and the president of the Macau Hotel Association, told the Times.

"We had some pick up in May and [were] slowly recovering; and June, which is traditionally a [busy] month was not going too bad after all," Verschuren, who is also the Area Vice President – Macau Operations for Artyzen Hospitality Group, said.

The association hoped to follow the following timeline: to recover in July, remain busy in August, and hopefully enjoy a more profitable September.

These hopes were formed after the government lessened the quarantine period from 14 days to 10 days for foreign arrivals, and later hinted that the observation period could be further reduced to seven days.

However, "that is gone now," Verschuren said. "We thought we were getting out of this [pandemic] by now," he lamented. Given the current situation, the industry is expecting at least two months before another recovery could occur.

With this timeline and recovery forecast, the association hopes that the pandemic will be under control by the second half of August, also considering that the government will allow two weeks to pass with no new cases before they be-

gin to loosen restrictions. Only then can they see a recovery in the sector.

September is considered a quiet month for the industry as there are no long holidays in the mainland during this month. However, the Golden Week in October contributes to an increase in arrivals to the SAR.

However, the executive refuses to be optimistic, noting, "We don't dare to make any predictions at the moment with the way things are going."

### HOTEL PRICES 'SERIOUSLY LOW' FOR EMPLOYEES

**THE** hotels are currently offering attractive rates to non-local employees to cater to those who live in the neighboring region. Some are paid for by their companies, while others are required to bear their own accommodation expenses. "Occupancy is not low, but the room rates are definitely seriously low," said Verschuren. With the current business downturn about to last from

six weeks to two months, the industry is in turmoil, particularly for the F&B industry, which is "suffering tremendously" from the shutdown of the city. Also, the executive revealed that most hotels are better staffed compared to six months ago as the government has "requested [the companies] to replace some blue-card holders with local employees upon the end of their contracts."

ANTHONY LAM

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

# HEALTH BUREAU DEFENDS CROWDING FOR MASS NAT

**C**ROWDS gathering at citywide SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test (NAT) stations is crucial to containing the spread of the virus, a health official asserted yesterday.

Since this round of recorded SARS-CoV-2 infections started this past Saturday, the government has been urging local residents to refrain from gathering and to stay home. Residents are also encouraged to minimize movement within the city.

However, members of the public have expressed their concerns on various platforms and media about the mass gatherings at citywide NAT stations. Controversy has grown since Sunday this week, the opening day of the previous round of mass testing.

The matter was raised again at yesterday's regular health press briefing.

Pulmonologist Alvis Lo, director of Health Bureau (SSM), admitted to the fact, while adding that NATs are best at detecting infections due to their high sensitivity in detecting the nucleic acid of the virus.

The health chief highlighted that the SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen test (RAT), that was made mandatory for everybody in Macau yesterday, acted as a complementary tool alongside the mass or common NAT. It is more accessible and practicable for the general public.

People were asked to upload their RAT results to a government

ANTHONY LAM



self-declaration platform along with a picture of the RAT kit.

Lo also said that bureau workers would be able to see the pictures of the RAT results uploaded by test takers. "Please don't think that we will not check the uploaded pictures; we did and will do so," the health chief revealed.

He added that this is the reason why the bureau managed to correct erroneous declarations made by test-takers who had mis-

interpreted results.

At the same time, all patients whose RATs have returned as positive result will be taken to the public hospital by ambulance for confirmatory NATs, after which their results are posted to the self-declaration platform.

The platform was overloaded yesterday morning when residents rushed to take the RATs and upload their results.

Moreover, he explained that different countries had different

testing strategies. Some relied mostly on NATs while some took a NAT and RAT hybrid strategy. He insisted that the government's current tactic is the most appropriate for Macau.

One journalist was concerned about the excessive amount of personal data requested by the SSM on the self-declaration platform. Lo explained that it was collected to facilitate contact tracing if a positive case is detected.

However, the fields on the pla-

form that ask test takers for the names of their workplaces or schools have been withdrawn.

In addition, the platform requires test-takers to agree to certain terms and conditions, which include but are not limited to surrendering their personal data. The clause in the terms emphasized that "the provision of all personal information [...] is voluntary." Without accepting the terms, the platform will not take any declaration. For the time being, it is unclear whether not declaring the results will lead to any consequences, such as not being allowed to enter certain venues.

The health chief pledged that "we will not have time to conduct extra processing of the data."

## 11 CASES FROM RAT

Meanwhile, the health chief hinted that identifying 11 preliminary positive cases from a total of 370,000 RAT results uploaded in half a day was worrying. He started off by saying that the RATs had detected 11 such cases which had to be confirmed, but in proceeding he referred to the cases as if they had been confirmed.

Defending the need for the RATs, the health chief suggested that if the 11 people had not taken the test, the virus might have been transmitted to other family members. The growth, he hinted, might have been exponential.

Therefore, Lo insisted, people who have not taken a RAT as of 5 p.m. yesterday should still self-test.

# Gov't announcement of special Covid test lambasted on social media

ANTHONY LAM

**F**OLLOWING the announcement on Tuesday afternoon that specific categories of people would be subject to a special Covid test, details were only released by the government shortly before midnight on Tuesday, with information that many social media users found confusing.

The press release, which was originally released in Chinese, wrote: "Inspection targets in key areas include: People who live, work or have activities in the area surrounded by Avenida de Horta e Costa, Rua do Almirante Costa Cabral, Estrada do Repouso and Avenida do Almirante Lacerda."

This English version was extracted from the government's official press release, which was made available to the media at about 1 a.m.



yesterday.

Commenting upon the official Facebook post from the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre, social media users criticized the announcement as too confusing and difficult to understand.

For example, social me-

dia users considered the wording "people who have activities in the area" to be too vague. Members of the public are greatly concerned about whether they are included as a testable group, especially those who do not live or work within the area but had visited it

briefly for an errand such as collecting a purchase.

At about 1 p.m. yesterday, following much online protest about the confusion, the center issued another release clarifying that "individuals who have been at the aforementioned locations for a total

period of more than one hour on or after 16 June" would be part of the key test group.

However, the clarification did not satisfy social media users. One user wondered how large the testable population would be, given such a broad definition, especially when only a limited number of NAT stations would be available to them.

With such a large group of people gathering at a limited number of NAT stations, the user questioned whether this would pose a higher risk.

