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FOUR NEW COVID-19 CASES REPORTED YESTERDAY, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES TO 35 IN THIS LATEST OUTBREAK

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GOV'T, SCHOOLS TO OBSERVE SILENCE FOR FORMER PRESIDENT JIANG ZENMIN

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THE IC IS PROMOTING A SERIES OF CULTURAL AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCES TO EXPLORE AND PROVIDE INSIGHT INTO MACAU'S DIFFERENT CULTURES

P2

AP PHOTO



China Three Chinese astronauts landed in a northern desert yesterday after six months working to complete construction of the Tiangong station, a symbol of the country's ambitious space program, state TV reported. A capsule carrying commander Chen Dong and astronauts Liu Yang and Cai Xuzhe touched down at a landing site in the Gobi Desert in northern China at approximately 8:10 p.m. (1210 GMT), China Central Television reported.

AP PHOTO



Indonesia's highest volcano on its most densely populated island released searing gas clouds and rivers of lava yesterday in its latest eruption. Monsoon rains eroded and finally collapsed the lava dome atop 3,676-meter Mount Semeru, causing the eruption, according to National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari. Several villages were blanketed with falling ash, blocking out the sun, but no casualties have been reported.

AP PHOTO



Malaysia New Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said last week he will also serve as finance minister as he unveiled a leaner Cabinet with many new faces in his unity government. In a move that appeared to contradict his anti-corruption platform, Anwar named the graft-tainted head of a smaller bloc as one of his two deputies. Malaysian politics took an unprecedented turn after a Nov. 19 general election failed to produce an outright winner.

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POLICY SHIFT

Beijing eases some Covid restrictions after protests, despite rising cases; WHO 'pleased' with the move

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AP PHOTO

NATIONAL SECURITY LAW ON THE WAY TO AL



41ST MACAO INT'L MARATHON MAINLAND RUNNERS ONCE AGAIN TOP LOCAL MARATHON

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COVID-19

LATEST OUTBREAK BRINGS TOTAL CASES TO 35

LYNZY VALLES

HEALTH authorities announced four new Covid-19 cases yesterday, bringing the total number of cases to 35 in this latest outbreak.

During this current outbreak, the government has not canceled events such as the international marathon and food festival, signaling an easing in Covid-19 measures.

In a statement, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre announced that the first case is a 25-year-old woman residing in mainland China. On Dec 3, she left Guangzhou for Macau, entering through the Border Gate.

That afternoon, according to a notification from the Chinese mainland health department, her sample tested positive in a pool of mixed samples of the test carried out at a nucleic acid testing station in Zhuhai.

The second case is a 37-year-old man from mainland China. He took a high-speed train from Jinan to Zhuhai via Changsha. On Dec. 1, he entered Macau through the Portas

do Cerco Border Post. According to the epidemiological investigation, during his stay in Macau, he entered several casinos and sauna and massage establishments. On Dec. 2, between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., he was in the Familia Nobre Sauna without a mask.

Detailed epidemiological investigation work is continuing.

The third case is a 52-year-old man from mainland China. On Dec. 2, he flew from Beijing to Macau on flight NX005 and tested negative for a nucleic acid test (NAT) performed upon arrival at the airport on the same day. However, he tested positive in a set of mixed samples of the test carried out at the NAT station at The Venetian Macau.

According to the epidemiological investigation, he had a meal in a restaurant on the second floor of the Eiffel Tower on Dec. 2 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., and was at the St. Regis Bar from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m.

On Dec 3, he went to a restaurant at the Four Seasons Hotel during lunch hours.

The fourth case is a 45-year-old local woman who is a nurse and had contact for a short period of

XINHUA



time with a positive case on Nov. 29. Although she had undergone NAT twice following that day, her rapid antigen result turned positive on Dec 3.

Meanwhile, Guangzhou in the

south, Shijiazhuang in the north, Chengdu in the southwest and other major cities announced they were easing testing requirements and controls on movement. In some areas, markets and bus ser-

vices reopened. A newspaper has reported Beijing, the capital, has begun allowing some people with the virus to isolate at home, avoiding crowded quarantine centers that have prompted complaints.

Mainland runners once again top local marathon

MAINLAND runners swept the podiums in both male and female divisions at the 41st Macao International Marathon held yesterday morning.

The mainland runners finished first, second and third in both the men's and women's races, also winning both divisions in the half marathon.

In the longer distance races, Li Mei Zhen in the women's race, and Guan You Sheng in the men's race won first prize, with Guan's win hotly contested until the final meters of the race.

In the end, Guan crossed the line with his main competition, Li Bo, just 6 seconds behind. Coming in third place was Nianzhe A Ti.

The first local runner to cross the line in the 42.195



km race was Chan Kai Un in 15th position overall.

Less contested was the female division, with Li completing the distance in 02:40:26, nine minutes ahead of the first runner-up Chi Ling Jie. The third was Chen Liqin.

In this group, the best

local athlete was Wu Yangyang who finished fifth overall but over 23 minutes behind the winner.

In the half distance, the winners, respectively in the male and female groups, were Wang Kun (01:08:46) and Yin Xiaoyu (01:17:43). **RM**

IC PROMOTES MIGRANT CULTURE THROUGH MUSIC

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) is promoting a series of cultural and musical performances to explore and provide insight into Macau's different cultures.

Titled "Oriental Traditional Music" and part of the "Insightful Cultural Excursion" performances, different cultural and musical programs will be performed on stage at the Taipá Museum Houses every Saturday of December.

Between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., different groups composed mostly of amateur musicians and performers will provide the audience with a taste of their culture in sound and vision.

On December 3, the performances included dancing, live music, and traditional musical instruments played by a group of Indonesians living and working in Macau.

The series continues

this Saturday (December 10) with the Filipino community in Macau.

Chinese pop music will take the stage on December 17 followed by relaxing and inviting meditational chords and percussion.

According to IC, the event also aims to enliven the area taking the opportunity to celebrate the establishment of the Macau Special Administrative Region as well as the Christmas season. **RM**



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RENATO MARQUES



National Security bill on the way to AL

RENATO MARQUES

THE new National Security bill has passed the Executive Council's (ExCo) preliminary procedures and analysis the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, said Friday in the ExCo press conference.

The Secretary said the bill is moving to the Legislative Assembly (AL) for debate and voting.

Wong said the draft law guarantees and protects people's freedom and rights, noting this protection is on the condition that the state's security is not endangered.

The Secretary for Administration and Justice and ExCo spokesperson, Andre Cheong, also noted the bill protects both the state's security and human rights.

At the same press conference, the Security chief said there

had recently been several instances of "external forces," influencing Macau. He said this has justified the creation of the new law but, as on previous occasions, he declined to provide any concrete information or detail about what kind of external influence was occurring, who was behind it and with what purpose.

