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LAWMAKER RON LAM ASKED THE GOV'T TO OFFER A GRACE PERIOD IN CUTTING THE FUTURE NON-LOCAL WORKER QUOTAS FROM ENTERPRISES

PUBLIC SECTOR'S NON-EMERGENCY SERVICES WILL CONTINUE TO BE SUSPENDED UNTIL JULY 1

US ABORTION RULING SPARKS GLOBAL DEBATE, POLARIZES ACTIVISTS



AP PHOTO



Sri Lanka Senior U.S. officials arrived in Sri Lanka yesterday to find ways to help the island nation in the throes of an unprecedented economic crisis and severe shortages of essential supplies, as the energy minister warned that new fuel shipments would be delayed. The U.S. over the past two weeks has announced millions of dollars in assistance to Sri Lanka, which has been surviving on \$4 billion in credit lines from neighboring India. It also has received pledges of \$300 million to \$600 million from the World Bank to buy medicine and other items.

Philippines An inter-island ferry with 165 passengers and crew caught fire off a central Philippine province yesterday, leaving one dead and another missing while the rest were safely rescued, the coast guard said. The fire hit the vessel Mama Mary Chloe shortly after noon near two island villages in Bohol province, coast guard officials said. A search backed by fishing boats was underway for one missing person. Footage on social media showed people in life vests bobbing in the sea, with the vessel engulfed in thick black smoke.

AP PHOTO

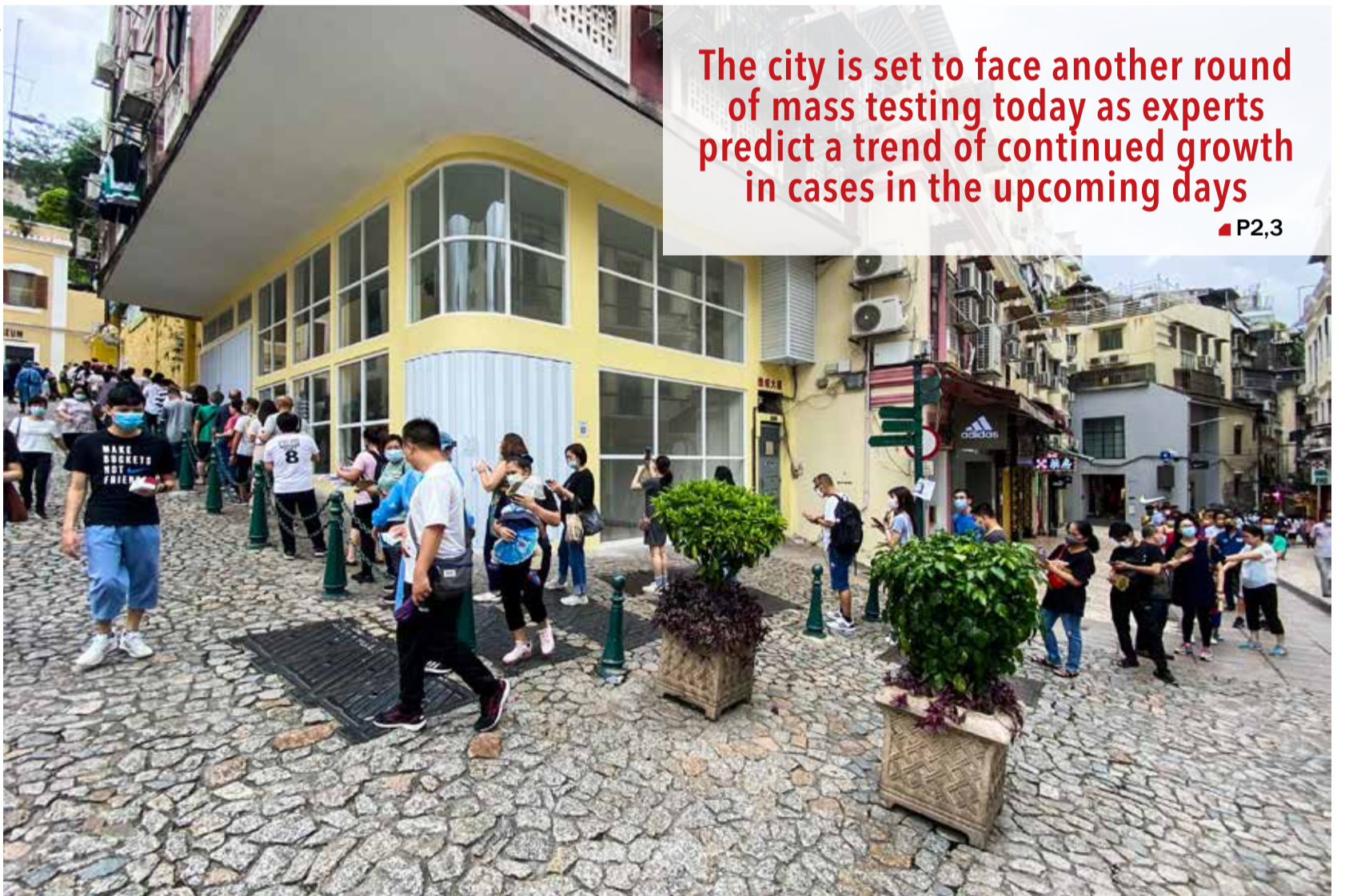


Ecuadorian President Guillermo Lasso this weekend lifted a state of emergency he'd imposed in six provinces amid an Indigenous-led strike, a surprise move that came as lawmakers in the National Assembly heard an opposition petition to remove him from office. The decision to end the state of emergency followed an initial meeting between government officials and Ecuador's largest Indigenous organization, which began the strike two weeks ago to demand gasoline prices be cut, price controls be imposed on agricultural products and a larger budget be set for education.

More on backpage

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER NAT

RENATO MARQUES



The city is set to face another round of mass testing today as experts predict a trend of continued growth in cases in the upcoming days

P2,3

AP PHOTO



PRESIDENT XI JINPING WILL TAKE PART IN HONG KONG ANNIVERSARY

P6

DUO OF FORMER CIVIL CONSTRUCTION HEADS PROSECUTED

P5

RENATO MARQUES



COVID-19 OUTBREAK

CITY BRACES FOR MORE MASS TESTING

RENATO MARQUES

MACAU will face yet another round of Covid-19 nucleic acid mass testing, commencing from 9 a.m. today until 6 p.m. tomorrow, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center announced yesterday during the daily press briefing.

This new round of citywide mass testing comes in response to the 299 positive cases detected from June 25 (Saturday) to 3 p.m. June 26 (Sunday), the director of the Health Bureau (SSM), Alvis Lo said during the briefing.

June 25 had among the highest number of cases reported within a single day, with a total of 71 positive cases. Notably, no mass testing was conducted on this day. Most of these cases came from nucleic acid tests (NAT) conducted in key areas and on specific focus groups in the community. These tests were conducted on around 26,000 people only, Lo noted.

"There are 71 new cases. Of these, 57 were detected in the

community, and only 14 came from people who were already under our supervision," the SSM director announced. Lo added that in total, of the 261 cases known by 24:00 Saturday, only 66 were symptomatic.

The number of clusters or groups of people testing positive has grown to 10. According to the epidemiologic investigation, authorities found links to known sources of infection in seven of these clusters, but have been unable to identify the potential source of infection in the other three.

Twenty other people are still undergoing epidemiologic investigation to understand if their infections are part of any of these known groups or if, alternatively, they are part of a different cluster.