Another user considered it very easy to fall within the definition, given the size and popularity of the zone. One user questioned why all the designated NAT stations are located on the Macau Peninsula with none in Taipa or Coloane. They pointed out that a cross-district lifestyle is very common in Macau.

Furthermore, some social media users pointed out that the announce-

ment did not provide advice in consecutive steps. In fact, the center required key groups to have negative SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen test (RAT) results before leaving homes for the extra NAT. However, the RAT requirement was put near the end of the announcement.

Another local social media user questioned the effectiveness of the computer graphics, in which the government applied a blue filter to designate the zone to be tested.

Later, coincidentally, another social media user posted a self-made version of the map on a Facebook group. The user colored the four border streets in red and magnified the names of the four streets on the map.

In addition, nearly two and a half years into the Covid-19 pandemic, the center's title on the Facebook page is still available only in Chinese, making it difficult for non-Chinese speakers, including Portuguese people, to search for the page.

# JP Morgan expects new licenses bid from July as gaming law promulgated today

LYNZY VALLES

**B**ROKERAGE JP Morgan is expecting the new public tender for the city's gaming licenses to commence in late July or August, basing its expectations on the timeline of 2001.

The note was issued after lawmakers approved the new gaming law Tuesday, cementing increased oversight of casino operations by the government.

In the note, analysts DS Kim and Livy Lyu remarked, "We recall, for the original concession 20 years ago, that public bidding kicked off around 40 days after the [original] law was passed and lasted for about three months."

"Based on this, we expect the bidding to kick off in August (or late July), the result of which could be announced by early November," the analysts said, as cited in a report issued by GGRAsia.

The approval of the long-awaited gaming law amendment will pave the way for new casino licenses to be issued following the expiry of the current ones in De-



ember after an extension from the original termination date of June 26.

According to the brokerage, the result of the tender process may be announced even by November.

Yesterday, the Official Gazette has published that the new gaming law will come into effect today amid the continuing tou-

rism drought that is causing the casinos to lose millions of dollars every day.

Amendments to the Macau SAR's Gaming Law No. 16/2001 will give the Chief Executive the power to terminate a gaming license without judicial procedures if a casino operator infringes upon national security.

The new license regime will

see a maximum of six gaming concessions granted, with no sub-concessions allowed. Furthermore, the maximum term of the concession contracts will be 10 years (with three years of exceptional extension), down from 20 years.

The approval of the new law also comes amid a fresh outbreak of Covid-19 that is bringing the

city to a standstill, with 71 new cases recorded as of yesterday afternoon, triggering casino stocks to fall by as much as 3.38% earlier this week.

For eight months, Macau has recorded zero Covid-19 cases in the local community.

Arrivals from Macau to Zhuhai must also undergo a 14-day lockdown, harming tourism sentiment.

Over the past two months, the battered industry has suffered a slump in revenue. In April it recorded its worst losses in 18 months, with gross gaming revenue (GGR) reaching only MOP2.68 billion as Macau endured stricter border restrictions whenever fresh outbreaks arose in neighboring regions.

Subsequently in May, GGR dropped to MOP3.34 billion: the second worst figure since travel resumed for visitors from mainland China in September 2020.

According to JPMorgan Chase & Co analysts, including DS Kim, Macau's GGR may hit "near-zero levels" for at least a few weeks until the situation is under control.

## 200 non-local workers on strike over mainland quarantine fees

**O**VER 200 non-resident workers rallied from Cotai to a park nearby the Liaison Office, urging their employers to shoulder the quarantine fee they would have to undertake in Zhuhai.

In a video accessed by the Times, the construction workers could be seen crossing the bridge from Taipa to Macau on foot as their form of protest.

In a statement issued by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), the office said that according to the foreign employment law, the quarantine fee is not a legal obligation of the employer.

DSAL personnel were deployed to the site.

"The authorities call on relevant employees to express their demands rationally, and in response to the pandemic, they should avoid gatherings to prevent the spread of the infection,"



Workers seen striking a protest

DSAL said in a statement.

It added that the bureau will follow up with both the employers and the employees.

Due to the outbreak in the city, individuals entering Zhuhai from Macau since June 15 shall report to their

communities, employers or hotels of accommodation immediately, undergo a seven-day home quarantine (outdoor activities not allowed) and another seven-day home health monitoring (staying at home is strongly advised). LV

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## SOUTH CHINA FLOODS FORCE TENS OF THOUSANDS TO EVACUATE

**MAJOR** flooding has forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of people in southern China, with more rain expected.

Parts of the manufacturing hub of Guangdong suspended classes, office work and public transport amid rising waters and the threat of landslides.

In the neighboring province of Jiangxi, almost 500,000 people have seen damage to their homes and their lives uprooted.

Roughly the same number have been affected in Guangdong, largely in the cities of Shaoguan, Heyuan and Meizhou.

The heavy rainfall has collapsed roads in some parts of cities and swept away houses, cars and crops, and more rain is forecasted for coming days. Chinese authorities on Sunday issued the year's first red alert, the most severe warning, for possible mountain torrents.

In Zhejiang province north of Guangdong, rescue crews in inflatable boats brought out residents trapped in their homes in inundated villages.

Further north, storm warnings were issued for much of the eastern provinces, including the capital Beijing, while reservoirs in the central province of Henan were at flood level and were releasing torrents of water downstream.

China regularly experiences flooding during the summer months, most frequently in central and southern areas that tend to receive the most rainfall. This year's flooding is the worst in decades in some areas and comes on top of strict COVID-19 regulations that have strangled travel, employment and ordinary life in much of the country.

China's worst floods in recent years were in 1998, when more than 2,000 people died and almost 3 million homes were destroyed, mostly along the Yangtze, China's mightiest river. **MDT/AP**

# JAPAN PM SAYS DIALOGUE WITH CHINA, S. KOREA KEY TO STABILITY

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

**JAPANESE** Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Tuesday that talks with China's leader are key to regional and international peace and stability amid growing tensions over territorial disputes and Beijing's increased military activity around Japan.

"It is important to maintain stable and constructive relations" between Japan and China, Kishida said at a party leaders' debate in Tokyo ahead of July 10 parliamentary elections.

Asked about a possible summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping when the two countries mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations in September, Kishida said nothing has been decided, but "Dialogue is important. I hope to think in concrete terms."

Japan sees China's increasingly assertive military activity in the East and South China Seas as a threat to some of the world's busiest sea lanes.