Preferring to use examples from Hong Kong, Wong said "there are some media outlets

that travel abroad frequently to meet and receive instructions," and also some "groups that receive training from external organizations." He did not specifying what type of training or instructions were received but said they were aimed at disrupting China's sovereignty and rule over the Special Administrative Region.

DEBATE OVER LAWYER ELIGIBILITY IN HK WOULD NOT HAPPEN IN MACAU

Asked about the decision from Hong Kong's top court to dismiss the Hong Kong government's appeal against a decision allowing a British lawyer to defend media tycoon Jimmy Lai, who has been charged with crimes related to national security, Wong said such a case could not arise in Macau.

Without commenting on the case's particulars, the local Security Chief said that in Macau only lawyers registered with the Macau Lawyers Association (AAM) can practice law and represent clients in court, remarking that local rules are "different from the ones in Hong Kong."

However, Wong did not exclude the possibility that local regulations might need to be amended.

In the Hong Kong case, the Department of Justice had sought to ban overseas lawyers from participating in national security cases apart from in exceptional cases, after losing its bid to block Timothy Owen from representing Lai in lower courts.

LIGHT FESTIVAL POSTPONED TO DEC. 9

"Light up Macao 2022", organized by Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), has been rescheduled to begin on Dec. 9. The bureau will announce more details at a later time. In partnership with local enterprises, "Light up Macao 2022" will weave a symphony of light arts in eight districts across the Macau Peninsula, Taipa and Coloane under the theme of "Dazzling Winter". The event features several properties of the six gambling concessionaires as partners for the first time, offering an expansion of venues included this year, while communities largely underpin the event.

GOLDEN BUS TO ADD SERVICE FREQUENCY

The public shuttle between Macau and Hong Kong, and between Hong Kong and Zhuhai will add a 6 p.m. departure time from Monday. The new route addresses the needs of cross-border travelers and those leaving Macau via Hong Kong airport. As seen on the Golden Bus's website, the current time slots are limited to 3 p.m., 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. The frequency has been much reduced since the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.

Gov't to observe silence for former president Jiang Zemin

THE SAR government will participate in formal mourning at the memorial service for former president of the People's Republic of China, Jiang Zemin, tomorrow.

The principal officials of the SAR government, members of the Executive Council, and staff from the legislative and judicial authorities, will stand and observe a three-minute silence as a mark of respect tomorrow 10 a.m., during the live television broadcast of Jiang's memorial service.

No government officials will attend any public entertainment activity, according to a statement issued by the Government Informa-



tion Bureau.

All entertainment and celebratory activities organized or funded by the government and scheduled for the day will be

suspended. The government has additionally appealed to all community associations, organizations, and all sectors of the community to sus-

pend all entertainment and celebratory activities scheduled for the day of the memorial service, and to arrange for their staff to watch the memo-

rial service and to participate in the mourning in silence.

The Education and Youth Development Bureau will arrange for all tertiary institutions, secondary schools, primary schools, and kindergartens in Macau to fly flags at half-mast on their respective campus facilities.

Any celebratory activities scheduled for that day will also be suspended at those educational venues, and teachers and students will observe the three-minute silence.

In front of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macau SAR, where a mourning hall has been set up, people queued to express their grief.

Over recent days, people from across China have continued to mourn Jiang Zemin, who passed away Wednesday in Shanghai aged 96. LV

UM STUDY BECOMES FIRST FROM MACAU TO BE LISTED BY NATIONAL KEY R&D PROGRAM

The Ministry of Science and Technology of China has recently announced a list of projects under the category of 'Stem Cell Research and Organ Repair' to be funded by the National Key R&D Program. A project submitted by Xu Renhe, associate dean (research) and Distinguished Professor of the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), University of Macau (UM), is among the projects listed and will receive a grant of RMB30 million. It is the first project from Macau and the first project led by UM that has been listed by the National Key R&D Program. This year, 27 universities and institutions have made the list under this category.

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MIECF with a focus on gov't policies, promotes EVs and eco-friendly tableware

RENATO MARQUES

THIS year's Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum & Exhibition (MIECF), to take place this weekend from December 9 to 11, will be aligned with the most recent government environmental policies.

The two major highlights are the area dedicated to "green mobility," which began last year, and the debut of an eco-friendly tableware exhibition zone.

The two areas are especially focused on government policies to promote the replacement of so-called "obsolete and polluting vehicles" with more technologically advanced electric vehicles (EVs), and on the new 2023 policy banning importation of disposable and single-use plastic tableware.

One of the fair's novelties will be the unveiling of a test drive activity for electric mo-



torcycles that aims to give participants a one-on-one experience of riding this type of vehicle and a better understanding of how charging stations and other aspects of EV mobility operate.

Over 30 EV brands will display vehicles and equipment in the green mobility zone and, according to the organizers, will release new products during the event.

Eco-friendly alternative fuel vehicles and associated equipment will be exhibited in this

zone, covering smart mobility technology for alternative fuel vehicles, smart transportation, smart driving systems and charging technology.

The same zone will include green commuting solutions aimed at sustainable urban development and overhauling the traditional transport system. Self-driving vehicles and charging facilities will also be included.

Apart from the local government policies, the MIECF will also highlight the 14th

Five-year National Plan and the Long-Range Objectives to 2035 with strategic plans for green, low-carbon, and quality development with ecological conservation as the priority.

As for this year's newly added "eco-friendly tableware zone," organizers expect a diverse exhibition and a large variety of products and solutions because, as of last Saturday, there were over 30 companies from the mainland, from Portuguese-speaking countries, and from the local region aiming to showcase their products.

Sustainable food, smart transportation solution, green construction, eco-city integration, and wastewater treatment are other themes to be highlighted at the event.

The MIECF will take place at Cotai Expo, The Venetian Macao between December 9 and 11, this year adopting the theme "Commitment to Green Development, Moving towards the Dual Carbon Goals".

EXHIBITION OF QUALITY CONSUMPTION HELD FOR THE FIRST TIME

AN exhibition showcasing a wide range of fine products from hundreds of brands worldwide opened in the city Friday. A forum on global bay areas also opened.

It was the first such event held in both Macau and the Guangdong-Macao in-depth cooperation zone in Hengqin of neighboring Zhuhai city.

Covering an area of 58,000 square meters, the exhibition is coupled with promotional activities and matching sessions aiming to serve as a platform for efficient exchanges between participants of different industries.

Forums covering Macau's major industries of culture, tourism, medicine and modern finance were also held.

Lei Wai Nong, Secretary for economy and finance, said at the opening ceremony that the innovative exhibition plays completely to the advantages of Macau and Hengqin, combining the mainland's vast consumer market with Macau's role as a platform linking China and Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs).

Zhang Xin, vice governor of Guangdong Province, said the event will provide new opportunities for Macau to speed up the building of an international trade center for China and the PSCs as well as for high quality consumption products.

