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**FORMER LAWMAKER SULU SOU POSTED ON HIS SOCIAL MEDIA PAGE A LETTER FROM A RESIDENT COMPLAINING ABOUT MACAU'S OVEREMPHASIS ON A SINGLE DISEASE**

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**SUDDEN ARENA IDEA ANGERS, UNNERVES PHILADELPHIA'S CHINATOWN**

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AP PHOTO



**India** At least 28 people have died and 60 others became ill from drinking altered liquor in western India, officials said yesterday. The deaths occurred in Ahmedabad and Botad districts of Gujarat state, where manufacturing, sale and consumption of liquor are prohibited. Several suspected bootleggers who were involved in selling the spiked alcohol have been detained. Deaths from illegally brewed alcohol are common in India, where illicit liquor is cheap and often spiked with chemicals such as pesticides to increase potency.

AP PHOTO



**Israeli** military demolished the homes of two Palestinians suspected of killing an Israeli security guard in a West Bank settlement in April. Vyacheslav Golev was killed in a shooting at the entrance of a Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank on April 29. The Palestinian militant group Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack. The Israeli military later apprehended two Palestinians suspected of carrying out the attack.

AP PHOTO



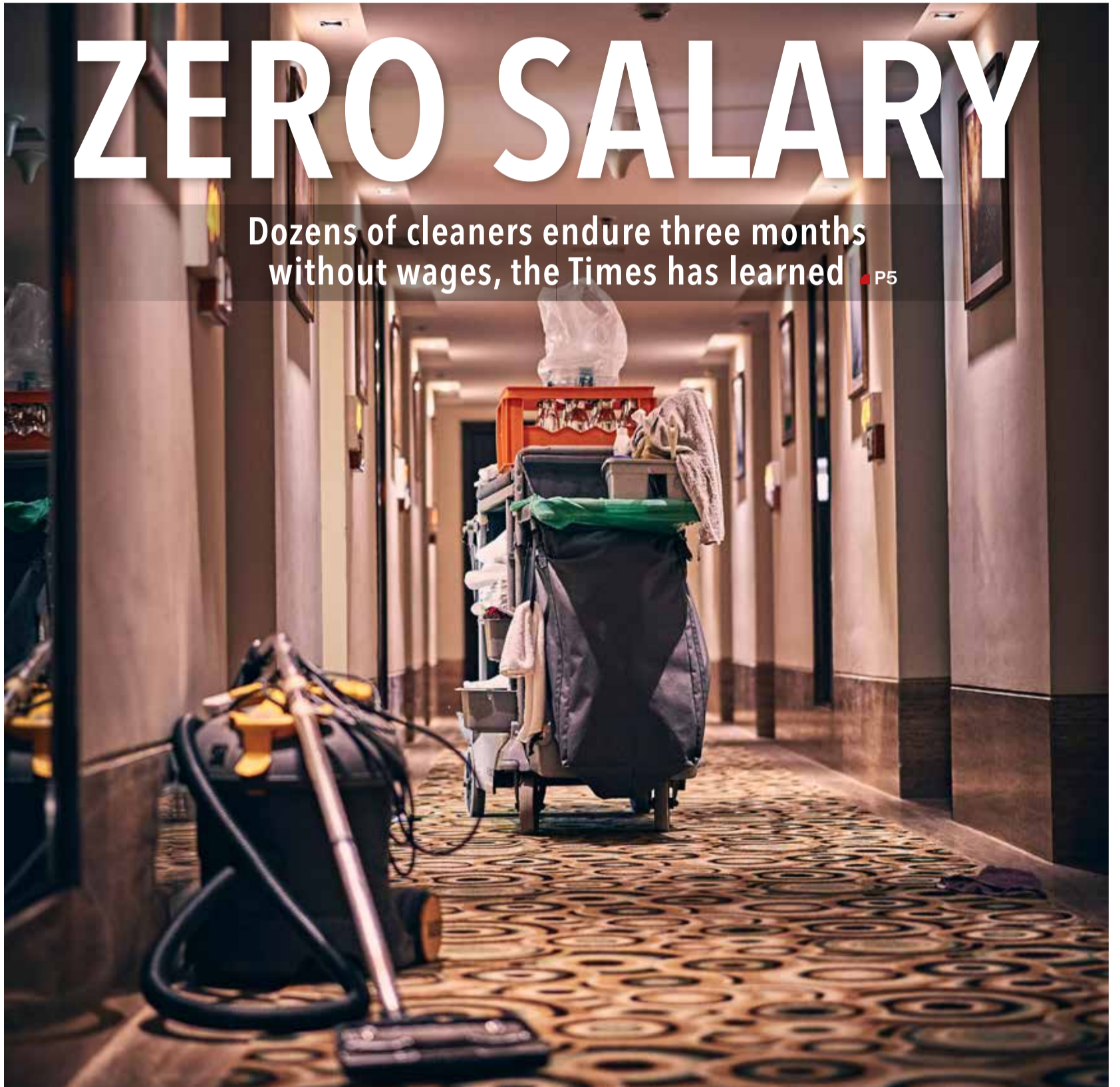
**Russia** targeted Ukraine's Black Sea regions of Odesa and Mykolaiv with air strikes yesterday, hitting private buildings and port infrastructure along the country's southern coast, the Ukrainian military said. The Kremlin's forces used air-launched missiles in the attack, Ukraine's Operational Command South said in a Facebook post. In the Odesa region, a number of private buildings in villages on the coast were hit and caught fire, the report said. In the Mykolaiv region, port infrastructure was targeted.

More on backpage

# ZERO SALARY

Dozens of cleaners endure three months without wages, the Times has learned

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COVID-19

# AUTHORITIES HIT BACK AT KEY AREA NAT NOTIFICATIONS CRITICISM

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center has urged all citizens to pay attention to the data they input to the Macao Health Code system, calling them to make any necessary updates as quickly as possible to avoid complications.

The announcement came in response to the many criticisms leveled by citizens who claim that they are either being wrongly designated for the nucleic acid tests (NAT) of key areas or, conversely, are living in those areas but have not been contacted to undertake a NAT.

At yesterday's daily briefing of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, the local coordinator of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Leong Iek Hou, said that these mismatches are not due to flaws in the system but are instead due to outdated or inaccurate data entered by the citizens

RENATO MARQUES



in the Health Code system, which is used to control key groups and areas, and the red and yellow zones of confinement.

"We know that there are many cases in which [people's] phone number is not updated so they could not get the notifications," Leong said, adding that "there are also problems with the address registered into the system ... not [being] updated and consequently leading to some being called to do the NAT because of their old address."

Leong said that people should pay attention to the personal information that they enter into the system, as there are many cases of duplicate records where people are using different addresses on the platform for the uploading of rapid antigen tests (RAT) and the Health Code.

She also mentioned that authorities are aware that elderly citizens and children can have their health code information on different devices depending on their caregivers, reminding them

of the need to update personal data on all the different devices.

"We call on people to review all data in all mobile devices, including those from domestic helpers, parents and other family members," the official said, adding that the RAT platform and Health Code work separately and addresses and phone numbers must be updated in both systems.

According to Leong, most people have authorized the Health Code system to collect personal data from the Identification Services Bureau when their personal information in this database is outdated, which she claims is the reason for many of the errors in calling the right people to undertake testing in the key areas.

## PATIENT CLASSIFIED AS SEVERE CASE RELEASED FROM MEDICAL CARE

**DURING** the same press briefing, the medical director of the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center (CHCSJ), Dr. Lei Wai Seng said that a patient who was previously classified as a severe case of infection with Covid-19 has recovered and been released from medical care. According to Lei, the patient, who had developed pneumonia, was for

some time considered a severe case but recovered after a week of artificial ventilation. The same official also noted that the CHCSJ had recorded two cases of heatstroke over the last few hours and called on citizens to pay attention to their situation and stay hydrated, especially those who are working outdoors in KN95 face masks.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### DISPARITY OR DISCRIMINATION? WAS THE DAILY NAT REGIME FOR FILIPINOS BASED ON SCIENCE?

The SAR health authorities announced that from July 22, all Filipino nationals are mandated to take daily nucleic acid tests without exception. Any missing daily nucleic acid test will impact their health codes.

This policy announcement apparently is evidence-based and supported by the recently universal nucleic acid testing results. The health authorities claimed that Filipinos accounted for 9.5 percent of COVID-19 positive testing cases in the recent pandemic outbreak.

They also infer that this ethnic group has a living habit of more intensive contact than their non-Filipino counterparts.