Japan is especially concerned about Chinese military and coast guard activity in the East China Sea near the Japanese-controlled Senkaku islands, which Beijing also claims and calls Diaoyu.

Japan's government said



Fumio Kishida, Japanese Prime Minister and president of ruling Liberal Democratic Party

Tuesday it protested to Beijing after finding that China has set up a new oil drilling rig in a contested area of the East China Sea.

Dialogue with South Korea, despite troubled relations stemming from Japan's actions during World War II, is also important considering the worsening security environment in

the region, Kishida said.

Asked about a possible meeting with new South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol when both leaders are invited to the June 29-30 NATO summit in Madrid, Kishida said nothing has been decided, "but dialogue is important."

Kishida said stable relations between the two sides depend

on efforts by Seoul to settle their disputes, including one over South Korean court decisions awarding compensation to wartime Korean workers in Japanese factories.

Kishida also said he will prioritize policies to ease surging energy and food prices triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. **MDT/AP**

## Man gets 18-month term for sex assault of Alibaba employee

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

**A** high-profile sexual assault against an Alibaba employee was sentenced to 18 months in prison yesterday, months after the employee went public about her assault and sparked renewed conversation of the treatment of women in Chinese society.

The defendant, Zhang Guo, was a representative from a supermarket that was in talks for business dealings with Alibaba, the Chinese e-commerce giant. Zhang had met the female Alibaba employee, surnamed Zhou, at a business dinner in July 2021.

Zhou later accused Zhang and another male Alibaba colleague of



plying her with alcohol. She said she was sexually assaulted at the dinner, and later again in her hotel room. She went public with her accusations on Alibaba's internal message board after she said that she had received no satisfactory response from the company.

A court in Jinan on We-

nesday found Zhang to be guilty of forcible indecency against Zhou while she was drunk at the dinner and the next day in her hotel room, and sentenced him to prison, according to a statement issued by the court on its official WeChat account.

It also said Zhang did not exhibit remorse nor

plead guilty for his actions.

When Zhou went public with her accusations, the case drew much attention online. Alibaba faced backlash for how it handled the situation.

Shortly after, Alibaba fired the male colleague accused of assault and stated that it had "zero

tolerance" over sexual assault. The colleague, surnamed Wang, faced a 15-day detention after Chinese prosecutors dropped the case against him.

Zhou's lawyer, Du Peng, told The Associated Press three other legal cases are pending, one of which was appealing the decision to not prosecute Wang. Zhou did not immediately comment.

In December, Alibaba terminated Zhou's employment, stating that she was dismissed for spreading false information about her assault and that her actions had negatively impacted the company.

Zhou's termination came even as Alibaba CEO Daniel Zhang pledged to improve the company's culture and formulate anti-sexual harassment policies at Alibaba.

Alibaba did not immediately comment. **MDT/AP**

SRI LANKA

# PM says economy 'has collapsed,' unable to buy oil

KRISHAN FRANCIS, COLOMBO

**S**RI Lanka's debt-laden economy has "collapsed" after months of shortages of food, fuel and electricity, its prime minister told lawmakers yesterday, in comments underscoring the country's dire situation as it seeks help from international lenders.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe told Parliament the South Asian country is "facing a far more serious situation beyond the mere shortages of fuel, gas, electricity and food. Our economy has completely collapsed."

While Sri Lanka's crisis is considered its worst in recent memory, Wickremesinghe's assertion that the economy has collapsed appeared intended to emphasize to his critics and opposition lawmakers that he has inherited a difficult task that can't be fixed quickly, as the economy founders under the weight of heavy debts, lost tourism revenue and other impacts from the pandemic, as well as surging costs for commodities.

Lawmakers of the country's two main opposition parties are boycotting Parliament this week



Sri Lanka's new Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe

to protest against Wickremesinghe, who became prime minister just over a month ago and is also finance minister, for not having delivered on his pledges to turn the economy around.

Wickremesinghe said Sri Lanka is unable to purchase imported

fuel, even for cash, due to heavy debts owed by its petroleum corporation.

"Currently, the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is \$700 million in debt," he told lawmakers. "As a result, no country or organization in the world is willing to provide

fuel to us. They are even reluctant to provide fuel for cash," he said.

Wickremesinghe took office in May after days of violent protests over the country's economic crisis forced his predecessor to step down. In his comments yesterday, he blamed the previous

government for failing to act in time to turn the situation around, as Sri Lanka's foreign reserves dwindled.

The foreign currency crisis has crimped imports, creating severe shortages of food, fuel, electricity and other essentials like medicines, forcing people to stand in long lines to fulfill basic needs.

"If steps had at least been taken to slow down the collapse of the economy at the beginning, we would not be facing this difficult situation today. But we lost out on this opportunity. We are now seeing signs of a possible fall to rock bottom," he said.

Sri Lanka has been muddling through mainly supported by \$4 billion in credit lines from neighboring India. But Wickremesinghe said India would not be able to keep Sri Lanka afloat for too long.

It also has gotten pledges of \$300 million-\$600 million from the World Bank to buy medicine and other essential items.

Sri Lanka has already announced that it is suspending repayment of \$7 billion in foreign debt due for repayment this year, pending the outcome of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund on a rescue package. It must pay \$5 billion on average annually until 2026.

Officials from International Monetary Fund are now visiting Sri Lanka to discuss a rescue package. Wickremesinghe said that a staff-level agreement is likely to be reached by the end of July. **MDT/AP**

# 'It's terrible:' Philadelphia mayor sorry for slain Filipino

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

**T**HE mayor of Philadelphia expressed shock and sorrow over the killing of a Filipino lawyer who was shot in the city over the weekend and is offering a \$20,000 reward for information that will lead to the arrest of the shooter, a senior Philippine diplomat said yesterday.

John Albert Laylo and his mother were heading to the airport to board a flight early Saturday when someone in a nearby car fired several rounds into their Uber at a red light near the University of Pennsylvania, police said. Laylo was hit in the back of the head and died Sunday in a hospital.

"I am sorry. It's terrible," Philippine Consul General Elmer Cato quoted Mayor Jim Kenney as telling him in a meeting at Philadelphia City Hall in an apology for Laylo's family and the Philippines. The



In this photo provided by Office of Philippine Consul-General Elmer Cato, Philippine Consul-General Elmer Cato, right, talks with Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, left, at the Philadelphia City hall, PA., Tuesday

mayor told him a \$20,000 reward was being offered for any information that will lead to the arrest of the gunman, he said.

