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A LINE SHOULD BE DRAWN TO EQUALIZE THE COMPENSATION FOR CIVIL SERVANTS WHO WORKED DURING THE JUNE 18 COVID-19 OUTBREAK, SAYS RON LAM

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SHENZHEN: LEVEL 0 INCIDENT RECORDED AT LING AO NUCLEAR PLANT

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RUSSIA SEEKS CLOSER SECURITY TIES WITH CHINA AS KEY GOAL

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GENTING TO THE RESCUE

Genting's bid in the gaming tender may be a way to partner itself to an incumbent gaming operator in financial turmoil: Bernstein ▲ P2



Taiwan About 400 tourists who were stranded on a mountainside when a strong earthquake hit Taiwan have descended safely, as the island yesterday repaired damage caused by the quake. The 6.8 magnitude quake hit the island on Sunday afternoon, temporarily trapping four people inside a leveled three-story building, knocking a train from its tracks and damaging a bridge. A worker in a cement factory was killed.



South Korea A U.S. aircraft carrier is to visit South Korea this week for its first joint training with South Korean warships in five years, officials said yesterday, in an apparent show of force against increasing North Korean nuclear threats. The USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier and its battle group will arrive at a southeastern South Korean naval base on Friday for a combined training meant to boost the allies' military readiness and to show "the firm resolve by the Korea-U.S. alliance for the sake of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula," the South Korean navy said in a statement. [More on p7](#)



Emirates The United Arab Emirates will launch its first lunar rover in November, the mission manager said yesterday. Hamad Al Marzooqi told The National, a state-linked newspaper, that the "Rashid" rover, named for Dubai's ruling family, would be launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida sometime between Nov. 9 and Nov. 15. The exact date will be announced next month, he said.

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SUNCITY TRIAL

ALVIN CHAU ATTESTS NO ASSOCIATION WITH SIDEBETTING

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LONG LIVE THE KING

QUEEN ELIZABETH II MOURNED BY BRITAIN AND WORLD AT FUNERAL

▲ P12

GAMING

GENTING 'PROSPECTIVE RESCUER' IF INCUMBENT OPERATOR CONTINUES TO FACE CASH BLEED

LYNZY VALLES

GENTING'S bid in the gaming tender may be a way to partner itself to an incumbent gaming operator in financial turmoil, according to a note issued by brokerage Sanford C. Bernstein.

The city's new bidder in the gaming concession public tender, which will award a 10-year license for casinos to operate, is GMM Limited, which is linked to Genting Malaysia. Although all seven companies have been accepted into the tender, GMM was accepted with conditions as authorities opened the bids on Friday.

"We do not expect Genting to win an outright concession and displace an incumbent," the brokerage stated in a note.

"However, we see Genting as positioning itself to be a prospective rescuer in the event that a concession holder experiences



Representatives of the companies submitting a bid in attendance, last week

financial difficulties and may require a partner (such as SJM), or a potential buyer of a willing seller in the future," analysts at the brokerage added.

During the bid proposal last week, one of the representatives (surnamed Chen) of GMM expressed a belief that Genting has a certain degree of confidence

in this bid for a Macau gaming concession, mentioning that the company assisted in the construction of ski resorts for the Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics held earlier this year.

Echoing similar sentiments, Bernstein noted, "There are other ties in China that could prove valuable to Genting's pursuit of

eventual entry into Macau."

Casino operators have been bleeding cash every day and have been in turmoil due to the pandemic that has been lingering for two and a half years, amid the city's adherence to Beijing's zero-Covid policy.

Casinos were also part of the non-essential firms that were

required to close during July for 12 days, which led to the lowest gross gaming revenues in decades during that month.

Gaming operator SJM Holdings Ltd experienced one of the highest losses during the first semester of this year, which amounted to HKD2.75 billion, a figure that is 88% higher compared to the same period in 2021.

The brokerage has warned that continued delays in the refinancing of SJM's bank debts are raising concerns, recalling that management has indicated a standby loan facility of up to HKD5 billion from Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau, S.A. (STDM).

Throughout this year, analysts expressed concern about cash burn rates in the city's gaming sector and are particularly wary about the ability of gaming companies to survive under harsh operating conditions.

SHENZHEN

Level 0 incident recorded at Ling Ao Nuclear Plant

RENATO MARQUES

GUANGDONG provincial authorities have reported that a Level 0 incident has occurred at the Ling Ao Nuclear Power Plant in Shenzhen.

The incident report noted that, during a regular inspection on September 17, an emergency diesel generator was unexpectedly activated.

Mainland authorities noted that the incident did not affect the operations of the facility, nor result in any harm to the health of the staff or the surrounding residents and environment.

The emergency diesel engine that unpredictably activated has the main function of supplying emergency power supply during a "hot standby" state, a mode of operation of the reactor that is activated when it is necessary to cool down the reactor.



After the event, operators carried out the inspection operation, having verified that the diesel generator and the emergency power supply system were in a normal condition. Operators stopped the diesel generator and restored it to its initial state.

According to the International Scale of Nuclear Accidents (INES) and the regulations on nuclear safety, the present occurrence was classified as a level

0 operational incident.

INES classifies nuclear incidents in levels from 1 to 7, with level 0 considered as a deviation that is not included in the INES and serves essentially for the correction of deviations and feedback of experiences.

The Ling Ao Nuclear Power Plant is located on the Dapeng Peninsula in Longgang District, Shenzhen, about 60 km north of Hong Kong.

COVID-19

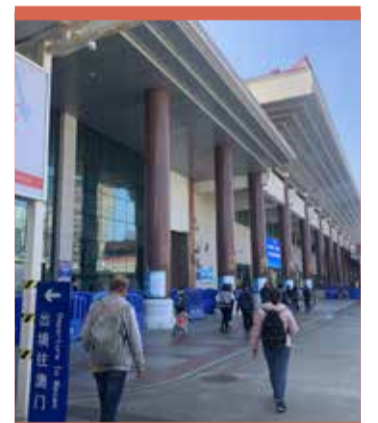
NAT VALIDITY FROM ZHUHAI TO MACAU EXTENDED TO 48 HOURS

STAFF REPORTER

THE validity of the nucleic acid test (NAT) taken for the purpose of crossing the border, previously 24 hours, changed to 48 hours as of yesterday, Zhuhai health authorities announced, a measure that will likely boost tourism arrivals in the upcoming Golden Week holidays.

According to the statement published by the Zhuhai-Macau Joint Prevention and Control Working Group, as of September 19 at 6 a.m., people who enter Zhuhai from Macau must have proof of a negative NAT result within 48 hours – a measure changed after a month and a half of the 24 hour validity.

Meanwhile, the validity of the NAT for people who enter Macau from Zhuhai remained unchanged at 48 hours.



Meanwhile, given the recent increase in tourism, Macau might see an average of 30,000 tourists per day during the October 1 holidays, the president of the Travel Industry Council of Macau, Andy Wu, said.

Dubbed the Golden Week, the seven-day holiday is a major event in mainland China, with the other being the May 1 holiday, which also lasts seven days.