The exhibition ran until yesterday. The forums on different industries were held in Hengqin from Wednesday to Thursday. **MDT/XINHUA.**

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PANDEMIC

TWO NEW COVID DEATHS AS SOME RESTRICTIONS EASED

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINA yesterday reported two additional deaths from COVID-19 as some cities move cautiously to ease anti-pandemic restrictions following increasingly vocal public frustrations.

The National Health Commission said one death was reported each in the provinces of Shandong and Sichuan. No information was given about the ages of the victims or whether they had been fully vaccinated.

China, where the virus first was detected in late 2019 in the central city of Wuhan, is the last major country trying to stop transmission completely through quarantines, lockdowns and mass testing. Concerns over vaccination rates are believed to figure prominently in the ruling Communist Party's determination to stick to its hard-line strategy.

While nine in 10 Chinese have been vaccinated, only 66% of people over 80 have gotten one shot while 40% have received a booster, according to the commission. It said 86%

of people over 60 are vaccinated.

Given those figures and the fact that relatively few Chinese have been built up antibodies by being exposed to the virus, some fear millions could die if restrictions were lifted entirely.

Yet, an outpouring of public anger appears to have prompted authorities to lift some of the more onerous restrictions, even as they say the "zero-COVID" strategy — which aims to isolate every infected person — is still in place.

The demonstrations, the largest and most widely spread in decades, erupted Nov. 25 after a fire in an apartment building in the northwestern city of Urumqi killed at least 10 people. That set off angry questions online about whether firefighters or victims trying to escape were blocked by locked doors or other anti-virus controls. Authorities denied that, but the deaths became a focus of public frustration.

The country saw several days of protests across cities including Shanghai and Beijing, with protesters demanding an

easing of COVID-19 curbs.

Beijing and some other Chinese cities announced that riders can board buses and subways without a virus test for the first time in months. The requirement has led to complaints from some Beijing residents that even though the city has shut many testing stations, most public venues still require COVID-19 tests.

Yesterday, China announced another 35,775 cases from the past 24 hours, 31,607 of which were asymptomatic, bringing its total to 336,165 with 5,235 deaths.

While many have questioned the accuracy of the Chinese figures, they remain relatively low compared to the U.S. and other nations which are now relaxing controls and trying to live with the virus that has killed at least 6.6 million people worldwide and sickened almost 650 million.

China still imposes mandatory quarantine for incoming travelers even as its infection numbers are low compared to its 1.4 billion population. **MDT/AP**

TIBETANS IN INDIA SUPPORT 'ZERO COVID' PROTESTERS

ABOUT 150 Tibetan exiles held up blank pieces of paper as they rallied in India's capital last week to express solidarity with people in China protesting its "zero COVID" policy.

The blank paper is a symbol of defiance used by some protesters in China against the ruling Communist Party's wide-

spread censorship.

Street protests broke out in several Chinese cities over the weekend driven by anger over rigid restrictions to combat COVID-19. The "zero COVID" policy seeks to eradicate the virus through sweeping lockdowns, travel restrictions and relentless testing.

Since the protests, some Chinese cities have eased anti-virus restrictions as the government tries to defuse public anger.

The demonstration in New Delhi was organized by the Tibetan Youth Congress, which supports the Dalai Lama. **MDT/AP**

COVID-19

WHO pleased to see China ease harsh zero policies

A top official at the World Health Organization said the U.N. agency was "pleased" to see China loosening some of its coronavirus restrictions, saying "it's really important that governments listen to their people when the people are in pain."

At a press briefing last week, WHO emergencies director Dr. Michael Ryan said the organization was glad to see China "adjusting their current strategies" in trying to recalibrate their response to COVID-19.

Last week, huge protests against the severe COVID-19 restrictions in China erupted in numerous cities, in the biggest show of opposition to the ruling Communist party in decades.

"We've all had to deal with restrictions of movement, we've all had to deal with having our lives changed and frankly, it's exhausting," Ryan said. The WHO has previously described China's "zero-COVID" strategy as "not sustainable," saying that the super-infectious omicron variant made trying to stop every single case of COVID impossible.

Ryan said using imported messenger RNA vaccines, like those made by BioNTech-Pfizer and Moderna, would be a "solid option" for China to boost its immunization coverage. China's home-grown vaccines have proven to be less effective and scientists say any protection they provided is likely to have faded with the emergence of omicron.

The decision of which vaccines to use "are choices that sovereign governments need to make based on the best benefit to their population," Ryan said. He said future strategies should balance "the control of the virus with the lives, the livelihoods and well-being and human rights of the people in China."

China has been developing its own version of an mRNA vaccine and has yet to authorize either of the shots made by Western companies.

Unlike in many Western coun-

tries, vaccination rates among China's elderly are lagging; only 66% of people over 80 have got one shot, while 40% have received a booster, according to China's National Health Commission.

By comparison, 93% of Americans 65 and over have received a full course of vaccine and another 2% have at least one dose, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Numerous public health officials have warned that China's zero-COVID strategy, which involves locking down entire communities if infections are found, serves little purpose given how easily the omicron variant spreads. But without significantly raising the country's vaccination rate quickly, releasing those restrictions could produce a surge of hospitalizations and deaths that could overwhelm the health system.

In recent days, Chinese authorities have loosened some COVID-19 protocols in cities including Guangzhou and Chengdu, easing testing requirements and controls on movement. Still, many of the rules that brought people into the streets of Shanghai, Beijing and at least six other cities remain in force.

The announcements easing restrictions didn't mention last weekend's protests of the human cost of anti-virus measures that confine millions of people to their homes. But the timing and publicity suggested Chinese President Xi Jinping's government was trying to mollify public anger.

Globally, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that about 90% of the population now has some kind of immunity to the coronavirus via prior infection or vaccination, and that the world is inching closer to the end of the pandemic.

"We are much closer to being able to say that the emergency phase of the pandemic is over, but we're not there yet," Tedros said. **MDT/AP**



SOUTH KOREA

Seoul arrests ex-top security official over border killing

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's former national security director was arrested this weekend over a suspected cover-up surrounding North Korea's killing of a South Korean fisheries official near the rivals' sea boundary in 2020.

Suh Hoon's arrest came as President Yoon Suk Yeol's conservative government investigates his liberal predecessor's handling of that killing and another border incident the same year, cases that prompted criticism Seoul was desperately trying to appease the North to improve relations.

Former President Moon Jae-in, who staked his single-term on inter-Korean rapprochement before leaving office in May, has reacted angrily to the investigation into Suh's actions. Moon issued a statement this week accusing Yoon's government of raising groundless allegations and politicizing sensitive security matters.



Former South Korean National Security Director Suh Hoon (center) arrives at the Seoul Central District Court in Seoul, Friday

Judge Kim Jeong-min of the Seoul Central District Court granted prosecutor's request to arrest Suh over concerns that he may attempt to destroy evidence, the court said in a statement. Suh didn't answer reporters' questions about the allegations on Friday as he appeared at the court for a

review over the prosecution's warrant request.

