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**SCIENCE WORKERS IN THE SAR HAVE RESPONDED TO PAYLOAD SPECIALIST SELECTION FOR CHINA'S MANNED SPACE PROGRAM**

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**CONSTRUCTION OF THE LRT BARRA STATION HAS SUFFERED A DELAY AND THE STATION WILL NOT BE COMPLETED UNTIL MARCH 2023**

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AP PHOTO



**Philippine** police killed three detained militants linked to the Islamic State group after they staged a jail rampage yesterday that saw a police officer stabbed and a former opposition senator briefly held hostage in a failed escape attempt from the maximum-security facility in the police headquarters in the capital, police said. National police chief Gen. Rodolfo Azurin Jr. said former Sen. Leila de Lima was unhurt and taken to a hospital for a checkup following the brazen escape attempt and hostage-taking at the detention center for high-profile inmates at the main police camp in Metropolitan Manila.

**Iran** Anti-government demonstrations erupted this weekend in several locations across Iran as the most sustained protests in years against a deeply entrenched theocracy entered their fourth week. At least two people were killed. Marchers chanted anti-government slogans and twirled headscarves in repudiation of coercive religious dress codes. In some areas, merchants shuttered shops in response to a call by activists for a commercial strike or to protect their wares from damage.

AP PHOTO



**Russia** An explosion Saturday caused the partial collapse of a bridge linking the Crimean Peninsula with Russia, damaging an important supply artery for the Kremlin's faltering war effort in southern Ukraine and hitting a towering symbol of Russian power in the region. Nobody immediately claimed responsibility for the blast, which killed three people. The speaker of the Russian-backed regional parliament in Crimea accused Ukraine, but Moscow didn't apportion blame. Ukrainian officials have repeatedly threatened to strike the bridge, and some lauded the destruction on Saturday.

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# GOLDEN JUMP-START

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**INTERNATIONAL MARATHON REGISTRATION FULL**

Registration is full for the mini marathon category of the 2022 Galaxy Entertainment Macao International Marathon, organizers announced yesterday. All places for the marathon and half marathon categories were filled Saturday. The Active Group Trophies will be awarded to the school, sports association, government-registered organization, and public and private entities with the highest number of participants who complete the mini-marathon. A total of 12,000 entries were made available for the registration of athletes of all levels and the three racing distances, with the larger portion (5,800) reserved for the mini-marathon. 4,800 entries were available for the half-marathon distance and the remaining 1,400 for the full marathon.

**ALVIN CHAU DISPOSES OF SHARES IN YEAH YEAH GROUP**

Alvin Chau disposed of his shares in the former Sun Entertainment Group Ltd., totaling 731 million shares valued at HKD0.030 per share after the close on Friday. Currently known as Yeah Yeah Group Holdings Ltd, the firm said it was "not aware of the identities of the counterparties" involved in the disposals conducted by Chau, "or of their respective principal business activities." With the reduction of his holdings, Chau now has a 2.17% shareholding, down 37.04% from before the disposal. The former mogul was arrested in November and is facing over 200 charges of fraud, money laundering and illegal gambling.

**RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PRICE ON DECLINE**

The overall residential property price index for June - August 2022 decreased 1.4% over the previous period (May - July 2022) to 254.8. The indices for the Peninsula (255.1) and Taipa and Coloane (253.9) fell 1.6% and 0.2% respectively, Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) data shows. The index for existing residential units (272.5) fell 1.3%; the index for those in the Macao Peninsula (265.0) fell 1.6% while the index for those in Taipa and Coloane (302.7) rose 0.1%. Realtor Centaline recently predicted real estate prices will remain low despite the expectation of better tourism prospects. Government data shows property prices have steadily fallen 2% to 3% in the past two months.

# LOCAL SCHOLARS JOIN PAYLOAD SPECIALIST SELECTION FOR MANNED SPACE PROGRAM

**SCIENCE** workers in the SAR have responded to payload specialist selection for the country's manned space program.

The selection, announced last week, was held in Macau for the first time, aiming to select specialists who will undertake scientific research and experiments in space and operate the space laboratory equipment.

William Chong Hang Chao, associate professor at the Faculty of Health Sciences of University of Macao (UM), has submitted his application for the selection after checking the requirements.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority, the target candidates are required to be healthy Chinese nationals aged between 30 and 45 who are Macau permanent residents with a doctoral degree and have engaged themselves for at least three years in the research fields of medicine, biology, psychology, physics or chemistry, mechanical or electrical engineering, astronomy or other disciplines.



If selected, Chao said he wishes to carry out research on the influences of a gravity-free environment upon the body functions and histocyte of organisms so as to lay the foundation for biological research on future space travel.

Pui In Mak, acting director of the State Key Laboratory of Analog and Mixed-Signal VLSI at UM, said he is most interested in finding out how to improve broadband communication in order to make high-speed wireless communication between

the space station and the ground smoother.

Sio Weng Hong, lecturer at the Institute of Applied Physics and Materials Engineering at UM, said he would like to research influences of space radiation on the physical properties of semiconductor materials by collecting, processing, and analyze data from experiments in space.

Tang Chi Pui, associate professor at the State Key Laboratory of Lunar and Planetary Sciences at Macao University of Science and Technology, said they used to feel the chance was too slim for them to work in space.

"Now, the rare opportunity of payload specialist selection makes us better oriented and more motivated," said Tang, whose lab was China's first state key laboratory in the field of astronomy and planetary sciences and has taken part in major national deep space exploration projects. **MDT/XINHUA**

**COVID-19**

## Zhuhai's new cases lead to cross-border workers, student suspensions

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE Macau government has called on affected Macau residents to refrain from returning to work or study for the time being in response to new Covid-19 cases logged in neighboring Zhuhai.

A recent statement from the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) noted workers and students at all local schools in the affected area in Zhuhai will be exempted from work or school from October 8.

For now, phases 2



and 3 of the Huafa New City integrated estate in Nanping Township are

being strictly managed. Those living in Zhuhai but not in the affected es-

tate should limit their travel when commuting between home and school, and while on holiday.

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has released a similar statement with identical requirements. The IAS requirements concern workers and users at social welfare facilities, such as subsidized nurseries and homes for the elderly.

The government has suggested people who have been to Block 98, Phase 2 of the Huafa New City on or after October 4, or several other locations in Zhuhai, should enter

centralized quarantine.

Some will be required to test regularly on the first, second, fourth and seventh days of their departure from restricted areas in Zhuhai.

Another government statement indicated that certain preventative measures have been implemented on civil servants with a recent travel history outside of Guangdong Province or in Shenzhen. Such measures have included, but have not been limited to, two SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid tests 24-hours apart in three days.

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**Times**

**DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR** Lynzy Valles  
**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS** Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

**NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS** Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí **DESIGNER** Miguel Bandeira | **ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS** JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | **NEWS AGENCIES** Associated Press, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua **SECRETARY** Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

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**ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

**OFFICE MANAGER** Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

**ADDRESS** Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR **Telephones:** +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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182,284 VISITORS

# Gov't satisfied with Golden Week arrivals, hotel occupancy at 67%

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE October 1 to 7 National Day Holiday, also known as the "Golden Week" of the National Day, ended last Friday, with the city recording some 182,284 visitor arrivals.