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ALVIN CHAU CASE

Court separates criminal charges from compensation claims to accelerate process

RENATO MARQUES

THE court has decided to separate the criminal charges that are pending in respect of the former junket and entertainment mogul, Alvin Chau, from the compensation claims filed by the government as well as four gaming concessionaires, who are also part of the multiple-defendant cases.

This news came through a report of TDM Radio, which had access to a court notification sent to the Public Prosecutions Office and the lawyers last Friday.

In the document, the judges noted that the decision was intended "to prevent the civil part of this process from delaying the criminal part (we can predict that the civil compensation claim will seriously delay the process)," adding also that taking into consideration the advantages and disadvantages of such an act, the court decided to separate the compensation claims from criminal charges, noting also the fact that, concurrently, the court is handling the trial of the former directors of the former Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT), Jaime Carion and Li Canfeng, which also requires significant resources from the court.

The same judges also noted that, in the case that involves Chau and another 20 defendants, "seven



of them are awaiting trial in prison" while the case involves over 100 witnesses and a very large quantity of documents and evidence.

Similarly, in the case of the former directors of the DSSOPT, there are also 21 defendants, of which three are awaiting trial in prison, and the case has a similar number of witnesses and a large volume of documents and evidence.

The court also noted that the periods of preventive custody being undergone by some of the main defendants in both cases are similar.

The government, as well as Wynn Resorts (Macau) S.A., SJM Resorts, S.A., MGM Grand Paradise, S.A., and Venetian Macao, S.A., have filed civil claims against the

defendants. The four casino operators respectively seek MOP795 million, HKD178 million, an amount to be determined, and HKD300 million from all or some of the defendants.

In the same notification letter, the court also noted that the compensation claims from Wynn, SJM, Venetian, and MGM, as well as those sought by the government, can be pursued through unofficial compensation, calling on the appellants to manifest this intention via written notification to the court.

LAWYERS ACCUSED OF DELAYING THE CASE

In the same notification signed by the president of the col-

lective of judges, Lou Ieng Ha, in representation also of the judges Lei Wai Seng and Chu Ka Sin, the judges also justify the separation of the civil and criminal parts of the case due to what they consider the likely stalling of the case by some of the lawyers.

"According to the development of the present case, many lawyers do not express an attitude of sufficient cooperation, many of the lawyers [are] still requesting [...] the extension of the hearing (even though we know that many defendants are in prison), so we can predict that the handling of the two urgent cases by the court will be delayed."

NEW GUIA HILL PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL TO OPEN SOON

The new Guia Hill Pedestrian Tunnel that connects the Flora Garden and the Casa Real Hotel area will soon be opened, local media Macao Daily News has reported. The tunnel goes through the Guia Hill and connects the hotel with footbridges. The system will also connect the Guia Hill Running Trail and the Reservoir Promenade. Recently, at night, the lights in the tunnel were seen to have been turned on. In April, Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário said that the tunnel's opening was expected to take place in the last quarter of the year. No update has been since been given.

UNMANNED VEHICLES HIT HENGQIN ROADS FOR TESTS

Two RoboBuses, five Robotaxis, and three unmanned sanitation vehicles began open road tests on an 11-km section from North Qinhai Road to West Qinhai Road between the Number 1 and 5 rest stations along the Hengqin Flower Corridor on September 15. Hengqin residents and tourists may be able to experience such vehicles that will pass by Hengqin Flower Corridor and Shizimen waterway during the upcoming National Day holiday, which will last from Oct 1 to 7. The 10 vehicles were provided by three domestic automobile enterprises, namely Cowa Robot, Beijing QCraft, as well as Turnip Transport (Beijing) Technology, with mature and leading autonomous driving technologies.

LYNZY VALLES

THE under-trial junket mogul Alvin Chau has denied any allegations that he was involved in illegal activities of multiplier bets for high rollers.

In the first session of the Suncity case at the Court of First Instance yesterday, Chau was seen in public for the second time since he was arrested in November in the context of one of the city's biggest criminal trials.

The trial that occurred yesterday was originally supposed to be held on September 2, but was postponed as many were absent. Although 11 defendants were still absent yesterday, the court ruled that the trial may continue.

During the trial, Chau has repeatedly denied allegations that he was involved in side-

SUNCITY TRIAL

Alvin Chau attests no association with side-betting

-betting activities. He admitted that although he was aware of such activities, he was never involved in them, noting that they did not have to take part in such practices given the size of Suncity's operations.

As cited in a TDM report, Chau was presented with several transcripts of intercepted phone calls and messages, in which he was said to be discussing side-betting activities.

Chau, together with 20 defendants, faces a string of charges, including fraud, money laundering and illegal gambling, which could see him spend decades in prison if convicted.

Now-defunct Suncity cheated Macau's government out of about USD1 billion in tax revenue from 2013 to last year, according to an investigation launched in 2019.

The government is seeking nearly HKD8.3 billion in compensation.

Another way to assess the government's entitlement to compensation is the amount of tax the government should have received during Chau's alleged operations of illegal gambling, the SAR government previously stated.

Chau is expected to take the stand at the trial this afternoon.



ASSOCIATION CALLS ON GOV'T FOR MORE SUPPORT TO PEOPLE WITH HEARING DISABILITY

STAFF REPORTER

A local association has expressed hope that government may provide more support for residents with a hearing disability.

On Sunday, the Macau Deaf Association held an opening ceremony for the International Day of Sign Languages and International Week of Deaf 2022.

"We hope to spread a message of equality and communion to society by holding this activity," said the association president Wong Kam Sun.

For hearing-impaired persons, Wong said, an inclusive community bridges the gap between them and those without hearing impairment, enabling them to further participate in society.

He hoped therefore that society could pay attention to the needs of deaf and hearing-impaired persons, and improve some measures such as in the official

broadcast of information, to which sign language and subtitles could be added, to enable them to understand.

Further, Wong added that fewer jobs were provided to deaf and hearing-impaired persons so far. He said the government opened up different types of recruitments for deaf and hearing-impaired persons, but it all depended on their individual abilities.

In addition, he said that sign language translators are few, with different types of translation requiring sign language interpreters in various categories, increasing the difficulty of deploying sign language interpreters and providing translation services.

Further, he considered that the development of technology could improve a barrier-free environment, but the premise is to ensure all people have the ability to use technology.

Earlier this year, the associa-



tion revealed that students with a hearing disability have opted to drop out of higher education due to the mandatory use of masks.

The association has communicated that, since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, students who have a hearing disability have had a difficult time because

they have been obliged to use masks at universities, which hide the lips and half of the face, making it harder to understand speech.



ISAF WORKING ON A NEW REGIME FOR 'SMALL-SCALE MEDICAL DEVICES' AND COSMETICS

RENATO MARQUES

THE Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau (ISAF) is conducting research and working on a draft bill for a new regulatory regime for small-scale medical devices and cosmetic products "suited to Macau's situation, to support the development of the Big Health industry," the ISAF president, Choi Peng Cheong, said during a meeting of ISAF officials with a delegation of the Macau International Big Health Industry Association.