The Filipino community expressed their sentiments on social media and questioned

whether this probably disproportionate infection figure ethically justifies the differential treatment.

Differential treatments are not new, and they could be legitimate. For instance, if the sentencing outcomes in criminal cases are caused by only legal factors while extralegal factors (i.e., variables that according to the law, cannot be considered in sentencing) are also being examined, then any racial or ethnic differences in sentencing will be legitimate, because race and ethnicity are not the reasons but the legal factors that cause disparities.

In my opinion, the implicit logic of this health policy is that the population of Filipino nationals is about twenty-seven thousand, which consti-

tutes less than four percent of the Macau population. However, the approximately ten percent infection rate among Filipino residents is much higher than their population ratio.

Suppose the Omicron variant coronavirus were to be randomly distributed in Macau. In that case, the infection rate of Filipino residents should be similar to their population ratio. Therefore, the current disproportionate infection rate reflects an ethical disparity, and authorities should target Filipino nationals to diminish the contagious risk of coronavirus.

Although the results of the universal tests appear to be factually valid to justify their policy change, the evidence is considered weak.

From a scientific perspective, the current figure is only a descriptive statistical result that depicts the infection outcome. However, the comparison base for the Filipino nationals is vague because these authorities fail to offer a complete picture of infection rates across all nationalities and residency statuses. What are the nationalities of the remaining ninety percent? Do other racial or ethnic groups have high infection rates as well?

What is the infection rate when comparing permanent residents and foreigners? Is nationality really the variable that can explain the high infection rate? Even if nationality is a statistically significant variable that correlates with infection outcomes, does it re-

main significant when accounting for other factors, such as occupations, income levels, and residential locations?

More importantly, the inferred reason for the disproportionate infection rate was that Filipinos are more likely to have intensive contact with others than their non-Filipino counterparts.

To be fair, it could be true that Filipinos are more likely to have social contact with others, especially socializing with their racial/ethnic group, therefore increasing the likelihood of coronavirus infection. However, this disparity could also be explained by other reasons, such as adverse residential circumstances.

Unfortunately, authorities did not provide further scientific evidence to support their

speculation. As a result, whether intensive contact is the explanatory variable of this disproportionate health outcome remains unknown.

Without strong scientific evidence, Filipino nationals could argue that the governmental decision is not based on empirical evidence but on the authorities' prejudice. Differential treatments based on race or ethnicity should be considered illegitimate, and therefore should be opposed. The government should investigate further and provide more robust scientific evidence before enacting such a policy to avoid damaging the image of minorities in our society.

**Rielly Foster**  
Local resident

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COVID-19

# Authorities hint 14 days of 'zero cases' needed to reopen

RENATO MARQUES

**H**EALTH authorities hinted yesterday that Macau needs to achieve the goal of having no new positive cases of Covid-19 in the community for 14 days to enjoy a significant reopening of venues as well as further border easing.

This information came out during yesterday's daily briefing from the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center by the local coordinator of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Leong Iek Hou, who said, in response to media inquiries, that the criteria being followed by authorities are based on the maximum incubation period for the Omicron variant (seven days) doubled.

"We know that this Omicron variant has an incubation period that can go from two-three days up to a maximum of seven days. The safer way to ensure that the community is safe is if we combine two periods of the maximum incubation, as in 7+7," Leong said, adding, that "this does not



necessarily mean that we will [keep] the same measures in force for the whole period. We can progressively ease some measures and resume some activities, as long as the results continue to be progressively better. Only after the mass testing (scheduled for July 30 and 31) will we decide if there is the need to prolong this

period of consolidation and, if so, for how long."

This response indicates that people in Macau must be prepared for at least another week of the consolidation period (after July 29), in which very few changes to the current settings are likely.

As on previous occasions, Leong focused on the upcoming

citywide mass testing results as the major factor which will contribute to the measures in place for next week.

Refusing to give a clear timeline for next week's decisions, the same official said that authorities do not wish to deceive people by advising some policies too early and then having to change them at the last minute.

This idea of having to wait for two rounds of seven days without

cases to ensure that society is virus-free comes as authorities report a third consecutive day without any new cases detected in the community. The two new cases added to the tally are from people who are under medical observation in quarantine hotels or red zones of confinement. The case tally stands at 1,816 cases since June 18.

At the same briefing, Leong announced that another 78 people undergoing treatment or observation in isolation have been released by the authorities as they are considered recovered from the infection. Among these, 31 were confirmed cases and another 47 had tested positive but had never developed any symptoms of the disease. The number of those considered recovered is now 1,065.

## 48H NAT BEING CONSIDERED FOR VENUES UNSUITABLE FOR MASK USE

**RESPONDING** to a media question, Leong also mentioned that local authorities are considering whether venues where the wearing of face masks is not practical could reopen on the condition that those attending the venue present a valid nucleic acid test (NAT) every two days. This protocol would be similar to rules in effect on the mainland. Leong elaborated that this measure could potentially allow venues such as gyms and other sports and leisure venues to reopen, as well

as spas and beauty centers, and potentially lead to the reinstatement of dining in at restaurants, bars, and other food and beverage establishments. But, the official warned, reopening will not come all at once but rather in a phased manner. Leong also said that this would include changes to the current validity of NATs for people who need to perform work. That would change from the current 48 hours' validity to "three, then four or five days," she said.

CONSOLIDATION PERIOD

# Gov't business restrictions a challenge for smaller firms

STAFF REPORTER

**L**OCAL employees are overwhelmed by the government's strict arrangements for work during this consolidation period.

The government has gradually lifted restrictions on industrial and commercial activities after entering the consolidation period Saturday.

Most companies are allowed to operate under several provisos, such as no more than 50% of employees being able to work at the same time, as well as social distancing measures.

The operator of a clock shop in the central area surnamed Chao questioned the requirements, saying they were not calibrated for lower-level employees.

"Residents going out shopping for four to five hours do not need a daily nucleic acid



test (NAT), but the employee who works for eight hours a day has to do a daily NAT?" Chao asked.

Responding to government

advice that employees should eat meals at home and avoid dining in the office, the clock shop worker said that the requirements are not clear and

specific, and do not consider whether the requirements are feasible for smaller firms.

"Most small shops generally only have one staff member," said Chao.

Earlier this week, Lawmaker Leong Sun Lok remarked that most reports he received regarding problems with labor rights, eating arrangements and accommodation were from gaming employees.

According to the Federal General Commercial Association of Macau Small and Medium Enterprises vice president Lo Wang Chun, general office buildings have the conditions to meet government requirements, and he believes that the employees will be able to have separate meal times.

However, he is concerned about the situation for street traders, noting that associated gatherings may risk spreading the coronavirus.

"I paid attention to the situation on the street, and I found that there were many people lining up for shopping, and many people queuing up for Portuguese tarts in Coloane. I'm worried that people gathering will hinder pandemic prevention work," said Lo.

## IAM ACCOMMODATES OVER 160 PETS DURING PARTIAL LOCKDOWN

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has accommodated over 160 pets during the partial lockdown, as well as those living in red zone buildings. During the partial lockdown, the government considered it a crime to walk dogs as it was deemed a non-essential activity. The owners of eight dogs living in red zones also sought private veterinarians for examination and hospitalization, according to a statement. Private veterinarians are allowed to enter red zone buildings to provide treatment for residents' pets in accordance with the requirements of the health department's pandemic prevention guidelines.

## CONSTRUCTION SECTOR WORRIED ABOUT MASKS IN HOT WEATHER

The construction sector has expressed worries that workers who work outside will have to wear an N95 mask in hot weather to comply with the government's pandemic prevention measures. A sector representative expressed concerns that workers may suffer from heat stroke or experience discomfort due to the prolonged wearing of these masks, with recent temperatures as high as 37 degrees Celsius.

ANTHONY LAM

## COVID RULES FOR HOSPITAL PATIENTS QUESTIONED

**F**ORMER lawmaker Sulu Sou has posted on his social media page a letter from a fellow user complaining about Macau's over-emphasis on a single disease.

The writer complained that an elderly member of their family was asked by the public hospital to take two SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen tests (RATs) before being granted entry to the hospital building.

The family member was attending the hospital due to some health conditions.

In the letter, the writer recalled that their family member had an appointment at the public hospital in June. After the first cases in this wave of Covid-19 were detected on June 18, the outpatient appointment was cancelled and no confirmed rebooking was available.

The original appointment was reportedly for a medical consultation to decide whether an operation or non-invasive treatments were preferred.



"It seems that there is only [one] disease worthy of concern in Macau," the writer complained.

