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GAMING: THOUSANDS LOSE JOBS AFTER PHILIPPINE ONLINE CASINOS CATERING TO CHINESE CLOSE FOR BUSINESS

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WIFE, DAUGHTER OF JACKSON CHANG ALLEGEDLY ENJOYED UNWARRANTED PRIVILEGES

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THE EUROPEAN UNION ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT THAT IT WILL REOPEN ITS BORDERS TO TRAVELERS FROM 14 COUNTRIES, POSSIBLY CHINA SOON

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US-China The Trump administration said it will bar defense exports to Hong Kong and will soon require licenses for the sale of items to Hong Kong that have both civilian and military uses. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the step as China moved ahead with imposing a new national security law for Hong Kong that many fear Beijing and the Chinese Communist Party will use to clamp down on dissent in the former British territory.

China confirmed 19 new cases as those infected in Beijing's June outbreak started being released from hospital. Of the new cases, seven were reported in Beijing and one in the eastern financial center of Shanghai, while 11 others were brought by Chinese travelers from outside the country, according to the National Health Commission. The first patient from Beijing's latest outbreak to be discharged, a 56-year-old man surnamed He, said he had stopped at the Xinfadi market's beef and mutton section for about 20 minutes on June 3.



The United States. Japan and France are prodding their companies to rely less on China to make the world's smartphones, drugs and other products. But even after the coronavirus derailed trade, few want to leave China's skilled workforce and efficient suppliers of raw materials to move to other countries. Disruptions from the pandemic, on top of a trade war, fueled warnings that relying too much on China leaves global companies vulnerable.

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GAMING | PHILIPPINES

THOUSANDS LOSE JOBS AFTER ONLINE CASINOS CATERING TO CHINESE CLOSE

Two online casino operators that cater mostly to Chinese clients are exiting the Philippines, and more shutdowns of offshore gaming firms in the Philippines are forthcoming, according to casino operator and regulator, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR).

More than 5,000 employees, mostly foreign nationals, will lose their jobs after Don Tences Asian Services Solutions and SC World Development Group Ltd asked that their licenses be canceled, according to PAGCOR.

Jose Tria, PAGCOR's Assistant Vice President for the Philippine Offshore Gaming Licensing (POGO), told the Manila Bulletin that other companies in the sector were considering an exit because of tax measures being imposed against the industry by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The Congress of the Philippines is looking at proposals to enforce a 5% franchise tax on gross revenue or receipts derived from online casino operations, and to impose a 25% income tax on foreigners working in the industry.

"There are other jurisdictions that have opened up, offering better tax rates and friendlier environment," Tria said. "Some [POGOs] also can no lon-

ger take the criticisms they get each day as it makes them feel unwelcome in our country. [...] They will most likely go to countries with lesser regulatory fees and taxes to be economically viable."

Tria said steps taken to stem the virus outbreak have also affected the operations and economic viability of online casinos. These are choking what could have been a pickup in transactions amid the pandemic, he said.

"We're working on ways to allow the resumption of their operations, but you know, we can only do so much," the PAGCOR official explained. "We are regulators, we have to do everything in accordance with the law."

"I've heard there are other companies that also plan to cancel their licenses, but I haven't received their official letters so I can't name them yet," Tria said. "We are doing our best to convince them to stay."

"Continued withdrawal by online gaming operators will hurt prospects of casino companies and also developers because this is a key market for residences and offices," says Astro del Castillo, managing director at First Grade Finance.

SUNCITY SAYS EXIT RUMOR IS MIX-UP

Citing Andrea Domingo, PAGCOR's chair and

chief executive, the Manila Bulletin reported that Suncity Group was among the junket operators to cease its POGO business. However, the gaming promoter told Inside Asian Gaming that they were committed to the junket business in Manila and "we can't find any reason to leave Manila at this particular moment."

"In regards to the comment provided by Mdm Andrea Domingo, we think she is referring to tele-betting services, which has nothing to do with the junket business that Suncity Group operates in Manila," the junket operator said. "We will continue to develop our VIP entertainment business in licensed gaming operators in Manila, and provide seamless VIP services to our guests," Suncity Group added.

Last year, the junket operator denied allegations made in the Chinese media that it was running online gambling operations in Southeast Asia that targeted mainland gamblers. At the time, owner Alvin Chau pledged that the entire group's operations would in future abide by Macau law, even those operations in foreign jurisdictions. Online casinos are not legal in Macau. **DB/AGENCIES**

Jackson Chang's wife, daughter said to enjoy employee 'privileges' at IPIM applicant's company

JULIE ZHU

THE employment of Jackson Chang's wife and daughter at a company owned by an investment visa applicant, which Chang is said to have improperly assisted, was used as evidence against the former official in yesterday's court hearing.

Chang, the former President of the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), stands accused of corruption charges relating to the granting of investment and skilled labor visas.

Yesterday, the Court of First Instance (TJB) continued the trial and Chang, his wife and seven other accused individuals attended the proceedings in court.

Yesterday's trial was centered on two people: Ip On Kei, who is Chang's wife, and Crystal Chang Sin Man, who is his daughter. The plaintiff's witness, who was the only witness at yesterday's proceedings, was the second individual from Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) to testify in this case.

The witness was one of the investigators in Chang's case. Like the first CCAC witness, this one also presented PowerPoint slides he produced to support his testimony. As previously reported, the TJB judge allowed the CCAC witnesses to illustrate evidence through such slideshows along with their testimonies.

According to the indictment, the CCAC accuses Chang of receiving bribes

through his wife and daughter. Chang is formally accused of providing inside knowledge about the immigration applications to another defendant, Ng Kuok Sao, and in turn receiving bribes from Ng for the help.

Yesterday's trial addressed the bribery concerning Chang's wife and daughter. The accusation states that Ng hired both Ip and Crystal Chang to Ng's company (Yi Jian). Based on the salary payment to Ip and Crystal Chang, CCAC believes that Ng hired them, with lesser job demands, as a form of payment to Jackson Chang.

Regarding Chang's wife, Ng had hired Ip in 2014 on a monthly salary of 15,000 patacas. Since her employment, Ip had always "worked from home." "We consider it privileged treatment given Ip didn't have to attend or to apply for leave, but she could work from home and still receive a salary," the witness said.

Ip's lawyer used Ip's working experience, educational background, and some emails to undermine the testimony. In 2007 and 2008, Ip worked for two different companies, receiving a monthly salary of 19,000 patacas and 20,000 patacas. Ip has a Master of Business Administration from the former University of East Asia. According to some email records, Ip had been in conversation with Yi Jian's customers regarding work matters.

However, the witness stated that the email only showed that Ip worked on

some occasions. Ip did not have a desk at the company nor did she have an account log-in for the company's computer system.

Ip's lawyer questioned the exact amount of the salary which was meant as a bribe to Chang. The witness stated that the bribery was in the form of employment because allowing Ip to work remotely was privileged treatment compared to the requirements for other workers.

The second key person in yesterday's trial was Crystal Chang. Ng hired Crystal in early 2015. Since August 2015, Crystal had received a monthly bonus for her excellent attendance.

