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**FOR MACAU TO BOUNCE BACK TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS IT'S 'EITHER COVID GOES AWAY OR ZERO-COVID POLICIES GO AWAY': GAMING ANALYST**

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China's government rejected as a "political lie" a report by The Wall Street Journal that Beijing tried to recruit informants in the Federal Reserve system to obtain U.S. economic data. The report, citing an investigation by a Senate panel, adds to accusations of Chinese computer hacking and other efforts to steal U.S. commercial and government information. The report "has no factual basis," said foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian. "The report you mentioned is a political lie fabricated by a few Republican lawmakers who harbor ill intentions," Zhao said in response to questions at a regular news briefing.

AP PHOTO



Japan's minister for gender equality and children's issues called the country's record low births and plunging population a national crisis and blamed "indifference and ignorance" in the male-dominated Japanese parliament. In an interview with AP, Seiko Noda (pictured) said the steadily dwindling number of children born in Japan was an existential threat, saying the nation won't have enough troops, police or firefighters in coming decades if it continues. The number of newborns last year was a record low 810,000, down from 2.7 million just after the end of World War II. More on macaudailytimes.com.mo

AP PHOTO



Afghanistan The lives of women and girls are being destroyed by a "suffocating" crackdown by the Taliban since they took power nearly a year ago, Amnesty International said in a report released yesterday. Initially, when they came to power, Taliban officials spoke of allowing women to continue to work and girls to continue their education. Instead, they formed an all-male government that has banned girls from attending school from seventh grade, imposed all-covering dress that leaves only the eyes visible and restricted women's access to work.

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# THE GAME MASTERS

**They are the members of the tender commission that will dictate the engagement of six gaming concessionaires for the next ten years**

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**ECONOMY WOES**

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**MACAU GP**

**NO SURPRISES EXPECTED FOR THIS YEAR'S RACES**

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se Championship is expected to commence on the weekend of August 19-21 at China's most famous Shanghai International Circuit, which will host the first of three quadruple heads.

The season finale will take place in Macau with the last round and the only two-race weekend of the season.

Bigger questions have been raised regarding the participants from the Macau GT Cup event. Over the last few years, the number of GT racing categories has multiplied and gained momentum, but since last season, the GT China Championship seems to have lost its glow. The only major GT championship confirmed to take place this year in Asia is the 2022 Fanatec GT World Challenge Asia, a high-ranked championship but one with no scheduled stop in Macau, with all the six rounds taking place in Malaysia, Japan, and Indonesia.

However, since the last round of the championship will take place at Indonesia's new Mandalika International Street Circuit on the weekend of October 21-23, it is possible that arrangements can be made to bring some of these cars and racers to the local GP in November as an invitational race outside of a regular championship.

If so, racing fans in Macau might be able to see some famous names of local and national motorsports in action such as China's David Pun, Hong Kong's Shaun Thong and Marchy Lee, or Taiwan's Brian Lee, among others.

As for the local races, no changes are expected to take place, with the Macau Touring Car Cup for 1.6 Turbo touring cars and the Macau Challenge Cup for over 1,950cc touring cars likely to take place in the same format as last year.

## NO SURPRISES EXPECTED FOR 69TH MACAU GRAND PRIX

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**N**O surprises are expected for the 69th edition of the Macau Grand Prix, set to hit the roads of the Guia circuit this November. With a racing line-up potentially subject to the same or very similar Covid-19 restrictions as last year, the event this year should feature the same line-up as last year, ra-

cing season calendars hint.

Although the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC) has not yet released any official information on this year's event, apart from a confirmation that it will take place, racing calendars, namely in China, have been hinting at the racing categories that are expected to take place.

After several delays and postponements, the TCR Asia Series is finally moving forward from this week with a double round at Hunan's Zhuzhou Circuit starting today (July 28), which extends over the weekend until July 31, with a total of four races to be held.

In a championship with a total of six rounds, all on Chinese soil, the competition's final races are

to be held in Macau in November under the banner of the once famous Macau Guia Race for touring cars.

The return of the TCR Asia series could also mark the return to local races of local driver Rodolfo Ávila, who will debut this year in the brand-new MG5 XPower TCR series.

As for the emblematic Formula 3 race, it seems it will again be replaced by the Formula 4 (F4) Chinese Championship this year, whose championship will be composed of four rounds in a total of 14 races.

The Shell Helix FIA F4 Chine-

## CE orders detailed planning for Zone A of new landfills

**T**HE Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng, has greenlighted the detailed planning for the area classified as East District-2 in the intervention areas of the city's Urban Master Plan. This area comprises Zone A of the new landfills.

The order of the CE was published yesterday in the government's official gazette and notes the purpose of planning as creating a

new livable community on the Macau Peninsula, and setting the rules for the overall planning of the area.

The detailed planning comes after the general planning for the Master Plan and drafts out the usage of the land at the street level, addressing the purpose and usage allowed for each land plot as well as other require-

ments such as green areas, the maximum height of buildings and soil occupation percentage, among others.

According to the general planning of Macau, East District-2 has a total area of 1.7 square kilometers and a planned population of about 96,000 people.

The land use is mainly residential and commercial, with some areas re-

served for green spaces or public open areas.

The area also includes the construction of several buildings dedicated to public housing projects that have already started to move forward, even before the final planning.

The west side of the district should also include other social and public use facilities such as schools and sports venues. **RM**



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COVID-19

# Stability period possible, including dine-in, after three more consolidation days

ANTHONY LAM

**S**HOPPING malls, conditional dine-in and indoor redecoration projects may resume next Wednesday if new case figures run low in the coming days, government public health doctor Leong Iek Hou announced yesterday.

Leong said that an Executive Dispatch will be issued to officially announce the matter.

As of yesterday, the city has recorded no new community cases for four consecutive days.

The public health doctor said that if the figure of new local cases remains low in the coming days, in combination with satisfactory results from the citywide SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test (NAT) this coming weekend, the city will see three more days of the consolidation period, covering Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

The government refers to the days starting from Wednesday, if all goes well, as the stability period.

After assessments, the Health Bureau (SSM) may allow shopping malls and indoor redecoration projects to resume operations with limited capacity during the stability period. "We will make announcements on this as soon as possible," said Leong.

The KN95 mandate may be scrapped for outdoor workers, so that they will be allowed to wear normal surgical masks only. "But we recommend wearing KN95 during [the stability] period for indoor workers," Leong added.

In addition, she said if the coming citywide NAT yields low or no new cases with all sources of infections pinpointed, the city will enter the stability period on Wednesday. "Certain measures will be eased," the public health doctor said.

Regular NATs will become part of Macau's life. Leong elaborated on the matter that although dine-in services would be allowed to resume, 48-hour-validity NATs will be required for diners, "because dine-in will not allow mask wearing." Reduced capacity will also be in place.

The same requirement will be implemented for those venues that serve members of the public, such as private tuition centers or continuing education centers.

NATs for key groups and key areas will also linger, she disclosed. The frequency of the regular NAT may be lowered from two days per test to three days during

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the stability period.

She assured local residents that the requirement for daily SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen tests (RATs) would likely remain for "a relatively long period of time." The distribution of RAT kits will also remain, she added.

On how to define "figures running low," Leong said she did not have a precise figure in her mind. "It is difficult to define it precisely," she said. But she reiterated that the new detections must have a clear source and chain of infections.

"Multiple sources of infections will not be acceptable in terms of epidemiology," she said.

The three-day extension was concluded based on the release of citywide NAT results, Leong added.

The resumption of operations for entertainment venues, meanwhile, will be allowed on a gradual basis, the public health doctor said in reply to a media question.

Leong was also asked whether the situation was developing better than the SSM expected, as it cut short the consolidation period, and she said that assessments had been conducted constantly.

"We have never said clearly how long the consolidation period will be," Leong said, adding the city is still prone to outbreaks because it is so small and its population is so closely connected. "A rebound can ha-

ppen abruptly."

The consolidation period was first announced to be two weeks long.

The duration of the stability period will be determined later, Leong added.

NATs for dining-in will be free-of-charge. "During the consolidation or the stability periods, as long as the NAT is required by the government, it can be booked at the free-of-charge test platform," Leong ascertained. "Unless the NAT result is used for border crossing."

In addition, the public health doctor also announced that two other key areas had been designated. The affected areas will be located between Avenida do Almirante Magalhães Correia and Avenida do Nordeste as well as between Avenida do Nordeste and Rua dos Pescadores.

