



**AN UNCLE AND NEPHEW HAVE MARRIED EACH OTHER'S SPOUSES IN ORDER TO MIGRATE TO MACAU AND OBTAIN RESIDENCY STATUS** P2

**INQUIRIES ABOUT MACAU TOURS SAID TO BECOME MORE POPULAR IN GUANGDONG** P5

**A MAN IN HONG KONG WAS REINFECTED WITH CORONAVIRUS AFTER RECOVERY – WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR IMMUNITY?** P6

AP PHOTO



**South Korea** Health officials ordered thousands of striking doctors to return to work as the country counted its 13th straight day of triple-digit jumps in coronavirus cases. Health Minister Park Neung-hoo said those who refuse could have their licenses suspended or revoked, or even face a prison term of up to three years. Doctors in the greater Seoul area joined physicians in other parts of the country in a three-day strike against government plans to boost the number of medical students. South Korea reported 320 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday.

**Philippines** Confirmed COVID-19 cases surged past 200,000 yesterday in another bleak milestone for a country that already has the highest number of infections in Southeast Asia. The Department of Health reported 5,277 new cases, mostly in densely populated metropolitan Manila, bringing the country's total to 202,361, including 3,137 deaths. President Rodrigo Duterte is facing growing criticism over the spread of the disease.

AP PHOTO



**India** has reported more than 67,000 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, raising the country's number of reported infections to 3.2 million with 1.5 million reported infections coming this month alone. The Health Ministry on Wednesday also reported 1,059 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking total fatalities from the pandemic to 59,449. India has been recording more than 60,000 new infections per day for the last two weeks, reaching a peak of 69,652 cases on Aug. 19.

More on backpage

# FASTER THAN GAMING

**Financial services exports grew at an average annual rate of 17.5% between 2002 and 2019, compared to an average of 14.1% in gaming services** P3



XINHUA

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



**LABOR LAWS ARE IN NEED OF AMENDMENT: LEGAL EXPERT** P4

**THE FIRST CLASS DSEJ BIDS TO INCREASE AWARENESS FOR EPIDEMIC PREVENTION AND 'LOVE FOR MOTHERLAND'** P3



### 14,000 ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES COLLECTED FOR RECYCLING

Launched in January by the Environmental Protection Bureau, the Electronic and Electrical Appliance Recycling Program has collected more than 45,000 pieces in its first seven months. The turnout has met the bureau's initial expectations. Appliances appropriate for collection include rechargeable batteries, light tubes, computers, screens, fridges and washing machines. Of the 45,000 or so pieces, 14,400 pieces were either fridges, air conditioners, washing machines or television sets. The bureau announced that once collected, the appliances will be dismantled and sorted. Reusable or recyclable materials will be transported to external plants for further processing.

### RESUMPTION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION SUBSIDY ANTICIPATED

Preparations for the resumption of the popular Continuing Education Subsidy from the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, which had previously offered 6,000 patacas to all Macau residents for use over three years, are on track. The subsidy was suspended due to fraudulent claims. The bureau has been working to fine-tune the program by issuing an improved version of the guidelines. Electronic platforms, risk management mechanisms and a real-time monitoring system will also be introduced. The bureau, meanwhile, asks course operators to abide by rules and regulations more rigorously, and fulfill their responsibilities and obligations.

### PORTUGUESE UNIVERSITY OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS TO MACAU STUDENTS

Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, a private college in Lisbon, is offering scholarships to 130 citizens of lusophone countries and territories, including Macau. The university announced in a statement that five of its scholarships are reserved for students from Macau. The university says the second phase of the application process will begin on September 1 and end on September 22. The scholarships are part of a drive to turn out graduates qualified to help the development of Portuguese-speaking parts of the world, the Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias says. The Cabo Verdean state-run news agency, Inforpress, reports that the scholarships are the result of an agreement struck in 2005 by the owners of the college and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries.

## FAMILY MEMBERS MARRY IN-LAWS IN MACAU ID FRAUD

ANTHONY LAM

**A**n uncle and nephew have married each other's spouses in order to migrate to Macau and obtain residency status, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) announced yesterday.

Four people are involved in the fraud case. The police managed to arrest two suspects, with the other two are currently on the mainland. The relevant mainland authorities will be asked to render assistance, the Macau police said.

The uncle, 63 years old, had formed a de-facto marriage in Macau with a female surnamed Hoi, who is also 63 years old. Both of them are Macau residents and are now on the mainland.

A de-facto marriage is similar to a civil union. The main difference is the absence of registration, on top of having fewer legal benefits, duties and obligations in the relationship.

RENATO MARQUES



The nephew, on the other hand, is a 47-year-old mainland resident. He married a mainland woman, surnamed Huang, aged 43, in November 1998. The couple divorced in June 2014.

One month later, Huang married her ex-uncle-in-law on the mainland. As the "new husband," he applied for Macau residency for Huang after the wedding.

At the same time, the nephew married his uncle's partner, Hoi, on the mainland. Hoi then submitted an application for the nephew's Macau residency.

The police revealed that the applications raised suspicions when they arrived at the Identification Bureau. The bureau based their suspicions on the age difference and the timing, as well as other undisclosed factors.

Therefore, the case was reported to the police for investigation.

The nephew and his original wife were intercepted by the police on August 16 while they were entering Macau through the Border Gate Checkpoint. They were then brought to investigation and confessed to participating in the fake marriage scheme.

## 11 NEPALESE ARRESTED FOR DISTRIBUTING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**A** group of 11 Nepalese men have been arrested by the Judiciary Police on allegations of owning and sharing pornographic videos depicting underage girls.

In a press briefing held to announce the case, the police disclosed that intelligence was received from the International Police (Interpol). After a preliminary investigation, the police deployed several teams to the 11 suspects' workplaces – four different security companies – to make the arrests.

Some of them admitted to downloading or sharing the videos. Meanwhile, the police are trying to gain clues as to whether more people were involved in the case.

The 11 suspects, aged

between 21 and 36 years, were charged by the police and transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office for further investigation.

According to the police, the intelligence was sent by Interpol in early August. Interpol discovered that the video was spreading via an overseas-run instant messaging system. The video was about three minutes long and depicted an underage girl having sex with a man.

Upon arresting the suspects, the local police seized several mobile phones containing the video. Seven of the suspects confessed, saying that they either downloaded the video from an unnamed website or received the video from their compatriots. They

then continued sharing the video with colleagues or friends.

The other four men denied the accusations.

No barter of benefits between the suspects was involved, the police disclosed.

After analyzing the video, the police came to the belief that it was shot outside of Macau.

Several other child porn cases have been busted by the Judiciary Police with intelligence from the Interpol.

The police are reminding people that sharing pornographic materials involving underage people in forms such as videos or photographs constitutes a serious crime.

Reports of such activities should be made to the police. **AL**

## THREE CASES OF BANK CARD ABUSE REVEALED

**R**ECENTLY, the Judiciary Police (PJ) received three different reports of credit or debit card abuse, resulting in a total loss of nearly MOP18,000 between the three victims.

A female mainland resident in her 20s approached the police on August 25, reporting that her ATM card had been used at 9 a.m. that day to make two separate withdrawals in Macau that totaled MOP6,000.

She was sure that she had not made any withdrawals that day, so she contacted her bank, who suggested her card's data might have been misappropriated.

Another case reported on the same day involved a female victim in her 30's who claimed to have lost more than

MOP2,600 to credit card abuse.

The alert also came as a mobile text message. A transaction was made with a company in Hong Kong. Her bank has agreed to postpone her repayment until the case is investigated.

A similar case was reported on August 24, in which a man in his 50s reported losing HKD9,000 to abuse of his credit card. The UnionPay credit card was issued several years ago.