Prior the Golden Week, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) announced it expected daily tourist arrival count to reach as high as 25,000, while the Travel Industry Council of Macau forecasted an average of 30,000 tourists per day.

MGTO director, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, had previously said the office had not expected "very exponential growth [when compared to September's results]."

The MGTO noted the average daily visitor count was 26,000, an increase of about 32.8% when compared with the average visitor count last month.

With last year's recorded result of only 1,166 visitors per day, this year's figure is still the best result of the last three years. In 2020, the



same period saw an average of 22,286 visitors per day (-14.3%).

Admitting its forecast was conservative, the MGTO notes visitor figures exceeded expectations.

The MGTO also noted that, over the seven-day holiday, the average occupancy rate of local hotels reached 66.7%, a figure representing an increase of 30% when compared

with the corresponding figures in September this year.

Total visitors to Macau over this period were 182,284, with the highest single-day count occurring October 1 when 37,000 people entered the region, the second highest single-day record in 2022.

With a slow recovery, the Golden Week of National Day Holi-

days is still incredibly far from the results obtained pre-pandemic (2019) when, in the same period, Macau received almost one million visitors with a daily average of around 140,000 people entering the region.

For the MGTO, the results obtained this year suggest there is a "gradual restoration of travelers'

confidence in Macau."

The entry of more visitors positively affected the hotel occupancy rate. Industry figures indicated an average occupancy rate of 66.7% among local hotels during the National Day Holiday, up 28.1% when compared with the rate in September this year. The occupancy rate on October 2 was the highest on a single day over the week, reaching 81.8%.

## PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS TO CONTINUE

Considering the results, the MGTO will continue to push for plans for different tourism products and promotional initiatives on the mainland.

According to the bureau, an "array of promotional events is mapped out for the fourth quarter," including destination presentations and consumer activities in the Greater Bay Area and mainland cities that have direct flights to Macau.

Promotions will also continue via e-marketing, with the MGTO continuing to promote Macau on platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Xiaohongshu, Douyin, travel influencers, and news websites on the mainland. These promotions will also include special offers on travel, hotels, and air tickets, launched in ongoing partnerships with e-commerce platforms.

These promotions aim to attract visitors to several festivities that will take place from October to December.

## THREE-QUARTERS OF RESIDENCY APPLICATIONS PROCESSED BY IPIM IN 1H APPROVED

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) has approved, during the first half of this year (1H), 156 temporary residency applications under the "Investment, Managerial Personnel and Special Qualifications Professionals" scheme, a statistics release from the governing entity shows.

The figure accounts for over three-quarters of all applications handled during this period (206). The majority (131) refer to applications submitted before this year.

Of the 206 applications processed, 189 were for renewals of temporary residency permits already granted. The remaining eight are applications for the extension of residency rights previously granted to family dependents. Of



these, five were granted and three were either rejected or canceled by the applicants.

In total, 50 applications were rejected or canceled by the applicants. The majority (38) related to renewals.

Nine other cases running in IPIM and submitted before this year for

new applications under the Major Investment and Special Qualifications Professionals scheme were rejected.

This means that from January to June this year, only five new temporary residency permits were conceded, all related to extensions of existing permits to family members.

## EMPLOYMENT

### YOUTH JOB FAIR SEES OVER 1,000 ENTRANTS ON FIRST DAY

**T**HE weekend's Youth Career Expo 2022 saw over 1,000 entrants on its first day, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) disclosed in a statement.

Hosted by the DSAL, the event was co-hosted by the Macao New Chinese Youth Association and the General Association of Chinese Students of Macau.

Participating employers conducted over 600 interviews on-site on the first day.

The job fair had attracted more than 70 participating companies, offering over 1,100 positions in industries such as tourism and leisure, retail, finance, information technology, and mechanical and electrical engineering, the DSAL said.

The expo hosted talks and seminars that included topics such as the opportunities within, and



the development of, the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone, job recruitment targeting Macau residents, the environment and eSports requirements in mainland China. The talks and seminars attracted about 400 attendees on the first day, the co-hosts said.

Statistics and Census

Service (DSEC) data released earlier this month indicates that the general unemployment rate (4.3%) and unemployment rate of local residents (5.5%) for the June-August 2022 period rose 0.2 and 0.1 percentage points from the previous period (May-July 2022) respectively, a record high since 2008. **AL**

ENVIRONMENT

# City records more days with poor-quality air

**M**ACAU has recorded several days of poor air quality levels in August and September, according to Meteorological and Geophysics Bureau data.

Information has shown the city faced three "unhealthy" days in August, 17 "unhealthy" days and four "very unhealthy" days.

Compared to the same period last year, the number of days with poor air quality was relatively higher, since the record last year was only three days.

According to SMG, the city's air quality is consistent with integral variations in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, particularly Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau.

In recent years, the average annual concentration of inhalable particles in suspension (PM10), fine inhalable particles in suspension (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO3), among other main pollutants, has shown a downward trend, while ozone (O3) has exhibited an upward



trend, which demonstrates that photochemical pollution in the Pearl River Delta region needs to be improved.

In this regard, the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau are carrying out a three-year study on "Photochemical O3 Pollution in the

Greater Bay Area and the characterization of regional and interregional O3 displacement" (2021-2024), to study the source of ozone precursors in the Greater Bay, the causes of ozone and the characteristics of regional and interregional transmission. LV



## LRT: BARRA 'HUB' CONSTRUCTION DELAYED TO MARCH 2023

RENATO MARQUES

**C**ONSTRUCTION of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) Barra station has suffered a delay and the station will not be completed until March 2023, the Chinese language newspaper Macao Daily reported, citing government sources.

Construction was to have been finished by November this year, but the government said the impact of the pandemic outbreak delayed the project's conclusion.

The same media report noted that the works, which started four years ago, will be delayed by 74 days, but that this will not affect the facility being opened to the public next year.

Citing the same government

source, the Chinese media outlet also stated that, besides being 2.9% behind the planned completion date, the project is also 0.7% over the initial budget.

Currently, electrical and mechanical installations and testing are occurring, while the main project and system are waiting to be tested.

Upon completed, the station will be able to receive LRT trains from Taipa's Ocean station, currently one of the terminal stations in Taipa, passing through the lower platform of the Sai Van Bridge.

This station will allow the extension of the Taipa line into the Peninsula, and is expected to include a transport hub that will link the LRT to other public transport modes such as buses and taxis.

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## TAIWAN OFFICE OFFICIALS IN MACAU SEE VISA EXTENDED

**T**wo officials working at Taiwan's office in Macau have had their working visas extended, local media outlet Jornal San Wa Ou and other Taiwanese media sources have reported.

Three people had been deployed from Taiwan to the office in Macau, according to reports citing remarks made during the island parliament's inquiry session of Chiu Tai-san, minister at the Mainland Affairs Council of Taiwan.

Two of the three have recently had their visas ex-

tended, making all three eligible to remain in Macau with valid visas.

Earlier reports noted that if their visas were not extended, the office would not have officials deployed from Taiwan by the end of this month.

The office is responsible for providing assistance to people traveling to and from Taiwan.