The victim's mother, Leah Laylo, "told me to convey to the mayor her anguish, her anger and her

demand for justice" and Kenney gave his assurance "that everything will be done to bring whoever is responsible for the death of her son to justice," Cato told The Associated Press.

"I also conveyed the great importance the Phi-

lippine government places on this case and the hope that authorities would do everything they can to solve the case," he said.

Laylo, 35, had last worked for a private company in Manila, Cato said. He had also served as a

legislative staffer for opposition Sen. Leila de Lima from 2016 to 2018 then left to take up graduate studies. De Lima earlier expressed hope a suspect would immediately be held to account "for the brutal and senseless act."

In Cato's meeting with Kenney, who was with two police officials involved in the investigation of the shooting, "we were told it is mostly likely a case of mistaken identity," Cato said without elaborating. He added police were analyzing video footage that showed some vehicles, including a black Cadillac, near the car carrying Laylo and his mother shortly before or around the time of the attack.

Kenney expressed his concern over the proliferation of guns that has led to deadly shootings in the U.S., Cato said.

In tweets earlier this week, Kenney said he was appalled by the "senseless"

shooting. "Every act of gun violence is an unspeakable tragedy," he wrote, while also calling for anyone with information about the shooting to contact police.

Philadelphia, along with other large U.S. cities, is experiencing a surge in gun violence. In one notable episode June 4, a gun melee in the South Street entertainment district, about 3 miles (5 kilometers) from the shooting that killed Laylo, left three people dead and several others injured.

Laylo's mother, who was slightly injured by glass fragments during the shooting, posted to Facebook that she and her son had been on vacation together. She shared snapshots of her and her son touring sites in New York, Washington and Philadelphia.

The victim's remains may be flown back to the Philippines on Tuesday, Cato said. **MDT/AP**

AFGHANISTAN

# Quake kills 1,000 people, deadliest in two decades

FAZEL RAHMAN FAIZI,  
KABUL

A powerful earthquake struck a rural, mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan early Wednesday, killing 1,000 people and injuring 1,500 more in one of the country's deadliest quakes in decades, the state-run news agency reported. Officials warned that the already grim toll would likely rise.

Information remained scarce on the magnitude 6.1 temblor near the Pakistani border, but quakes of that strength can cause severe damage in an area where homes and other buildings are poorly constructed and landslides are common. Experts put the depth at just 10 kilometers — another factor that could increase the impact.

Rescuers rushed to the area by helicopter, but the response is likely to be complicated since many international aid agencies left Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover of the country last year and the chaotic withdrawal of the U.S. military from the longest war in its history.

Neighboring Pakistan's Meteorological Department said the quake's epicenter was in Afghanistan's Paktika province, some 50 kilometers southwest of the city of Khost. Buildings were also damaged in Khost province, and tremors were felt as far away as the Pakistani capital of Islamabad.

Footage from Paktika showed men carrying people in blankets to waiting helicopters. Others were treated on the ground. One resident could be seen receiving IV fluids while sitting in a plastic chair outside the rubble of his home and still more were sprawled on gurneys. Some images showed residents picking through clay bricks and other rubble from destroyed stone houses, some of whose roofs or walls had caved in.

The death toll, given by Afghan emergency official Sharafuddin Muslim, made it the deadliest quake since 2002, when a 6.1 magnitude temblor killed about 1,000 people in northern Afgha-



nistan immediately after the U.S.-led invasion overthrew the Taliban government following the 9/11 attacks. Muslim said 600 more people were injured.

In most places in the world, an earthquake of this magnitude wouldn't inflict such extensive devastation, said Robert Sanders, a seismologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. But a quake's death toll more often comes down to geography, building quality and population density.

"Because of the mountainous area, there are rockslides and landslides that we won't know about until later reporting. Older buildings are likely to crumble and fail," he said. "Due to how condensed the area is in that part of the world, we've seen in the past similar earthquakes deal significant damage."

Earlier, the director-general of state-run Bakhtar news agency, Abdul Wahid Rayan, wrote on Twitter that 90 houses have been destroyed in Paktika and dozens of people are believed trapped under the rubble. The Afghan Red Crescent Society had sent some 4,000 blankets, 800 tents and 800 kitchen kits to the affected area, he added.

"We urge all aid agencies to send teams to the area immediately to prevent further catastrophe," Bilal Karimi, a

deputy spokesman for the Taliban government, wrote on Twitter.

In Kabul, Prime Minister Mohammad Hassan Akhund convened an emergency meeting at the presidential palace to coordinate the relief effort for victims in Paktika and Khost.

The "response is on its way," the U.N. resident coordinator in Afghanistan, Ramiz Alakbarov, wrote on Twitter.

That may prove difficult given the situation landlocked Afghanistan finds itself in today. After the Taliban rushed across the country in 2021, the U.S. military and its allies fell back to Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport and later withdrew completely. Many international humanitarian organizations followed suit because of concerns about security and the Taliban's poor human rights record.

In the time since, the Taliban has worked with Qatar, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates on restarting airport operations in Kabul and across the country — but nearly all international carriers still avoid the country, and reluctance on the part of aid organizations to put any money in the Taliban's coffers could make it difficult to fly in supplies and equipment.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif in a sta-

tement offered his condolences over the earthquake, saying his nation will provide help to the Afghan people. At the Vatican, Pope Francis offered prayers for all those killed and injured and for the "suffering of the dear Afghan population."

In just one district of Khost province, the earthquake killed at least 25 people and injured over 95 others, local officials said.

Some remote areas of Pakistan saw reports of damage to homes near the Afghan border, but it wasn't immediately clear if that was due to rain or the earthquake, said Taimoor Khan, a disaster management spokesperson in the area.

The European seismological agency, EMSC, said the earthquake's tremors were felt over 500 kilometers (310 miles) by 119 million people across Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

Mountainous Afghanistan and the larger region of South Asia along the Hindu Kush mountains has long been vulnerable to devastating earthquakes.

In 2015, a major earthquake that struck the country's northeast killed over 200 people in Afghanistan and neighboring northern Pakistan. In 1998, a 6.1 magnitude earthquake and subsequent tremors in Afghanistan's remote northeast killed at least 4,500 people. MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1985 AIR INDIA JET CRASHES KILLING 329



A passenger jet has disintegrated in mid-air off the coast of Ireland, killing all 329 people on board.