He received a text message from the card issuer on August 11, notifying him that the amount had been spent. After cross-referencing with the issuer, he was informed that the money was an advance withdrawal taken using the credit card. **AL**

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EDUCATION

# DSEJ aims to increase awareness of epidemic prevention and 'love for motherland'

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) is aiming to implement a new program in local schools for the 2020/2021 academic year with a special focus on epidemic prevention, the bureau informed.

The pedagogical program titled "The First Class of the New Academic Year" aims to help schools develop a series of educational activities around the theme of preventing and fighting epidemics. It arises directly from experiences of the Covid-19 outbreak, which disrupted the previous academic year enormously, necessitating a long period of class suspension and the introduction of online school activities for the first time.

According to the DSEJ, the new program is intended to raise the level of support and promotion of smart school activities, leading schools to develop several online teaching activities in which virtual education is also included.

To ensure that the upcoming school year occurs without hassle, the DSEJ said that it will send to schools an updated version of its guidelines to deal with Covid-19.

In addition, they will also host a meeting with school principals to discuss the requirements for schools to strictly enforce these guidelines and measures. These include the disinfection and thorough cleaning of school facilities, conducting drills to test the capacity of schools to manage the beginning of the academic year and simulating scenarios of school operations.

During the meeting, which is to take place today, the DSEJ will also call on schools to prepare contingency plans in case classes need

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



to be suspended in the new academic year due either to the pandemic or other events, including natural disasters, severe weather and terror attacks or intruders on school premises.

These drills should be prepared and practiced during the new academic year to "reinforce the awareness and capacity of all teachers and students through response exercises for sudden crises," DSEJ said.

## LOVE FOR MOTHERLAND PAVILION

The "Love for Motherland" Pavilion begin operating from December this year, the DSEJ announced.

The pavilion aims to be a place where exhibitions, training sessions, and multimedia and audio-

visual displays will take place to instill a sense of belonging to China in Macau's younger generation.

Besides the special venue, the DSEJ is also planning to launch a complementary project in schools, entitled the "Love for the Motherland and for Macau Education Project." Schools will use

the Pavilion as an educational resource to learn about the history of Macau and the social development of the motherland and Macau, the DSEJ said.

Additionally, schools will be encouraged to organize exchange programs to the mainland for groups of students to increase

their understanding and feeling of belonging to the motherland.

Extracurricular activities, school competitions, and special "education days" will also be organized for the same purpose throughout the year.

## NUMBER OF STUDENTS UP 2.8% THIS YEAR

The 121 school institutions of Macau will begin the academic year with an estimated total of 85,014 students, representing a year-on-year increase of 2.8%.

Primary school students have mostly contributed to this increase, recording an expected increase of 4.9% year-on-year. Meanwhile, secondary education students increased in number by 2.8% from the previous academic year.

Bucking the trend, kindergarten student numbers dropped by 0.8%.

The increase in the number of students is not being followed by increases in figures related to teaching staff, which remain almost unchanged, registering only a slight rise of 0.1%.

The DSEJ also noted that currently, of the 113 school institutions for regular education, a total of 108 are integrated into the free education system which covers almost 96% of students in Macau.

## 10-YEAR PLANS FACE PUBLIC CONSULTATION THIS YEAR

**T**HE 2020/2021 academic year will mark the start of a new public consultation round on two of the major 10-year plans for the education sector, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) disclosed.

In the upcoming school year, the DSEJ hopes to gather opinions on "Medium and long-

term planning for non-higher education (2021-2030)" and the "Macau Youth Policy (2021-2030)."

In a statement, the DSEJ said it hoped that the public would voice their opinions to help the bureau to improve its work related to education and the youth of Macau. **RM**

## 1,000 new spots opened on helicopter tour

STAFF REPORTER

**D**UE to the popularity of the "Macau Ready Go! Local Tours" helicopter ride, the service provider has decided to launch additional tours for 1,008 participants from September 1 to 22.

The new quotas will

be offered to applicants on the waiting list produced by the first round of electronic lots last month. Participants who missed the chance to join the previous waiting list can enter the second electronic lot draw, which started on August 25.

The new electronic

lots will be drawn at the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) where representatives from various tourism bodies will cast the lots. This will be witnessed by MGTO Deputy Director Cheng Wai Tong.

Listed applicants can choose their desired date for the tour.

They can also bring one other participant along. Each pair of participants will be assigned one window seat, however, children aged between 2 and 12, and elderly participants over 65 will not be assigned window seats for safety reasons.

From September 1, tours will be held from Wednesday to Sunday each week. Applicants may reschedule their tour date if the helicopter flight is canceled because of bad weather.

## CENTRAL LIBRARY TO BE BUILT ELSEWHERE

**T**HE Central Library project will no longer be built at the location of the Old Court Building in downtown Macau.

Public broadcaster Radio Macau reported yesterday that the government has changed its mind on the controversial plan, which has faced numerous setbacks in recent years.

According to the broadcaster, the government plans to use the Old Court Building near Nam Van Lake for another purpose.

At present, the new location proposed for the project is not known to the public.

The Central Library project, estimated to cost as much as 900 million patacas, was opposed by lawmakers and urban planners, who suggested it be built in another location.

The government of Chui Sai On had regarded the Central Library as one of the most important developments in the cultural sector of Macau. **DB**





## LEGAL EXPERT SAYS SOME LABOR LAWS 'PECULIAR' AND 'A NUISANCE'

LYNZY VALLES

**SOME** of Macau's labor laws are peculiar, says legal expert Helena Kok, who specializes in this area of the law.

Speaking during a breakfast talk organized by the France Macau Chamber Commerce, Kok, a partner at MdME Lawyers, labelled some of the city's old and amended labor laws as nuisances and said that there were newly implemented laws that were unnecessary.

Protecting the city's social harmony and stability has been one of the government's key goals. However, the labor law expert implied that while the government had been advocating for social harmony strongly, it had failed to produce and amend laws that

would achieve this goal.

"We cannot implement social harmony by banning this and that. We're aiming for social harmony, and social harmony can only be achieved with the correct and generally accepted policies," Kok told the audience.

She listed seven labor laws including annual leave, the labor union law, 40-hour working weeks, mandatory pension funds, paid justified absence, part-time regulation and the limitation period of entitlement claims.

For the employment and immigration law expert however, these laws are in need of amendment.

Kok criticized the city's minimum annual leave, which is still six days during the second year of service. She said that it is not pro-

gressive even compared to Hong Kong, which adds one day to the minimum amount of leave every year until 14 days.

The lawyer also slammed the fact that until now, no trade union bills have been approved in the Legislative Assembly, despite about a dozen attempts by lawmakers since 1999.

As the Times has previously reported, no other proposal generates as much fervent interest from Macau's rubber-stamp parliament than the trade union bill. It pits the workers representatives and the pro-democratic wing against the business interests of the AL.

"They advocate so much social harmony but social harmony is never the answer, it's an outcome [of decisions]," said Kok.

"On the policies, I think the government should be less principle orientated and more empirical. They should listen [and] be flexible."

Kok also deemed one of the newly implemented amendments to the laws regarding hiring non-resident workers to be unnecessary. The amendment means non-resident workers are no longer allowed to be granted a working visa while on a tourist visa.

According to the labor law expert, the amendments, which will be officially implemented by October, are a nuisance which only make it more difficult for non-skilled applicants and employers to go through the process, given that the city has been relying on a supply and demand system.

"I think Macau's labor policy lacks long-term planning. All we are seeing here are just very short term [and] I understand why because all these government leaders are in this short-term appointment scheme," the lawyer said.

Kok referenced the fact that the government heavily protects croupier and driver positions for local residents but does not consider how it will manage these shortages in the future, given the current generation may not want to fill these positions.

"We promote these dealers to pit managers [through training programs], and so who will be the croupiers in the long run? Non-locals? No, because it's protected. So what is the long-term plan? It's nice to hear that it's protected but what's the plan in 10 years?" she asked.