Everybody residing or working in the aforementioned areas, or with a footprint there for at least half an hour on or after July 24, will need to be tested once, on either July 28 or 29. No waiver will be issued to any person.

The government will disseminate an SMS to concerned groups of people. Their health codes will turn yellow on July 30 if they fail to do the test and will turn red on July 31 if they fail to make up for the test.

On why two new key areas have been designated amid the projected fall in new cases, Leong said that the community is still

prone to the risk of outbreak as the city is still under the consolidation period.

"Therefore, we are still identifying people or areas with higher risks as key groups and areas," Leong said. "Several districts have recently seen higher number of infections."

## CASINOS ALLEGEDLY STARVING WORKERS

It was also raised at yesterday's press briefing that some casinos were allegedly not allowing their workers to have meals during their shifts, citing SSM guidelines.

It was also reported that casino workers were not allowed to order takeaway food amid company canteens not being operational.

To this, Leong said that SSM had never put any restrictions on the source of meals. It has no restrictions as to whether food is ordered from outside or brought

in from home.

She added that during the consolidation period, dining in a public area with no mask on is "relatively risky."

SSM guidelines ban dining in offices or workplaces unless suitably separated areas are available. Meals can only be taken with one person per separate space at a time.

"We have encouraged employers to find ways so their employees can have meal breaks at work," Leong emphasized.

The public health doctor was questioned about the matter four times during the press briefing. She eventually referred questioners to the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ), saying that the latter may be well aware of the concerns after the press conference. She believed that it would issue a response in due course.

## COVID-19 CERTIFICATES 'GENERALLY SATISFY' REQUIREMENTS

**SOME** overseas Macau residents have complained that they have been unable to board a flight back to Macau because their testing site no longer issued paper certificates for SARS-CoV-2 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. As the Health Bureau (SSM) accepts only paper certificates, it was questioned how these people can

instigate their homecoming. Division head at Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, Leong Iek Hou, said that as of yesterday, she had not heard about such complaints or requests. She added that, currently, many people are coming into Macau each day, and that "generally their certificates satisfy our requirements."



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NEW CASINO CONCESSIONS

## PUBLIC TENDER GAMING COMMISSION CREATED

**T**HE Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng formally created yesterday the commission that is to be in charge of the public tender for the attribution of the new gaming licenses.

The creation of the commission was published in the government's official gazette yesterday under executive order No. 135/2022.

The commission will be in charge of carrying out work on the public tender for the attribution of new concessions for the exploitation of games in casinos, which will be attributed this year.

This commission will analyze and decide on all matters relating to the public tender until the concession contracts are awarded, except for the acts of provisional or definitive awarding and other acts done under the terms of the law to other entities.

According to the order, in its first meeting, the tender committee will elect the chairperson and a secretary. All the administrative, financial, technical, and logistical support for the operation of this commission will be done by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ).

Commission members include the Secretaries for Administration and Justice, Economy and

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Finance, and Social Affairs and Culture, as well as the Secretary General of the Executive Council Secretariat, Hoi Lai Fong, the Directors of the Economic and

Technological Development Bureau, Macau Government Tourism Office, DICJ, Judiciary Police, and Land and Urban Construction Bureau.

### EXCO GREENLIGHTS SPECIALIZED COMMISSION

On the same day, the Executive Council (ExCo) finalized the analysis of the Administrative Re-

gulation that proposes to create a specialized commission to address matters related to the gaming sector.

This commission's duties include studying the development of the gaming sector and providing support in the definition of policies for the sector, as well as providing support in the creation of norms and regulating guidelines. Among other competencies is also proposing measures for the supervision of the development and operations of the gaming sector.

This commission will be chaired by the Secretary for the Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, and will have as members, representatives from the offices of the Chief Executive, Secretary for Administration and Justice, Secretary for the Economy and Finance, Secretary for Security, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture and Secretary for Transport and Public Works. The director of the DICJ, Adriano Ho, is also a member.

This commission will gather in plenary meetings, with ordinary sessions held at least every semester.

All the administrative, financial, and technical support for the operation of this commission will also be the responsibility of the DICJ.

## Lawmakers call on gov't to promptly release assistance measures

STAFF REPORTER

**L**AWMAKERS Ella Lei and Leong Sun Iok are jointly calling for the implementation of financial assistance measures by the Macau government to take place as soon as possible, urging the government to prepare well in order to ensure social-economic revival. Only some industrial and commercial activities are allowed to operate, with many industries still closed, which is making a big impact on Macau's economy.

"Earlier, the government stated that [it is] using government resources to help society recover, and considering [the introduction of] more economic assistance measures to support residents," the lawmakers said in a joint statement.

"For some industries [greatly impacted] by the suspension, it is recommended to launch a "special assistance plan for the



suspension of work and business" to alleviate the plight of enterprises and ensure the employment of local employees," they further added.

The statement urges the government to announce the details of the measures as soon as possible and distribute money to encourage residents to stimulate the economy by spending, in the hopes that such a distribution will support residents to cope with the pandemic.

Currently, many people are worried about unemployment, and that

it will be more difficult for unemployed residents to find jobs. Lei and Leong also suggested that the government extend the "temporary subsidy plan to encourage the employment of unemployed local residents" published earlier by the government, which encourages local industries to hire unemployed local residents as a matter of priority.

As for the "program of training with allowance" that has been suspended for long time due to the pandemic, Lei and Leong suggested, in addition to

lowering the conditions for applications and increasing the quotas of participants, that the government use online services to carry out the program so as to convince residents to learn new skills.

Further, self-employed people such as tour guides and taxi drivers will receive MOP10,000 each, which is MOP5,000 less than employees. Leong suggested that the government increase these amounts so that the self-employed can receive the same level of financial assistance as regular employees.

## SECTOR REP SAYS BANKS HAVE TAKEN MEASURES TO AVOID LONG QUEUES

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) and the Macau Association of Banks have called on banks to make arrangements for pandemic prevention work and to avoid crowding of people in queues.

"Banks [are] distributing tickets for queueing so that [patrons] only need to arrive [at an appointed] time," president of the Macau Association of Banks Ip Sio Kai commented to TDM.

Ip noted that banks had already stepped up to manage large queues and that all bank managers would keep observing the queues forming outside the banks to deter gatherings.

This comes after long queues were spotted outside several branches since the beginning of the week.

"Special queues have been set up for the elderly

and if the waiting time for them is too long, they will be allowed to be seated inside first," Ip added.

Whether banks would be open on weekends "would depend on the pandemic situation and [I will] keep an eye on the public's demand for financial services," Ip said.

The AMCM is calling on the public to use online or self-service services as much as possible.

"Banks can only provide limited services during the consolidation period, namely with regard to the number of workers covered by the measures on travel to work, going to and from the workplace, as well as restrictions on the flow of people in closed spaces," the AMCM reiterated.

After an almost two-week closure, local banks opened on July 25, providing limited services such as emergency financial services for the public.



GAMING

# Consultant: Either Covid or zero-Covid policy must go away before casinos rebound

LYNZY VALLES

**F**OR Macau to bounce back to pre-Covid-19 pandemic levels and experience pent-up demand similar to Las Vegas when it reopened, it's "either Covid goes away or zero-Covid policies go away."

This idea was shared by Andrew Klebanow, co-founder and senior partner of C3 Gaming, in an online seminar of the French Chamber of Commerce (FMCC) titled "The Road to Macau Tourism Recovery."

Nevada reopened casinos on June 4, 2020, welcoming tourists to return to the glitzy gambling mecca of Las Vegas.

The reopening comes after an unprecedented shut down of casinos in April as part of the city's measures to deter the spread of Covid-19.

Klebanow, also the president of Klebanow Consulting, said that, following the comeback, casino revenues were hitting an all-time record – yet this only occurred after over six months of reopening.

"There was not a vehicle on the [road], nor people on the sidewalk. That was [already] six months after we reopened," said the gaming expert.

"Until March 2021, [it was] as if somebody turned a switch on; suddenly tourism rebounded. I'm not talking a small predictable phase, but literally overnight, [business] ... returned," he added.

Despite business coming back, the sector underwent a couple



Andrew Klebanow

of setbacks such as in September 2021 when the Delta variant emerged that spread across the country rapidly, and the Omicron variant in December 2021 that emerged as the primary Covid variant.