On June 19, 2021, the Macao Economic and Cultural Office in Taiwan ceased operations as Macau employees working at

the office could not obtain work visas.

Its then director also resigned from the position.

Chiu was also questioned about the status of the Dr. Sun Yat Sen Memorial House in Macau, currently priced at MOP30 million for sale. He said selling the premises is among several plans his office has to handle any prospective situations. According to Jornal San Wa Ou, the premises is now being held by a private company registered in Singapore. AL



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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GAMING

# Daisy Ho acquires 10% stake of SJM from Angela Leong

LYNZY VALLES

**S**JM Resorts managing director Daisy Ho has acquired a 10% stake in the company after assuming Angela Leong's former role amid management changes – a move seen as a response to the city's biggest gaming overhaul.

A document filed by the group states Ho bought the 300,000 shares for a nominal MOP1 on October 2, accounting for 10% of the entity's issued share capital.

According to the new law, the managing directors of gaming operators are required to hold 15% of its capital stock, 5% more than the previous amount.

"Ms. Ho and [lawmaker] Leong entered into an agreement to transfer the ownership of all Type B shares [300,000] in SJM Resorts to Ms. Ho from Leong for consideration of MOP1 for compliance

with the requirement," the gaming operator said in a statement.

Late last month, the company announced Ho would replace Leong, the group's managing director since 2011.

The move comes after incumbent gaming operators submitted bids on or before September 14, seeking to secure a fresh gaming concession slated to operate from January 1, 2023.

The company registry, which the Times reviewed, states Leong was re-appointed to the position on May 27, 2022, which means she is SJM's official representative.

Her appointment, which is valid for three years until a general assembly convenes in 2025, was terminated following a decision made by the company on August 24, 2022, and filed with the official commercial registry on September 26.

SPORTS

# 3X3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT KICKS OFF TODAY WITH OPEN, WOMEN'S GROUP

**T**HE 3x3 basketball tournament kicks off today, featuring 72 teams from the Open Group and 33 from the Women's Group.

Officially known as the Wynn Cup – 3x3 Greater Bay Area Tour, the finals of the basketball tournament will be held in Macau between October 10 and 16 at the Ruins of St. Paul, Largo do Pagode da Barra, Tap Seac Square and Wynn Palace.

The Open Group and Women's Group finals will take place from October 10 to 12, and the Greater Bay Area group finals will take place from October 14 to 16.

The main difference between this year's tournament and last year's is that the scale of this year's event has been expanded to include matches in each of the nine major cities in the Greater Bay Area, before the tournament finals are held in Macau.

This is the second edition of the competition held last year under the same name, which was also sponsored by Wynn Macau S.A.

Tickets will not be needed until October 15, while tickets costing MOP100 will be needed for the October 16 tournament. **LV**

Create A Better  
**TOMORROW TODAY**  
今天開創明天



## MGM and MYEIC Introduce Smart Solutions Used in Integrated Resort to Young Entrepreneurs



The second edition of "MGM x MYEIC Young Entrepreneur Nurturing Program" (Program) went into its second sharing session, "Smart Hotel Led by Technologies". The session enabled nearly a hundred of local young entrepreneurs and representatives of SMEs to learn about the smart solutions used in an integrated resort. Participants were given some insights and directions to enhance their projects, in order to establish business partnership with large enterprises like MGM.

Prior to the sharing session, both parties organized a business matching session to selected young entrepreneurs, where they were given opportunities to promote their business projects to MGM.



The sharing session was hosted by Winnie Ho, Assistant Vice President of Digital and Information Technologies of MGM, where she introduced the Company's information technology services, as well as its applications on the enhancement of customer experience, internal communications, and continuing education programs for team members. In her sharing, Ho stressed the contributions of young entrepreneurs, who have introduced many innovative projects to accelerate the rapid development of various areas of business. On the other hand, MGM also gives its undivided support to young entrepreneurs – that the Company prefers to work with young entrepreneurs over large or overseas enterprises, and even commits in resources to help bettering their business and services.

Moving onto the Q&A session, Chris Wong, Director of Digital Bay, who has established a successful partnership with MGM through the Program, shared his collaborations with MGM. A start-up specialized in developing mini programs on Wechat, Digital Bay has developed several Wechat mini games for MGM, which have received positive feedbacks from users and customers. Winnie Ho gave good recognition to Digital Bay for their attentiveness and determination in seeking solutions, as well as their excellent after-sales services, which made them stand out from the crowd. She also encouraged young entrepreneurs to be more open-minded when trying to establish partnerships with large enterprises, and more importantly, provide tailor-made solutions to cater their needs.

The event was concluded with a guided tour to the Spectacle and MGM Theater of MGM COTAI, which enabled participants to know about the advanced technologies and smart solutions used in the venues. Participants including young entrepreneurs working in online marketing, cruise control for drones, e-commerce and blockchain technology, all agreed that the session has offered insightful knowledge. They also found it insightful to learn about the purchasing standards of large enterprises.



Co-organized by MGM, Parafuturo de Macau (PFM Macau) and MYEIC, as well as supported by a lineup of local youth associations, "MGM x MYEIC Young Entrepreneur Nurturing Program" aims to continue supporting the growth of young entrepreneurs and SMEs.

MGM  
Avenida Dr. Sun Yat Sen, NAPE, Macau  
T 853 8802 2888 F 853 8802 3333  
E sustainability@mgmmacau.com  
W <http://www.mgm.mo/>



COMMERCE

# GOV'T LASHES OUT AT LATEST US EXPORT CONTROLS ON CHIPS

**C**HINA on Saturday criticized the latest U.S. decision to tighten export controls that would make it harder for China to obtain and manufacture advanced computing chips, calling it a violation of international economic and trade rules that will "isolate and backfire" on the U.S.

"Out of the need to maintain its sci-tech hegemony, the U.S. abuses export control measures to maliciously block and suppress Chinese companies," said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning.

"It will not only damage the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, but also affect American companies' interests," she said.

Mao also said that the U.S. "weaponization and politicization" of science and technology as well as economic and trade issues will not stop China's progress.



She was speaking after the U.S. on Friday updated export controls that included adding certain advanced, high-performance computing chips and semiconductor manufacturing equipment to its list, as well as new license requirements for

items that would be used in a supercomputer or for semiconductor development in China.

The U.S. said that the export controls were added as part of ongoing efforts to protect U.S. national security and foreign policy interests.

"The threat environment is always changing, and we are updating our policies today to make sure we're addressing the challenges posed by (China) while we continue our outreach and coordination with allies and partners," Under Secretary

of Commerce for Industry and Security Alan Estevez said in a statement.

U.S.-China relations have deteriorated in recent years over technology and security issues. The U.S. has implemented a raft of measures and restrictions designed to prevent China from obtaining chip technology, while China has earmarked billions for investment into the production of semiconductors.

The tensions have impacted semiconductor companies in the U.S. and globally which either export chips or manufacture chips in China. Semiconductor companies such as Nvidia and AMD has seen a 40% decline in stock price over the past year.