The writer pre-empted questions about why the family did not transfer the patient to a private hospital, explaining that, firstly,

they did not consider it feasible or appropriate to request surgery at a private hospital, considering the patient's old age. Secondly, although the family could afford the estimated medical fees at private hospitals, the patient did not

wish to spend a large amount of money.

About a month after the outpatient appointment was cancelled, the patient suddenly began vomiting constantly at home and had a strange feeling in the abdominal

area. The patient was rushed to the public hospital by their family.

At the entrance, they were asked to present health codes with RAT results issued on the same day. After entering the hospital, another RAT was conducted on the patient before he was triaged.

The writer questioned why patients needed to face this obstacle when they were already feeling ill.

The patient was sent to the observation ward until nightfall, with family not permitted to enter. The patient reported that there were more elderly than young people in the ward, but all were required to wear KN95 masks for as long as eight hours.

Based on this experience, the writer wondered whether any patients had seen their illnesses deteriorate due to deferred outpatient consultations. The writer asked that the government release data in this respect.

In addition, the writer also doubted the acceptability of asking those already feeling ill to wear KN95 masks during long waits at hospitals.

## DSAT clarifies schedules displayed at LRT stations following accusations

ANTHONY LAM

**S**CHEDULES are displayed at all Light Rapid Transit (LRT) stations and platforms for passengers' information, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) said in reply to lawmaker Ron Lam's inquiry.

In his inquiry dated May 13 and received by the Office of the Chief Executive on May 27, Lam criticized the mass transport system for lacking accurate information on train departure and arrival times. Instead, its operator - MTR Corp - only posted that trains depart every 10 to 15 minutes.

This mode of announcement has been frustrating to passengers, Lam pointed out, as they could not catch the right train even if they found the system convenient.

Lam said that the lack of a precise timetable had discouraged members of the public to use the system.

He added that precise timetables are available in other similar systems in neighboring regions. Furthermore, other systems also added trains during peak hours to cope with additional demand.

He also criticized the closed payment system on



the LRT gates, querying why, prior to May 24, passengers could only use a LRT stored-value card or single-journey token to enter and exit the gates. The card or the coin can be purchased at in-station service counters.

Now, passengers can also use their Macau Pass cards to do so.

In response, DSAT pointed out that Macau Pass had always been accepted at in-station service counters for the purchase of the LRT stored-value card or single-journey coin. It added that according to the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM), Simple Pay

had been introduced to the LRT system, meaning that all eight mobile payment systems are now accepted at in-station service counters.

Moreover, passengers taking rides with their Macau Pass card will enjoy privileges according to their card types.

DSAT recapped Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário's comment that no interchange fare privileges would be available between LRT and public bus services. Rosário cited the sensitivity of public-private collaboration as a justification, completely omit-

ting the fact that the government is now subsidizing the city's bus services.

In his last question, the lawmaker also expressed his disappointment in the government's weak supervision on the LRT's investment, operations and costs. He demanded clear budgeting, usage analysis and financial plans on the East Line of LRT.

On this, DSAT cited the Commission of Audit for revealing that national practices were acquired in 2011. Phase-based auditing practices have been introduced since then for major construction projects.

## TWO RESIDENTS FOUND DEAD IN APPARENT SUICIDES

**T**WO residents have died by suicide in the span of just two days, and the Judiciary Police is now investigating the cases.

In a building along Rua de Francisco Xavier Pereira, a 74-year-old resident was found hanged in their bathroom at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday.

The discovery came after a neighbor noticed a bad smell.

After examination of the body, the PJ stated that the body, though decomposed, had obvious strangulation marks on the neck, and estimated the person had died some time ago.

No suicide note was found.

Separately, the PJ reported that on Monday,

a 31-year-old female resident was found hanged in a residential building along Avenida do Almirante Lacerda.

The PJ did not find any suspicious injuries on the deceased woman's body and no suicide note was found.

According to the statement, the woman lived with her family, who were out shopping when she died.

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) encourages residents to be conscious of their psychological and emotional state as well as those of their relatives and friends. If in need, residents can call Caritas' Life Hope hotline (28525222) or the IAS counseling hotline (28261126). LV



# Dozens of cleaners endure three months without wages

LYNZY VALLES

**S**EVERAL non-resident workers employed in the cleaning sector face serious financial difficulties as many are reportedly yet to receive their salaries after their contracts ended on May 31.

With no apparent response from their employer, a cleaning company located at Rua da Palmeira, these former employees have nowhere to go.

According to an employee interviewed by the Times, her and several colleagues' employment contracts ended on May 31, yet they finished their work with nothing.

"They have not paid us our salaries for up to two months: April and May. We have [finished] our contracts already and there are no wages yet," lamented a former worker who requested anonymity.

The minimum wage for local cleaners and security guards hired by property management service suppliers or those working in residential buildings is MOP6,656 per month. The daily salary is calculated on the basis of an expected maximum of eight hours work per day.

The Labour Affairs Bureau



(DSAL) stated recently that 29 non-resident workers filed a case at the bureau after a cleaning company failed to pay their wages.

According to the former employee, staff currently employed by the company have not received their salaries for the past three months.

"They've been giving out several excuses, so you would not know what and who to believe any more," the non-resident worker said.

"It's July already and we've been in a lockdown. Where else can we turn? We are just full of uncertainty at this moment," she added.

Asked whether their overtime is paid, the worker said it was "usually not. We fulfill our duties and yet sometimes they even deduct [from] our salaries."

Although the group who chose to have their contracts not renewed have been trying to make contact with the company, the worker said that it refuses to reply to them.

The Times is also aware that several workers employed by another cleaning company do not receive a housing allowance. According to the labor law, non-resident employees are entitled to a monthly housing allowance of at least MOP500.

"We do not get that support, but what can we do? They threaten us that they will fire us. We'll just have to accept it," another worker who also requested anonymity told the Times.

According to DSAL, the bureau has contacted the company in question and demanded the provision of information in order to understand the salary payment situation.

"The government will continue to monitor the case, investigating it under the terms of the law, [and] certain that it will apply sanctions, if it comes to verify the existence of any act that violates the law, in order to guarantee the legitimate rights and interests of the workers," the bureau said in a statement.

## GAMING

# Chinese analyst pessimistic about Macau's July GGR

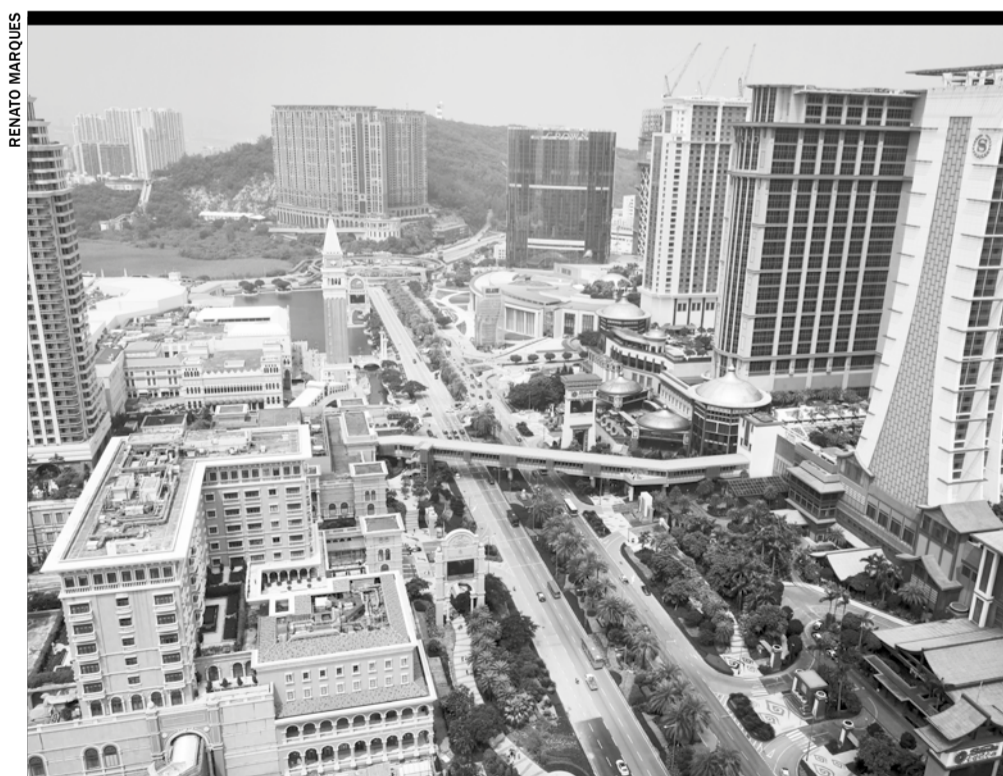
ANTHONY LAM

**A**N analyst from a Chinese securities agency in Hong Kong has forecast that Macau's July gross gaming revenue (GGR) will plunge to MOP100 million at its lowest.