However, the rise of these variants no longer deterred tourists.

The dramatic uptick continued until May 2022, when Las Vegas Municipal Airport recorded its third busiest traffic month in the airport's history, as well as hotels hitting the 80% occupant range.

Nevada casinos continued setting revenue increases as in May, the city has posted USD1.3 billion in gaming revenues, logging a 15th straight month of USD1 billion or more in house winnings and topping results from two years ago, before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic brou-

ght business across the state to a near-halt.

Meanwhile in Macau, a rebound in casino industry – which has been burning cash daily – is what the city has long been waiting for.

"In 2019, Macau had GGR of about USD 37 billion. I see post-pandemic, [it could] get back up that USD50 billion range very quickly. I think the growth [will be] phenomenal [but] one of two things has to happen: Either Covid goes away, or zero-Covid policies go away," said Klebanow.

"If one of these things happen, you're going to be [swamped] with people and business," he added.

However, the casino sector has been in turmoil – especially after a two-week closure during the partial lockdown where the government mandated all non-essential services to close as part of its zero-

-Covid strategy.

Gaming analysts forecast that revenues would plunge 99% compared to pre-pandemic levels this July.

Aside from that, the sector is at a great disadvantage following the crackdown on junkets, which brought easy money to the industry, as well as the fact that the clock is ticking, as their gaming licenses expire in December 31.

To obtain a new license, casinos are set to undergo tough scrutiny with the new gaming law – which gives power to the Chief Executive to terminate a concession if it is considered a threat to national security or to the security of Macau.

"There's more [problems] than just Covid. We're having a perfect storm here," said Rutger Verschuren, president of the FMCC and

the Macau Hotel Association.

"We really feel that there is something working against us in the gaming industry. We are pushed for diversification [and] casino law also requires integrated resorts invest more in non-gaming," he said.

However, the issue of when casinos can recover their losses from the past two years remains a question as concessionaires prepare for their bid proposals.

Whether Macau can bounce back as significantly as Las Vegas did, Klebanow believes that Macau is still positioned to attract greater customers compared to its competitors such as Singapore and Vietnam, which have been freely open to visitors since last year.

Although the central government aims to reposition Macau as a greater entertainment destination, Macau is placed within the PRC as the 'go to' destination to gamble.

As a travel bubble has been established between the SAR and the mainland, quarantine is not required upon arrival – except recently as Macau is undergoing a pandemic outbreak.

"That is a pretty alluring position to have in the market. [You] can't deny the fact that Macau has one unique attribute that no other city in the PRC has - you go there and gamble," he added.

For Klebanow, Macau's integrated resorts are considered to be "greater than anything than what we have here in Las Vegas."

## Casinos expected to suffer from staff shortage post-pandemic

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE casino industry is expected to see a shortage of staff once the economy returns to normal and operators should have a clear plan for reemploying staff who have left.

Andrew Klebanow, co-founder and senior partner of C3 Gaming, said that Las Vegas, to this day, is still short on staff, following casino closures during the peak of the pandemic.

In an online seminar of the French Chamber of Commerce (FMCC) titled

"The Road to Macau Tourism Recovery," the gaming consultant said that not only are they short on staff in the hospitality industry, but also in all sectors of the economy.

US casinos are just one of many industries struggling to add new workers, and they find themselves competing with each other not only for casino workers, but for people with experience in the hotel, restaurant and tourism industries, to name just a few.

Back in April in Las Vegas, about 6,000 people

attended jobs fair in which 105 casino and other employers offered 13,000 jobs.

"I suspect you will have this problem also, considering how many of your expatriate employees have left. There are just a lot of people who have left. A lot of expatriates went home and are very reluctant to return. They just said that they were done," he said.

"You need to plan for this. What is it going to take to get these employees back and get them back in a hurry when business kicks in? Because you will find you-

self not getting the hotel rooms done on time, and failing to get people into the restaurants," Klebanow added.

Echoing the same sentiments, Rutger Verschuren, president of the FMCC and the Macau Hotel Association, said that he also expects to see the same problem in Macau.

"We have to be ready. [...] One room attendant can do 12 to 13 rooms a day, depending on the property. Considering there are 40,000 rooms in Macau, we need more room attendan-



ts for that," he added.

Meanwhile, in terms of service quality: the pandemic has changed everything – from consumer expectations to customer

behaviors.

"People are going to be so tired in this two- to three-year pandemic; they will take whatever you've got," Klebanow said.



AP PHOTO



Joe Biden, Xi Jinping

DIPLOMACY

# XI, BIDEN TO SPEAK AS POSSIBLE PELOSI TAIWAN VISIT LOOMS

**U.S.** President Joe Biden is planning to speak with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping for the first time in four months, with a wide range of bilateral and international issues on the table.

But a potential visit to Taiwan by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is looming over the conversation set for today, with China warning of a severe response if she travels to the self-governing island Beijing claims as its own territory.

Yesterday, China's Foreign Ministry declined to comment on the presidential phone call. However, spokesperson Zhao Lijian reiterated China's warnings over a Pelosi visit.

"If the U.S. insists on going its own way and challenging China's

bottom line, it will surely be met with forceful responses," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing. "All ensuing consequences shall be borne by the U.S."

Pelosi's office has yet to say when, or even if, she will proceed with the visit, but the timing is especially sensitive amid heightened tensions between Beijing and Washington over trade, human rights and Taiwan.

While the U.S. has in recent years sent a Cabinet secretary and high-ranking former officials to Taiwan, Pelosi's status as the top congressional Democrat and second in line of succession to the presidency puts her in a separate category. The speaker has made standing up to China a key feature of her more than three decades in Congress.

While Biden has no authority to prevent Pelosi visiting, China's Communist government chooses to ignore the separation of powers in the U.S., saying Congress is beholden to the administration. In Beijing's perception, the fact both belong to the Democratic Party reinforces the notion that Pelosi is somehow working with Biden's assent.

Despite that, Biden last week told reporters that U.S. military officials believed it was "not a good idea" for the speaker to visit the island at the moment. The Financial Times reported last week that Pelosi planned to visit Taiwan in August, a trip that had originally been planned for April but was postponed after she tested positive for COVID-19.

Pelosi would be the highest-

ranking U.S. elected official to travel to Taiwan since Republican Newt Gingrich visited the island in 1997 when he served as House speaker. Gingrich and other prominent Republicans who are normally highly critical of Pelosi have offered their encouragement, saying China has no right to dictate where Americans can travel to.

China has given no details on what specific actions it would take in response, but experts say it could launch additional incursions into waters and airspace near Taiwan, or even cross the center line of the Taiwan Strait dividing the two. Some have speculated China might even attempt to prevent her plane from landing, something that would spark a major crisis and is gene-

rally considered unlikely.

U.S. officials told The Associated Press that if Pelosi goes to Taiwan, the military will increase movement of forces and assets in the Indo-Pacific region.

They declined to provide details, but said that fighter jets, ships, surveillance assets and other military systems would likely be used to provide overlapping rings of protection for her flight to Taiwan and any time on the ground there.

A possible Pelosi visit makes it even more important that Xi and Biden hold a meaningful discussion, said Yu Wanli, a professor of international relations at Beijing Language and Culture University.

Although both their administrations are opposed to it, Pelosi's visit "has been hijacked by U.S. domestic politics, with Republicans and other forces exerting pressure not to show weakness to China," Yu said.

"The issue of how China and the U.S. manage and control the Taiwan issue has become an urgent matter, and therefore the talk between the two leaders is very timely and necessary," he said.

The U.S. has only informal relations and defense ties with Taipei in deference to China, but remains the island's most important source of military and political support.

China, which in recent years has boosted its threat to use force to annex Taiwan if necessary, objects to all U.S. arms sales and contacts with the island's government.

The sides split amid civil war in 1949 and Taiwanese leader Tsai Ing-wen has refused Beijing's demand that she recognize the island as a part of China. Public sentiment in Taiwan strongly favors maintaining the status quo of de-facto independence without further antagonizing Beijing. **MDT/AP**

# US governor calls for security review of Chinese firm's project in North Dakota

**GOV.** Doug Burgum is pressing federal officials to expedite a review of a Chinese company's purchase of land in North Dakota for a wet corn milling plant to ensure it is not detrimental to national security.

Fufeng Group's planned \$700 million project in Grand Forks has stirred some opponents to raise fears of espionage due to its proximity to a U.S. Air Force base.

