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**THE NUMBER OF DOMESTIC DISPUTES AND CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HAVE BOTH UNDERGONE UPWARD TRENDS DUE TO THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC DOWNTURN**

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**PUBLIC HOSPITAL ATTEMPTING TO RESUME CERTAIN SERVICES**

P5

**US ACCUSES MACAU FOR ALLEGEDLY FAILING TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, GOV'T REFUTES REPORT**

P2



**China** A tornado blew through 11 villages in a farming region of eastern China, damaging homes, killing at least one person and injuring 25 others, while swaths of the country face extreme heat. The homes and property of more than 2,000 people were damaged when the twister struck Wednesday in Jiangsu province south of Beijing. Total damage was estimated at around 65 million yuan (\$9.6 million), the newspaper Global Times reported, citing local media.

**Indonesia** The pilot of a passenger airplane in Indonesia suffered a health emergency 15 minutes after take-off yesterday and was forced to return to the airport before being rushed to a hospital where he later died. The Citilink Indonesia flight — an Airbus A320 carrying more than 100 passengers — had departed from Surabaya's international airport in East Java province and was headed to Ujung Pandang city in South Sulawesi province.

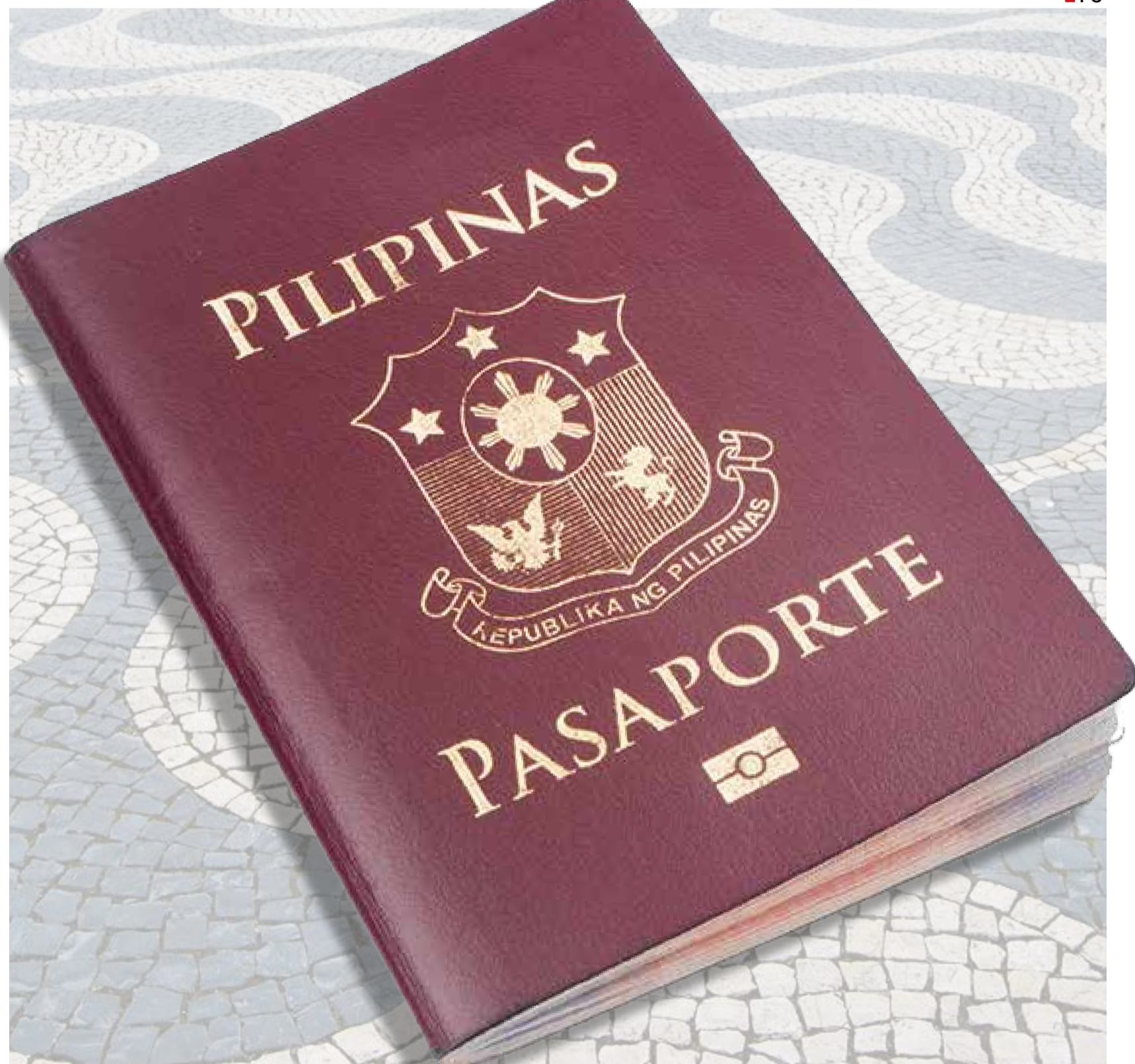


**European Union** imposed more sanctions on Russia yesterday over the war in Ukraine after the bloc's member states backed a series of measures that would include gold imports and tighten export controls on some high-technology goods. European Commission Ursula von der Leyen said that the "reinforced, prolonged EU sanctions against the Kremlin" send "a strong signal to Moscow: we will keep the pressure high for as long as it takes." The details of the sanctions were still unclear since they still need to be posted in the EU's official journal.

More on backpage

# GOV'T FACES BACKLASH FOR 'DISCRIMINATORY' DIRECTIVE

P3



## LAWMAKERS DOUBT EFFECTIVENESS OF NEW STIMULUS

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# US ADDS MACAU TO TRAFFICKING BLACKLIST

LYNZY VALLES

A US report has placed Macau on the country's Tier 3 Watch List for allegedly failing to identify or provide services to victims of human trafficking. The report also noted that Macau has not initiated any trafficking prosecutions for the third consecutive year.

Countries or regions placed in Tier 3 are those whose governments do not fully meet the minimum standards within the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) and who, it has been deemed, are not making significant efforts to do so.

According to its 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report, the US Department of State stated that the Macau government "has not convicted a trafficker since 2019 and has never identified a victim of forced labor."

As cited in the report, Washington accused the government of not fully meeting the "minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and ... not making significant efforts to do so, even considering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity."

The US department stated that the "government maintained weak protection efforts, and authorities did not report identifying or providing services to any victims for the third consecutive year," and that it has "never" identified labor trafficking victims in Macau.

Meanwhile, the SAR government maintained anti-trafficking



law enforcement efforts.

Law 6/2008 amended the penal code and criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of three to 20 years' imprisonment, depending on the age of the victim.

However, "the government has not initiated any trafficking prosecutions since 2018 and has not convicted a trafficker since 2019."

"Officials reportedly believed a victims' initial consent or 'voluntary association' with a trafficker was sufficient evidence to prove a trafficking crime did not occur, which sometimes led to trafficking cases being pursued under other crimes and weakened victim identification efforts," the US department stated.

It also slammed Macau for the absence of standard labor laws for domestic workers.

While there was a required

minimum income threshold for employers to be able to sustain a monthly wage of at least a MOP3,000 patacas, there was no minimum wage for foreign domestic workers, "a situation which

may have increased their vulnerability to trafficking," the report noted.

It recalled that the government adjudicated 1,758 labor dispute cases in 2021, "but did not report

how many inspections it conducted at construction sites or employment agencies for labor violations."

"The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts or provide anti-trafficking training to its personnel posted overseas."

It also added that domestic workers in the SAR may be vulnerable to forced labor in Macau, noting that some employment agencies overcharged workers with recruitment fees of approximately two to three months' salary and withheld workers' passports, potentially leading to debt-based coercion.

"Some brokers bring migrant workers to Macau to renew work visas for other countries, while restricting their movement and withholding their passports," it added.

## SAR EXPRESSES 'STRONG INDIGNATION' AT US REPORT

THE Office of the Secretary for Security slammed the report, claiming that the government has been providing full support for victims of trafficking.