Kok also highlighted that the number of imported skilled quota approvals has increased this year, particularly in the finance sector, amid the recession caused by the pandemic.

This year all 46 skilled quotas from the finance sector were approved, compared to eight approvals out of nine applications last year.

Meanwhile, 343 quotas were approved out of 354 applications in the education sector, and 45 quotas were approved out of 53 applications in the hospitality and F&B sector.

"We don't have them [skilled workers] and the government knows it," said Kok.

It was also noted that although construction workers are not listed in the skilled category, gaming operators are in need of further non-skilled quota approvals for imported workers who specialize in different areas such as scaffolding and welding, as local construction workers tend to decline these tougher jobs.

## Financial services growing faster than gaming, says economist

DANIEL BEITLER

**EXPORTS** of financial services are growing at faster rate than gaming services, according to local economist José Luís de Sales Marques, and have been since at least 2002.

Financial services exports grew at an average annual rate of 17.5% per year between 2002 and 2019, compared to an average of 14.1% annual growth in gaming services, according to government data cited by the economist in a presentation organized yesterday by the British Chamber of Commerce in Macao. The average annual growth in exports of all services grew



on average by 11.6% per year during the same period.

"Macao institutions and residents are investing out-

side of Macau. This is the reason that this [sector] is growing so fast," said Sales Marques, when questioned on the rapid rise.

The casino sector has long been the main driver of Macau's economy. Last year, gambling directly accounted for about of the local economy and cast considerable influence on much of the rest.

In its pursuit of economic diversification, the Macau government has recently returned to the idea of cultivating financial services. In addition to the establishment of Macau as a center for yuan settlement, financial authorities are also studying whether to develop a securities market centered around trade with Portuguese-speaking countries.

However, according to

Sales Marques, Macau lacks the homegrown talent to build this industry. Economic planners will have to look beyond Macau's borders.

"Whether this can have a sustainable impact on Macau's diversification [is to be seen]," said Sales Marques yesterday. "Financial services are very complex [...] and require a very specialized type of workforce. I am not sure whether at this moment Macau has enough experts in that area or the infrastructure even to do that. Macau needs a lot of experts and they must come from outside. So this is the main problem."

Sales Marques delive-

red a presentation yesterday about China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Announced in 2013 by Chinese President Xi Jinping, this strategic initiative is an infrastructure project that seeks to redesign global trade flows.

The economist said that the initiative was "a very elastic concept that can be adapted to any [geopolitical] reality." This means that even though some countries, such as Sri Lanka and Malaysia, are now reviewing their involvement in the project, "no single setback will jeopardize it. If one country does not want to be a part of it, their neighbor might."



## INQUIRIES ABOUT MACAU TOURS SAID TO BECOME MORE POPULAR IN GUANGDONG

ANTHONY LAM

**I**NQUIRIES and bookings for Macau hotels are reportedly rising in Guangdong Province, local newspaper Macao Daily News reported, as the issuance of tourism visas across the border are gradually being resumed.

The report said that there was a five-fold increase in inquiries recorded by travel agencies across the province since the resumption of travel endorsements was announced. The report, however, did not state which period the comparison was made to, nor did it state the number of inquiries.

The report also cited a survey which received over 10,000 responses, noting that more than 40% of the respondents showed



BLOOMBERG

the desire to visit Macau after the pandemic.

The data did not surprise travel agency operators across Guangdong province, however. They pointed out that individual travel has been the most popular type of tour to Macau for

residents of Guangdong Province.

The travel agency industry in the province has made preparations to boost travel to Macau by providing online and offline promotions.

Applications for travel

endorsements to Macau resumed in Guangdong this week and the first batch of new endorsements should be issued by next week, as the application process usually takes seven days.

The city of Zhuhai saw its first batch issued last week. However, the Public Security Police Force, which manages border control measures in Macau, did not see a leap in arrivals with tourist endorsements from Zhuhai last weekend. Nonetheless, the authority expressed its confidence that mainland residents would return to Macau once they receive their endorsements.

China's largest online travel agency, Ctrip, has recently recorded 50% more searches made with the keyword "Macau", according to Macao Daily News.

## THREE NEW MEMBERS APPOINTED TO TDM BOARD

RENATO MARQUES

**L**AWMAKER and lawyer Vong Hin Fai, Government Information Bureau (GCS) director Inês Chan, and Holy House of Mercy president António José Freitas are the three new faces appointed as non-executive members of the board of directors of public broadcaster Teledifusão de Macau (TDM) by Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng. The appointments were announced in a dispatch from the CE published yesterday in the Government's Official Gazette (BO).

While Inês Chan is being appointed to replace and fulfil the duties of former GCS director Victor Chan, who left his post at GCS for another public company, Macau Investment and Development Limited,

Vong and de Freitas are newly appointed. It has not been disclosed at this time whether they will increase the number of directors at the local broadcaster or if the new appointments are intended to replace old members.

All the new appointments will be valid from September 1.

The BO dispatch also revealed that the current chairman of the Executive Committee of TDM, Manuel Gonçalves Pires Júnior, has been removed at his request as a member of the Inspection Commission of the Pension Fund, another post he held.

In late May this year, Pires filed for retirement effective September 1. The name of the person who will replace him at the helm of TDM has not been announced yet.

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ANALYSIS

# A MAN WAS REINFECTED WITH CORONAVIRUS AFTER RECOVERY – WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR IMMUNITY?

MEGAN CULLER, FREEMAN UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

A 33-year old man was found to have a second SARS-CoV-2 infection some four-and-a-half months after he was diagnosed with his first, from which he recovered. The man, who showed no symptoms, was diagnosed when he returned to Hong Kong after a trip to Spain.

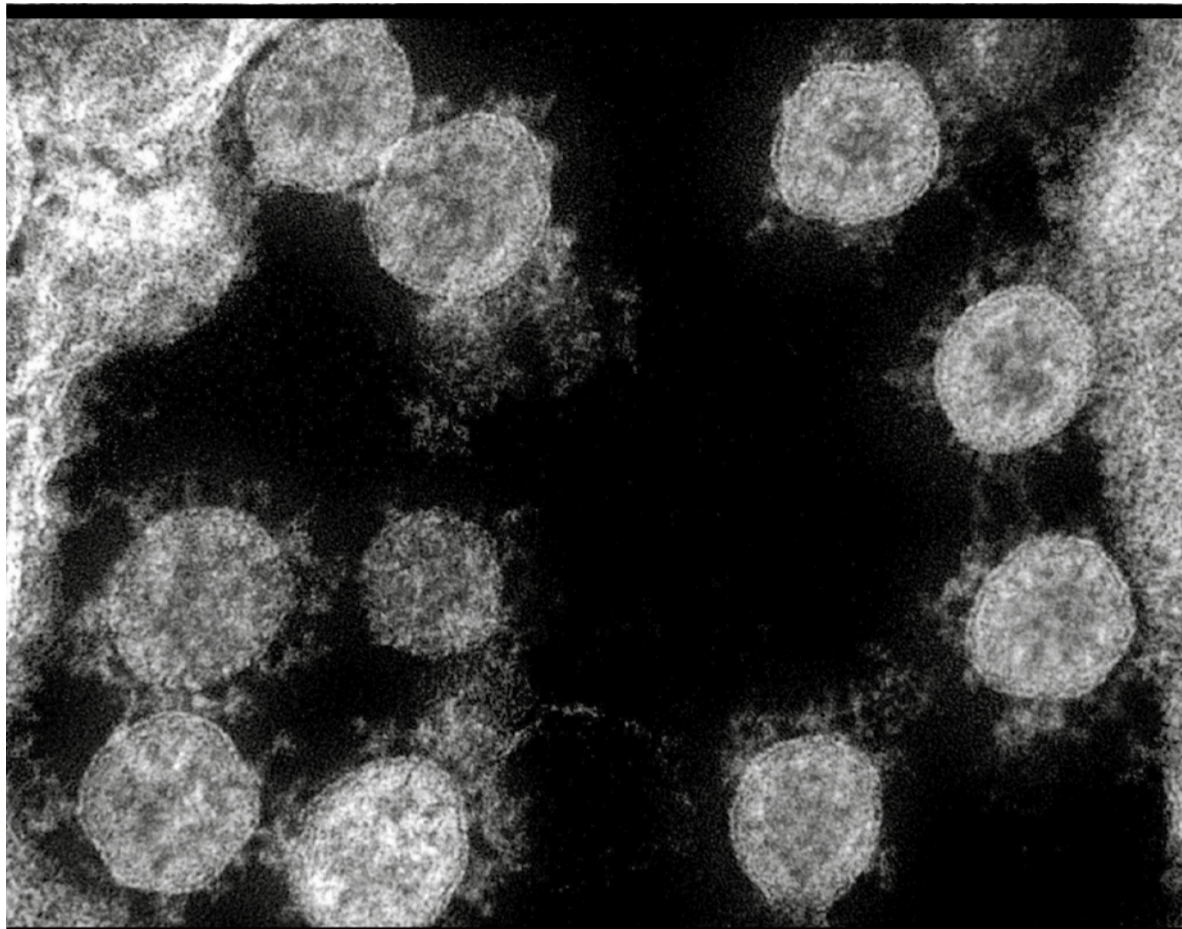
I am a virologist with expertise in coronaviruses and enteroviruses, and I've been curious about reinfections since the beginning of the pandemic. Because people infected with SARS-CoV-2 can often test positive for the virus for weeks to months, likely due to the sensitivity of the test and leftover RNA fragments, the only way to really answer the question of reinfection is by sequencing the viral genome at the time of each infection and looking for differences in the genetic code.