"Our top priority is, and

always will be, the safety and security of our citizens and our nation," Burgum, a Republican, said in a letter Monday to U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, calling for an expedited review of the project by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.

"We ask that this review process be completed with the utmost urgency to aid Grand Forks officials in their decision-making

process and provide clarity on whether this land purchase has national security implications," Burgum's letter said.

The agency told The Associated Press that it does not publicly comment on its reviews.

City Administrator Todd Feland said the company, which is privately owned, voluntarily submitted a formal request Monday to have federal officials review the project.

"They weren't required

to, but they did," Feland said.

The city and the company continue to be 100% behind the project, even with growing opposition and suspicion toward it, he said.

"I think we're caught into this nationwide rhetoric about concerns about the Chinese and what they may be doing, and we've become a symbol of that," Feland said.

City Council meetings have turned ugly in recent

weeks, with people becoming "angry, loud and vile," he said.

The issue has drawn people to the meetings and police officers now are in attendance because of threats to city officials, he said.

The governor's letter was sent in support of a formal request made last week by North Dakota U.S. Sens. John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer, and Sen. Marco Rubio, of Florida, all Republicans, for a federal review of the land purchase.

The Grand Forks City Council in February gave initial approval to the Chinese agribusiness for its proposed corn-milling

facility that officials said could be the largest private sector investment in the community's history.

Fufeng makes products for the animal nutrition, food and beverage, pharmaceutical, health and wellness, oil and gas, and other industries. It's a leading producer of xanthan gum. The Grand Forks site would be its first U.S.-based manufacturing facility.

Burgum at the time endorsed the project and hailed it as a "huge opportunity for producers and workers in the Grand Forks area and our entire state." He did not raise security concerns then. **MDT/AP**



# Philippines scraps Russian chopper deal

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

**T**HE Philippine government has scrapped a deal to purchase 16 Russian military transport helicopters due to fears of possible U.S. sanctions, Philippine officials said.

Former Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Tuesday night he canceled the 12.7-billion-peso (\$227 million) deal to acquire the Mi-17 helicopters in a decision last month that was approved by then-President Rodrigo Duterte before their terms in office ended on June 30.

"We could face sanctions," Lorenzana told The Associated Press, describing ways Washington could express its displeasure if the Philippines proceeded with the deal due to America's worsening conflict with Russia.

American security officials were aware of Manila's decision and could offer similar heavy-lift helicopters for Philippine military use, he said.

After serving as defense chief under Duterte, Lorenzana has been appointed by new President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to head a government agency in charge of transforming former military bases into business hubs.

Philippine Ambassador to Washington Jose Manuel Romualdez told The AP that the deal was canceled because Manila could face possible sanctions under a U.S. federal law called the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act if the helicopter deal went through.



Former Philippine Secretary of National Defense Delfin Lorenzana

A Philippine military official said the helicopter deal would undergo a "termination process" after the decision to cancel it was made since a contract has already been signed. The Russians can appeal but there is little room for the Philippine government to reconsider, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to publicly discuss the issue.

Under the helicopter purchase agreement, which was signed in November, the first batch of

the multi-purpose helicopters would have been scheduled for delivery by Russia's Sovtechnoexport in about two years.

Asked in March if Russia's invasion of Ukraine would affect the purchase, Lorenzana told reporters: "We do not see any likelihood of it being scrapped as of this moment" and added that "only time can tell."

Lorenzana at the time said an initial payment had been made by the Philippines in January. It was not immediately clear what would happen to the payment

after the Philippines' decision to back out of the deal.

The Russian-made helicopters could have been used for combat, search and rescue operations, and medical evacuations in the Southeast Asian archipelago, which is often lashed by typhoons and other natural disasters, Philippine officials said.

In March, the Philippines voted "yes" on a U.N. General Assembly resolution that demanded an immediate halt to Moscow's attack on Ukraine and the

withdrawal of all Russian troops. It condemned the invasion and echoed U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's appeal for respect of humanitarian principles to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine.

Duterte has expressed concern over the global impact of the Russian invasion but has not personally condemned it. When he was in office, he nurtured close ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom he once called his "idol," and Chinese leader Xi Jinping while frequently criticizing U.S. security policies.

The Philippines is a treaty ally of Washington, which has imposed heavy sanctions aimed at pressuring Moscow to pull back from Ukraine.

The deal to acquire the Russian helicopters was among several weapons purchase agreements signed during Duterte's final months in office.

Last February, Lorenzana signed a 32-billion-peso (\$571 million) deal to acquire 32 S-70i Black Hawk helicopters from Poland-based aerospace manufacturer PZL Mielec. It was the largest military aircraft acquisition contract signed under Duterte, Philippine defense officials said.

Due to financial constraints, the Philippines has struggled for years to modernize its military, one of the most underfunded in Asia, to deal with decades-long Muslim and communist insurgencies and to defend its territories in the disputed South China Sea. **MDT/AP**

# Japan, Indonesia to boost naval security ties as China rises

**T**HE leaders of Japan and Indonesia agreed yesterday to bolster their ties in maritime security and their cooperation on climate change, energy and investment between the Asian archipelago nations.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, at a joint news conference after holding talks with Indonesian President Joko Widodo in Tokyo, said Japan will provide support to "further reinforce Indonesian maritime security capability to ensure peace and safety at sea in the Indo-Pacific region."

Kishida also announced that Tokyo is loaning 43.6 billion yen (\$318 million) to fund Indonesian infrastructure projects and disaster prevention.

Widodo's Japan visit



Indonesian President Joko Widodo (left) and Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida meet in Tokyo yesterday

follows his trip to China, where he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and formally invited him to the Group of 20 summit in Bali in the fall. The two leaders on Tuesday also discussed

issues ranging from trade to maritime cooperation.

While Indonesia and China enjoy generally positive ties, Jakarta has expressed concern about Chinese encroachment on its exclusive

economic zone in the South China Sea, which China claims virtually in its entirety.

Widodo's comments in Tokyo focused on investment, energy and the G-20 summit. Widodo welcomed

new Japanese investments and asked for Japan's support in new technology involving clean energy, infrastructure, medicine, agriculture and natural resources.

"In particular, I invite Japan to support the acceleration of Indonesia's net zero emission target through advocating innovative technologies such as hydrogen and ammonia technology," he said.

Japan is promoting mixing hydrogen and ammonia at coal-fired power plants as a way to lower emissions.

Also, Kishida said Japan is researching whether it can provide Japanese patrol vessels for Indonesia to build its maritime capabilities.

Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force is participating

for the first time in the Garuda Shield multilateral training exercise hosted by Indonesia next month, Kishida said. The U.S. is also joining the exercise.

While Japan promotes a "free and open" Indo-Pacific vision of security and trade with the United States and other democracies and friendly nations in the region that share concern about China's increasing assertiveness, the two leaders did not mention the country by name.

Widodo said Indonesia, as the chair of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations next year and Japan as the chair of the Group of 7 summit, will continue to cooperate for the peace and prosperity in the region and the world. **MDT/AP**





Residents line up to be tested for COVID-19 in Wuhan

COVID-19

# New studies bolster theory coronavirus emerged from the wild

LAURA UNGAR,  
SCIENCE WRITER

**T**WO new studies provide more evidence that the coronavirus pandemic originated in a Wuhan, China market where live animals were sold – further bolstering the theory that the virus emerged in the wild rather than escaping from a Chinese lab.

The research, published online yesterday [Macau time] by the journal *Science*, shows that the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market was likely the early epicenter of the scourge that has now killed nearly 6.4 million people around the world. Scientists conclude that the virus that causes COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, likely spilled from animals into people two separate times.

“All this evidence tells us the same thing: It points right to this particular market in the middle of Wuhan,” said Kristian Andersen a professor in the Department of Immunology and Microbiology at

Scripps Research and coauthor of one of the studies. “I was quite convinced of the lab leak myself until we dove into this very carefully and looked at it much closer.”

In one study, which incorporated data collected by Chinese scientists, University of Arizona evolutionary biologist Michael Worobey and his colleagues used mapping tools to estimate the locations of more than 150 of the earliest reported COVID-19 cases from December 2019. They also mapped cases from January and February 2020 using data from a social media app that had created a channel for people with COVID-19 to get help.