Addressing the theme of the promotion and continuous development of the Big Health industry, Choi noted that is necessary to update the rules in such fields as well

as to "continue to improve the existing drug management regime, promoting the sustainable development of the pharmaceutical sector under the premise of equal emphasis on traditional Chinese and Western medicine."

The development of the Big Health Industry was a topic started by the government, which is said to have the goal of promoting the sector until 2025, according to the plan drafted in the Second Five-Year Plan for Socio-Economic Development of the Macau Special Administrative Region (2021-2025).

According to the same official, this work includes efforts towards the promotion of the development of economic di-

versification and cultivating emerging industries, as well as improving the legal regime closely related to socio-economic development and the life of the population.

It is not currently clear which amendments the ISAF proposes to make, but they are related to the use of medical devices most commonly in use in beauty centers and alternative medicine clinics, among others. Likely, such a regime could also include regulations concerning the application and use of traditional Chinese treatments as well as alternative medicine such as acupuncture, cupping therapy, and others, that are very popular in Macau and Asia in general.

TRANSPORT

506 BUS-RELATED ROAD INCIDENTS LOGGED IN FIRST SEVEN MONTHS

FROM January to July this year, the city recorded 506 traffic incidents involving public buses, 255 of which held the means of transport accountable for the incident, the Transport Advisory Committee has announced.

Although more than half of all bus-related incidents held the public bus accountable, the committee employed another way to present the ratio. According to it, per 100,000 km, only 0.9 road incidents both involved a public bus

and held a public bus accountable. It added that a drop from 1.1 incidents per 100,000 km in 2021 had been recorded.

Some committee members attributed the drop to "the two bus companies' persistence in improving the handling of safety and adding safety measures," adding that they hope the operators can continue putting safety first and improving bus services.

Regarding daily bus services, the committee disclosed that in the first eight months, the-

re were about 8,800 bus departures per day on average, which was a 7% drop year over year. In addition, the Transport Bureau discovered that the waiting time has lengthened at certain bus stops during peak hours in the first half of the year.

While the bus operators received in the first half of the year a fair review of their services, some committee members found the review channels not very representative, as they thought bus services had improved in the said period. **AL**



Lawmaker calls for fair pay for civil servants who worked during lockdown

ANTHON LAM

A line should be drawn to equalize the compensation for civil servants who worked during the June 18 Covid-19 outbreak, lawmaker Ron Lam has advocated in his recent written enquiry.

The June 18 outbreak halted the city's activities for about 45 days, of which 10 were under almost complete lockdown. Despite all non-essential activities being suspended, some civil servants were asked to assist in disease management and support.

Lam pointed out that different bureaus or government entities have different views on the provision stated in Clause 1, Article 199 of the Macau General Regulations Governing Members of Public Administration Positions.

It is stated in the provision: "Under the circumstances that a general waiver of work is given to all workers in a governmental department due to exemption from work, orders from the Chief Executive on closure of department,



or natural disasters or severe weather conditions, workers who work due to vocational necessity are compensated by deduction from normal working hours. The number of hours to be deducted being equal to the number of hours of work performed, but not ex-

ceeding the worker's normal daily working hours."

The difference in the interpretation of the said provision has, Lam said, resulted in the difference in arrangements in choosing between a working hours waiver or overtime compensation. He

thus questioned the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) as to whether it would clarify the manner in which this matter should be handled.

On the other hand, some civil servants have been offered the option of conducting a working

hours waiver, but were abruptly asked to work extra hours to compensate for the waived working hours.

Lam was told by complainants that the confusing arrangements had made a severe negative impact on morale. Therefore, he asked the SAFP if it would proactively contact all governmental departments to ensure that all of them made legal and fair arrangements with respect to the matter.

He also pointed out that governmental chiefs have differing interpretations on "general waiver of work" as in the law. Hence, he asked the SAFP if it would give a clear definition of this, adding that the lawmaking record at the parliament has no mention of it.

Similar to the multitude of occasions on which lawmakers discussed topics and happenings related to the June 18 outbreak, the lawmaker did not forget to express his "sincere gratitude to the diligent, obliging and resilient civil servants who offered their services during the outbreak."

AD

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RUSSIA SEEKS CLOSER SECURITY TIES WITH CHINA AS KEY GOAL

VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV,
MOSCOW

A top Russian security official declared yesterday on a visit to China that the Kremlin considers beefing up ties with Beijing as a top policy goal.

Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of the national Security Council chaired by Russian President Vladimir Putin, described the "strengthening of comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation with Beijing as an unconditional priority of Russia's foreign policy."

Patrushev is one of Putin's closest associates. Speaking during a meeting with Guo Shengkun, a top official of China's Communist Party, he said "in the current conditions, our countries must show even greater readiness for mutual support and development of cooperation."

Patrushev's office said in a terse statement after the talks in the Chinese city of Nanping that the parties agreed to "expand information exchanges on countering extremism and foreign attempts to undermine the constitutional



order of both countries in order to derail independent policies of Russia and China serving their national interests."

The Chinese and Russian officials also emphasized a need to expand cooperation on cybersecurity and strengthen contacts

between their law enforcement agencies on fighting terrorism.

The statement didn't offer any further details of prospective cooperation.

Putin met with Chinese President Xi Jinping last week in Uzbekistan, their first encoun-

ter since the Russian leader sent troops into Ukraine in late February.

A Chinese government statement issued after the meeting didn't specifically mention Ukraine but said Xi promised "strong support" for Russia's "core interes-

ts." Beijing uses "core interests" to describe issues such as national sovereignty and the ruling Communist Party's claim to Taiwan, over which it is willing to go to war.

Xi's government, which said it had a "no-limits" friendship with Moscow before the Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, has refused to criticize Russia's military actions. China and India both have increased their imports of Russian oil and gas, helping Moscow offset Western sanctions imposed over its actions in Ukraine.

During his meeting with Xi on Thursday, Putin praised China's president for maintaining a "balanced" approach to the Ukrainian crisis and said he was ready to discuss Beijing's "concerns" about Ukraine.

Putin's rare mention of Chinese worries came as the impact of volatile oil prices and economic uncertainty due to almost seven months of fighting in Ukraine has caused anxiety in China.

Xi and Putin met on the sidelines of the eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a security alliance created as a counterweight to U.S. influence that also includes India, Pakistan and four ex-Soviet nations in Central Asia. **MDT/AP**

STRAIT TENSIONS

China criticizes Biden's support for Taiwan

JOE MCDONALD,
BEIJING

CHINA'S government yesterday criticized President Joe Biden's statement that American forces would defend Taiwan if Beijing tries to invade as a violation of U.S. commitments about the self-ruled island, but gave no indication of possible retaliation.

Biden said "yes" when asked during an interview broadcast Sunday on CBS News's "60 Minutes" program whether "U.S. forces, U.S. men and women, would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion."

The comment added to displays of official American support for the island democracy in the face of growing shows of force by the mainland's ruling Communist Party, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory.

Without citing Biden by name, a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said the "U.S. remarks" violate Washington's com-



U.S. President Joe Biden waves as first lady Jill Biden watches standing at the top of the steps of Air Force One before boarding at Andrews Air Force Base, last week

mitment not to support formal independence for Taiwan, a step Beijing has said would lead to war.