To the Commission for Monitoring the Measures to Deter Trafficking in Persons, the office stated that human trafficking remains at a "low percentage or an almost zero percentage in Macau."

"The Macau SAR government [strongly disputes] and expresses its strong indignation at the irresponsibly-made comments on the work of law enforcement and the judicial system in Macau,"

the office, led by Wong Sio Chak, said.

"In the 2022 report, and despite not having up-to-date and accurate knowledge about the global situation in Macau, the US continues to utter meaningless statements regarding the work to prevent and combat human trafficking carried out by Macau, presenting subjective judgments." The office then pledged that security authorities will continue active cooperation with judicial bodies, with a view to carrying out law enforcement work, and continue to strengthen international and interregional exchange and cooperation.

### COVID-19

## 64 patients discharged yesterday

ANTHONY LAM

HEALTH Bureau division head and public health doctor Leong Iek Hou announced yesterday that 64 more people had been discharged from care, with 26 symptomatic from hospitalization and 38 asymptomatic from confinement.

As of yesterday, the city had seen 633 people discharged since June 18.

Out of the 1,795 people

who have tested positive since June 18, 1,100 were asymptomatic, accounting for about 61.2%. The remaining 695 were symptomatic.

All 1,795 positive cases have contracted the BA.5.1 variant of SARS-CoV-2, Leong confirmed in response to a question from the press.

Yesterday also saw another patient, a 93-year-old male with chronic illnesses, succumb to complications

at 3 a.m. yesterday after contracting SARS-CoV-2.

According to medical director of the public hospital, Dr Lei Wai Seng, the patient tested positive on July 9. He lived in San Mei On Building with his family. Prior to his diagnosis, a family member of his also tested positive.

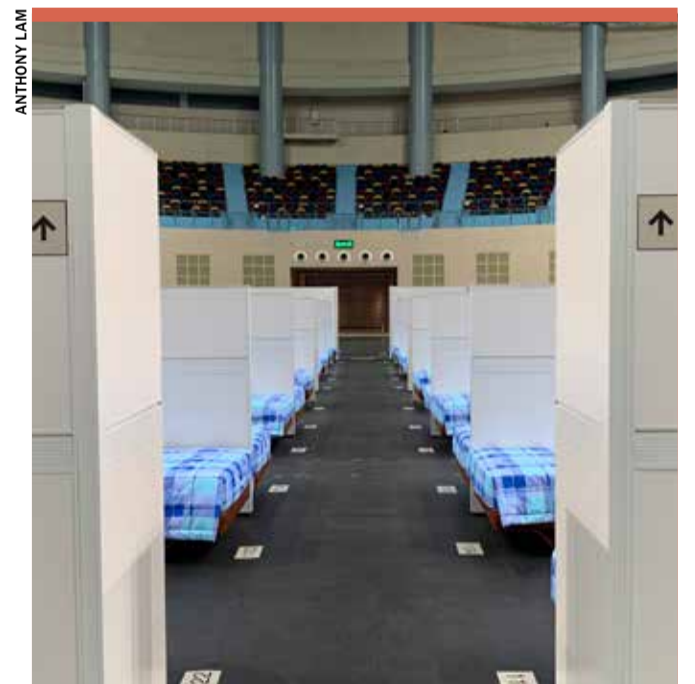
He had been suffering from chronic heart and lung diseases and needed regular oxygen before he contracted the virus.

Upon hospitalization,

he did not develop obvious symptoms of pneumonia. He later developed gastrointestinal bleeding and a continuous fever, among other complications.

Lei reported that antiviral and antibiotic medications had been prescribed but were unable to prevent multiple instances of organ failure from occurring.

At the agreement of his family, no invasive therapy was administered to the patient, Lei added.



ANTHONY LAM

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# Philippine passport bearers required to take NAT every day

ANTHONY LAM

**A**LL Philippine passport bearers in Macau will need to take daily SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid tests (NAT) from today, regardless of whether they are Macau residents.

Defending the decision, Health Bureau (SSM) public health doctor Leong Iek Hou said that 9.5% of all 1,795 cases detected since June 18 involved Philippine citizens. "We have excluded those with Macau IDs," she added.

The public health doctor referenced last year's decision to implement NAT requirements in relation to key groups as a further justification for the measure. Last year, the city ran several tests on groups including those of Indonesian and Burmese origin, security guards, construction workers, among others.

The government has been employing the term "key group" to refer to those who need to be tested when others in the population do not.

Described by many social media users as racist, the upcoming testing requirements will apply to all Philippine passport holders in Macau. Those Macau residents with Philippine passports will need to undergo the test as well. Stay-in domestic helpers from the Philippines will also be tested daily.

Leong was grilled by members of the press at yesterday's regular health press briefing about the allegedly racist nature of the test.

Defending the need for the test, the public health doctor recapped the "relatively high risks"

RENATO MARQUES



encountered by people of that nationality, reflected in the 9.5% proportion of the entire infected population. "From data analysis, we have concluded that they are at higher risk," Leong said. "We need to allocate our resources to riskier groups as the city nears its consolidation period."

Meanwhile, the public health doctor also announced yesterday that a key area has been identified. The area will cover the neighborhoods along Rua do Seminário, Rua da Praia do Manduco, Flora Garden and San Kio.

From today, those living and working within the key area, as well as those who have stayed there longer than 0.5 hours after July 18, will be required to be tested every day until July 24.

About 15,000 people currently reside or work in this area, Leong said.

Again, the public health doctor attributed the need to test to the frequent detection of new positive

cases within the area.

As to why regular tests are needed for these groups of people, the public health doctor said in addition that it would be helpful for early detection and confinement or hospitalization.

These two groups of people will have no exceptions, meaning that the elderly, infants, children, and those who do not need to leave homes will still need to be tested.

Missing a test will result in their health codes being changed to yellow, while missing two consecutive tests will change the health code to red, the public health doctor said. To restore green codes, they will need to take a test.

The public health doctor added that the SSM will consider the need to identify any other areas as key areas for frequent NATs based on the results of constant evaluation. As such, she warned all members of the public to ensure they have registered the correct addresses on

tween July 24 and 29.

She said that the definition of this group of people include those who have or will have left home for work between July 20 and 29; such people will need to take the test at two-day intervals, regardless of their work hours and professions.

A person affected by this rule is only required to take the test the day before the date on which they need to leave home for work. For example, if they stay home until July 25 and leave home for work July 26, they will need to take the test on July 25 at the earliest. Once they initiate the test cycle, they will need to follow the two-day intervals until July 29, according to the public health doctor.

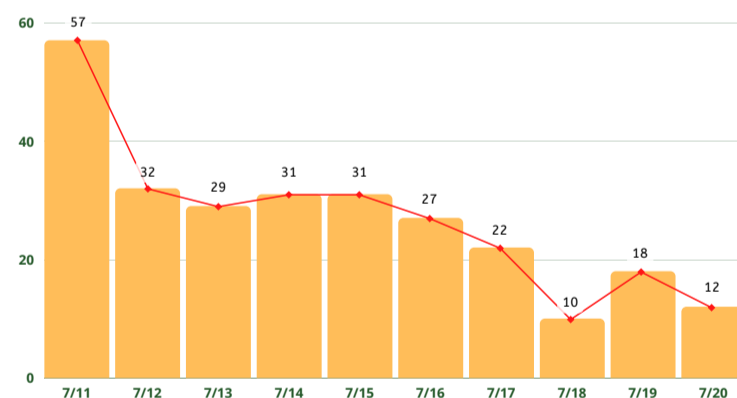
Despite this, the public health doctor added that people are free to take the test even if they are not part of any of the key groups, key areas or working groups.

Tests can be booked through the booking link below the health code application platform. As the test is free-of-charge, results will not be eligible for the purposes of border crossing.

In terms of daily SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen tests (RATs), Leong emphasized that all members of the public will need to conduct them daily from July 23 to 29, regardless of their working locations, key group or areas conditions, or other factors.

their health code to avoid being erroneously identified as falling within any key areas that may be designated.