A previous inquiry by South Korea's Board of Audit and Inspection concluded that officials from Moon's government made no meaningful attempt to rescue Lee Dae-jun after learning that the 47-year-old fisheries official

was drifting in waters near the Korea's western sea boundary in September 2020.

After confirming that Lee had been fatally shot by North Korean troops, officials publicly played up the possibility that he had tried to defect to North Korea, citing his gambling debts and family issues, while withholding evidence suggesting he had no such intention, the audit board said in an October report.

Suh also served as Moon's spy chief before being appointed as national security director two months before the killing. He faces suspicions that he used a Cabinet meeting to instruct officials to delete intelligence records related to the incident while the government crafted a public explanation of Lee's death.

Suh is also suspected of ordering the Defense Ministry, National Intelligence Service, and the Coast Guard to portray Lee as trying to defect in their reports on his killing.

Critics say the Moon government went out of its way to paint Lee as unsympathetic as it tried to appease a nuclear-armed rival with a brutal human rights record.

In June, the Defense Ministry and coast guard reversed the Moon government's description of the incident, saying there was no evidence that Lee had tried to defect.

Moon's Democratic Party issued a statement criticizing Suh's arrest, saying suspicions he might destroy evidence were unreasonable since "all the materials are in the hands of the Yoon Suk Yeol government."

"The Defense Ministry, Coast Guard, National Intelligence Service and other security-related agencies have made a judgment on the Western Sea incident based on an analysis of information and circumstances," the party said in a statement. It called the investigation a type of political vendetta.

Yoon's government is separately investigating the 2019 forced repatriation of two North Korean fishermen, despite their reported wish to resettle in South Korea.

In July, the National Intelligence Service filed charges against Suh and his spy chief successor Park Jie-won for alleged abuse of power, destruction of public records and falsification of documents regarding the two cases. **MDT/AP**

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PUTIN'S WAR

Russia rejects \$60-a-barrel cap on its oil, warns of cutoffs

JAMEY KEATEN, KYIV

RUSSIAN authorities rejected a price cap on the country's oil set by Ukraine's Western supporters and threatened yesterday [Macau time] to stop supplying the nations that endorsed it.

Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan, the United States and the 27-nation European Union agreed Friday to cap what they would pay for Russian oil at \$60-per-barrel. The limit is set to take effect today, along with an EU embargo on Russian oil shipped by sea.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia needed to analyze the situation before deciding on a specific response but that it would not accept the price ceiling. Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, warned that the cap's European backers would come to rue their decision.

"From this year, Europe will live without Russian oil," Ulyanov tweeted. "Moscow has already made it clear that it will not supply oil to those countries that support anti-market price caps. Wait, very soon the EU will accuse Russia of using oil as a weapon."

The office of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, meanwhile, called Saturday for a lower price cap, saying the one adopted by the EU and the Group of Seven leading economies didn't go far enough.

"It would be necessary to lower it to \$30 in order to destroy the enemy's economy faster," Andriy Yermak, the head of Zelenskyy's office, wrote on Telegram, staking out a position also favored by Poland — a leading critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine.

Under Friday's agreements, insurance companies and other firms needed to ship oil would only be able to deal with Russian crude if the oil is priced at or below the cap. Most insurers are located in the EU and the United Kingdom and could be required to observe the ceiling.



Ukrainian servicemen walk on a pontoon bridge across the Inhulets river in Kherson region, Ukraine

Russia's crude has already been selling for around \$60 a barrel, a deep discount from international benchmark Brent, which closed Friday at \$85.42 per barrel.

The Russian Embassy in Washington insisted that Russian oil "will continue to be in demand" and criticized the price limit as "reshaping the basic principles of the functioning of free markets." A post on the embassy's Telegram channel predicted the per-barrel cap would lead to "a widespread increase in uncertainty and higher costs for consumers of raw materials."

"What happens in China will help shape whether the price cap has any teeth," said Jim Burkhard, an oil markets analyst with IHS Markit. He said dampened demand from China means most Russian crude exports are already selling below \$60.

The price cap aims to put an economic squeeze on Russia and further crimp its ability to finance a war that has killed an untold number of civilians and fighters, driven millions of Ukrainians from their homes and weighed on the world economy for more than nine months.

The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reported that since Friday Russia's forces had fired five missiles, carried out 27 airstrikes and launched 44 shelling attacks against Ukraine's military positions and civilian infrastructure.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy head of the presi-

dent's office, said the attacks killed one civilian and wounded four others in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region. According to the U.K. Defense Ministry, Russian forces "continue to invest a large element of their overall military effort and firepower" around the small Donetsk city of Bakhmut, which they have spent weeks trying to capture.

In southern Ukraine's Kherson province, whose capital city of the same name was liberated by Ukrainian forces three weeks ago following a Russian retreat, Gov. Yaroslav Yanushkevich said evacuations of civilians stuck in Russian-held territory across the Dnieper River would resume temporarily.

Russian forces pulled back to the river's eastern bank last month. Yanushkevich said a ban on crossing the waterway would be lifted during daylight hours for three days for Ukrainian citizens who "did not have time to leave the temporarily occupied territory." His announcement cited a "possible intensification of hostilities in this area."

Kherson is one of four regions that Putin illegally annexed in September and vowed to defend as Russian territory. From their new positions, Russian troops have regularly shelled Kherson city and nearby infrastructure in recent days, leaving many residents without power. Running water remained unavailable in much of the city — and one resident was seen scooping

up water from a dirty puddle.

The city continued to suffer heavy shelling Saturday that left many residents disoriented, toppled power lines and dumped torn-off tree branches on the roads.

"When we start to repair (electricity networks), the shelling starts immediately," said Oleksandr Kravchenko, who is in charge of high-voltage networks in Kherson. "We just repair electric lines and on the next day we have to repair lines again."

Ukrainian authorities also reported intense fighting in Luhansk and Russian shelling of northeastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region, which Russia's soldiers mostly withdrew from in September.

The mayor of the city of Kharkiv, which remained under Ukrainian control during Russia's occupation of other parts of the region, said some 500 apartment buildings were damaged beyond repair, and nearly 220 schools and kindergartens were damaged or destroyed. He estimated the cost of the damage at \$9 billion.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu met this weekend in Minsk with the president and defense minister of Belarus, which hosts Russian troops and artillery. Belarus has said its own forces are not taking part in the war, but Ukrainian officials have frequently expressed concern that they could be induced to cross the border into northern Ukraine. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1950 PYONGYANG TAKEN AS UN RETREATS

Chinese troops have entered the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, as United Nations forces are pushed steadily back towards South Korea.

The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) invaded the south in June this year. Forces from the UN and Republic of Korea led a counter-offensive on 15 September.

