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# Times

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**MALAYSIA'S TOP COURT UPHOLDS EX-PM NAJIB'S GRAFT CONVICTION**

▲ P7



AP PHOTO



**Philippines** A tropical storm lashed the northern Philippines with strong wind and rain, injuring at least two people and prompting the president to close schools and government offices in the capital and outlying provinces. Tropical Storm Ma-on slammed into Maconacon town in Isabela province yesterday morning with sustained winds of 110 kilometers and gusts of up to 150 kph and will barrel northwestward through northern provinces before blowing away from the country overnight, forecasters said.

AP PHOTO



**Lebanon** Another significant section of the devastated Beirut Port silos collapsed yesterday in a cloud of dust. No injuries were reported — the area had been long evacuated — but the collapse was another painful reminder of the horrific August 2020 explosion. The collapse left the silos' southern part standing next to a pile of charred ruins.

AP PHOTO



**USA** Most adults think gun violence is increasing nationwide and want to see gun laws made stricter, according to a new poll that finds broad public support for a variety of gun restrictions, including many that are supported by majorities of Republicans and gun owners. The AP-NORC poll also shows majorities of U.S. adults view both reducing gun violence and protecting gun ownership as important issues.

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# HEATED BILLS

**Unbearable hikes in households' electricity bills frustrate residents amid financial turmoil; CEM blames estimates due to lack of direct readings during lockdown** ▲ P3



**SECURITY STATS**  
**LESS GAMING MEANS LESS CRIME IN FIRST HALF**



▲ P3

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**BERNSTEIN: DAILY GGR GROWING SLIGHTLY**

The casino sector's average daily gross gaming revenue (GGR) grew by 9% to MOP86 million from August 15 to 21, compared with the previous week. Channel checks from brokerage Stanford C. Bernstein shows that revenues from the start of the month until August 21 stood at approximately MOP1.4 billion – a figure that is 53% lower year-on-year. "The recovery is still slow as it is constrained by various travel restrictions in China, and players are remaining cautious about travel (fearing the government will suddenly impose a lockdown order like in Sanya of Hainan province)," the note issued by analysts Vitaly Umansky, Louis Li and Shirley Yang says.

**TRANSPORT PUBLIC CONSULTATION ENDS WITH 1,200 OPINIONS**

The public consultation on the "Transportation Master Plan (2021-2030)" officially ended Monday, receiving more than 1,200 opinions, of which more than 890 opinions were presented by filling in the online form, representing about 70%. The remaining opinions were collected by participating in the consultation sessions, and received by e-mail, postal mail or fax, as well as presented in person with the written opinions. The DSAT held six specific consultation sessions aimed at the public. Participants focused on issues relating to, among other issues, the connection of the pedestrian system, vehicle control indicators, electric vehicle charging equipment, bus service and barrier-free travel conditions, as well as the suggestion of carrying out the study on the west line of the LRT.

**NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHAIRMAN SWORN IN**

Diana Costa, new chairman of the Board of Directors of the Pension Fund (FP), took office yesterday. During the ceremony, Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong, encouraged the new president and colleagues to "continue to strive, in order to effectively carry out the various works." Costa, graduate of Law from the Faculty of Law of the University of Lisbon, Portugal, joined the public service in 1991. In 2000, she took on the position of deputy director of Justice Affairs Services, and since 2016, she has held the position of vice-president of the Board of Directors of FP.

**COVID-19**

**MANDATES ON FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC 'VIOLATE THE LAW'**

LYNZY VALLES

**S**EVERAL residents who were supposed to exit the quarantine hotel on August 17 have been mandated to stay as their quarantine is extended. This news was not well received by some as local authorities allegedly failed to clearly explain why they were not permitted to leave.

Speaking to the Times, a family that recently came back from Portugal on August 11 was admitted at Treasure Hotel for the mandatory seven-day quarantine until August 18.

As it was a family of three, the mother stayed alone in one room, while the father and son stayed in an adjacent room.

On August 17 both adults received a phone call informing them their quarantine was extended by two more days due to "a lot of people testing positive on the floor."

"I asked how many people tested positive, which rooms, who made the decision and if we were going to receive a written notice, but the person on the phone just kept saying 'I don't know,'" said Cristina, who declined to provide her last name.

According to Cristina, the caller suggested they call the Center for Disease Control. However, no one answered.

On August 20, the day they were supposed to leave quarantine, her husband was informed that he, along with his 15-year-old son, would need to stay until August 24 due to "someone in the proximity of their room having tested positive."

At that time the family had al-



ready tested negative nine times.

"When I checked out, I asked the personnel why my family was not leaving that day. Again the first response was 'I don't know.' [...] I was very angry and told them my son is a minor and I was entitled to know why he was not allowed to leave," Cristina explained.

She then reported the incident to a police officer, lamenting that her family, who stayed adjacent to her room, had to stay "against their will" and without an official explanation.

"They kept on saying to write a letter to the director of the Health Bureau," she said.

The Times has sought an opinion from a Macau-based lawyer on the matter.

According to Sérgio de Almeida Correia, the principles of necessity, proportionality and adequacy to the proposed objectives, contained in article 4 of Law 2/2004 were violated.

The legal expert noted that they were faced with the "lack of written orders, duly substan-

tiated, indicating the reasons for the successive extensions of the quarantine and the foreseeable period of subjection to the measure."

"When quarantine is extended without notification to the person concerned, the right of complaint and appeal and the control of arbitrariness cannot be carried out. Administrative guarantees are also violated, without the certainty that the illegal detention will not be extended successively, sine die, as new guests arrive at the hotel and test positive," the lawyer adds.

The family said they have also faced language difficulties as the personnel had a hard time communicating with them in English.

The issue was not resolved even amid the husband needing to see a doctor as he was suffering from claustrophobia and panic attacks.

"My son called me asking me what he should do as his father is not well," said Cristina.

"I asked for a doctor and [the

personnel] told me that they had to evaluate first. He [just] continued asking questions," she explained, adding that a doctor was only called after a threat that the situation may trigger mental health issues.

Set to leave today, the father and son duo had tested negative in all 13 tests. One of these tests was done in hospital on the day of consultation, and they had to wait four to five hours for the results.

"If my husband had a heart attack instead of a panic attack, he would be dead by now."

If the conditions of the hotel are as good as the government says, why are they so afraid? And if other people continue to test positive in other rooms around, does that mean they can never leave?" she questioned.

Further, according to the lawyer, "there is only a faceless order and a continuous crime of kidnapping committed by Macau public entities under the pretext of fighting the pandemic."

**Covid-19 test voluntary for people arriving Zhuhai**

STAFF REPORTER

**Z**HUHAI health authorities announced that, commencing August 23 and for people who enter Zhuhai

from Macau, the nucleic acid test (NAT) at designated places near the border will be voluntary.

According to the statement published

by the authorities in Zhuhai on August 22, starting from 6 a.m. yesterday, all people who enter Zhuhai from Macau may choose whether they do the

self-paid Covid-19 test at designated testing sites near the border.

The requirement of a negative NAT result from within 24 hours remains unchanged.

Zhuhai New Coronavirus Pneumonia Epidemic Prevention and Control Headquarters said the measure depends on the current situation with the pande-

mic, and will be adjusted in future according to the situation.

Earlier this month, the pandemic prevention measure which stipulated that Macau arrivals coming from the land port may only enter and exit through the port once per day, will be tentatively maintained until 12 a.m. September 9.

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# Less gaming means less crime in 1H, but there are exceptions

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE significant drop in gaming activities in Macau is also the cause of the reduction in crimes recorded in the first half of this year (1H), statistics released yesterday by the Office of the Secretary for Security show.

According to the release, the number of crimes related to gaming has registered a significant drop in the first half of this year, even when compared with the same period two years ago.

Among the gaming-related crimes that reduced the most are: kidnapping, which dropped by 82.4%; theft (-68.8%); and murder and bodily harm, both decreasing by 50%.

This decrease contributed to a general drop in violent crime rates in Macau by 35.7% on 1H.

The reduction in these crimes would have been more significant than reported but for the increase in the rates of sexual abuse against children. In the first semester of this year alone, the rates of this crime increased by 70%, or seven cases, more than the previous year's total of 17.