The Air India flight was only 45 minutes from London Heathrow when it suddenly disappeared from radar screens at 0816 BST.

Airline officials said they do not know the cause of the crash, but suspected it was caused by a bomb planted by Sikh extremists.

The Boeing 747 plunged into the sea from 30,000 ft (9,144 m) and rescue officials said they did not expect to find survivors. The pilot had no time to issue a mayday message, according to the coastguard.

Flight AI 182 was flying from Toronto to London with a stopover at Montreal. Most of the passengers were of Indian origin and intending to fly on to Bombay or Delhi.

The plane had already been delayed at Mirabel Airport, Montreal, where Canadian Mounties removed three suspicious packages.

The rescue operation is being co-ordinated by the coastguard in Plymouth and Falmouth, and four RAF helicopters are being used to search for bodies.

"There is a large slick of fuel about 4.5 miles [7.2km] long and a lot of wreckage on the surface," pilot Paul Redfern said.

He confirmed some bodies had been recovered and taken to a temporary mortuary at Cork Airport.

A coastguard spokesman told the BBC he thought it very unlikely there would be any survivors.

"I think we have to face the facts. The chances can't be very good - nevertheless if there is a possibility then we will explore it as far as we can," he said.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Five months later, Talwinder Singh Parmar and Inderjit Singh Reyat were arrested on weapons, explosives and conspiracy charges connected with the bombing.

Reyat was fined on a minor explosive charge, but the case against Mr Parmar was dropped - though Canadian police believed him to be the leader of the Air India conspiracy. He was killed by police in India in 1992.

In 1991, Reyat was sentenced to 10 years in prison for making a bomb destined for another Air India flight, but which exploded at Tokyo's Narita airport, killing two baggage handlers.

Two years after his release, the Sikh electrician pleaded guilty to manslaughter in connection with the Air India bombing and was sentenced to five years.

Two further suspects - Vancouver businessman Ripudaman Singh Malik and millworker Ajaib Singh Bagri - were acquitted of involvement with the attack in March 2005.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS



### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You may meet that special person if you attend fundraising functions. You can mix business with pleasure to get favorable results. Proceed with caution if operating equipment or vehicles.



### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Avoid extravagance or risky financial schemes. Sit tight. Things aren't as bad as they appear. You can handle situations that require contact with institutions or large corporations.



### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Get out and rub shoulders with people in high positions if possible. You might have some problems balancing your books. Get involved in groups that can offer intellectual stimulation.



### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Try not to let relatives or friends cause any friction with your mate. You may overspend if you travel today; however, the trip will be one to remember. Make sure that you make reservations early.



### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Try out for a local sports team such as volleyball, tennis, lawn bowling, or whatever interests you. Trips will be favorable for business as well as pleasure.



### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You will learn valuable information if you travel today. Take care when dealing with older relatives. Rewards for past good deeds will be yours.



### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Get help setting up a reasonable budget. Look into ways of making extra cash. Love could develop at social events that are work related. Go out with friends who are positive and supportive.



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Try not to allow your partner to lead you astray or upset your routine. Your partner could also use some time alone with you. Do not lend money or belongings to friends.



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Self-improvement could bring amazing results. Take matters in hand when it comes to dealing with clients or colleagues. Problems on the home front might be a little disconcerting.



### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Travel will be on your mind; however, be careful and proceed with caution as minor accidents will cause delays. Finish up any correspondence by early afternoon.



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Spend time by yourself to avoid any conflicts with family members. You can make changes to your living quarters that should please family members.

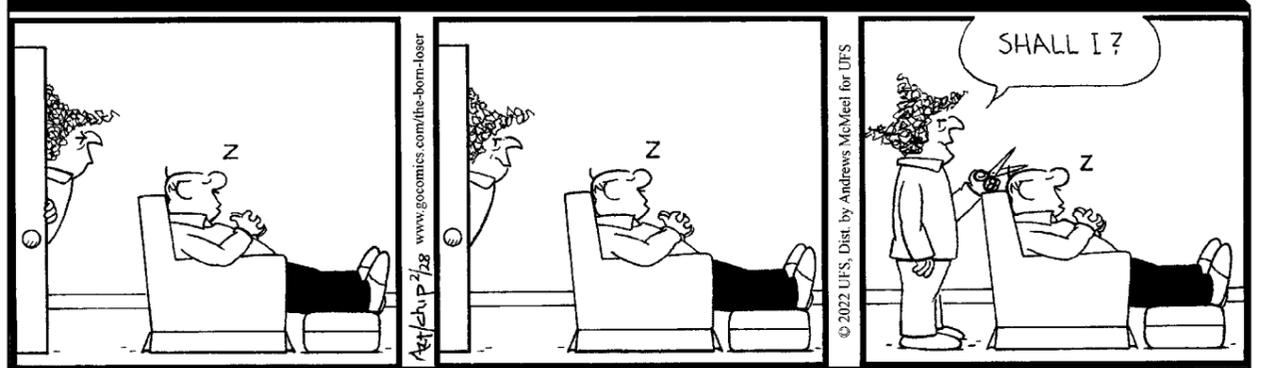


### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Be sure to question any detail that you feel could leave you in a precarious position at a later date. You may be angry if someone tries to take credit for something you did.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

### EASY

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

### EASY+

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

### MEDIUM

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

### HARD

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

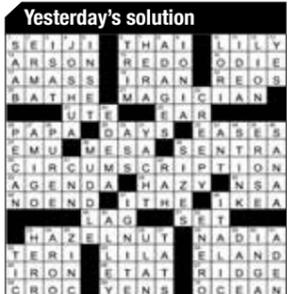
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	24	30	rain
Changchun	21	25	rain
Chengdu	24	31	showers
Chongqing	26	34	rain
Fuzhou	25	33	cloudy
Guangzhou	27	33	thunderstorms
Guiyang	21	27	showers
Haikou	27	35	cloudy
Hangzhou	25	33	rain
Harbin	20	30	cloudy
Hefei	25	35	thunderstorms
Nanjing	25	33	cloudy
Shanghai	25	34	overcast
Taipei	25	30	cloudy
Wuhan	25	32	showers
Hong Kong	28	31	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	13	21	cloudy
Frankfurt	16	26	overcast
Paris	18	27	cloudy
London	15	27	clear
New York	17	21	showers