Earlier this month, Citigroup had forecast the city's July GGR to be about MOP400 million.

Yan Zhaojun, a strategic analyst from Zhongtai International in Hong Kong, told Hong Kong media outlet Oriental Daily that Macau's GGR in July may run even lower than the level Citigroup has estimated.

He based this forecast on precedents of the delayed resumption of relative normalcy. He pointed out that even though the city has recently loosened its lockdown orders, interactions with neighboring Zhuhai



will take at least two weeks to return after disease control measures are lifted.

In light of this, the

analyst suggested that Macau's July GGR would not exceed MOP200 million in the best case, and there is a

cloudy forecast for August.

He believes that significant border control easing between the city and the

mainland will not happen before the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the dates for which have not been disclosed.

Past congresses have usually taken place in October or November.

Given this, Yan forecasts Macau's GGR for this year to fall below MOP60 billion from an original forecast of MOP80 billion.

After 10 days of de-facto lockdown, the city's casinos were allowed to reopen on the stroke of midnight last Saturday, July 23. Despite the green light, not all casinos rushed to reopen their doors to the public. The gaming establishments located in the city center did not reopen immediately.

Additionally, due to capacity restrictions imposed by the government, casinos that reopened right away

saw 20% lower patronage than before the de-facto lockdown period, according to a casino manager who spoke to local online media outlet Allin Media.

Some casinos employed unconventional measures to discourage people from entering because of the government's capacity restrictions. For example, one casino prioritized entry for hotel guests and required entrants to have at least HKD3,000 in hand. This was a temporary measure to avoid crowds gathering at the entrance, according to the media outlet.

The city's GGR figure for the second quarter was MOP8.5 billion, and MOP26.27 billion for the first half of the year. The former figure reflects a 52% fall year-on-year, while the latter amounts to only 30% of the yearly total for 2021.



Pedestrians cross 10th Street in the Chinatown neighborhood of Philadelphia

OVERSEAS CHINESE

# SUDDEN ARENA IDEA ANGERS, UNNERVES PHILADELPHIA'S CHINATOWN

CLAUDIA LAUER,  
PHILADELPHIA

**W**EI Chen wants people who visit Philadelphia's Chinatown to look through the community's gateway arch and see the residents chatting in Mandarin on the steps to the apartments above or the vendors selling traditional Chinese food to families walking by, not a giant Philadelphia 76ers arena a block away.

"These apartments are full of people who are low-income, who are elderly people, and people who are new immigrants," said Chen, the community engagement director for Asian Americans United. "You have to think about how Chinatown was created. We weren't welcome in other neighborhoods."

Chen, along with other organizers and members of Chinatown, said they were surprised by the Philadelphia 76ers' announcement last week of a proposal to build a \$1.3 billion arena just a block from the community's gateway arch. They said neither the organization nor the property owner reached out for community input before the announcement.

A spokesperson for 76 Devcorp, the development company behind the arena, said in an emailed statement that the process is in its early stages — years from "anything changing" — and that the company planned to work with the community to help shape the project and ensure it's "done right."

"We are very sensitive to the

Chinatown community's concern in light of prior Center City proposals and are committed to listening to and working with the community in a way that hasn't happened before," the statement read.

Those are promises many in Chinatown have heard before. After decades of developments — like the Pennsylvania Convention Center, which took homes from 200 families; Interstate 676, also known as the Vine Street Expressway, which threatened to cut off parts of the community — and proposals for a jail, a casino and another sports facility that all were beaten back by the community, residents have a deep playbook of their own to choose from.

Across the country, there are fewer than 50 Chinatowns, some more vibrant and larger than others. Many took root in areas of cities that were thought of as red light districts. And as cities grew and changed around those communities, many Chinatowns have been under threat from gentrification or development.

Like others, the community in Philadelphia is just bouncing back after losing business during the pandemic, when Chinatown's restaurants were shuttered for dining-in. Much of the senior population didn't want to leave the neighborhood because of the fourfold increase since 2019 in hate

crimes against people of Asian descent.

"This is an ongoing struggle for Chinatowns and other downtown communities of color and of low income," said historian John Kuo Wei Tchen, director of Rutgers University's Clement Price Institute on Ethnicity, Culture and the Modern Experience. "In the case of Chinatowns that play important symbolic roles for the cosmopolitan claims of the city, sport authority interests often trump such roles."

**"This is an ongoing struggle for Chinatowns and other downtown communities of color and of low income."**

JOHN KUO WEI TCHEN  
HISTORIAN

The 76ers' current home is in south Philadelphia, a few miles from downtown, along with most of the city's other pro sports teams.

Many Chinatown residents and business owners are concerned that if a new arena is built, affordable street parking will disappear, traffic will increase, and holding traditional celebrations and festivals could become more difficult. But they are also worried that already-increasing property values could spike and force many who depend on the community to leave.

Debbie Wei is a founding member of Asian Americans United, started in Philadelphia in the 1980s to unite people of Asian ancestry to build the community and fight oppression. She was also an organizer of the protests against a proposed Phillies baseball stadium that city officials wanted to place at Chinatown's door in 2000.

"If it's not a stadium, it's a highway or a convention center. Seattle ... Detroit ... Chicago, Boston, and then Washington, D.C. I

have friends who grew up in Chinatown in D.C. and it's just been decimated," Wei said.

The home of the Washington Capitals hockey team and the Wizards basketball team moved to D.C.'s Chinatown community in 1997. Economic development experts say the increased foot traffic and more desirable

real estate brought revitalization, but for the Chinatown community it meant rising rents and chain restaurants forcing them out.

Census numbers show that in 1990, about 66% of the people who lived in the D.C. Chinatown area identified as Asian American. That dwindled to 21% in 2010. And as of the 2020 census, that had dropped to about 18% in the two tracts that make up parts of Chinatown.

Wei described signs for chains like CVS and Starbucks appearing with Chinese translations beside

them, calling it a "cosmetic illusion." Chen fears the changes to D.C.'s Chinatown could happen to Philadelphia.

"If you go inside a restaurant or a business, the workers aren't Asian anymore. The owner isn't Asian. And a lot of the customers aren't Asian," he said. "So where is the Chinatown? It's not there anymore."

But in Philadelphia, Chinese-speaking households have been one of the fastest-growing populations, according to the census. The community passed the 5% threshold recently, meaning Chinese languages became official ballot languages. Asian and other immigrant communities contributed to the city reversing a decades-long trend of losing population in recent censuses.

Helen Gym, the first Asian American woman to serve on Philadelphia City Council and an at-large member, held up two T-shirts from previous fights against potentially detrimental developments wanting to come to Chinatown. The first says, "No stadium in Chinatown," and the second crossed out the word stadium and replaces it with "casino," for the 2008 proposal that hoped to put a casino near the current proposal for the arena.

Gym previously joined the fight against the stadium and said that now, as a council member, she is "extremely skeptical" of the 76ers proposal.

"To us, this is one of the most vital parts and neighborhoods and communities in the city of Philadelphia," Gym said. "This side has been a community that has continued to invest in itself, in its people, in small businesses. And in fact, this side is the one that has grown the health and well-being of the city."

After the stadium failed in 2000, Gym said, the community developed the nearby space north of the expressway to add a public charter school, a community center, extensions of the Chinese Christian Church, the first Cambodian arts center and other cultural organizations.

Wei was the first principal of that school, the Folk Arts Cultural Treasures charter school. She said the building's owner turned down offers from developers who wanted to build condos.

"People don't understand what Chinatown means to the people of this community, people all over the area who consider this their home," Wei said.

"There are precious few communities, real communities, left in Philadelphia. They are not just geographic; they are about relationships and memories. They are a place-based core that has been systematically destroyed not just in Philadelphia and the U.S.; but around the world," Wei said. "And once Chinatown is gone, it's gone. You can't rebuild it." **MDT/AP**

MYANMAR

# Widespread condemnation of execution of prisoners

DAVID RISING & EILEEN NG

**I**NTERNATIONAL outrage over Myanmar's execution of four political prisoners intensified yesterday with grassroots protests and strong condemnation from world governments, as well as fears the hangings could derail nascent attempts to bring an end to the violence and unrest that has beset the Southeast Asian nation since the military seized power last year.