"China strongly deplores and rejects it and has made solemn complaints with the U.S. side," said the spokeswoman, Mao Ning.

CBS News reported the White House said after the interview U.S. policy hasn't changed. That policy says Washington

wants to see Taiwan's status resolved peacefully but doesn't say whether U.S. forces might be sent in response to a Chinese attack.

Tension is rising following efforts by Chinese President Xi Jinping's government to intimidate Taiwan by firing missiles into the nearby sea and flying fighter jets toward the island after visits to Taipei by political figu-

res including U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Mao called on Washington to "handle Taiwan-related issues prudently" and "not to send any wrong signals" to supporters of Taiwan independence "to avoid further damage to China-U.S. relations and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait."

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war that ended with the Com-

munist Party in control of the mainland. The two governments say they are one country but dispute which is entitled to be the national leader.

"We will do our utmost to strive for the prospect of peaceful reunification with the utmost sincerity, while we will not tolerate any activities aimed at splitting China and reserve the option to take all necessary measures," Mao said.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry expressed "sincere gratitude" to Biden for "affirming the U.S. government's rock-solid promise of security to Taiwan."

Taiwan will "resist authoritarian expansion and aggression" and "deepen the close security partnership" with Washington and other governments "with similar thinking" to protect regional stability, the statement said.

Washington is obligated by federal law to see that Taiwan has the means to defend itself but doesn't say whether U.S. forces would be sent. The United

States has no formal relations with the island but maintains informal diplomatic ties.

The Communist Party has persuaded most foreign governments to switch official recognition to Beijing, though many maintain informal ties have extensive trade and investment relations with Taiwan. The island's official diplomatic partners are mostly small, poor nations in Africa and Latin America.

"Taiwan is an inalienable part of China," Mao said. "The government of the People's Republic of China is the only legal government representing the whole of China."

Washington says it doesn't support formal independence for Taiwan, a stance Biden repeated in the interview broadcast Sunday.

"Taiwan makes their own judgments about their independence," the president said. "We're not encouraging their being independent."

In May, Biden said "yes" when asked at a news conference in Tokyo whether he was willing to get involved militarily to defend Taiwan if China invaded. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



People from flood-affected areas wait to get free food distributed by a charity, in Chachro, near Tharparkar, a district of southern Sindh province, Pakistan, yesterday

In hopeful sign, Pakistan says no new flood deaths in three days

MUNIR AHMED, ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN said yesterday there have been no fatalities for the past three days from the deadly floods that engulfed the country since mid-June, a hopeful sign that the nation is turning a corner on the disaster.

Since the start of the unprece-

dent monsoon rains and flooding, 1,545 people have died and thousands more have been injured. The floods have affected 33 million people, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. Swelling waters have swept away villages, roads and bridges, and at one point inundated a third of Pakistan's territory.

In the aftermath of the de-

vastation, doctors and medical workers are battling the increase in waterborne diseases and other infections, and struggling to treat the sick and deliver medicines, food supplies and tents to people displaced by the floods.

The National Disaster Management Authority said the waters have now returned to normal levels in all rivers, lakes and reser-

voirs. Experts have said the flooding was worsened by climate change.

According to the provincial health department in Sindh, the country's worst-hit province, a total of 68,418 patients were registered there on Sunday. Hundreds of villages in Sindh remain under water. Last week, doctors said they treated 90,000 patients

at medical and makeshift camps across the province.

Most of the patients, mainly women and children, suffer from waterborne diseases, skin infections and dengue fever, the Sindh health department said. Among those killed by the floods in Pakistan this summer were 552 children and 315 women.

Last week, the U.N. children's agency said more deaths from diseases can be avoided by ensuring medical facilities in flood-affected areas were adequately supplied.

"I have been in flood-affected areas ... the situation for families is beyond bleak, and the stories I heard paint a desperate picture," said Abdullah Fadil, the UNICEF representative in Pakistan, adding that young mothers were exhausted or ill and unable to breastfeed their babies.

"All of us on the ground see malnourished children, battling diarrhea and malaria, dengue fever, and many with painful skin conditions," Fadil added. "A lot of the mothers are anemic and malnourished themselves and have very low-weight babies."

Fadil has said the floods have affected 16 million children. Pakistani authorities have set up more than 13,000 medical camps in flood-hit areas in Sindh.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, who is in New York to attend the gathering of world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly, urged the international community to send more help to flood victims. Sharif is expected to make another appeal for help at the U.N. event. **MDT/AP**

US aircraft carrier to visit S. Korea amid N. Korean threats

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

AU.S. aircraft carrier is to visit South Korea this week for its first joint training with South Korean warships in five years, officials said yesterday, in an apparent show of force against increasing North Korean nuclear threats.

The USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier and its battle group will arrive at a southeastern South Korean naval base on Friday for a combined training meant to boost the allies' military readiness and to show "the firm resolve by the Korea-U.S. alliance for the sake of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula," the South Korean navy said in a statement.

It would be the first such joint drills involving a U.S. aircraft carrier near the peninsula since 2017, when the U.S. sent three aircraft carriers including the Rea-

gan for naval drills with South Korea in response to North Korean nuclear and missile tests, according to the South Korean Defense Ministry.

The carrier's arrival comes after North Korea recently passed a new law designed to authorize the preemptive use of nuclear weapons in certain conditions, in a move that apparently shows its increasingly aggressive nuclear doctrine. Earlier this year, the North test-launched a slew of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles capable of reaching both the U.S. mainland and South Korea.

Some experts say the North Korean moves clearly suggest it's not interested in returning to denuclearization talks until the United States and others recognize it as a nuclear state. They say North Korea needs such a recognition for arms control negotiations with its ri-

vals and to get sanctions relief and other concessions while maintaining some of its nuclear weapons.

After a meeting in Washington last week, senior U.S. and South Korean officials said in a statement that "any (North Korean) nuclear attack would be met with an overwhelming and decisive response." The statement said the United States reiterated "its ironclad and unwavering commitment to draw on the full range of its military capabilities, including nuclear (one)" to provide extended deterrence to South Korea.

The U.S. and South Korean officials also highlighted that the upcoming deployment of the Reagan Carrier Strike Group in the region is a clear demonstration of U.S. security commitment, according to the joint statement. It



The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) is escorted into Busan port, South Korea, after completing a joint drill with the South Korean military on Oct. 21, 2017

was the allies' first such meeting since early 2018.

To cope with North Korean nuclear threats, South Korea has been building and purchasing an array of high-tech missiles, stealth jets and other conventional weapons. But it has

no nuclear weapons and is under the protection of a U.S. "nuclear umbrella," which guarantees a devastating American response in the event of an attack on its ally. About 28,500 U.S. troops are deployed in South Korea.