Regularly, each month, she was awarded 1,800 patacas in addition to her monthly salary of 15,000 patacas. Crystal's salary was about 5,000 patacas more per month than another woman, surnamed Leong, who held the same position as a front desk clerk. Leong, who joined the company in 2016, has slightly higher education, took less leave, and received less bonus than Crystal.

According to CCAC's evidence, Crystal personally acknowledged that she frequently took leave.

Crystal's lawyer defended her client by claiming that all of the leave was taken with reasonable justification. For instance, Crystal needed to attend school or take a trip to visit her family. Some evidence corroborated the lawyer's argument. However, the witness said that Crystal's reasons

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Former IPIM President, Jackson Chang

CCAC's witness also acknowledged that the company might not have even operated after its establishment based on the absence of financial records.

THE POWERPOINT

The judge appeared agitated after one defendant's lawyer questioned the witness's PowerPoint presentation.

Previously, the judge had approved the use of the PowerPoint slides by the CCAC's witnesses as a supportive tool for the testimony.

During a previous trial, more than five lawyers, including Chang's, Ip's and Crystal's, doubted the legitimacy of the PowerPoint and questioned the methodology of having a witness doing a PowerPoint presentation in the court. Chang's lawyer even commented that "it was the first time in over 20 years of my career to see such a thing."

Yesterday, when a lawyer asked about the PowerPoint presentation, the judge became visibly agitated, telling the lawyer that "the court has already approved the PowerPoint. What problem do you have with it?"

could not be verified. This specific CCAC investigator did not explore why Crystal was awarded for attendance nor did he confirm the validity of Crystal's reasons for her leave.

According to one piece of evidence, there was one month when Crystal worked for 25 days, while her colleague, Leong, was on duty for 31 days. Yet, Crystal was awarded 1,800

patacas for excellent attendance whereas Leong was not. Both the judge and the lawyer expressed their intention to question a future witness about the salary for the particular month, as the

motive for the bonus remained unexplained.

Another theory advanced by the CCAC was that Chang's daughter was given 10% of the shares of a company created by Ng. How-

ever, both the daughter and the father's lawyer objected to the accusation because the only document showing the 10% shares given was a handwritten note saying "Chang Sin Man, 10%."

Macau billionaire's appeal declined by US Supreme Court

THE U.S. Supreme Court has rejected an appeal made by billionaire and real estate developer Ng Lap Seng to overturn his conviction and four-year prison sentence for bribing two United Nations (UN) ambassadors to help him build a multibillion-dollar conference center in Macau.

AP PHOTO



Ng Lap Seng

As reported by Reuters, the judges confirmed an earlier ruling in the appeals court that federal bribery laws were sufficient to cover payments made by entities such as the United Nations.

In 2017, Ng was sentenced to four years in prison for his role in the bribery scheme, and was also charged for money laundering and corruption. Ng allegedly has paid more than \$1 million to former UN General Assembly president John Ashe, as well as other officials, in exchange for their support to build a conference center that would host the United Nations' annual Global South-South Development Expo.

According to prosecutors,

Ng's plan was to build a permanent home to host an annual UN conference on economic cooperation among developing countries. The conference center was to be located on a man-made island off the coast of Macau at no cost which he would use to develop a complex that included apartments, offices, high-end shopping, as well as a casino and a luxury hotel.

In August 2018, Ng's defense lawyers appealed to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals to void his con-

viction on the basis that U.S. law had been "misapplied" to cover the inter-governmental organization. However, the appeals court disagreed, concluding that federal bribery laws covered the payments. Ng's lawyers then appealed to the highest court in the U.S., where the same decision was delivered.

Ng is the founder of Macau-based real estate company Sun Kian Ip Group. The developer has investment projects across China, but most notably in the Greater Bay cities of Guangzhou, Zhaoqing, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Macau.

According to the company's website, it was involved in the investment and development plans for high-profile projects in Macau, including the "master development plan" for the Nam Van Lake area, the Hotel Fortuna, and the Lotus Bridge that connects Cotai with Hengqin.

Ng is imprisoned in Pennsylvania and is eligible for release in January 2022, according to Reuters. **DB**

AD



FINE PRINT EXHIBITION SHOWCASES LOCAL ARTISTS

A collective exhibition of fine prints, featuring artwork from six Macau-based artists, is currently showing at Creative Macau.

The exhibition titled "Magical Feelings" aims to bring the city's fine art printmakers together to "showcase the individuality of each artist", according to Lúcia Lemos, director of Creative Macau and one of the participating artists in the exhibition.

Aside from Lemos, Creative Macau has also invited Duarte Esmeriz, Fernando Simões, Kei Joaquim Kuong, Lei Cheng and Cheong Hoi I.

Each artist has used different techniques and forms to produce their artwork, including copper plates, polymer plates, and blocks of wood, among others.

One of the artists, Cheong, introduced her works of

Mokuhanga (Japanese woodcuts) to the Times. "Different from other forms of etching, Mokuhanga can produce colorful artwork," said Cheong.

In the exhibition, Cheong presents a series of art that she named "Wings of Freedom," expressing her own interpretation of freedom.

Cheong also called on local artists to present their work outside of Macau, implying that

there is a small market for art development in the city.

"Artists shouldn't be limited [in showcasing their work] in Macau. They should expand outside of the city too," said Cheong, adding that some local artists are putting too much focus on presenting their art in the city, failing to recognize opportunities that other countries can bring.

Meanwhile, Simões presen-

ts pieces with the Portuguese style cobblestones, sculptures, ceramics, paintings and micro mosaics.

In the exhibition, he showcases the cultural and architectural legacy of the Portuguese and the Jesuits in the series titled "Reminiscence."

The series presents snapshots of historic buildings and artefacts which is a witness to the long and rich cultural exchange between the east and the west.

Magical Feelings will run until July 11 and is held every Monday to Saturday, from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Creative Macau. LV/SI

Expert warns putting off relaxing measures due to lack of immunity

ANTHONY LAM

ZHONG Nanshan, expert pulmonologist and academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, has warned against relaxing the Covid-19 containment measures in Macau.

The expert has excelled in containing several diseases in mainland China, including the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), as well as several bird and swine influenza outbreaks. His latest focus is Covid-19. He is also head of a National Health Commission expert panel in mainland China.

Zhong reviewed and commended the Covid-19 containment efforts in Macau during a seminar held at the Government Headquarters. He was invited to the seminar by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng.

The mainland expert said Macau's containment to only 46 infections so far can be considered exemplary,



Zhong Nanshan (left)

given the city's community density and small geographic area. It is also remarkable that the city has so far seen zero Covid-19-related deaths.

Vigilance, however, should be maintained because currently there is no vaccination for the disease, which means that the majority of Macau people have no anti-bodies against Covid-19.

Although it is important, in the expert's opinion, to revive the economy, it is as important to maintain the effort in containing the disease.

Nonetheless, Macau's experience in disease containment and economic revival is worth learning from, the expert told the audience.

In his opinion, Macau's upcoming challenges include the gradual lifting of border restrictions, as well as residents and students returning from overseas, among other tasks. Zhong advised that the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center should stay united and plan for the worst and that it is also important to learn from other places.