Leong recapped the comments of her superintendent, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong, from Wednesday, saying that those required to leave home for work will need to take regular NATs at two-day intervals be-



Daily Covid-19 cases during the partial lockdown

## NAT directive for Filipinos receives backlash, Consulate says order not a 'political issue'

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE Philippine Consulate General in Macau has called on Filipino nationals to heed the new mandate from the local government that requires all Filipinos to undergo a daily nucleic acid test (NAT) from today until Sunday.

The Macau government received backlash on social media as officials singled Filipino nationals out as more at risk for infection,

disclosing they account for 9.5% of the city's total of 1,795 Covid-19 cases as of July 20.

9.5% is approximately double the proportion of Filipinos in the city, thus they are over-represented in the positive Covid case numbers.

Filipino nationals in the city amount to some 30,000, which is roughly 4% of the city's population, based on the most recent data provided by

the government.

"Let us avoid making this order a political issue. We should view this as a health issue in the general aims of those in charge to achieve the dynamic zero-covid target," the statement issued by the consulate last night read.

"Today's time and situation demands our calm and a better understanding of Macau's implemented measures. Our cooperation and support in these steps

are key for the safety of the entire Macau society in which we belong," it added.

In several social media posts about the news, a number of users lambasted the government for imposing a "discriminatory guideline" as authorities believe they have higher risk of infection.

"I'm not Filipino and I won't be affected by it but are we actually [going to] accept high level government racism in the 21st

century?" said one.

"Unbelievable racist and discriminatory action. As a start - not all Filipinos are helpers, guards, and Food and Beverage workers - but that doesn't even begin to excuse the prejudice revealed in this policy," said another.

Although several netizens still expressed their support towards Macau's implementation of rules to deter the spread of Covid-19, this specific rule seems to

make little sense to them. "Pinpointing nationalities won't improve the [Covid-19] situation. What about the other 90.5%?" one questioned.

This is not the first time that the government has imposed mandatory NATs based on ethnicity.

Back in October 2021, certain occupational and racial groups of individuals - identified as key groups by the Health Bureau (SSM) - had been ordered to take four NATs in eight days. This series of tests at the time concerned workers in construction, laundry and security trades, as well as non-resident workers from Nepal and Vietnam.



AL PLENARY

# Lawmakers doubt effectiveness of new measures, approve budget amendment

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday approved a new amendment to the 2022 government budget that aims to reinforce the public accounts with money from the financial reserves to address the current pandemic situation.

The request for a new amendment to the 2022 budget is intended to fill the gap created by additional government expenses and fund the previously-announced 10 billion pataca package of measures aiming to assist workers and companies suffering as a result of the control measures enforced to contain the local outbreak.

Although the bill was passed, several lawmakers expressed disagreement with the methods chosen by the government to address the problem as well as expressed serious doubts that such measures can effectively help to resolve the problems in society.

Among the most highlighted concerns was the fact that the conditions imposed by the bill for the attribution of cash handouts will exclude many residents who might have been working during the previous two years (2020 and 2021) but who are currently unemployed or have been laid-off and need help; and mostly that the measures said to aim to support the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are too frail to be able to provide any effective "lifeline" to most of them.

Among the critics was Ella Lei, one of the lawmakers who represents the interests of workers, who accused Lei Wai Nong of presenting a bill amendment that aims only achieve legal compliance more than to provide effective su-



pport for people.

"It seems like this bill is more a way for the government to balance its accounts and legalize the spending that it is already doing than a means to effectively support the population," Ella Lei said. "Many people cannot meet the requirements, but they are effectively in a situation akin to unemployment, as they cannot go to work."

For the lawmaker, the measures were poorly drafted and do not take into account all the new businesses created in the last few years. Such businesses cannot benefit from the provided support, she said, referring to measures aimed at liberal professions as well as shop owners and other self-employed professionals.

The lawmaker called on the government to find "real" measures to "effectively solve the problem" of the many unemployed, underemployed, and workers whose

wages have been suspended due to the mandatory closure of their workplaces.

Another lawmaker from the sector, Leong Sun Iok, followed Ella Lei's remarks, calling on the government to do more for the local workers.

Leong noted that part of the budgetary reinforcement covers an 18% increase in overtime payments to civil servants who are performing Covid-19-related duties. The lawmaker proposed that the government hire local unemployed people to perform some of these tasks to avoid overloading civil servants with extra work and also divert these funds to needier people.

Also addressing the measures aimed at liberal professions, Leong said that the government has proposed to apply a single solution to a wide range of unrelated circumstances and jobs – naming shopkeepers, tour guides, taxi dri-

vers, among others – each of which are affected to very different degrees by the crisis.

The same lawmaker also urged the government to exercise more control over price inflation on essential goods, claiming that if the population is already suffering from low or no wages, "the price hike in the market certainly does not help."

With even harsher words, José Pereira Coutinho accused Lei Wai Nong of treating the AL as an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) that he can resort to in order to ask for more money after spending all the budgetary allowance that was previously approved.

"Secretary Lei seems to treat the AL as an ATM where he can come to withdraw more cash after spending the budget that was previously approved and then revised. This seems to be a common method for this Secretary, who, over the past few years, has amen-

ded budgets several times due to a lack of capacity to plan a budget and also has an inability to keep the budget within reasonable limits," Pereira Coutinho said, noting that Lei Wai Nong abuses the AL to "cover up his office planning mistakes." He remarked that since this budget was first presented, the Secretary was, on several occasions, warned by many lawmakers and finance experts regarding the overestimation of receipts as well as underestimation of expenses. "But he does not listen, does he?" Pereira Coutinho questioned rhetorically.

The same lawmaker called on the government to create a new law aiming to suspend the payment of capital amortization on loans previously contracted by the SMEs for a period, until the situation improves, creating a dormancy period in which business owners would only be required to pay interest due, so as to prevent further bankruptcy.

As for the cash handouts, Pereira Coutinho and Ron Lam found the system unfair and excessively complex, saying that it would be "preferable and cheaper for the public purse if the government just attributed another check [annual partaking scheme cash handout] and another round of money in electronic consumption cards. [Such measures] even save money when compared with this new scheme," he claimed.

Also calling for broader support that would include more citizens – particularly those who are currently unemployed or whose jobs have been suspended – were lawmakers Nick Lei Leong Wong, Che Sai Wang, Song Pek Kei, Wong Kit Cheng, and Zheng Anting, among others.

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Women's General Association of Macau has expressed that the number of domestic disputes and cases of domestic violence have both undergone upward trends due to the impact of the pandemic and resultant economic downturn, according to the latest statistics.

Statistics published by the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) show that there were a total of 81 suspected domestic violence cases in 2021, an increase on the 38 cases recorded in 2020.

## Rising number of domestic violence cases

"The reasons for such an increase include the increased time spent with family members during the pandemic, the rising pressure on parents to discipline their children, the rise in conflicts between parents over issues pertaining to child education, and the increase in the awareness of domestic violence," lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng pointed out.

Wong also called on the government to review the

current domestic violence law on the adjustments for the protection of suspected victims of domestic violence, given that assistance measures for these victims cannot be enforced under the current law.

The IAS responded that the victims of suspected domestic violence can access protection and assistance measures currently stipulated in the domestic violence law, including temporary sanctuary ser-

vices, emergency financial and legal assistance, free health care services, assistance with future schooling needs or employment services, and personal and family consultation sessions.

The IAS also said that it would expedite the approval process for emergency financial assistance applications made by victims who are unemployed due to injuries brought about by domestic violence.





AL PLENARY

# LAWMAKERS CRITICIZE DELAY AND DETAIL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT

RENATO MARQUES

**S**EVERAL lawmakers also criticized the lack of time provided to analyze the bill and the limited detail on information provided by the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong. Lei came under fire by some lawmakers and was accused of abusing the Legislative Assembly's (AL) urgency law approval method to approve, with little discussion, matters of vital importance for society, and which involve the spending of billions of patacas from the public money reserves.

According to several lawmakers, the bill lacked detail and explanation of where the added budget will be applied and how. The lack of time and information given to the lawmakers before the discussion in a special videoconference plenary session was also condemned.

Among those voicing more criticism was Ron Lam, who expressed discontent from the start regarding the lack of time and information provided, claiming to have directed questions to the office of the Secretary when the bill was received by the AL, without a response.