North Korean forces quickly retreated back over the 38th parallel and General Douglas MacArthur ordered troops to pursue them into North Korea.

On 19 October Pyongyang was captured and by 24 November, North Korean forces were driven back almost to the Yalu River which marks the border of China.

But two days later, as General MacArthur prepared for a final offensive Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) joined the NKPA to launch this latest counterattack.

Today in Pyongyang, the CCF had to wade across the Taedong River because American engineers had destroyed bridges to the deserted city and burned all supplies and equipment that might help enemy forces.

Thousands of refugees are waiting to be taken from the north to the south bank by small boats.

Meanwhile in the north-east of the country, up to 20,000 US Marines and 7th Division infantrymen are totally surrounded by Communist Korean and Chinese forces south of the Chosin reservoir.

Reports from the headquarters of X Corp say marines and soldiers are now under fire from six Chinese divisions and enduring some hardship in sub-zero temperatures.

Allied aircraft are supplying the trapped troops with ammunition and food and have evacuated 1,700 wounded men to hospitals on the coast.

The British Commonwealth 29th Brigade, the rearguard of the Eighth Army, has retreated to positions further south of Pyongyang.

And two companies of the US 187th Airborne Regiment are fighting Communist troops near Sibyon, 70 miles (112 km) south-east of Pyongyang.

UN reinforcements have been sent to the American paratroops.

In Washington, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee had a meeting with President Harry S Truman to discuss events in Korea.

And General Omar Nelson Bradley, general of the army, has been explaining the seriousness of the situation to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Yesterday President Truman condemned the Chinese for joining NKPA forces and escalating the war.



Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The dramatic events at the Chosin Reservoir were reported as one of the greatest and bloodiest retreats in US Marine Corps history.

For two weeks, during one of the coldest winters on record, the First Marine Division, 200 British Marine Commandoes and elements of the US Seventh Division fought their way to the sea port of Hungnam along a narrow route through the mountains of North Korea — the Funchilin Pass.

They had support from ships in Hungnam that provided naval gunfire and navy and marine aircraft. At Hungnam, the Navy re-deployed more than 100,000 marines and soldiers of the X Corps, and evacuated over 100,000 North Korean refugees.

All UN troops retreated south and in January, 1951, the Communists recaptured Seoul, the South Korean capital. UN troops prepared a second counterattack for March 1951 and by June had recaptured Seoul.

The Korean War cost about two million lives. It ended with an armistice on 27 July 1953 which established a fixed demarcation line with a four kilometer demilitarization zone.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You need to concentrate on your business ventures more than on your relationship today. Don't be too quick to let friends and relatives know what you're up to.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Don't lament to a friend about any grievance regarding your mate, or it may be hard to rectify your relationship. Help children complete projects they're having difficulty with.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Small business ventures can earn you extra cash. You will be popular and will easily attract members of the opposite sex. Your unique approach to life will interest others.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 You've been hurt before and could be again if you don't play hard to get. Be prepared to neutralize any threats. Avoid overloading your plate.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Be sure that you lay your cards on the table. Kick your shoes off and relax. Travel will promote new romantic encounters.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 You must try to help. Don't involve yourself in the emotional problems of those you work with. Try to mix business with pleasure while traveling.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Be diplomatic and honest, and that person will only be made to look bad. You will need to finalize important deals today. You can invest in profitable ventures.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Your creative ability will surface, giving you good ideas for ways of making money. You can get others to do things for you but be sure not to overpay them or lend them money.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 You can write beautiful love letters today. Friends and relatives can give you good advice. Travel and family gatherings should be in order.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Pleasure trips will be most enjoyable if you take them with that special person in your life. Don't hesitate to sign up for lectures or seminars that will enlighten you.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Keep your feelings to yourself if you want to avoid embarrassment. Think about your budget before booking a trip. Get help setting up a reasonable budget.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 You may be the recipient of false information. Secret affairs may only cause complications in your life. Do not let the reactions of others get you going.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-8	4	fine
Changchun	-16	-7	fine
Chengdu	5	10	cloudy
Chongqing	8	13	cloudy
Fuzhou	14	15	rain
Guangzhou	12	16	cloudy
Guiyang	1	8	overcast
Haikou	16	20	cloudy
Hangzhou	6	7	rain
Harbin	-19	-9	fine
Hefei	1	8	cloudy
Nanjing	3	9	overcast
Shanghai	8	10	rain
Taipei	17	20	rain
Wuhan	2	8	cloudy
Hong Kong	15	21	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-12	-9	overcast
Frankfurt	2	4	showers
Paris	1	4	cloudy
London	4	8	cloudy
New York	4	9	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Give one star, say; 4- Steeps; 9- Leaves out; 14- ___ roll; 15- Regular course; 16- Skin openings; 17- Weariness; 19- Having wings; 20- ___ and the Night Visitors; 21- Geographical reference; 23- Be dependent; 24- Map lines; 27- Some DVD players; 30- Group within a group; 32- ___ de France; 33- SE Asian country; 37- "Steal This Book" author Hoffman; 39- Person to whom property is transferred; 40- Situated at the bottom; 42- Part of TNT; 43- Monotony; 44- Road hazard; 45- Pertaining to the fingers; 48- Atlantic mackerel; 50- Discharged; 51- Step; 55- Thin as ___; 57- Clear-headed; 58- Piece of history; 60- Outlaw; 64- Actress Barkin; 65- Antique auto; 66- Univ. aides; 67- Holmes's creator; 68- Eccentric; 69- Before, of yore;

DOWN 1- Like some bears and icecaps; 2- Make ___ for oneself; 3- Like Fran Drescher's voice; 4- Dirty; 5- Meal crumb; 6- "Aladdin" monkey; 7- Young goat; 8- Stable; 9- Opaque gemstone; 10- Tooth; 11- Irritable; 12- Hanoi holiday; 13- Wind dir.; 18- Bashful; 22- Medicinal amt.; 24- Subterfuge; 25- Village Voice award; 26- ___ glance; 28- Rap sheet info; 29- Prophets; 30- Church council; 31- Backing for an exhibit; 33- Frenzied; 34- Wonderland girl; 35- In the strict sense; 36- ___ Lingus; 38- Coal container; 40- Soak leather in base solution; 41- Diary of ___ Housewife; 43- Round Table title; 46- ___ were you...; 47- Aureate; 49- Projecting window; 51- ___ favor; 52- Diminish; 53- Symbol of Lebanon; 54- Uneven; 56- Teen spots?; 57- Hot; 58- Blushing; 59- "Xanadu" band; 61- That, in Tijuana; 62- Fast flier; 63- Domestic animal;

Friday's solution

A	B	C	S	B	A	S	H	A	P	E	R
C	O	A	L	E	S	T	E	S	T	E	R
H	O	P	I	A	W	A	R	E	T	A	I
T	B	S	P	C	A	V	A	C	O	E	R
O	C	E	A	N	D	R	I	P	P	I	N
A	B	O	R	T	T	O	R	O	T	O	L
T	E	M	M	A	N	O	N	T	R	A	
E	Y	E	D	I	N	E	Z	B	R	A	I
I	S	T	R	A	N	G	E	R	A	I	S
S	A	M	B	A	R	S	O	S	O	D	E
P	R	O	B	L	E	M	A	T	O	Y	S
E	C	O	L	T	I	L	E	R	T	O	R
C	O	T	E								

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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TALES AZZONI, DOHA

MATCH OF THE DAY

BRAZIL WAITS ON NEYMAR FOR SOUTH KOREA LAST 16 MATCH

WHETHER Neymar is in the lineup, on the bench or resting for a third consecutive game will depend on how he performs in Brazil's last training session ahead of its round-of-16 match against South Korea today [Tuesday, 03:00] at the World Cup.