ASSOCIATION CALLS FOR FAMILY DOCTOR SCHEME

JULIE ZHU

LAM U Tou, one of the speakers yesterday at the Macau United Citizens' Association forum, believes that the city will benefit from a family doctor healthcare system.

The forum was centered on Macau's healthcare coupon.

Lam, the president of the Association of Synergy of Macao pointed out that one of the government's original purposes in setting up a healthcare coupon system was to develop a "family doctor" medical structure.

However, as of today, no family doctor system exists in Macau. "More than 10 years have gone by and we still don't have family doctors, at

least I don't have one," noted Lam.

In Lam's opinion, the Macau government should sponsor private doctors so that local families can have family doctors.

Lam indicated that the family doctor system will be the most efficient healthcare system. He believes that Macau's healthcare mechanism favors the doctors but not the patients.

Another speaker, surnamed Chan, who is a dentist with his own practice, wants the local government to increase accessibility to healthcare. Annually, each Macau resident receives healthcare coupons equivalent to 600 patacas. In Chan's opinion this amount is not large.

ANTHONY LAM

Gov't to roll out digital education platform in Sept

AN e-learning platform will be officially available to all foundational education entities from September. The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) is reviewing proposals it has received to date.

The news was disclosed after a plenary meeting of the Non-tertiary Education Commission yesterday.

Once decided, the platform will be available to all students, teachers and parents of foundational education levels. Two functions will be provided in the upcoming school year, including mass communication channels to foster real-time understanding of stakeholders' circumstances, as well as an e-teaching function that is an e-classroom.

Although the education bureau is likely to purchase the service, schools have discretion as to whether they will use it. The education regulator stressed that it will be a platform accessible in mainland China because several thousand local students, besides teachers, reside in the mainland.

A total of five companies have submitted proposals to provide education services on the e-learning platform. The education regulator revealed that two of them



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are locally owned companies; another two are mainland-based with offices in Macau. The remaining one is a global enterprise bidding in the name of its Macau office. The preliminary budget is "several million patacas."

The education commission also discussed the reinstated three-tier rainstorm warning system during the meeting. The system was canceled in 2004 and replaced by a single "on or off" warning system.

Under the reinstated system that will take effect from September 1, schools will be suspended mandatorily when rainfall reaches 50mm per hour, which will trigger the Red warning. When it reaches 80mm of rainfall per hour, the Black warning will be issued.

The lowest level, which is signaled by the Yellow warning, implies minor inconvenience. Schools will not be called off during a Yellow warning, but the

education regulator asks schools to handle late-comers with flexibility and refrain from punishing students who arrive late.

Another topic covered in the meeting was on school resumption following the first two waves of Covid-19 outbreak in Macau. Students were forced to stop attending schools due to the disease after the Lunar New Year break.

Foundational education gradually resumed from May. The education regulator was pleased with the resumption and advised that more than 61,000 students have returned to their 68 respective schools for studies to date.

Out of the 61,000, there are about 3,000 cross-border students and 100 of them reside in Zhongshan, with the remaining in Zhuhai. Some of these cross-boundary students opted to stay in Macau due to the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving about 2,000 crossing the border every day.

However, someone who presented himself as "a student from

a school on Avenida da Vitória" wrote to local media outlet Macau Concealers to complain about being given eight tests in two days right after the resumption of school.

The writer pointed out that it is against the guidelines issued by the educational regulator, in which academic assessments were to be lightly implemented and flexible. The writer also complained about not having enough time to prepare for the tests.

In response, the education regulator admitted that it has received some complaints from parents with regards to tight schedules, excessive assessments and other pedagogical problems.

It has "conducted communications with the concerned schools and discovered that it was a problem of miscommunication." According to the DSEJ, schools have aligned with the guidelines and promised to make necessary adjustments where deviations exist.

As kindergartens will not resume this academic year, they have been communicating with the education regulator regarding possible resumption in September. Judging from the current situation, the bureau is confident that kindergartens can resume as planned, although decisions may vary depending on the actual situation.

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HKMAO, LIAISON OFFICES IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY LAW

THE Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (HKMAO) announced in a statement yesterday that it is in full support of the national security legislation for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), which was concluded by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC).

The State Council's Office sees the legislation and implementation of the law in the SAR as part of the Appendix 3 of the Hong Kong Basic Law of landmark significance to the enactment of the "One country, two systems" policy.

Not only so, the implementation of the law will also accurately follow the path of the "One country, two systems" policy, as well as actually protecting national sovereignty, safety and developmental benefits. In addition, it will effectively safeguard the constitutional order pinpointed by the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law of Hong Kong, as well as the continuous prosperity and stability of the SAR. The law will also introduce a transformation for the SAR from unrest to order.

The HKMAO pointed out that the national security law

for Hong Kong is in defense of the root of "One country", while addressing the differences between the "Two systems". It not only stipulates clearly the formations of and punishments against four types of national security breaches, but also institutionalizes the protection of national security on both levels in the Central People's Government and the HKSAR Government.

China's office also remarked that the legislation abides with the "One country, two systems" policy, the Constitution and the Hong Kong Basic Law. Although it is a hanging blaze to violators of national security, it is the guardian of the freedom and tranquility of the vast majority of Hong Kong residents, including foreigners residing in Hong Kong. Competent Central and SAR authorities will honor their duties in implementing the law.

Finally, the PRC Government is determined in safeguarding national security. The State Council's Office stressed that no intimidation or sanction will impact HKSAR's global economic power or scare the people of the PRC.

Also yesterday, the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Macau has also noted in a statement sent to the Times that it supports

the legislation, which is the key to seamless and constant implementation of the "One country, two systems" policy. It completely highlights the central government's belief and crave for constitutional governance of the country and the SAR.

The MSAR's office commented that in the course of the legislation, the NPC has insisted scientific, democratic and lawful legislation, while to the greatest extent protecting human rights and considering the differences between the Common Law and Continental Law Systems.

According to the Liaison Office, the NPC has "fully listened to the voices of the people," in both the SAR and the mainland. The legislation has a strong foundation of public opinion, the office noted.

Finally, the Liaison Office in Hong Kong has also stressed in a statement that nobody should underestimate the commitment of the Central People's Government to safeguarding national security in Hong Kong.

The implementation of the law will illustrate a new start for Hong Kong. It will further strengthen the "One country" and highlight the "Two systems", the Hong Kong Office stressed. **STAFF REPORTER**

Law criticized abroad, defended by China

CHINA'S enactment of a national security law for Hong Kong yesterday drew statements of deep concern and regret from abroad and a firm defense at home.

The law has fueled a widening divide between China and the United States and some other countries over the future of Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory that Britain handed over to Beijing in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" framework.

It criminalizes separatist activity, subversion, terrorist acts and foreign influence in Hong Kong affairs.

BEIJING:

"This issue is purely China's internal affairs, and no foreign country has the right to interfere," foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said. "The Chinese government is unwaveringly determined to safeguard the interests of national sovereignty, security and development, to implement the 'one country, two systems' policy, and to oppose any external force interfering in Hong Kong affairs."