Myanmar's military-led government that seized power from elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021 has been accused of thousands of extrajudicial killings since then, but the hangings announced Monday were the country's first official executions in decades.

"We feel that this is a crime against humanity," said Malaysian Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah, speaking at the side of the United Nations' Special Envoy on Myanmar Noeleen Heyzer at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur.

He said the executions would be a focus of the upcoming meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations foreign ministers, which begin in Cambodia in a week.

Myanmar is a member of the influential ASEAN group, which has been trying to implement a five-point consensus it reached on Myanmar last year calling for



Executed: Kyaw Min Yu, a pro-democracy activist talks to journalists as he arrives at Yangon airport welcomed by his wife Nilar Thein (background) also an activist and his daughter (2012)

dialogue among all concerned parties, provision of humanitarian assistance, an immediate cessation of violence and a visit by a special envoy to meet all parties.

With the executions, he said, "we look at it as if the junta is making a mockery of the five point process."

Heyzer said that the U.N. sees the executions as a "blatant violation" of a person's "right to life, liberty and security."

In Bangkok, hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators protested outside neighboring

Myanmar's embassy, waving flags and chanting slogans amid a heavy downpour.

"The dictators used their power arbitrarily," yelled a young man through a bullhorn to the crowd, some of whom waved pictures of Suu Kyi or the four executed men. "We can't tolerate this any more."

Among the four executed was Phyto Zeya Thaw, a 41-year-old former lawmaker from Suu Kyi's party, and Kyaw Min Yu, a 53-year-old democracy activist better known as Ko Jimmy. All were tried, convicted and sentenced by a mi-

litary tribunal with no possibility of appeal.

The executions were carried out over the weekend, and came as a surprise even to family members.

Phyo Zeya Thaw's mother Khin Win May told The Associated Press she had just spoken with her son via video conference on Friday and he had asked her for reading glasses, books and some spending money.

"I was a little shocked when I heard about the execution, I think it will take some time," she said.

She said she hoped her son and the others would be seen as martyrs for their cause.

"I'm proud of all of them as they sacrificed their lives for the country," she said.

The execution of the four activists prompted immediate calls from around the world for a moratorium on carrying out any further sentences, and condemnation for what was broadly seen as a politically motivated move.

Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, announced in June that it was going to resume executing prisoners and has 113 others who have been sentenced to death, although 41 of those were convicted in absentia, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a non-governmental organization that tracks killing and arrests. At the same time, 2,120 civilians have been killed by security forces since the

military takeover.

"This was a barbaric act by Myanmar's military regime," said New Zealand's Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta of the four executions carried out. "New Zealand condemns these actions in the strongest possible terms."

Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong said she was "appalled" by the executions.

"Australia opposes the death penalty in all circumstances for all people," she said.

Earlier, Australia and New Zealand had joined the European Union, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Norway and South Korea in a joint statement condemning the executions.

ASEAN denounced the executions as "highly reprehensible."

It said the move represented a setback to the group's efforts to facilitate a dialogue between the military leadership and opponents.

"We strongly and urgently call on all parties concerned to desist from taking actions that would only further aggravate the crisis, hinder peaceful dialogue among all parties concerned, and endanger peace, security and stability, not only in Myanmar, but the whole region," the group said in a statement.

The military's seizure of power from Suu Kyi's elected government triggered peaceful protests that soon escalated to armed resistance and then to widespread fighting that some U.N. experts characterize as a civil war.

Some resistance groups have engaged in assassinations, drive-by shootings and bombings in urban areas. Mainstream opposition organizations generally disavow such activities, while supporting armed resistance in rural areas that are more often subject to brutal military attacks. MDT/AP

SOLOMONS

# US sends Sherman, Kennedy to visit south pacific islands

**T**HE U.S. is sending a high-profile diplomatic delegation to visit the Solomon Islands next week led by Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and including Ambassador to Australia Caroline Kennedy.

The U.S. State Department said yesterday the trip is to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal and for the diplomats to meet with Solomon Islands officials to "highlight the enduring relationship" between the two nations.

The visit will hold particular personal interest for Sherman and Kennedy,

whose fathers both fought there during World War II.

And it comes after the U.S. and several Pacific nations expressed deep concern about a security pact the Solomon Islands signed with China in April, which many fear could result in a military buildup in the region.

The trip will also highlight the reopening of the U.S. embassy in the capital, Honiara, which is part of an express U.S. strategy to counter China's growing influence.

The U.S. previously operated an embassy in the Solomon Islands for five years before closing it

in 1993.

Kennedy has just begun her role in Australia after formally presenting her credentials on Monday. When she arrived in Australia last week, she told reporters the Pacific region was critical and "I think the U.S. needs to do more."

"We're putting our embassies back in and the Peace Corps is coming, and USAID is coming back and we're coming back," she said.

Kennedy said the Pacific held great personal significance because her father, the late President John F. Kennedy, had served there during World War II and

"was rescued by two Solomon Islanders and an Australian coast watcher."

Sherman's father Mal Sherman was a Marine who was wounded during the Battle of Guadalcanal.

As well as Sherman and Kennedy, the delegation will include Kin Moy, a state department principal deputy assistant secretary, and Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Stephen Sklenka, the deputy commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

During the Aug. 6-8 trip, Sherman is scheduled to give speeches at Skyline Ridge, the site of the U.S. Guadalcanal Memorial, and at Bloody Ridge. MDT/AP



U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman

AP PHOTO



Truss, Sunak: one of them will succeed Boris Johnson as PM

UK

# Two leadership contenders spar over tax in TV debate

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

**T**HE two candidates vying to be Britain's next prime minister sparred yesterday [Macau time] over how to help families struggling with the soaring cost of living, meeting in a testy televised debate that highlighted the contrasting economic visions of the Conservative Party rivals.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss promised to cut taxes as soon as she took office, using borrowing to pay for it. Former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak said he would get inflation under control first, arguing that Truss's plan would increase the public debt and leave people worse off in the long run.

Tempers flared as Sunak said that "it's not moral to ask our children to pick up the tab for the bills that we're not prepared to pay."

Truss called that "Project Fear" and said it was sensible to borrow to rebuild from the coronavirus pandemic, a "once in a 100-year event."

The pair are battling to succeed Boris Johnson, who quit as leader of the governing Conservative Party on July 7 after months of ethics scandals triggered a mass exodus of ministers from his government. The contest has exposed deep divisions within the party as it tries to move on from the tarnished, but election-

-winning Johnson.

Odds makers say Truss is the favorite to win. She outperforms Sunak in polls of Conservative members — though Sunak has the edge among voters as a whole.

The winner will be chosen by about 180,000 Conservative Party members and will automatically become prime minister, governing a country of 67 million. Party members will vote over the summer, with the result announced Sept. 5. Johnson remains caretaker prime minister until his successor is chosen.

Truss, 46, and Sunak, 42, have wooed Conservatives by doubling down on policies thought to appeal to the right-wing Tory grassroots, including a controversial plan to deport some asylum-seekers to Rwanda.

The government says the policy will deter people-traffickers from sending migrants on hazardous journeys across the Channel. Political opponents, human rights organizations and even a few Conservative lawmakers say it is immoral, illegal and a waste of taxpayers' money.

The first scheduled deportation flight was grounded after legal rulings last month, and the whole policy is now being challenged in the British courts.

Hard-line policies like the Rwanda plan are less popular with voters as a whole than with Conservatives, but the British electorate won't get a

say on the government until the next national election, due by the end of 2024.

The leadership election is taking place during a cost-of-living crisis driven by soaring food and energy prices, partly due to the war in Ukraine. While many countries are experiencing economic turbulence, in Britain it's compounded by the country's departure from the European Union, which has complicated travel and business relations with the U.K.'s biggest trading partner.

Both Sunak and Truss are strong supporters of Brexit, which was the signature policy of the Johnson government.

Both denied Brexit was responsible for huge queues of vehicles waiting to cross to France at the port of Dover in recent days.

Sunak is running as the candidate of fiscal probity, while Truss has positioned herself as a disruptor who will "challenge orthodoxy" and "get things done."

The two sparred on topics such as policy toward China, with Truss accusing Sunak of changing his stance on relations with Beijing.

Sunak says that China represents the "biggest-long term threat to Britain" and that if elected he would close the 30 Confucius Institutes in Britain. Funded by the Chinese government, the institutes teach Chinese language and culture, but have been accu-

sed of spreading pro-Beijing propaganda.

"As recently as a month ago you were pushing for closer trade relationships with China," said Truss, who warned the West must not become "strategically dependent" on China.