There is no published peer-review report on this man – only a press release from the University of Hong Kong – although reports say the work will be published in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. Here I address some questions raised by the current news reports.

## Why wasn't the man immune to reinfection?

Immunity to endemic coronaviruses – those that cause symptoms of the common cold – is relatively short-lived, with reinfections occurring even within the same season.

AP PHOTO



So it isn't completely surprising that reinfection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, might be possible.

Immunity is complex and involves multiple mechanisms in the body. That includes the generation of antibodies – through what's known as the adaptive immune response – and through the actions of T-cells, which can help to educate the immune system and to specifically eliminate virus-infected cells. However, researchers around the world are still learning about immu-

nity to this virus and so can't say for sure, based on this one case, whether reinfection will be a cause for broad concern.

## How different is the second strain that infected the Hong Kong man?

"Strain" has a particular definition when referring to viruses. Often a different "strain" is a virus that behaves differently in some way. The coronavirus that infected this man in Europe is likely not a new strain.

A STAT News article reports that the genetic make up of

the sequenced virus from the patient's second infection had 24 nucleotides – building blocks of the virus's RNA genome – that differed from the SARS-CoV-2 isolate that infected him the first time.

SARS-CoV-2 has a genome that is made up of about 30,000 nucleotides, so the virus from the man's second infection was roughly 0.08% different than the original in genome sequence. That shows that the virus that caused the second infection was new; not a recurrence of the first virus.

## The man was asymptomatic – what does that mean?

The man wasn't suffering any of the hallmark COVID-19 symptoms which might mean he had some degree of protective immunity to the second infection because he didn't seem sick. But this is difficult to prove.

I see three possible explanations. The first is that the immunity he gained from the first infection protected him and allowed for a mild second infection. Another possibility is that the infection was mild because he was presymptomatic, and went on to develop symptoms in the coming days. Finally, sometimes infections with SARS-CoV-2 are asymptomatic – at the moment it is difficult to determine whether this was due to the differences in the virus or in the host.

What can we say about reinfection based on this one case?

Only that it seems to be possible after enough time has elapsed. We do not know how likely or often it is to occur.

## Should people who have recovered from COVID-19 still wear a mask?

As we are still learning about how humans develop immunity to SARS-CoV-2 after infection, my recommendation is for continued masking, hand hygiene and distancing practices, even after recovery from COVID-19, to protect against the potential for reinfection. AP/THE CONVERSATION

# Hong Kong police arrest 16, including two opposition lawmakers

HONG Kong police arrested 16 people yesterday on charges related to anti-government protests last year, including two opposition lawmakers.

Pro-democracy legislators Ted Hui and Lam Cheuk-ting announced their arrests on social media.

Posts on Lam's Twitter account said he had been arrested on charges of conspiring with others to damage property and obstructing justice during a protest in July 2019. The tweets said he has also been accused of rio-

ting on July 21, 2019.

That was the day a group of more than 100 men clad in white attacked protesters and passengers with steel rods and rattan canes in a subway station. Protesters and many from the opposition camp have accused the police of colluding with the attackers, as they arrived late to the scene and did not make arrests that night.

A post on Hui's Facebook page did not make clear the exact charges he was facing.

The chairman of the Democratic Party in Hong

Kong, Wu Chi-wai, called the arrests of Lam and Hui "ridiculous." Lawmaker James To said the arrests amounted to political persecution.

The two were arrested along with 14 others – aged between 26 and 48 years old – in relation to the huge protests last year, according to a police official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the press before an official statement had been released. AP

AP PHOTO





# Wang Yi visits Italy, in first foreign trip since pandemic

**I**TALIAN Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio said he emphasized during a meeting with his Chinese counterpart yesterday [Macau time] that Italy would be monitoring closely the implications of new Chinese security measures in Hong Kong.

"I reiterated that, together with all our European partners, we have emphasized that Hong Kong's stability and prosperity, based on the one country, two systems principle, are essential," Di Maio told reporters in a joint press conference with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

It is equally essential to "preserve the high degree of autonomy and the fundamental rights and freedoms" guaranteed to Hong Kong citizens, he said.

Rome is the first stop of Wang's five-nation European tour, which includes France, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway. It is Wang's first foreign trip since the coronavirus outbreak in China that turned into a global pandemic.

Wang emphasized China's support for close ties with Italy, with which it formed diplomatic relations 50 years ago.

The ministers were scheduled for a private lunch after their press statements.

The visiting diplomat's top agenda item in Europe was expected to be pushing Europeans to guarantee market access to telecom giant Huawei, and broader efforts to keep European countries quiet on Hong Kong and to take Beijing's side in its tariff war with Washington.

Before the meeting, prominent Hong Kong democracy activist Nathan Law delivered a letter to the foreign ministry asking Di Maio to address "the Hong Kong problems and human rights violations" during the meeting.

China's contentious national security law for Hong Kong is seen by



Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi (left) and Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio in Rome

many as Beijing's boldest move yet to remove the legal firewall between the semi-autonomous territory of Hong Kong and the mainland's authoritarian Communist Party system.

Italy last year was the first major democracy to sign an agreement to join China's "Belt and Road" initiative. The program includes major infrastructure investments to create a conduit for trade and China's construction industry. Both the United States and Italy's European partners see it as a threat as China seeks to project its power.

## BEIJING FIRM ON DETENTION OF TWO CANADIANS

China said yesterday it remains firm in its insistence that Canada make the first move to

end the detention of two Canadians, following a meeting of the two countries' foreign ministers.

Former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and Canadian entrepreneur Michael Spavor have been held in China on unspecified national security charges for more than 620 days in apparent retaliation for Canada's late 2018 arrest of Meng Wanzhou, an executive at tech giant Huawei and the daughter of the company's founder.

Meng was detained at Vancouver's airport at the request of the United States, which wants her extradited to face fraud charges over the company's dealings with Iran. Her arrest enraged Beijing, which calls it a political move aimed at constraining China's rise

as a global technology power.

Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Francois-Philippe Champagne urged Beijing to release the two Canadians during a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Rome on Tuesday.

The two are suspected of engaging in "activities endangering China's national security" and their cases are being handled "in strict accordance with the law while protecting their legal rights," foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at a daily briefing on Wednesday.

China has "made it clear to the Canadian side that it should respect the spirit of the rule of law and China's judicial sovereignty," Zhao said, adding that China was

not responsible for the current difficulties in bilateral relations.

"The Canadian side is well aware of the crux of the problem and should immediately take effective measures to correct the mistakes and create conditions for the bilateral relationship to get back on track," Zhao said.

In addition to detaining Kovrig and Spavor, China has also restricted various Canadian exports to China, including canola seed oil, in an apparent attempt to pressure China into releasing Meng, who is residing in one of her Vancouver mansions under a form of house arrest.

Since her detention, China has also sentenced four Canadians convicted on drug charges to death, an unusually high number for foreign suspects held in China.

While the Canadian government has made no indication it will trade Meng for Kovrig and Spavor, calls have arisen among the Canadian public for a deal to be made.

"The blind adherence to the use of the rule of law and no ransom ensures that Kovrig and Spavor will remain forgotten within Chinese prisons for the foreseeable future," former foreign service officer Gar Parady wrote in the Ottawa Citizen newspaper last week.

"The offering of Meng Wanzhou in exchange for Kovrig and Spavor is the only answer," Parady wrote in the opinion piece.

MDT/AP

# Chinese envoy says Australia betrayed China for US on virus

**A** senior Chinese diplomat yesterday likened Australia's call for an inquiry into the coronavirus pandemic to the betrayal of Roman dictator Julius Caesar in a Shakespearean tragedy for the benefit of the United States.

Wang Xining, the Chinese Embassy in Australia's deputy head of mission and its second-in-charge, spoke at the National Press Club about Australia's call for an independent inquiry into the origins of and international responses to the pandemic.

The call has been blamed for a major deterioration in bilateral relations that has resulted in

the Chinese government refusing to take phone calls from Australian ministers and disruptions to Australian exports including beef.

The Australian call came "when the United States government was trying all out to blame China for their failure to control the spread of the disease and ... shirk responsibility," Wang said.

In describing Australia's action, Wang quoted the play "Julius Caesar" from a scene in which the dictator realizes that his friend Marcus Junius Brutus is among the assassins who are about to knife him.

"It is approximately identical to Julius Caesar

in his final day when he saw Brutus approaching him: Et tu, Brute?," Wang said, using a Latin phrase meaning "And you, Brutus?"

The World Health Assembly, the governing structure of the World Health Organization, has since endorsed a global investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 outbreak. Wang said that probe had an "entirely different origin" from the Australian proposal.

China has maintained ministerial contacts with the United States as well as governments of other countries that supported Australia's pandemic stance, including Japan, Germany and France.



Wang Xining, the Chinese Embassy in Australia's deputy head of mission

Wang denied China was singling out Australia for special treatment by freezing out ministers to send a message to other middle-powers not to speak out.

"I think it's a very lop-

sided interpretation of what happened between us," Wang told reporters.

He declined to say whether he thought Chinese-Australian relations would improve after the U.S. presidential election,

saying Chinese comment on another country's election would equate to interference in that nation's internal affairs.

China respects Australia's strategy alliance with the United States, Wang said.

"To have an ally is not a problem," he said. "The problem is whether you target a third party with the strength of an alliance."

"If we find any tendency to use the strength of an alliance to strike China down, or press China down — what currently some of the U.S. politicians are doing — then we will express clearly our opposition and our position," he added. AP



ANALYSIS

# Trump's convention aims to airbrush his tenure

JULIE PACE, WASHINGTON

**A**T President Donald Trump's Republican convention, he is welcoming to immigrants, not the architect of some of the nation's harshest anti-immigration policies.

At Trump's convention, the coronavirus pandemic has largely subsided, not continued to infect thousands of Americans a day. The economy is booming, not sputtering. Trump is a leader in healing racial strife, not stoking divisions.

Yesterday's [Macau time] gauzy prime-time programming amounted to an airbrushing of some of the darker and more controversial episodes of Trump's nearly four years in office — an effort to urgently address the vulnerabilities that have imperiled his reelection prospects just over two months until his November face-off against Democrat Joe Biden.

His campaign and his party were effectively asking voters to believe a polished and packaged portrait of the president more than the unrestrained version he puts on display each day. That version of Trump may energize his most ardent supporters, but it frequently frustrates more moderate Republicans and has alienated some voters, including many suburban women, whom Trump wants to win back before Election Day.

The gap between reality and convention rhetoric was particularly glaring on immigration, the signature issue of Trump's political rise and his presidency. Trump ran for office in 2016 on a platform to dramatically crack down on immigration, both illegal and legal. Since winning the White House, he has fundamentally transformed the nation's immigration system, including effectively ending asylum at the southern border and trying to scare people off crossing the border illegally by separating children from their parents.

But Trump's convention made scant reference to those policies and only passing nods to his signature plan to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Instead, the most prominent mention of immigration came during a taped segment in which



Trump oversaw a naturalization ceremony at the White House, jovially congratulating five immigrants as they were sworn in as new American citizens.

"You've earned the most prized, treasured, cherished and priceless possession anywhere in the world. It's called American citizenship," Trump said. He made no mention of the fact that he has also systematically made it much harder for people to come to the U.S. legally to work, study or settle in the country.

Trump has long been adroit at creating an alternate reality and is often unconcerned with shifting focus when it's politically expedient. It's been a signature of his business life and his rise in politics, and now, as he is nominated by the Republican Party for a second term, he is doing so with the White House as a literal backdrop.

To be sure, political conventions are always aimed at creating a lofty image of a presidential candidate — a days-long opportunity for their party to control their own narrative and shape their own story. For example, Biden's convention last week spun his more than four decades in Washington as necessary experience in a moment of crisis rather than the mark of a politician past his prime, as many Republicans contend.

But Trump's challenge in shifting public perception is made more difficult, both because he is running on a real record from his nearly four years in office and because his campaign is asking Americans to look past many of the crises that are still actively battering the country.

That's particularly true regarding the pandemic, which has killed more than 170,000 Americans this year, but was largely an afterthought in the convention proceedings. Larry Kudlow, a top Trump economic adviser, described the pandemic in the past tense, not as a virus that continues to upend nearly every aspect of American life. Only first lady Melania Trump, the night's final speaker, paid sustained tribute to those who have died this year.

"I want to acknowledge the fact that since March our lives have changed drastically," Mrs. Trump said in a convention address from the White House Rose Garden. "My deepest sympathy goes out to everyone who has lost a loved one and my prayers are with all those who are ill or suffering."

The virus has also cratered the U.S. economy, shuttering businesses across the country and sending the unemployment rate soaring above 10%. Though some of aspects of the economy have recovered as cities and states have eased pandemic-related restric-

tions, the economy overall is in a far different place than it was at the start of the year.

Nearly half of Americans whose families experienced a layoff during the pandemic believe those jobs are lost forever, according to a July poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Yet the convention featured Americans and political leaders heaping praise on Trump's economic stewardship, describing the economy in glowing terms that no longer apply to many Americans.

Trump's campaign also made a concerted effort to showcase a diverse array of speakers, particularly Black Americans, in a nod to the racial strife that has coursed through the country following the deaths of George Floyd and others while in police custody. Speakers defended Trump against charges of racism, but made no mention of his heated rhetoric about the protests that followed Floyd's death and the aggressive crackdown on the crowds that gathered outside the White House earlier this summer.

Polling also underscores the reality of Trump's abysmal support among Black voters, despite the diverse lineup on the convention stage. According to a Gallup poll, Trump's approval rating among Black Americans has hovered around 1 in 10 over the course of his presidency. AP

## this day in history

### 1985 BUDD SMASHES 5,000M RECORD



The controversial athlete, Zola Budd, has broken the world 5,000m record.

