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MUST CALLS FOR ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION TO BE EXPEDITED AS MACAU RECORDS BELOW-PASSING CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX IN Q2

P2

INDUSTRY: INFUX OF TOURISTS HAS WORSENERD THE WAIT FOR TAXIS ACROSS THE CITY

P4

HONG KONG'S NEWLY NAMED ROMAN CATHOLIC CARDINAL WANTS RECONCILIATION AND MORE HOPE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

P6



AP PHOTO



Japan Torrential rain has been pounding southwestern Japan, triggering floods and mudslides and leaving two people dead and at least six others missing yesterday. Rains falling on the regions of Kyushu and Chugoku since the weekend caused flooding along a number of rivers as well as mudslides, closing roads, disrupting trains and cutting the water supply in some areas.

AP PHOTO



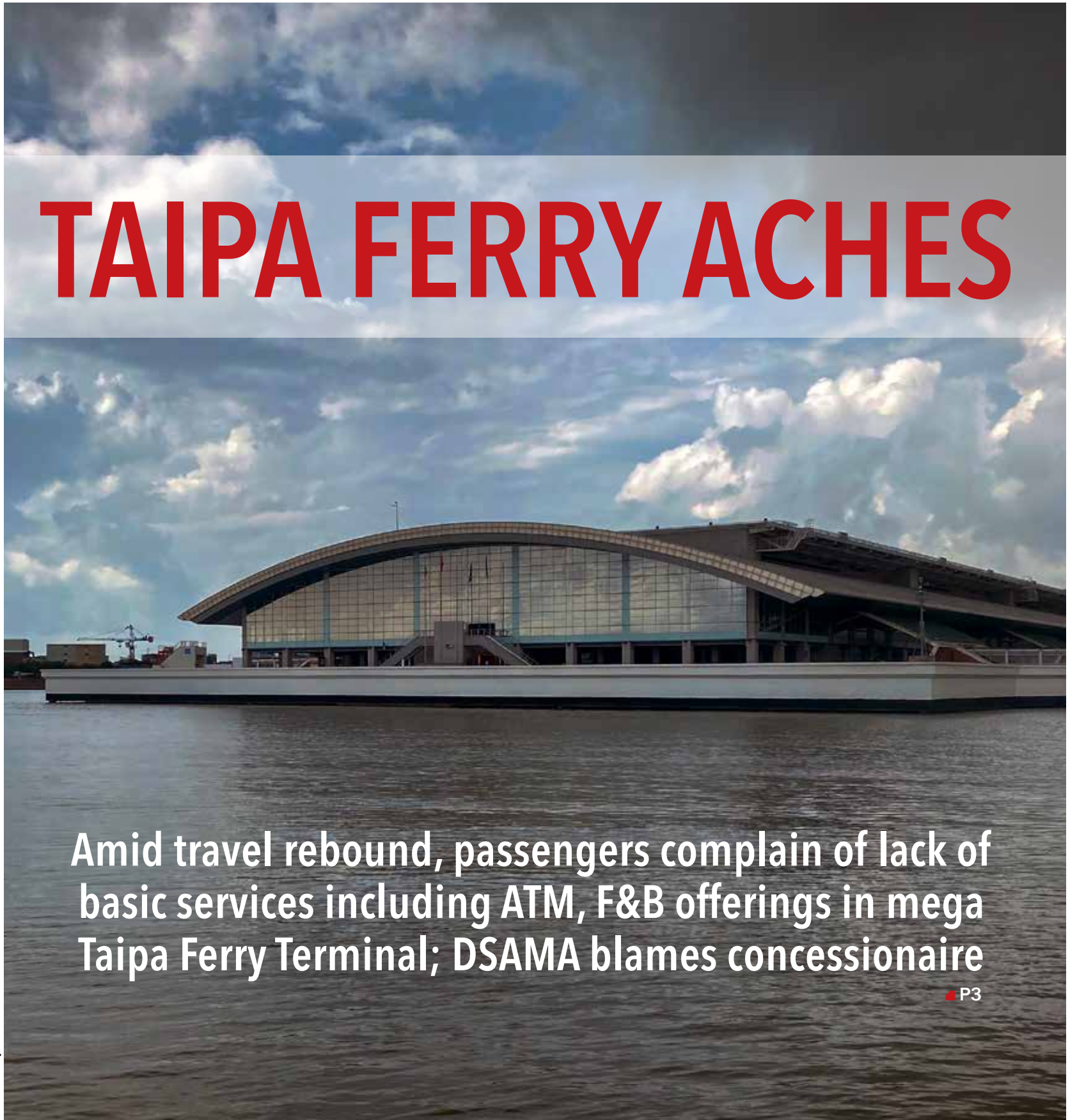
India Schools in New Delhi were closed yesterday after heavy monsoon rains battered the capital and caused landslides and flash floods in the country's north, killing at least 15 people over the last three days. The torrential rain over the weekend left parts of New Delhi overflowing with water that submerged roads and stranded residents. The northern hill states were the worst affected, with 10 people killed in flash floods and landslides in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand states, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.

AP PHOTO



New Zealand A U.S. honeymoon couple who survived severe burns when New Zealand's White Island volcano erupted in 2019 are listed as the first witnesses to testify in a trial of tourism industry operators over the disaster that claimed 22 lives. Prosecutors open their case in the Auckland District Court today on health and safety charges against six companies and directors in the Dec. 9, 2019, volcanic eruption at the popular tourist attraction.

More on backpage



TAIPA FERRY ACHES

Amid travel rebound, passengers complain of lack of basic services including ATM, F&B offerings in mega Taipa Ferry Terminal; DSAMA blames concessionaire

P3

RENATO MARQUES

JP MORGAN
CASINO REVENUES TO HIT 100% PRE-COVID LEVELS BY OCTOBER

P2

DSEDJ 'HIGHLY CONCERNED' ABOUT STABBING INCIDENT AT LOCAL SCHOOL

P3

**POLICEMAN DIES
AFTER TRAINING**

A member of the SWAT team yesterday died after feeling unwell following a training session. The incident happened at 10 a.m. when the SWAT team commenced running training in Coloane. According to reports, the 45-year-old policeman felt unwell after completing the 1,800-meter distance. He had been part of the SWAT team since 1998. The Public Security Police stated their sadness at the death of the police officer and expressed their deepest condolences to his family and colleagues, saying that they will maintain close contact with the families of the person to provide appropriate assistance.

**CITY RECORDS HIGH
TEMPERATURE OF
35.8 DEGREES CELSIUS
YESTERDAY**

Real-time monitoring data from the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) shows that five of the 10 monitoring stations in Macau recorded temperatures of 34 degrees Celsius or above. The highest temperature recorded was 35.8 degrees Celsius at the Outer Harbor Ferry Terminal weather station, while the temperature at Taipa Grande station was 32.4 degrees Celsius. The SMG predicts that the weather will continue to be extremely hot in the next few days, and the maximum temperature in some areas will reach 33 degrees Celsius or above.

**1,550 TOBACCO
CONTROL
VIOLATIONS
ISSUED IN 1H**

The Health Bureau (SSM) has issued 1,550 cases of violations in the first half of the year, of which 1,532 were related to illegal smoking and the remainder were sales of products that did not meet the label requirements. Most cases of violations occurred in restaurants and shopping malls. The SSM and the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau inspected casinos across Macau and prosecuted a total of 86 cases of illegal smoking. Also, government data shows that the tobacco control hotline received a total of 590 calls in the first half of the year.

ECONOMY

**MACAU RECORDS BELOW-PASSING
CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX IN Q2**

ANTHONY LAM

THE city has obtained a score of 94.33 in the Consumer Confidence Index in the second quarter of the year, on a scale of 0 to 200, the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) has announced.

The passing grade for the index is 100.

The university interviewed 829 Macau residents at or above the age of 18 years during the time frame from Jun. 1 to 10.

Despite the below-passing index, the score for the latest quarter has seen a rise of 7.89% or 6.9 index points from the previous quarter. Of the six determinants, five recorded a rise quarter-over-quarter.