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Phases; 7- Hack off; 10- X-ray units; 14- Of special elegance; 15- Australian bird; 16- Capital city of Western Samoa; 17- Certain fisherman; 18- Little drink; 19- Haul; 20- Standing alone; 23- On the up-and-up, briefly; 26- Crosses (out); 27- Calm; 28- Islamic chieftain; 29- Hotel freebie; 30- Marseilles Mrs.; 31- Land; 33- Penlight battery; 34- Al Jolson's real first name; 37- Not emp.; 38- They loop the Loop; 39- Sandwich initials; 40- Tours turndown; 41- O.T. book; 42- Rejections; 43- Deep down; 45- "Seinfeld" uncle; 46- One \_\_\_ time; 47- Untruths, tells falsehoods; 48- Discombobulated; 51- Single unit; 52- Impudent; 53- Selling technique; 56- Ship's company; 57- Hellenic vowel; 58- Having a handle; 62- On or towards the Mediterranean, for example; 63- \_\_\_ Avir; 64- Frenzied woman; 65- Crying shame; 66- \_\_\_ longa, vita brevis; 67- Money-grubbers;

DOWN 1- Radical '60s grp.; 2- Driving aid; 3- Boxer Laila; 4- Artillery shot; 5- Apply, as pressure; 6- Parched; 7- Person with a flat, say; 8- Leaves out; 9- Insect stage; 10- Interweave; 11- Month of showers; 12- Roman goddess of the moon; 13- Tending to droop; 21- Immoderation; 22- Super Bowl III MVP; 23- Get to know; 24- Host; 25- Circumference; 29- Dome home; 30- Mediterranean island; 32- Trojan War hero; 33- Lets up; 34- Diarist Nin; 35- Sensitive spots; 36- Fidgety; 44- Goes by; 45- Extra time; 46- Historical records; 48- Songwriters' org.; 49- Foot bones; 50- Driving hazard; 51- Western; 52- Egyptian peninsula; 54- Intro to physics; 55- Soccer star Mia; 59- Hydrocarbon suffix; 60- Sailor; 61- Begley;



## 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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COLOANE 1 BED	HKD 9,300

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TAIPA RENOVATED 2 BEDS	HKD 4,680,000
CENTRAL TAIPA 2-BEDS	HKD 4,380,000
TAIPA CUTE & COZY STUDIO	HKD 3,980,000
TAIPA STUDIO WITH BALCONY	HKD 3,780,000
TAIPA GREAT POTENTIAL 1-BED	HKD 3,480,000
CENTRAL MACAU 1 BED	HKD 2,850,000
MACAU PARKING VA LONG	HKD 1,600,000

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AD

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# SOUTH KOREA HITS DOZENS WITH TRAVEL BANS AMID CRYPTO PROBE

**S**OUTH Korean prosecutors have barred dozens of people connected to Terraform Labs from leaving the country as they expand an investigation into a \$40 billion collapse of the company's cryptocurrency that devastated traders around the world.

The Seoul Southern District Prosecutor's Office said yesterday it plans to summon them for questioning as it tries to determine whether the company committed fraud or violated financial regulations before the implosion of its digital currencies, TerraUSD and Luna, in May.

The office didn't specify the number of people placed under the monthlong travel ban or who they are, although they may include current and former staff members and developers. Prosecutors refused to provide more details, saying the investigation was ongoing.

Daniel Hong, a former Terraform developer, tweeted a government notice showing that



he was banned from leaving the country through July 19. Hong tweeted: "stop asking me why i couldn't make it to NYC frens,

this is why: the Korean government imposed an exit ban for all ex-@terra\_money employees today."

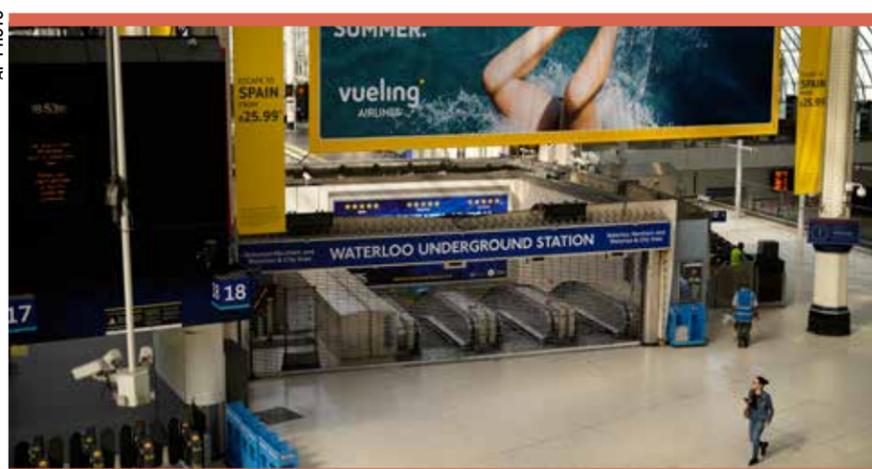
The collapse of TerraUSD and Luna, developed by Terraform Lab's Stanford-educated co-founder Do Kwon, affected an estima-

ted 280,000 South Korean investors while causing broader turmoil in the global cryptocurrency market.

TerraUSD was designed as a "stablecoin," which are pegged to stable assets like the U.S. dollar to prevent drastic fluctuations in prices. However, around \$40 billion in market value was erased for the holders of TerraUSD and its floating sister currency, Luna, after the stablecoin plunged far below its \$1 peg in May.

South Korean prosecutors launched the investigation last month following collective complaints filed by dozens of investors. They could try to summon Kwon, who is reportedly in Singapore and faces accusations that he exaggerated the stability of his currencies.

The Bank of Korea, South Korea's central bank, said in a report published earlier this month that the collapse of TerraUSD and Luna was a major factor in the global currency market shrinking by more than 40% compared to late last year, when its market value reached over \$2.3 trillion. The U.S. Federal Reserve's recent decision to raise its key interest rate to fight inflation has also contributed to the slide by further repelling investors from volatile assets, the bank said. **MDT/AP**



# UK inflation rate hits new 40-year high of 9.1%

**B**RTAIN'S inflation rate hit a new 40-year high of 9.1% in the 12 months to May, figures showed yesterday, as Russia's war in Ukraine drove food and fuel prices ever higher.

The Office for National Statistics said consumer price inflation rose slightly from 9% in April, itself the highest level since 1982.

Chief economist Grant Fitzner said "continued steep food price rises and record high petrol (gasoline) prices were offset by clothing

costs rising by less than this time last year, and a drop in often fluctuating computer games prices."