The Brazil star missed two group-stage matches with a right ankle injury he received in the team's opening win against Serbia. He was back training with teammates on Saturday, but it remains unclear whether he's fit enough to play against South Korea.

"He will train this afternoon, and if he trains well, he will play," Tite said ahead of the team's practice session on Sunday.

Tite said he planned to use Neymar from the start instead of as a substitute if he's healthy enough to play.

"I prefer to use my best player from the start," Tite said. "It's the coach who has

AP PHOTO



to make that decision and take on that responsibility."

Brazil struggled without the playmaker but still won its group despite a loss to

Cameroon in the last match.

South Korea advanced after a surprise win over Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal in their last group game, making it to the last 16 for the first time in 12 years.

Tests after the Serbia match showed ligament damage in Neymar's ankle and it wasn't clear if he would be able to play again

in Qatar. His ankle looked bad, with a lot of swelling, and doctors wouldn't say if he would recover during the tournament.

But after undergoing intensive physiotherapy treatment, Neymar improved and was back training on Saturday. In footage released by the Brazilian soccer federation, he appeared to be in good condi-

tion, doing drills with the ball and taking shots on goal without signs of his injury.

Midfielder Fred replaced Neymar against Switzerland. With Brazil already through to the knockout phase, Tite rotated the entire squad against Cameroon.

This will be the first time Brazil and South Korea

meet in an official match, with the Brazilians winning six of their seven friendlies. South Korea's only win came in 1999.

South Korea advanced in Qatar thanks to a dramatic stoppage-time goal by Hwang Hee-chan in a 2-1 victory over Portugal. It had drawn with Uruguay in its opener and then lost to Ghana.

Hwang was expected to be in the starting lineup again against Brazil after missing the team's first two games because of a hamstring injury.

South Korea is trying to advance past the round of 16 for the first time since its historic run as a co-host in 2002, when it made it to the semifinals and ended fourth. It was eliminated in the group stage both in 2014 and 2018.

Brazil is trying to win its first World Cup title since the 2002 tournament in Japan and South Korea. The Selecao has made it to the last eight in every tournament since then, with its best run being the semifinal appearance at the home tournament in 2014.

The winner of the match will face either Japan or 2018 runner-up Croatia in the quarterfinals. MDT/AP

FINAL GROUP STANDINGS

Group A	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Netherlands	3	2	1	0	5 - 1	7
Senegal	3	2	0	1	5 - 4	6
Ecuador	3	1	1	1	4 - 3	4
Qatar	3	0	0	3	1 - 7	0
Group B	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
England	3	2	1	0	9 - 2	7
United States	3	1	2	0	2 - 1	5
Iran	3	1	0	2	4 - 7	3
Wales	3	0	1	2	1 - 6	1
Group C	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Argentina	3	2	0	1	5 - 2	6
Poland	3	1	1	1	2 - 2	4
Mexico	3	1	1	1	2 - 3	4
Saudi Arabia	3	1	0	2	3 - 5	3
Group D	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
France	3	2	0	1	6 - 3	6
Australia	3	2	0	1	3 - 4	6
Tunisia	3	1	1	1	1 - 1	4
Denmark	3	0	1	2	1 - 3	1
Group E	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Japan	3	2	0	1	4 - 3	6
Spain	3	1	1	1	9 - 3	4
Germany	3	1	1	1	6 - 5	4
Costa Rica	3	1	0	2	3 - 11	3
Group F	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Morocco	3	2	1	0	4 - 1	7
Croatia	3	1	2	0	4 - 1	5
Belgium	3	1	1	1	1 - 2	4
Canada	3	0	0	3	2 - 7	0
Group G	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Brazil	3	2	0	1	3 - 1	6
Switzerland	3	2	0	1	4 - 3	6
Cameroon	3	1	1	1	4 - 4	4
Serbia	3	0	1	2	5 - 8	1
Group H	PL	W	DRAW	L	GF - GA	PNT
Portugal	3	2	0	1	6 - 4	6
Korea Republic	3	1	1	1	4 - 4	4
Uruguay	3	1	1	1	2 - 2	4
Ghana	3	1	0	2	5 - 7	3

IN OTHER SPORTS...

South Africa win Dubai Sevens for fourth straight time

SOUTH Africa won the Dubai Sevens a fourth straight time after putting away Ireland 21-5 in the final this weekend.

The South Africans dominated possession in the first half and scored three converted tries to lead 21-0 at the break. Then their defense took over and Ireland could score only once.

Their first victory on the rugby sevens world series lifted them into the lead with Australia, the winner of the opening leg in Hong Kong a month ago.

Shilton van Wyk scored the opening try after 20 seconds, with a dummy in his own half and break to the posts. Van Wyk also got the second try on a scissors move and wrong-footed three defenders.

Siviwe Soyizwapi got the third try in first half stoppage time from an intercept when Ireland was pushing to get back into the final. Ri-



cardo James Duarttee converted all three.

Ireland's only points came midway through the second half, after Jack Kelly powered through from a quick-tapped penalty.

"We slipped a few tackles here and there. However,

we're really happy with the defense we put out there," Soyizwapi said. "It was part of the plan and I can say it worked."

Both teams came from behind in their semifinals.

Van Wyk also starred when South Africa beat

New Zealand 26-19 from 12-0 down at halftime. New Zealand led 19-14 but South Africa leveled through Branco du Preez and in the last minute Van Wyk scored the winning try untouched off a ruck on the tryline. MDT/AP

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

RONALD BLUM, AL RAYYAN

LAST 16

NETHERLANDS 3, USA 1

US knocked out of WC, loses to the Netherlands

CHRISTIAN Pulisic covered his face as he walked off. Tyler Adams, Weston McKennie and Kellyn Acosta gathered for a group hug. Tim Weah, DeAndre Yedlin and Sean Johnson sat on the field in a small circle with their cleats off.

"It hurts after a tough loss like that when we feel like we could have had more," Pulisic said, managing a voice only just above a whisper. "We don't want to feel like this again."