HONG KONG:

"It will only target an extremely small minority of people who have breached the law, while the life and property, basic rights and freedoms of the overwhelming majority of Hong

Kong residents will be protected," Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said. "The legislation will not undermine 'one country, two systems' and Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy."

TAIWAN:

"China promised that Hong Kong would remain unchanged for 50 years. The adoption of the National Security Law makes people feel that this commitment is indeed a blow to public confidence," Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen said. "We are disappointed that China cannot fulfill its commitments, which also proves that the 'one country, two systems' is not feasible."

JAPAN:

"It is regrettable that the national security law was enacted despite strong concerns shared among the international society and the people of Hong Kong," Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said. "It will undermine trust for the principle of 'one country, two systems.'"

UNITED KINGDOM:

"We are deeply concerned by unconfirmed reports that Beijing has passed the national security law. This would be a grave step," British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said. "Once we have seen the full legislation, we will make a further statement." **AP**



Protesters gather at a shopping mall in Central during a pro-democracy protest against Beijing's national security law

CHINA approved a contentious national security law that will allow authorities to crack down on subversive and secessionist activity in Hong Kong, a move many see as Beijing's boldest yet to erase the legal firewall between the semi-autonomous territory and the mainland's authoritarian Communist Party system.

President Xi Jinping signed a presidential order promulgating the law after it was approved by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the official Xinhua News Agency said. It will be added to the Basic Law, Hong Kong's constitution.

"We hope the law will serve as a deterrent to prevent people from stirring up trouble," said Tam Yiu-Chung, Hong Kong's sole representative on the Standing Committee "Don't let Hong Kong be used as a tool to split the country."

He said punishments would not include the death penalty, but did not elaborate on further details.

Passage of the law came amid fears in Hong Kong and abroad that it would be used to curb opposition voices in the Asian financial hub. The U.S. has already begun moves to end special trade terms given to Hong Kong after the former British colony was returned to China in 1997.

The legislation is aimed at curbing subversive, secessionist and terrorist activities, as well as foreign intervention in the city's affairs. It follows months of anti-government protests in Hong Kong last year that at times descended into violence.

Speaking in a video message to the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva, Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said the law would "only target an extremely small minority" of lawbreakers, would not be retroactive, and that mainland legal bodies would only have jurisdiction in "rare, specified situations."

Critics say it is the most significant erosion to date of Hong Kong's British-style rule of law and the high degree of autonomy that Beijing promised Hong Kong would en-

China approves contentious Hong Kong national security law



Pro-China supporters hold Chinese and Hong Kong national flags during a rally to celebrate the approval of a national security law for Hong Kong yesterday

joy at least through 2047 under a "one country, two systems" framework.

Hong Kong pro-democracy activists Joshua Wong, Agnes Chow and Nathan Law issued statements on Facebook saying they would withdraw from their organization Demosisto, which then announced that it would disband with the loss of its top members.

Wong said "worrying about life and safety" has become a real issue and nobody will be able to predict the repercussions of the law, whether it is being extradited to China or facing long jail terms.

Democratic Party leader Wu Chi-wai said he would defy a police ban on today's "handover day" march.

He will be joined by Figo Chan, of the Civil Human Rights Front,

who urged people to take to the streets, saying: "We are aware of the risks of being prosecuted. But we insist on taking the lead, as we want to tell Hongkongers not to fear."

Police plan to have 4,000 riot officers on standby, the South China Morning Post reports.

More than a hundred protesters gathered at a luxury mall in Hong Kong's Central business district, chanting slogans including "Free Hong Kong, Revolution Now," with several holding up a flag representing an independent Hong Kong as well as posters condemning the law.

The law's passage "re-

Carrie Lam said the law would 'only target an extremely small minority' of lawbreakers

presents the greatest threat to human rights in the city's recent history," said the head of Amnesty International's China Team, Joshua Rosenzweig.

"The speed and secrecy with which China has pushed through this legislation intensifies the fear that Beijing has calculatingly created a weapon of repression to

be used against government critics, including people who are merely expressing their views or protesting peacefully," Rosenzweig said in a statement.

Concerns were also expressed in Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary.

"Democracy and freedom are shared universal values of Hong Kong and Taiwan," the island's

Mainland Affairs Council said, adding that China had betrayed its promises to Hong Kong,

The self-governing island recently said it would consider providing asylum for Hong Kong opposition figures who fear arrest.

Ahead of the law's passage, the Trump administration said it will bar defense exports to Hong

Kong and will soon require licenses for the sale of items that have both civilian and military uses.

"We cannot risk these items falling into the hands of the People's Liberation Army, whose primary purpose is to uphold the dictatorship of the (ruling Communist Party) by any means necessary," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said his government was "deeply concerned" over reports of the law's passage, saying that would be a "grave step." Britain has said it could offer residency and possible citizenship to around 3 million of Hong Kong's 7.5 million people.

"This issue is purely China's internal affairs, and no foreign country has the right to interfere," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said yesterday.

He said China would take necessary measures to protect its nation-

nal interests in response to "the wrong acts of the United States."

Under the law, Beijing will set up a national security office in Hong Kong to collect and analyze intelligence and deal with criminal cases related to national security.

Government critics fear Beijing will use the law to pursue political opponent. Some have questioned the legal basis on which China proceeded with the legislation, saying it undermines the Basic Law.

An earlier attempt to pass a security law in 2003 was dropped after hundreds of thousands of people marched in Hong Kong's streets against it.

China for years had put off another such effort, but citing a new urgency after last year's protests, announced it would bypass the Hong Kong legislature and enact the law on its own.

Chinese officials have railed against what they claim is foreign interference in the territory that they blame for encouraging the anti-government protests. Beijing condemned those protests as an attempt to permanently split Hong Kong away from China.

Drafting of the law took place amid intense secrecy, with even top Hong Kong officials reportedly not given advance notice of its specifics.

Questions linger over the effects on Hong Kong's free press that has come under increasing political and financial pressure, as well as the operations of non-governmental organizations, particularly those with foreign connections.

The law's passage comes after Hong Kong's legislature in early June approved a contentious bill making it illegal to insult the Chinese national anthem. Pro-China figures have also been pushing for more "patriotic" education to be introduced into the curriculum in hopes that will boost their identification with Beijing. **MDT/AP**

EU reopens its borders to 14 nations but not to US tourists



LORNE COOK, BRUSSELS

THE European Union announced last night that it will reopen its borders to travelers from 14 countries, and possibly China soon, but most Americans have been refused entry for at least another two weeks due to soaring coronavirus infections in the U.S.

Travelers from other big countries like Russia, Brazil and India will also miss out.

As Europe's economies reel from the impact of the coronavirus, southern EU countries like Greece, Italy and Spain are desperate to entice back sun-loving visitors and breathe life into their damaged tourism industries. American tourists make up a big slice of the EU market and the summer holiday season is a key time.

Citizens from the following countries will be allowed into the EU's 27 members and four other nations in Europe's visa-free Schengen travel zone: Algeria, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Rwanda, Serbia, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia and Uruguay.

The EU said China is "subject to confirmation of reciprocity," meaning it should lift all restrictions on European citizens entering China before European countries will allow Chinese citizens back in.