Pereira Coutinho made similar remarks, accusing Lei of abusing the urgency method for the approval of the amendment to rush in an approval without providing explanations.

Usually more aligned with the government, Nick Lei Leong Wong also expressed his disagreement

with the attitude of the government, citing several examples from the bill in which "lawmakers can only speculate about what this money will be for."

"We see that there is some additional budget attributed to several departments such as the Health Bureau (SSM) and the Municipal

Affairs Bureau (IAM). In the SSM case, we see there are some 600 million patacas more, which are attributed to pandemic prevention materials and equipment, and the like. But there are another 300 million patacas here and I don't know what they are for. Since this amendment bill is to be done via

a method of urgency, I think the government should at least better detail the expenses," Nick Lei said. He added, "For IAM, it is the same. There are some 200 million patacas that are not explained. This is probably for the supply of food and other essentials for the people in the red zones [of confinement] but in reality, this is just my assumption. We don't know for sure."

Che also said several dubious figures were presented and it was difficult even for him to understand the total amount that the government wanted the lawmakers to approve.

During the first part of the session, two lawmakers, including Pereira Coutinho, voted against the discussion of the bill as a matter of urgency and another abstained from voting.

Despite the heavy criticism, lawmakers passed the bill, which now provides approval for another 35.1 billion patacas to be used by the government. Lei explained that a large part of this amount (14.6 million patacas) is simply to fill the gap created in the public coffers related to the receipt of gaming taxes for the period between January and July. This gap comes from the government's overestimation that in 2022, gaming taxes would generate revenue of at least 130 billion patacas, while, as the Times reported, in the first half of this year, the amount accumulated was just 26.3 billion patacas.

## DSAL: No double standards in NAT services hiring process

STAFF REPORTER

**D**EPUTY director of the Labour Affair Bureau (DSAL), Chan Un Tong, has reiterated that the standards for recruiting nucleic acid test samplers are the same regardless of whether workers are sourced locally or from mainland China.

This comes after he was questioned by a resident in a TDM Macau Forum about the recruitment process for NAT employees, who questioned whether mainland China and Macau job-seekers were judged according to different criteria – including the need for different positions – and whether priority was given to job seekers from mainland China.

Chan stated that there had been a shortage of professionals available to assist in pandemic pre-



vention efforts in Macau at the outbreak of the pandemic. Thus, the authorities hired samplers using an online platform to support the testing institutions.

"Although the authorities have provided 100 quotas to samplers who come from mainland China, they still have to

go through the formalities of obtaining a certificate from the mainland, and no one has come to Macau so far," said Chan.

Chan further explained that sampling is a high-risk job. So far, positions are open to those with the relevant medical qualifications obtained only through a bachelor's

degree in Macau. Moreover, all samplers from mainland China also need to undergo training before assisting with the pandemic prevention work.

Last week, DSAL job-matched 27 candidates with medical backgrounds to vacancies relating to NAT administration.

## COVID-19

### PUBLIC HOSPITAL ATTEMPTING TO RESUME CERTAIN SERVICES

**M**EDICAL director of the public hospital, Dr Lei Wai Seng, has said that the medical facility was gradually resuming certain services, such as medical tests and diagnostic imaging. The key is to avoid crowd formation.

He admitted that the public hospital has tight space constraints, and that the slow resumption of certain services is intended to avoid creating risks or potential chains of infections.

Certain service users will be contacted by text messages or phone calls, Lei added. Some patients may even be able to restock their prescribed medications at community pharmacies with their IDs and the text messages sent from the public hospital.

On infant and child regular vaccinations, the SSM's health centers had already contacted those needing the services recently. Parents are encouraged to wait patiently. **AL**





# BIDEN: MILITARY SAY A PELOSI TAIWAN TRIP 'NOT A GOOD IDEA'

SEUNG MIN KIM,  
WASHINGTON

**P**RESIDENT Joe Biden said on Wednesday that U.S. military officials believe it's "not a good idea" for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to visit Taiwan at the moment.

Biden's comments in an exchange with reporters came a day after the Chinese Foreign Ministry said it would take "resolute and strong measures" should Pelosi proceed with reported plans to visit Taiwan in the coming weeks.

"Well, I think that the military thinks it's not a good idea right now," Biden said in response to a question about Pelosi's reported trip. "But I don't know what the status of it is."

The president stopped short of suggesting that Pelosi not travel to Taiwan.

Pelosi was originally scheduled to visit in April but had to postpone after she tested positive for COVID-19. She would be the highest-ranking American lawmaker to visit the close U.S. ally since Newt Gingrich, a Republican, traveled there 25 years ago when he was House speaker.

The Financial Times reported on Tuesday that Pelosi planned to move forward with her postponed visit to Taipei in the next month. Her office declined to

AP PHOTO



comment, saying the office does not confirm or deny the speaker's international travel in advance, due to longstanding security protocols.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijiang said

such a visit would "severely undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, gravely impact the foundation of China-U.S. relations and send a seriously wrong signal to Taiwan independence forces."

The U.S. has a longstanding commitment to the "One China" policy that recognizes Beijing as the government of China but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei. China has stepped up its military provoca-

tions against Taiwan in recent years as it looks to intimidate it into accepting Beijing's demands to unify with the communist mainland.

Biden also said that he expected to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping sometime in the 10 next days.

Biden's national security and economic aides are in the process of completing a review of the U.S. tariff policy and making recommendations to the president.

The tariffs imposed under President Donald Trump applied a 25% duty on billions of dollars of Chinese products. The penalties were intended to reduce the U.S. trade deficit and force China to adopt fairer practices.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has called for eliminating some of those tariffs as a way to help fight inflation in the United States. Others in the Biden administration, including U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai, have raised concerns about easing tariffs when China has not upheld its agreements on purchasing U.S. products.

Biden sidestepped a reporter's question on Wednesday about what he might have to say to Xi about tariffs. "I'd tell him to have a good day," Biden responded.

Biden and Xi have their differences over Russian President Vladimir Putin's prosecution of his nearly 5-month-old war against Ukraine. Biden has sought to press the Chinese to resist directly providing economic or military assistance to Russia. **MDT/AP**

## CYBERSECURITY

# Didi Global fined USD1.2 billion for data violations

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

**C**HINA'S internet watchdog yesterday fined ride-hailing firm Didi Global more than 8 billion yuan (\$1.2 billion) following an investigation into the company's cybersecurity practices.

The probe found Didi violated China's network security law, data security law and a law protecting personal information, the Cyberspace Administration of China said in a statement.

A separate statement explaining the fine said Didi's "illegal operations" had brought "serious" national security risks, affecting the country's information infrastructure and data security.

Didi's chairman Cheng Wei and president Jean Liu

were fined 1 million yuan (\$148,000) each as they were held responsible for the company's violations, regulators said.

"Didi's violations of laws and regulations are serious, and in light of the network security review, they should be severely punished," the statement read.

Didi illegally collected nearly 12 million screenshots and 107 million pieces of passengers facial recognition data and more than 167 million records of location data, among other information, regulators said. The company's violations first began in June 2015.

Didi said in a statement posted to its official Weibo social media account that it "sincerely" accepted the decision.

"We will take this as a warning, and persist in paying equal attention to both security and development," Didi said, adding that it would work toward "safe, healthy and sustainable" development of its business.

The decision comes over a year after Didi pushed forward with its New York stock listing in June 2021.

Regulators, who reportedly did not approve of Didi's listing, launched the investigation two days after the company went public and ordered it to take down more than two dozen apps, sending its stock price plunging.

Didi moved to delist from the New York stock exchange, exiting on June 10.

The ride-hailing firm is among a slew of internet

AP PHOTO



technology firms that have faced close scrutiny during a crackdown on the tech-

nology industry that began in 2020, with regulators halting Alibaba-affiliated

financial technology firm Ant Group's initial public offering. **MDT/AP**



MYANMAR

# Economy fragile as fighting, inflation hit poor

ELAINE KURTENBACH,  
BANGKOK

**A** R M Y - R U L E D Myanmar's economy remains fragile as civil strife, inflation and onerous policy decisions add to troubles facing farmers and businesses, reports by the World Bank and other experts said yesterday.