It was explained that economic recovery in Macau, as seen in rising employment and casino figures, has improved consumer confidence. The university added that economic diversification should be expedited so as to maintain rising consumer confidence.

The determinant of employment has recorded the highest increase – 18.89% quarter-over-quarter – to 101.9 index points. The second-highest rise was seen in the determinant of stock invest-



ment – from 91.06 to 103.85 index points.

As for other determinants, commodity prices scored 76.41 points, local economy 95.92 points, standard of living 98.44 points, as well as residence purchases 89.45 points. The last determinant recorded a fall of 1.71% quarter-over-quarter.

The university pointed out that external economic conditions are still unstable, but national recovery policies are starting to take effect, despite internal economic synergies still being insufficient.

Considering the latest Con-

sumer Confidence Index, president Samuel Tong Kai Chung of the Macau Institute of Management told local media outlet Exmoo that more time should be expected for the city's economy to recover to 2019 levels.

He also underlined that there will be different pace of recovery across different economic activities.

Despite the city having recovered to 88.8% of the first quarter of 2019 in terms of private consumption, Tong stressed that the latest figure is still behind those of the first quarters of 2021 and 2022.

Explaining this, Tong recalled that during the past three years, many local enterprises and domestic consumers had relied on loans to survive. They will need more time to balance off their accounts, the academic added.

From a macro perspective, the academic sees that the city is still within a recovery and economic restructuring phase.

In addition, Tong pointed out that certain industries are still experiencing bottle necks. For example, airline companies shall need more time to fill positions vacated during the past three years.

GAMING

**Casino revenues to hit 100%
pre-Covid levels by October: JP Morgan**

GAMING revenues are likely to hit 100% of pre-Covid levels by October as the first nine days of July recorded a robust recovery, according to JP Morgan.

In a note, JP Morgan analysts DS Kim and Mufan Shi stated that their weekly channel check shows that July 1 to 9 gross gaming revenues (GGR) have reached MOP4.8 billion, implying a daily run rate of MOP530 million.

The figure exceeded

the MOP500 million per day estimated in the second quarter of 2023.

"It's again the highest non-holiday GGR since the pandemic and bodes well for upcoming summer holidays," the analysts said.

"At this level, we believe mass GGR is comfortably running at 90%+ of pre-COVID levels, and we continue to expect 100%+ recovery in mass by October."

Gaming activities in Macau over the last mon-

th generated a total of MOP15.207 billion, some MOP358 million less than in May, which reached, so far, the highest monthly GGR of this year, with MOP15.565 billion.

The June result contributes to an accumulated MOP80.136 billion GGR in the first half of this year, a figure that opens the door to a final result of GGR in 2023 that is, on average, far higher than the MOP130 billion forecast of the government. LV



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TAIPA FERRY TERMINAL

Concessionaire to blame for the low range of services

RENATO MARQUES

FOR some time, travelers and other users of the Taipa Ferry Terminal have been noticing difficulties in accessing some basic services at the mega facility located at Pac On.

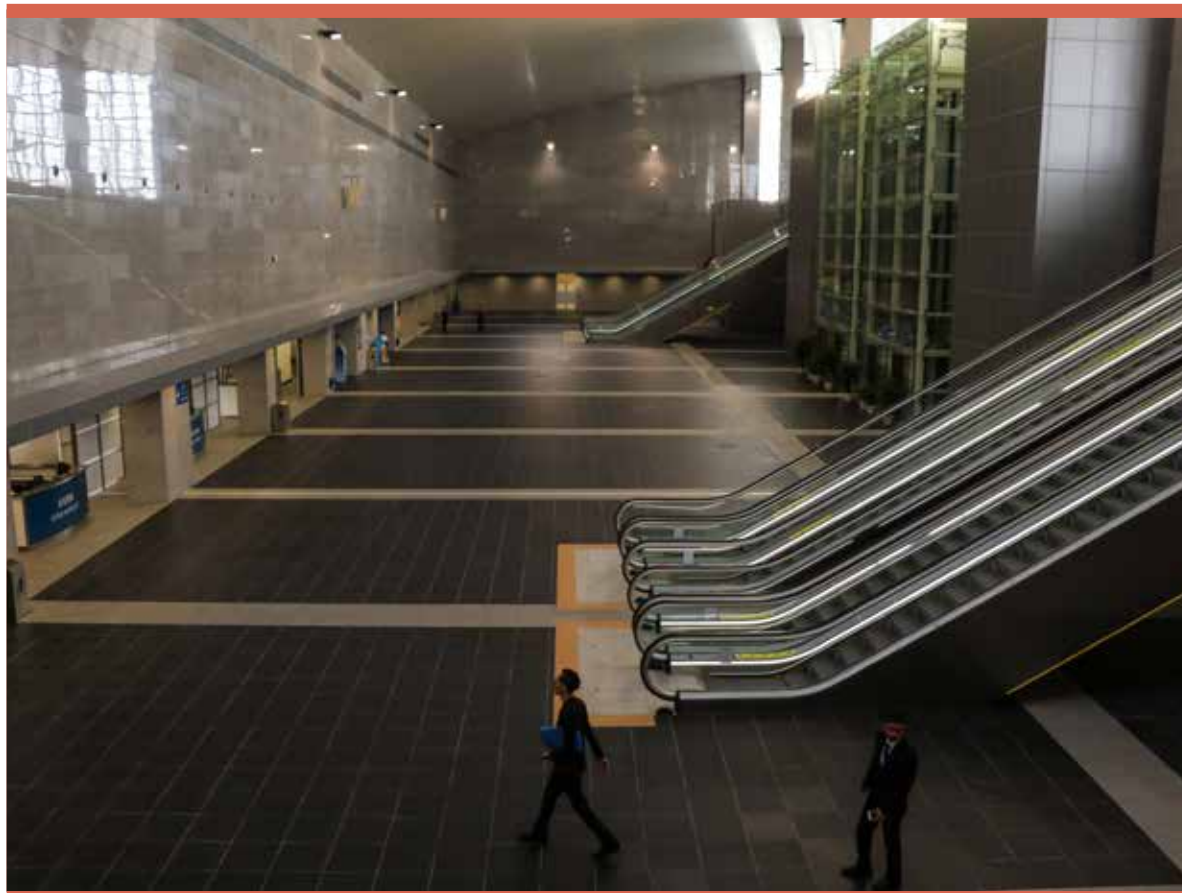
In reality, and according to some readers of the Times who have been frequent users of the facility since its opening back in June 2017, the services offered in the terminal have been wound back, making life difficult for the passengers opting for this method of travel between Macau and Hong Kong.

According to the users, basic services such as an ATM are completely absent from the terminal; complaints also extend to a lack of offerings in terms of food and beverages and other services existing in the facility.

Following such complaints, the Times has contacted the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA), the governmental entity in charge of the facility, as well as the company holding the concession for the management and operation of the terminal CSI Group Ltd (CSI).

In a written response to the Times, the bureau headed by Susana Wong said, "Our bureau has been urging the concessionaire to implement the commitment contract, to guarantee certain numbers of shops or self-service ma-

RENATO MARQUES



chines provided at the terminal." She added "at present, seven restaurants are operating at the food court in the Taipa Ferry Terminal. In addition, there are some vending machines, one convenience store, and one currency exchange shop, to provide the basic services for the public and visitors."

Regarding the lack of ATMs, DSAMA said that the problem will soon be resolved.

"The concessionaire (CSI), for the management of the commercial space at Taipa Ferry Terminal, will shortly install an ATM at the terminal."

DSAMA also noted that it has already "requested the CSI to step up its efforts in attracting more diversified business to be introduced into the terminal, e.g. more ATMs and travel agencies, as to maintain a favorable business en-

vironment."

In two different recent visits of the Times to the terminal it was seen that of the seven restaurants mentioned by DSAMA, only three were operating at the time of the visit, while the only existing convenience store was "temporarily closed," a security staff member said when questioned.