The USS Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group were initially supposed to come to South Korea on Thursday, but its arrival date was changed due to bad weather including a typhoon, the South Korean navy said. **MDT/AP**

US

Biden: Classified documents at Mar-a-Lago raise concerns

COLLEEN LONG,
WASHINGTON

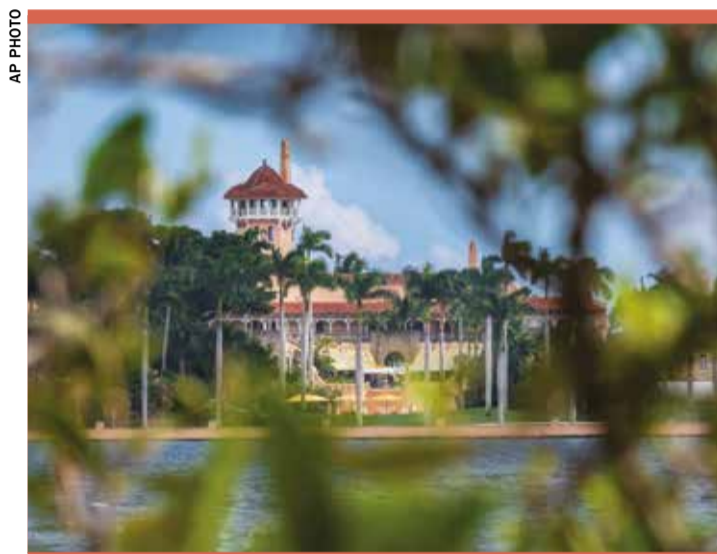
PRESIDENT Joe Biden says the discovery of top-secret documents at former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate raised concerns that sensitive data was compromised and called it "irresponsible."

Biden, who rarely does interviews, spoke to CBS' "60 Minutes" in a segment that aired Sunday. He said that when he heard about classified documents taken from the White House, he wondered how "anyone could be that irresponsible."

Biden added: "And I thought, what data was in there that may compromise sources and methods?"

The president said he did not get a heads-up before the Trump estate was searched, and he has not asked for any specifics "because I don't want to get myself in the middle of whether or not the Justice Department should move or not move on certain actions they could take."

The FBI says it took about 11,000 documents, including roughly 100 with classification markings found in a storage room and an office, while serving a court-authorized search warrant at the home on Aug. 8. Weeks after the search, Trump lawyers asked a judge to appoint a special master to conduct an independent review of the records.



AP PHOTO

The warrant says federal agents were investigating potential violations of three different federal laws, including one that governs gathering, transmitting or losing defense information under the Espionage Act.

Biden told "60 Minutes" that when he heard about classified documents being taken from the White House, he wondered how "anyone could be that irresponsible."

"And I thought what data was in there that may compromise sources and methods?"

In the wide-ranging interview, the president wouldn't commit to running for reelection in 2024, though he's said in the past that he planned to.

"My intention, as I said to begin with, is that I would run again," he said. "But it's just an intention. But is it a firm decision that I run again? That remains to be seen."

Biden was asked about

growing concerns that Russia's efforts to seize Ukraine could inspire China's leader Xi Jinping to attack Taiwan. The island has been recognized by the U.S. as part of China but has its own democratic government. Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin met last week.

Biden again said the U.S. forces would respond "if in fact there was an unprecedented attack."

White House officials later said the official U.S. policy had not changed, and would not say whether American forces would be called to defend Taiwan. Biden has made the claim before, but the statements come at an increasingly tense time for U.S.-China relations, particularly after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip there last month.

Beijing sees official American contact with Taiwan as encouragement to make the

island's decades-old de facto independence permanent, a step Biden and other U.S. leaders say they don't support.

The president said the U.S. commitment to Ukraine was "ironclad" and would remain so "as long as it takes." Ukrainian troops are engaged in a counteroffensive that has reclaimed towns and cities from Russian troops. But the toll the war has taken is vast, and fresh atrocities are being revealed, including torture chambers and mass graves. Since January 2021, the U.S. has given more than \$13.5 billion in security assistance to Ukraine.

In the same hour, "60 Minutes" also aired an interview with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who will be speaking to the U.N. General Assembly in New York this coming week. Raisi echoed standard Iranian lines about the status of currently stalled nuclear talks with world powers. He said the United States is not trustworthy and demanded guarantees that the U.S. would not withdraw from a deal as President Donald Trump did in 2018.

Raisi said he had no plans to meet with Biden on the sidelines of the U.N. event as it would serve no purpose, although he reiterated that Iran is willing to discuss prisoner exchanges with the United States. He also defended his country's anti-Israel stance and said Tehran was committed to pursuing "justice" for the Trump administration's assassination of a top Iranian military commander. **MDT/AP**

quest for comment.

The industrial complex that includes the Pivdennoukrainsk nuclear plant sits along the Southern Bug River about 300 kilometers south of the capital, Kyiv. The attack caused the temporary shutdown of a nearby hydropower plant and shattered more than 100 windows at the complex, Energoatom said.

Ukraine's presidential office said the attack also severed three power transmission lines.

The nuclear plant is Ukraine's second-largest after the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which is Europe's largest and has repeatedly come under fire. The two plants have reactors of the same design. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1967 QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 TAKES TO THE WAVES



The Queen has launched the new Cunard cruise liner named after her, the Queen Elizabeth 2, at a ceremony on the Clydebank.

Tens of thousands of people crowded the river's banks as the Queen appeared on a platform high against the bow of the 963 ft (293.5 metres) long liner, with Prince Philip and Princess Margaret by her side.

In clear tones, she pronounced: "I name this ship Queen Elizabeth the Second. May God bless her and all who sail in her."

She then pressed the launching button, and a bottle of champagne shattered against the huge bows of the ship.

After a pause, the ship began her journey down into the water. She began slowly, but soon gathered speed, hitting 22mph (34.4 kph) before she entered the water stern-first.

A two-foot (0.6m) high wave rose up and travelled across the Clyde, announcing the arrival of Cunard's latest - and probably last - great luxury cruise ship to be built here.

Her launch comes just a few days after Cunard's other great liner, the Queen Mary, made her last transatlantic crossing to New York.

The 58,000-ton QE2 is now Cunard's only big cruise ship.

Since the early 1950s, when cruise liners carried over a million passengers a year across the Atlantic, sea traffic has almost halved to around 600,000 journeys.

By contrast, the airlines are now carrying over five million people each year.

Shipping companies like Cunard are increasingly turning to the pleasure cruise market as their main source of income.

The new QE2 will be fitted out with just this market in mind, with big deck spaces and four swimming pools.

There are nearly 1,000 cabins, restaurants on the upper decks with sea views, cocktail bars, night clubs and a theatre.

The mammoth liners, like the original Queen Elizabeth and the Queen Mary, were built for speed rather than luxury, and in using them for long, leisurely cruises Cunard has been losing money fast.

The company is hoping to reverse that trend with its first giant cruise ship to be targeted exclusively at the leisure market.

Courtesy BBC News

PUTIN'S WAR

UKRAINE WARNS OF 'NUCLEAR TERRORISM' AFTER STRIKE NEAR PLANT

KARL RITTER & JON GAMBRELL, KYIV

ARussian missile struck close to a nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine without damaging the three reactors but hit other industrial equipment yesterday in what Ukrainian authorities denounced as an act of "nuclear terrorism."