"We understand the goal of ensuring national security and urge the U.S. government to implement the rules in a targeted way—and in collaboration with international partners—to help level the playing field and mitigate unintended harm to U.S. innovation," the Semiconductor Industry Association, which represents U.S. semiconductor industry, said in a statement. **MDT/AP**

# 19th CPC Central Committee convenes seventh plenary session

**T**HE 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) opened its seventh plenary session in Beijing yesterday.

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, presented a work report on behalf of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. He also delivered explanatory remarks on a draft report by the 19th CPC Central Committee to the 20th CPC National Congress. Wang Huning gave explanatory remarks on a draft amendment to the CPC Constitution.

A meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee on Sept. 9 studied three documents to be submitted to the seventh plenary session for discussion. They are the two above-mentioned drafts and a draft work report by the 19th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection to the 20th CPC National Congress.



A man takes photos of the decoration set up for the ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC) at Tian'anmen Square in Beijing, capital of China, July 3, 2021.

The decision to hold this plenary session was made at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee on Aug. 30. It was also decided at the meeting that the Political Bureau would make a proposal to the plenary session that the 20th CPC National Congress be convened on Oct. 16 in Beijing.

The 20th CPC National Congress is a congress of great significance to

be convened at a crucial moment, as the whole Party and the entire nation embark on a new journey toward building a modern socialist country in all respects, and advance toward the Second Centenary Goal.

The congress will take stock of the Party's work over the past five years, as well as achievements of the CPC Central Committee.

The congress will re-

view the international and domestic situations, grasp the new requirements for the development of the cause of the Party and the country on the new journey in the new era, as well as the new expectations of the people, and formulate action plans and major policies.

## OVER 2.6M DEPUTIES ELECTED

More than 2.6 million new deputies have been elected to people's congresses in townships and county-level regions in China, following the conclusion of elections that began in the first half of 2021.

Nearly 150,000 more deputies were elected this time over the previous elections.

In accordance with the country's amended electoral law, the base numbers of deputies to people's congresses at township and county levels have both been increased to boost the participation in politics from the primary-level.

According to statistics, 921 million voters, accounting for 86.49% of registered voters, cast their votes in the election of county-level people's congress deputies. **MDT/XINHUA**

# YACHT OWNED BY SANCTIONED RUSSIAN TYCOON DOCKS IN HONG KONG

**A** superyacht connected to sanctioned Russian tycoon Alexey Mordashov has anchored in Hong Kong as Western governments move to seize yachts connected to Russian businessmen.

The megayacht Nord, worth over \$500 million, arrived in Hong Kong on Wednesday afternoon after traveling for over a week from Vladivostok, Russia, its last port of call.

Mordashov has estimated wealth of over \$18 billion, according to a Bloomberg estimate. He is the main shareholder and chairman of Severstal, Russia's largest steel and mining company.

He was sanctioned by the U.S., the United Kingdom and the European Union in February after Russia invaded Ukraine. Mordashov has since attempted to

challenge the sanctions against him in European courts.

A Marine Department spokesperson was quoted in the South China Morning Post as saying Hong Kong is not obliged to enforce unilateral sanctions imposed by other jurisdictions.

U.S. and European authorities have seized over a dozen yachts belonging to sanctioned Russian tycoons to prevent them from sailing to other ports that are not affected by the sanctions. Russian oligarchs have begun docking their yachts at ports in places like Turkey, which has maintained diplomatic ties with Russia since the war began.

The Nord, which measures 141.6 meters, has two helipads, a swimming pool and 20 cabins. The yacht is currently sailing under a Russian flag. **MDT/AP**



KOREAS

# N. Korea launches two missiles toward sea after US-S. Korea drills

HYUNG-JIN KIM  
& MARI YAMAGUCHI, SEOUL

**N**ORTH Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters yesterday, the latest of a recent barrage of weapons tests, a day after it warned the redeployment of a U.S. aircraft carrier near the Korean Peninsula was inflaming regional tensions.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that it detected two missile launches yesterday between 1:48 a.m. and 1:58 a.m. from the North's eastern coastal city of Munchon. It added that South Korea's military has boosted its surveillance posture and maintains a readiness in close coordination with the United States.

Japanese Vice Defense Minister Toshiro Ino also confirmed the launches, saying Pyongyang's testing activities are "absolutely unacceptable" as they threaten regional and international peace and security.

Ino said the weapons could be submarine-launched ballistic missiles. "We are continuing to analyze details of the missiles, in-



A TV screen showing a news program reporting about North Korea's missile launch with file footage, is seen at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday

cluding a possibility that they might have been launched from the sea," Ino said.

North Korea's pursuit of an ability to fire missiles from a submarine would constitute an alarming development for its rivals because it's harder to detect such launches in advance. North Korea was believed to have last tested a missile launch from a submarine in May.

The South Korean and Japanese militaries assessed that the missiles flew about 350 kilometers and reached maximum altitudes of 90 to 100 kilometers before falling into the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida separately instructed officials to gather and analyze all information they could and expedite any updates about the tests to

the public. His office said it also was seeking to ensure the safety of all aircraft and ships in waters around Japan while preparing for any contingencies.

South Korea's presidential office said National Security Director Kim Sung-han called an emergency security meeting over the launches where members reviewed the South's defense preparedness and discussed ways to streng-

then cooperation with the United States and Japan to counter the growing North Korean threats.

Seoul warned that Pyongyang's consecutive provocations will deepen its international isolation and increase the "instability of the regime" by worsening its economy and people's livelihoods.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said in a statement that the launches didn't pose any immediate threat to U.S. personnel or territory, or to its allies. But it said the launches highlight "the destabilizing impact" of North Korea's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. It said U.S. commitments to the defense of South Korea and Japan remain "ironclad."

The launch, the North's seventh round of weapons tests in two weeks, came hours after the United States and South Korea wrapped up two days of naval drills off the Korean Peninsula's east coast.

The drills involved the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and its battle group, which returned to the area after North Korea fired a powerful missile over Japan last week to protest the carrier group's previous training with South Korea.

On Saturday, North Korea's Defense Ministry warned that the Reagan's redeployment was causing a "considerably huge negative splash" in regional security. The ministry called its recent missile tests a "righteous reaction" to intimidating military drills between South Korea and the United States. **MDT/AP**

SHOOTING

# Families leave offerings for children slain at Thai day care

TASSANEE VEJPONGSA  
& DAVID RISING,  
UTHAI SAWAN

**F**AMILIES offered flowers and dolls, popcorn and juice boxes to children massacred at a day care center in Thailand, part of a Buddhist ceremony held yesterday just paces from where the slaughter began that was meant to guide the young souls back to their bodies.

"Come back home" and "come back with us," the relatives called into the empty day care center, many with tears in their eyes.

The gun and knife attack on the Young Children's Development Center in Uthai Sawan was Thailand's deadliest mass killing, and it robbed the small farming community of much of its youngest generation. The former police officer who



stormed the building killed two dozen people at the day care before taking more lives as he fled, including his wife and child, police said. He then killed himself.

Ceremonies were held yesterday at three temples, where the 36 victims — mostly preschoolers — were taken ahead of funeral rites and cremation on Tuesday.

Maneerat Tanone-

thong — whose 3-year-old Chaiyot Kijareon was killed at the day care center — said the rituals were helping her with her grief.