Earlier, the Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng, published an order extending the closing of all public services to the public until July 1, with exception of essential services and related Covid-19 prevention and control activities.

Information provided by the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center noted that for this new round of mass testing, which will take place over a six-hour shortened period (33 hours in total), there will be an increase in the number of sample collection posts. This brings the 32 general posts to 41 (9 more).

The new posts include schools as well as civil society associations, intending to further reduce the distance between people and the NAT sampling collection posts, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, said.

According to Ao Ieong, the authorities intend for posts to be no further than a 15-minute walk from each person's home or workplace.

The goal, she said, was to minimize the use of public transport to reach testing sites, reducing the risk of further community transmission.

"We want people to have their test as close as possible to their homes, within their nei-

ghborhood, and not across the city in other neighborhoods," Ao Ieong said, adding, "our purpose is that they can be tested just a short distance away from their homes and without the need to take the public buses."

Later, in response to media inquiries, she added that residents may do a test closer to

their work if they prefer but noted that they should do so only when exiting the workplace.

Additional remarks were made by several officials on the need to respect the booking time as much as possible to avoid unnecessary crowding at the NAT posts, which can pose an additional risk of transmission.

The new round of mass testing for the whole population will take place from 9 a.m. today until 6 p.m. on June 28 (Tuesday).

FOOTPRINT RECORDING NOT 'USELESS' ANYMORE

DIRECTOR of the Health Bureau (SSM) Alvis Lo remarked on the need for citizens to record their every step outside their homes, noting the importance of this measure now.

"Before, there was no great need for people to present the local Health Code and to scan the location QR Codes of every establishment as [case numbers] were insignificant at the time, but it is no longer like that. We are in a situation where recording our itineraries can greatly help to find cases and uncover clusters and

links," the SSM director said. Lo's comments followed Secretary Ao Ieong's call for people to use the location QR codes of every place they enter – especially at markets, supermarkets and other places where crowds can assemble.

Lo also said that he hopes that citizens can have "some patience" to cope with the current restrictions and measures, as "we now need to have an added control so we can return to normal (before June 18) as soon as possible."

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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

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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 **Telephones:** +853 287 160 81/2 **Fax:** +853 287 160 84
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COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Zhong Nanshan team forecasts more cases in upcoming days

RENATO MARQUES

HEALTH authorities have said that according to the pandemic prediction model developed by the team of Chinese experts led by Zhong Nanshan, there will be a trend of continued growth in cases in the upcoming days.

On this basis, authorities decided to impose a new round of mass testing as well as to distribute more Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits to the population, so there is continuing feedback on potential new cases.

According to the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, as part of the mass testing today and tomorrow, people will receive, free of charge, another five kits of RAT as well as a 10-pack of KN95 facemask, which authorities

FLORA TANG



consider safer for the prevention of infections between people.

"On mass testing, we are going to distribute five kits of RAT for the upcoming days. We are also

going to distribute KN95 facemask to the population as these masks are of better quality with 83% of effectiveness for prevention of infections, in contrast to the surgical

masks that have an effectiveness of around 60-something percent," Ao leong said, adding that there will be no masks distributed to children as "children should be

kept at home as much as possible and avoid any kind of outdoor activities."

The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture also urged everyone to stay home as much as possible and not to leave home unless there is extreme necessity to do so, such as buying food supplies.

Called to comment on the need for the large majority of the population to continue to work given that private companies – contrary to the public sector – have continued normal business activities, the director of the Health Bureau (SSM), Alvis Lo, said that he hopes all companies from different sectors that can either stop or, in the alternative, assign work that staff members can do remotely from home.

Questioned on the real effectiveness and necessity of so many tests (RAT and NAT) and on the possibility of more mass testing to come, he said, "when the cases are growing it is good to do mass testing to spot infections at the early stages. And when the number of positive cases starts to decline, it is also a good time for mass testing to ensure that there isn't a relapse or new clusters due to some concealed cases in the community."

NON-EMERGENCY PUBLIC SERVICES SUSPENDED UNTIL JUL. 1

STAFF REPORTER

PUBLIC sector non-emergency services will continue to be suspended until July 1, according to an executive order issued by the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive has directed that as Covid-19 cases continue to rise, and with another round of mass testing today, the public sector will remain closed apart from those providing emergency and essential services.

However, as cited in the order published in the Of-

ficial Gazette, the closure "does not prevent public sector leadership directing public administration staff to work in epidemic prevention or for other reasons in the public interest."

The order also reiterated that public servants who have been exempt from work and providing services due to department closures should fulfil their obligations and stay at home.

Also, the Macau Association of Banks has indicated that all banks will remain closed for ano-

ther week. However, bank hotline services are still available.

The government has been calling on the public to avoid going out unless necessary to deter the spread of the virus.

It also encourages residents to self-administer a rapid antigen test and upload the result on the Macao Health Code.

The government is also encouraging the public to strictly comply with the preventive measures according to their instructions.

LYNZEY VALLES



GOV'T WARNS OF FRAUD CALLS

Recently, unknown people have been calling members of the public advising them that they had tested positive in a NAT and their respective health codes were about to be changed to "yellow codes." The callers requested personal information for identity verification so that they could be sent to the makeshift hospital for isolation. The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre urged the public to be vigilant against fraudulent calls. The Health Bureau will contact each person with a positive test result according to their registered personal information and will take the initiative to state the identity information for verification.

GOV'T FURTHER LOOSENS RED, YELLOW ZONES CRITERIA

ANTHONY LAM

DESPITE reiterating the increasing risks of the current Covid-19 outbreak, the government further relaxed the criteria for declaring red and yellow zones in the city.

Initially, identifying a single positive case was grounds for declaring a whole building a red zone. The government later announced on June 23 that only two positive cases would trigger the red zone designation. Residential

buildings with only a single case would instead be declared yellow zones.

Yesterday, after just three days, the government made another adjustment to its criteria. The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre announced early Sunday in Chinese, and mid-Sunday in English, that the criteria would be further loosened.

It said that in response to the changes in the outbreak, the criteria for declaring a red zone would

be changed to two apartments or families (collectively living in more than one room) with positive cases.

Under the new criteria, buildings with only one apartment or one family with positive cases will be classified as yellow zones. Buildings that were originally classified as red zones that do not satisfy the new criteria will be re-classified into yellow zones after the completion of at least one SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test.

FLORA TANG



RESIDENTS SHOULD NOT WORRY ABOUT LACK OF RESOURCES

The government is again urging residents to avoid panic buying, noting that relevant authorities have inspected over 1,200 supermarkets and each have shown "abundant supply." Last week, residents were seen panic buying in several supermarkets were amid the surge of Covid-19 cases. Also, due to the increased demand, the Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau has inspected stock in drugstores. According to the results of the inspection, stocks in the pharmacies were found to be sufficient.

LAWMAKER CALLS FOR BUFFER ON CUTTING TECHNICAL NON-LOCAL WORKERS

ANTHONY LAM

LAWMAKER Ron Lam has recently asked the government to offer a grace period in cutting the future non-local worker quotas from enterprises.

Justifying his request, the lawmaker said that he had recently heard the views of "more than a few" owners of local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). They reportedly saw their technical non-local worker quotas suddenly cut.

The lawmaker said he was told by these entrepreneurs about the halting of their businesses due to the abrupt cancellation of the quotas, as well as the government not being able to provide enough apt candidates to fill up the vacancies.