Another staff member, when questioned about where a travel-

er could use an ATM, pointed to the Macau International Airport, a facility located some 500 meters away (walking distance) from the Taipa Ferry Terminal.

The mega-structure that took 12 years to be completed had an estimated cost of MOP3.8 billion, covers an area of 200,000 square meters, and includes 16 ferry berths, three berths for multi-purpose use, a heliport with capacity for five helicopters, 88 immigration counters, and a car park with a capacity for 740 vehicles.

It is also one of the facilities linked since 2019 to the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) transport system, which is currently one of the terminal stations of Taipa Island connecting the terminal to Ocean Gardens, and passing through the Airport, Cotai, Lotus Checkpoint, among others.

Currently, three main ferry routes are operating from the Taipa Ferry Terminal, Macau-Hong Kong (operated by Cotai Water Jet and Turbo Jet), as well as Macau-Shenzhen (via both Shekou and Fuyong Ports) and operated by Yuet Tung Shipping.

According to DSAMA's website, there are a total of 80 sailings per day arriving or departing Taipa Ferry Terminal which, according to the most updated official statistics from the Statistics and Census Service, have brought to Macau in the period between January and May this year some 750,080 visitors. The large majority (438,898) are from Hong Kong but also from all the foreign markets supplying tourists to Macau.

As previously mentioned, the Times also contacted the terminal concessionaire for a comment on this matter but no reply has been received in the six days between this contact and press time.

ANTHONY LAM

AN alleged stabbing that took place in a secondary school yesterday saw a female student injured, generating concerns from the education bureau.

According to the Public Security Police Force (PSP), at about 11:35am yesterday, a report was received regarding the case, which took place in Mateus Ricci College down from the Ruins of St Paul's.

Preliminary investigations indicated that a male student who had left the school allegedly attacked the girl with a sharp object. The girl was sent to the hospital following immediate care by the campus nurse.

Police believed that the two students had had conflict before, but underlined that investigations were ongoing.

Stabbing at local school injures a student, education bureau 'highly concerned'

Following the incident, director Kong Chi Meng of the education bureau was seen by local media outlets arriving at the school.

In a subsequent statement, the education bureau disclosed that the teacher in the class immediately triggered the emergency mechanism to evacuate the scene after the incident. The teacher stayed behind and attempted to calm the boy.

The DSEDJ has also deployed teams to both the school and the hospital to handle the situation. Counselling services have been provided to witnesses, while the injured girl was confirmed as safe by

the hospital.

The bureau is calling for students to seek help from parents, teachers or trustworthy people should they encounter emotional trauma following the incident. Professional help should also be sought if these other sources mentioned are not sufficient.

The Social Welfare Bureau's (IAS) helpline for victims of domestic violence provides service for individuals or family members who suffer or are at risk of suffering from domestic violence.

If in need of support, residents can call IAS' counseling hotline (28233030).



CE MEETS WITH PWC DELEGATION

Prior to his departure for Guizhou, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng has met with a delegation from the Asia-Pacific and China Office of global accounting firm PwC. The delegation was led by the president of the Office, Raymund Chao Pak-ki, who is also the Hong Kong member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Chao spoke highly of Macau's MICE and supporting facilities, adding that improvements in network speed and charges will attract more events. The firm had also set up an office in Hengqin, the executive added.

TAX BUREAU ANNOUNCES LUCKY DRAW WINNERS

The Financial Services Bureau (DSF) drew raffle winners on Jul. 7 for its June campaign, which was held to encourage taxpayers to utilize its online payment channels. Those who have paid any taxes through the DSF online channels between May 1 and Aug. 31 are automatically enrolled. The latest draw identified winners for a grand prize, 50 second prize winners and 50 third prize winners. The list of winners is available on the DSF website and winners will be notified individually. Prizes should be collected by Jul. 31. Eligible tax payers who have not won any prize in a round will be enrolled in the next round.



TAXI INDUSTRY 'DOES NOT OPPOSE' MORE TAXI LICENSES

ANTHONY LAM

THE industry does not object to the government issuing more licenses, but it should be done in phases.

Tai Kam Leong, deputy head of

a local taxi association, said that after the resumption of normal travel, the influx of tourists has worsened the wait for taxis across the city, according to local media Macao Daily News.

Although many taxi drivers have

returned to work, there have not been enough taxis, especially since some licenses are going to expire this year or next.

As a result, the taxi industry leader hinted at his support for more taxi licenses. However, he stressed

that they must be issued in phases so as not to overheat the market.

Meanwhile, Cheung Chi Man, executive director of Macau Radio Taxi Service Company, expressed his support for more taxi licenses to the same media. He added that demands were not met even with all 300 taxis from the company in full operation.

Relying on a fleet of seven-seater vehicles, the company has been popular among family tourists, which account for a majority of visitors to Macau, the executive pointed out. On a daily basis, the company handles an average of 15,000 orders. As such, he hoped that the government could issue between 200 and 300 additional radio taxi licenses.

Wong Man Pan, the government's transport advisor, has said on a Radio Macau show that per-company license bidding might help improve the difficulty of grabbing a cab in older districts.

Local taxi drivers have long been criticized for lacking enthusiasm to enter the older districts of the city.

FIBA 3X3 WORLD TOUR

Serbian Ub Huishan NE team crowned at Macau 3X3 Masters



RENATO MARQUES

NUMBER one seeds Ub Huishan NE from Serbia continued their dominant performance of the FIBA 3x3 World Tour 2023 after beating another Serbian team (Liman) 21:16 in the final of the Macau Masters on Sunday evening.

With this win, the Ub equaled the record of four straight Masters wins at the start of the season.

In a match in which the heat and humidity of Macau played a role, es-

pecially in the last part, Vladimir Dordevic gave Ub the 15:12 lead that proved to be decisive, as this was followed by two missed free throws from Ning Zhang, which proved costly for Liman.

Although the misses led to the defeat of Liman in the final match, Zhang was one of the most acclaimed by the fans, also proving to be essential in the path of Liman reaching the final. Zhang's performance peaked at the semi-final match against Ulaanbaatar MMC Energy (Mongolia) scoring 11 points, 6 re-

bounds, and 5 highlights.

Marko Brankovic won the final match Most Valuable Player (MVP) trophy after topping player value (36.6) and overall scoring (34).

In the individual contests that are part of the extra entertainment segment of these basketball events, Toronto KBA's Nemanja Mitrovic won the Maurice Lacroix Shoot-Out Contest, while Piotr Grabowski claimed the Chooks to Go Dunk Contest.

The Macau podium finish was completed with the Beijing team (China).

The tournament title sponsored by Wynn Macau was played at the Cotai Wynn Palace's Turf at South Gate over the weekend, with a total of 14 teams in competition.

PJ REPORTS TWO ALLEGED SUICIDES IN CONSECUTIVE DAYS

RENATO MARQUES

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) has reported that two local women aged 55 and 24, respectively, have allegedly committed suicide by jumping from the top floors of buildings.

The first case reportedly occurred on Sunday at around 2 p.m. when there was a report of the 55-year-old woman jumping from a building located at Rua de Pedro Coutinho in Macau to the

street level.

The PJ investigators did not find any evidence that could lead to suspicion of a crime, so they suspect that it was suicide.

The woman's identity was revealed later via her fingerprints, as when she was found she did not have any identification documents on her.

After contacting the family, the PJ discovered that the woman had a chronic disease, which is presumed

to be the potential cause for suicide.

In an unrelated case that occurred yesterday morning, a 24-year-old woman was found on the third-floor platform of a hotel unit located at Estrada da Vitória in Macau.

According to the preliminary investigation by the PJ, she allegedly jumped from the top floor of the hotel building.

No belongings or suicide note were found on the woman, nor did the PJ find

any evidence of a potential crime.

In both cases, the cause of death will be finally ascertained through a forensic examination.