"I am trying not think about horrible images and focus on how lovely he was. ... But I don't know what I will do with myself once this is all over," she said. "I am determined that I will try let go of this, that I won't

hold any grudge against the perpetrator and understand that all of these will end in this life."

At Rat Samakee temple, family members sat in front of the tiny coffins while Buddhist monks chanted prayers. They placed trays of food, toys and milk along the outside of the temple walls as offerings to the spirits of their slain children.

Later, they headed to the day care center and gathered in front of a makeshift memorial there to receive the slain children's belongings. They made offerings of their kids' favorite foods and lit incense and candles as they implored the children's souls to return to their bodies.

Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha attended evening prayers at the three temples where bodies were brought later yesterday.

Police identified the attacker as Panya Kamrap, 34, a police sergeant fired earlier this year after being charged with a drug offense.

An employee at the day care told Thai media that Panya's son had attended the center but hadn't been there for about a month. Police have said they believe Panya was under stress from tensions between him and his wife, and money problems.

The attack has left no one in the small community untouched, and brought international media attention to the remote, rural area.

Meanwhile, Thai authorities yesterday fined two CNN journalists for working in the country on tourist visas but cleared them of wrongdoing for entering the day care center, saying they had filmed

inside believing they had obtained permission.

Deputy national police chief Surachate Hakparn said the journalists had been waved into the building by a volunteer or a health officer, but did not know the person was not authorized to allow them inside.

They each agreed to pay fines of 5,000 baht (\$133) and leave the country after admitting to working despite entering Thailand on tourist visas, he said.

Authorities began looking into the incident after a Thai reporter posted an image on social media of two members of the crew leaving the scene. One CNN crew member was seen climbing over the low wall and fence around the compound, over police tape, and the other already outside. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

# 'War crime:' Industrial-scale destruction of Ukraine culture

HANNA ARHIROVA, KYIV

**T**HE exquisite golden tiara, inlaid with precious stones by master craftsmen some 1,500 years ago, was one of the world's most valuable artifacts from the blood-letting rule of Attila the Hun, who rampaged with horseback warriors deep into Europe in the 5th century.

The Hun diadem is now vanished from the museum in Ukraine that housed it — perhaps, historians fear, forever. Russian troops carted away the priceless crown and a hoard of other treasures after capturing the Ukrainian city of Melitopol in February, museum authorities say.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, now in its eighth month, is being accompanied by the destruction and pillaging of historical sites and treasures on an industrial scale, Ukrainian authorities say.

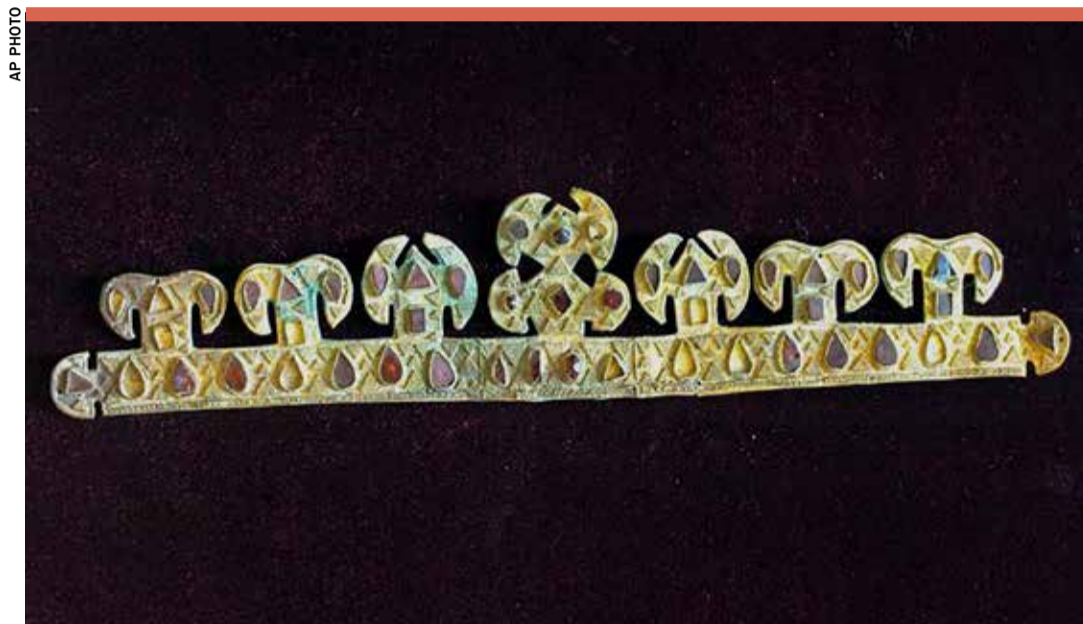
In an interview with The Associated Press, Ukraine's culture minister alleged that Russian soldiers helped themselves to artifacts in almost 40 Ukrainian museums. The looting and destruction of cultural sites has caused losses estimated in the hundreds of millions of euros (dollars), the minister, Oleksandr Tkachenko, added.

"The attitude of Russians toward Ukrainian culture heritage is a war crime," he said.

For the moment, Ukraine's government and its Western backers supplying weapons are mostly focused on defeating Russia on the battlefield. But if and when peace returns, the preservation of Ukrainian collections of art, history and culture also will be vital, so survivors of the war can begin the next fight: rebuilding their lives.

"These are museums, historical buildings, churches. Everything that was built and created by generations of Ukrainians," Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska, said in September when she visited a Ukrainian museum in New York. "This is a war against our identity."

Workers at the Museum of Local History in Melitopol first tried hiding the Hun diadem and hundreds of other treasures when Russian troops stormed the southern city. But after weeks of repeated searches, Russian soldiers finally discovered the building's se-



The 1,500 year-old golden tiara, inlaid with precious stones, one of the world's most valuable artifacts from the blood-letting rule of Attila the Hun, is seen in a museum in Melitopol, Ukraine, in November 2020

cret basement where staff had squirreled away the museum's most precious objects — including the Hun diadem, according to a museum worker.

The worker, who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity, fearing Russian punishment for even discussing the events, said the Ukrainians don't know where Russian troops took the haul, which included the tiara and some 1,700 other artifacts.

Dug up from a burial chamber in 1948, the crown is one of just a few Hun crowns worldwide. The museum worker said other treasures that disappeared with Russian soldiers include 198 pieces of 2,400-year-old gold from the era of the Scythians, nomads who migrated from Central Asia to southern Russia and Ukraine and founded an empire in Crimea.

"These are ancient finds. These are works of art. They are priceless," said Oleksandr Symonenko, chief researcher at Ukraine's Institute of Archaeology. "If culture disappears, it is an irreparable disaster."

Russia's Culture Ministry did not respond to questions about the Melitopol collection.

Russian forces also looted museums as they laid waste to the Black Sea port of Mariupol, according to Ukrainian officials who were driven from that the southern city, which was relentlessly pounded by Russian bombardment. It fell under Moscow's complete control only in May when Ukrainian defenders who

clung to the city's steelworks finally surrendered.

Mariupol's exiled city council said Russian forces pilfered more than 2,000 items from the city's museums. Among the most precious items were ancient religious icons, a unique handwritten Torah scroll, a 200-year-old bible and more than 200 medals, the council said.