The strike followed warnings from Russian President Vladimir Putin of possible stepped-up attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure after his forces

suffered humiliating battlefield setbacks. It also renewed fears of a possible radioactive disaster in the nearly 7-month-long war.

The missile struck within 300 meters of reactors at the Pivdennoukrainsk plant, also known as the South Ukraine Nuclear Power Plant, blasting a crater 2 meters deep and 4 meters across, according to Ukrainian nuclear operator Energoatom.

Black-and-white CCTV footage released by Ukraine's Mi-

nistry of Defense showed two large fireballs erupting one after the other in the dark, followed by incandescent showers of sparks. A time stamp on the video read 19 minutes after midnight.

The ministry and Energoatom both called the strike "nuclear terrorism." The Russian Defense Ministry had no immediate comment. The United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, did not immediately respond to a re-

IN CONTEXT

The QE2 made her maiden voyage to New York on 2 May 1969.

She became the company's flagship, and one of the most famous cruise liners in the world. After extensive refits over the years she is now a byword for the ultimate in luxury at sea.

In 1982, she was requisitioned by the British government as a troop transport vessel during the Falklands War.

She was eventually the only ship offering a regularly scheduled transatlantic service.

She began her last season of sailings to New York in 2003 and was replaced in 2004 by Cunard's biggest passenger liner, the Queen Mary 2. The QM2 has also replaced the QE2 as flagship of the British merchant fleet.

The leisure cruise market is now big business, and after 40 years in the doldrums, shipyards are again building massive 50,000- to 80,000- tonne ships.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Relationships may be hard to handle. If they're really interested, they'll wait. Be prepared to neutralize any threats.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

You must refrain from overpending on entertainment. They didn't fully understand what was expected. You'll have great insight.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You may want to take a look at your direction in life. Get thinking about prolonging longevity. Your talents are likely to be discovered.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

All your energy should be directed into moneymaking opportunities. Avoid any confrontations with colleagues. If you join intellectual or cultural groups, you should meet individuals who stimulate you.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Your health may have suffered due to neglect or abuse. You need to keep everyone on your domestic scene too busy to complain. You could make extra cash through creative hobbies.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Don't let others put unreasonable demands on you. Someone close to you may need help. You may have problems with skin, bones, or teeth if you haven't been taking proper care of yourself.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Financial gains can be made. Your generous nature could be taken advantage of. Get the whole family involved in a worthwhile cause or cultural event.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Social activities will be satisfying. Your interest in religion and philosophy may lead you to specific destinations. Your energetic nature and ability to initiate projects will add to your popularity.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You can get a promotion if you put in a little extra detail. You just hate waste, and when someone else costs you dearly you see red. Lovers may no be truthful.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Real estate investments could be to your advantage. You will meet potential new mates through friends or relatives. Don't allow personal problems to conflict with professional duties.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You're in the mood to get out and visit friends. However, be careful with luggage; it may be rerouted. Be careful when dealing with female members of your family.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

If you are in the midst of a financial deal, this is your lucky day. Do you really want to start something with someone you can't reason with? You will be able to communicate well today.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

CHINA

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
Beijing	13	26	fine
Changchun	3	16	fine
Chengdu	18	21	rain
Chongqing	25	27	rain
Fuzhou	24	33	fine
Guangzhou	26	35	thunderstorms
Guiyang	19	27	cloudy
Haikou	25	31	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	19	26	cloudy
Harbin	5	16	fine
Hefei	17	22	overcast
Nanjing	17	23	cloudy
Shanghai	20	26	cloudy
Taipei	23	28	cloudy
Wuhan	21	25	overcast
Hong Kong	28	32	showers

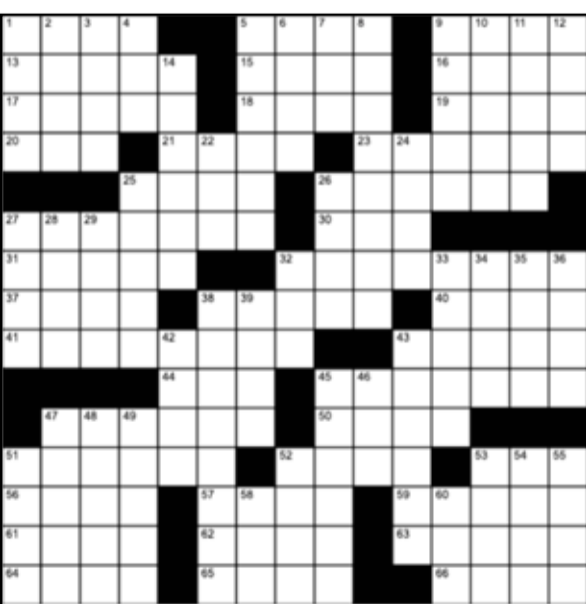
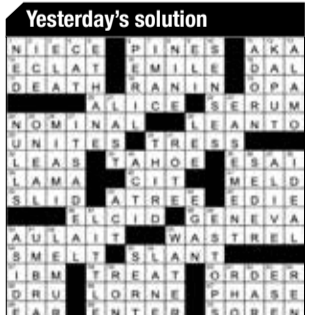
WORLD

Moscow	6	15	cloudy
Frankfurt	6	17	overcast
Paris	9	19	overcast
London	9	19	overcast
New York	17	27	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Haunted house sound; 5- Icelandic epic; 9- Poet Teasdale; 13- Disguised, briefly; 15- Metric unit of mass; 16- Small songbird; 17- Blank look; 18- Wife of a rajah; 19- Sacramento's ___ Arena; 20- Rocky peak; 21- Champagne name; 23- The land of promise; 25- Smithereens; 26- Substitute kept in reserve; 27- Quantities; 30- Notebook maker; 31- Artist Rousseau; 32- Man who sells goods; 37- Away from the wind; 38- Break off; 40- Scrabble piece; 41- Place for marbles; 43- Type of ray; 44- Heston's org.; 45- Most gruesome; 47- Dark suit; 50- In the neighborhood; 51- Solid alcohol; 52- NASA launch vehicle; 53- Biol., e.g.; 56- OPEC member; 57- Vogue rival; 59- Attach, as a patch; 61- Polynesian carving; 62- Barflies; 63- Long; 64- Freelancer's encl.; 65- Chimney residue; 66- Organs used for sight;

DOWN 1- Atomizer output; 2- Aware of; 3- Rent-___; 4- And not; 5- Way out; 6- Fiddlesticks!; 7- Son of Jacob; 8- Friendly; 9- Style; 10- Chilean pianist Claudio; 11- Summarize; 12- Presently; 14- Third sign of the zodiac; 22- Slugger Mel; 24- Pinnacle; 25- Graduated glass tube; 26- Prejudice; 27- Cries of discovery; 28- Dissolve; 29- Draft classification; 32- Express; 33- Flight segment; 34- Jester; 35- Charity; 36- Cool; 38- Inattentive; 39- Periods of history; 42- Word processing command; 43- Like expressionless eyes; 45- Troubled state; 46- "Fancy that!"; 47- Ridge; 48- Mountains; 49- Golfer with an army; 51- Takes a load off; 52- Choir member; 53- Convince; 54- An apple or a planet will have this at the centre; 55- Hostelries; 58- John in England; 60- Extra-wide shoe size;



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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- CHUN LEONG | 1 BEDS HKD6,800
- BUCKINGHAM | 2 BEDS HKD13,900
- HELLENE G. | 3 BEDS HKD12,500
- NAM LONG | 1 BED HKD 8,500
- COLOANE V. | 1 BED HKD 9,300
- COLOANE V. | 2 BEDS HKD 10,500
- COLOANE V. | 2 BEDS HKD10,000

FOR SALE

- JADE GARDEN | 4 BEDS HKD15,380,000
- NOVA TAIPA | 4 BEDS HKD12,880,000
- BAI YUEN GRD. | 3 BEDS HKD12,800,000
- MANHATTAN | 3 BEDS HKD12,980,000
- 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 HKD10,800,000

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GAMING

NJ CASINO, ONLINE, SPORTS BETTING REVENUE UP 10% IN AUGUST

WAYNE PARRY,
ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.