The Social Welfare Bureau encourages residents to be conscious of their psychological and emotional state as well as those of their relatives and friends. If in need of support, residents can call Caritas' Life Hope hotline (2852 5222) or IAS' counseling hotline (2826 1126).



RENATO MARQUES

US

FDA is being asked to look into Logan Paul's energy drink, which has the caffeine of 6 Coke cans

JAKE OFFENHARTZ, NEW YORK

AN influencer-backed energy drink that has earned viral popularity among children is facing scrutiny from lawmakers and health experts over its potentially dangerous levels of caffeine.

On Sunday, Sen. Charles Schumer called on the Food and Drug Administration to investigate PRIME, a beverage brand founded by the YouTube stars Logan Paul and KSI that has become something of an obsession among the influencers' legions of young followers.

"One of the summer's hottest status symbols for kids is not an outfit, or a toy—it's a beverage," said Schumer, a Democrat from New York. "But buyer and parents beware because it's a serious health concern for the kids it so feverishly targets."



AP PHOTO

Backed by two of YouTube's best known stars, PRIME was an immediate sensation when it lau-

nched last year, prompting long lines in grocery stores and reports of school yard resale markets.

Advertising itself as zero sugar and vegan, the neon-colored cans are among a growing num-

ber of energy drinks with elevated levels of caffeine; in PRIME's case, 200 milligrams per 12 ounces, equivalent to about half a dozen Coke cans or nearly two Red Bulls.

That high content prompted bans from some schools in the United Kingdom and Australia where some pediatricians warned of possible health impacts on young children such as heart problems, anxiety, and digestive issues.

Company representatives, meanwhile, have defended the product as clearly labeled "not recommended for children under 18." They sell a separate sports drink, known as PRIME Hydration, which contains no caffeine at all. Representatives for PRIME did not immediately return a request for comment.

But in his letter to the FDA, Schumer claimed there was little noticeable difference in the online marketing of the two drinks—leading many parents to believe they were purchasing a juice for their kids, only to wind up with a "cauldron of caffeine."

"A simple search on social media for Prime will generate an eye-popping amount of sponsored content, which is advertising," he wrote. "This content and the claims made should be investigated, along with the ingredients and the caffeine content in the Prime energy drink." **MDT/AP**

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Solomon Islands leader visits Beijing, highlighting US-China rivalry in South Pacific

LEADERS of the Solomon Islands and China yesterday promised to expand relations that have fueled unease in Washington and Australia about Beijing's influence in the South Pacific.

Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare met Chinese leader Xi Jinping and the country's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang. Sogavare and Li presided over the signing of agreements on police, economic and technical cooperation.

"We are here to further boost relations," Sogavare told Li following a ceremony at which a Chinese military band played the Solomon Islands national anthem.

The Solomon Islands, 2,000 kilometers northeast of Australia, has been China's biggest success in a campaign to expand its presence in the South Pacific. Sogavare's government switched official recognition in 2019 to Beijing from Taiwan, the self-ruled island democracy claimed by the mainland's ruling Communist Party as part of its territory.

"Solomon Islands, sir, has a lot

to learn from China's development experience," Sogavare told Li. He welcomed an opportunity for dialogue to enhance "bilateral interaction and cooperation."

The two governments "have decided to establish a comprehensive strategic partnership of mutual respect and common development," Li said.

"The relationship between China and the Solomon Islands has developed rapidly, and we can now say that it is very fruitful."

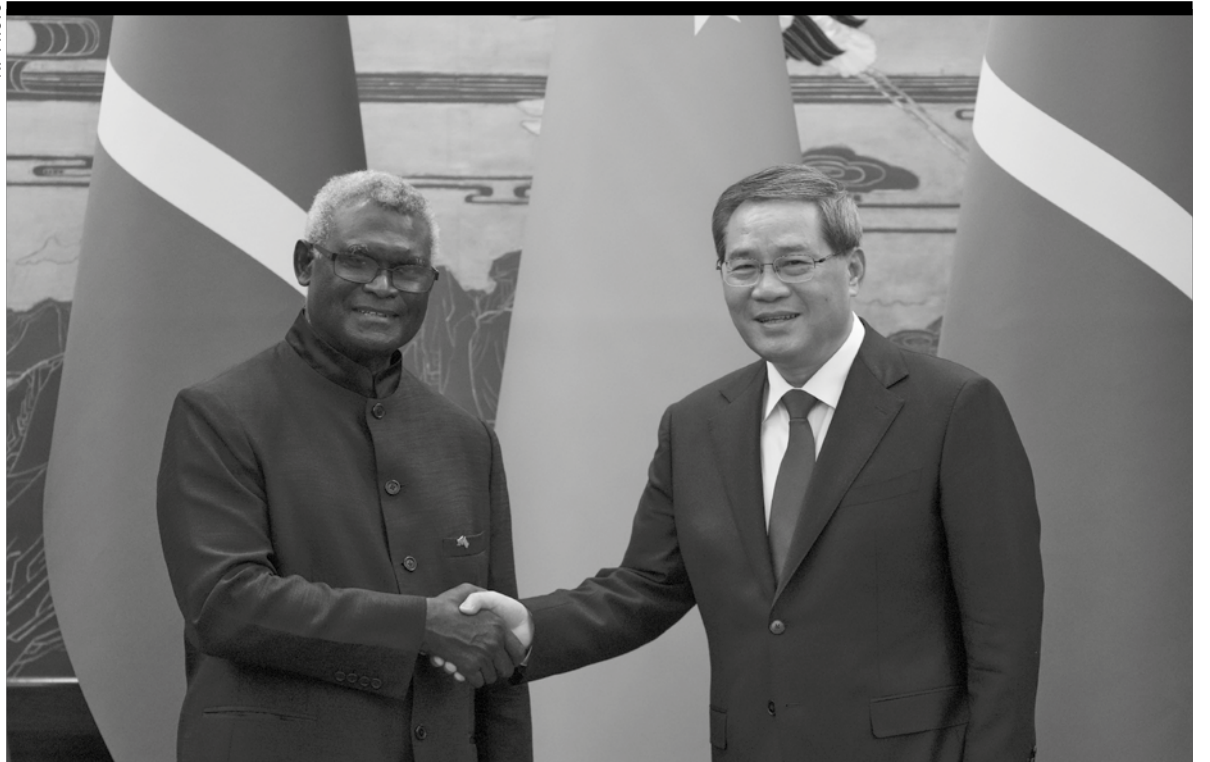
The Solomon Islands signed a secretive security agreement with Beijing that might have allowed Chinese military forces in the South Pacific. However, Sogavare rejected suggestions his government might give Beijing a military foothold in the region.

The nearby island nation of Kiribati also switched official relations to Beijing in 2019.

China's foreign ministry said last week Sogavare's visit would "inject new momentum" into relations and "deepen mutual political trust."

The Biden administration has responded by announcing plans

AP PHOTO



Visiting Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, left, shakes hands with his Chinese counterpart Li Qiang at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, yesterday

to reopen an American Embassy in the Solomon Islands.

Biden convened a summit of Pacific Island leaders in September to unveil a strategy that included climate change, mariti-

me security and preventing over-fishing.

Biden promised \$810 million in new aid for Pacific Island nations over the next decade, including \$130 million to address the

effects of climate change.

Agreements signed yesterday by Solomon Islands and Chinese officials included an implementation plan for police cooperation through 2025. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

Newly named Roman Catholic cardinal wants reconciliation and more hope for young people



Hong Kong Bishop Stephen Sau-yan Chow

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

HONG Kong's newly named Roman Catholic cardinal said yesterday that he hopes for reconciliation and wants the city to give young people more hope following the economic downturn and a campaign to crush a pro-democracy movement.

On Sunday, Pope Francis announced he had chosen 21 new cardinals, including Hong Kong Bishop Stephen Sau-yan Chow, 64. Chow said it was somewhat unbelievable to learn that he was picked, and that he felt it is a new mission that God assigned to him through the pope.

The ceremony to formally install him as a cardinal will be held in September.