The bare-footed runner completed the distance in a time of 14 minutes and 48.07 seconds - 10 seconds faster than the previous record.

Budd came in nine seconds ahead of second-placed Ingrid Kristiansen of Norway - the former 5,000m record holder.

It is the second time she has broken the 5,000m world record.

The first time was in her homeland of South Africa last year when her achievement could not be recognized as the country is banned from international sport because of its policy of apartheid.

Her participation in the race at Crystal Palace in London was not publicised beforehand to avoid protests by anti-apartheid campaigners.

The fast-tracking of South African-born and bred Budd's application for British citizenship - on the strength of a British grandfather - caused uproar last year.

Critics said it was a ruse to allow her to compete in the upcoming Olympic Games.

Controversy followed her to the event in Los Angeles in 1984 when she collided in the 3,000m with US favourite, Mary Decker, who fell and failed to finish.

Budd came in seventh.

Since then Budd's cause has not been helped by her refusal to publicly condemn apartheid.

Protests at her British citizenship have not abated with time and anti-apartheid campaigners have sometimes forced Budd off the course during races.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Budd broke several British and world records but could never outrun the controversy that dogged her.

She returned to South Africa in 1988 and did not compete again on the world stage until 1992 after South Africa's had abolished apartheid and been re-admitted to international sport.

A long-anticipated "re-match" with Mary Decker in a road race in 1992 ended in an anti-climax, with Decker winning easily.

Difficulties in Budd's running career were accompanied by some in her private life.

In 1989 she argued over money with her father, Frank, and refused to let him give her away when she married Mike Pieterse later that year.

Five months after his daughter's wedding Frank Budd was shot dead by a hitchhiker who claimed he had made a homosexual pass at him.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**



**ARIES**

**Mar. 21-Apr. 19**

As devoted as you are to your friends and loved ones, you can't be responsible for them. So if one of them comes under attack today, you need to think twice before stepping up to defend them.



**TAURUS**

**Apr. 20-May. 20**

The interpersonal energy of a person you may have to deal with today is going to be less than ideal, so it will be up to you to even out the balance and keep the conversation positive.



**GEMINI**

**May. 21-Jun. 21**

If you hit the ground running this morning, you'll be able to get all your work done earlier, which means you will have more free time for doing anything you want!



**CANCER**

**Jun. 22-Jul. 22**

Even if you don't quite know how to express your feelings to someone today, any kind of communication is going to be good. Get a conversation started. That's all that really matters.



**LEO**

**Jul. 23-Aug. 22**

A friend or co-worker is doing something exciting with their life, and you want to be doing this, too. So what's stopping you? You don't need any more resources than you already have.



**VIRGO**

**Aug. 23-Sep. 22**

You take time to tidy up your house and car on a regular basis, so why not take some time to clean out the emotional clutter as well? Call someone you trust today and find out if they're free for a conversation.



**LIBRA**

**Sep. 23-Oct. 22**

The overall effect will be to elevate your prestige in the group of people involved. No more holding back due to the fear that people will think you're a know-it-all! That's not wise behavior.



**SCORPIO**

**Oct. 23-Nov. 21**

They feel left out, not knowing what you really think. You can't be the perfect diplomat all the time, so loosen up and feel free to share your genuine thoughts.



**SAGITTARIUS**

**Nov. 22-Dec. 21**

You learn more when you challenge someone than when you just go along with what they say because you're afraid to disagree. If everyone doesn't agree, it isn't the end of the world. It's the beginning of a discussion.



**CAPRICORN**

**Dec. 22-Jan. 19**

Do some research. There are many loose ends dangling, and each one will lead you to a host of new ideas for improving your current situation. Explore, analyze, and then formulate a new plan.



**AQUARIUS**

**Jan. 20-Feb. 18**

You're smart enough to know that you have to be careful in business deals, so don't listen when someone encourages you to "go for broke" and dive headfirst into a shady-sounding enterprise.



**PISCES**

**Feb. 19-Mar. 20**

If someone seems like they're being a little too critical about something you say or do today, try not to take it personally. Take it for what it is: honesty. You can't blame another person for saying what they think.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sanson**



**SUDOKU**

**EASY**

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

**EASY+**

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

**MEDIUM**

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

**HARD**

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

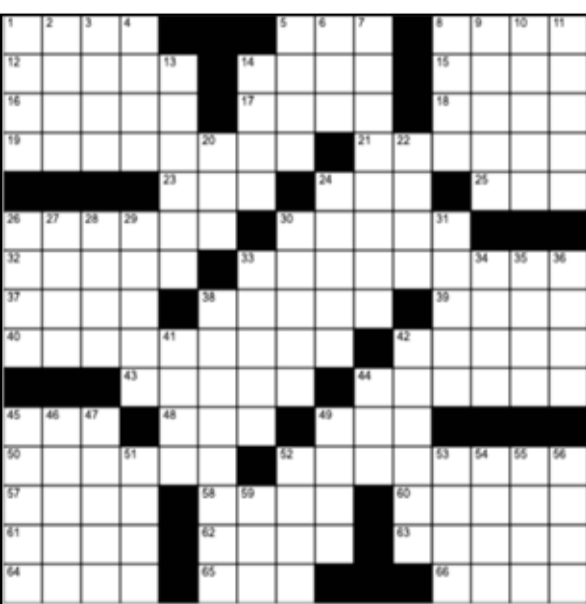
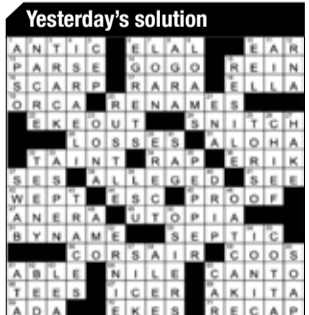
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	26	32	thundershower
Harbin	20	26	thundershower
Tianjin	27	31	shower
Urumqi	21	30	clear
Xi'an	25	35	overcast
Lhasa	12	26	cloudy
Chengdu	25	33	shower
Chongqing	29	39	clear
Kunming	18	26	shower
Nanjing	26	34	thundershower
Shanghai	27	33	drizzle
Wuhan	28	36	cloudy
Hangzhou	26	34	overcast
Taipei	26	31	drizzle
Guangzhou	25	28	rainstorm
Hong Kong	26	28	rainstorm
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	13	25	clear
Frankfurt	13	24	clear
Paris	15	27	clear
London	15	21	clear
New York	25	30	cloudy

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS:** 1- Manager; 5- WWII female enlistee; 8- Let's just leave \_\_\_ that; 12- Accumulation of fluids; 14- Like some orders; 15- Hideout; 16- Broadcaster; 17- Land in water; 18- Being, to Brutus; 19- Submerged to the mid-leg; 21- Child's toy; 23- Drop the ball; 24- Mus. slow-up; 25- You betchal; 26- Merciful; 30- Rio Grande feeder; 32- Separated; 33- Sailboat; 37- Heavy book; 38- Experiment; 39- Bundle; 40- Grabbing; 42- Range rovers; 43- Great Lakes tribesmen; 44- Clawed; 45- Perform; 48- Printing widths; 49- Barracks bed; 50- "Boo!" reaction; 52- Feeble; 57- French evening; 58- It's a thought; 60- Emulate Cicero; 61- Cube creator Rubik; 62- Without value; 63- Must, informally; 64- High schooler; 65- Hair goop; 66- First king of Israel;