NEW Jersey's casinos, horse tracks that offer sports betting and the online partners of both types of gambling outlets won \$470.6 million from gamblers in August, up more than 10% from a year earlier, according to figures released Friday by state gambling regulators.

The amount of money won from in-person gamblers at casinos was nearly \$274 million, up 4.4% from a year earlier. But that total still lagged behind the level of August 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic hit, when the total was more than \$286 million.

Returning to pre-pandemic levels for in-person gamblers has been the main goal of Atlantic City's nine casinos, regardless of the fact that money from internet and sports betting continues to grow.

Those revenue streams are misleading, casino executives say, because casinos do not get to keep all that money; it must be shared with third parties



including tech platforms and sportsbooks. By some estimates, as much as 70% of internet and sports betting money is not retained by the casinos.

"It has been a great summer for Atlantic City and the region," said James Plousis, chairman of the New Jersey Casino Control

Commission. "The recent efforts to create impressive in-person experiences will continue to provide positive momentum going into the fall."

Comparing results from the three summer months to the same period last year, Atlantic City's casino winnings grew more

than 6% and total gambling revenue exceeded \$1.2 billion, up 9%, Plousis said.

Jane Bokunewicz, director of the Lloyd Levenson Institute at Stockton University, which studies the Atlantic City casino industry, called the casinos' August performance "a solid showing."

She noted that in-person casino winnings, while trailing the pre-pandemic level of August 2019, still exceeded every other August since 2015.

"The relatively slow growth of brick-and-mortar gaming revenues compared to the increasing contribution of internet gaming to total revenue could potentially suggest a change in consumer behavior that doesn't cannibalize in-person gaming but includes significant internet gaming activity," she said. "A decreased reliance on exclusively in-person gaming activity has the potential to keep the New Jersey casino industry competitive with its neighbors and make it more resilient to market disruptions that might potentially occur in the future."

For the month of August, five of the nine casinos reported increases in the amount of money won compared to a year earlier. They are: Borgata (\$120.7 million, up over 29%); Hard Rock (nearly \$54 million, up 2.8%); the Ocean Casino Resort (nearly \$40 million, up nearly 14%); Bally's (just over \$20 million, up nearly 30%); and Resorts (\$18.7 million, up 0.2%).

Four casinos reported revenue declines compared with a year earlier. They are: Golden Nugget (\$44.5 million, down 2.7%); Tropicana (\$35.1 million, down 7.8%); Harrah's (just over \$25 million, down 10.4%); and Caesars (just over \$22 million, down nearly 13%).

The Borgata had its second-best month ever in August, trailing only the \$124 million it won from gamblers in July. Both those figures represent the highest totals ever achieved by an Atlantic City casino since legal gambling began here in 1978.

Among internet-only entities, Resorts Digital won \$43.5 million, up nearly 26%, and Caesars Interactive NJ won \$8.9 million, down 10%.

For the first eight months of this year, the casinos, tracks and their partners have collectively won \$3.38 billion, up 13.2% from the same period last year. MDT/AP

AD

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馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata °
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

BASKETBALL

Las Vegas Aces win first WNBA title, Chelsea Gray named MVP

PAT EATON-ROBB & UNCASVILLE, CONN.

LAS Vegas never had a professional sports champion — until Sunday.

Chelsea Gray scored 20 points to lead the Las Vegas Aces to their first WNBA title, and the city's first pro title, in a 78-71 road win over the Connecticut Sun in Game 4.

Gray went 9 of 13 from the floor, and was named Finals MVP after averaging 18.3 points in the series.

Vegas finished on an 8-0 run. As the buzzer sounded, league MVP A'ja Wilson, who played every minute of the game, grabbed the ball and stomped the floor before being mobbed by her teammates.

"We champs! We champs! We champs!" Wilson screamed at teammates as they pulled on their championship hats and T-shirts before the trophy ceremony.

Riquna Williams had 17 points



Las Vegas Aces' Chelsea Gray (12) goes up for a basket as Connecticut Sun's DeWanna Bonner, left, and Brionna Jones (42) defend during the second half in Game 4 of a WNBA basketball final playoff series, Sunday

for Vegas, Kelsey Plum added 16 points, Jackie Young had 13 and Wilson added 11 points to go with her 14 rebounds.

Wilson hopes this is just the beginning for the franchise.

"You see it. You see it," Wilson said in the on-court celebration. "This is what we're building. This is what we're doing. This is it. I'm so happy right now."

Courtney Williams had 17

points to lead Connecticut and Alyssa Thomas had her second straight triple-double with 11 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds. Jonquel Jones added 13 points and DeWanna Bonner had 12.

"When you come up short it certainly, really hurts," Sun coach Curt Miller said. "But that means that there was something that mattered, and something special among that group of players."

For Aces coach Becky Hammon, who didn't get a title in her standout WNBA career, the ring completed a decades-long quest. She left an assistant coach position with Gregg Popovich and the San Antonio Spurs to take over in Las Vegas. The move paid off.

"They're unbelievable on the court, but they're unbelievable humans, first and foremost," Hammon said. "They care about each other. They invest in each other. It's been an absolute honor to be their coach. I saw excellence and I wanted to be a part of it."

Hammon also paid tribute to former Aces coach Bill Laimbeer, who was on the floor for the ceremony: "He put this team together and saw the pieces."

Aces owner Mark Davis, who also owns the NFL's Las Vegas Raiders, wasn't with his football team Sunday. He was in Connecticut to get a trophy. He hoisted it, then turned it over to gleeful players who did the same.

"Las Vegas, we are world champions," Davis said.

The Aces led by two points at the half and four points after three quarters. They held a six-point lead in the fourth when Plum was called for a flagrant foul after running into Bonner while the Sun guard was attempting a 3-pointer and sending her to the floor holding her right ankle.

Bonner hit all three free throws before Jones' short jumper cut the lead to a point. The Sun then tied the game at 67 on free throw by Courtney Williams and took a 71-70 lead on two fouls shots from Brionna Jones.

But Las Vegas had the answers.