"For Hong Kong, (I hope) the city can have

more reconciliation," he told reporters on Monday. "This is what I hope (we) can achieve."

Beijing and the Vatican severed diplomatic ties in 1951 following the Communist Party's rise to power and the expulsion of foreign priests. For decades, the Vatican and China have experienced tensions alternating with improvement of relations over China's insistence that it has the right to appoint bishops and the jailing of priests who professed loyalty to the pope.

Chow, who will become the city's fourth cardinal, is expected to guide flocks in a geopolitical area of keen concern to the Vatican.

In April, he already made a trip to Beijing, marking the first visit to the Chinese capital by the city's bishop in nearly three decades.

At the end of his trip, he said he invited the sta-

te-appointed archbishop of Beijing to visit his city, a symbolic gesture that experts said could strengthen the fragile relationship between China and the Vatican.

In Hong Kong, Chow is widely seen as a moderate, or politically neutral, figure.

But before the Beijing trip, Chow suggested the arrested protesters who committed relatively minor crimes in Hong Kong's 2019 anti-government movement but have not been charged should be handled leniently. He wrote in an article that would help bring hopes and positive energy to those who feel hurt and making them wait for an indefinite time would not help the Hong Kong society recover.

Asked yesterday if he still hopes for more lenient treatments for those arrested, he said he hopes "there will be more reconciliation and more hopes can be given to young people."

"Especially for those who have made mistakes, so that they can have a future. This is very important," he added. **MDT/AP**

NINIEK KARMINI &
JIM GOMEZ, JAKARTA

ASEAN

Myanmar violence and sea disputes to dominate talks joined by US, Russian and Chinese envoys

MYANMAR'S prolonged civil strife, tensions in the disputed South China Sea and concern over arms buildups in the region are expected to dominate the agenda when Southeast Asia's top diplomats gather for talks this week in Indonesia.

Russia's year-old invasion of Ukraine and the U.S.-China rivalry will also be under the spotlight as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang participate as dialogue partners of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations foreign ministers in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta.

North Korea has yet to say whether its foreign minister, Choe Son Hui, will attend the ASEAN Regional Forum, an annual regional security meeting.

It's also unclear who among the key figures in the world's most intractable conflicts will meet on the sidelines of the group's ministerial meetings.

The top diplomats of ASEAN, which includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, will meet today and Wednesday before their Asian and Western counterparts join them in discussions on Thursday and Friday.

Founded in 1967, the often-unwieldy collective of democracies, autocracies and monarchies has been held together for decades by bedrock principles of non-interference in each other's domestic affairs and consensus-based decision-making.

But that approach has also prevented the 10-nation bloc from dealing swiftly with crises that spill across borders.

ASEAN's principles have been tested since Myanmar's army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021 and plunged the country into deadly chaos.

More than 3,750 civilians, including pro-democracy activists, have been killed by security forces and nearly 24,000 arrested since the military takeover, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a rights group that keeps tallies of such arrests and casualties.

Myanmar's military government has largely ignored a five-point plan by ASEAN heads of state that includes an immediate end to the violence and dialogue among all contending parties.

That prompted the regional group to take an unprecedented punitive step by barring Myanmar's military leaders from its top-level gatherings, including the ministerial meetings, that Indonesia will host.

Since assuming ASEAN's rotating chairmanship this year, Indo-

AP PHOTO



nesia has initiated some 110 meetings with groups in Myanmar and provided humanitarian aid to build trust, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said, adding that continuing violence would hurt efforts to return the nation to normalcy within ASEAN.

"ASEAN is still very concerned about the increasing use of violence in Myanmar which has resulted in civilian casualties and the destruction of public facilities," Retno told a news conference on Friday. "This must stop immediately."

Two months ago, an aid convoy with Indonesian and Singaporean embassy representatives on an ASEAN mission to provide help to displaced people came under fire from unknown attackers in a road ambush in Myanmar's eastern Shan State. A security team returned fire and a security vehicle was damaged, but no one in the convoy was injured, state-run television MRTV reported.

ASEAN is under international pressure to effectively address the crisis in Myanmar. But ASEAN members appear divided over how to proceed, with some recommending to ease punitive actions aimed at isolating Myanmar's generals and invite its top diplomat and officials back to the high-profile summit meetings.

Retno stressed the group would continue to focus on enforcing the ASEAN leaders' five-point plan.

A draft of a post-meeting communique to be issued by the ASEAN foreign ministers remained blank on Myanmar, reflecting the difficulty of reaching agreement on the issue. Their concerns over other contentious issues, such as the South China Sea disputes, were included in the draft, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press.

"ASEAN is still very concerned about the increasing use of violence in Myanmar which has resulted in civilian casualties and the destruction of public facilities."

RETNO MARSUDI
INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Dewi Fortuna Anwar, director of the Jakarta-based think tank Habibie Center, said the situation in Myanmar could become a long-term problem like the South China Sea disputes given ASEAN's limited capacity to solve it. The bloc, however, should try to convince Myanmar's military government that it has better options, she said.

"It's recalcitrant. Its determination to hang on to power is not going to be sustainable because it's only going to incite conflicts," Anwar told the AP.

Myanmar is scheduled next year to assume the role of coor-

dinating ASEAN's engagements with the European Union. But the E.U., which has imposed sanctions on the military government, has opposed such a role for Myanmar, two Southeast Asian diplomats told the AP on condition of anonymity because they lack authority to discuss the issue publicly.

On the South China Sea con-

years of delay.

The disputed waters have emerged as a delicate front in the rivalry between China and the United States.

Washington has challenged Beijing's expansive territorial claims and regularly deploys warships and fighter jets in what it calls freedom of navigation and overflight patrols that have incensed China.

Other Western and European nations have deployed navy ships on occasional patrols in the busy waterway, where a bulk of the world's trade transits, with similar calls for unimpeded commerce and mobility.

China's increasingly aggressive actions have prompted other countries to boost their territorial defenses.

"We expressed concern about the growing arms race and naval power projection in the region, which could lead to miscalculation, increased tensions, and may undermine regional peace, security, and stability," the ASEAN foreign ministers said without elaborating in their draft communique, whose wording is still subject to negotiations and could change.

Anwar said there's no solution in sight for the South China Sea disputes and ASEAN could only take steps to help prevent full-blown conflict.

"We hope that China will give up this claim, but don't hold your breath on that," she said. **MDT/AP**

Erdogan: Turkey could approve Sweden's NATO membership if Europeans 'open way' to Turkey EU bid

TURKISH President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says his country could approve Sweden's membership in NATO if European nations "open the way" to Turkey's bid to join the European Union.

Erdogan, whose country has been holding off its final approval to Sweden's NATO membership, made the comments in Ankara on Monday before departing to the alliance's summit meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania.

"Turkey has been waiting at the door of the European Union for over 50 years now, and almost all of the NATO member countries are now members of the European Union. I am making this call to these countries that have kept Turkey waiting at the gates of the European Union for more than 50 years," Erdogan said.

"Come and open the way for Turkey's membership in the European Union. When you pave the way for Turkey, we'll pave the way for Sweden as we did for Finland," he added.

Turkey is a candidate to join the EU, but its membership bid has been stalled due to Ankara's democratic backsliding and disputes with EU-member Cyprus.

Earlier Monday, Sweden's



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

foreign minister had expressed optimism that Turkey would drop its objections to Swedish NATO membership, saying the Nordic's country's accession is a question of when, not if.

Erdogan and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson were expected to meet later Monday in Vilnius ahead of the two-day NATO summit.

Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström told public broadcaster SVT that he expects Turkey will eventually signal that it will let Sweden join the alliance, though he

couldn't say whether that would happen at the annual summit.

"What we are counting on, of course, is to reach a point where we get a message back from President Erdogan that there will be what you might call a green light ... a message that the ratification process in the Turkish Parliament can start," Billström said.

Turkey has stalled Sweden's NATO accession, saying it needs to do more to crack down on Kurdish militants and other groups that

Ankara considers as threats to its national security. Anti-Turkey and anti-Islam protests in Stockholm raised doubts that an agreement could be reached before the alliance's summit.