As such, these entrepreneurs hope the government can cut non-local worker quotas – even if such quotas are necessary – gradually to give business owners time to prepare. They warned that if the government does not consider this need, some SMEs may not be able to survive and will need

to shut down.

Accordingly, he requested that the government explain the grounds on which it cut technical non-local worker quotas and asked whether it would allow some flexibility given the recent Covid-19 infections.

He also asked if the government would allow non-local workers to take unpaid leave.

On the matter of repaying interest only on real property mortgages, the lawmaker pointed out that with the installment period unchanged, the longer the "interest-only" period, the larger each installment would become.

Although Lam considers the "interest-only" measure preferable for the time being, he hopes the government can negotiate with the banking sector to lengthen the installment period to "ease the burden of mortgagors."

He also commented on the new round of MOP10-billion financial subsidies. He suggested that the government learn from a similar support scheme in Hong Kong, which focuses on salary subsidies aiming to encourage employers to maintain the size of their teams.



Lawmaker Ron Lam

QUARANTINE FEE IN ZHUHAI DROPS TO CATER TO OVER 200 NON-LOCALS

A medical observation hotel in Zhuhai has agreed to allow over 200 construction workers whose contracts were not renewed to pay only RMB150 in quarantine fees.

Last week, several dozens of non-resident workers staged a protest by walking out of a construction site in Zhuhai to the Liaison Office, urging its employers to pay their quarantine fees.

Such fees will cost these workers some RMB7,000 to RMB8,000 as the neighboring region is requiring arrivals from Macau to undergo a 14-day quarantine period as cases continue to rise.

The workers lamented that the cost of quarantine was already higher than the monthly salary they earned in the territory.

According to the Secretary for Security, following negotiation and communication by the Liaison Office, a hotel in Zhuhai expressed willingness to lower room rates.

The official added that most affected workers have already accepted the offer and signed the agreement. They have since been sent to undergo the nucleic acid test and quarantine in Zhuhai.

According to Wong, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) will continue to monitor the situation as many are still not satisfied with the arrangement and have called on their employers to cover the costs of quarantine on their behalf.

He added that, after communicating with the Zhuhai authorities, the Macau SAR will follow suit with this approach to deal with similar cases in future. He said he believes the problem can be resolved properly.

On Wednesday night following the protest, DSAL stressed that according to foreign employment law, quarantine fees are not a legal obligation of the employer.

"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," DSAL said in a statement. LV

EMPLOYMENT

Unemployed residents at 12,800

MACAU'S total employment figure stood at 364,800 and the number of employed residents totaled 275,900, down by 5,600 and 2,900 respectively from the previous period ((February-April 2022).

Recent statistics produced by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) showed that, analyzed by industry, employment in hotels, restaurants and similar establishments decreased while employment in gaming and junket activities increased.

The number of residents unemployed decreased by 500 from the previous period to 12,800. Most of those unemployed and searching for a new job were previously engaged in gaming and junket activities



and in the construction sector.

The figure is expected to increase following reports in local media that the Million Dragon Hotel had allegedly started to dismiss employees due to

"unforeseeable business prospects" last month.

A letter to employees designated June 26 as their final day of work, the same date that the six gambling concessions were originally intended

to end.

The number of those underemployed grew by 1,100 from the previous period to 12,700, with the majority again working in gaming and junket activities and the

construction sector.

Meanwhile, the proportion of new labor market entrants seeking their first job increased by 0.4 percentage points to 6.6% of the total unemployed.

In comparison with March-May 2021, the unemployment rate rose by 0.4 percentage points, while the underemployment rate and the labor force participation rate dropped by 0.8 and 0.6 percentage points respectively.

Both the general unemployment rate (3.4%) and the unemployment rate of local residents (4.4%) for March-May 2022 decreased by 0.1 percentage point from the previous period (February-April 2022).

Meanwhile, the underemployment rate increased by 0.4 percentage points to 3.4%. The labor force living in Macau totaled 377,600 and the labor force participation rate was 68.3%. LV

Duo of former civil construction heads prosecuted

ANTHONY LAM

TWO ex-directors of the former Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) have been prosecuted by the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) over the weekend, local media reports.

The former bureau – which has now ceased operations – was merged with the Infrastructure Development Office (GDI) April 1 and then separated into the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) and the Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU). The two steps took place concurrently.

According to public broadcaster Portuguese Rádio Macau, the indictments were issued June 24 after the MP concluded its investigations. The charges against the duo were for the crimes of association, criminal syndication and money laundering.

The ex-directors were Li Canfeng and Jaime Roberto Carion. Li has been taken into custody at the prison in Coloane. Carion, meanwhile, is at large and is not in Macau.

RENATO MARQUES



Li Canfeng

According to the report, local businesspeople Sio Tak Hong, Kwan Wai Lam and Ng Lap Seng are also involved. The case concerns a total of 21 people.

Li is alleged to be involved in the crimes of association and criminal syndication, which will be prosecuted together. He was also charged with 11 counts of taking bribes for conducting illicit activities, 10 counts of money

laundering, a count of document forgery and four counts of erroneous declarations of assets.

Meanwhile, Carion is alleged to be involved in the crimes of association and criminal syndication, which will also be prosecuted together. He was also charged with five counts of taking bribes for conducting illicit activities and six counts of money laundering.

The same report by the public broadcaster said that Sio was charged with the crimes of association and criminal syndication, as well as two counts of offering bribes, five counts of money laundering and four counts of document forgery.

Kwan was charged with the crimes of association and criminal syndication, as well as three counts of offering bribes and

three counts of money laundering. Ng is charged with crimes of association and criminal syndication, as well as four counts of money laundering.

The public broadcaster also said that constructor Wu Ka I, who was involved in the bribery of former Secretary for Transport and Public Works Ao Man Long, is also involved.

The charges made against the duo of former DSSOPT directors were revealed by the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) last December and this January. Earlier announcements by the CCAC did not suggest that the crimes of association nor criminal syndication would be among the charges to be brought.

Earlier, the anti-corruption agency charged Carion with taking bribes for conducting illicit activities and money laundering. The businesspeople were charged with the crimes of offering bribes and money laundering.

Although Carion and some of his family members have left Macau, several real properties that belong to them have been seized by CCAC.

The list of charges reported by the public broadcaster differ significantly from those previously announced by MP or CCAC. It is unclear if this is due to the judiciary uncovering additional evidence in support of such charges.