Sexual abuse against children is also responsible for the worsening of violent crimes which, despite the increase rates of child sexual abuse, still registered a decrease of 8.1% due to the drop in kidnapping (-82.4%),



and also general reductions in other crimes like bodily harm (-18%), threats (-12.3%), and rape (-12.5%).

Also related to the crimes usually linked to the gaming industry, there is 15% recorded decrease in the crime of usury.

The pandemic prevention and control measures' effect on the borders have also resulted in an exponential decrease in the number of visitors to Macau which, when combined with other local guidelines calling on people to avoid leaving the home, made the crime of residential robbery almost impossible. Residential robbery had the greatest reduction of 86.7%.

Scams appear to be immune to the measures related to Covid-19 as, in most cases, they

occur via phone or the internet. In fact, during the peak of the pandemic, several reported scams were loosely related to the Covid-19 pandemic. This contributed to scams showing less variation year-on-year, registering only a slight decline of 2.8% and a total number of cases reaching 648 in the first six months.

The trafficking and consumption of drugs also registered reductions of 28.2% and 15.4%, respectively.

Authorities are concerned about cybercrime; the government has been passing more laws and regulations over this category of crimes. Cybercrime has registered a significant drop year-on-year (-82.7%) from 617 cases on the 1H of 2021 to just 107 cases this year.

from the mainland.

A total of 5,971 people were also found to be overstaying their visas. This crime is another that did not reduce noticeably when compared to others, registering a decline of just 10.8%.

## REDUCTION IN TOURISTS NOT ENOUGH TO STOP TAXI OFFENSES

In the first half of 2022, police processed a total of 131 offenses committed by taxi drivers, a figure that represents an increase of six cases compared to the same period last year (+4.8%).

The offenses include two cases of excessive charging, 19 cases of passenger refusal, and 110 cases of other undisclosed infringements.

Concurrently, the police prosecuted a total of six cases of illicit operation of taxi service, which is an offense that decreased by two cases, or 25%, in frequency when compared to the same period last year.

In all the aforementioned cases, police are said to have applied lawful sanctioning measures in close cooperation with the Transport Bureau.

With more control over the borders, there were also fewer opportunities for incidents of illegal immigration, which dropped by over 50%. Still, a total of 80 illegal immigrants were detected, with 70 of those related to people

## SECURITY CHIEF FORECASTS INSTABILITY DUE TO UNEMPLOYMENT

**ANALYZING** the impacts of the recent significant growth of the unemployment rate in Macau, the Office of the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, forecasted that, "if in the future the unemployment rate in Macau continues to increase, various conflicts in society will intensify, which will inevitably bring more factors of

instability to the general security of Macau." Nonetheless, the same officials said that currently and despite the current high rate, "the rising of unemployment has not had a significant negative impact on the security of society, especially on crimes directly related to gambling."

CEM

# Electric price spikes frustrate residents amid current financial turmoil

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HIS month's electricity bills, spiking even amid the government's utility subsidies, have surprised many households. Yesterday, the Times was informed that residents were seeing their electricity bills increase by up to 300%.

These residents expressed their frustrations about the high bills coming amid current financial and employment difficulties. According to one, her current bill amounts to MOP1,400, a 300% increase compared to recent bills; her previous bill was only MOP170.

"My friends and family are also experiencing this



problem. I am hoping it is just a glitch," said the resident.

Another household had a similar experience, while one more was cau-

ght by surprise after their bill came to MOP3,000, which was significantly more than the MOP600 to MOP700 usual bill.

A post shared on social media also shows a bill of MOP4090, up from the usual MOP1,500.

However, according to CEM, the company has suspended on-site meter reading services and issued estimated bills to customers from June 20 to August 1.

"These estimated bills were based on the relevant decree-law (Article 19 of Decree-Law No. 43/91/M that provides that estimates are to be used when the meter cannot be read due

to reasons attributable to the customer or force majeure), and the calculations were made according to the average value of the actual electricity consumption of the customer in the past 12 months," CEM said in a reply to the Times.

"In the past two months, CEM provided bill payment deferral arrangements to cooperate with the pandemic prevention measures, therefore the amount on the electricity bill was the result of two-month consumption," it added.

Other explanations were that the weather was hot and that, during this billing period, citizens mostly stayed home. For these reasons, "the bill value might have increased."

There are still workers who are on leave without pay. It is reported that, for these people, the increase in electricity bills will worsen their situation.

Despite bills being adjusted for incorrect estimates and excess credited to the next month, several residents lament the bad timing of the situation.

"We have barely earned anything this month so seeing this great increase is problematic," a resident told the Times.

CEM has resumed the on-site meter reading services after the lifting of the partial lockdown, and the next bill will be adjusted according to the actual reading.

## COVERAGE OF SMART METERS

CEM said it has extended the coverage of smart meters. The goal is to generally complete the replacement of meters in Macau with smart meters by 2025. "At that time, the technical conditions will be able to avoid estimated bills due to failure to read meters on site."

NON-LOCAL TALENTS

# COMMITTEE CALLS FOR CLEARER DETAILS ON HOW GOV'T CAN ATTRACT TALENT

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Third Standing Committee has discussed a bill concerning a "legal system for attracting talent" and yesterday introduced the first six articles. Of these, the committee paid particular attention to the composition and operation of judging committees tasked with attracting overseas talent.

The government passed the bill August 11. The main contents of the bill is about establishing the classification and definition of three types of talent, being high-end talent plan, excellent talent plan, and senior professional talent plan.

After the meeting, the committee president, Vong Hin Fai, said that the committee agrees with the six articles of the bill introduced by the legal advisory group of Legislative Assembly (AL) including the relevant process for attracting talent using tax incentives.

In the second article - the objectives of the bill - Vong said some in the committee queried how the government would provide education, promotion, and training to the talent attracted to Macau, as these details were not explained. The committee also queried whether this content should be included in the objectives of the bill.

"[We would like to know] how the government can attract, accommodate and introduce talent into Macau, and what these three



concepts mean," Vong said. Vong said further clarification was also needed to clarify whether the key industries mentioned in the bill are related to the big four industries mentioned in the government statement. These key industries need also be defined. The third article names the three types of talents, but is not clear enough about the first two types of talents, and some in the committee is concerned that the overall definitions of the three types of talents were not specific enough. They

also claimed the bill does not clearly explain what standard the government will use to measure and classify people into the three types.

The committee also addressed two terms in the fourth article: first are the powers of the Chief Executive (CE) in the bill, claiming the bill does not list the extension of residence permit power for relevant talents. The extension of the residence permit powers is mentioned in article twenty-two, but not mentioned directly

among the powers of the CE.

Second, concerning the authorization, part of the committee questioned whether the authorization can happen between classes of the government (for example, the CE authorizing the Secretary, the Secretary authorizing the director, and so on).

Some committee members believe the bill is important for the government, and that authorization should only be a power of the CE. Some committee members also considered the judging

committees formed to attract talent, such as composition direction (which was the purpose of establishing the department), operation, and the person managing the department.

For the operation of the department, Vong expressed whether the department will set up different committee groups to deal with different affairs.

Vong said that the committee hopes the government can provide more details about the bill.

For article six, he advised the committee to formulate special institutions for online video meetings.

According to the previous statement of the government, "high-end talent" refers to those who have outstanding talents or technical abilities and have achieved internationally recognized outstanding achievements or who have made significant contributions in a specific field.

"Excellent talent" refers to those who are beneficial to the moderate diversification of the local economy, especially those who can promote the development of key industries, possess professional experience and technical capabilities, and perform outstandingly in their professions or industries.

"Senior professional talent" refers to those who have professional experiences and skills, can support the development of key industries, or make up for the development needs of Macau, but are in short supply.

## SSM amends data on suicides for 1H, reduces to 38

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Health Bureau (SSM) has released statistics on the number of suicides in the first half of this year (1H). These figures amend information released late last month by the medical doctor from the board of directors of the Conde de São Januario Hospital Medical Center who told the media that there was a record of 53 cases in the 1H.

The new release from SSM reduces the figure to 38, noting that in the second quarter (Q2) there were 19 cases reported, nine fewer than in the first quarter (Q1) of the year.

According to SSM, the Q2 figure represents a de-



crease of around 32% when compared to Q1.