Billström said Sweden has fulfilled its part of a tripartite deal that Sweden, Finland and Turkey signed at last year's NATO summit in Madrid.

"We should consider it as a settled question in the sense that it is not a question of if. In connection with the NATO summit in Madrid last year, Turkey already gave Sweden status as an invitee to NATO. It is therefore a question of when," he said.

Billström said he expects Hungary, which also hasn't ratified Sweden's accession, to do so before Turkey.

In a statement, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said that "Finnish — and soon Swedish — membership of the alliance is a historic milestone for NATO, the Nordic region and Denmark's security. And there is no doubt that they will strengthen the security of all allies."

Previously non-aligned Sweden and Finland applied for NATO membership last year following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Finland joined in April this year. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2000 BRITAIN PIONEERS HIV VACCINE



The World Aids Conference in South Africa has announced trials for a new HIV vaccine will begin in Britain.

Liberal Democrat MP Evan Harris will be one of 18 healthy volunteers who will take part in the first toxicity tests.

The MP for Oxford West, Dr Harris, 35, said: "I hope to be a small part of a process that will deliver something that will save Africa from further devastation."

The vaccine has been developed by researchers at Oxford and Nairobi Universities who studied prostitutes in Kenya and found a group who resisted the disease in spite of daily exposure to it.

If the tests in Oxford are successful, trials will go to Nairobi in October under the supervision of Professor Job Bwayo and his team.

Professor of immunology at Oxford University Andrew McMichael said: "Our chances of developing a vaccine are better than 50-50. But the earliest we could expect a vaccine to be ready would be in seven to 10 years."

There are currently 34 million people in the world suffering from HIV and 70% of them are in Africa.

This is the first time a vaccine has been based on the HIV strain in Africa. It uses DNA and a wild animal virus similar to that used to combat smallpox.

The Oxford-Nairobi project is one of 11 similar groups around the world funded by the International Aids Vaccine Initiative (Iavi). It has received £14m from the British Government.

Iavi estimates that three times more than the £200m currently spent on research programmes is needed to find a vaccine within ten years.

Vaccination should provide a much cheaper and more effective means of tackling the pandemic, especially for the Third World which cannot afford HIV drugs and is barred from developing generic variations.

According to Iavi only 2% of the \$20m spent annually on Aids around the world is for vaccine development.

Courtesy BBC News

RUSSIA

KREMLIN SAYS PUTIN MET WITH MERCENARY LEADER DAYS AFTER ABORTIVE MUTINY

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin met with Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin days after a short-lived rebellion by the mercenary chief and his private army, the Kremlin's spokesman said Monday.

The three-hour meeting took place at the Kremlin on June 29 and also involved commanders from the military company Prigozhin founded, Kremlin spokesman

Dmitry Peskov said.

Wagner mercenaries have fought alongside Russian troops in Ukraine. Prigozhin has a long-simmering feud with Russia's top military brass which on June 24 culminated in an armed mutiny in which he led his fighters into Russia.

Prigozhin ended the mutiny after a deal was brokered for him to be exiled to Belarus.

The confirmation of a face-

-to-face meeting with Putin, who has branded Prigozhin as a backstabbing traitor, adds a new twist to the uncertainty surrounding the mercenary chief. His fate and whereabouts have been unknown since the abortive mutiny, which severely weakened Putin's authority.

Peskov said that during the June 29 meeting, Putin offered an "assessment" of Wagner's actions on the battlefield

in Ukraine and "of the events of June 24." The president also "listened to the explanations of the commanders and offered them options for further employment and further use in combat," the Kremlin spokesman said.

A total of 35 people took part in the meeting, including Wagner commanders and the leadership of the company, namely Prigozhin himself, Peskov said. **MDT/AP**

IN CONTEXT

The trials began in Oxford in August 2000. In April 2002 the Oxford-Nairobi project trials were extended to a further 120 volunteers in Oxford and London.

In July 2002 US pharmaceutical company VaxGen announced that it might develop a vaccine within five years and began the final phase of human testing.

By 2001, 15,000 people were being infected with HIV every day around the World.

By 2005 1.3 million people had access to Anti-Retroviral Treatment or ART - although still short of the 3 million target set for 2005, the figure has increased rapidly in recent years.

In 2006 an estimated 38.6 million people around the world are living with Aids.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You can get into weight loss programs or go out and change your image with a new look in clothing, hairstyle, and attitude. You could do extremely well in competitive sports events.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Make residential changes that will lift your spirits. Depression may put a damper on your day. Patience will be of utmost importance. Personal alterations will be in your best interest.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 You can make changes to your living quarters that should please family members. Be prepared to take advantage of your good fortune. Your lover will cost you dearly if you let them.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Focus, and concentrate on yourself and your future. Changes in your domestic scene are evident. You may want to get involved in financial investments presented to you.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Don't let relatives stand in the way of your personal plans. You can gain approval, get kudos, and ask for help if you put a little heart into your speech or request.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Friends and relatives can give you good advice. Minor health problems will cause setbacks if you haven't taken proper care of yourself.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Opportunities for travel must be carefully considered. Be ready to explain your actions. Don't be afraid to talk to close friends or relatives about pressing personal problems.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Ask those in key positions to help you overcome the delays and to support your concerns in order to move on. Knowledge can be acquired if you listen.

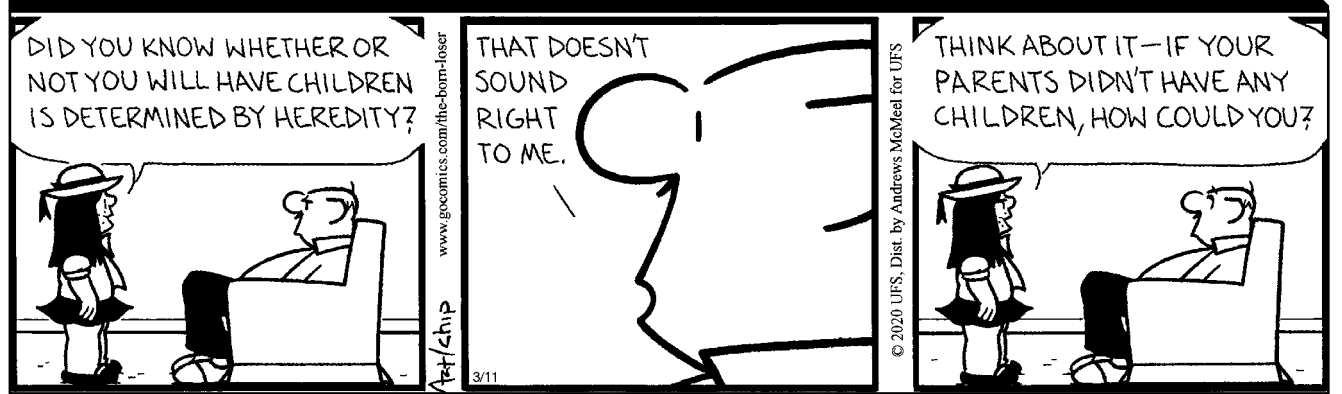
SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 You can mix business with pleasure to get favorable results. Your desire for excitement and adventure may be expensive. You can purchase items that will enhance your appearance.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Mingle with those who can help you get ahead. Your relationship is undergoing some changes. This will not be the best day to initiate change. You should be on the road.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Go with the flow and don't let the unsettled atmosphere get on your nerves. Romantic opportunities will flourish through travel or communication.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Discord may arise with someone you're close to. You will feel tired and rundown if you have allowed yourself to get into a financial mess.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