Riquna Williams 3-pointer put the Aces back on top and Gray's step-back jumper extended the lead back to 75-71 with under a minute left. A'ja Wilson then stole a pass and Plum hit a short jump shot to secure the win. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

TRAGIC IGNORING OF SCIENCE DURING PANDEMIC

In its report released on Wednesday, the Lancet COVID-19 Commission, drawing on more than two years of work from over 170 global experts, painted a lamentable picture of how many members of the world community failed to timely and effectively respond to the pandemic, resulting in “millions of preventable deaths”.

“This staggering death toll is both a profound tragedy and a massive global failure on multiple levels,” said the report.

The report highlights slow and cautious responses from governments, misinformation, unbalanced vaccine distribution and political rivalries between major countries as being contributing factors to the high death toll.

The findings of the commission deserve global attention as well as soul-searching reflection.

With countries bracing themselves for another pandemic winter, it is both valuable and critical that any past ineffectiveness and deficiencies are remedied so that the world can get this pandemic under control and be better prepared for the next one.

Of all the lessons to be learned, full recognition and true respect for science is essential. As the report correctly points out, several national leaders, former US president Donald Trump included, made highly irresponsible remarks in the first few months of the outbreak, “neglecting scientific evidence and needlessly risking lives with a view to keeping the economy open”.

The ignoring of science has also enabled a political virus to flourish. Political manipulations over the pandemic from some Western countries in such forms as stigmatization of the virus, politicization of the origin-tracing efforts and hijacking global vaccine cooperation with geopolitical competition have also severely compromised global solidarity, hindering concerted action.

The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, which has been a direct result of the wilful denial of science, has not only brought immeasurable losses and untold sufferings to humankind but also dealt a heavy blow to the global economy. It has amplified and exacerbated geopolitical competition and increased inequality and injustice, not least in the allocation of global health resources, especially vaccine distribution.

Unless the lessons are learned, there is no guarantee that the world will fare any better when the next pandemic hits. Any political calculations that lead to inefficient responses to a pandemic are tantamount to assisting the spread of the pathogen and enabling it to wreak havoc.

Rather than displaying an indifference to suffering and ignoring responsibilities in favor of political point-scoring, governments must embrace international cooperation to ensure a concerted response to any future public health emergency.

Qatar’s ambassador to Germany was urged yesterday to abolish his country’s death penalty for homosexuality at a human rights congress hosted by the German soccer federation two months before the Middle East country hosts the World Cup.

Fan representative Dario Minden switched to English to directly address the Qatari ambassador, Abdulla bin Mohammed bin Saud Al Thani, at the congress in Frankfurt.

“I’m a man and I love men,” Minden said. “I do — please don’t be shocked — have sex with other men. This is normal. So please

get used to it, or stay out of football. Because the most important rule in football is football is for everyone.”

Minden continued: “So abolish the death penalty. Abolish all of the penalties regarding sexual and gender identity. The rule that football is for everyone is so important. We cannot allow you to break it, no matter how rich you are. You are more than welcome to join the international football community and also, of course, to host a big tournament. But in sports, it is how it is. You have to accept the rules.”

AP PHOTO



LONG LIVE THE KING

QUEEN ELIZABETH II MOURNED BY BRITAIN AND WORLD AT FUNERAL

DANICA KIRKA, MIKE CORDER & SAMYA KULLAB, LONDON

BRITAIN and the world said a final goodbye to Queen Elizabeth II at a state funeral yesterday that drew presidents and kings, princes and prime ministers — and crowds who thronged the streets of London to honor a monarch whose 70-year reign defined an age.

In a country known for pomp and pageantry, the first state funeral since Winston Churchill’s was filled with spectacle: Ahead of the service, a bell tolled 96 times — once a minute for each year of Elizabeth’s life. Then, 142 Royal Navy sailors used ropes to draw the gun carriage carrying her flag-draped coffin to Westminster Abbey before pallbearers bore it inside the church, where around 2,000 people ranging from world leaders to health care workers gathered to mourn her.

The trappings of state and monarchy abounded: The coffin was draped with the Royal Standard and atop it sat the Imperial State Crown, sparkling

with almost 3,000 diamonds, and the sovereign’s orb and scepter.

But the personal was also present: The coffin was followed into the church by generations of Elizabeth’s descendants, including King Charles III, heir to the throne Prince William and 9-year-old George, who is second in line. On a wreath atop the coffin, a handwritten note read, “In loving and devoted memory,” and was signed Charles R — for Rex, or king.

“Here, where Queen Elizabeth was married and crowned, we gather from across the nation, from the Commonwealth, and from the nations of the world, to mourn our loss, to remember her long life of selfless service, and in sure confidence to commit her to the mercy of God our maker and redeemer,” the dean of the medieval abbey, David Hoyle, told the mourners, as the funeral opened.

The service drew to a close with two minutes of silence observed across the United Kingdom, after which the attendees sang the national anthem, now titled “God Save the King.”

The day began early when the doors of Parliament’s 900-year-old Westminster Hall were closed to mourners after hundreds of thousands had filed in front of her coffin.

Monday was declared a public holiday in honor of Elizabeth, who died Sept. 8 — and hundreds of thousands of people descended on central London to partake in the historic moment. They jammed the sidewalks to watch the coffin wend its way through the streets of the capital after the service. As the procession passed Buckingham Palace, the queen’s official residence in the city, staff stood outside, some bowing and curtsying.

More people lined the route the hearse took from the capital to Windsor Castle, and many threw flowers at the convoy as it passed, some of which rested on top of the vehicle. Millions more people tuned into the funeral live on television, and crowds flocked to parks and public spaces across the U.K. to watch it on screens. Even the Google doodle turned a respectful black for the day. MDT/AP

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania closed their borders yesterday to most Russian citizens in response to the wide domestic support in Russia for the war in Ukraine. Under the coordinated travel ban, Russians wishing to travel to the Baltic countries and to Poland as tourists or for business, sports or cultural purposes will not be allowed in even if they hold valid visas for the European Union’s checks-free Schengen Area.

Swiss officials yesterday formally signed a procurement contract to acquire three dozen F-35 fighter jets from the United States as part of a planned refurbishment of Switzerland’s air force that has run afoul of critics of the big defense purchase, the government said. The head of Switzerland’s armaments service and F-35A program director inked the procurement deal that is to cost just over 6 billion Swiss francs for the planes that will be delivered between 2027 and 2030.

AP PHOTO



EU A dozen environmental groups are starting legal challenges against the European Union’s executive branch in a bid to stop the inclusion of natural gas and nuclear power generation in the bloc’s list of sustainable activities. European Union lawmakers in July voted to add natural gas and nuclear to the list, backing a proposal from the European Commission that has been drawing fierce criticism and accusations of greenwashing.

AP PHOTO



Germany Volkswagen has set the price range for the multibillion-euro sale of a minority stake in luxury brand Porsche as it prepares an initial public offering to fund VW’s investments in new technologies and businesses including electric cars, software and services. The German automaker said it aims for a listing on the Frankfurt stock exchange on Sept. 29 after it places up to 25% of non-voting preferred shares in Porsche AG, maker of the 911 sports car and Cayenne SUV, with investors.