The United States' return to the World Cup ended with a 3-1 loss to the Netherlands this weekend in the round of 16. While the Oranje extended their unbeaten streak to 19 games and advanced to a quarterfinal with Argentina, the Americans contemplated how far they came and how short they fell.

Defensive lapses gave the Dutch a treat as Memphis Depay scored in the 10th minute and Daley Blind in first-half stoppage time.

U.S. hope revived when Pulisic's cross hit the trailing foot of



Daley Blind of the Netherlands, celebrates after scoring his side's second goal

second-half substitute Haji Wright and popped over goalkeeper

Andries Noppert and into the net in the 76th. But Denzel Dumfries, named after actor Denzel Washington, scored on a volley in the 81st after assisting on the first two goals.

"The American public should be optimistic," said Gregg Berhalter, the first person to play for and coach the U.S. team at a World Cup. "When you look at the way we wanted to play and did play, it should be positive."

The U.S. hasn't reached the quarterfinals since 2002 and was eliminated in the first knockout round, just like in 2010 and 2014.

After the American failure to qualify for the 2018, Yedlin was the only holdover on a roster that was the tournament's second-youngest, averaging just over 25 years.

"Now they know that feeling of what it's like to lose after putting so much into it," the 29-year-old defender said, "and the feeling of defeat from the past can only fuel success in the future."

The U.S. is winless in 12 games against European opponents at the World Cup since 2002 and has won once and lost seven in knockout rounds since the cham-

pionship launched in 1930.

"This tournament has really restored a lot of belief, restored a lot of respect to U.S. soccer and to soccer in our country," McKennie said. "I think we've shown that we can be giants eventually. Maybe we may not be there yet, but I think we're definitely on our way."

Before a crowd of 44,846 at the renovated Khalifa International Stadium, Pulisic had a chance to put the U.S. ahead in the third minute. McKennie knocked a poor clearance back into the penalty area, but Noppert blocked his point-blank shot with his left thigh.

"I thought I was way offside when it happened, but I still hit it and he made a good save," Pulisic said.

The Dutch went ahead when Cody Gakpo played the ball to Dumfries on the right flank. Depay sprinted into the penalty area as Adams failed to track him, and Dumfries one-timed a cross that Depay redirected inside Matt Turner's far post for the first goal against the U.S. during the run of play in the tournament.

Blind scored in the first minute of stoppage time. Following a throw-in, Dumfries got a cross around Adams and Blind beat a late-arriving Sergiño Dest to the ball at the penalty spot for his first international goal in eight years.

Wright entered in the 67th and scored his second international goal on the unusual touch from three yards out, sparking U.S. hopes. But Dumfries was left unmarked by Tim Ream and Antonee Robinson and scored off Blind's cross from six yards for his sixth goal. **MDT/AP**

SCOREBOARD

Group F	Croatia	0	0	Belgium
Group F	Canada	1	2	Morocco
Group E	Japan	2	1	Spain
Group E	Costa Rica	2	4	Germany
Group H	Ghana	0	2	Uruguay
Group H	Korea Republic	2	1	Portugal
Group G	Serbia	2	3	Switzerland
Group G	Cameroon	1	0	Brazil
Round of 16	Netherlands	3	1	United States
Round of 16	Argentina	2	1	Australia

LAST 16

What's next for Australia after loss to Argentina, exit?

ARGENTINA 2, AUSTRALIA 1

AUSTRALIA'S World Cup adventure came to an end against a Lionel Messi-inspired Argentina. A 2-1 loss at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium matched its best-ever performance at soccer's biggest tournament by reaching the round of 16 for only the second time in its history.

Drawn in Group D with defending champion France and Euro 2020 semifinalists Denmark, the Socceroos had a tough task just to reach the round of 16. A 4-1 loss to France in its opening game was a worrying start.

Back-to-back wins against Tunisia and Denmark saw the Aussies pick up their highest points total in a group stage and emulate the performance



from 2006 by qualifying for the knockouts.

Few would have expected Australia to get past Argentina, but it gave Messi and co. a real fright with a late fightback yesterday [Macau time].

"Everyone said before

we came here we were the worst Socceroo team ever to qualify for a World Cup, but that's gone now," said coach Graham Arnold.

Arnold's contract is up and his future is uncertain.

"I need a break, a rest and no doubt I'll have some

good discussions with the organisation," he said after the match.

Six of the players who made the field for Australia against Argentina are in their 30s, with Aaron Mooy the oldest of those at 32.

Mitchell Duke, who scored the winner against Tunisia, is 31 and so is Matthew Leckie, who struck against Denmark.

How many of those will still be around in four years' time remains to be seen.

Garang Kuol, at 18 years and 79 days, became the youngest player to appear in

a World Cup knockout match since Pele in 1958.

And the teenager, who is joining Premier League club Newcastle in January, was close to making himself an Australian hero when forcing a late save from Argentina goalkeeper Emi Martinez.

Stoke defender Harry Souttar, at 24, is another who could have a bright future after enhancing his reputation with impressive performances at the World Cup.

Arnold used his post-match news conference to lobby for a national soccer

development centre in Australia to produce more high-quality players.

"We need to spend money and get help from government to put some money in the game to help develop kids," he said.

It won the tournament in 2015, but will face tough competition, with Japan, South Korea and Saudi Arabia also qualifying.

The performances of those nations, along with Australia, at the World Cup is evidence of the growing strength of soccer in the region. **MDT/AP**

TODAY'S MATCHES

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
Mon	Dec 5	23:00	Japan	Croatia	H 4, D 3.3, A 2.14
Tue	Dec 6	3:00	Brazil	Korea Republic	H 1.31, D 5.75, A 13

OPINION

**Gambling
 and the Law**

I. Nelson Rose



TRAPPED IN MACAU

[Last month], Macau awarded “provisional licenses” to the six current casino operators. These will allow them to continue to operate until they are awarded their official concessions in January.

No surprise there. In fact, the biggest surprise is that another company, Genting, even bothered to compete.

Genting had hoped to add what was once the world’s richest casino market, prior to Covid, to its massive Resorts World operations in New York, Singapore, Malaysia and Las Vegas.

It may be unfair for me to also include Caesars as one of the losers, since the company formerly known as Harrahs knew it would be a waste of time to try to replace one of the entrenched concession holders. But it has been desperate to undo the dreadful mistake it made in 2001. When Macau open its casino licensing opportunities to the world, the company did not even submit a bid. It apparently thought that the sleepy little former Portuguese colony, with a rumored presence of organized crime, was not worth the effort.

I visited one of the dark, dangerous looking casinos in Macau in 1996, so I understood Harrahs’ executives’ emotional reactions. But in the gaming industry, money beats feelings every time. I did not see how having the only legal casinos in China, the most populous nation in the world, could be anything but a sure thing.