Conditions have improved since last year, right after the military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, but the country "remains a long way short of a recovery," said Kim Alan Edwards, a senior World Bank economist.

"The economy really remains fragile," he said.

Myanmar is one of several countries in Asia, also including Sri Lanka and Laos, whose economies are imperiled by soaring prices and weaker currencies. A military takeover in February 2021, on top of the pandemic, has reversed a decade of reforms and strong economic growth, leaving 40% of the population living in poverty.

"Inequality is estimated to have worsened, with those already poor falling into deeper destitution," the World Bank said in its latest update.

Opinions differ over the state of the economy, partly because of



a lack of access to up-to-date information following the military's seizure of power.

The World Bank is forecasting that the economy will have grown at a 3% annual pace in the fiscal year that ends in September, following an 18% contraction the previous year.

Some private sector economists are less optimistic.

In a separate report, Fitch Solutions put growth in the current fiscal year at minus 5.5%, recovering to 2.5% next year. It said it did not expect the economy to recover to a pre-pandemic level for at least another six years.

Myanmar has been ruled by the military for most of the past 70 years. The army's takeover interrupted a gradual transition toward democratic civilian government and a more modern, open economy and drew a slew of sanctions against the military, which controls many industries.

Foreign investment has largely collapsed and many foreign-owned businesses have withdrawn, including major energy companies like France's Total SA and Telenor of Norway.

Manufacturing has recovered somewhat after many factories were idled due to coronavirus

outbreaks and massive protests against the military following its takeover, Edwards said. But workers generally are getting fewer hours and lower wages.

Banks, meanwhile, are better able to access cash than during the first months after the army took control, he said, but credit is scarce.

The exact state of Myanmar's foreign exchange reserves is unclear since the last official data were from late 2020, when they were estimated at about \$6 billion-\$7 billion. About \$1 billion are known to have been frozen by U.S. sanctions.

Given the lack of tourism revenues, weaker export earnings and surging costs for imports of oil and gas and materials needed for manufacturing, it's "quite likely the reserve situation has deteriorated quite severely," Edwards said.

"There's not a lot of clarity," he said, though he said he did not believe Myanmar's reserves had fallen on the same scope as those in Sri Lanka, where the economy has collapsed, causing a political upheaval, as the country has run out of funds to pay for vital essentials such as food, fuel and medicine.

To try to conserve precious hard currency, especially U.S. dollars, Myanmar's central bank has issued several orders requiring businesses to deposit any such holdings into banks and convert them to the local currency, kyats, at much worse than the unofficial rates.

Meanwhile, it is Myanmar's poorest who are suffering the worst impacts of the crisis, especially those living in rural areas where armed civilian resistance forces are fighting the army.

The World Bank report said 20% of all businesses it surveyed and 40% of agricultural businesses said the conflict was their biggest challenge, disrupting farming and shipments of produce to markets.

But a 70% jump in the price of fuel and higher costs for fertilizer and transport also are taking a toll, it said.

"With regard to agriculture, the bottom line is we don't think the worst is past," Edwards said.

MDT/AP

SRI LANKA

# Newly elected president sworn into office

BHARATHA  
MALLAWARACHI,  
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

**V**ETERAN politician Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as Sri Lanka's new president yesterday to take charge of a nation bitterly angry he will remain in power amid an unprecedented economic crisis.

Sri Lankans have taken to the streets for months to demand their top leaders step down to take responsibility for economic chaos that has left the nation's 22 million people struggling with shortages of essentials, including medicine, fuel and food. While the protesters have focused on the Rajapaksa political dynasty, Wickremesinghe also has drawn their ire as a perceived Rajapaksa surrogate.



Sri Lanka's newly elected president Ranil Wickremesinghe, signs after taking oath during his swearing in ceremony in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday

The six-time prime minister had never held the top job. But he easily won the secret ballot of lawmakers Wednesday to finish the term of former

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who fled the country after protesters stormed his residence last week and resigned.

His appointment recei-

ved mixed reactions, with some supporters lighting firecrackers while protesters continued to demand that he resign.

Wickremesinghe, 73, has wide experience in diplomatic and international affairs and has been overseeing bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund. He won the support of 134 members in the 225-member Parliament.

Lawmakers apparently considered him the safer hands to lead the nation through the crisis, despite public anger at Wickremesinghe as an example of the nation's problematic political establishment. During demonstrations last week, crowds set his personal residence on fire and occupied his office.

After Wednesday's vote,

Wickremesinghe called for politicians to work together and pleaded for the country to move on. But protesters flocked to the presidential office instead, chanting, "Ranil, go home!"

Protest leaders told reporters on Wednesday they don't accept Wickremesinghe's appointment and urged him to step down immediately.

Parliament's selection goes against the "will of the people," said Jeewantha Peiris, a protest leader and Catholic priest, adding that demonstrations against Wickremesinghe would continue.

"We are the people who sent Gotabaya home, and it's not a difficult task for us to send you (Wickremesinghe) home," said Tampitiye Sugathananda, a Buddhist

monk and protest leader who was outside the presidential office.

Wickremesinghe took his oath as the country's 8th executive president Thursday morning before Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya at a ceremony held in Parliament in the capital, Colombo. He now can choose a new prime minister.

In an example of the troubles caused by the economic crisis, a power outage hampered live coverage of the swearing-in ceremony at Parliament. An official at Parliament who spoke on condition of anonymity as he is not authorized to speak to the media said the live coverage was to be done by the state-owned Independent Television Network.

In some areas, Wickremesinghe's supporters lit firecrackers and distributed sweets to celebrate his appointment as president, local media reported.

MDT/AP



PUTIN'S WAR

# Russia pounds major Ukrainian city after expanding war aims

MSTYSLAV CHERNOV,  
KHARKIV

**R**USSIAN shelling pounded a densely populated area in Ukraine's second-largest city yesterday, killing at least three people and injuring at least 23 others with a barrage that struck a mosque, a medical facility and a shopping area, according to officials and witnesses.

Police in the northeast city of Kharkiv said cluster bombs hit Barabashovo Market, where Associated Press journalists saw a woman crying over her dead husband's body. Local officials said the shelling also struck a bus stop, a gym and a residential building.

The bombardment came after Russia reiterated its plans to seize territories beyond eastern Ukraine, where the Russian military has spent months trying to conquer Ukraine's Donbas region, which is south of Kharkiv. The Russian declaration Wednesday came after Ukrainian officials aired plans to try to recapture Russian-occupied areas near the country's southern Black Sea coast.

Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terexhov said the attacks early yesterday targeted one of the most crowded areas of the city, which had a prewar population of about 1.4 million.

"The Russian army is randomly shelling Kharkiv, peaceful residential areas, civilians are being killed," Terexhov said.

At the market, desperate screams of Sabina Pogorelets pierced the air as she begged Ukrainian police to let her embrace her husband, Adam, whose body was lying partly covered with cloth next to a small stall. A bloody wound could be seen on his head as policemen gently pulled his wife away so medical workers could take away his body.

"Please! I need to hold his hand!" Pogorelets cried.

Nearby, a man hugged his small daughter as he and other visitors stood in shock. Emergency teams treated at least two of the wounded in nearby ambulances.

"People started working



little by little, they came out to sell things, and residents came here to buy things," said Volodymyr Tymoshko, head of the National Police in the Kharkiv region. "And exactly this place was hit by "Uragan" rockets with cluster bombs to maximize the damage to people."

The cluster bombs claim could not be independently confirmed. AP journalists quickly at the scene saw burned-out cars and a bus pierced by shrapnel.

The Kharkiv region's governor, Oleh Syniehubov, said four people were in grave condition and a child was among those wounded in the shelling. Russian forces also shelled wheat fields in the area, setting them on fire, he said.

Elsewhere, Russian forces shelled the southern city of Mykolaiv overnight as well as the eastern cities of Kramatorsk and Kostiantynivka, where two schools were destroyed, Ukrainian officials said.

As of early yesterday, Russian shelling across Ukraine killed at least five people and wounded at least 17 more in 24 hours, Ukraine's presidential office reported.