"I'm delighted that you've come round to my way of thinking," she said.

Sunak faces hostility from allies of Johnson, who consider him a turncoat for quitting the government earlier this month, a move that helped bring down the prime minister. Truss chose to remain in the caretaker government.

Both candidates, though, said Johnson would not be part of their government if they became prime minister.

"I think we need to look forward at this point," Sunak said.

Truss said Johnson "deserves a well-earned break, and added: "What's done is done."

Many Conservatives worry that the bitter internal fighting the campaign has already brought is only benefitting the opposition Labour Party. Former party chairwoman Amanda Milling said the contest was "more toxic than I've ever seen."

Writing on Twitter, she urged both candidates to sign up to a "Clean Campaign Charter," saying that without it "the lasting damage to our Party could see us out of power for a decade." **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1965 HEATH IS NEW TORY LEADER



Shadow Chancellor Edward Heath has beaten off his rivals in the Conservative leadership contest triggered by last week's unexpected resignation of Sir Alec Douglas-Home.

Mr Heath's victory comes as a surprise - shadow Foreign Secretary Reginald Maudling had been widely tipped to win.

Two polls of Tory MPs published this morning indicated a large majority intended to vote for him in today's ballot.

However, in the event many backed Mr Heath instead giving him 150 votes to Mr Maudling's 133.

The third challenger, maverick Enoch Powell, managed just 15 votes meaning Mr Heath had a slim overall majority.

Under Conservative Party leadership election rules Mr Maudling could have forced a second ballot but in view of Mr Heath's majority he bowed to tradition and announced his withdrawal.

In a statement issued late this evening Mr Maudling said: "I am very grateful to all the friends who have supported me but I have no doubt that it is in the interest of the party I should not continue to another ballot."

"I hope to have the opportunity of working under Mr Heath's leadership to defeat the present government as soon as possible."

Many are attributing Edward Heath's success to Mr Maudling's poor performance as Chancellor in the last Conservative government.

Mr Heath formally takes over as leader in a week's time when he makes the traditional address to a meeting of Conservative peers, Young Conservatives, the party's national executive and constituency delegates.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Edward Heath became prime minister in 1970. He achieved his aim of taking Britain into the European Economic Community (EEC) but widespread industrial action and economic difficulties led to the Tories falling from power in February 1974. After he failed to lead his party back into office in another election in 1974 he was challenged for the leadership by Margaret Thatcher who had been Education Secretary in his cabinet. In February 1975 Mr Heath was forced to resign when she defeated him in the first round. Mrs Thatcher then went on to beat four other male candidates to become the first female leader of a British political party and, four years later, Britain's first woman prime minister. Edward Heath never forgave Mrs Thatcher for ousting him and refused to serve in her cabinet. He was knighted in 1992 and, after more than 50 years as a MP, retired from politics in 2001. He died in July 2005.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS



### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Educational pursuits should help you develop your hobbies. Coworkers may not be giving you all the pertinent information. Don't let individuals with wild schemes talk you into a financial deal that is not likely to be successful.



### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Be prudent and don't be led down the garden path. Secret information will be eye opening. You should get out and meet some of those clients that you only speak to on the phone.



### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Be careful not to sign your time or your cash away. Sit back and observe, regardless of how hard that might be. You can elaborate on your creative ideas and get involved in groups that relate to the arts.



### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Dinner, theater, or a comedy club may be just the place. You can get support from groups that you belong to if you're willing to step out on a limb and voice your opinions.



### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You should teach children some of your unique creative talents. Use discretion, especially if involved with someone from work. You'll find it easy to meet new people.



### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Emotionally, things may not run so smoothly. Keep your wits about you and be sure that you can trust those you confide in. Be honest if you wish to solve the problem.



### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Your home environment may be hectic, which could result in emotional upset if you aren't well organized. Make sure that you have covered yourself legally and try not to let your temper get out of hand.



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You may find yourself in the midst of a pretty good deal. Concentrate on your job. You may want to make drastic changes concerning your personal partner. You will find good buys and you will lift your spirits.



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You could easily lose your temper at work. Don't push your opinions or ideas on others. You can enhance your reputation by making contributions to worthwhile causes.



### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Problems with your mate will develop if you don't let them have their way. Don't be too shy to promote your own interests. Raise your self esteem and your confidence if you want to get back into the mainstream again.



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Communication will be the source of your knowledge and you must be sure to spend time with those who have more experience. You will have a great deal of insight when dealing with others.

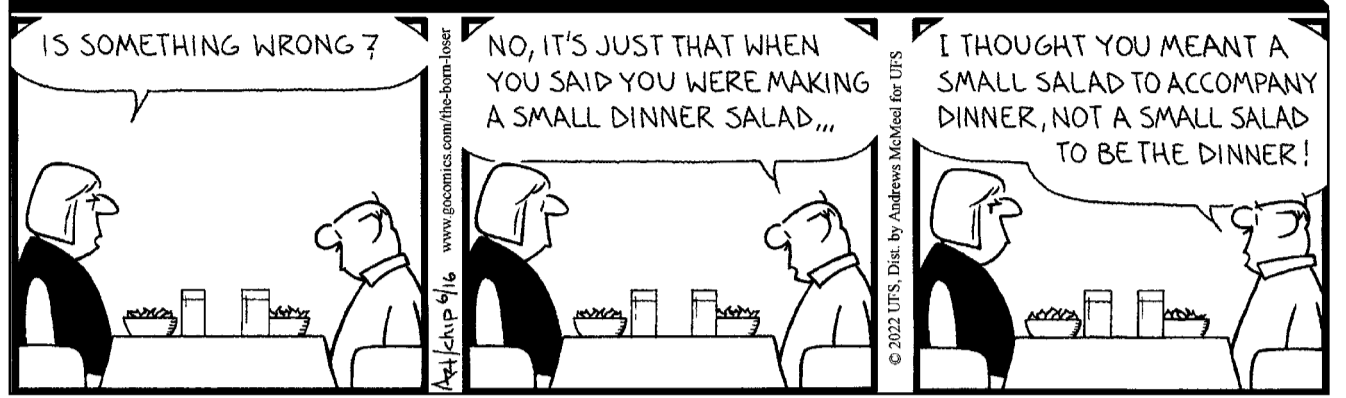


### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Don't be alarmed. Avoid confrontations with coworkers who aren't pulling their weight. Your nerves are frizzled. This is a great day to get out and enjoy an entertaining evening with friends or lovers.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



## SUDOKU

### EASY

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

### EASY+

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

### MEDIUM

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

### HARD

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

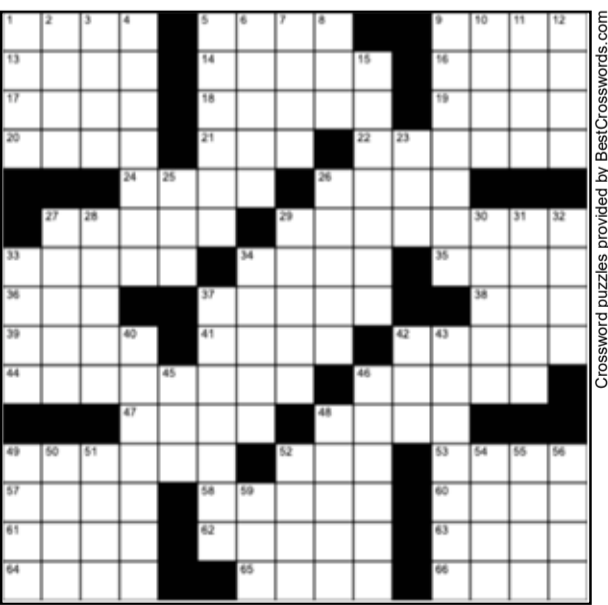
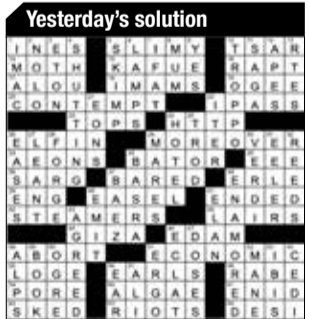
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	23	27	rain
Changchun	21	32	rain
Chengdu	24	33	showers
Chongqing	26	35	rain
Fuzhou	27	38	fine
Guangzhou	28	38	fine
Guiyang	23	31	cloudy
Haikou	26	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	26	38	thunderstorms
Harbin	21	32	fine
Hefei	25	35	cloudy
Nanjing	25	36	cloudy
Shanghai	27	37	overcast
Taipei	25	31	cloudy
Wuhan	23	36	fine
Hong Kong	28	32	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	19	31	rain
Frankfurt	13	21	overcast
Paris	16	27	overcast
London	16	23	overcast
New York	24	31	showers

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Round object, often used to store computer data; 5- Contented sighs; 9- Vaporize; 13- Langston Hughes poem; 14- Deadly virus; 16- Otherwise; 17- Beige cousin; 18- Follows orders; 19- Country singer McCann; 20- At that time; 21- Fleur-de-; 22- Certain fisherman; 24- Not false; 26- Basic unit of heredity; 27- Tall tales; 29- Large burrowing African mammal; 33- Skater Harding; 34- River sediment; 35- Ashtabula's lake; 36- Adj. modifier; 37- Heaps; 38- Traveler's stop; 39- Bridle part; 41- Draft classification; 42- You \_\_\_ right; 44- Back street; 46- "South Pacific" hero; 47- Autobahn auto; 48- Public exhibition; 49- Child's toy; 52- Magician's prop; 53- Baht spender; 57- Mayberry moppet; 58- Employ again; 60- Cereal grain; 61- Permits; 62- Arabian republic; 63- Peter Fonda title role; 64- Egress; 65- Treehouse used by birds; 66- A bit.