Now I am not so sure. The new concessions are only good for ten years. Operators will soon have to start again the horrible process of seeking renewals. And the governments of Macau and the Peoples Republic of China have made it clear that they barely tolerate legal gaming.

Macau announced that the main criteria for the right to operate a casino is now how much the casino company promises to spend on non-gaming.

Operators will have to spend at least US\$1.27 billion on non-casino developments over the next decade. This is on top of a hike in the tax rate to 40%, one of the highest in the world.

One of the two Macau officials now in total control of casinos, the Secretary of Economy and Finance, announced that non-gaming would become a major economic driver in the next ten years.

“What we need to change is Macau’s image as a gambling city.”

The other official, the Chief Executive, agreed, stating that one of his administration’s main goals is to ensure that non-gaming accounts for 60 percent of Macau’s Gross Domestic Product in the future.

So how are the six casino operators – MGM, Galaxy, Sands, Melco, Wynn and SJM – supposed to spend those billions of dollars? And what will take gambling’s place?

The Macau government will be building up “MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions), culture, modern finance and Chinese medicine.”

Macau and the PRC are also putting in many restrictions on how casinos can operate. The ability to bring in high-rollers, the lifeblood of Macau’s casinos, will be difficult, if not impossible. Junkets are greatly limited. Mainlanders will no longer be able to transfer out cash.

Each casino will have a government bureaucrat overseeing day-to-day operations. The two top officials will decide how many tables and slot machines each casino can have. They even think they can determine how much those slots and tables should win and will fine casinos that don’t make their quotas.

What do you do if you have spent hundreds of millions of dollars and two decades building your business in Macau, which, before Covid, had been one of the most successful casinos in the world? Do you walk away from your billion-dollar integrated resort?

No. You stick with it, even when the government orders you to close the casino and have literally no income for months because a total of six people died of Covid in the entire city.

Macau’s casinos won US\$37.6 billion in gaming revenue in 2018. And now the government has ordered the casino companies to replace that with MICE, culture, modern finance and Chinese medicine.

That would be a lot of money spent on Chinese medicine. Perhaps Caesars was right to not get trapped in Macau.

gamblingandthelaw.com

U.S.-owned Hess Corporation, a consortium partner in Guyana’s offshore oil sector, has agreed to buy \$750 million worth of carbon credits from the South American nation in the next decade as it works to ensure Guyana’s almost intact Amazonian rainforests remain standing for decades to come, officials said yesterday [Macau time].

Guyanese government officials and executives from New York-based Hess signed off on the agreement late Friday under the United Nations Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degra-

duction program (REDD).

This is the second major such deal the country has negotiated in the past decade. Back in 2009, Norway had signed off on a deal to provide \$250 million in funding to help ensure the country’s 18 million hectares of forest will remain intact.

Government says it will pursue efforts to secure additional partners in the carbon credit market as the country works to ensure minimal harvesting of its forest resources in a country the size of Britain, or the U.S. state of Idaho, with less than 1 million inhabitants.

AP PHOTO



Robert Downey Sr., left, and his son Robert Downey Jr. from the documentary “Sr.”

HOLLYWOOD

**DOWNEY JR. ON
 MAKING ONE LAST FILM
 WITH HIS DAD IN ‘SR.’**

JAKE COYLE, NEW YORK

ROUT to make an objective portrait, a tribute to his father, the underground filmmaking maverick Robert Downey Sr. His dad had other plans.

“The key point in this is when he goes, ‘OK, I think we should split into two camps: The (expletive) movie and the one I’m gonna make,’” recalls Downey Jr., laughing. “I just go, ‘Man, hats off to you, Pops.’”

“Sr.,” directed by Chris Smith, is a work of father-son harmony more than might be suggested by Downey Sr.’s typically brusque assertion of filmmaking independence. It’s a kind of home movie, mostly made by Downey Jr. but with his father’s own insertions peppered throughout. It’s a son’s loving reckoning with his iconoclast father, a freewheeling cult filmmaker whose experimental films gave Downey Jr. his entry into movie-making and whose outsized personality did much to inform his son, for bet-

ter and worse. As Downey Jr. puts it, “My dad and I are pretty flawed dudes.”

“It was a way to put something between us in our own relationship and closure. I didn’t know that it would be the quickest way to the heart of things,” Downey Jr. said in a recent interview by phone from Los Angeles alongside his wife and producing partner Susan Downey. “It’s like a little string you pull at, you know. And it winds up pulling you into a rabbit hole that I kind of needed to go down in order to process and ingest the totality of our relationship.”

Downey Sr. died last year at the age of 85 after having Parkinson’s. That’s part of the film; Downey Sr. wanted it to be. “Sr.,” which debuted Friday on Netflix, was made with the intention of capturing his last days: a last stab at gaining some understanding of him, wrestling with their shared demons and, once again, making a movie together. Some 50 years ago, Downey Jr. made his debut in his father’s antic 1970 dog pound comedy, “Pound,” at

the age of 5.

“I have pretty good recall for the entirety of this incarnation, for better or worse,” says Downey Jr., 57. “Those films and projects, I have very clear memories of that. I can still see the Mounds bar that was being handed to me. It was my first prop I ever had to deal with.”

Years before he was the Oscar-nominated actor of “Chaplin” or the star of “Iron Man,” Downey Jr. was, as he says in the film, “just Bob Downey’s kid for a long time.” Absurdist, spontaneous films like 1971’s “Putney Swope” and 1972’s “Greaser’s Palace” made the elder Downey a pivotal countercultural provocateur who defined himself outside of the mainstream.

In “Sr.,” Downey Jr.’s reverence for his father is easy to see, as is their mutual affection for one another. But that doesn’t mean the old man was always easy on his famous son. Every film Downey Jr. ever made, he wondered: “What will Sr. think?” Every 15 years or so would he get a thumb’s up. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



El Salvador The government sent 10,000 soldiers and police to seal off a town on the outskirts of the nation’s capital Saturday to search for gang members. The operation was one of the largest mobilizations yet in President Nayib Bukele’s nine-month-old crackdown on street gangs that long extorted money from businesses and ruled many neighborhoods of the capital, San Salvador. The troops blocked roads going in and out of the township of Soyapango, checking people’s documents.

AP PHOTO



Russia Former U.S. intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, who fled prosecution after revealing highly classified surveillance programs, has received a Russian passport and taken the citizenship oath, Russian news agencies quoted his lawyer as saying Friday. Lawyer Anatoly Kucherena was reported as saying that Snowden got the passport and took the oath last week, about three months after Russian President Vladimir Putin granted him citizenship.

AP PHOTO



NATO member and Russia’s neighbor Estonia is boosting its defense capabilities by acquiring an advanced U.S. rocket artillery system in the Baltic country’s largest arms procurement project ever, defense officials said Saturday. The deal signed Friday for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System is worth more than \$200 million and includes equipment such as ammunition and rockets, as well as training.