Also looted were art works by painters Arkhip Kuindzhi, who was born in Mariupol, and Crimea-born Ivan Aivazovsky, both famed for their seascapes, the exiled councillors said. They said Russian troops carted off their stolen bounty to the Russian-occupied Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine.

## With the war now in its eighth month, the says it has verified damage to 199 sites in 12 regions

The invasion has also wrought extensive damage and destruction to Ukraine's cultural patrimony. The U.N.'s cultural agency is keeping a tally of sites being struck by missiles, bombs and shelling. With the war now in its eighth month, the agency says it has verified damage to 199 sites in 12 regions.

They include 84 churches and other religious sites, 37 buildings of historic importance, 37 buildings for cultural activities, 18 monuments,

13 museums and 10 libraries, UNESCO says.

Ukrainian government tallies are even higher, with authorities saying their count of destroyed and damaged religious buildings alone is up to at least 270.

While invasion forces hunted for treasures to steal, Ukrainian museum workers did what they could to keep them out of Russian hands. Tens of thousands of items have been evacuated away from the front lines and combat-struck regions.

In Kyiv, the director of the Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine lived in the building, guarding its artifacts, during the invasion's first weeks when Russian forces sought, unsuccessfully, to encircle the capital.

"We were afraid of the Russian occupiers, because they destroy everything that can be identified as Ukrainian," recalled the director, Natalia Panchenko.

Fearing Russian troops would storm the city, she sought to confuse them by taking down the plaque on the museum's entrance. She also dismantled exhibits, carefully packing away artifacts into boxes for evacuation.

One day, she hopes, they'll go back into their rightful place. For now, the museum is just showing copies.

"These things were fragile, they survived hundreds of years," she said. "We couldn't stand the thought they could be lost." MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1980 THATCHER 'NOT FOR TURNING'



The Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has made a defiant speech to Conservatives at the party conference in Brighton.

In it she stressed her determination to stick to tough economic policies despite doubts expressed within Tory ranks.

Responding to recent expectations of an about-turn on counter-inflationary policies, Mrs Thatcher declared to widespread cheers:

"To those waiting with bated breath for that favourite media catchphrase, the U-turn, I have only one thing to say: You turn if you want to. The lady's not for turning!"

Outside in the rain, 'Right to Work' protesters demonstrated, two of whom managed to breach security and make their voices heard in the hall.

But her speech did acknowledge the plight of the country's two million unemployed.

"Let me make it clear beyond doubt. I am profoundly concerned about unemployment," she said.

She added: "Human dignity and self-respect are undermined when men and women are condemned to idleness."

The Prime Minister expressed her commitment to reducing inflation which she said was beginning to fall, reminding delegates it was the "parent of unemployment".

She also claimed a number of measures imposed by her government in its first 17 months in office as successes.

This included the "first crucial changes" in trade union law, the breaking down of monopoly powers and allowing council tenants the chance to buy their homes.

Mrs Thatcher condemned Soviet foreign policy and in particular its present occupation of Afghanistan.

In response to the recent demonstrations by Polish ship-workers, she praised their resolve to "participate in the shaping of their destiny", and their actions as testament to a crisis in Communism.

Her closing words were reserved for criticism of Labour and votes cast at its party conference in favour of withdrawal from NATO and the EEC.

"Let Labour's Orwellian nightmare of the Left be a spur for us to dedicate with a new urgency our every ounce of energy and moral strength to rebuild the fortunes of this free nation," she said.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Margaret Thatcher was the UK's first female prime minister and this was one of her most famous speeches.

She led three successive Conservative governments from 1979 to 1990.

In office she privatised state-owned industries and utilities, implemented strict trade union restrictions, and reduced social expenditures. Thatcher's free market economics strengthened the overall economy and created a growing middle class, but widened the gap between rich and poor.

Her refusal over European integration and the creation of the hated poll tax lost her the leadership to John Major in 1990.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**



**ARIES**

**Mar. 21-Apr. 19**

Don't blow situations out of proportion. If you can't get ahead in the company you're with, perhaps it's time to move on. Make changes that will enhance your appearance.



**TAURUS**

**Apr. 20-May. 20**

You are best not to nag or criticize. The distance may make you both appreciate each other more. Travel will be good if you are seeking knowledge.



**GEMINI**

**May. 21-Jun. 21**

Be innovative. You should get out and meet new people today. You can make successful moves. You may find yourself in a heated dispute with a friend if you try to change your mind.



**CANCER**

**Jun. 22-Jul. 22**

Read between the lines before you sign your name. Hassles with close friends or family will put a damper on your day and result in isolation and loneliness.



**LEO**

**Jul. 23-Aug. 22**

Accommodate others but not before you do your own thing. Do the proper safety checks before you go out. Difficulties with children will surface if you try to break a promise you made.



**VIRGO**

**Aug. 23-Sep. 22**

Make a point of working on yourself. If everyone wants to do their own thing, let them. You should sit down with someone you trust and work out a budget that will enable you to save a little extra.



**LIBRA**

**Sep. 23-Oct. 22**

Make changes around your house and plan to do some entertaining. You will be full of energy and you need to find something constructive to do.



**SCORPIO**

**Oct. 23-Nov. 21**

You are best to stick to yourself today. You could lose money or precious belongings if you aren't careful. You should be able to tie up loose ends today.



**SAGITTARIUS**

**Nov. 22-Dec. 21**

You need to reevaluate your situation. A residential move may be in order. Travel will be favorable. Resist overspending on luxury items.



**CAPRICORN**

**Dec. 22-Jan. 19**

Check your personal papers and make sure everything is in order. The stamina you possess will be apparent in your approach to your hobbies and creative projects. Try to be patient and understanding.



**AQUARIUS**

**Jan. 20-Feb. 18**

You will have a problem dealing with groups. You may be able to get some good advice about your personal problems. Take the time to close deals that have been up in the air.



**PISCES**

**Feb. 19-Mar. 20**

Older family members may try to put unreasonable demands on you. Get down to business and do the work yourself. Rewards for past good deeds will highlight your day.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

**EASY**

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

**EASY+**

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

**MEDIUM**

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

**HARD**

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

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	6	18	fine
Changchun	5	9	rain
Chengdu	11	18	overcast
Chongqing	14	19	cloudy
Fuzhou	20	27	cloudy
Guangzhou	19	28	fine
Guiyang	9	14	overcast
Haikou	23	27	cloudy
Hangzhou	10	18	cloudy
Harbin	5	11	cloudy
Hefei	6	18	cloudy
Nanjing	8	16	fine
Shanghai	12	18	cloudy
Taipei	21	25	rain
Wuhan	6	19	cloudy
Hong Kong	22	28	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	1	11	overcast
Frankfurt	7	21	overcast
Paris	8	19	rain
London	4	16	showers
New York	9	19	overcast