SSM also added that, according to an analysis of the data, the increase or decrease in cases of death by suicide in Macau is easily influenced by accidental factors, the main and

possible causes of suicide being chronic or physical illnesses, mental illnesses, gambling issues or financial problems.

With the Covid-19 pandemic lasting over two years and all its related consequences, the SSM says,

"citizens inevitably manifest different levels of psychological problems, such as anxiety, depression and mental stress." SSM recommends citizens maintain a healthy lifestyle, including a balanced diet, physical exercise, enough sleep, no

smoking, reducing alcohol consumption and finding ways to relax.

Concurrently, the SSM asks people to maintain proactive contact and care for those close to them, especially those suffering from chronic diseases and the elderly. "People in emotional distress can also actively seek and resort to professional assistance and advice," SSM said in the same statement.

People in these situations can seek help at the health-care centers of Tap Seac, Fai Chi Kei, Areia Preta, Ilha Verde, Jardins do Oceano, Nossa Senhora do Carmo-Lago, Praia do Manduco, and Seac Pai Van, where outpatient mental health consultations are operating.

Additionally, they can also seek help from non-profit associations that have established community psychological counseling groups and that provide counseling services to citizens free of charge.

According to information from the Judiciary Police yesterday, a 26-year-old male resident of Macau, is the latest case of alleged suicide, committed yesterday. The case is still under investigation by the police to confirm the cause of death.

All those emotionally distressed or who find themselves in a desperate situation should call the "Caritas Life Hope" hotline at 28525222 to obtain emotional counseling services.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## THE VENETIAN MACAO TURNS 15



# SANDS CHINA'S FLAGSHIP TOURISM DESTINATION

## PART 3: RETAIL, DINING, ACCOMMODATION, AND FAMILY-FRIENDLY LEISURE

For 15 years now, **The Venetian Macao** has been reaching ever-higher levels of excellence as a member of the Macau community. In this five-part series, Sands China gives us a closer look at what this leader in integrated resorts has been doing in the areas of **talent development, economic diversification, tourism, local procurement, and corporate social responsibility.**

**A**S **The Venetian Macao** turns 15 and the Macau government accelerates the "Tourism+" concept, Sands China's flagship integrated resort continues to lend its support and contribute to Macau's profile as a world center of tourism and leisure by utilizing its non-gaming facilities – the largest-scale of such facilities in Macau. In addition to expansive MICE space and entertainment venues, The Venetian Macao and its sister resorts are leaders in Macau's retail space, family-friendly leisure options, diverse food and beverage outlets, and accommodation.

Sands China is heeding the call to actively cultivate industries suitable for Macau. In doing so, we

### VENETIAN FUN FACTS

- 386 million visitors
- 10 million visitors in 169 days after opening
- Hotel fully booked the entire first year
- Nearly 12 million room-nights
- Twice the size of The Venetian Resort Las Vegas
- Multitudes of celebrity entertainment events
- Macau's most popular tourist destination after Ruins of St. Paul's
- Featured in superstar PSY's "New Face" music video

have dynamically extended our effort to help attract the ever-expanding middle-class market, extend visitors' length of stay, stimulate consumer spending, and promote the development of family, leisure, and business tourism.

### A SHOPPER'S PARADISE

As Macau's first and still its most well-known integrated resort, The Venetian Macao changed Macau's landscape, literally and figuratively. Macau's retail space totaled approximately 27,800 sqm in 2006. The Venetian Macao quadrupled that number. Today, Macau's retail space measures 460,000 sqm, with Sands China's being the largest.

**Shoppes at Venetian** was unlike anything Macau had seen before. With serenading gondol-

liers rowing on indoor canals and with colorful Venetian streetscapes, the luxurious 1 million sq ft mall brought over 350 stores featuring world-renowned brands. And Streetmosphere entertainers perform for guests as they wander through Shoppes at Venetian much like in the streets of Venice, featuring jugglers, living statues, magicians, musicians and more.

Interconnected with Shoppes at Four Seasons, Shoppes at Parisian and Shoppes at Londoner, the combined offering of **Sands Shoppes** comprises over 700 shops occupying 2.1 million square feet of retail space.

### FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES

The Venetian Macao is home to **Qube**, an innovative activity center offering amazing climbing

structures with slides and nets, and myriads of computer games. This 800+ sqm playground features a 6-meter-high climbing facility with slides, bridges, barriers, and more.

At Cotai Expo, **teamLab Super-Nature Macao** is an immersive interactive experience, featuring cutting-edge art installations in a massive 3D space. The permanent exhibition spans over 5,000 sqm of labyrinth floor space with impressive 8-meter-high ceilings – creating a 'body-immersive' art space where visitors instantly change the nature of the artworks through their direct interaction. The artworks are not pre-recorded images but created by a computer program in real-time based on human interaction. Previous visual states can never reoccur or be replicated, making no two visits the same.

### BUILDING A CITY OF GASTRONOMY

Among the many appealing features of The Venetian Macao is its interconnectivity with its sister resorts – The Plaza Macao, The Parisian Macao, and The Londoner Macao – together creating **Sands Resorts Macao**.

With over 150 dining options at our properties, Sands China offers a variety of dining experiences to visitors. We have been working in tandem with the SAR government's tourism policies and have introduced many top international chefs to Macau in recent years to manage and open restaurants, enriching this City of Gastronomy with a dazzling array of delicacies from around the world.

Sands Resorts Macao has been recognized at the influential Meituan Black Pearl Restaurant Guide 2022 for a fifth year in a row, with two signature restaurants achieving diamond ratings – The Parisian Macao's La Chine and Four Seasons Hotel Macau's Zi Yat Heen. Meanwhile, The popular The Golden Peacock at The Venetian Macao is a long-time Michelin-starred restaurant.

### ACCOMMODATION FIT FOR ROYALTY

With The Venetian Macao having already set the bar high with its ever-popular Royale and Bella suites, we opened **The Parisian Macao** in September 2016. Inspired by the magic and wonder of the famed City of Light, The Parisian Macao attracted 15.2million visits in 2017 alone. Its retail mall, **Shoppes at Parisian**, offers 300,000 sq ft featuring the latest in fashion and couture in a setting reminiscent of the streets of Paris, with an eclectic mix of street artists and entertainers heightening the authentic experience.

**The Londoner Macao**, with its first phase opened in February 2021, is a bold British-themed reimagining of Sands Cotai Central, which first opened in April 2012. The eye-catching integrated resort features some of London's most recognizable landmarks, such as the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben.

**The Londoner Hotel** features **Suites by David Beckham**, the city's first-ever celebrity-designed suite project created in collaboration with global icon David Beckham and the David Collins Studio, an award-winning luxury interior design firm based in the United Kingdom.

Be it the architectural style, décor, catering, or auxiliary facilities, all of The Londoner Macao's elements offer visitors an immersive British experience, allowing them to indulge in an exotic ambiance without travelling abroad. The building immediately joined The Venetian and The Parisian as one of the most sought-after landmarks in Macau.

In celebrating 15 years of The Venetian Macao, we look forward to continuing our tradition of providing excellence in all areas, from community support to entertainment, accommodation, shopping and more.

**Be sure to check back in next Thursday when we examine what The Venetian Macao has been doing to help it excel in the area of local procurement.**



Terry Sio

"The opening of The Venetian Macao created a great shopping destination for Macao residents and tourists alike. As a witness to the development of Macau's retail industry, I've seen how Sands China has provided a broad development opportunity for Macau's retail industry and market over the years, while enriching the shopping experience.

President of the Rainbow Group and President of the Macao International Brand Enterprise Commercial Association (MIBA)



Andy Wu

"Ever since its opening, The Venetian Macao has been serving as a beautiful name card for promoting Macau's tourism industry. For the last 15 years, we have witnessed the booming local tourism industry, and The Venetian Macao has enriched Macau's tourism elements, especially in fashion shopping, welcoming both residents and tourists.