The increase was in line with analysts' expectations and signals no quick end to the cost-of-living squeeze facing millions in Britain. The Bank of England says inflation could hit 11% in October when a cap on domestic energy bills is raised.

Jack Leslie, senior

## 19 countries that use the euro recorded 8.1% inflation the same month

economist at economic think-tank the Resolution Foundation, said inflation would likely climb further in June because of "the big spike in petrol prices over the past month."

"With the economic

outlook so unclear, no-one knows how high inflation could go, and how long it will continue for - making fiscal and monetary policy judgements particularly tough," he said.

Inflation is soaring worldwide: The U.S. reported a rate of 8.6% in May and the 19 countries that use the euro recorded 8.1% inflation the same month.

Millions of people in Britain, like those across Europe, are seeing their cost of living soar, in part driven by Russia's war in Ukraine that is squeezing supplies of energy and food staples such as wheat.

The pressure is driving British workers to seek substantial pay increases, a move the Conservative government argues could spark a wage-price spiral, driving inflation even higher.

Tens of thousands of railway workers are walking off the job for three days this week in the country's biggest transit strike for three decades, and a potential precursor to a summer of labor discontent. **MDT/AP**

## FASHION

# LUXURY MARKET SEEN AS GROWING IN 2022 DESPITE INFLATION, WAR

**N**EITHER inflation nor the war in Ukraine are threatening to take a bite out of the luxury fashion market, according to a study published Tuesday.

While much of the world is fretting over higher fuel and energy prices, the study by Bain & Company consultancy indicated that the global luxury market remains set for growth, largely due to the continued resiliency of the world's wealthiest people.

The global luxury market grew by nearly one-third to 288 billion euros (\$198 billion) last year, rebounding from its worst recorded dip due to the 2020 pandemic lockdowns, according to the study commissioned by Italy's Altagamma association of high-end producers.

Sales of personal luxury

goods including apparel, accessories and footwear posted high double-digit growth in the first quarter of this year, despite the first signs of economic uncertainty tied to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Bain said.

In its most pessimistic outlook, assuming global inflationary pressure, Bain forecasts growth in the sales of high-end personal goods this year to grow by 5% to around 305 billion euros. But the consultancy also sees a case for up to 15% growth if the current trends continue, pushing the market to 330 billion euros next year.

The United States and Europe have boosted growth so far this year, while sales are expected to hit a hard stop in China due to COVID-19 restrictions in key cities. **MDT/AP**



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

AP PHOTO



# Bayern Munich signs Senegal star Sadio Mané from Liverpool

**B**AYERN Munich completed the signing of Senegal forward Sadio Mané from Liverpool yesterday. The Bavarian powerhouse said the 30-year-old Mané had signed a contract with the club through June 2025. "There are very few players like him in the world," Bayern

chief executive Oliver Kahn said. "We're sure that Sadio Mané will delight our fans in the coming years with his spectacular style of play. He's ambitious and eager to win more titles. This package is very strong." A person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press last Friday that it was worth up

to 41 million euros with Liverpool receiving 32 million euros up front, with a further 6 million euros due when he meets a specified appearance clause and an additional 3 million euros based on individual and team achievements. Mané's arrival will fuel speculation that Poland star Robert Lewandowski is set to lea-

ve Bayern. Lewandowski, who scored 312 goals in 384 Bundesliga games for Bayern and former club Borussia Dortmund, has been pushing for a departure since last season ended. Mané just completed what was arguably the best season of his career, converting the clinching penalty in a shootout to win the African Cup of Nations

for Senegal, helping his country qualify for the World Cup, and starring for Liverpool in a campaign where the club nearly achieved an unprecedented quadruple of major trophies. He won every major honor with Liverpool — the Champions League and Club World Cup in 2019, the Premier League in 2020 and both the FA Cup and League Cup in 2022. He has also scored 31 goals in 89 appearances for Senegal and was named African Footballer of the Year in 2019. Lewandowski tallied 35 goals in 34 appearances last season to become the Bundesliga's leading scorer for the fifth season in a row, and the seventh time overall. He also broke the old record for Bundesliga goals in a season with 41 last year. Mané scored 120 goals in 269 competitive appearances for Liverpool after joining from Southampton in 2016. He previously played for Salzburg, where he won an Austrian title, and French club Metz, which he joined as a 19-year-old from Génération Foot in Senegal. "Everyone knows his outstanding technical qualities as well as his incredible mentality," Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidi said. "He will contribute a lot and help to lead our team, which has a great structure." MDT/AP

AD

生活藝術雜誌 LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE

**MACAUCLOSER**

可持續的生活  
LIVING SUSTAINABLY

認識正在為城市綠化努力的澳門人  
MEET MACAU LOCALS MAKING AN EFFORT TO GREEN UP THE CITY

MACAUCLOSER TO THE GREATER BAY AREA  
橫琴就是未來  
THE FUTURE IS HENGQIN

現在發售 NOW ON SALE

OUR GREATER BAY AREA SUPPLEMENT INSIDE  
本期雜誌加入了大灣區特刊，不容錯過

**MACAU**  
澳門

**BENFICA MACAU ACADEMY**  
澳門賓菲加體育學校

**FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS**

**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**TAMPERING WITH  
 HEALTH CODE IS  
 CROSSING THE  
 REDLINE**

If some officials abuse their power by turning healthy people's health codes red, they are crossing a dangerous redline.

Some people in Henan province are alleging that the authorities tampered with their health code to stop them from lodging a complaint against a possible Ponzi scheme. If this is true then this is one of the worst forms of abuse of power.

Several rural banks in Henan province are supposed to have lured depositors with much higher deposit interest rates than that provided by the big four State-owned banks. However, since mid-April, the depositors found they were unable to withdraw their money. Altogether, they had deposited more than 39.7 billion yuan (5.9 billion) in the banks.

Desperate depositors who lived and worked outside the province, rushed to Zhengzhou, capital of Henan province, to voice their frustration and demand justice. However, when they reached the provincial capital on Monday, they found that their health codes had turned red, implying they are infected with COVID-19 or suspected cases.

Such a code bars them from taking public transport or entering any public place. All this has led to growing suspicion that the local authorities allegedly took advantage of the health kit, an epidemic prevention and control tool, to arrest the petitioners' movements. The sole purpose of the health kit, which traces people's movements so as to be able to raise a flag when they come in contact with COVID-19 patients, is to safeguard public health. Any misuse of the provision should be punished according to law.