The list is to be updated every 14 days, with new countries being added or

dropped off depending on whether they are keeping the pandemic under control.

U.S. tourists made 27 million trips to Europe in 2016 while some 10 million Europeans head across the Atlantic each year.

Still, many people both inside and outside of Europe remain wary about traveling in the coronavirus era, given the unpredictability of the pandemic and the possibility of second waves of infection that could affect flights and hotel bookings. Tens of thousands of travelers had a frantic, chaotic scramble in March to get home as the pandemic swept across the world and borders slammed shut.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the United States has surged over the past week, and President Donald Trump also suspended the entry of all people from Europe's ID check-free travel zone in a decree in March, making it extremely difficult for the EU to include the U.S. on their safe travel list for now.

In contrast, aside from a recent outbreak tied to a slaughterhouse in western Germany, the spread of the virus has generally stabilized across much of continental Europe.

To qualify for the list, EU headquarters said yesterday that countries should have

a comparable per capita number of COVID-19 cases to those in the 31 European countries over the last 14 days and have a stable or decreasing trend in the number of infections.

The Europeans are also taking into account those countries' standards on virus testing, surveillance, contact tracing and treatment and the general reliability of their virus data.

According to European

The EU said China is 'subject to confirmation of reciprocity,' meaning it should lift all restrictions on European Union citizens

Commission figures, the United States is the EU's biggest in-bound long-haul tourism market in terms of arrivals and tourist spending. In 2014, U.S. tourists accounted for 18% of the total nights spent in the EU by visitors from outside, followed by Russia at 14.9%. Tourists from China, Japan and Brazil each accounted for less than 5% of nights.

Yesterday's decision will not go down well with all Europeans.

On the deserted Saint-Louis island in Paris, at the heart of the French capital, businesses were mourning the loss of American tourists.

"Americans were 50% of my clientele," said Paola Pellizzari, president of the local

business association and owner of a Venetian mask and jewelry shop. "We can't substitute that clientele with another."

European Union countries hastily slapped restrictions on who could cross their borders in February as the virus spread rapidly in Italy. Then in mid-March, the Europeans limited all non-essential travel to the 27 EU member states plus Liechtenstein, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.

Non-EU citizens who are already living in Europe are not included in the ban.

The EU also recommended that restrictions be lifted on all people wanting to enter who are European

and their family members, long-term EU residents who are not citizens of the bloc, and travelers with "an essential function or need," regardless of whether their country is on the safe list or not. That would allow in people like American medical experts, for example.

The EU list does not apply to travel into Britain, which left the EU in January. Britain now requires all incoming travelers — bar a few exceptions like truck drivers — to go into a self-imposed 14-day quarantine, although the measure is under review and is likely to ease in the coming weeks. The requirement also applies to U.K. citizens. AP

this day in history



1997 HONG KONG HANDED OVER TO CHINESE CONTROL

Hong Kong has been handed back to the Chinese authorities - ending more than 150 years of British control. The British flag was lowered over Government House - home to the last Governor Chris Patten for the past five years - at midnight last night.

The flag was presented to Mr Patten who was then driven off in his official Rolls Royce, before the car was handed over to Tung Chee-hwa, the territory's Chief Executive.

In his farewell speech, Mr Patten said: "The story of this great city is about the years before this night and the years of success that will surely follow it."

Britain has controlled Hong Kong island since 1842 - apart from a brief period during World War II when the Japanese took over.

A huge fireworks display lit up Victoria Harbour at 2000 local time. One hour later, 4,000 guests sat down to a banquet in the Convention Centre on the harbour front, while 509 Chinese troops crossed the land border into Hong Kong.

Among the guests for the final handover ceremony at the Convention Centre were Prince Charles, Prime Minister Tony Blair, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and Chris Patten. Chinese dignitaries included President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and military leader General Zhang Wannian.

In Beijing the ceremony was watched on giant screens erected in Tiananmen Square.

At the stroke of midnight, the red digits of the countdown clock turned to zero and the handpicked crowd roared its approval.

Shortly afterwards, Prince Charles and Mr Patten boarded the Royal Yacht Britannia and waved a final farewell to the strains of Rule Britannia and Land of Hope and Glory.

Just half an hour after the handover, there was a demonstration by the Hong Kong Democratic Party outside the Legislative Council building - but it did not delay the inauguration of the new Special Administrative Region government.

Tung Chee-hwa was sworn in as Hong Kong's new leader.

"This is a momentous and historic day ... Hong Kong and China are whole again," said Mr Tung.

But he promised, "We value this empowerment and we will exercise our powers prudently and responsibly."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Discussions between Britain and China on the future of Hong Kong began in 1982.

After 22 rounds of formal talks, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her Chinese counterpart, Zhao Ziyang, signed the Joint Declaration in 1984.

In 1992, Chris Patten was sworn in as the last governor of Hong Kong with a remit to prepare for the colony's democratic future under Chinese rule. Democratic elections were held in 1995 for the new Legislative Council.

Proposals to introduce controversial new security laws galvanised public opinion from 2002 until today.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

A recent scare regarding your health could prove to be nothing, but you shouldn't take the good news as an endorsement of the way you've been choosing (or not) to exercise.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Taking anything for granted is unwise now, especially the people you care about. Make an effort to get in touch with a friend you haven't seen in a while. They need to know that they are still important in your life.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Just because you're not exactly up to date on what's going on with controversial issues doesn't mean that you don't have a right to an opinion. Education doesn't just come from books and schools.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You know that person in your life who is spontaneous, fun loving, and always acting on impulse? Well, the charm of their capriciousness could wear a bit thin for you today.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

The phrase "no guts, no glory" will have special significance for you today. You may have to step up and show what you're made of in order to get the acclaim you know you deserve.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Karma is definitely on your side right now, so you can expect some valuable payback for all the good deeds you've performed in the recent past. Don't brag about this windfall, though.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Joining a group - even online or socially distanced - is the easiest way to get a shot of social energy, and you could really use it right now. If you're in a meeting, speak up more than you usually would.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Your comments to close friends definitely have weight, but you can't feel responsible for the health of their egos. In other words, don't beat yourself up if you can't cheer up a blue friend with one pep talk.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Pick up an epic novel that takes place in an exotic locale. Watch a documentary about one of your must-see spots. Take a trip through some beautiful travel websites and pick your next destination.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You can't suffer because others are irrational or insecure. You earned this, and you have also earned the right to bask in the glow. Enjoy the applause.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Be prepared to deal with interruptions today. There could be many. Unfortunately, not everyone you'll be dealing with has a good grip on the concept of priorities.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

It will only make you feel bogged down and sluggish. Mix things up and try not to eat on the go. You can eat more healthfully and mindfully if you prepare the food yourself.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