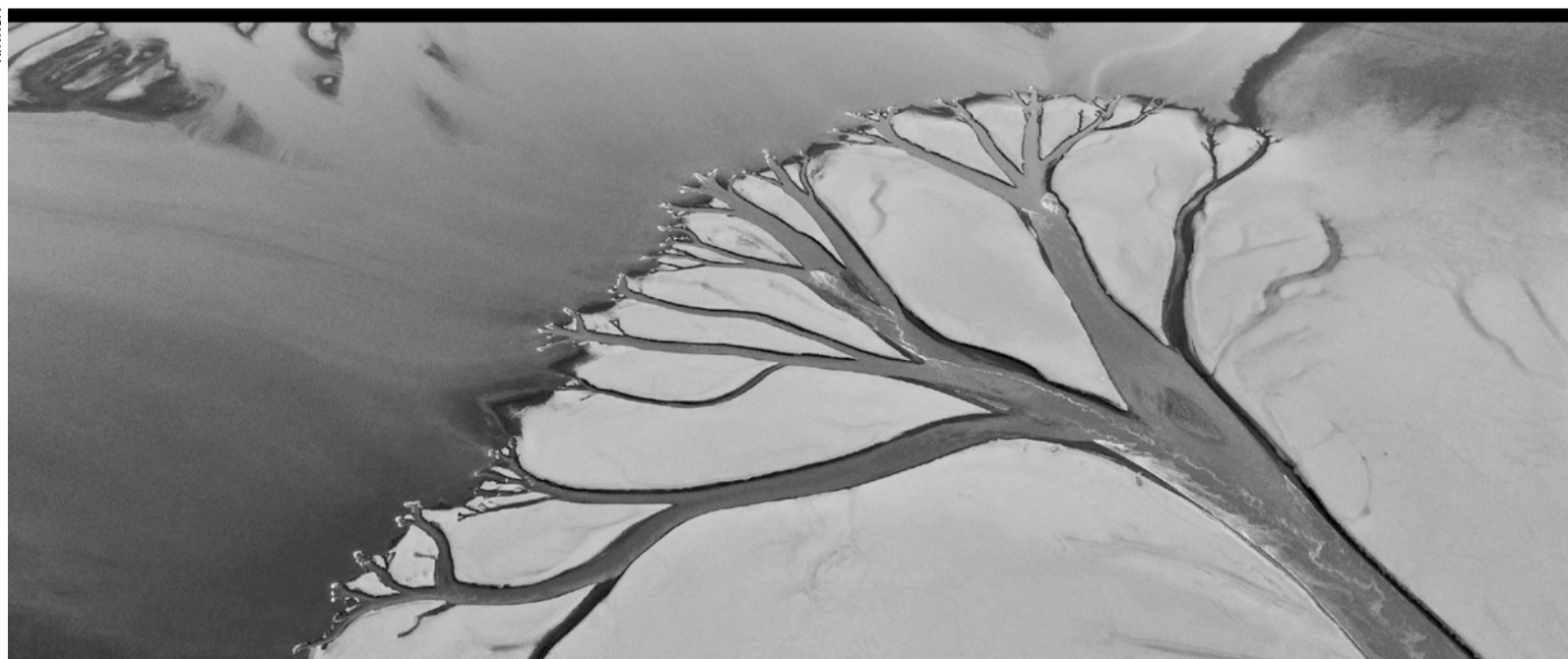
Chairman of the Travel Industry Council of Macau



Wong Fai

"The development of non-gaming tourism elements at The Venetian Macao has played a leading role in the industry and driven the development trend of leisure tourism in Macao. The resort's success has helped make Macao a leisure tourism destination and it continues to promote the diversified development of tourism in Macao.

President of the Macau Leisure Tourism Services Innovation Association



Water flows through chanelns in the lake bed of Poyang Lake, China's largest freshwater lake, in Jiangxi Province

CLIMATE CHANGE

# ITS LARGEST LAKE IS SO DRY, CHINA DIGS DEEP TO WATER CROPS

**W**ITH China's biggest freshwater lake reduced to just 25% of its usual size by a severe drought, work crews are digging trenches to keep water flowing to one of the country's key rice-growing regions.

The dramatic decline of Poyang Lake in the landlocked southeastern province of Jiangxi had otherwise cut off irrigation channels to nearby farmlands. The crews, using excavators to dig trenches, only work after dark because of the extreme daytime

heat, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

A severe heat wave is wreaking havoc across much of southern China. High temperatures have sparked mountain fires that have forced the evacuation of 1,500 people in the southwest, and factories have been ordered to cut production as hydroelectric plants reduce their output amid drought conditions. The extreme heat and drought have wilted crops and shrunk rivers including the giant Yangtze, disrupt-

ing cargo traffic.

Fed by China's major rivers, Poyang Lake averages about 3,500 square kilometers (1,400 square miles) in high season, but has contracted to just 737 square kilometers (285 square miles) in the recent drought.

As determined by water level, the lake officially entered this year's dry season Aug. 6, earlier than at any time since records began being taken in 1951. Hydrological surveys before then are incomplete, although it appears the

lake may be at or around its lowest level in recent history.

Along with providing water for agriculture and other uses, the lake is a major stopover for migrating birds heading south for the winter.

A wide swath of western and central China has seen days of temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius in heat waves that have started earlier and lasted longer than usual.

The heat is likely connected to human-caused climate change,

though scientists have yet to do to the complex calculations and computer simulations to say that for certain.

"The heat is certainly record-breaking, and certainly aggravated by human-caused climate change," said Maarten van Aalst, director of the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre in the Netherlands. "Drought is always a bit more complex."

The "truly mind-boggling temperatures roasting China" are connected to a stuck jet stream — the river of air that moves weather systems around the world — said Jennifer Francis, a climate scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research Center in Falmouth, Massachusetts.

She said an elongated area of relatively high atmospheric pressure parked over western Russia is responsible for both China's and Europe's heat waves this year. In China's case, the high pressure is preventing cool air masses and precipitation from entering the area.

"When hot, dry conditions get stuck, the soil dries out and heats more readily, reinforcing the heat dome overhead even further," Francis said.

In the hard-hit city of Chongqing, some shopping malls have been told to open only from 4 to 9 p.m. to conserve energy. Residents have been seeking respite in the cool of air raid shelters dating from World War II.

That reflects the situation in Europe and elsewhere in the Northern Hemisphere, with high temperatures taking a toll on public health, food production and the environment. **MDT/AP**

TAIWAN

# Tsai says resolve in self-defense cannot be shaken

HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

**T**AIWAN'S leader invoked an armed conflict from 1958 as an example of the island's resolve to defend itself while she met yesterday with more foreign visitors amid the highest tensions with China in decades.

U.S. policy researchers and Japanese lawmakers are the latest visiting delegations, just weeks after China reacted to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan by holding large-scale military exercises that included firing missiles over the island and sending ships across the midline of the Taiwan Strait.

China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory, to be taken by force if necessary, and sees high-level foreign visits to the island



Taiwan's Tsai Ing-wen (right) poses for photos with Keiji Furuya, an ultra-conservative who heads a Japan-Taiwan parliamentarians group, in Taipei, yesterday

as interference in its affairs and de facto recognition of Taiwanese sovereignty.

In speaking to policy researchers from Stanford University's Hoover Ins-

titution think tank, Tsai Ing-wen referred to the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958, a conflict in which the Chinese military conducted prolonged shelling in

Taiwan's outlying Kinmen and Matsu islands.

Tsai said the military and civilians worked together then to safeguard Taiwan.

"That battle to protect

our homeland showed the world that no threat of any kind could shake the Taiwanese people's resolve to defend their nation, not in the past, not now and not in the future," she said. "We, too, will show the world that the people of Taiwan have both the resolve and the confidence to safeguard peace, security, freedom and prosperity for ourselves."

Tsai later said to the Japanese lawmakers that aggression against Taiwan would have a major impact against the entire Indo-Pacific region.

Leading the Japanese delegation was Keiji Furuya, an ultra-conservative who heads a Japan-Taiwan parliamentarians group.

Furuya criticized China's military exercises in the past few weeks in his speech ahead of his mee-

ting with Tsai.

"China's actions are unacceptable toward the Japanese and Taiwanese people who have shared values in democracy freedoms, rule of law and human rights. We oppose this type of threat from China," he said.

Furuya also said "what is most important is for Taiwan to cooperate closely with the international community with Japan and the U.S. at the center to completely suppress China's attempts to change the status quo."