Most surprisingly, the headquarters for epidemic prevention and control in Zhengzhou, responsible for health code management, is yet to respond to the public outcry. Other departments that the public approached for help have also passed the buck.

This scandal not only discloses the arrogance of those invested with power, but has also brought to light the low level of governance in the some local government agencies' lack of respect for the rule of law.

The depositors' grievances should be heard and addressed properly by the authorities concerned through proper investigation.

Apart from being grossly unjust, such categorizing of some as high-risk people through fraudulent means, could also put many others, who are defined as close contacts, into quarantine or lockdown, and deal a blow to many businesses. Such tricks will damage the public's trust in the local authorities' pandemic control efforts at a time when the country is seeing sporadic COVID-19 outbreaks.

Anyone seen to have abused power in the aforementioned case should be held accountable. No one should be allowed to cross the redline by randomly turning people's health codes red.

Pope Francis on yesterday blasted the violence that plagues Mexico as he mourned the slayings of two of his "brother" Jesuits who were gunned down in a remote Mexican church by apparent drug gang members.

Francis, an Argentine Jesuit, offered prayers to the Jesuit community at the end of his weekly general audience, saying he was "saddened and dismayed" to learn of the slayings in Mexico's mountainous Chihuahua state.

"How many killings there are in Mexico!" he said. "Once again, I repeat that violence never resolves problems but just increases

useless suffering."

Javier Campos Morales, 79, and Joaquín César Mora Salazar, 80, were killed Monday inside the church in Cerocahui. A man being pursued by a drug gang had apparently sought refuge in the church, and the gang members killed him and the priests when they found him, authorities said.

Francis ministered to drug addicts when he was archbishop of Buenos Aires and has long condemned the "dealers of death" who fuel the drug trade, which he has blamed on the "devil" and lust for money.

AP PHOTO



Myanmar's Defense Minister Mya Tun Oo

**MYANMAR MINISTER  
 JOINS SOUTHEAST ASIAN  
 DEFENSE MEETING**

**SOPHENG CHEANG,  
 CAMBODIA**

**M**YANMAR'S defense minister, under sanctions from the United States, Britain and other countries for abuses committed by his country's military, was welcomed yesterday to an annual meeting with his counterparts in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Gen. Mya Tun Oo wore his military uniform as he attended the ASEAN defense ministers' meeting in Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh.

More than 600 civic groups inside and outside Myanmar had issued an appeal to the ministers not to invite him. They accuse him of complicity in violence committed by Myanmar's military as it seeks to crush opposition to its seizure of power last year from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a private organization that tracks government killings and arrests, said Friday that 2,000 civilians have been killed by Myanmar's security forces. The army is also battling anti-government guerrillas in the countryside.

Mya Tun Oo has also been accused of involvement in atrocities carried out by the army against the Muslim Rohingya minority in 2017, when he was chief of the military's general staff, the third most powerful post in the army.

International courts are investigating allegations that the military committed genocide in brutal counterinsurgency campaigns that sent more than 700,000 Rohingya fleeing to neighboring Bangladesh for safety.

"The Myanmar military junta's acts fully meet the definition of terror under international and national law, and is responsible for ongoing violations of international human rights and humanitarian law following the military's illegal coup attempt," said the appeal issued by 677 civic groups to the ASEAN defense ministers.

"General Mya Tun Oo plays a leading role in the management of the military, which is responsible for committing ongoing atrocity crimes with total impunity," it said. "Mya Tun Oo's direct responsibility for international law violations has been recognized by the USA, UK, EU, Canada and New Zealand, which sanctioned him."

Wai Hnin Pwint Thon, from the group Burma Campaign UK, told The Associated Press that ASEAN was failing to respect and stand with the people of Myanmar by inviting Mya Tun Oo to its meeting.

"The military will see this invitation ... as a sign of encouragement to continue carrying out their human rights violations in the country with complete impunity," she said.

Cambodia is chair of the 10-nation ASEAN this year. In February, ASEAN foreign ministers held their annual retreat without their counterpart from Myanmar, who was prevented from participating but allowed to attend online as an observer.

ASEAN has sought to play a mediating role in Myanmar's crisis, fearing its increasingly violent unrest may cause problems regionally. In April last year it reached a consensus on a five-point plan to try to help restore stability, but Myanmar has hindered the agreement's implementation.

Relations were strained further when Myanmar would not allow an ASEAN special envoy to meet with Suu Kyi, who has been detained since the takeover. ASEAN, under the guidance of its former chair, Brunei, took the unprecedented step of not allowing the leader of Myanmar's military government, Min Aung Hlaing, to attend its annual summit last October.

A joint declaration issued after yesterday's defense ministers meeting included a statement of support for the five-point consensus, which calls for an immediate cessation of violence, a dialogue among concerned parties, mediation by an ASEAN special envoy, provision of humanitarian aid and a visit to Myanmar by the special envoy to meet all concerned parties.

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**Turkey** Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (pictured, right) arrived in Ankara yesterday, making his first visit to Turkey following the slaying of Saudi columnist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul. As Saudi Arabia and Turkey press ahead with efforts to repair ties that were strained by Khashoggi's killing, the crown prince will meet President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the last leg of a Middle East tour that also took him to Egypt and Jordan.

**European Union's** executive arm yesterday proposed setting legally binding targets to reduce the use of chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030 and a ban on all pesticide use in areas such as public parks, playgrounds and schools. The European Commission said the current rules limiting the use of pesticides were too weak and have not been applied consistently across the EU.

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**French** armed forces conducted a surprise military exercise in Estonia, deploying more than 100 paratroopers in the Baltic country that neighbors Russia, the French defense ministry said yesterday. The airborne operation conducted on Tuesday night and dubbed Thunder Lynx "enabled, at very short notice, the dropping of about 100 paratroopers" from France's 11th Airborne Brigade "over an area secured by Estonian soldiers," the statement said.

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**UK** Thousands of people are returning to England's Glastonbury Festival as the five-day music and performing arts event reopened yesterday for the first time in three years after being disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The festival, which is marking its 50th anniversary, has 3,000 performers scheduled, including Billie Eilish, Diana Ross, Kendrick Lamar and Paul McCartney. McCartney's weekend gig will make him, at age 80, the festival's oldest solo headline performer.