They asked, “Of all the locations that the early cases could have lived, where did they live? And it turned out when we were able to look at this, there was this extraordinary pattern where the highest density of cases was both

extremely near to and very centered on this market,” Worobey said at a press briefing. “Crucially, this applies both to all cases in December and also to cases with no known link to the market ... And this is an indication that the virus started spreading in people who worked at the market but then started to spread into the local community.”

**Since sampling an animal that was at the market is impossible, ‘this is maybe as close to a smoking gun as you could get’**

Andersen said they found case clusters inside the market, too, “and that clustering is very, very specifically in the parts of the market” where they now know people were selling wildlife, such as raccoon dogs, that are susceptible to infection with the

coronavirus.

In the other study, scientists analyzed the genomic diversity of the virus inside and outside of China starting with the earliest sample genomes in December 2019 and extending through mid-February 2020. They found that two lineages – A and B – marked the pandemic’s beginning in Wuhan.

Study coauthor Joel Wertheim, a viral evolution expert at the University of California, San Diego, pointed out that lineage A is more genetically similar to bat coronaviruses, but lineage B appears to have begun spreading earlier in humans, particularly at the market.

“Now I realize it sounds like I just said that a once-in-a-generation event happened twice in short succession,” Wertheim said. But certain conditions were in place — such as people and animals in close proximity and a virus that can spread from animals to people and from person to person. So “barriers to spillover have been lowered such that multiple introductions, we believe, should actually be expected,” he said.

Many scientists believe the virus jumped from bats to humans, either directly or through another animal. But in June, the World Health Organization recommended a deeper probe into whether a lab accident may be to blame. Critics had said the WHO was too quick to dismiss the lab leak theory.

“Have we disproven the lab leak theory? No, we have not,” Andersen said. “But I think what’s really important here is there are possible scenarios and there are plausible scenarios and it’s really important to understand that possible does not mean equally likely.”

The pandemic’s origins remain controversial. Some scientists believe a lab leak is more likely and others remain

open to both possibilities. But Matthew Aliota, a researcher in the college of veterinary medicine at the University of Minnesota, said in his mind the pair of studies “kind of puts to rest, hopefully, the lab leak hypothesis.”

“Both of these two studies really provide compelling evidence for the natural origin hypothesis,” said Aliota, who wasn’t involved in either study. Since sampling an animal that was at the market is impossible, “this is maybe as close to a smoking gun as you could get.” **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1965 US ORDERS 50,000 TROOPS TO VIETNAM



President Johnson has committed a further 50,000 US troops to the conflict in Vietnam.

Monthly draft calls will increase from 17,000 to 35,000 – the highest level since the Korean War, when between 50,000 and 80,000 men were called up each month.

It will take the US force in Vietnam up to 125,000 but officials say at this stage demands should be met by conscription, without calling upon the reserves.

Speaking in a televised address from the White House President Johnson said: “We do not want an expanding struggle with consequences no one can foresee.”

“Nor will we bluster, bully or flaunt our power. But we will not surrender, nor will we retreat,” he continued.

The President gave the news conference after a week of intensive talks with senior military and security advisers in Washington.

He explained the decisions were in response to requests made by General Westmoreland, the US Commander in the South Vietnamese capital, Saigon.

Mrs Johnson and her daughter looked close to tears as Mr Johnson admitted: “I do not find it easy to send the flower of our youth, our finest young men, into battle.”

The US leader also made clear his desire for peace and recalled the – unsuccessful – efforts of 40 countries to bring an end to the fighting on 15 occasions.

He called upon the United Nations to redouble its efforts to restore peace to Vietnam and detailed a personal letter to that effect being personally delivered to the UN Secretary-General, U Thant, in New York by the new US Ambassador to the UN, Arthur Goldberg.

The Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, and the Secretary of Defence, Robert S McNamara, are to persuade Congress of the need to finance the US’ new military commitments, in the light of a reduced defence budget this year.

President Johnson explained: “We intend to convince the communists that we cannot be defeated by force of arms or by superior power.”

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

By the end of the year 180,000 US troops had been sent to Vietnam.

In 1966 the figure doubled.

80,000 Americans had been killed or wounded in the Vietnam War by summer 1967.

Pressure to withdraw mounted, not least because money for domestic reforms was diverted to the military.

There was Rioting in US cities and demonstrations on university campuses in the summer of 1967.

President Johnson and the Democratic Party were already losing votes. In the 1966 congressional elections the Republicans gained 47 seats in the House of Representatives and three in the Senate.

In March 1968 President Johnson announced a pause in the US bombings of Vietnam and said he would not be standing for re-election later that year.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS



### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Short trips will be educational. Go over their important documents and take the time to suggest alternatives. Help an older member with a problem that faces them.



### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Risky ventures may turn in your favor. You may overspend if you travel today; however, the trip will be one to remember. Get back to the comforts of cottage or home.



### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You may be emotionally unstable if you let someone you care about get away with verbal abuse. Much knowledge can be obtained through the experiences you have. Visitors may drop by unexpectedly.



### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You will accomplish the most through orderly activities. You might find added popularity with those around you today. A lack of support and negativity have been the main problems.



### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Difficulties with females you live with could cause emotional stress. You need time to put your house in order and sort out what you are going to do about your personal direction.



### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

If you've been under stress and worrying about older members of the family, it's time to come to terms with the situation. Some of your new friends may not be that trustworthy.



### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You may be overreacting to a situation at hand. You will enjoy travel and getting together with peers. Be sure to look into travel opportunities that will provide you with mental stimulation.



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Romance appears. Financial affairs do not look too favorable today. Get them to pitch in, if you need help. You can have a working relationship with children if you exercise patience and understanding.



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Try not to jump to conclusions. Don't let other people meddle in your private affairs. Try not to skirt issues if you think you'll hurt someone's feelings.



### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Relationships may be hard to handle. Your need to be in a leadership position will help you surpass any rivals you might encounter. Get back to the comforts of cottage or home.



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Hang out with friends or family today. The experience will be good. Be careful while traveling. Entertainment could cost you more than you expect.

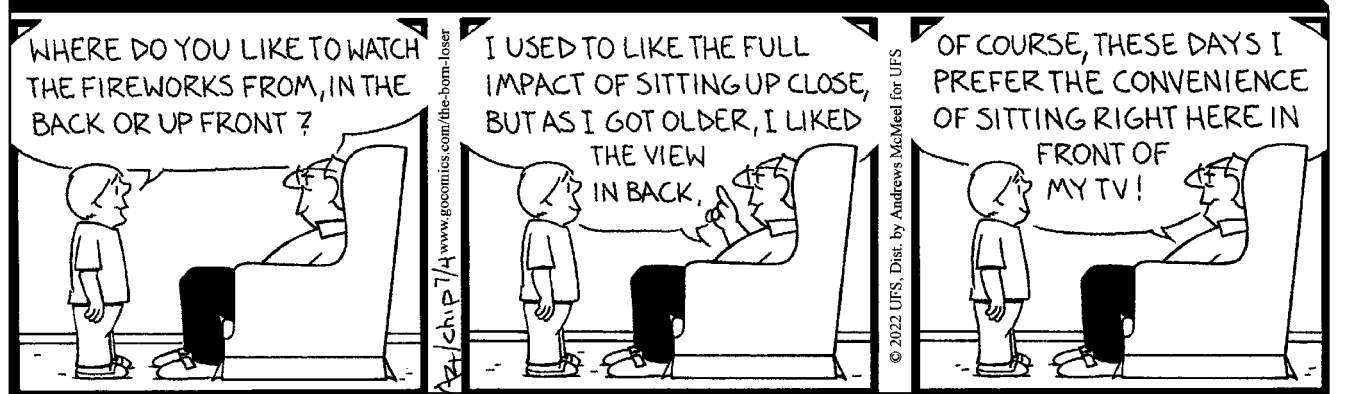


### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Your high energy will enable you to enlist the help of those in a position to back you. Use your added discipline to get what you want. You can change your living arrangements.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