On Monday, Tsai met with the Indiana state governor, who came to discuss business and academic cooperation with Taiwanese institutions on the issue of semi-conductors, an industry in which Taiwan dominates globally.

A delegation of former Japanese defense officials and a U.S. congressional delegation that followed Pelosi have also visited Taiwan recently. **MDT/AP**

EILEEN NG, PUTRAJAYA

MALAYSIA

**M**ALAYSIAN ex-Prime Minister Najib Razak lost his final appeal yesterday in a graft case linked to the looting of the 1MDB state fund, with the top court unanimously upholding his conviction and 12-year prison sentence.

The loss means Najib will have to begin serving his sentence immediately, becoming the first former prime minister to be jailed.

The five-member Federal Court panel said it found the High Court judge was right in his judgment and that Najib's appeal was "devoid of any merits."

"This is a simple and straightforward case of abuse of power, criminal breach of trust and money laundering," said Chief Justice Maimun Tuan Mat, who read out the verdict.

"We are unable to conclude that any of the findings of the High Court, as affirmed by the Court of Appeal, were perverse or plainly wrong so as to warrant appellate intervention. We agree that the defense is so inherently inconsistent and incredible that it does not raise a reasonable doubt on the prosecution case," she said.

The court ordered Najib to begin his time behind bars.

1MDB was a development fund that Najib set up shortly after taking power in 2009. Investigators allege at least \$4.5 billion was stolen from the fund and laundered by Najib's associates. Najib was found guilty in 2020 of abuse of power, criminal breach of trust and money laundering for illegally receiving \$9.4 million from

# Top court upholds ex-PM Najib's graft conviction



Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak (center) speaks to supporters outside at Court of Appeal in Putrajaya, yesterday

SRC International, a former unit of 1MDB.

Najib, 69, has maintained he is innocent and had been out on bail pending his appeals. Just before the court delivered its verdict, he stood up in the dock to make a statement protesting the top court's series of refusals last week to postpone the appeal hearings.

Najib said he felt he was "unfairly treated" and that his case has been rushed through. He pointed

out that a leaked verdict by the Federal Court had been posted on a website and said if this was true, it would be the a "judicial misconduct of the highest order."

But Maimun said the appeal hearings had ended because Najib's newly appointed lawyers refused to make any new arguments in protest of not being given more time to prepare.

Najib appeared in shock after the verdict was read. He was im-

mediately surrounded by his family and supporters.

Earlier yesterday, Najib sought to remove Maimun from the case, citing possible bias because her husband had made a negative Facebook posting about Najib's leadership shortly after his ouster in 2018 general elections. But the judges dismissed Najib's application.

The Federal Court last week also dismissed a bid by Najib to

seek a retrial on grounds of bias by the High Court judge, and refused to postpone the appeal to give his new lawyers more time to prepare. The court also denied a request by Najib's new lawyer to withdraw from the case.

Maimun, Malaysia's first female chief justice who was appointed in 2019, has come under attack on social media from Najib's supporters. Police arrested a man over the weekend in connection with death threats made against Maimun. Hundreds of Najib's supporters gathered outside the court in a show of support.

The prison term will cement Najib's fall from grace. The British-educated Najib was born into Malaysia's political elite. His father was the country's second prime minister and his uncle was the third.

He was thrust into politics in 1976 after his father died, becoming Malaysia's youngest lawmaker at age 22, and the youngest ever deputy minister two years later. He became prime minister in 2009 as a reformer but his term was tainted by the 1MDB scandal that sparked investigations in the U.S. and several other countries and caused his government's downfall.

Najib faces a total of 42 charges in five separate trials linked to 1MDB, and his wife is also on trial on corruption charges.

Najib, who has a strong social media following, remains politically influential. His United Malays National Organization leads the current government after defections of lawmakers caused the collapse of the reformist government that won the 2018 polls. **MDT/AP**

PAKISTAN

# Government steps up pressure on ex-PM Imran Khan

**P**AKISTANI government stepped up pressure on former Prime Minister Imran Khan who has been holding mass rallies, seeking to return to office, with an Islamabad court poised to launch contempt proceedings over his verbal threats to a judge at a weekend rally.

Meanwhile, police raided the apartment of Khan's close aide Shahbaz Gill overnight in the Pakistani capital, and took him away in handcuffs for interrogation.

The developments came two days after authorities filed terrorism charges against Khan, escalating political tensions in the country. In a speech at a rally on Saturday, Khan vowed to sue police officers and a female judge, Zeba Chaudhry, and alleged that Gill had been tortured after his ini-



Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan (center) addresses during an anti-government rally in Islamabad

tial arrest earlier this month. Khan, who came into power in 2018 and was ousted in April in a no-confidence vote in Parliament, could be disqualified for life from politics if convicted of insulting Chaudhry. The

terrorism charge against him could carry anything from several months to 14 years in prison, the equivalent of a life sentence.

Gill has been charged with treason for his recent anti-army remarks during a

show on the private ARY TV in which he urged soldiers and officers to disobey "illegal" orders from military leaders. The treason charge against Gill carries the death penalty under a sedition act that stems from a British

colonial-era law. ARY TV remains off-air in Pakistan following that broadcast.

Since his ouster, Khan has alleged — without providing evidence — that Pakistan's powerful military took part in a U.S. plot to oust him. Washington, the Pakistani military and the government of Khan's successor, Shahbaz Sharif, have all denied the allegation.

The latest trouble for Khan started at Saturday's rally when he criticized Chaudhry, saying: "You also get ready for it, we will also take action against you. All of you must be ashamed."

Sharif's government is unhappy with Khan over his threats and although courts usually pardon offenders if they apologize, some politicians have been convicted in the past for disobeying or

insulting judges.

It was unclear whether Khan would attend a court hearing or send his lawyer.

Ahsan Bhoon, a lawyer who heads the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan, welcomed the proceedings against Khan, saying no one should be allowed to insult a judge or damage the reputation of the judiciary.

Khan came to power promising to break the pattern of family rule in Pakistan. His opponents contend he was elected with help from the powerful military, which has ruled the country for half of its 75-year history.

Since his ouster, Khan has also demanded early elections and vowed to oust Sharif's government through "pressure from the people." **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Philosopher Alexander Dugin speaks during the final farewell ceremony for his daughter Daria Dugina in Moscow yesterday

RUSSIA

# Mourners pay tribute to nationalist Dugina killed by car bombing

VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV,  
MOSCOW

**H**UNDREDS of people lined up yesterday to pay tribute to the daughter of a leading right-wing Russian political thinker following the 29-year-old woman's death in a car bombing that Moscow blamed on Ukrainian intelligence.

Speaking during a farewell ceremony held at a Moscow broadcast production center, Alexander Dugin said with his voice breaking that his daughter, a commentator with a nationalist Russian TV channel, "died for the people, died for Russia."

"The huge price we have to pay can only be justified by the highest achievement, our victory," Dugin said. "She lived for the sake of victory, and she died for the sake of victory. Our Russian victory, our truth, our Orthodox faith, our state."

Darya Dugina was killed when a remotely controlled explosive device planted in her SUV blew up on Saturday night as she was driving on the outskirts of Moscow, ripping the vehicle apart and killing her on the spot, authorities said.

Her father was widely believed to be the intended tar-

get. Dugin is a philosopher, writer and political theorist who ardently supports Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to send troops into Ukraine. Russian media quoted witnesses as saying that the SUV belonged to Dugin and that he had decided at the last minute to travel in another vehicle.

During the memorial service at the Ostankino television center, Dugin shared what he said were his daughter's last words to him, spoken at a nationalist festival they both attended just before her death: "Father, I feel like a warrior, I feel like a hero. I want to be one, I don't want any different fate. I want to be with my people, with my country."

The car bombing, unusual for Moscow since the gang wars of the turbulent 1990s, triggered calls from Russian nationalists to respond by ramping up strikes on Ukraine. Ukraine has denied any involvement in the bombing.

Oleksiy Danilov, the secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, reaffirmed the denial late Monday, saying that "our special services have no relation to that."

Leonid Slutsky, the head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the lower house of Russia's parliament, attended

yesterday's farewell ceremony for Dugina. Slutsky, who took part in several rounds of talks with Ukrainian negotiators in March, indicated the killing would have repercussions for the conflict in Ukraine.