The scattered attacks illustrate broader war aims beyond Russia's previously declared focus on the

Donbas region's Donetsk and Luhansk provinces, which pro-Moscow separatists have partly controlled since 2014.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told state-controlled RT television and the RIA Novosti news agency Wednesday that Russia plans to retain control over more territory, including the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions in southern Ukraine.

Moscow's current strategy also envisions making gains elsewhere, Lavrov said.

With Western countries providing Ukraine with longer-range weapons, Lavrov said Russia's "geographical tasks will be pushed even further from the current line because we cannot allow the part of Ukraine under control of (Ukrainian President Volodymyr) Zelenskyy or whoever comes to succeed him, to have weapons that will pose a direct threat to our territory and the territories of those republics that have declared their independence."

Analysts from the Institute for the Study of War, a think tank based in Washington, said they think the current Russian offensive in Donetsk may result in the capture of the cities of Slo-

viansk or Bakhmut. But it noted that "Russian troops are now struggling to move across relatively sparsely-settled and open terrain. They will encounter terrain much more conducive to the Ukrainian defenders."

Ukraine's military reported yesterday that Russian forces attempted to storm the Vuhlehirska power station in the Donetsk region, but said "Ukrainian defenders made the enemy resort to fleeing." Ukraine forces on Wednesday struck a key bridge on the Dnieper River for the second time in as many days, apparently trying to loosen Russia's grip on the southern Kherson region.

"Russia is prioritizing the capture of critical national infrastructure, such as power plants," the British Defense Ministry said yesterday. "However, it is probably also attempting to break through at Vuhlehirska, as part of its efforts to regain momentum on the southern pincer of its advance towards the key cities of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk."

Fighting also persists in the Luhansk region, next to Donetsk, but it has not been fully captured by Russia, governor Serhiy Haidai said. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1977 DENG XIAOPING BACK IN POWER



The disgraced deputy Prime Minister of China, Deng Xiaoping, is to return to Chinese Government.

The Chinese Communist Party conference has restored him to the offices of Vice Premier of the State Council, Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission and Chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army.

He was dismissed from his posts after the leftist Gang of Four blamed him for the popular uprising in Tiananmen Square in April last year after Premier Zhou Enlai's death.

Since the death of Chairman Mao last September the Gang of Four has sidelined Mr Deng and attempted a programme of radical reform.

But Mao Tse Tung's named successor as CCP chair, Hua Guofeng, has been purging the Party of extremist influences such as the Gang of Four.

The Gang of Four was formally expelled from the CCP at a meeting of the Central Committee's Third Plenum last weekend.

The Gang includes Mao's fourth wife, Jiang Qing, former vice premier and politburo member Zhang Chunqiao, former factory worker Wang Hongwen and Shanghai intellectual Yao Wenyuan.

The official CCP newspaper, The People's Daily, last week accused the group of trying to "rebuild" the Communist Party, excluding senior officials and creating a "mass organisation".

Chinese authorities now regard "pleading the Gang's innocence" as a "counter-revolutionary act".

A party official in Kiangsi who defended the group recently was "denounced for his crime" at a meeting of 4,000 people.

Premier Hua has also identified far-left tendencies in party leaders of 13 of China's 29 administrative regions and removed them from power.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

By the end of 1978 Deng Xiaoping had effectively wrested power from Hua Guofeng.

The Gang of Four members had been arrested in October 1976 and were put on trial in 1980 for their part in an attempted coup.

In 1978 Deng oversaw the historic change of direction for China, the stressing of the so-called "Four Modernisations" of agriculture, industry, national defence, and science and technology.

During Deng's long hold on power, he instituted a variety of reforms aimed at decentralising the economy and opening the country to international trade. He resigned from his last official Party post in 1989, after he and other Party elders ordered the use of military force to clear Tiananmen Square.

He remained extremely influential until his death in 1997, and it was Deng who agreed to Jiang Zemin's elevation to Party chief and Deng who nominated Hu Jintao as Mr Jiang's successor.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Personal alterations will be in your best interest. You are best not to confide in anyone right now. You will learn a great deal from the foreigners you meet.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Opportunities for romance may develop through dealing with groups that have a purpose. Try to avoid any drastic decisions concerning personal legal matters. Not the best day for business trips.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Offer consolation, but don't give them any direction. Sit tight. Things aren't as bad as they appear. You will have to do a lot of running around, so be prepared to fall short of your expectations.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Try to ease any disappointment by making amends. Show what a dedicated person you can be. Your mate will appreciate your honesty.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
You will gain valuable insight and knowledge through the experiences you have along the way. Don't be too quick to let friends and relatives know what you're up to.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Take on positions that offer on the job training or pay for courses related to the business. You will be emotional when dealing with coworkers or employers.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Lovers may prove unworthy of your affection. Your uncanny insight will help you make the right choices. Your involvement in interest groups may bring you popularity.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Travel could bring you the adventure and excitement you require. Be discreet and don't present your ideas until you're certain that they're foolproof. Limitations at work might set you back.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Pursue outdoor activities or any physical exertion. Sudden disruptions will cause upset and a change of routine in your home environment. You will attract members of the opposite sex readily.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Opportunities may come up at prestigious affairs. You need to get out and be an observer. Join humanitarian groups and let your leadership ability take over.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Get involved in philosophic groups that will enlighten you. Reevaluate your situation. Minor accidents are likely if you take risks.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Deception in your home is evident. Don't beat around the bush. You will need to work diligently in order to accomplish even the smallest amount. Relatives will be happy that you dropped by.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

**EASY**

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

**EASY+**

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

**MEDIUM**

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

**HARD**

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

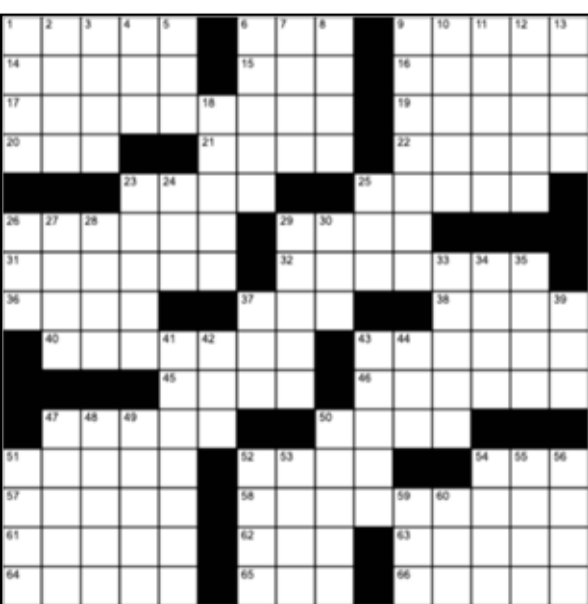
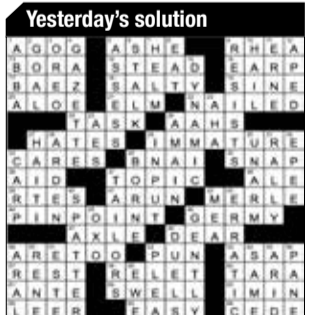
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	24	32	cloudy
Changchun	20	30	cloudy
Chengdu	22	28	showers
Chongqing	26	32	rain
Fuzhou	26	40	fine
Guangzhou	26	36	fine
Guiyang	21	28	cloudy
Haikou	26	33	cloudy
Hangzhou	27	37	thunderstorms
Harbin	20	30	cloudy
Hefei	24	33	thunderstorms
Nanjing	25	33	thunderstorms
Shanghai	27	35	overcast
Taipei	26	33	fine
Wuhan	28	35	fine
Hong Kong	29	33	fine
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	16	27	overcast
Frankfurt	18	30	overcast
Paris	16	27	rain
London	15	22	showers
New York	25	34	overcast