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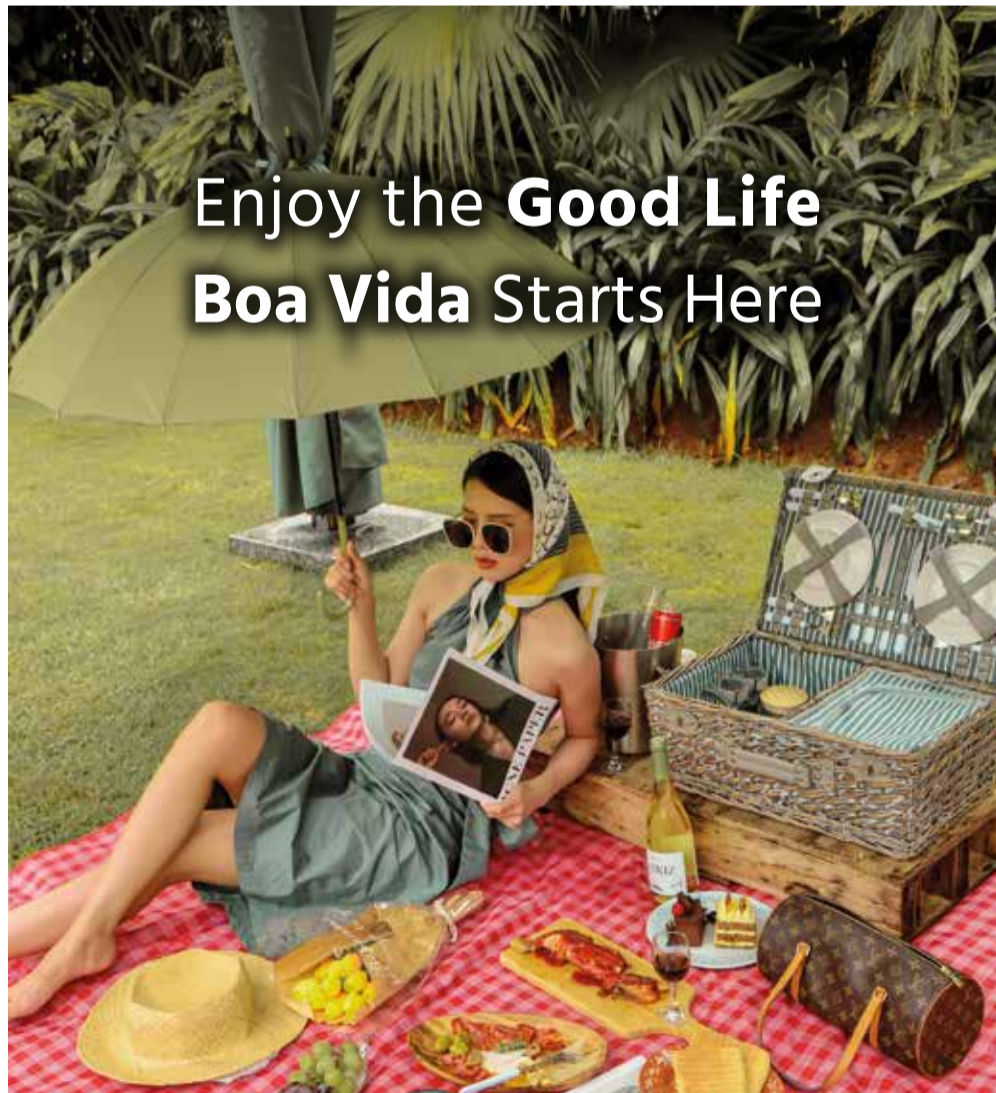
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25TH ANNIVERSARY

XI TAKING PART IN HONG KONG ANNIVERSARY BUT NO WORD ON VISIT

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping will participate in this week's celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the return of Hong Kong to China, the government said Saturday, but it left unclear whether he will visit the former British colony for the highly symbolic event.

Xi, who also is general secretary of the ruling Communist Party, will attend a meeting for the anniversary and the inauguration of Hong Kong's government led by newly appointed Chief Executive John Lee, the official Xinhua News Agency said. The announcement gave no other details.

The anniversary is one of the highest-profile political events in a year when Xi is widely believed to be trying to break with tradition and award himself a third five-year term as party leader. He already is the most powerful Chinese leader since at least the 1980s and wants to be seen as leading a "national rejuvenation" amid a military buildup and more assertive policy abroad.

Xi hasn't made a trip outside the Chinese mainland since the start of the coronavirus pandemic 2 1/2 years ago. Hong Kong faces a renewed rise in infections after a flood of cases earlier this year threatened to overwhelm its



hospitals.

Lee and his predecessor, Carrie Lam, both issued statements thanking Xi for participating in anniversary celebrations but didn't clarify whether he would visit Hong Kong.

The anniversary follows a crackdown led in part by Lee, a former Hong Kong security chief. Activists have been sentenced to prison, scores of others arrested

and Hong Kong's most prominent pro-democracy newspaper shut down.

The tighter controls under a national security law imposed in 2020 have prompted some people to leave for Taiwan, Britain and other countries. That has led to concerns the ruling party is ruining Hong Kong's status as a global business and financial center.

Hong Kong, one of Asia's ri-

chest cities and a global business center with thriving film, publishing and other creative industries, returned to China on July 1, 1997, under an agreement that promised a "high degree of autonomy" for 50 years.

Activists and foreign governments claim Beijing has reneged on that. The United States suspended agreements that treated Hong Kong as a separate territory

for trade, saying the city no longer had enough autonomy from Beijing.

Two years after Hong Kong, the neighboring Portuguese territory of Macau also returned to China in 1999, allowing the ruling party to say it had ended foreign colonialism.

Since the Hong Kong handover, ordinary people in the territory have struggled with soaring living costs that inflamed political tension.

Beijing imposed the sweeping national security legislation in 2020 following protests that erupted over a proposed extradition law and spread to include demands for more democracy.

Those sentenced to prison include Jimmy Lai, former publisher of the defunct pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily. Hong Kong's 90-year-old former Roman Catholic bishop, Joseph Zen, was among those arrested.

The crackdown adds to tension between Beijing and the United States, Europe, Japan and other Asian governments over alleged human rights, Taiwan and conflicts with its neighbors over Chinese territorial claims in the South China and East China seas.

Hong Kong's final British colonial governor, Chris Patten, expressed heartbreak this month over the crackdown.

"I thought there was a prospect that (China) would keep its word, and I'm sorry that it hasn't," Patten told The Associated Press on June 20 in London. "I just find it intensely difficult. I do believe that Hong Kong is a great city, I hope it will be a great city again."

MDT/AP

Envoy says Australia fired first shot with Huawei ban

ROD MCGUIRK,
CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA had fired the "first shot" in its deteriorating relations with China four years ago when the then-government banned Chinese-owned telecommunications giant Huawei from rolling out the country's 5G network due to security concerns, a Chinese ambassador said on Friday.

Xiao Qian, China's ambassador to Australia since January, gave a rare public address at University Technology Sydney that was repeatedly interrupted by human rights protesters holding signs that read "Free Tibet" and "Hong Kong independence."

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said he was not aware of the



China's Ambassador to Australia Xiao Qian

human rights protesters at Xiao's speech, but "we hope the relevant people will observe basic diplomatic protocol."

The address comes

as China shows signs of thawing a diplomatic deepfreeze of Australian ministers following the election of a new government last month.

Bilateral relations plummeted in early 2020 after the previous Australian government called for an independent investigation into the origins of

and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

But Xiao highlighted the government's 2018 decision to block Huawei from Australia's 5G rollout as a turning point in the relationship.

"That perhaps could be described as the first shot that has really damaged our normal business relations," Xiao said.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang wrote to congratulate Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese days after his election victory in a gesture seen by some as China seeking to reset the relationship.

Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe had an hourlong meeting with his Australian counterpart Richard Marles on the sidelines of a regional security summit in Singapore this month in the

first minister-to-minister talks between the two countries in more than two years.

Albanese has acknowledged some improvements in the bilateral relationship, but is demanding China lift a series of formal and informal sanctions on Australian exports as a gesture of goodwill.

"China, already there have been some improvements. But there's a long way to go. It will be a problematic relationship," Albanese told Australian Broadcasting Corp on Thursday.

Xiao said there was still time for the two countries to mend relations so that both could celebrate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties on Dec. 21.