DOWN 1- Intake; 2- Hankering; 3- Annoyed; 4- Nation; 5- Greek god of the winds; 6- "Steal This Book" author Hoffman; 7- Weed whackers; 8- Crafty; 9- Hold as an opinion; 10- Actress Lena; 11- Wight or Man; 12- Cordelia's father; 15- Maintains; 23- Stop; 25- Messenger \_\_\_; 26- Hood-shaped anatomical part; 27- Warble; 28- Smith's block; 29- Choreographer Alvin; 30- Prospero's servant; 31- Wash cycle; 32- Vegas game; 33- Skater Lipinski; 34- Egyptian peninsula; 37- Like talc or volcanic ash; 40- Most tidy; 42- Roadie's burden; 43- Very funny; 45- Actor Brynner; 46- Scope; 48- Relaxes; 49- It may be landed; 50- Zenith; 51- South American monkey; 52- Actor Cronyn; 54- Light ring; 55- Up and \_\_\_; 56- Got it; 59- Still, in poetry.



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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- COLOANE V. | 1 BED HKD 9,300
- TAIPA STUDIO | 1 BED HKD 6,800
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- NOVA TAIPA | 4 BEDS HKD 12,880,000
- BAI YUEN GRD. | 3 BEDS HKD 12,800,000
- 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
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AD

TECH

# ALIBABA TO SEEK PRIMARY LISTING IN HONG KONG, ADDING TO NYSE

**A**LIBABA, the world's biggest e-commerce company by sales, announced plans yesterday to change the status of its shares traded in Hong Kong, making them more accessible to Chinese investors at a time when Beijing is pressing tech companies to share their wealth with the public.

The primary listing in Hong Kong is expected to be completed by the end of 2022, which would make Alibaba a dual-primary listed company on the New York Stock Exchange and the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

CEO Daniel Zhang said Alibaba was pursuing another primary listing venue to foster a "wider and more diversified investor base."

"Hong Kong and New



York are both major global financial centers, with shared characteristics of openness and diversity," Zhang said in a statement. "Hong Kong is also the launch pad for Alibaba's globalization strategy, and we are fully confident in China's economy and future."

The move will give millions of mainland Chinese investors access to Alibaba's shares, as its

shares could then be included in the Stock Connect investment channel that allows mainland Chinese investors to buy stocks listed in Hong Kong and vice versa for Hong Kong and overseas investors.

Alibaba's decision to seek a primary listing in Hong Kong also comes as U.S. regulators have threatened to delist U.S.-listed Chinese com-

panies unless they follow auditing requirements, which in turn triggered a selloff of Chinese stocks listed in the U.S.

The Hangzhou-headquartered firm went public in New York in September 2014 in what was the biggest initial public offering at the time, and later completed a secondary listing in Hong Kong in November 2019.

It was once the darling of many technology stock investors, but its stock price has plummeted following Beijing's regulatory crackdown on China's technology industry.

In the past year, Alibaba's New York stock price has plunged 47%. Ahead of the announcement, its stock price closed at \$101.06 Monday. **MDT/AP**

ENERGY

# EU REACHES DEAL TO RATION GAS AMID RUSSIAN CUT-OFF FEARS

**E**UROPEAN Union governments agreed yesterday to ration natural gas this winter to protect themselves against any further supply cuts by Russia as Moscow pursues its invasion of Ukraine.

EU energy ministers approved a draft European law meant to lower demand for gas by 15% from August through March. The new legislation entails voluntary national steps to reduce gas consumption and, if they yield insufficient savings, a trigger for mandatory moves in the 27-member bloc.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen welcomed the move, saying that the "the EU has taken a decisive step to face down the threat of a full gas disruption by (Russian President Vladimir) Putin."

On Monday, Russian energy giant Gazprom said it would limit supplies to the EU through the Nord

Stream 1 pipeline to 20% of capacity, heightening concerns that Russian President Vladimir Putin will use gas trade to challenge the bloc's opposition to the war in Ukraine.

"The winter is coming and we don't know how cold it will be," said Czech Industry Minister Jozef Sike-la, whose policy portfolio includes energy. "But what we know for sure is that Putin will continue to play his dirty games in misusing and blackmailing by gas supplies."

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, is pressing the ministers to reach an agreement less than a week after rushing out the rationing proposal.

"We have to be ready for the possible supply cuts from Russia at any moment," said European Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson. "We have to act right now." **MDT/AP**

AD



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TURISMO NO ESPAÇO RURAL



The houses are set in the heart of the World Heritage Site of the Douro Valley and its famous winery landscape where the world's Ports are produced. Both restored relics overlooking the Rio Douro, these eight rooms houses have been blessed with gorgeous wooden floors, plush queen beds and marble baths; the best have dazzling river views. But it is the welcome that makes this place stand out from the crowd.



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**RUGBY**

# Some league players in Australia refuse pride jersey

**S**EVEN Manly Sea Eagles players have withdrawn from a National Rugby League match in Australia because they're unwilling to wear their club's inclusion jersey.

The jersey has rainbow stripes and a rainbow collar — in place of the regular white sections — to support LGBTQ inclusion in sports, and the club plans to use it for one game against Sydney Roosters.

Sea Eagles coach Des Hasler yesterday said seven players advised club officials that wearing the pride jersey conflicts with their cultural and religious beliefs.

"The players will not play [tomorrow] and we accept their decision," Hasler said. "These young men are strong in their beliefs and convictions and we will give them the space and support they require."

"The playing group are solid and understanding of each other's views. As a club we will wear the jersey on Thursday night."



Former Australian rugby league player Ian Roberts gestures during a red carpet event for the movie premiere of "Thor: Love and Thunder" at the Entertainment Quarter in Sydney earlier this week

Josh Aloiai, Jason Saab, Christian Tuipulotu, Josh Schuster, Haumole Olakau'atu, Tolu Koula and Toafofoa Siple are not available for selection on Thursday. NRL squads contain 13 starting players and four on the interchange bench for each game.

Hasler apologized for the fallout which stemmed from the

club's lack of advance consultation with the playing group.

"Our intent was to be caring towards all diverse groups who face inclusion issues daily," Hasler said. "Sadly this poor management has caused significant confusion, discomfort and pain for many people, in particular those groups whose human rights we in

fact attempting to support.

"We wish to apologize to the LGBTQ community who embrace the rainbow colors, who use these colors for pride and advocacy and human rights issues."

Australian Rugby League Commission chairman Peter V'landys said he understood the players' choices, based on religious and cultural differences, but pushed for inclusion and acceptance in the sport.

"One thing I take pride in with rugby league is we treat everyone the same," V'landys said. "It doesn't matter your color, sexual orientation or race. We're all equal."

"We'll never take a backward step in having our sport inclusive. But at the same time we will not disrespect our players' freedoms."

The NRL does not have a designated Pride round, but V'landys said it could be a consideration for future seasons.

Andrew Purchas, co-founder of the Pride In Sport program that supports Australian sports clubs

in aspects of inclusion, acknowledged the apology from the Sea Eagles.

"Conversation, education and building understanding are key to respectfully moving forward on these important discussions in our communities," Purchas said in a statement. "At its most basic, a Pride jersey signals a fundamental value: everyone should feel safe to play."

"We strongly support the NRL in its endeavours to continue to uphold values associated with inclusivity, safety and belonging, and we would urge all people to think about these as non-controversial values we can unify around."