### EASY

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

### EASY+

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

### MEDIUM

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

### HARD

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

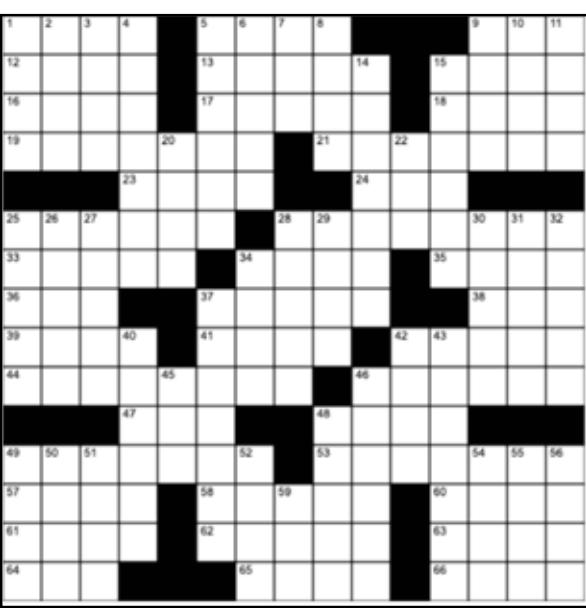
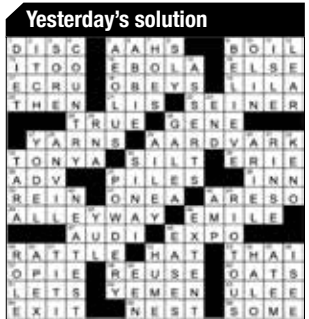
## WEATHER

|              | MIN | MAX | CONDITION    |
|--------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| <b>CHINA</b> |     |     |              |
| Beijing      | 21  | 29  | rain         |
| Changchun    | 22  | 30  | cloudy       |
| Chengdu      | 22  | 34  | cloudy       |
| Chongqing    | 25  | 33  | cloudy       |
| Fuzhou       | 28  | 37  | cloudy       |
| Guangzhou    | 27  | 37  | fine         |
| Guiyang      | 20  | 28  | cloudy       |
| Haikou       | 26  | 34  | cloudy       |
| Hangzhou     | 26  | 38  | fine         |
| Harbin       | 22  | 31  | cloudy       |
| Hefei        | 26  | 37  | rain         |
| Nanjing      | 27  | 36  | cloudy       |
| Shanghai     | 29  | 36  | overcast     |
| Taipei       | 26  | 31  | cloudy       |
| Wuhan        | 27  | 33  | fine         |
| Hong Kong    | 27  | 33  | overcast     |
| <b>WORLD</b> |     |     |              |
| Moscow       | 16  | 27  | thunderstorm |
| Frankfurt    | 17  | 28  | overcast     |
| Paris        | 16  | 27  | cloudy       |
| London       | 13  | 23  | cloudy       |
| New York     | 24  | 33  | showers      |

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Wise men; 5- Garden pest; 9- Conscripting org.; 12- Lawyer Dershowitz; 13- Tropical plant used in cosmetics; 15- Busy; 16- Takes home; 17- Like a roc; 18- Second letter of the Greek alphabet; 19- Polish remover; 21- Man who has lost his wife; 23- Commedia dell'arte; 24- Bygone bird; 25- Cereal plant; 28- Remove air from; 33- Total; 34- Word that can precede hygiene, tradition and agreement; 35- Conked out; 36- Orchestra's place; 37- Lulus; 38- AMA members; 39- Kitchen addition; 41- Pinto or lima; 42- Without \_\_\_ in the world; 44- Reverie; 46- Core; 47- Proverb ending?; 48- Female horse; 49- Vanity; 53- Irregularity; 57- Frequently; 58- Graceful birds; 60- Caesar's wings; 61- Actress Harper; 62- Eucalyptus eater; 63- See yal; 64- Piggy; 65- Puts into words; 66- Large jug or pitcher;

DOWN 1- "Give that \_\_\_ cigar!"; 2- A Baldwin brother; 3- Movable barrier; 4- Place in position; 5- Crudely built hut; 6- Embankment; 7- Verse starter?; 8- Chew on; 9- Bouillabaisse, e.g.; 10- Construction locale; 11- The closest one to us is the sun; 14- Creatures; 15- On deck, perhaps; 20- Hurler Hersher; 22- Female deer; 25- Two-footer; 26- Writer Loos; 27- In bad shape; 28- Night vision?; 29- Acquire through work; 30- Actor Quinn; 31- Haute; 32- Ford flop; 34- Fit for service; 37- Tapering, four-sided pillar; 40- Decrees; 42- Saab model; 43- Incinerate; 45- Dawn Chong; 46- Topeka's state; 48- Virile; 49- Suffragist Carrie; 50- Ersatz butter; 51- Centrepiece of the human face; 52- Terrible time?; 54- There oughta be \_\_\_; 55- Overdue; 56- 365 days; 59- Penlight battery;



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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- HELLENE G. | 3 BEDS HKD 12,500
- NAM LONG | 2 BEDS HKD 11,500
- COLOANE V. | 1 BED HKD 9,300
- TAIPA STUDIO | 1 BED HKD 6,800
- COLOANE V. | 2 BEDS HKD 10,500

## FOR SALE

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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
- NOVA PARK | 2 BEDS HKD 10,800,000

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# KOREAN FIRM'S USD22B INVESTMENT WILL MEAN NEW US JOBS, WHITE HOUSE SAYS

**SOUTH** Korea's SK Group yesterday [Macau time] announced plans to invest \$22 billion in the United States on industries including semiconductors, green energy and bioscience, which the White House said will create tens of thousands of domestic jobs while helping ease global supply chain snarls that have persisted during the coronavirus pandemic.

President Joe Biden, who continues to isolate in the White House residence after testing positive for COVID-19 last week, met virtually with SK Group Chairman Chey Tae-won and called it a "historic and pathbreaking announcement."

It is "proof that we're meeting the emergency in the climate crisis with urgency and opportunity and innovation to save the planet and create good-paying jobs," Biden said.

SK Group's investments will include \$15 billion in the semiconductor industry through research and development programs, as well as materials and a testing and packaging facility, which will help address supply chain problems, the conglomerate said in a statement.



U.S. President Joe Biden (on screen at left) listens as SK Group Chairman Chey Tae-won speaks from the White House in Washington, this week

Another \$5 billion will go to green energy businesses, including electric vehicle charging stations, green hydrogen production and battery materials and recycling, SK Group said. The final batch, which the company described as worth "several billions of dollars," would go toward biotechnologies developing new drugs designed to bolster competitiveness in the U.S. pharmaceutical industry.

"In the past, these kinds of technology investments went to China," Biden said. "Today, and in my administration,

these types of technology investments are coming to the United States."

SK Group had already previously said it would invest \$7 billion for new facilities that produce batteries for electric vehicles in Tennessee and Kentucky, as part of a joint venture with Ford Motor Co.

Last year, there was \$333.6 billion dollars in foreign investment in the U.S., the highest on record since 2016 and a 73% increase from 2020, the White House said in a statement.

The announced investment

is part of the Biden administration's efforts to reduce the impact of supply chain bottlenecks around the globe, which the administration says are helping fuel record-high inflation. The White House is also championing a proposal advancing through Congress designed to boost the computer chips industry and high-tech research in the United States.

During a virtual meeting with industry and union leaders on Monday, Biden called semiconductors "the building blocks for the modern economy." **MDT/AP**

consecutive quarter of lower shipments after two years of growth.

Growth of Microsoft's cloud computing business made up for some of its shortfalls elsewhere. Microsoft's cloud-based segment sold \$20.9 billion for the quarter, up 20% from last year.

Microsoft's work-related software segment, which includes its Office suite of products, grew 13% to \$16.6 billion for the quarter. That included a 26% increase in revenue from its career-focused social network LinkedIn, despite lower spending on ads on the service.

Microsoft is currently aiming to close on a \$68.7 billion purchase of video game company Activision Blizzard, in what could be the largest-ever tech industry acquisition. The deal, announced in January, awaits approval from anti-trust authorities in the U.S. and the United Kingdom. **MDT/AP**

## F&B

# MCDONALD'S POSTS LOWER Q2 REVENUE, CHARGES WEIGH DOWN PROFIT

**MCDONALD'S** revenue fell short of expectations in the second quarter as coronavirus restrictions shuttered stores in China and higher prices took a toll on U.S. demand.

The Chicago burger giant said its revenue fell 3% to \$5.72 billion in the April-June period. That was short of Wall Street's forecast of \$5.8 billion, according to analysts polled by FactSet.

Same-store sales, or sales at stores open at least a year, were up nearly 10% worldwide. That was higher than the 6.8% that analysts had expected.