"Personally, I am still optimistic," Xiao said. MDT/AP

Explorers find WWII Navy destroyer, deepest wreck discovered

A U.S. Navy destroyer that engaged a superior Japanese fleet in the largest sea battle of World War II in the Philippines has become the deepest wreck to be discovered, according to explorers.

The USS Samuel B. Roberts, popularly known as the "Sammy B," was identified on Wednesday broken into two pieces on a slope at a depth of 6,985 meters.

That puts it 426 meters deeper than the USS Johnson, the previous deepest wreck discovered last year in the Philippine Sea also by American explorer Victor Vescovo, founder of Dallas-based Caladan Oceanic Expeditions. He announced the latest find together with U.K.-based EYOS Expeditions.

"It was an extraordinary honor to locate this incredibly famous ship, and by doing so have the chance to retell her story of heroism and duty to those who may not know of the ship and her crew's

sacrifice," Vescovo, a former Navy commander, said in a statement.

The Sammy B. took part in the Battle off Samar, the final phase of the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944, in which the Imperial Japanese Navy suffered its biggest loss of ships and failed to dislodge the U.S. forces from Leyte, which they invaded earlier as part of the liberation of the Philippines.

According to some records, the destroyer disabled a Japanese heavy cruiser with a torpedo and significantly damaged another. After having spent virtually all its ammunition, she was critically hit by the lead battleship Yamato and sank. Of a 224-man crew, 89 died and 120 were saved, including the captain, Lt. Cmdr. Robert W. Copeland.

According to Samuel J. Cox, a retired admiral and naval historian, Copeland stated there was "no higher honor" then to have led the men who displayed such incredible courage going into battle against

AP PHOTO



overwhelming odds, from which survival could not be expected.

"This site is a hallowed war grave, and serves to remind all Americans of the great cost born by previous generations for the freedom

we take for granted today," Cox said in a statement.

The explorers said that up until the discovery, the historical records of where the wreck lay were not very accurate. The search in-

cluded the use of the deepest side-scan sonar ever installed and operated on a submersible, well beyond the standard commercial limitations of 6,000 meters, EYOS said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Karim Ahmed Khan, International Criminal Court chief prosecutor

PHILIPPINES

Int'l court prosecutor seeks to reactivate probe

MIKE CORDER,
BRUSSELS

THE chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court said Friday he has asked judges for authorization to resume his investigation "as quickly as possible" into the so-called war on drugs in the Philippines.

Judges last September authorized Prosecutor Karim Khan to investiga-

te alleged crimes against humanity between Nov. 1, 2011 and March 16, 2019, linked to the deadly crackdown.

However, the probe was suspended last November after the Philippines said in a letter to ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan that it already is investigating the crimes and so the international court doesn't have jurisdiction.

"The court may only exercise jurisdiction where national legal systems fail to do so, which is certainly not the case in the Philippines," the letter said, citing domestic investigations.

However, Khan has now sought to resume his probe, saying in a statement that "I have concluded that the deferral requested by the Philippines is not warranted,

and that the investigation should resume as quickly as possible."

More than 6,000 mostly poor drug suspects have been killed, according to government pronouncements, but human rights groups say the death toll is considerably higher and should include many unsolved killings by motorcycle-riding gunmen who may have been deployed by police.

Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has defended the crackdown as "lawfully directed against drug lords and pushers who have for many years destroyed the present generation, especially the youth."

Duterte has denied condoning extrajudicial killings of drug suspects although he has openly threatened suspects with death and has ordered police to shoot suspects who dangerously resist arrest.

The ICC is a court of last resort for cases that countries are unwilling or unable to prosecute. Under the court's rules, a country can request deferral of an investigation if it is already investigating the crimes. **MDT/AP**

AUTOMOBILE

TOYOTA RECALLS ELECTRIC CAR FOR FAULTY WHEEL THAT MAY DETACH

YURI KAGEYAMA, TOKYO

TOYOTA is recalling 2,700 bZ4X crossover vehicles globally for wheel bolts that could become loose, in a major setback for the Japanese automaker's ambitions to roll out electric cars.

Toyota Motor Corp. said Friday the cause is still under investigation, but the whole wheel could come off, risking a crash.

"Until the remedy is available, no one should drive these vehicles," the company said in a statement.

Among the vehicles subject to the latest recall, about 2,200 were destined for Europe, 270 for North America, 112 for Japan, and 60 for the rest of Asia, according to Toyota. They were produced between March and June.

The bZ4X, which went on sale about two months ago, is a key model in Toyota's plans to strengthen its electric lineup.

Toyota is planning to have 30 EV models by 2030,

selling 3.5 million electric vehicles globally that year. Toyota is also investing 2 trillion yen (\$17.6 billion) in battery research and development to achieve such goals.

The "bz" in the recalled model's name, as well as others in the works, stands for a "beyond zero" series, including sport-utility vehicles of all sizes, pickup trucks and sportscars, according to Toyota.

The maker of the Prius hybrid and Lexus luxury models has been seen by some critics as a straggler in pushing electric vehicles, partly because it has been so bullish, and successful, in other green technology, such as hybrids and fuel cells, as well as efficient gas engines.

Demand for electric cars is expected to continue growing, especially with gas prices soaring recently, amid worries about inflation and the war in Ukraine, and as people around the world become more conscious about climate change and the environment. **MDT/AP**

US abortion ruling sparks global debate, polarizes activists

DÁNICA COTO
& CARA ANNA, NAIROBI

THE end of constitutional protections for abortions in the United States on Friday emboldened abortion opponents around the world, while advocates for abortion rights worried it could threaten recent moves toward legalization in their countries.

The U.S. Supreme Court's overturning of the landmark Roe v. Wade decision "shows that these types of rights are always at risk of being steamrolled," said Ruth Zurbriggen, an Argentinian activist and member of the Companion Network of Latin America and the Caribbean, a group favoring abortion rights.

But in El Salvador, anti-abortion campaigner Sara Larín expressed hope the ruling will bolster campaigns against the procedure around the globe.

"I trust that with this ruling it will be possible to abolish abortion in the United States and throughout the world," said Larín, president of Fundación Vida SV.

In Kenya, Phonsina Archane watched news of Friday's ruling and said she froze for a while in a state of panic.

"This is being done in America, which should be an example when it comes to the women's rights movement," said Archane, an activist for abortion rights. "If this is happening in America, what about me here in Africa? It's a very, very sad day."

She worried the ruling will embolden abortion opponents across Africa who have charged into reproductive health clinics or threatened attacks. "There is no safe place on the continent," she said.

Abortion in sub-Saharan Africa is already more unsafe than in any other region of the world, and the overwhelming majority of women of child-bearing age live in countries where abortion laws are highly or moderately restricted, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a New York-based research organization that supports abortion rights.



Demonstrators gather outside the United States embassy in Vauxhall to protest against the decision to scrap constitutional right to abortion, Friday

Archane said civil society groups in Africa will have to come together to work out strategies on how to keep themselves and women safe. Just months ago, many saw hope when the World Health Organization released guidelines on quality abortion care, she said. "We had a step ahead, and now we have to go five steps back again."

The decision, which leaves it up to lawmakers in individual U.S. state to decide whether to allow or ban abortions, lit up social media across Argentina, where a law that legalized elective abortion up to the 14th week of gestation took effect in January 2021 after years of debate.

Anti-abortion activists cheered the ruling, with legislator Amalia Granata tweeting: "There is justice again in the world. We are going to achieve this in Argentina too!"