The Sea Eagles are in ninth place in the NRL, one spot below the Roosters. The top eight teams qualify for the playoffs.

Manly was the only club planning to wear a pride jersey in this round.

Former Manly forward Ian Roberts, who in the 1990s was the first high-profile rugby league player to come out as gay, said he was not surprised by the players' decision.

"It hasn't totally shocked me like it's shocking everyone else," he told the Sydney Morning Herald. "As an older gay man I'm used to this. I expected there would be some sort of religious pushback." **MDT/AP**

AD

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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Kang Bing, China Daily



**A DECADE OF RISING  
 FOREST COVER AND  
 BETTER PROTECTING THE  
 ENVIRONMENT**

Just as US presidents always take part in the annual Thanksgiving Day ceremony of pardoning the turkey in the White House and thanking God for a bountiful harvest, Chinese leaders, for decades, have been participating in the annual tree planting activity in Beijing's suburbs every March.

While the lucky turkey pardoned in the White House hogs the limelight, as many as 47 million of its fellow birds end up on dinner tables in the US on Thanksgiving Day.

The Chinese people take tree planting seriously. In fact, President Xi Jinping, together with many other State leaders, joined local residents for tree planting in the capital's suburbs in March this year his 10th successive presence at the annual activity since he became China's top leader. Xi said that by joining other volunteers to plant trees, he wants to make his contribution to building a green and beautiful China, and encourage society, especially the youth, to promote ecological advancement.

When the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, forests covered only 8.6 percent of the country's land area. The constant use of wood for cooking and heating had denuded forests and reduced the green cover, resulting in environmental deterioration, desertification with deserts advancing from the north and soil erosion.

It was under such circumstances that China launched a national tree-planting campaign to build forest belts in its north, northeast and northwest regions. The idea was to prevent large swathes of land from being subsumed by the advancing deserts. Yet nobody at the time realized the campaign would last more than seven decades.

Thanks to nationwide efforts, 13 percent of China's territory was covered by forests by 1980. But the launch of reform and opening-up in the late 1970s proved to be a double-edged sword for the expanding forest cover. On the one hand, reform and opening-up increased investments in afforestation and helped people better realize the importance of environmental protection. On the other hand, the expanding economy demanded more resources with forest land and timber being important resources.

For years, media report on trees being illegally felled to make furniture and other products or to be used as construction material were rampant. To curb such illegal activities, tree-felling was first banned in some regions and later across the country. And thousands of lumbermen laid down their chainsaws to become tree planters and tenders.

Also, villas illegally built in forests or forested areas were demolished and related officials and businesspeople punished or sentenced to prison according to Party regulations and laws, thanks to the longstanding attention of the central leadership.

Although the battle between forest protection and illegally tree-felling continued for a few decades, thanks to the efforts of people nationwide more than 78 billion trees were planted in four decades 21 percent of China's land was covered with forests by the end of 2012. And when Xi Jinping became China's top leader that year, he didn't waste any time in stressing that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, and highlighting the country's efforts to promote ecological advancement.

As a leader who in his youth toiled as a farmer on the almost barren Loess Plateau for seven years, Xi knows better than many what forests mean to a nation. As a result, investments in environmental protection programs have kept increasing in the past decade and the concept of "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets" has become a motto for China's future development.

Last year, it was reported that forest cover has increased to 23 percent of the country's land territory, and spread over 220 million hectares.

Now that China has put the environment first, and is following a green development path, for sure, more trees will be planted and our living environment will become greener and better.

Chinese investment and trade — and possibly an invitation to the Group of 20 summit in Bali this fall — are on the table in talks yesterday between visiting Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Widodo arrived in Beijing on Monday night on the first stop of a trip that will take him also to Japan and South Korea later this week.

Trade, investment and fisheries will be important issues in meetings with the leaders of all three countries, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said last week. In Beijing, the two sides were

expected to discuss Chinese investment in infrastructure and natural resources, including a delayed project to build a high-speed rail line from Indonesia's capital Jakarta to the city of Bandung.

Widodo was also meeting China's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Keqiang, who is in charge of economic policy.

The Indonesian president is one of the few foreign leaders to travel to China, which has limited foreign visitors because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The vast majority of Xi's talks with other leaders have been by phone or video link for more than two years.

**FRANCE'S MACRON IN  
 CAMEROON AT START OF  
 THREE-NATION AFRICA TOUR**

EDWIN KINDZEKA MOKI,  
 YAOUNDE

**F**RENCH President Emmanuel Macron, in Cameroon to start his 3-nation Africa tour, is expected to discuss the food crisis in Africa provoked by Russia's war in Ukraine, the need for Cameroon to increase its agricultural production and the country's upsurge in insecurity.

In Yaounde, Cameroon's capital, for a three-day visit to this central African country, Macron then visits Benin and Guinea Bissau.

The Cameroon government gave the capital a facelift for Macron's visit. Bulldozers razed makeshift market stalls and shacks on all streets in Yaounde where Macron's envoy will pass.

"They have destroyed my only source of livelihood," said Solange Kemje, 28, among the several hundred stall owners affected.

Others welcomed the visit of France's leader, hoping that Macron will extend help in the face of rising insecurity from jihadi violence that has spilled over from neighboring Nigeria.

The central African state is also battling a separatist conflict that has killed at least 3,300 people and displaced more than 750,000 in five years, according to the U.N. Rebels are fighting for Cameroon's English-speaking minority to have an independent country called Ambazonia.

Some hope that hope Macron will influence President Paul Biya to end the use of force as a solution to the separatist crisis in Cameroon's English-speaking regions, Capo Daniel, deputy defense chief of the Ambazonia Defense Forces, one of the separatist groups, said.

"One of our factions in



our liberation movement called for a lockdown to protest Emmanuel Macron's visit. But other movements will be watching this event with the hope that Emmanuel Macron will push Paul Biya to choose the path of peaceful resolution of the war (of separatist violence) as an alternative to the current posture of the state of Cameroon to use war to resolve the problem with Ambazonia," Capo said.

**In Yaounde for a  
 three-day visit to  
 Cameroon, Macron  
 then visits Benin  
 and Guinea Bissau**

Cameroon says France supports its military to fight separatists and the jihadi violence from Nigeria's Boko Haram rebels but has given no details on how many weapons have been received from France.

Others hope that Macron will encourage Cameroon's 89-year-old President Paul Biya, who has been in power for close to 40 years, to retire.

"The discussion should go around a peaceful transition of power in Cameroon and also the issues of human rights and

democracy in Cameroon," Prince Ekosso, leader of the United Socialist Democratic Party said.

Biya is accused of rigging elections in order to stay in power until he dies. Biya maintains he has always won democratic elections fairly.

Cameroon has signed a defense treaty with Russia and has agreed for China to carry out mining, both of which reduced the influence of France in the country, he said.

Cameroon, Benin and Guinea Bissau should ask Macron to reconsider EU trade sanctions on Russia, Cameroon's Consumers League said. The

consumer advocacy group blames the EU sanctions for fuel and wheat shortages and rising food prices across Africa.

Macron will likely try to strengthen multilateral cooperation to stop the spread of jihadi terrorism across West Africa including in Cameroon, Benin and Togo, Kulu said.

Macron is accompanied by the French ministers of Foreign Affairs, Armed Forces and Foreign Relations, as well as the French Secretary of State for Development. **MDT/AP**



**Russia** American basketball star Brittney Griner (pictured) returned to a Russian courtroom yesterday for her drawn-out trial on drug charges that could bring her 10 years in prison if convicted. The trial of the two-time Olympic gold medalist and Phoenix Mercury standout began July 1 but only four sessions have been held, some them lasting only a few hours. She acknowledged that she was carrying vape canisters containing cannabis oil when she was arrested at a Moscow airport in February, but said she had no criminal intent.



**USA** Former President Donald Trump will return to Washington today [Macau time] for the first time since leaving office, delivering a policy speech before an allied think tank that has been crafting an agenda for a possible second term. Trump will address the America First Policy Institute's two-day America First Agenda Summit as some advisers urge him to spend more time talking about his vision for the future and less time relitigating the 2020 election as he prepares to announce an expected 2024 White House campaign.

**Markets** Asian stock markets were mostly higher yesterday as investors braced for another sharp interest rate hike by the U.S. Federal Reserve to cool inflation. Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul advanced. Tokyo edged lower. Oil rose more than \$1 per barrel. Wall Street ended up 0.1% on Monday ahead of this week's Fed meeting at which officials are expected to announce a rate hike of up to three-quarters of a percentage point, triple the usual margin.