But there were double-digit declines for comparable stores in China, where restaurants were closed temporarily throughout the country for most of the quarter.

U.S. same-store sales rose 3.7%. McDonald's said most of that increase was due to higher prices, with store traffic remaining flat.

Chief Financial Officer Kevin Ozan said McDonald's is seeing some trade-down to cheaper items and lower sales of combo meals in the U.S., particularly among lower-income consumers. The number of customers per sale has also declined from the height of the pandemic, when locked-down families would often pick up large orders at the drive-thru.

Ozan said year-over-year U.S. price increases in the 8% to 9% range will likely continue through the remainder of the year as McDonald's compensates for its higher costs. McDonald's expects food and paper costs to be up 12% to 14% for the full year, while its labor costs are up 10%.

CEO Chris Kempczinski said McDonald's has benefited from another form of trading down, with higher-income Americans choosing on some days to hit a McDonald's rather than more expensive sit-down restaurants.

"Even though we're pushing through pricing, the consumer is tolerating it well," Kempczinski said.

McDonald's profit fell 46% to \$1.19 billion. That included \$1.2 billion in charges related to the sale of its 850 stores in Russia. **MDT/AP**

## TECH

# Microsoft blames economic woes for missing profit targets

**MICROSOFT** reported fiscal fourth-quarter profit of \$16.7 billion, or \$2.23 per share, falling short of analyst expectations for \$2.29 per share — a rare disappointment from the tech giant that has consistently beat Wall Street expectations in recent years.

It posted revenue of \$51.9 billion in the April-June period, up 12% from last year. Analysts had been looking for revenue of \$52.94 billion, according to FactSet.

The company blamed a number of "evolving macroeconomic conditions and other unforeseen items" for affecting its financial performance, including pandemic-related production shutdowns in China, a

deteriorating personal computer market, lowered spending on advertisements and the war in Ukraine, which led Microsoft to scale down its operations in Russia.

The company had already lowered its profit and sales estimates in early June based on what it described as "unfavorable" changes in the foreign exchange rate as the U.S. dollar surged.

A tough season for computer sales — blamed on supply chain disruptions and geopolitical instability — put pressure on Microsoft's personal computing business, which relies on licensing revenue from PC manufacturers who install its Windows operating system on their products.

Sales from those licenses dropped 2% from the same time last year, Microsoft reported Tuesday. That, along with a 6% drop in sales of Microsoft's Xbox gaming-related content, dragged down the company's broader personal computing business segment, which grew just 2% to \$14.4 billion for the quarter.

The market research firm Gartner recently said global PC shipments declined 12.6% in the second calendar quarter of 2022 from the same time last year, the sharpest decline in nine years. Another report by International Data Corp. estimates PC shipments declined 15.3% during that April-June period, the second





FOOTBALL

# England sweeps past Sweden 4-0, reaches Women Euro 2022 final

**E**NGLAND is heading back to Wembley Stadium for a European Championship final.

This time it's the women's team going for the title.

Sealed with an impudent back-heeled goal by Alessia Russo, England swept past Sweden with a 4-0 win yesterday [Macau time] in the first Euro 2022 semifinal match.

Germany or France awaits in Sunday's final — they play on Wednesday — and the winner will be taking on a host team that has captured the imagination of a nation. Just like England's men's team did last summer at Euro 2020, when it got to the final at Wembley but lost in a penalty shootout to Italy.

"Football's Coming Home" — English soccer's anthem — was sung by the excitable home fans in the crowd of 28,624 at Bramall Lane in Sheffield in the final minutes of what proved to be a one-sided match as England reached



the final of a European Championship for the third time, after 1984 and 2009. England lost both times and has never won a major international tournament.

The Swedes, ranked No. 2 in

the world behind the United States, were supposed to represent England's toughest test of the tournament but they had no answer to the attacking power of Sarina Wiegman's team.

Or its brilliant finishing.

"This result will go all over Europe and the world," Wiegman said. "It was such a performance that, tomorrow, everyone will talk about us."

Beth Mead scored her tournament-high sixth goal to set England on its way, controlling Lucy Bronze's cross from the right and shooting home first time on the turn from 10 yards (meters) in the 34th minute.

Mead is only the second player to score six goals at a single Women's Euros, after Germany's Inka Grings in 2009.

Bronze, England's right back, scored herself in the 48th with a far-post header from a left-wing corner, the ball going through two pairs of legs and past late-diving goalkeeper Hedvig Lindahl.

The third goal was the best of all and summed up the confidence coursing through this England team.

Russo — just on as a substitute — had a close-range shot saved

but gathered the rebound and, facing away from goal, produced a cheeky backheel that went through the legs of the 39-year-old Lindahl.

Fran Kirby added the fourth through a chip from the edge of the area that Lindahl got both hands to but couldn't stop the ball rolling into the net.

"I don't think we started the game well but still we found a way," said Wiegman, who was coach of the Netherlands team that won the Euros in 2017.

The match could have been different had Sweden taken a couple of early chances, the first falling to Sofia Jakobsson after barely 20 seconds but Mary Earps made a save with her left foot.

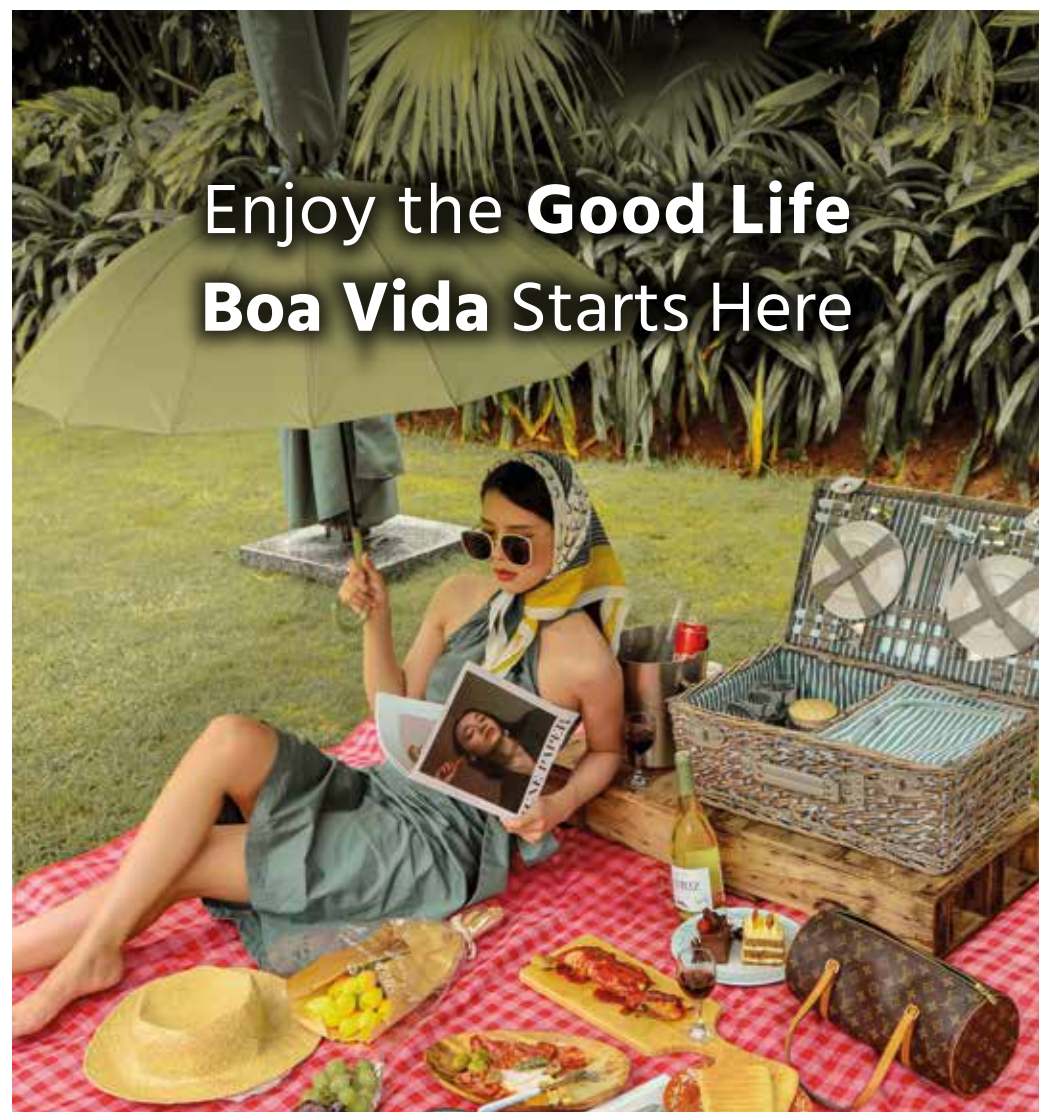
Then, in the 11th minute, Stina Blackstenius headed against the crossbar from only a few yards out at a corner.