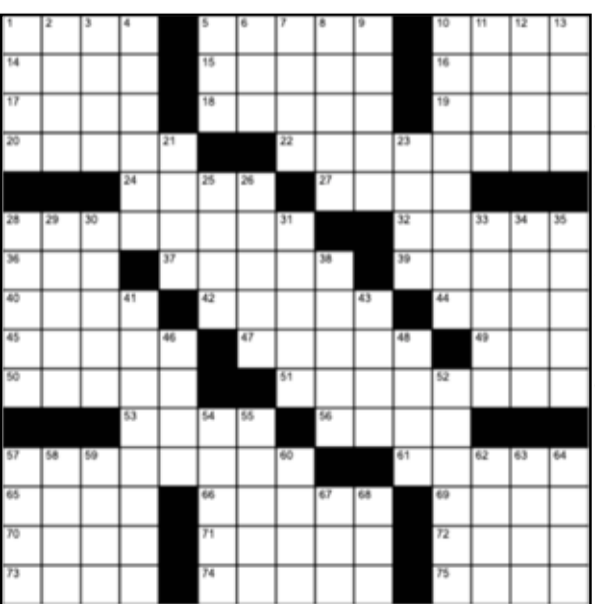
**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Speech issue; 5- Flavor; 10- Thom of footwear; 14- Zeno's home; 15- Piece of music written for a solo instrument; 16- Commedia dell'...; 17- Morale of "NYPD Blue"; 18- Lost in Paris?; 19- Bonkers; 20- Short journey; 22- Medical student; 24- Clump of hair; 27- "All The Way To \_\_\_", song by REM; 28- Period of high birthrate; 32- Shut; 36- "Evil Woman" band; 37- Caper; 39- Ventilated; 40- Bern's river; 42- Lure; 44- Title; 45- Shorthand taker; 47- Colorful parrot; 49- Canterbury can; 50- \_\_\_ firma; 51- Sans abode; 53- Kon-Tiki Museum site; 56- Between ports; 57- Actual elapsed period; 61- Trick; 65- \_\_\_ never work; 66- Springs; 69- Writer Wiesel; 70- Spouse; 71- Give consent; 72- "Consarnit!"; 73- Lost traction; 74- Class of Indian society; 75- Change for a five;

DOWN 1- Actor Cobb; 2- Rick's love in "Casablanca"; 3- Linebacker Junior; 4- Too much acrylic on the canvas?; 5- Calendar abbr.; 6- Corroded; 7- Run smoothly; 8- More bizarre; 9- Employ again; 10- Stringed musical instrument; 11- Rock's Motley \_\_\_; 12- Env. notation; 13- Resting place; 21- Big brass; 23- Quechua speaker; 25- Adoring; 26- Emblem; 28- Animal; 29- Having wings; 30- Tree insect; 31- Book after Jonah; 33- Declaim; 34- Big rigs; 35- Paradises; 38- Winter drink; 41- Registered; 43- Edible roots; 46- Kiln for drying hops; 48- Read 'em and \_\_\_; 52- Texas border city; 54- Light purple; 55- Last letter of the Greek alphabet; 57- Wheel parts; 58- Catchall abbr.; 59- Prefix with meter; 60- Hearing organs; 62- King of comedy; 63- Mudville complement; 64- Frat party purchases; 67- Domestic animal; 68- Go out with;

**Friday's solution**

A	P	S	O		A	S	I	A		I	T	C	H										
L	E	O	N		L	E	M	U	R		S	O	R	A									
T	A	L	E		S	N	A	K	E		R	O	O	T									
A	T	O	M		A	N	Y				N	U	A	N	C	E							
					O	R	C	A		C	A	P	E										
					A	E	R	I	E		F	A	M	I	L	I	A	R					
					A	C	T	F	E		R	A	C	E		I	R	A	E				
					N	T	H				M	U	L	A	S		A	H	A				
					K	O	O	K			E	S	S	O		A	L	T	E	R			
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					V	I	P	E	R		A	D	E	P	T		L	E	E	R			
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					E	T	E	S			S	T	A	Y						Y	A	M	S



**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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juliet@jmlproperty.com  
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Windy Lam  
(853) 6881 1007  
windy@jmlproperty.com  
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FORMULA ONE

# Verstappen takes second straight drivers' title with Japan win

STEPHEN WADE, SUZUKA

**M**AX Verstappen is now a two-time Formula One world champion, both titles awarded under bizarre and unprecedented circumstances long after he crossed the finish line.

The Red Bull driver won the rain-shortened Japanese Grand Prix yesterday and didn't learn he was champion until F1's governing body penalized Charles Leclerc after the race.

"The championship obviously did not come the way this time around," Verstappen initially said after climbing from his car following his 12th victory of the season. The Dutchman even apologized to the crowd on the track's public address system.

Seconds later, Verstappen was told he was a two-time world champion and crew members and friends suffocated him with hugs.

"Once I crossed the line I



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands celebrates with his team after winning the Japanese Formula One Grand Prix at the Suzuka Circuit in Suzuka, central Japan, yesterday

thought: 'It was an amazing race, good points again. But I'm not world champion yet.'

The 25-year-old said he was tipped off when his mechanics started to cheer, but said he was still confused.

"I don't mind it was a little confusing," he said. "I find it ac-

tually quite... funny."

Verstappen's first title was won in last year's season finale at Abu Dhabi, where seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton dominated the race until a late caution. It was then that race control set in motion an unprecedented sequence of events when since-

-fired race director Michael Masi allowed for a late restart.

Verstappen passed Hamilton to win the race and his first championship, but Mercedes disputed the way the race ended and the teams argued with the FIA for hours before Verstappen was finally, officially, named champion and able to celebrate.

Two titles for Verstappen signals a changing of the guard in F1, even if Verstappen's championship-clinching races will forever be remembered for their controversial endings.

In Suzuka, Verstappen started from the pole in pouring rain only for the race to be stopped after two laps as several cars crashed. The race resumed two hours later, but only 28 of the 53 laps were completed and Verstappen led the entire way.

The Belgian Grand Prix a year ago was not completed in the rain and F1 for the sixth time in history awarded only half points for that shortened event. So nearly all the teams figured Sun-

day's race was only going to be worth half points again.

The entire paddock seemed surprised when the FIA then ruled full points would be awarded. But even that wasn't enough: Leclerc received a post-race penalty that dropped the Ferrari driver from second to third and officially gave Verstappen the points margin needed to clinch the title with four races remaining.

"So then we had enough points, so we were world champions again," summarized Verstappen. "It's a great feeling, but when I crossed the line I didn't believe that we would have won the title right there."

The race was messy from the start in the rain when Carlos Sainz Jr. spun and was knocked out of the race, and Chinese driver Zhou Guanyu also had a dramatic spin but continued.

Organizers stopped the race after two laps.

Pierre Gasly complained on his radio that he passed a recovery vehicle that was improperly on the track as the safety car emerged just as the race was red-flagged. It triggered rage throughout the paddock because in 2014, French driver Jules Bianchi collided with a recovery vehicle on the Suzuka track. Bianchi was placed in an induced coma and died nine months later, and he was one of Gasly's closest friends. **MDT/AP**

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**BASKETBALL**

**DAILY TRAININGS**

**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**IMPERATIVE THAT  
 RAPID WORSENING  
 OF UKRAINE CRISIS IS  
 PROMPTLY ARRESTED**

Another leak has been detected in the undersea pipelines running from Russia to Europe, the Swedish Coast Guard said on Thursday.

That means four leaks have now been detected in the pipelines running from Russia to Europe, according to the Swedish Coast Guard.