In more conservative countries like El Salvador, where abortions are illegal no matter the circumstance and where some 180 women with obstetric emergencies have been criminally prosecuted in the last two decades, Larín warned that the ruling could inspire yet more efforts to loosen abortion restrictions outside the U.S.

"Campaigns promoting abortion may intensify in our countries because funding and abortion clinics in the United States are going to close as they have been doing in recent years," she said.

At the Vatican, the head of

the Pontifical Academy for Life, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, joined U.S. bishops in saying it is a time for reflection, healing wounds and civil dialogue.

"The fact that a large country with a long democratic tradition has changed its position on this issue also challenges the whole world," the academy said.

In Mexico, lawyer and activist Verónica Cruz said the ruling could give a boost to anti-abortion groups, but added it likely won't have any impact in Mexico where 10 of the country's 32 states have legalized abortion up to 12 weeks gestation in recent years.

She noted the ruling could lead to an increase in calls for help from U.S. women seeking abortions. So far this year, local activists have helped some 1,500 U.S. women get the abortion pills, Cruz said.

Ricardo Cano, with the anti-abortion group National Front for Life, also doubts the ruling would have any impact in Mexico or elsewhere in Latin America, given the advance of leftist ideologies in the region.

Colombia, which became in February the latest Latin American country to expand access to abortion, also will not be affected by the ruling, said Catalina Martínez Coral, director for Latin America and the Caribbean for the Center for Reproductive Rights.

Ahead of U.S. President Joe Biden's trip overseas, the heads of at least two Group

of Seven members called the decision "horrific."

"No government, politician or man should tell a woman what she can and cannot do with her body," said Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, adding that he "can't imagine the fear and anger" women in the U.S. must be experiencing in the wake of the ruling.

The French Foreign Ministry urged U.S. federal authorities "to do everything possible" to ensure American women have continued access to abortions, calling it a "health and survival issue." France's president, Emmanuel Macron, added in a tweet that "abortion is a fundamental right of all women."

New Zealand's prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, said: "Watching the removal of a woman's fundamental right to make decisions over their own body is incredibly upsetting. Here in New Zealand we recently legislated to decriminalise abortion and treat it as a health rather than criminal issue.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, head of the World Health Organization, said on Twitter that he was "concerned and disappointed" by the ruling, saying it reduces both "women's rights and access to health care."

The U.N. agency dealing with sexual and reproductive health said that whether or not abortion is legal "it happens all too often" and global data shows that restricting access makes abortion more deadly. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1991 YUGOSLAV TROOPS MOVE AGAINST SLOVENIA



Yugoslav tanks, troops and aircraft have swept into the small republic of Slovenia, 48 hours after it declared independence.

Federal forces moved to seize control of border crossing points with Italy, Austria and Hungary and launched an assault on the airport near the province's capital, Ljubljana.

More government tanks rolled into a town in neighbouring Croatia, which is also seeking independence. At least seven people have died and 100 have been reported injured in the clashes so far.

The Slovene administration has rejected a call by the Yugoslav prime minister for a three-month truce to allow negotiations to take place, demanding troops be withdrawn first.

Road access to the capital has been blocked by police and paramilitary forces from the self-declared state. The government in Ljubljana said they had seized or destroyed 15 tanks and shot down six helicopters.

"There is war in Slovenia - there are conflicts in at least 20 places," said Defence Minister Janez Jansa.

The British Government condemned the use of force in the country and called for dialogue between the two sides.

But a spokesman for the Yugoslav defence ministry warned the federal army would "carry out its obligations to the end, regardless of the type of resistance".

A message from the military commander of the district, General Konrad Kosek, to Ljubljana stated clearly his mission was to re-establish federal control over the province.

"The order will be executed unconditionally - we shall proceed according to the rules of combat... All resistance will be broken," it said.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Communist Yugoslavia was formed by Marshall Tito in 1945.

He dealt with nationalist aspirations by creating a federation of six republics: Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia. But ethnic tensions were never far from the surface. Although the federation held together for 10 years after Tito's death in 1980, it fell apart rapidly after Slovenia's declaration of independence.

Croatia and Bosnia followed soon after, but at the cost of a renewed battle with the Serbs - who wanted to build a greater Serbia.



A bitter conflict developed, characterised by huge numbers of refugees, ethnic hatred and atrocities committed by all sides.

An uneasy peace was only achieved in December 1995 with the Dayton Accord.

The state union of Serbia and Montenegro was all that remained of the federation of six republics that made up former Yugoslavia - but in a referendum on 21 May 2006, Montenegro narrowly voted for independence from Serbia.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Try a barbecue or a day at the beach. This is a good day to check out your investments. You may be in an extremely passionate mood today.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Your attitude is changing rapidly and your plate is overloaded. Spending too much time talking to friends or relatives could easily turn into a debate that could lead to estrangement.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Plan to visit friends or relatives. Avoid letting children and friends borrow. It's doubtful anyone will try to stand in your way or cut you off at the pass today.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You need to take a break with the ones you love. You must not make unnecessary changes today. Social functions will bring you in touch with new lovers.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You will have a greater involvement in groups; however, they may not be to your advantage. Make sure you concentrate if operating machinery or vehicles.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 The knowledge you have will enhance your reputation. You will be able to catch up on overdue paper work. Comfort is a necessity. Check your motives.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 This could be the cause of a dispute that may result in estrangement. Make residential changes that will lift your spirits. Your tendency to overreact could get you into trouble.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 You can be sure that any dealing with large institutions should go well. Try to curb your habits, or you could find yourself in an awkward financial position. This is a great day to spend with family.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You need time to put your house in order and sort out what you are going to do about your personal direction. Pleasure trips will turn out to be better than anticipated.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Your emotions will be touched off concerning recent encounters with your lover. Don't let any small misunderstandings get in the way. Drastic changes regarding your personal attitude are evident.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Do not confront situations unless you are sure you have a good understanding of the dilemma. Your personal life will be disrupted if you have been too busy with business.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Try to curb your bad habits, and compromise if your partner gives you an ultimatum. Don't let children hold you back from doing things you enjoy. Don't avoid situations that may deteriorate;

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	22	31	thunderstorms
Changchun	19	28	rain
Chengdu	21	35	cloudy
Chongqing	25	32	rain
Fuzhou	26	35	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	35	thunderstorms
Guiyang	22	28	rain
Haikou	26	36	cloudy
Hangzhou	28	36	cloudy
Harbin	18	29	thunderstorms
Hefei	27	32	overcast
Nanjing	27	35	overcast
Shanghai	25	30	overcast
Taipei	27	33	rain
Wuhan	28	32	overcast
Hong Kong	28	32	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	20	33	overcast
Frankfurt	14	26	overcast
Paris	12	24	overcast
London	10	19	rain
New York	18	27	rain