England survived, worked out how to really hurt Sweden — primarily down the flanks — and didn't look back.

The Swedes, the European champions in 1984, were looking to reach their first final since 2001 and fifth in total.

Instead, they are going home and it is England heading to the final, thrilling a nation that has fallen for its entertaining women's team that has scored 20 goals this tournament — nine more than any other country. **MDT/AP**

AD



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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**TAIWAN QUESTION  
 BEING RECKLESSLY  
 HIJACKED BY  
 WASHINGTON  
 POLITICIANS**

This year is the 30th anniversary of the 1992 Consensus in which both sides of the Taiwan Straits agreed that there is only one China.

A gathering in Beijing on Tuesday to mark the occasion conveyed an unequivocal message that if US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi goes ahead with her proposed visit to Taiwan next month, it will have far-reaching consequences for Sino-US relations and the cross-Straits situation. Speculation is running high that Pelosi does intend to do so, despite US President Joe Biden's expressed opposition, the Pentagon's caution that it would not be a good idea, and Beijing's stern warnings.

Beijing's warnings have reportedly been significantly stronger than those it has made in the past when it has objected to US actions or policy relating to Taiwan. That is because if she proceeds with her proposed trip, it would constitute not only a grave provocation but also a de facto rejection by the US top legislature of the principle of one China that the US is committed to upholding.

Although she has not confirmed her visit, Pelosi told reporters last week that it was important to show support for Taiwan. And even though she denied that Congress was pushing for the island's independence, what makes the situation truly dangerous is that Pelosi, who is not well-disposed toward China herself, is being goaded into making the trip by the China hawks in both parties.

"Nancy, I'll go with you," former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo, who is reportedly considering a run at the White House in the next election, tweeted on Sunday: "See you there!"

A spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry said there would be a "resolute response" if Pelosi does visit the island, with speculation also rife about what this might entail. Some of the more hawkish US politicians have been unable to hide their glee that it might lead to a military clash.

Even if the wishful scenario of these arm-chair warriors does not materialize this time, a visit by Pelosi would be a signal that US politicians hostile to China are trying to seize the initiative to change the status quo across the Straits, and use the island as a launch pad for confrontation with China.

The deep concerns Pelosi's proposed visit has aroused within Taiwan reflect the helplessness of those on the island who recognize that the secessionists who have bet on the US' protection of the island have made it an expendable piece in Washington's game plan to contain China.

The 1992 Consensus laid the foundation for close economic and cultural exchanges across the Straits that brought tangible benefits to both sides and beyond. It was the refusal of the island's current authorities to uphold it that has triggered the cross-Straits tensions which they continue to foment with the help of their supporters in Washington.

The 30th anniversary of the consensus therefore has highlighted how the secessionists on the island are betraying the motherland by discarding the consensus and are trying to surrender the fate of the island to the US.

A giant Mega Millions lottery jackpot ballooned to \$1.02 billion after no one matched all six numbers yesterday [Macau time] and won the top prize.

The new estimated jackpot will be the nation's fourth-largest lottery prize.

The jackpot has grown so large because no one has matched the game's six selected numbers since April 15. That's 29 consecutive drawings without a big winner.

Tuesday's numbers were: 07-29-60-63-66, Mega Ball: 15.

The \$1.02 billion prize is for winners who choose the annuity option, paid annually over 30 years. Most winners opt for the cash option, which for the next drawing Friday night is an estimated \$602.5 million.

The odds of winning the jackpot are 1 in 302.5 million.

Mega Millions is played in 45 states as well as Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The game is coordinated by state lotteries.



AP PHOTO

**CROATIA OPENS ADRIATIC  
 COAST BRIDGE, LINKING  
 DIVIDED REGION**

**DARKO BANDIC, ZAGREB**

**C**ROATIA yesterday [Macau time] opened a long-awaited bridge connecting two parts of the country's Adriatic Sea coastline while bypassing a small sliver of Bosnia's territory.

Top officials and guests gathered in the evening for a formal opening ceremony that included a flyover by military jets, speeches, performances and fireworks.

Earlier, many Croats braved summer heat to be among the first to cross the Peljesac bridge on foot as it opened for pedestrians ahead of the official inauguration.

Co-funded by the European Union and built by a Chinese company, the elegant, cable-stayed bridge with six pylons is a rare venture of its kind amid concerns in Europe over China's bid to boost its economic influence through investment in infrastructure.

In a video message aired at the opening ceremony, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang said the bridge "illustrates friendly relations" between his country and Croatia, but also between China and the EU.

"China and the EU present important political for-

ces and leading global economic powers," said Li.

The 2.4-kilometer bridge spans the Adriatic Sea to link Croatia's mainland to the Peljesac peninsula in the south, allowing easier access to the country's most important tourism destination — the medieval walled city of Dubrovnik.

**The 2.4-km bridge spans the Adriatic Sea to link Croatia's mainland to the Peljesac peninsula in the south, allowing easier access to the medieval walled city of Dubrovnik**

Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic described the day as historic for the country, which joined the EU in 2013 after splitting from the former Yugoslavia and going through a war in the 1990s.

"I am overwhelmed by the feelings of pride, joy and gratitude," said Plenkovic.

The Yugoslav federation had no internal borders between its six republics, including Croatia and Bosnia. But when it broke up in the early 1990s, the two parts of Croatia's Adriatic Sea coastline were split by a narrow strip of Bosnia.

Both residents and tourists had to pass border checks, which slowed down traffic and left the inhabitants of the southern area feeling isolated from the rest of the country.

That area includes Dubrovnik, a stunning medieval town that has been on UNESCO's protected heritage list and is Croatia's biggest tourist attraction.

The bridge finally became a reality in 2017 when the EU allocated 357 million euros (\$365m), which covered much of the 526 million-euro (\$533) cost. The China Road and Bridge Corporation in 2018 won an international tender to construct the bridge.

The project, however, had faced criticism from Bosnia, whose officials complained of unresolved border issues and said the bridge would hamper access to its part of the coastline.

Known for its stunning nature and hundreds of Adriatic Sea islands, Croatia is a major tourism destination, attracting millions from Europe and all over the world every summer. Tourism also is key for Croatia's economy, which remains among the weakest in the EU. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

**Philippines** A strong earthquake set off landslides and damaged buildings in the northern Philippines yesterday, killing at least five people and injuring dozens. In the capital, hospital patients were evacuated and terrified people rushed outdoors. The 7-magnitude quake was centered in a mountainous area of Abra province, said Renato Solidum, the head of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, who described the midmorning shaking as a major earthquake.

**Ukrainian** artillery hit a strategic bridge essential for Moscow to supply its forces occupying Ukraine's southern region, using a U.S.-supplied precision rocket system to deliver a morale-lifting punch. The Ukrainian military struck the Antonivskiy Bridge across the Dnieper River in southern Ukraine, the deputy head of the Moscow-appointed administration for the Kherson region, Kirill Stremousov, said. He said yesterday the bridge was still standing but its deck was pierced with holes, preventing vehicles from crossing.

**USA** The intensifying rivalry between former President Donald Trump and his once fiercely loyal vice president, Mike Pence, was put on stark display Tuesday as the two gave dueling speeches in Washington on the future of the Republican Party. Trump, in his first return to Washington since Democrat Joe Biden ousted him from the White House, repeated the false election fraud claims that sparked the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection, while Pence, in a separate address, implored the party to move on from Trump's defeat.



AP PHOTO

**Canada** It was a stunning image: Pope Francis briefly wearing a full Indigenous headdress, its rows of soft white feathers fastened in place by a colorful, beaded headband after he apologized for the Catholic Church's role in Canada's "disastrous" residential school system for Indigenous children. Chief Wilton Littlechild, a residential school survivor himself, gave Francis the headdress, placing it on his head amid cheering by an audience in Maskwacis, Alberta, that included many school survivors.