"We see that Kyiv isn't inclined to have talks, and my own position as a member of the negotiation team is that it would be hard to engage in talks after that horrible tragedy," he said.

Putin on Monday sent a letter of condolences to Dugin and his wife, denouncing the "cruel and treacherous" killing and saying that Dugina "honestly served people and the Fatherland, proving what it means to be a patriot of Russia with her deeds." He posthumously awarded Dugina the Order of Courage, one of Russia's highest medals.

Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB, the main successor to the KGB, said Dugina's killing was "prepared and perpetrated by the Ukrainian special services."

The FSB charged that a Ukrainian citizen, Natalya Vovk, carried out the killing after arriving in Russia in July with her 12-year-old daughter and renting an apartment in the building where Dugina lived in order to shadow her. It said that Vovk and her daughter were at a nation-

list festival that Dugin and his daughter attended just before the killing.

The agency said that Vovk drove to Estonia after the killing, using a different license plate for her vehicle.

Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu dismissed the Russian claim, saying in televised remarks that "we regard this as one instance of provocation in a very long line of provocations by the Russian Federation, and we have nothing more to say about it at the moment."

Dugin, dubbed "Putin's brain" and "Putin's Rasputin" by some in the West, has been a prominent proponent of the "Russian world" concept, a spiritual and political ideology that emphasizes traditional values, the restoration of Russia's global influence and the unity of all ethnic Russians throughout the world.

Dugin helped popularize the "Novorossiia," or "New Russia" concept that Russia used to justify the 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and its support of separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine. He has urged the Kremlin to step up its operations in Ukraine.

Dugin has also promoted authoritarian leadership in Russia and spoken with disdain of liberal Western values. He has been slapped with U.S. and European Union sanctions.

His daughter expressed similar views and had appeared as a commentator on the TV channel Tsargrad, where Dugin had served as chief editor.

Dugina herself was sanctioned by the U.S. in March for her work as chief editor of United World International, a website that Washington has described as a source of disinformation. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1993: MICHAEL JACKSON ACCUSED OF CHILD ABUSE



Police in Los Angeles are investigating allegations of child abuse made against singer Michael Jackson.

They have refused to give details but it has emerged that two of Mr Jackson's homes were searched at the weekend following allegations of child abuse.

It is reported that the father of one boy befriended by Mr Jackson has alleged the singer seduced the child and performed sex acts with him.

Detectives are said to have interviewed the boy and other youngsters who visited Mr Jackson's Neverland ranch in Santa Barbara.

They include 12-year old actor Macaulay Culkin, star of the Home Alone films.

The singer who is currently on tour in Thailand is aware of the allegations and issued a statement through his lawyer, Harold Weitzman.

"I am confident the police department will conduct a fair and thorough investigation and that the result will demonstrate that there was no wrong doing on my part," Mr Weitzman read.

The singer's security adviser, Anthony Pellicano, has said the allegation is part of a \$20m extortion plot.

Around 30 such blackmail attempts were made against Mr Jackson each year, Mr Pellicano added.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Michael Jackson vehemently denied the accusations - made by the father of 13-year old Jordie Chandler - and he was never charged.

A civil case was settled out of court in early 1994 when he paid Jordie Chandler a reported \$20m (£14m).

Three years later Jordie Chandler's account of the relationship was detailed in a book by a journalist, Victor M Gutierrez.

The book was said to be based on a diary the boy had kept at the time and included details of alleged sexual encounters between the pair. In 1996 Jordie Chandler's father, Evan, started a claim for around \$60m (£38.5m) from the singer claiming Michael Jackson had breached an agreement never to discuss the case.

In 1999 a court ruled in Michael Jackson's favour and threw out the lawsuit.

Then in November 2003, he was arrested and charged with child abuse after British journalist Martin Bashir had made a documentary in which Jackson admitted sharing his bed with children.

Dubbed the trial of the century, it lasted four months and ended in June 2005 when Michael Jackson was cleared of all charges.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Make sure you concentrate if operating machinery or vehicles. Don't rely on others to do your work. Put all your energy into moneymaking ventures.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
You can make a difference if you offer your help at functions that involve children. You will have to be careful not to let others find out about your intentions.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
You are apt to meet someone special on your journey. You would be wise to socialize with as many people as possible. Sit tight. Things aren't as bad as they appear.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
You will find that joint ventures could easily turn out to be dead end projects. Real estate investments could be to your advantage. Work diligently and you will get ahead today.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
It's hard to stay mad if the object of the anger refuses to react. Look into ways to make your home more comfortable. Do not expect too much from others.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
You may not be able to help, but your support will be favorable. Be careful what you say. Your magnetic, outgoing personality will capture hearts.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Strong willpower will come to your rescue. Your added discipline will enable you to complete some of those unfinished projects. Catch up on your reading and correspondence.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
You are best to do something energetic with friends instead. You are best to concentrate on your professional endeavors. Financial gains can be made through wise investments.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Groups you belong to will not only enjoy your company, but they will also share your interests. Talk to an older, established individual about your present situation. Deception is evident around you.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Be careful not to consume too many spicy foods, or minor health problems could put you out of commission for the day. Listen to a good friend who is truly looking out for your best interests.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
You can accomplish a lot if you put some effort into household duties or redecorating plans. Don't let others saddle you with guilt that isn't warranted. Your ability to work with detail will bring recognition.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
You will find their philosophies worth exploring. Compromise will be necessary. You must try to lay your cards on the table. Talk to your mate and tell them how you feel.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

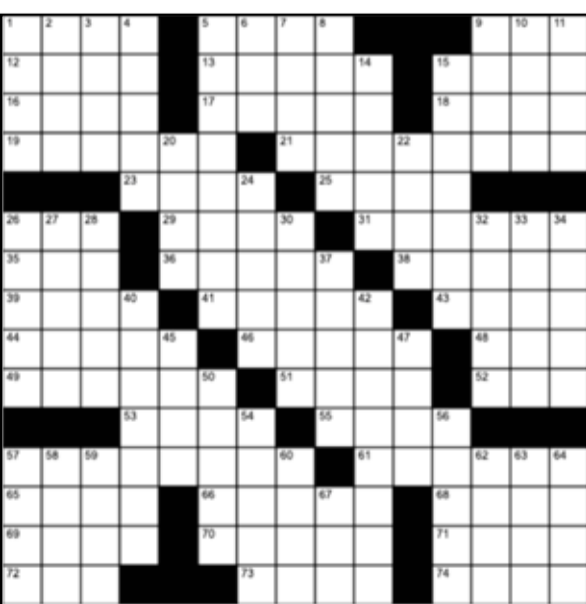
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	19	28	cloudy
Changchun	12	23	fine
Chengdu	27	39	cloudy
Chongqing	33	42	fine
Fuzhou	29	39	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	35	cloudy
Guiyang	21	32	cloudy
Haikou	25	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	30	39	thunderstorms
Harbin	13	23	cloudy
Hefei	25	34	thunderstorms
Nanjing	26	36	thunderstorms
Shanghai	30	39	rain
Taipei	26	33	cloudy
Wuhan	29	37	cloudy
Hong Kong	28	33	rain
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	17	32	clear
Frankfurt	17	32	overcast
Paris	20	30	overcast
London	17	28	overcast
New York	22	32	overcast

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Gorge; 5- She played Carla on "Cheers"; 9- Ques. response; 12- Lab culture; 13- Viscounts' superiors; 15- Ersatz butter; 16- Potter's oven; 17- Word on a ticket; 18- Hero; 19- Church party; 21- Evading; 23- "East of Eden" director Kazan; 25- Seemingly forever; 26- Photographer Goldin; 29- Israeli weapons; 31- Try to dissuade; 35- Bambi's aunt; 36- Flat-topped hills; 38- Sub system; 39- Actress Rowlands; 41- Jargon; 43- Canadian gas brand; 44- Rub out or remove from memory; 46- Movie critic Roger; 48- DDE's command; 49- Feudal tenant; 51- Thin stratum; 52- Touch on the shoulder; 53- Reflected sound; 55- Hwys.; 57- Repair; 61- Lure; 65- Faction of a group, often religious; 66- Employees; 68- North Sea feeder; 69- Permits; 70- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 71- Actress Turner; 72- Guadalupe gold; 73- Hurler Hershiser; 74- Tolkien tree creatures;