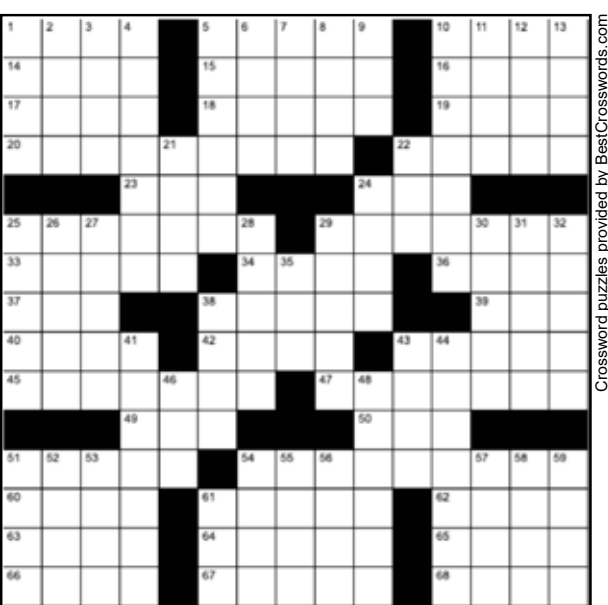
	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	34	rain
Changchun	20	27	thunderstorms
Chengdu	26	34	thunderstorms
Chongqing	29	38	cloudy
Fuzhou	27	37	fine
Guangzhou	27	35	cloudy
Guiyang	22	30	cloudy
Haikou	27	36	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	27	38	fine
Harbin	19	27	thunderstorms
Hefei	26	36	overcast
Nanjing	23	35	cloudy
Shanghai	27	36	overcast
Taipei	26	31	cloudy
Wuhan	30	36	fine
Hong Hong	27	29	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	11	19	rain
Frankfurt	19	35	overcast
Paris	17	32	overcast
London	14	21	rain
New York	23	32	fine

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Hairless; 5- Bit of wisdom; 10- Actress Downey; 14- Comics canine; 15- Sister of Thalia; 16- Hgt.; 17- Duration; 18- Barbecue leftovers?; 19- Quote; 20- Joy; 22- Elevator stop; 23- Actor Erwin; 24- ___ culpa; 25- Furrow; 29- Legendary king of Thebes; 33- Between, old-style; 34- Immoral habit; 36- Engage, as gears; 37- Frozen Wasser; 38- Aspect; 39- Caught ya!; 40- Once more; 42- Thought; 43- Walked back and forth; 45- Make insane; 47- Convent; 49- Legal thing; 50- Involuntary muscular contraction; 51- Give it ___!; 54- Authorized; 60- Portnoy's creator; 61- Out of patience; 62- Sea-going eagle; 63- Italian wine city; 64- Rice-___; 65- "Peter Pan" dog; 66- Page; 67- ___ nova; 68- Counterfeiter catcher;

DOWN 1- Two out of two; 2- 1998 Sarah McLachlan hit; 3- Lame movement; 4- Burial at sea; 5- Goober; 6- Gaelic language of Ireland or Scotland; 7- Contented sighs; 8- Hwys.; 9- Acapulco article; 10- To recover; 11- A dish with many ingredients; 12- Take ___ your leader; 13- Allege; 21- Let's just leave ___ that; 22- Gvmnt; 24- Encounter; 25- Place; 26- Strong thread; 27- Stair part; 28- Skirt; 29- Current location; 30- Freedom from war; 31- Member of the wedding; 32- Disreputable; 35- Hot diamonds; 38- Fruit; 41- "Old Ironsides" was one; 43- Nabokov novel; 44- Aged; 46- New Jersey cager; 48- System of social perfection; 51- Graceful horse; 52- Wine choice; 53- Kitchen addition; 54- King mackerel; 55- Flurries; 56- Sisters; 57- Pull an all-nighter; 58- Editor Wintour; 59- Low in fat; 61- Terrif;

Yesterday's solution



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	

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MUSIC

UNDERWATER SHOW IN THE FLORIDA KEYS PROMOTES AWARENESS OF CORAL REEF PROTECTION

HUNDREDS of divers and snorkelers listened to an underwater concert that advocated coral reef protection Saturday in the Florida Keys.

The Lower Keys Underwater Music Festival, which also spotlighted eco-conscious diving, took place at Looe Key Reef, an area of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary located about 6 miles south of Big Pine Key.

Established in 1990, the sanctuary protects 3,800 square miles of waters including the barrier reef that parallels the 125-mile-long island chain.

Participants swam among Looe Key's colorful marine life and coral formations while listening to water-themed music broadcast by a local radio station. The music was piped undersea through waterproof speakers suspended beneath boats above the reef.

The oceanic playlist included



the Beatles' "Yellow Submarine," Jimmy Buffett's "Fins" and the theme from "The Little Mermaid."

Tunes were interspersed with diver awareness messages about ways to minimize environmental impacts on the world's coral reefs, whose rich biodiversity has led them to be called the rainforests of the sea.

While the festival's primary purpose was to encourage reef

preservation, it also afforded a singular underwater experience. "Mermaids" and other costumed characters added unique visual elements to the auditory offering on part of the continental United States' only living coral barrier reef.

The four-hour musical event was staged by local radio station 104.1 FM and the Lower Keys Chamber of Commerce. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



MUSIC

SWEDEN'S CITY OF MALMO WILL HOST THE 2024 EUROVISION POP MUSIC CONTEST

THE southern Swedish city of Malmo will host the 2024 Eurovision Song Contest in the same venue that housed the colorful and eclectic music competition in 2012, the Swedish organizers said Friday.

The 68th edition will be held at the Malmo Arena, and the live televised final has been set for May 11, with semi-finals on May 7 and May 9.

Sweden's third largest city — which also hosted the event in 1992 and 2012 — was picked in what organizers called a "strong bid process" examining

venues, accommodations for visitors, infrastructure and other factors.

"Malmo was eventually chosen as it met all the criteria," said executive producer Ebba Adielsson at Sweden's public broadcaster SVT.

In May, Sweden won this year's contest in Liverpool, England, with the power ballad "Tattoo" by Swedish singer Loreen, who also won the 2012 Eurovision. The host country usually is the winner of the previous year's event, but 2022 runner-up Britain hosted this year on behalf of the winner, Ukraine. MDT/AP

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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER "DEIGNAN AWARD" FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN MACAU (2023)



F1

Verstappen takes 6th straight win at British GP as Norris, Hamilton in epic fight for 2nd

JAMES ELLINGWORTH,
SILVERSTONE

ON a day when Brad Pitt joined the Formula One grid to shoot his new movie, defending champion Max Verstappen was reduced to a cameo role in his own win with F1 fans gripped by the fight for second place.

Apart from losing the lead to Lando Norris at the start — and then taking it back — Verstappen's cruise on Sunday to yet another win — his sixth in a row — lacked the Hollywood-style drama of Norris' battle with seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton for second.

That fits a pattern this season of dominant wins for the Red Bull driver and increasingly hard-fought battles behind him as Mercedes, Ferrari, Aston Martin and now McLaren jostle to be the second-fastest team.

"It's very confusing, to be honest, because every single race it's someone else," Verstappen said.



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen

Filming for Pitt's upcoming F1-themed movie had been taking place all weekend around the F1 sessions, using black-and-gold cars from the fictional APX team. Pitt himself and co-star Damson Idris joined the grid in racing suits before the start.

Verstappen extended his overall lead to 99 points over teammate Sergio Perez. First place in a race earns 25 points.

Starting on pole position, Verstappen was overtaken off the line by McLaren's Norris in what he later

admitted was a "terrible" start but swept back into the lead on lap five and held on until the end. Red Bull has won all 10 races this year, 11 in a row including the final race of 2022, matching the record of McLaren with 11 consecutive wins in 1988.

Norris had been expected to drop back after qualifying a surprise second on the grid, but instead remained Verstappen's closest challenger throughout the race.

After a safety-car restart, he fought wheel-to-wheel with Hamilton, who had what were in theory fas-

ter tires, but held on to second for his and McLaren's best result since 2021. "It was an amazing fight," Norris said.

Hamilton had started seventh and credited the crowd for powering him to a 14th career podium finish at Silverstone. "I didn't do it, the crowd did," he said. "I felt the energy, I felt the support. This is the reason we got back up there."