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Sticker; 6- Hit sign; 9- Writer of lyric poetry; 14- "\_\_\_\_\_ by any other name..."; 15- \_\_\_ Aviv; 16- Japanese-American; 17- Home; 19- Dazzling display; 20- Cut (off); 21- Beams; 22- Author Calvino; 23- Very much; 25- Fertile soils; 26- Operatic soprano; 29- Show to a table; 31- Mountain nymphs; 32- One on the run; 36- Throw; 37- Hosp. workers; 38- Fashion mag; 40- Bonelike; 43- Bodily organ; 45- Apprehends; 46- Trojan War hero; 47- Explosion; 50- Cosmonaut Gagarin; 51- Run of bird-song; 52- Author Hunter; 54- More, in Mexico; 57- Utah's \_\_\_ Mountains; 58- Death rate; 61- Israeli desert region; 62- Bronze component; 63- Support tower; 64- Preceding, poetically; 65- Radical '60s org.; 66- Museum piece;

DOWN 1- "James and the Giant Peach" author; 2- Switch back?; 3- \_\_\_ d'etat; 4- Knucklehead; 5- Appomattox figure; 6- European ermine; 7- Depend; 8- Auto pioneer; 9- The tiniest bit; 10- Judicial rulings; 11- Religion of the Muslims; 12- Closes; 13- Bandleader Puente; 18- \_\_\_ Perot; 23- As \_\_\_ resort; 24- Little guy; 25- Fond du \_\_\_ Wis.; 26- Portable bed; 27- Buck follower; 28- Not as much; 29- Transmits; 30- Pothook shape; 33- Old finnish money; 34- Differently; 35- "East of Eden" director Kazan; 37- Corduroy feature; 39- They loop the Loop; 41- Shackle; 42- Bit of grain; 43- Mock; 44- Done, to Donne; 47- Lasting a short time; 48- Jargon; 49- Transform; 50- Threads; 51- "Chicken of the sea"; 52- CPR experts; 53- Emptiness; 54- Factory; 55- Yours, in Tours; 56- Match up; 59- Calendar abbr.; 60- Caustic stuff;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



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MANHATTAN   3 BEDS	HKD 12,980,000
HELLENE G.   4 BEDS	HKD 9,588,000
NAM LONG   1 BED	HKD 3,780,000
HELLENE G.   2 BEDS	HKD 9,900,000
TAIPA STUDIO   1 BED	HKD 3,980,000
NOVA PARK   2 BEDS	HKD 10,800,000

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BOOK IT

# Bourland autopsies the princess myth with precision

IT'S about time someone took the princess story that's normalized to girls and autopsy it with absolute precision.

"The Force of Such Beauty" opens on the night of Caroline's second attempt at escaping Lucomo, the small European country in which she became a princess. But author Barbara Bourland quickly jumps back in time to reveal every excruciating and exhilarating detail that led to this moment. Once caught up, the story satistically marches on to the very end of Caroline's breathtaking story.

Caroline is from South Africa. Her first race was two months after Nelson Mandela became president in 1990. Her white parents volunteered their time and limited resources to ending Apartheid. Then they threw themselves into Caroline and her burgeoning running career, which brought her all the way to a world-record-shattering gold at the Olympics.

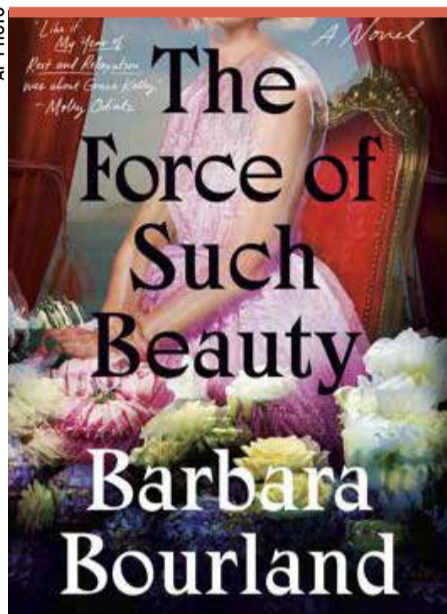
But that was before the fall that ground her running career to a shattering halt. And it's not for the faint of heart; Bourland holds no punches with absolutely gruesome descriptions of medical trauma.

The red flags are there from the

beginning. The stage is set for misery. Bourland reveals from the first handful of pages that Caroline is trapped at wit's end on display as lover Finn's gleaming jewel sequestered in the castle. Yet the writing is smart enough, the story good enough, to get swept away in their chemistry until reality comes crashing back.

Carefully crafted wordplay flits through the pages. Dr. Sun "treats" Caroline's depression, the castle they live in is called the Talon and the name of the country, Lucomo, literally means king.

Descriptions fit for dreams or nightmares, vivid and evocative, capture how one's environment can affect everything, like the secluded cottage where Caroline and Finn's love feels timeless and unshakable, or the red dirt of Johannesburg that is so home to Caroline that she tastes it in her mouth. Each setting brings with it a new flavor of narration. And despite the narrator Caroline supposedly being uneducated, Bourland's immense vocabulary still ekes through.



"The Force of Such Beauty" by Barbara Bourland (Dutton)

"The Force of Such Beauty" grips with the strength of an Olympian and holds it with the endurance of a marathoner. Bourland's passionate storytelling transmogrifies into an insatiable urge to keep reading Caroline's story even after its end — an ending that actually caught my breath, not once, but twice in quick succession. DONNA EDWARDS, MDT/AP

tTUNES

# SPLASHES OF COLOR FROM PIANIST SAM REIDER



"Petrichor" Sam Reider (Slow & Steady)

JAZZ pianist Sam Reider can sound reflective or restless, pensive or playful, sometimes in adjacent measures.

"Petrichor" is the solo debut album from Reider, who sings and plays accordion for the jazz-bluegrass group Human Hands. His new release features eight original instrumentals that echo Debussy, Chopin, Gershwin, James Booker and Keith Jarrett, among others, but the end result is delightfully distinctive.

Reider recently moved back to his hometown of San Francisco, and he says the music was inspired by the region's landscape. He mixes

melodic moments with discordant intervals, serving up splashes of color in a range of registers. His explorations lead to subtle undulations, modulations and roller-coaster runs as notes tinkle, thunder, sing and shimmer before reaching satisfying conclusions.

Choice cuts include the title tune, an uptempo gem with a rollicking bass line, and "Land's End," a blue waltz built on a wandering three-note rhythmic pattern. It's never certain where those notes will land, and on "Petrichor," that's one more reason to keep listening. STEVEN WINE, MDT/AP

AD

**合夥人 PARTNERS:**  
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山度士 Álvaro Rodrigues  
馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata  
趙魯 Zhao Lu  
馬傑安 João Nogueira Marques

**大律師 ASSOCIATES:**  
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羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues  
馬潔冰 Maria João Marques  
陶義德 António Isó de Azeredo  
白穎怡 Iclia Berenguel  
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

DRIVE IN

# High couture dreams in 'Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris'

JAKE COYLE,  
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

**P**AUL Gallico's 1958 novel "Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris," about a British cleaning lady with high couture dreams, wouldn't seem to have even a stitch of contemporary relevance. Yet Anthony Fabian's charming adaptation, snugly tailored to star Lesley Manville, proves the durability of a good fairy tale and a smashing dress.

The film has added an "H" to the title, in case the cockney accent got lost in translation. But "Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris" has not otherwise skimmed on a warm helping of plucky British decency in resurrecting the tale of Ada Harris (Manville), a widow in post-WWII London who hasn't lost her stiff upper lip and good-natured optimism despite little that has gone her way in midlife.

She and her best friend, a

fellow cleaner named Vi (Ellen Thomas), spend most of their days at the service of wealthy aristocrats who duck their payments, pleading poverty. At the pub, they're more likely to be asked to watch a dog than to dance.

Nevertheless, hope hasn't gone out of Ada's life. When she catches sight of her lady's gown, a Christian Dior purchased for 500 pounds, Ada is completely enchanted and becomes determined to raise the money for one, herself. Aside from all the work and good fortune at the greyhound races needed to raise the money, realizing her dream requires much more than a trip to the nearest luxury store. Ada must travel to the House of Dior in Paris, a quixotic notion for anyone of her stature.

Ada's not aiming for a status upgrade; she just loves the dresses, that's all. Her straightforward and kind manner

wins her a number of allies, including a courteous marquis (Lambert Wilson), a melancholy model (Alba Baptista) and a helpful accountant (Lucas Bravo).