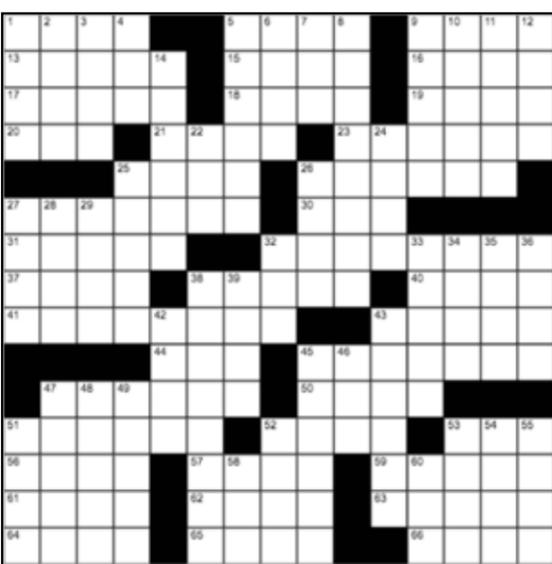
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	22	33	cloudy
Harbin	17	28	clear
Tianjin	23	34	cloudy
Urumqi	13	27	clear
Xi'an	21	31	cloudy
Lhasa	12	24	shower
Chengdu	24	30	shower
Chongqing	24	28	moderate rain
Kunming	18	23	heavy rain
Nanjing	23	27	cloudy
Shanghai	23	28	overcast
Wuhan	25	33	clear
Hangzhou	23	30	drizzle
Taipei	27	31	drizzle
Guangzhou	28	35	thundershower
Hong Kong	28	32	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	16	16	drizzle
Frankfurt	15	15	drizzle
Paris	17	17	drizzle
London	14	14	drizzle
New York	21	21	moderate rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Not pro; 5- Beat it!; 9- Basics; 13- Ides month; 15- Tombstone lawman; 16- Vamp Theda; 17- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 18- Free from contamination; 19- Russian pancake; 20- ___ Paulo, Brazil; 21- Mongrel dog; 23- Elevated; 25- Wife of a rajah; 26- Trojan War hero; 27- Satanic; 30- Road with a no.; 31- Emulate Cicero; 32- Capable of being severed; 37- Defense grp. since 1949; 38- Hot spot; 40- Ring out; 41- Keep at a distance; 43- ___ firma; 44- Water tester; 45- Chest related; 47- Discharges from the RAF; 50- Quarry; 51- Deaden; 52- Steps down to an Indian river; 53- Matchsticks game; 56- Auto pioneer; 57- Archipelago part; 59- Throw out; 61- To ___ (perfectly); 62- Injury reminder; 63- Blathered; 64- X-ray units; 65- Screen; 66- Longings;

DOWN: 1- Latin lesson word; 2- Zip; 3- Small combo; 4- Road hazard; 5- Infected; 6- ___ monde; 7- Bobby on the ice; 8- Light musical work; 9- "Steal This Book" author Hoffman; 10- Model airplane wood; 11- Weeps; 12- Quartz grains; 14- Merciful; 22- Verse starter?; 24- Work without ___; 25- Copter part; 26- Make ___ for it; 27- Ready to eat; 28- Periods of history; 29- Damon of "Good Will Hunting"; 32- Stage signal; 33- Mimicry; 34- Capital of Switzerland; 35- Pasternak heroine; 36- Airline to Tel Aviv; 38- Haughty; 39- Matures; 42- Molecular component; 43- Move unsteadily; 45- Round body; 46- Song syllable; 47- 4th letter of the Greek alphabet; 48- Broke off; 49- Meditates; 51- Male swine; 52- Delighted; 53- Branta sandvicensis; 54- Clickable image; 55- Range. Abbr.; 58- Biol. e.g.; 60- Songbird;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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FOR RENT

One Central, Macau- Lovely 2 bedroom
\$25,000/mth 1,269 ft² 2 1/2 2 1/2

FOR SALE

- [Taipa] Hoi Wan Garden 2 1/2 1 1/2
900 ft² \$4,900,000 (ref: 19106003)
- [Taipa] Taipa Village (2 units) 4 1/2 2 1/2
1,404 ft² \$8,380,000 (ref: 19096006)
- [Macau] Seaview Garden 3 1/2 2 1/2
1,420 ft² \$10,900,000 (ref: 20016004)
- [Coloane] Large 3/4 bedroom 2 1/2 3 1/2 2 1/2
2,530 ft² \$12,980,000 (ref: 19096000)

FOR RENT

- [Taipa] Delightful 1 Bed 1 1/2 1 1/2
820 ft² \$9,500/mth (ref: 20051001)
- [Taipa] Old Taipa Village Apartment 2 1/2 1 1/2
600 ft² \$9,900/mth (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Great View Apartment 4 1/2 2 1/2
2,060 ft² \$28,000/mth (ref: 20031001)
- [Taipa] Private house 2 1/2 3 1/2 3 1/2
4,266 ft² \$45,000/mth (ref: 19055006ST)

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

BALI HOTELS GO ON SALE FOR CHEAP WITH VIRUS HAMMERING TOURISM



FARIS MOKHTAR

GONE are the Australian surfers and Chinese tour groups. Also missing are yoga aficionados seeking inner peace, like Julia Roberts in "Eat Pray Love."

With no tourists and no income courtesy of the coronavirus pandemic, struggling hotel owners on the Indonesian resort island of Bali have been forced to put their properties up for sale. Given the dire state of the market, some may have to stomach a loss. For investors with a long view, it's a chance to grab a slice of paradise on the cheap.

Balangan Wave, a 50-villa resort under construction near its namesake popular surfing beach, has already hit the market, and developer Michael Halim has slashed his asking price to \$9 million from \$17 million in May.

"In the current market, one can't avoid selling at a loss," Halim said. "Businesses are closing, there's cash flow issues."

While the halt to international travel has devastated holiday hot spots from Hawaii to Phuket in Thailand, Bali is more vulnerable than most. Tourism accounts for more than 60% of the island's economy, providing jobs for everyone from chefs and cleaners at five-star resorts to self-employed guides and drivers.

A record 6.2 million travelers flocked to the island's beaches, hotels and yoga retreats in 2019. This year, tourist arrivals slumped 22% to 1.04 million in the first quarter, even before the worst of the outbreak. Now, the usually pumping beach clubs lay quiet and the once-thronged Tanah Lot Temple is deserted.

While major global chains such as Marriott International Inc. and Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc., have the financial firepower to stay afloat during the pandemic, smaller hotels at the budget end of the market are struggling to survive. The number of lodgings listed for sale in Bali has jumped 30% since

the pandemic struck, according to Indonesian property firm Galaxy Kuta.

"It's a good time to buy," said Chandran V R, managing director of Singapore-based Cosmopolitan Real Estate, which is handling the Balangan Wave sale. "Bali will bounce back to normal. When that happens, prices will soar again."

Also looking for a buyer is the two-star POP! Hotel Teuku Umar in Denpasar. With eye-catching neon window frames and interiors, the 140-room hotel was put up for sale for \$7.7 million in May.

Situated a 30-minute taxi ride from Kuta and Seminyak beaches, and with rooms as low as \$14 a night, it was a hit with backpackers. Not anymore.

"The hotel has no income at all and has maintenance costs to pay," said Meirina Rajianto, an agent at Bali-based Galaxy Kuta, who is handling the sale. "The owner decided to sell rather than bleeding more money."