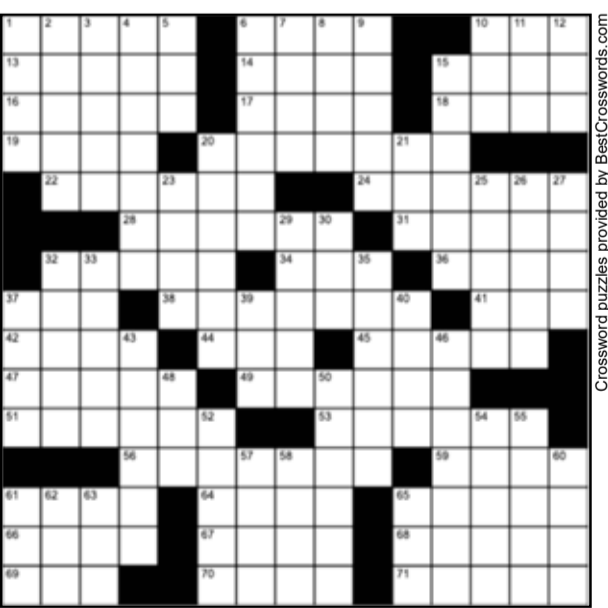
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Pass into disuse; 6- Pub offerings; 10- Dundee denial; 13- Overjoy; 14- "Give that ___ cigar!"; 15- Deities; 16- Backing for an exhibit; 17- Helps; 18- Designer Gucci; 19- Bird of prey; 20- Intoxicating liquor; 22- Kathmandu resident; 24- Idolizes; 28- Straight; 31- Pipe cleaner; 32- Varnish resin; 34- Move about recklessly; 36- Environmental sci.; 37- B'way hit sign; 38- Eighth sign of the zodiac; 41- Prefix with tourism; 42- Ancient Briton; 44- Single unit; 45- Grind together; 47- Legend maker; 49- Lack of variety; 51- Super Bowl III MVP; 53- In and of ___; 56- Traders; 59- Portrayal by an actor; 61- Portfolio; 64- Stir up; 65- Stiff; 66- Plastic or liberal. e.g.; 67- Bath powder; 68- Nut of an oak; 69- Ask invasive questions; 70- Formerly, formerly; 71- ___ la vista;

DOWN 1- Vichyssoise veggie; 2- Actor Delon; 3- Stickum; 4- Skyline sight; 5- Lamprey; 6- Charlotte ___, Virgin Islands; 7- Not of the cloth; 8- Prefix with skeleton; 9- Figure skater Cohen; 10- Cambodia's Lon ___; 11- Say further; 12- That, in Tijuana; 15- In abundance; 20- Permanent-magnet alloy; 21- Like 1 and 3, e.g.; 23- Intentions; 25- Speed contests; 26- Methuselah's father; 27- Go it alone; 29- Come to terms; 30- Music style performed by Dr Dre and Eminem; 32- "All My Children" vixen; 33- Doctor's replacement; 35- Numerals; 37- Duration; 39- Mich. neighbor; 40- Responsibility; 43- Baseball deals; 46- 1981 Neil Diamond hit; 48- Had a little something; 50- Administer; 52- Poker Flat chronicler; 54- Company emblems; 55- Coquet; 57- One telling tales; 58- Building wings; 60- Dame ___ Everage; 61- Mushroom morsel; 62- Sheet music abbr.; 63- Hog home; 65- Go, team!

Friday's solution

SLANG	MASS	DANE
PAPAL	OLLIA	AREA
OSSIE	BOOM	NEAT
THEREF	TWEEZERS	
FIR	SNAILS	
DISPUTE	ERG	
REPUL	AMASS	TAM
ARAT	STIRS	GALLI
TEST	IMAGE	MALES
WRETCH	ED	ONLOAN
HOMO	INES	EARTO
OWEN	NOSE	STEED
ANNE	GRIP	SHOES



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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Windy Lam
(853) 68811007
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AI-10010081-9



João Lam
(853) 66841718
joao@jmlproperty.com
AI-10010563-6

Group asks for living wages, labor rights for 2026 World Cup

ANNE M. PETERSON

WITH this year's World Cup in Qatar clouded by labor and human rights issues, there's a push for the North American cities awarded games for the 2026 tournament to commit to livable wages, equitable hiring and worker protection.

The Dignity 2026 coalition has brought together groups including the AFL-CIO, Human Rights Watch and the Independent Supporters Council to work with FIFA and the individual host cities in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The coalition has met several times in the past few months with soccer's international governing body to discuss its commitment to these issues. With last week's announcement of the 16 cities that will host games, the effort has become more targeted.

They say FIFA is listening, but has not pledged to require minimum standards.

"That means looking at fair living wages, targeted local hiring, strong health and safety protections and agreements that make sure workers have a voice on the job. So we have given them about nine points that we would like to see implemented across all of the



host cities. Because one of the things we have found is the cities haven't gotten guidance about what the expectations are," said Cathy Feingold, director of the international department at the AFL-CIO. "And so we think the best way to handle this is to make

sure there are very clear binding frameworks that unify all of the host cities."

FIFA did not respond to a request for comment.

This year's World Cup starts in November. Critics say the first World Cup in the Middle East is

problematic because of Qatar's history of human and labor rights abuses. There have been widespread reports of abuse of the migrant workers who have built the estimated \$200 billion in projects that include stadiums, transport and other infrastructure.

Qatari officials and FIFA have said the World Cup has accelerated positive changes in the nation's laws and society. And indeed, the nation has introduced a minimum wage and dismantled the "kafala" sponsorship system binding workers to their employer.

The U.S., Canada and Mexico bid for the World Cup included a 90-page plan to address human rights. Some of the groups in Dignity 2026 were involved in the plan's formulation.

"We know very well that what's on paper, doesn't always mean what's put into practice. And so what we've come together to do is really translate that document that at this point is non-binding and make sure its implemented in the host cities," Feingold said.

Four years ago when the joint bid was awarded, there were concerns about the implications of then-President Donald Trump's orders barring travel to the United States from a number of Muslim-majority countries. Trump later assured FIFA that travel for the event would not be impeded, and President Joseph Biden subsequently overturned the orders.

Of rising concern are U.S. laws in some states targeting the LGBTQ community, including laws that impact transgender children and athletes, as well as measures that impact reproductive rights and voting access.

In Canada, the marginalization of indigenous communities is under scrutiny, while Mexico has struggled to reign in fans who use homophobic chants at soccer matches. **MDT/AP**

Vonn urges athletes use platform for good 'especially today'

EDDIE PELLIS

LINDSEY Vonn used her induction speech into the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Hall of Fame on Friday to urge athletes to put their platform to good use, "especially today," the day the Supreme Court overturned the landmark ruling that guaranteed a women's constitutional right to abortion.

Vonn joined Michael Phelps, Billie Jean King, Michelle Kwan, Mia Hamm and the late Pat Summitt among the inductees into the Class of 2022.

Vonn gave a special nod to her mother, Linda Krohn, who is battling ALS.

She closed with a message to fellow athletes, urging them to keep the Olympic spirit alive by "using your world, your platform, for good."

"These amazing peo-

ple before me and many others have proven that great things can be achieved in ways that reach far beyond medals," Vonn said. "And in the world we live in now, especially today, it's so incredibly important."

King, at the forefront in the fight for women's advances in sports, was the first woman inducted in the "special contributor" category. She said it felt only appropriate that her honor came during the same week as the 50th anniversary of Title IX.

"To be the first woman to be inducted in a special contributor category is a true honor and reflective of my lifelong goals: To make sure what I did off the court had more impact than what I did on it," she said.

The evening included several references to Title IX.

Inductee Natalie Coughlin said that had it not been for the landmark bill, her swimming career would've ended in 2000, before she became a multi-time NCAA champion and four years before she won the first of her 12 Olympic medals.

Also inducted at the ceremony at the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Museum in Colorado Springs were Roger Kingdom (track), Muffy Davis (Para Alpine skiing and cycling), David Kiley (Para Alpine skiing, track and field and wheelchair basketball), Trischa Zorn-Hudson (Para swimming) and Gretchen Fraser (skiing).