With their help, Ada and her rolls of cash get a seat at a Dior fashion show, with pieces re-created by costume design master Jenny Beavan ("Cruella," "Mad Max: Fury Road," "Howards End"). For Manville, who memorably played Cyril, the imposing sister of Daniel Day-Lewis' meticulous designer in Paul Thomas Anderson's "Phantom Thread," it marks a return — through a very different entryway — to a mid-century house of fashion. For the terrific veteran character actor of Mike Leigh's films and many others, it's a lovely, lighter turn for Manville, and a most-deserved leading role.

Fabian's film embraces the familiar beats of its story, ba-



Lesley Manville in a scene from "Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris"

thing "Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris" in the twinkling glow of fairy tale. It's best in its mostly London-set first half, as Ada seizes her dreams, and a little too cartoonish in Paris, where she not only wins over Huppert's character but leads a tidy labor uprising. "Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris" stretches a bit to make high and low meet harmoniously, but it often manages the feat, thanks espe-

cially to Manville. As a force of British charm, you could imagine her Ada one day teaming up with Paddington. I mean, so long as the bear was fitted for a new duffle coat.

"Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris," a Focus Features release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America for suggestive material, language and smoking. Running time: 115 minutes.★★★★

AD

生活藝術雜誌 LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE

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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**SOME POSITIVITY  
 INJECTED INTO  
 CHINA-EU TIES**

The ninth round of the China-EU High-Level Trade and Economic Dialogue, held virtually on Tuesday, was pragmatic, candid, efficient and constructive, according to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce.

Agreement was reached on trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, mutual openness, fair competition, intellectual property rights protection and business investment optimization, the ministry said in its statement.

This represents a remarkable step forward from the state of affairs at the 23rd China-EU Summit in early April, which EU High Representative Josep Borrell described as a “dialogue of the deaf”, when such divisive topics as the conflict in Ukraine and human rights in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region prevented the two parties from even producing a joint statement.

The latest dialogue was of far-reaching significance for both China and the EU because it indicated impressive political will to maintain economic and trade engagement despite all the differences between the two sides that have been overly politicized recently and have disrupted the otherwise highly mutually beneficial economic and trade ties that have served both sides well for decades.

Since China and the then European Economic Community established diplomatic relations in 1975, both sides have known full well the cultural and political differences between them. And there were no lack of occasions and topics on which they had divergent views. But nothing prevented them from developing generally friendly and profitable economic and trade ties. The fruitful China-EU cooperation, especially in the economic and trade field, has thrived and ballooned to its present-day scale and depth because they have strived to find stable middle ground where economic and trade ties could prosper largely free of political disturbances.

Close China-EU economic and trade ties have benefited both parties tremendously. They are especially important at this time when the global post-pandemic recovery is struggling to gain traction. There has never been a greater pragmatic need for the two sides to work together to overcome the economic challenges they face.

The consensus they reached on Tuesday will certainly be very conducive to more healthy Chinese and EU economies going forward. But in this time of rampant politicization and anti-globalization, China-EU cooperation remains very vulnerable to political disruptions.

Considering both the EU and NATO have explicitly labeled China as a systemic challenge, ideological and political factors may easily mar the prospects for bilateral cooperation.

How well the Tuesday consensus can be implemented hinges on the extent to which the two parties can keep a proper distance between business and politics.

**WORLD'S OLDEST MALE GIANT  
 PANDA DIES AT AGE 35 IN HONG KONG**

**THE  
 BUZZ**

The oldest-ever male giant panda in captivity has died at age 35 at a Hong Kong theme park after his health deteriorated.

An An lived most of his life at Ocean Park after he and a female panda were gifted to Hong Kong by China in 1999. The female panda, Jia Jia, died in 2016 at age 38, making her the oldest-ever panda in captivity.

Ocean Park mourned An An as a family member who grew with the park and built bonds with locals and tourists.

“An An has brought us fond memories with numerous heart-warming moments. His cleverness and playfulness will be dearly missed,”

Paulo Pong, chairman of Ocean Park Corporation, said in a statement.

Over the past three weeks, An An had been kept out of sight from visitors at the park as his health worsened.

He was euthanized to prevent further suffering yesterday morning after veterinarians from Ocean Park and government authorities consulted the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda, Ocean Park said.

China commonly engages in “panda diplomacy” where the mammals exclusively found in China are leased to other countries as a sign of goodwill.

AP PHOTO



**WHO AGAIN CONSIDERS  
 DECLARING MONKEYPOX  
 A GLOBAL EMERGENCY**

**MARIA CHENG, LONDON**

AS the World Health Organization's emergency committee convened yesterday to consider for the second time within weeks whether to declare monkeypox a global crisis, some scientists said the striking differences between the outbreaks in Africa and in developed countries will complicate any coordinated response.

African officials say they are already treating the continent's epidemic as an emergency. But experts elsewhere say the mild version of monkeypox in Europe, North America and beyond makes an emergency declaration unnecessary even if the virus can't be stopped. British officials recently downgraded their assessment of the disease, given its lack of severity.

“I remain concerned about the number of cases, in an increasing number of countries, that have been reported,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told the emergency committee as its meeting got underway.

He said it was “pleasing” to note falling num-

bers of monkeypox cases in some countries but that the virus is still increasing elsewhere and that six countries reported their first infections last week.

Monkeypox has been entrenched for decades in parts of central and western Africa, where diseased wild animals occasionally infect people in rural areas in relatively contained epidemics. The disease in Europe, North America and beyond has circulated since at least May among gay and bisexual men. The epidemic in rich countries was likely triggered by sex at two raves in Spain and Belgium.

Some experts worry these and other differences could possibly deepen existing medical inequities between poor and wealthy nations.

There are now more than 15,000 monkeypox cases worldwide. While the United States, Britain, Canada and other countries have bought millions of vaccines, none have gone to Africa, where a more severe version of monkeypox has already killed more than 70 people. Rich countries haven't yet reported any monkeypox deaths.

“What's happening in Africa is almost entirely separate from the outbreak in Europe and North America,” said Dr. Paul Hunter, a professor of medicine at Britain's University of East Anglia who previously advised WHO on infectious diseases.

The U.N. health agency said this week that outside of Africa, 99% of all reported monkeypox cases are in men and of those, 98% are in men who have sex with other men. Still, the disease can infect anyone in close, physical contact with a monkeypox patient, regardless of their sexual orientation.

“In these very active gay sexual networks, you have men who really, really don't want people to know what they're doing and may not themselves always know who they are having sex with,” Hunter said.

Some of those men may be married to women or have families unaware of their sexual activity, which “makes contact tracing extremely difficult and even things like asking people to come forward for testing,” Hunter said, explaining why vaccination may be the most effective way to shut down the outbreak. **MDT/AP**

**Germany** Natural gas started flowing through a major pipeline from Russia to Europe yesterday after a 10-day shutdown for maintenance — but the gas flow remained well short of full capacity and the outlook was uncertain, which leaves Europe still facing the prospect of a hard winter. The Nord Stream 1 pipeline under the Baltic Sea to Germany had been closed since July 11 for annual maintenance work.

AP PHOTO



**Germany** The European Central Bank raised interest rates yesterday for the first time in 11 years by a larger-than-expected amount, joining steps already taken by the U.S. Federal Reserve and other major central banks to target stubbornly high inflation. The move raises new questions about whether the rush to make credit more expensive will plunge major economies into recession at the cost of easing prices for people spending more on food, fuel and everything in between.

AP PHOTO



**Italian** Premier Mario Draghi resigned yesterday after his ruling coalition fell apart, dealing a destabilizing blow to the country and Europe. Draghi tendered his resignation to President Sergio Mattarella during a morning meeting at the Quirinale Palace. Mattarella, who rejected a similar resignation offer from the premier last week, “took note” of the new one and asked Draghi's government to remain on in a caretaker capacity.

**UK's** Supreme Court said yesterday it will hold hearings in October on whether Scotland can call an independence referendum without the consent of the British government. Pro-independence Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said she intends to hold a plebiscite on secession on Oct. 19, 2023. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's U.K. government says it won't allow it because Scots rejected independence in a 2014 referendum that was billed as a once-in-a-generation vote. A vote held without the approval of the London government would not be legally binding.