Before the coronavirus hit, hotel deals across Asia Pacific were at record levels, fueled by cashed-up private equity and real estate funds, along with wealthy individuals, said Corey Hamabata, senior vice president of JLL's hotels and hospitality group in Hong Kong.

Among those drawn to Bali was the Trump Organization, which signed an agreement in 2015 to lend its name to a new hotel and golf club on the island. Even it's scaling back, with its local partners signaling last week they may opt for a four- or five-star resort — not six — to make it more affordable.

Motorcyclists ride past closed souvenir shops in Kuta. Photographer: Putu Sayoga/Bloomberg

Still, buyers are likely to remain active as opportunities to buy discounted assets arise, Hamabata said. "We expect most buyers will be driven by three main themes: buying at a discount; buying under-utilized properties to improve them; or buying properties in strategic

locations to grow a brand or platform."

A growing domestic travel market in Indonesia, the world's fourth-most populous country, may also prop up hotels until the globe-trotters return. The number of internal trips rose to 303 million in 2018 from 270 million in 2017.

"We are expecting domestic demand will be quicker to recover than international demand," said JLL's Hamabata.

While the island of 4.2 million had early success in containing the virus, it has recently seen a spike in infections to more than 1,400, with 13 deaths. Indonesia has surpassed 54,000 cases, with 2,754 deaths, making it the worst hit Southeast Asian nation.

That may dent plans to reopen Bali's economy. Under a three-step strategy, domestic tourists would be allowed back in August, with international sun-seekers welcomed in September if everything goes according to plan, the Jakarta Globe reported earlier this month, following a visit by tourism minister Wishnutama Kusubandio to the island.

Even in the best case scenario, it's unlikely tourists will arrive in droves.

Its biggest source of tourists, Australia, has signaled it's likely to keep borders closed until next year. In Singapore, just a 2 1/2-hour flight away, the government is only allowing essential trips and has warned that mass holiday travel will take longer to resume.

That makes Bali a risky bet. The 5,780-square-kilometer island has more than 4,300 hotels, according to government figures. Intense competition at the budget end of the market had many hotel owners strained even before the virus hit.

"Those with little cash flow to cover the lockdown period and unable to restructure or delay debt payments will likely come under pressure very quickly," said Govinda Singh, head of hotels and leisure for valuation and advisory services in Asia at Colliers. **BLOOMBERG**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China extends discount period to end of August



Sands China is offering special savings and discounts on recreational activities including treatments at two signature spas and family fun at The Parisian Macao's Aqua World and children's playground pa-

radise Qube Kingdom until August 31.

The "Summer Twice as Nice Spa Indulgence" allows guests to book any two treatments and receive the second treatment at a 50% discount,

either at Bodhi Spa at Conrad Macao Cotai Strip or Le SPA'tique at The Parisian Macao.

Meanwhile, guests staying at The Parisian Macao can enjoy a 30% discount on entry fee into the water theme area of Aqua World and children's playground at Qube Kingdom.

Local residents can also enjoy 30% discounts at selected restaurants until August 31 by showing their Macau ID card. Participating restaurants include Imperial House Dim Sum at The Venetian Macao; Lotus Palace and Market Bistro at The Parisian Macao; Southern Kitchen at Sands Cotai Central; Golden Court and Copa Steakhouse at Sands Macao.

2nd-phase 'Galaxy Appreciates Heroes' discounts roll out



Galaxy Entertainment is rolling out its second-phase of special discounts to Macau ID and non-resident working permit holders at its

StarWorld Hotel, the Galaxy Macau and the Broadway Macau.

From now until July 14, residents can enjoy 25% off

at selected restaurants. The promotion is rolled out at restaurants including CHA BEI, The Apron Oyster Bar & Grill, Terrazza Italian Restaurant, Saffron, the Ritz-Carlton Café, and Man Ho Chinese Restaurant, among others.

Spending MOP30,000 or more at Galaxy properties accumulated within seven consecutive days will be redeemable for a night's stay at the Galaxy Hotel. Meanwhile, all seven hotels at Galaxy properties are running special rates.

Six-hours of free self-parking and a maximum MOP500 "lucky" discount when paying with MPay are also part of the promotions.

MOTORSPORTS

F1 DRIVERS
DISCUSS WHETHER
TO TAKE A KNEE AT
SEASON OPENER

FORMULA One drivers will discuss taking a knee at the opening race of the delayed season in Austria on Sunday.

"Some of the drivers have already been speaking," McLaren driver Lando Norris said. "If we are going to do it, we should all do it as a grid. It will be discussed following the drivers' briefing with the Grand Prix Drivers' Association [last week]."

The Black Lives Matter movement has been supported by soccer players in Germany, Italy and England taking a knee before and during games.

"We will do whatever we can to show that we care and respect everyone," Norris said. "We will do what is right when the time comes."

Six-time world champion Lewis Hamilton has been vocal about Black Lives Matter and F1's diversity issues.

Like Hamilton, Norris will carry the "End Racism" message on his car this season. The 20-year old driver recently encouraged his social media following to sign petitions following Hamilton's criticism of his peers for staying silent on the matter.

"This sport reaches millions of people and the more we can do as drivers, teams, and as a community in Formula One, the bigger impact we can have." AP

Rugby sevens world series canceled; NZ awarded titles

THE remainder of the rugby sevens world series was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic and New Zealand declared the men's and women's champions yesterday.

The rounds in Hong Kong, Singapore, Langford (Canada), London and Paris were previously postponed, but World Rugby canceled them after discussions with the host unions. Hong Kong, the crown jewel in sevens, won't be staged for the first time in 44 years.

New Zealand was awarded the titles for leading the standings when the series stopped after six of the 10 men's rounds, and four of the five women's rounds.

The New Zealand men won three legs and reached the podium in two more. They won a record-extending 13th series but their first since 2014.

South Africa and Fiji, which dominated the series in



Fiji's Jerry Tuwai (center) tackled by South Africa's Selwyn Davids (left) during their semifinal match at last 2018 Hong Kong Sevens rugby tournament

recent years, were second and third.

The New Zealand women won four of the five legs, and claimed the series for the sixth time in eight editions.

Australia was second and Canada third.

The seedings for the Tokyo Olympics will be adapted to include 2021 series results,

World Rugby said.

There will be no relegation in either series but Japan will be promoted as the winner of the men's second-tier series.

No women's team will be promoted because their second-tier series didn't begin.

"Rugby sevens is a key driver of global growth for our

sport, particularly in emerging nations, and it firmly remains a top priority for our organisation," World Rugby chairman Bill Beaumont said. "As we begin to see light at the end of the tunnel, 2021 has potential to be a very exciting year for rugby sevens with the Tokyo Olympic Games on the horizon." AP

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OPINION

Our Desk

Anthony Lam



IS FOOD A PERSONAL PREFERENCE?

This question crossed my mind when I came across this social media post debating about food the other day.

Memory is vague now but I still have that image in my mind depicting a rather famous person, whose name I no longer remember. The caption of the image explained that the person was trying out 15 types of British food. It was a hyperlink to a video, as far as I can remember, which I didn't click on.