The 1976 women's 4x100 freestyle relay swimming team, anchored by Shirley Babashoff in its stunning upset over the East Germans, and the 2002 men's Paralympic sled hockey



Lindsey Vonn arrives for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Colorado Springs, Colo., Friday

team also were inducted after being voted into the hall by a mix of Olympic and Paralympic athletes,

media and administrators and fans.

Led by a record-setting 28 medals and 23 golds

won by Phelps, this year's class has captured a total of 129 medals, including 86 gold. **MDT/AP**

OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**FATAL BACKSLIDE
 ON WOMEN'S
 RIGHTS IN US**

The US Supreme Court's seismic ruling on Friday to overturn Roe vs Wade that has guaranteed women the constitutional right to abortion since 1973 has sent shockwaves across the United States and around the world.

The 5-4 vote by the conservative majority court has allowed states the freedom to ban abortions, thereby denying women the right to make own personal decisions about their bodies and reproduction choices. Already, the so-called trigger bans in 13 states, mainly in the South and Midwest, have either gone into effect automatically with the court's decision or will go into effect in 30 days. Many other states are set to move in that direction.

The Supreme Court's decision is a curtailment of the rights of women in the US that goes against the will of the majority of people in the country. The latest Pew survey shows that 61 percent of US adults say abortion should be legal all or most of the time, while only 37 percent say it should be illegal.

The ruling will hurt minority women the most, since 38 percent of all the women who had abortions in the US in 2019 were non-Hispanic blacks according to the latest data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Many of them live in the Southern states which have the most draconian abortion laws. Being unable to travel to places to access abortion services or simply resorting to unsafe abortion measures will put their lives in grave danger. In the words of Linda Goler Blount, president of Black Women's Health Imperative, the court decision will be "a death sentence for many black women".

Massive protests against the ruling have broken out in many US cities. President Joe Biden lamented the court decision as a "sad day" for the nation.

Global leaders have decried the historic setback. French President Emmanuel Macron pledged "solidarity with the women whose liberties are being undermined". UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet condemned it as "a huge blow to women's human rights and gender equality".

What is more disturbing is that the decision may well be the beginning of revoking more fundamental rights in the US by the Supreme Court. Justice Clarence Thomas has hinted that the court should reconsider contraception and gay marriage rulings.

What happened on Friday was unthinkable not so long ago. Many countries in the world have moved to remove or relax restrictive abortion laws in the past decades. However, the US is regressing on such a progressive trend in an alarming way.

US politicians are used to pointing fingers and lecturing the world on human rights and women's rights, including by intentionally fabricating and exaggerating facts. Now is the time for them to stand up for those rights by stopping the worst backsliding on women's rights in the US in nearly 50 years.

Otherwise, they will once again expose their double standards and hypocrisy.

Pope Francis celebrated families Saturday and urged them to shun "selfish" decisions that are indifferent to life as he closed out a big Vatican rally a day after the U.S. Supreme Court ended constitutional protections for abortion.

Francis didn't refer to the ruling or explicitly mention abortion in his homily. But he used the buzzwords he has throughout his papacy about the need to defend families and to condemn a "culture of waste" that he believes is behind the societal accep-

ance of abortion.

"Let us not allow the family to be poisoned by the toxins of selfishness, individualism, today's culture of indifference and waste, and as a result lose its very DNA, which is the spirit of welcoming and service," he said.

The pope, noting that some couples allow their fears and anxieties to "thwart the desire to bring new lives in the world," called for them not to cling to selfish desires.



President Joe Biden and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz speak during a bilateral meeting at the G7 Summit in Elmau, Germany, yesterday

**BIDEN: G-7 TO BAN
 RUSSIAN GOLD IN
 RESPONSE TO UKRAINE WAR**

**ZEKE MILLER,
 DARLENE SUPERVILLE
 & GEIR MOULSON, ELMAU**

PRESIDENT Joe Biden said yesterday that the United States and other Group of Seven leading economies will ban imports of gold from Russia, the latest in a series of sanctions that the club of democracies hopes will further isolate Russia economically over its invasion of Ukraine.

A formal announcement was expected Tuesday as the leaders hold their annual summit.

Biden and his counterparts will huddle on the summit's opening day yesterday to discuss how to secure energy supplies and tackle inflation, aiming to keep the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine from splintering the global coalition working to punish Moscow.

Hours before the summit was to formally open, Russia launched missile strikes against the Ukrainian capital yesterday, striking at least two residential buildings, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. They were the first such strikes by Russia in three weeks.

Senior Biden administration officials said gold is Moscow's second largest

export after energy, and that banning imports would make it more difficult for Russia to participate in global markets. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details before the announcement.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the ban on Russian gold will "directly hit Russian oligarchs and strike at the heart of Putin's war machine," a reference to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Putin is squandering his dwindling resources on this pointless and barbaric war. He is bankrolling his ego at the expense of both the Ukrainian and Russian people," Johnson said. "We need to starve the Putin regime of its funding."

In recent years, gold has been the top Russian export after energy — reaching almost \$19 billion or about 5% of global gold exports, in 2020, according to the White House.

Of Russian gold exports, 90% was consigned to G-7 countries. Of these Russian exports, over 90%, or nearly \$17 billion, was exported to the UK. The United States imported less than \$200 million in gold from Russia in 2019, and under \$1 million in 2020 and 2021.

Biden arrived in Germany's picturesque Bava-

rian alps early yesterday to join his counterparts for the annual meeting of the world's leading democratic economies. Reverberations from the brutal war in Ukraine will be front and center of their discussions. Biden and the allies aim to present a united front in support of Ukraine as the conflict enters its fourth month.

Unity was the message Biden took into a pre-summit sit-down with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who holds the G-7's rotating presidency and is hosting the gathering.

"We've got to make sure we have us all staying together. You know, we're gonna continue working on economic challenges that we face but I think we get through all this," Biden said.

Scholz replied that the "good message" is that "we all made it to stay united, which Putin never expected," a reference to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"We have to stay together, because Putin has been counting on, from the beginning, that somehow NATO and the G7 would splinter, but we haven't and we're not going to," Biden said. "We can't let this aggression take the form it has and get away with it."

MDT/AP



Russia attacked the Ukrainian capital yesterday, striking at least two residential buildings, the mayor of Kyiv said, as elsewhere Russian troops fought to consolidate their gains in the country's east. Associated Press journalists in Kyiv saw rescue services battling flames and rescuing civilians. The general prosecutor's office said preliminary information indicated one person was killed and four injured; Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said four people were hospitalized with injuries and a 7-year-old girl was pulled alive from the rubble.



Norway A gunman opened fire in Oslo's nightlife district Saturday, killing two people and leaving more than 20 wounded in what the Norwegian security service called an "Islamist terror act" during the capital's annual LGBTQ Pride festival. Investigators said the suspect, identified as a 42-year-old Norwegian citizen originally from Iran, was arrested after opening fire at three locations in downtown Oslo.



Spain While Russia's invasion of Ukraine is certain to dominate an upcoming NATO summit in Madrid, Spain and other member nations are quietly pushing the Western alliance to consider how mercenaries aligned with Russian President Vladimir Putin are spreading Moscow's influence to Africa. As the host of the summit taking place from tomorrow to Thursday, Spain wants to emphasize its proximity to Africa as it lobbies for a greater focus on Europe's southern flank in a new document outlining NATO's vision of its security challenges and tasks.