**DOWN** 1- Fifth Avenue store; 2- Currency exchange fee; 3- Bath powder; 4- Journalist Pyle; 5- Understands; 6- Taken in; 7- Writer Bombeck; 8- Still in the game; 9- Et \_\_\_\_ (and other men); 10- Light gas; 11- Album unit; 14- Lost a lap; 15- Comfortably familiar; 20- Grad; 22- Supermodel Sastrre; 24- Grocery lane; 26- Israeli desert region; 27- The end of \_\_\_\_; 28- Grannies; 30- Swedish imports; 32- Beginning; 33- Dreadlocks wearer; 34- Band; 37- Twisted expression?; 40- Declares positively; 42- Thankful; 45- A pop; 47- Revenuers, for short; 50- Potala Palace site; 54- Top; 56- Elegance; 57- Scandinavian capital city; 58- Change direction; 59- Outside; Prefix; 60- Animal house; 62- This \_\_\_\_ outrage!; 63- Small change; 64- Periods; 67- Sum charged;



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.   2 BEDS	HKD 9,900,000
TAIPA STUDIO   1 BED	HKD 3,980,000
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MINING

# RARE EARTHS PROCESSOR BUYS RIGHTS TO MINE IN GREENLAND

DAKE KANG, BEIJING

ONE of the world's few rare earths processors outside China has bought exploration rights to mine in Greenland, opening an avenue for diversifying supplies of the minerals critical for advanced and green technologies.

Rare earths are a group of minerals used in the manufacture of electric vehicles, wind turbines, electronics, robots and other machinery. China currently dominates global production, processing about 85% of the world's rare earths, but skyrocketing demand is pushing companies to look for other sources.

Toronto-based Neo Performance Materials, the rare earths processor, said yesterday [Macau time] it plans to develop the Sarfartoq deposit in southwest Greenland and will send the ore to its facility in Estonia in Eastern Europe. It's one of only two plants outside China that processes rare earths to a high degree.

Neo aims to have the mine running in two to three years. It will be the company's first major



mining project. CEO Constantine Karayannopoulos said that by opening the mine, he hopes to shield the company from volatile rare earth prices, which have shot up in recent years due to supply disruptions and strong demand.

"We're at the mercy of the market," he said.

Karayannopoulos called it "business, not geopolitics." But in recent years, rare earths have attracted

the attention of policymakers in Washington, Beijing and other capitals given their importance to the global high-tech supply chain. The U.S., Europe and Japan call their dependence on China's rare earths a "national security risk" and have sought to diversify their supply.

But such efforts have struggled, as mines in other countries have run into opposition or failed to get off the ground after fluctuating

prices scared investors away.

Meanwhile, supplies of rare earths have shrunk, and some mines are raising ethical and environmental concerns. Mining rare earths is a dirty business when done cheaply, and China, the world's largest miner, has shuttered many mines in recent years to curb environmental damage.

Some of that mining has been outsourced to Myanmar, where


a lack of oversight is masking a dirty secret. An Associated Press investigation this month found the Myanmar mines are linked to environmental destruction, the theft of land from villagers and the funneling of money to brutal militias, including at least one linked to Myanmar's secretive military government. The AP traced rare earths from Myanmar to the supply chains of 78 companies, including major auto makers and electronics giants.

The U.S. State Department said in a statement that it was "deeply concerned" about illicit mining in Myanmar, and called on other countries to ensure that their economic activity with Myanmar "does not enable or further exacerbate the regime's violence against its own people."



Karayannopoulos said that in Greenland, the company plans to dig up rock, crush it and do basic processing that does not involve the use of damaging chemicals. The ore will be then shipped to Estonia, where it will be further processed into a form that can be used to make magnets.

Plans for another rare earths mine in Greenland failed after voters put in power a left-leaning government that blocked development. The site had high concentrations of uranium, raising concerns over how radioactive waste would be disposed. **MDT/AP**



AD



## HOLIDAY RENTAL HOUSES

Lugar das Letras  Casa de Gouvães 


The houses are set in the heart of the World Heritage Site of the Douro Valley and its famous winery landscape where the worlds 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.

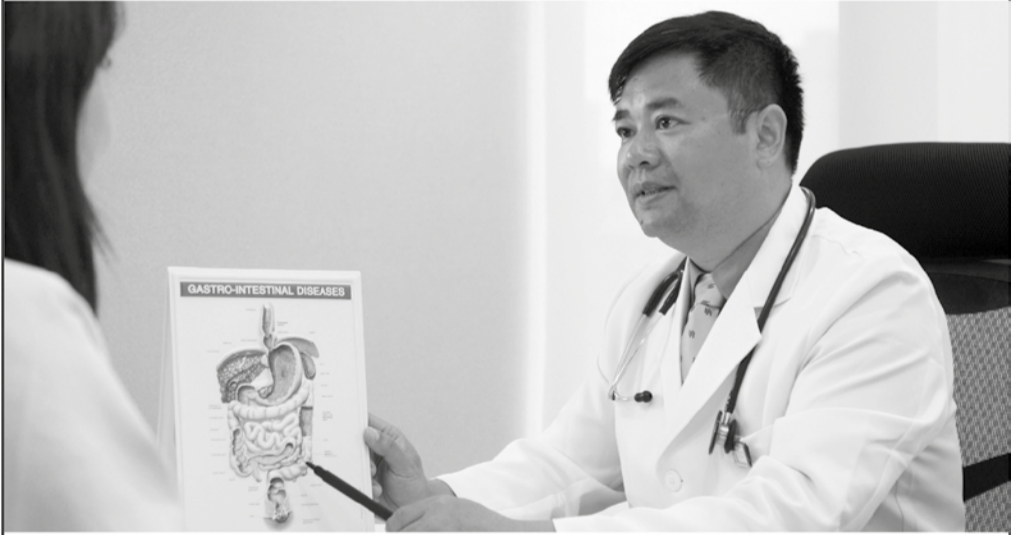
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FOOTBALL

# Man United springs back to life with win over Liverpool

MAN UNITED 2, LIVERPOOL 1

**F**INALLY, there are signs of life at Manchester United. Against a backdrop of protests against the club's ownership, United delivered a performance of intensity and spirit to beat fierce rival Liverpool 2-1 yesterday [Macau time] and claim its first points in the Premier League this season.

Composed finishes by Jadon Sancho in the 16th minute and Marcus Rashford in the 53rd earned a victory at Old Trafford that will bring some respite for under-pressure manager Erik ten Hag, who made a huge statement in his team selection by dropping star striker Cristiano Ronaldo and club captain Harry Maguire and was validated.

"I wanted a different attitude and that is what I saw them bring on the pitch," said Ten Hag, who has started his tenure at United amid something of a crisis at En-



Manchester United's Marcus Rashford celebrates after scoring his side's second goal

gland's biggest club. "But it's only the start."

Suddenly, the heat is on Liverpool — widely expected to be a title contender again this season — with Jürgen Klopp's team still waiting for a win after three games

and now languishing behind United in the standings on just two points.

Mohamed Salah scored an 81st-minute consolation but it was another below-par display from Liverpool after draws with

Fulham and Crystal Palace, even if this was a first league loss in 2022.

"In the warm-up, it was the quietest I have heard this stadium and they wanted something to lift them," Liverpool defender Andrew Robertson said. "And we gave them it."

What is historically the biggest game in English soccer was preceded by a pre-match protest by thousands of United fans angry at the direction and state of the club under its owners of 17 years, the Glazer family.

The supporters called for the U.S.-based Glazers to sell the club as they walked to Old Trafford then gathered on the concourse outside the storied stadium, in front of a large police presence. Many lingered as the match began.

The pressure was on United after losses to Brighton (2-1) and Brentford (4-0) to open the season, and the players fed off a frenzied atmosphere that seemed to

affect Liverpool early on.

"The start of the game was exactly what everyone expected, what United fans expected. They were after us," Klopp said. "They started slightly more aggressive than us."