**DOWN:** 1- Bill; 2- Thor's father; 3- Shrivelled, without moisture; 4- "Peter Pan" pirate; 5- Flying stinger; 6- Competitor of Tide and Cheer; 7- Pertaining to an office; 8- Belinda Carlisle's "Should \_\_\_ You In?"; 9- Delicious; 10- Brides walk down it; 11- Woody inhabitants of forests; 13- Fervent; 14- Stadium section; 20- Predating; 22- Molecular component; 24- Put a new price on; 26- Panama and bowler; 27- Atop; 28- Baby's cry; 29- Aggregate of qualities that make good character; 30- Hurts; 31- Cavalry weapon; 33- Weeps; 34- Hard to find; 35- Pierce portrayer; 36- Hotbed; 38- Rational; 41- Manitoba native; 42- Frankfurter; 44- Director Browning; 45- It's a good thing; 46- Task; 47- Triple; 49- Wyoming resource; 51- Golf club which can be numbered 1 to 9; 52- Big name in PCs; 53- Son of Aphrodite; 54- Pro follower; 55- Famous last words; 56- Distribute cards; 59- Owing;



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



**FOR SALE**

**Hoi Wan Garden, Taipa**  
**HK\$4,900,000** 900ft<sup>2</sup> 2 1/2 1

**FOR RENT**

**Waterfront Duet Studio, Macau**  
**\$9,000/mth** 469ft<sup>2</sup> 1 1/2

**FOR SALE**

- [Macau] One Oasis modern studio 2 1/2 1 1/2  
 691ft<sup>2</sup> **\$6,357,000** (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Taipa Village (2 units) 4 1/2 2 1/2  
 1,404ft<sup>2</sup> **\$8,380,000** (ref: 19096006)
- [Taipa] Manhattan D unit 4 1/2 2 1/2  
 2,305ft<sup>2</sup> **\$17,980,000** (ref: n/a)
- [Macau] 2 Shops downtown  
 1,404ft<sup>2</sup> **\$20,800,000** (ref: 19015573)

**FOR RENT**

- [Taipa] Old Taipa Village Apartment 2 1/2 1 1/2  
 600ft<sup>2</sup> **\$9,900/mth** (ref: n/a)
- [Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1/2 1 1/2  
 710ft<sup>2</sup> **\$20,460/mth** (ref: 20021002)
- [Macau] One Central 2 1/2 2 1/2  
 1,269ft<sup>2</sup> **\$25,000/mth** (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Great View Apartment 4 1/2 2 1/2  
 2,060ft<sup>2</sup> **\$28,000/mth** (ref: 20031001)

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## HUAWEI LOSES UK TOP COURT RULING OVER GLOBAL PATENT RATES

JONATHAN BROWNING  
& SUSAN DECKER

**U.K.** judges can set global royalty rates for the use of telecommunications technology, Britain's highest court said in a pair of cases over how much Huawei Technologies Co. owes a U.S. patent owner.

The U.K. Supreme Court yesterday affirmed a decision that Huawei would either have to pay Unwired Planet International Ltd. a global rate set by judges or face an order limiting its British sales. In a related decision involving another patent owner, the court rejected Huawei and ZTE Corp.'s

argument that, if any court were to establish a global rate, it should be in China, where manufacturing and the bulk of sales are located.

Unwired Planet and Conversant Wireless Licensing Sarl each have patents related to the 2G, 3G, and 4G telecommunications standards. Unwired Planet is seeking royalties on Huawei's phones and infrastructure, while Conversant contends it's entitled to royalties from both Huawei and ZTE.

Huawei and ZTE were challenging rulings that would effectively make British courts a one-stop shop to set global royalty rates.

Since the original ruling, the country's tribunals have become increasingly popular.

The "decision makes the U.K. one of the leading global jurisdictions for the resolution of such disputes," EIP, one of the law firms representing the patent holders, said in a statement.

A spokesman for Huawei didn't immediately return a message seeking comment.

The cases have pitted the owners of patents on standardized technology, including Qualcomm Inc. and Ericsson AB, against those who use the systems in their products, including Apple Inc. It's a thorny issue that's becoming

more important as the world transitions to the next generation of wireless technology known as 5G.

Regulators and courts around the world have grappled with how to value patents for essential technology and whether their owners have any rights to limit the use of the inventions. The unclear rules have frustrated automakers and other manufacturers of so-called internet of things devices poised to adopt 5G for everything from connected cars to robotic surgery.

Businesses that are normally competitors have come together to establish industry-wide standards so, for instance, a photo, text message or phone call from

a Samsung Galaxy phone can seamlessly transfer to an Apple iPad, or a phone using a network can switch to Wi-Fi without a hiccup.

Because they have an advantage on getting their inventions included in any standard, participants pledge to license their relevant patents on "fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory terms."

The phrase, known as FRAND, has never been defined, as the standard-setting boards rely on the companies to work out contracts among themselves, sometimes through high stakes litigation. It was at the heart of billion-dollar fights such as Apple's since-resolved efforts to lower the amount it pays Qualcomm.

Since patents are limited to national borders, judges hearing these disputes decide the appropriate rate for the inventions in their home country. Each side files lawsuits in courts they consider favorable, in hopes that a ruling will give them an advantage in negotiations.

Patent owners, such as Unwired Planet, would prefer to have issues resolved in one court, particularly if they get to choose the most patent-friendly venue.

American courts have been limiting patent rights, even though big damage awards are still possible, while Chinese courts have been criticized for having low damage awards.

Unwired Planet is part of a Texas-based firm called PanOptis Patent Management that won a \$506 million U.S. verdict against Apple Aug. 11. Apple said the company failed to follow its obligation to license its 4G patents on fair terms.

The cases are Unwired Planet International Ltd. v. Huawei Technologies Co., UKSC 2018/0214; and Huawei Technologies v. Conversant Wireless Licensing SARL, UKSC2019/0041, both U.K. Supreme Court. **BLOOMBERG**

### AVIATION

## AirAsia X seeks debt help with flights unlikely until 2021

**AIRASIA** Group Bhd.'s long-haul arm said it needs to reach agreements with major creditors to restructure outstanding debt as it faces "severe liquidity constraints" that threaten its ability to resume flying and continue as a going concern.

The warning came in an exchange filing yesterday, in which AirAsia X Bhd. also reported a net loss for the three months ended June 30 of 305.2 million ringgit (\$73 million), worse than a 207.1 million ringgit deficit a year ago. Sales tumbled 91% to 91.4 million ringgit.

"In the short term, the company will need to seek agreement with major creditors to restructure outstanding liabilities, which have accrued during the period since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, in order to continue as a going concern," AirAsia X said in the filing.

Securing support from aircraft lessors, maintenance service providers and financial institutions is necessary for the restart of scheduled flights on a staggered basis early next year and a return to profitability, it said. The Malaysia-based budget carrier hasn't been

able to operate any of its usual international passenger services bar a few cargo and charter flights to help repatriate people stranded by the coronavirus.

Parent AirAsia has been considering strategic options, including bringing in investors to shore up the unit's finances, integrating it with the broader group or even shuttering it, people familiar with discussions have said. Auditor Ernst & Young said last month there may be "significant doubt" over AirAsia X's ability to continue as a going concern based on its 2019 financial report.

AirAsia X's operations have been suspended since March 28 as tight border controls, quarantine measures and a reluctance to travel have devastated global aviation, particularly for carriers that are dependent on international routes. The International Air Transport Association doesn't expect a full recovery before 2024.

AirAsia X has said that it's actively engaging with business partners and creditors to reschedule payments and renegotiate contracts to ensure enough cash for operations when demand recovers. It

plans to apply for a state guaranteed loan of up to 500 million ringgit and is aiming to operate a leaner fleet size. That will involve returning excess aircraft to lessors.

The long-haul airline is the biggest customer of Airbus SE's A330neos. It expects to remain in "hibernation mode" until travel restrictions ease, although maintains demand should pick up toward the end of 2020. The company has deferred delivery of some A330neos. It has 78 of the aircraft on order, according to Airbus's website.

Some countries are at

least moving to open their borders. Singapore and Malaysia, for example, have already eased restrictions for essential and business travel.