The comments below the post made me believe that the person had tried out food items such as stargazer pie, haggis, and jellied eels. If you don't know yet what they are, stargazer pie has several fish sticking out of the peripheral of the pie at a vertical angle with their (dead) heads up. The pie got its name because the fish are like looking at the starry sky. For the other two, please google them.

Moving on, those social media users started to complain about the uniqueness, if not weirdness, of British cuisine.

There are some less extraordinary dishes in the cuisine, of course, such as bangers and mash, fish and chips, and the globally renowned full English breakfast.

The trio didn't calm those users down, however, for at least one of them said that all three of the national dishes are made with unhealthy ingredients. The breakfast is remarkably concerning, as it consists of numerous preserved or greasy food items, such as black pudding, bacon, hash browns, and baked beans.

Well, I'm rather unconvinced with the last one, as in my understanding baked beans can be self-made, although it can be considerably time consuming. Frying bacon and deep-frying hash browns – my apologies – are beyond my skills to defend.

I missed the post and didn't get a further grasp of their discussion. Even so, the post (so far that I could remember) still lingers around and has prompted me to think whether food can really be defined as good or bad. And if it can, what criteria should we employ?

Should the nutritionist's perspective prevail, many cuisines shall also be considered "bad food." The hard chili in Thai cuisine can be tough on the stomach. The roasting method in Cantonese cuisine and the smoking process in many western cuisines can also be harmful to a person's health.

Otherwise, if taste is concerned, I personally won't deny that bangers and mash are appealing. What about cooking skills? Some superior ingredients, such as fresh abalone and lobster, don't really need much of those. Indeed, they can taste superbly wonderful by merely being poached.

After thinking for several days and nights, I still can't get over that internal debate. I couldn't help but think, after all these years falling in love with mesmerizing food, what makes my dish good?

Talking about that, on Facebook particularly, there have been several populous groups advertising exceptional restaurants while others condemn miserable ones. Like horseracing tips, the same restaurant may appear in either type of groups.

Then I started to think probably it's a personal matter to consider what food is great and what is not. It may rely heavily on the background of a person. Our grandparents, who grew up during the wartime, may have a lower bar than us when it comes to good food.

Luckily, I have a grandma who is ethnic Chinese and likes western food as much as Cantonese. One person's meat is another's poison, after all.

GOLD HEADS FOR
BIGGEST QUARTERLY GAIN

Gold headed for the biggest quarterly advance since 2016 amid a surge in demand for haven assets due to the coronavirus outbreak, which shows no signs of abating.

Bullion has been rising due to a resurgence in virus infections, with new hot spots emerging and the World Health Organization warning that the worst of the pandemic is still to come because of a lack of global solidarity. More U.S. areas took steps to scale back reopenings, while Australia's Victoria is imposing a four-week lockdown in some parts of the metropolis of Melbourne in an attempt to contain a

spike in cases.

There's also increased geopolitical tension after China's top legislative body approved a landmark national security law for Hong Kong, a sweeping attempt to quell dissent that risks U.S. retaliation and the city's appeal as a financial hub.

The precious metal has rallied 17% this year as the health crisis prompted a wave of stimulus from governments and central banks as they tried to minimize the damage to the global economy. Investors also continue to pile into gold-backed exchange-traded funds, with holdings at a record.

SWINE FLU INFECTING
HUMANS RAISES FEARS OF
PANDEMIC POTENTIAL

A strain of flu virus spreading in Chinese pigs has shown it can also infect humans, suggesting that another pathogen with pandemic potential waits in the wings behind the coronavirus.

The flu strain that jumped to humans has become predominant among pigs across China since 2016, according to a team of researchers that includes George Gao Fu, head of China's Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The researchers based their findings on surveillance studies conducted in 10 provinces from 2011 through 2018.

Influenza is one of the most frequent causes of pandemics, which occur when a new infectious disease that no one has immunity to sweeps around the world. Pigs are known to harbor flu viruses that can occasionally infect workers they come into contact with, creating a risk of wider outbreaks.

Called G4 EA H1N1, the



swine flu strain bears genes similar to those in the virus that caused the 2009 flu pandemic, according to the study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, a research journal. Tests found the virus in about 10% of 338 swine workers whose serum samples were collected between 2016 and 2018.

The human infections indicate that the flu strain "possesses all of the essential hallmarks of a candidate pandemic virus" and that it poses "a serious threat to human health," the researchers concluded.

Zoonoses, diseases that jump from animals to humans, are one of the most common sources of dangerous new infections. Ebola, HIV, and the coronavirus itself are all examples of deadly pathogens that originated in animals. SARS-CoV-2, the cause of the Covid-19 pandemic that's infected more than 10 million people and killed more than 500,000 of them, is widely considered by scientists to have come from bats, a natural reservoir of such pathogens. **BLOOMBERG**

BELGIAN KING EXPRESSES REGRET FOR
VIOLENCE IN COLONIAL RULE

FOR the first time in Belgium's history, a reigning king expressed deep regret yesterday for the violence carried out by the former colonial power when it ruled over what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In a letter to the president of the DRC, Felix Tshisekedi, Belgium's King Philippe stopped short of issuing a formal apology but conveyed his "deepest regrets" for the "acts of violence and cruelty" and the "suffering and humiliation" inflicted on Belgian Congo. The letter was published on the 60th anniversary of the African country's independence.

"To further strengthen our ties and develop an even more fruitful friendship, we must be able to



talk to each other about our long common history in all truth and serenity," Philippe wrote.

Philippe's letter was sent amid growing demands that Belgium reassess its colonial past and take responsibility for the atrocities committed by former King Leopold II. In the wake of the protests against racial inequality triggered by the May 25 death of George Floyd in

the United States, several statues of Leopold, who is blamed for the deaths of millions of Africans during Belgium's colonial rule, have been vandalized. A petition has called for Belgium to remove all statues of the former king.

A bust of Leopold II is expected to be taken down from display today in the city of Ghent following a decision from local authorities. **MDT/AP**

India yesterday reported more than 18,000 new coronavirus cases and 400 deaths after an Indian company said it would start clinical trials of a potential vaccine. Bharat Biotech said it had received government permission to go ahead with the first two phases of clinical trials after initial studies demonstrated safety. Multiple vaccine trials are in a preclinical stage in India, and several other candidates are being tested around the world.



South Korea's professional baseball league will require fans to wear masks, sit at least a seat apart and prohibit them from eating food in the stands when spectators are allowed back into stadiums. The Korea Baseball Organization said teams will be initially allowed to sell 30% of seats. Fans must buy tickets with credit cards to help trace contacts of any virus carriers. South Korea's moves to reallocate fans in sporting events come despite a virus resurgence.

Australia's second-largest city will lock down dozens of suburbs for a month in a bid to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews said yesterday 233 positive tests for COVID-19 in Melbourne since Thursday was unacceptably high. Andrews announced 36 suburbs in which residents will be required to stay at home from today until July 29 except for four permitted reasons.



Britain's medical regulatory agency has approved the resumption of a trial testing whether hydroxychloroquine, the malaria drug favored by Donald Trump, might help prevent health workers from contracting the coronavirus. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency had suspended enrollment into the trial after a paper was published in the journal Lancet last month that suggested there was an increased death risk linked to the drug.