Lisandro Martinez, an off-season signing at center back who has come under enormous criticism in recent days, was particularly impressive and set the tone by clattering into Salah in the first minute, then barging into the Liverpool forward after getting up off the ground. Later in the first half, Raphael Varane, who replaced Maguire, virtually rugby-tackled Luis Diaz to the ground, to roars of approval from United's fans even if it earned him a booking.

Sancho's goal came in United's best spell of the game, the winger showing great composure to trick James Milner by feigning to shoot, cut back inside and place a shot into the corner as Virgil van Dijk bizarrely stood motionless in front of him. It was the seventh straight Premier League match that Liverpool had fallen behind.

The stadium erupted again when Anthony Martial, a half-time substitute, played through Rashford and the striker sprinted toward the area before placing a calm finish inside the near post. **MDT/AP**

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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Kang Bing, China Daily



**NEW MENACE OF OBESITY  
 MUST BE TACKLED WITH  
 CARE AND CONCERN**

**Obesity** was considered alien to the Chinese people. A few among us who were overweight became the butt of jokes, and sometimes envy, when I was young. To many of us, obesity was a problem of the developed countries.

Proving this contention, a recent World Health Organization report said 59 percent Europeans are overweight or obese, with the obesity rate being as high as 25 percent, next only to the United States. The report also said that each year, 1.2 million deaths in Europe are caused by diseases related to obesity or high body mass index (BMI).

Unfortunately, the Chinese people are catching up fast with the developed world in terms of obesity and high BMI. The Dietary Guidelines for Chinese Residents 2022, released by the Chinese Nutrition Society in April, reported that 50.7 percent of Chinese adults are now overweight with 16.4 percent of them being obese.

To make things worse, 19 percent of schoolchildren between six and 17 years of age are considered overweight or obese while the rate for preschool children is 10.4 percent. Unhealthy diets and lack of physical exercise are traditional causes of high BMI, the COVID-19 pandemic that confined people to their homes for weeks or months on end is being cited as a new cause of rising obesity, because an increasing number of people rely or relied on takeouts from restaurants, many of which serve rich, greasy food.

No wonder "you look slimmer" has become the highest praise a person can get when meeting others, and "how to lose weight rapidly?" the most common question.

Those who fail to control their appetite or hate physical exercise have to pay a dear price to reduce their BMI. I have a young friend who had to have one-third of his stomach removed to stop gorging on food. He did lose 30 kilograms, but paid a high price for it, both in terms of money and health.

Some others prefer to play safe: they ask doctors to remove fat from their bellies, hips and thighs. Those afraid of scalpels can try beauty-slimming tea that makes people lose appetite or have bouts of a running stomach.

A lot more people visit body-slimming centers that offer traditional Chinese medical solutions to obesity such as massage, acupuncture, moxibustion and medicinal baths, leading to a boom in the body-slimming service sector over the past decade. Data show that by the end of 2019, China had more than 40,000 weight-losing centers and clinics.

What bothers educators and parents the most is the steady rise in obesity among school kids increasing at the rate of about 1 percent a year over the past decade or so. And if this trend is not reversed, the health of future generations will be in trouble.

Since few of the body-slimming therapies for adults can be applied to children, the only possible way of preventing children from becoming overweight or obese is to encourage them to play outdoor sports and/or do more physical exercise, which in today's society is easier said than done.

Schoolchildren in China are burdened by a tough syllabus. It used to be normal for children to go to school at 7:30 am and return home around 9 pm.

To ensure children spend more time playing sports or doing physical exercise, the central education authorities have taken many measures, including limiting school hours, making PE class compulsory, reducing homework and streamlining afterschool training courses.

When such measures failed to produce effective results, the authorities increased the value of PE scores for promotion from primary school to secondary school, to senior high school, and in the national college entrance exam.

The new measures seem to be working, as an increasing number of students can be seen playing sports in community parks after school to increase their PE scores. Hopefully, obesity will have little to do with the Chinese people in the long run.

[Abridged]

Germany's natural gas storage facilities are now more than 80% full, showing steady progress despite a drastic reduction in deliveries from Russia amid the war in Ukraine.

Gas storage in Europe's biggest economy has reached 80.14% of capacity, according to industry figures released yesterday.

The head of Germany's network regulator, Klaus Mueller, tweeted that storage is "being filled steadily" but cautioned that a planned three-day halt to deliveries through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline from Russia next week "could temporarily dampen" the effort.

Natural gas is used to power industry, heat homes and offices,

and generate electricity. Increasing the amount in reserve has been a key focus of the German government since Russia invaded Ukraine to avoid rationing for industry as demand rises in the winter.

The country's storage was about 56% full when Russian state-owned energy company Gazprom started cutting supplies through Nord Stream 1 in mid-June. It cited technical problems that German authorities have dismissed as cover for a political power play.

In recent weeks, Nord Stream 1 has been running at only 20% of capacity.



Seventeen year old Anglo-Belgian pilot, Mack Rutherford

**TEEN PILOT ON TRACK  
 FOR SOLO GLOBAL  
 FLIGHT WORLD RECORD**

**MARK CARLSON,  
 CHARLEROI**

**A** Belgian-British teenage pilot was on track yesterday to become the youngest person to fly around the world solo in a small plane as he landed in southern Belgium ahead of the penultimate leg of his global odyssey.

Mack Rutherford, who turned 17 during the journey, touched down at Buzet Airstrip near the city of Charleroi, where he originally learned to fly. He's due to land in Bulgaria tomorrow. His aim: to displace Travis Ludlow of Britain, who was 18 when he set the record in 2021.

Rutherford is flying a Shark, one of the fastest ultralight aircraft in the world with a cruising speed reaching 300 kph (186 mph), which has been specially fitted out for the long journey. It's normally

a two-seater, but an extra fuel tank has been installed next to the young pilot.

It's the same kind of aircraft used by his 19-year-old sister, Zara Rutherford, when she set the world record on Jan. 20 for the youngest woman to fly solo around the world.

Mack's lonely journey, which began on March 23, took him through 52 countries over five continents. To conform with Guinness World Records requirements, the route crossed the equator twice.

"It was supposed to take between two to three months and it's been five months now," he told The Associated Press. Administrative formalities in Crete and Dubai "because of paperwork issues, visas, permits, things like that," caused the delay.

The flight took him through Africa and the Gulf region — where he face

periods of extreme heat — then on to India, China, South Korea and Japan. From there, he headed to Alaska and down the U.S. West Coast to Mexico. The teen then headed north again along the U.S. East Coast to Canada, across the Atlantic via Iceland, to the U.K. and Belgium.

If all goes well, and weather permitting, he'll fly east across Europe via Slovakia and land at an airport in the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, tomorrow.

Proud father Sam Rutherford said his two children have set a shining example.

"They have got around the world safely, effectively, professionally. And they've shown to other youngsters that you don't have to be 18 even, and certainly not 30, to make a difference and do something and follow your dreams," he told AP. **MDT/AP**



Mack Rutherford, right, poses with his sister Zara Rutherford



**Poland** The publisher of a new textbook in Poland says it is removing a passage on human fertility that many interpreted as being about in vitro fertilization and which caused widespread offense. The publishing house, Bialy Kruk, said that it disagreed with the criticism and the "wrong interpretation" of the passage but that "taking into account the social good ... we decided with the author to remove the controversial fragment from the textbook."



**Netherlands** Dutch lawmakers broke into their summer vacations yesterday to debate the government's contentious plans to slash nitrogen emissions that have sparked angry protests by farmers. The debate was called after Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra said in a newspaper interview that the goal of reducing emissions by 50% by 2030 was not set in stone.



**Sudan** The death toll from flash floods in Sudan since the start of the country's rainy season has climbed to 83, an official said yesterday as the downpours continued to inundate villages across the east African nation. At least 36 people have been injured since May. More than 18,200 houses have been "completely destroyed" across the country while around at least 25,600 were partly damaged. The United Nations said more than 146,200 people have been affected by floods.



**Mozambique** A new offensive by Islamic extremist rebels in the embattled province of Cabo Delgado has increased the number of displaced by 80,000 and undermines the government's claims of containing the insurgency. The rebels have expanded their area in a campaign that has lasted for more than two months. The new offensive, which started in June, follows a period of relative calm when the police had declared that "the war against terrorism is almost at an end."