McLaren rookie Oscar Piastri was a career-best fourth ahead of Hamilton's Mercedes teammate George Russell as McLaren's upgraded car proved far more competitive than even the team had predicted.

Perez was off the podium for the fourth time in five races, finishing sixth after starting 15th, with seventh for Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso and an impressive eighth for Alexander Albon of Williams.

When Kevin Magnussen broke down with flames coming from the back of his Haas on lap 33 of 52, it gave drivers including Verstappen, Norris and Hamilton the chance

to pit under the safety car without losing time. Ferrari was among the losers because Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz had just pitted. They finished ninth and 10th respectively.

Race organizers and police were on high alert to prevent a repeat of the protest at last year's race when environmental activists stormed the track. That included police using a facial recognition system on the entry gates to the circuit, a relatively new and controversial technology in Britain.

Drivers had warned against a repeat of track protests, arguing it would risk their safety and that of any protesters entering a live track. Last year's protest took place shortly after a crash had caused a red-flag stoppage, meaning cars were already going more slowly on their way to the pits.

Before the Grand Prix on Sunday, environmental group Last Generation delayed the start of a DTM sportscar race in Nuremberg, Germany, after pouring oil onto the track. MDT/AP

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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

IT WILL TAKE CONCRETE MOVES FROM US TO MOVE TIES FORWARD ON SURER FOOTING

With the Joe Biden administration reportedly planning further restrictive measures regarding the United States' chip exports and investments in China, how Beijing responds will show how much it believes the we-don't-mean-to-harm-you message US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen sought to deliver during her four-day visit to China.

It was hoped that as one of the few figures in the Biden administration that can talk reasonably about China, Yellen's visit would help to build "a resilient and productive channel of communication" between the Biden administration and Beijing, as well as make some breakthroughs in certain specific economic realms.

The amicable atmosphere that prevailed during her meetings with all her Chinese hosts and the comparatively positive responses forthcoming from the Chinese side both point to that first goal being largely realized, thanks to the pragmatism of both the guest and hosts.

The two sides should strive to carry forward that positive momentum in a bid to renormalize their strategic communications in the economic field first. This would be "a step forward" in the two sides' efforts "to put the US-China relationship on surer footing", as Yellen said.

However, the extent to which the second goal can be realized, and how well the communication recovers, depends on how much Yellen has allayed Beijing's fears that the US will do "something that would have broad-based impacts on the Chinese economy" — which sounds more like a threat rather than reassurance that the Biden administration wants to improve ties.

Although Yellen stressed "That's not the case. That's not the intention", adding that the Biden administration does not see US-China relations "through the frame of great power conflict", that is the impression Beijing has been left with given the actions of the US.

The Biden administration has clearly defined China as the primary challenge to the US, and acted accordingly. It regards China as "the only country with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to do it", as stated clearly in The Administration's Approach to the People's Republic of China issued in May last year.

She reiterated the claim that the US would take "targeted actions" that are "transparent, narrowly scoped and targeted to clear objectives". These are supposedly aimed at protecting its own national security interests and those of its allies. But that does not change the bullying, coercive and suppressive nature of the moves that have been narrowly scoped and targeted at China's high-tech companies, innovation capacity, security departments and strengths in trade.

Not to mention the US' persistent provocations over the Taiwan question and in the South China Sea. Although that's not the treasury secretary's concern, how can Beijing ignore them?

Having said that, since Yellen's communication was with functional departments, if there are any positive practical outcomes after her visit it would represent some movement in the right direction.

BEJWELED CANNON AND OTHER ART WILL HEAD HOME TO SRI LANKA FROM NETHERLANDS MUSEUM

THE BUZZ

Sri Lanka's foreign minister said yesterday that his country welcomes the Netherlands' plan to return hundreds of colonial-era artifacts — including a bejeweled, ceremonial cannon — and said the Indian Ocean island is working to preserve the historic items.

The Dutch government last week announced that it will return 478 objects of cultural significance to Indonesia and to Sri Lanka. It said the objects were wrongfully brought to the Netherlands

during the colonial period, acquired under duress or by looting.

Under the plan, Sri Lanka is to receive six artifacts, including the cannon and guns currently in the collection of the National Museum of World Cultures and the Rijksmuseum. The transfer of ownership to Sri Lanka will take place later this year.

Foreign Minister Ali Sabry said Sri Lanka is "very grateful" for the items' return. Discussions continued, he said, to "identify the number of artifacts."



AFTER MEETING SUNAK, BIDEN HEADS FOR WINDSOR CASTLE TO DISCUSS CLEAN ENERGY WITH KING CHARLES III

SEUNG MIN KIM, JILL LAWLESS & CHRIS MEGE-RIAN, LONDON

PRESIDENT Joe Biden's itinerary this week in Europe is dominated by the ongoing war in Ukraine and his continued efforts to rally an international coalition against Russia's invasion of its neighbor.

But first, some tea.

The U.S. president's initial stop on his three-nation trip is Britain, where he'll meet with King Charles III for the first time since the latter was crowned in May. Biden did not attend Charles's coronation, sending first lady Jill Biden instead, and Monday's visit will be marked by a bit of royal pomp — including a royal salute, a viewing of U.S.-related artifacts at Windsor Castle and teatime for the two men.

Biden and Charles will also use their visit to bring attention to climate issues, hosting a forum focused on how to encourage private companies to engage in more clean energy efforts, specifically in developing economies.

The royal visit is paired with Biden's sixth meeting with British Prime Minister

Rishi Sunak since Sunak for talks on a range of global issues, including the war in Ukraine. The two nations are among the most stalwart defenders of Kyiv, and the United Kingdom has pushed the White House to take more aggressive steps in providing military aid to Ukraine.

The leader talks are meant to highlight the so-called enduring "special relationship" between the U.S. and the U.K. When Biden declined to attend Charles's coronation, he promised the king in a phone call that he would visit soon.

Biden last had formal talks with Charles, then prince, at the COP26 U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland, in November 2021. The U.S. president also attended the state funeral of Charles's mother, Queen Elizabeth II, in September as well as a reception for heads of state at Buckingham Palace the night before the service.

The climate portion of Biden's visit with the king also underscores the high priority that the environment has been for the 74-year-old Charles, who has long fought to protect wildlife and

battle climate change. Formally called the Climate Finance Mobilisation Forum, Biden and Charles will be briefed by officials from the financial and philanthropic sectors on their discussions about expanding clean energy initiatives in developing nations.

Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said the president has "huge respect" for the king's commitment on the climate issue in particular. He said Charles has been a "clarion voice" on climate and "someone who's mobilized action and effort."

"So the president comes at this with enormous goodwill," Sullivan told reporters Sunday as Biden flew to London.

Before making his way to Windsor Castle, Biden sat down with Sunak at the prime minister's official residence at 10 Downing St. in London to discuss Ukraine and other matters, possibly including the U.S. president's decision this week to provide Ukraine with cluster munitions, a weapon that more than two-thirds of the members of the NATO military alliance have barred for their potential threat to civilian life. MDT/AP



NATO Russia's war in Ukraine will top the agenda when U.S. President Joe Biden and his NATO counterparts hold a summit in Lithuania's capital over two days starting today. They are expected to focus on ensuring that Ukraine has support as long as the conflict continues, how to bring the country even closer to NATO without actually joining, and security guarantees Kyiv might need to ensure that Russia doesn't invade again after the war ends.



Sweden's foreign minister expressed optimism yesterday that Turkey will drop its objections to Swedish NATO membership, saying the Nordic's country's accession is a question of when, not if. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson were expected to meet in the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, ahead of a two-day NATO summit.



Ukraine A Russian airstrike on a school in southern Ukraine killed four adults as people gathered to receive humanitarian aid, the governor of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region said yesterday, branding the incident "a war crime." Three women and a man, all in their 40s, died in Sunday's attack in the town of Orikhiv. A guided aerial bomb caused an explosion at the school. Eleven other people were wounded in the attack, he said.