Sweden has detected two leaks on the Nord Stream 1 pipeline on its side of the sea, while Denmark has confirmed it has detected a leak on both the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines on its side.

Suggestions of sabotage quickly emerged after the first three leaks were detected after seismologists reported explosions that "rattled the Baltic Sea", with some European officials and energy experts promptly laying the blame at Russia's door claiming that it directly benefits from higher energy prices and economic anxiety across Europe.

Although the loss of leverage would suggest otherwise.

Others have suggested Ukraine might have been responsible in a bid to frame Russia for an attack on European Union energy infrastructure and drag NATO into the conflict on its side.

The EU has certainly responded predictably with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell saying in a statement on behalf of all 27 members on Wednesday that: "Any deliberate disruption of European energy infrastructure is utterly unacceptable and will be met with a robust and united response."

Others have pointed fingers at the United States. A video clip from February showing US President Joe Biden vowing to prevent Nord Stream 2 from operating if Russia began its "special military operation" in Ukraine went viral on social media on Wednesday, and there have also been media reports about the frequent presence of United States Navy ships near the waters since August.

But with no party stepping forward to claim responsibility, it remains to be seen if an investigation can determine what happened, and if the damage was deliberate, who should be held accountable.

Some things are certain, however. Europe's energy crisis has undoubtedly become even more severe, and the outlook for European countries in the coming winter is even bleaker than it was.

The Nord Stream pipeline leaks have also added even more uncertainty and complexity to the Ukraine crisis. The likely sabotage should prompt members of the world community to join hands to find a peaceful solution to end the Ukraine crisis at an early date. Not least because all countries will feel the effects.

Whether by design or ignorance, the leaks are a climate catastrophe. Huge volumes of methane, which is significantly more potent than carbon dioxide at absorbing the sun's heat and warming the Earth, are being pumped into the Baltic Sea and atmosphere.

Talks to end the conflict are imperative to arrest the seemingly relentless spiral into an abyss.

Germany's foreign minister is calling for European Union entry bans and asset freezes against those responsible for what she described as brutal repression against anti-government protesters in Iran.

The most sustained protests in years against Iran's theocracy are now in their fourth week. They erupted Sept. 17 after the burial of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish woman who died in the custody of Iran's feared morality police. Amini had been detained for an alleged violation of strict Islamic dress codes for women.

Since then, protests spread across the country and have been met by

a fierce crackdown, in which dozens are estimated to have been killed and hundreds arrested.

"Those who beat up women and girls on the street, carry off people who want nothing other than to live freely, arrest them arbitrarily and sentence them to death stand on the wrong side of history," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock was quoted as telling yesterday's Bild am Sonntag newspaper.

"We will ensure that the EU imposes entry bans on those responsible for this brutal repression and freezes their assets in the EU," she added.

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE TO  
 ACTIVISTS FROM BELARUS,  
 RUSSIA, UKRAINE**

HANNA ARHIROVA,  
 FRANK JORDANS &  
 VANESSA GERA, KYIV

**H**uman rights activists from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday, a strong rebuke to Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose invasion of Ukraine ruptured decades of nearly uninterrupted peace in Europe, and to the Belarusian president, his authoritarian ally.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the 2022 prize to imprisoned Belarus activist Ales Bialiatski, the Russian group Memorial and the Ukrainian organization Center for Civil Liberties. Bialiatski is the fourth laureate to be honored while in detention.

Berit Reiss-Andersen, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, said the panel was honoring "three outstanding champions of human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence."

"We are in the midst of a war and we are talking about two authoritarian regimes and one nation fighting a war and we would like to highlight the importance of civil society," she said.

In Ukraine, there was some resentment at awarding the Ukrainian group alongside activists from Russia and Belarus, whose government allowed Russian forces to attack Ukraine from its territory.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted that the Nobel committee has "an interesting understanding of the word 'peace' if representatives of two countries that attacked a third one received the prize together."

"Neither Russian nor Belarusian organizations were able to organize resistance to the war," he said.

Belarus' Foreign Ministry denounced the Nobel Committee for honoring Bialiatski, with the spokesman calling its choices in



Ales Bialiatski, the head of Belarusian Viasna rights group, stands in a defendants' cage during a court session in Minsk, Belarus, Nov. 2, 2011

recent years so "politicized" that "Alfred Nobel got tired of turning in his grave."

Olav Njølstad, director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, retorted: "Well, I'm quite sure we understand Alfred Nobel's will and intentions better than the dictatorship in Minsk."

Asked whether the Nobel Committee was intentionally rebuking Putin, whose 70th birthday is Friday, Reiss-Andersen said the prize was not against anyone but for the democratic values the winners champion. However, she did note that both the Russian and Belarusian governments were "suppressing human rights activists."

It was the second straight year that Putin's repressive government was implicitly rebuked with the prize. It was awarded last year to Dmitry Muratov, editor of the independent Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta, and Philippine journalist Maria Ressa, for their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression. Both have struggled in the past year.

Bialiatski was a leader of the democracy movement in Belarus in the mid-1980s and has continued to campaign for human rights and civil liberties. He founded the non-govern-

mental organization Human Rights Center Viasna.

He was detained following protests in 2020 against the re-election of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. He remains in jail without trial and faces up to 12 years in prison if convicted.

"Despite tremendous personal hardship, Mr. Bialiatski has not yielded one inch in his fight for human rights and democracy in Belarus," Reiss-Andersen said.

Pavel Sapelko, one of the leaders of Viasna, told The Associated Press that the Belarusian authorities will not be able to ignore the fact that Bialiatski won the prize.

"It is a clear signal from the international community to the regime of Lukashenko, who must free all political prisoners," Sapelko said by phone from the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, where he settled after being forced to leave Belarus. "The Nobel prize to Bialiatski is both a lifeline, an alarm and a recognition of achievements."

Six of Viasna's rights activists are currently jailed, while more than two dozen others operate in secrecy, monitoring the worsening human rights situation in Belarus. **MDT/AP**



Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the biggest in Europe, has lost its last remaining external power source as a result of renewed shelling and is now relying on emergency diesel generators, the U.N. nuclear watchdog said Saturday. The International Atomic Energy Agency said the plant's link to a 750-kilovolt line was cut at around 1 a.m. Saturday. It cited official information from Ukraine as well as reports from IAEA experts at the site, which is held by Russian forces.



Germany A train communications system was targeted by sabotage this weekend, forcing both passenger and cargo trains to halt for nearly three hours across the northwest of the country, authorities said. Operator Deutsche Bahn said that no long-distance or regional trains were running in the states of Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony and Bremen. That also affected trains between Berlin and Cologne, neither of which was directly affected by the system failure, and between Berlin and Amsterdam, while trains from Denmark weren't crossing the border into Germany.



UK The leader of the Scottish government said yesterday that she will push on with her campaign to take Scotland out of the United Kingdom, even if she loses a Supreme Court case seeking authorization to call a new independence referendum. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon wants to hold a referendum in October 2023, but the Conservative U.K. government in London has said no. Britain's top court is due to hear arguments starting tomorrow on whether Scotland's semi-autonomous administration can organize an independence vote without the London government's consent.