Prior to the outbreak, AirAsia X flew to places such as Australia, China, India and Saudi Arabia. It's also the only Malaysian airline that served the U.S. - from Kuala Lumpur to Hawaii via Osaka. In November, the Federal Aviation Administration downgraded Malaysia to so-called Category 2, barring its carriers from adding any more flights to North America. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**



AP PHOTO



FOOTBALL

# Barcelona still hoping Messi will stay with the club

**B**ARCELONA hasn't given up on Lionel Messi just yet.

A day after the Argentine great told the club he wants to leave, Barcelona said its restructuring project still revolves around the player.

"We want to rebuild for the future together with the best player in history," Ramon Planes, the club's technical director, said yesterday. "We are not contemplating any departure on a contractual level because we want him to stay. We have to show a huge respect for Messi because he is the best player in the world."

Planes spoke as Barcelona officially introduced striker Francisco Trincão at an event that had already been scheduled before Messi announced his desire to leave on Tuesday.

"We can't make this a dispute between Leo Messi and Barcelona because neither deserves it," Planes said.

Barcelona is trying to avoid an abrupt ending to Messi's career at the club. His last match with a Barcelona jersey was the embarrassing 8-2 loss to Bayern Munich in the quarterfinals of the Champions League, one of the worst defeats in the player's career and in the club's history.

But Messi apparently has already made up his mind, and it seems only a matter of how ugly the termination will get and if Barcelona will get any money out of it.

Dozens of fans protested in front of the Camp Nou late Tuesday calling for the resignation of team president Josep Bartomeu. More protests by fans were sche-

duled for today [Macau time].

"The situation has been uncomfortable for everybody," Barcelona fan Oriol Aznar said. "This board of directors should have resigned a long time ago. Bad results, bad management. Nothing positive about them. They are destroying the club. It's normal that Messi wants to leave. They want to end the year with a decent financial balance if they make money out of Messi leaving. But this isn't the right way."

Messi's first contract with the club was signed on a napkin after a lunch between his representatives and club officials nearly 20 years ago, but it was with a burofax — a certified communication method commonly used in Spain, similar to a telegram — that Messi told the club he wants to leave.

There was no phone call or

meeting with club officials. Just the burofax.

In it, Messi invoked a clause in his contract that allowed him to leave for free after the end of the season.

But Barcelona said the clause mentioned by Messi expired on June 10, meaning that the player missed the deadline and would have to pay the clause of 700 million euros (\$827 million) if he wants to leave before his contract ends in June 2021.

What Messi may contend is that the clause was to expire at the end of the season, which this year was moved back because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The club said it replied to Messi's burofax saying it wanted him to stay and finish his career with Barcelona.

"Total war!" said a front-page

headline by the Sport newspaper yesterday.

"Goodbye by burofax," said the sports daily AS.

Messi was outspoken against club directors throughout the season but has yet to speak publicly since the loss to Bayern.

Former Barcelona playmaker Rivaldo said he was sad to see Messi leaving like this, and that it would be difficult for the club if it didn't get compensated financially.

"At a complicated time like this, with the current crisis, it would be a drama for Barcelona to lose its biggest star without getting anything in return," he said. "This is probably the biggest dispute between the parts right now, so I don't expect a quick exit, especially after the exchange of buro-faxes between them yesterday."

AD

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OPINION

World Views

Andreas Kluth, Bloomberg

WOMEN HAVE BEEN BETTER LEADERS THAN MEN DURING THE PANDEMIC

The evidence is in: At least during the first wave of Covid-19, countries with female leaders suffered far lower death rates than comparable nations led by men. This doesn't mean that the trend will necessarily persist in a second or third wave. Nor does it imply that women are also better leaders when it comes to whatever else governments find themselves doing, from reforming labor markets to waging war. But it's worth pondering nonetheless.

In doing so, it's of course tempting to descend into the netherworld of gender stereotypes and individual caricature. Donald Trump, president of the country with the most deaths from Covid-19, has communicated with an uninformed machismo that has provoked reactions ranging from shock to satire. Jair Bolsonaro, president of Brazil, the runner-up in coronavirus deaths, has pooh-poohed the disease as a "little flu."

By contrast, Angela Merkel, chancellor of Germany, which has generally managed the outbreak well, has impressed with explanations of the epidemiological R0 factor that went "viral" for their sobriety and clarity. Jacinda Ardern, prime minister of New Zealand, which has only 22 deaths from Covid-19 to date, has talked to Kiwis via Facebook Live from her home in a way that is casual and interactive but also reassuring and credible.

Erna Solberg, prime minister of Norway, with 264 deaths, has told her country's children that "it's OK to be scared when so many things happen at the same time," acknowledging vulnerability even while projecting competence.

But in a new global analysis, Supriya Garikipati at the University of Liverpool and Uma Kambhampati at the University of Reading avoid stooping to mere anecdotes. Using data up to May 19, they matched the 19 countries led by women with their "nearest neighbors" according to a mix of factors including population, the economy, gender equality, openness to travel, health expenditures and the proportion of elderly people. They couldn't use Taiwan (7 deaths), which is governed by a woman but doesn't belong to the United Nations.

Their conclusion was unequivocal: On average, the countries run by women suffered half as many deaths from Covid-19 as the nations governed by men.

One reason could be that women are more averse to risk, as most studies corroborate. But the choice facing leaders this spring wasn't simply between more or less risk. It was a trade-off between one risk, that to life, and another, that of economic loss. So the difference between the men and women, as the study's authors point out, was really that the women took less risk with lives and more with the economy, whereas men did the opposite. Over time, of course, death and economic loss become intertwined.

The women also tended to communicate very differently with citizens. It's long been hypothesized that female leaders lean toward "a more democratic or participative style" whereas men are "more autocratic or directive." That's been hard to prove, but researchers are still studying whether women indeed bring more empathy to leadership or integrate more emotional information in their decision making.

An interpersonal, empathetic and participatory approach certainly seems to help in managing a pandemic.

Comparisons between the sexes invariably become frustrating, either verging on the stereotypical or the vague and woolly. We have no idea how the late "Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher — or the Brittonic Queen Boudica, who gave short shrift to several Roman legions — would have managed Covid-19. In leadership, individual character and talent surely trumps gender and everything else.

That said, the pattern during this pandemic so far certainly suggests that the world could use much more female leadership. With only 19 countries of the 193 in the UN run by women, there's plenty of room for improvement.

[Abridged]

Two people have been killed and one injured during a third night of unrest in the US city of Kenosha, sparked by the police shooting of a black man.

Police said three people had been shot, but gave no details about who was involved.

Local media reports earlier said the violence was believed to have stemmed from a conflict between protesters and armed men guarding a petrol station.

Unrest broke out after Jacob Blake was shot and injured by

police on Sunday.

Video footage showed the 29-year-old being shot a number of times as he leaned into a car. His lawyers said it would take "a miracle" for him to walk again.

People have since defied emergency curfews in the city to join protests, which at times have turned violent.

In their statement, Kenosha Police said officials responded to "reports of shots being fired and multiple gunshot victims" in the city yesterday [Macau time].

NORTH, SOUTH KOREA BRACE FOR STRONG TYPHOON, FLIGHTS HALTED

KIM TONG-HYUNG. SEOUL

HUNDREDS of flights were canceled in South Korea while North Korea's leader expressed concern about a potential loss of lives and crops as the countries braced for a fast-approaching typhoon forecast as one of the strongest to hit their peninsula this year.

Packing a maximum wind speed of 162 kilometers per hour, Typhoon Bavi was already lashing South Korea's southern resort island of Jeju yesterday afternoon, flooding roads, toppling trees, ripping off signboards and knocking down at least one traffic sign as it passed over waters off the island's western shores. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

South Korea's weather agency said the typhoon will start to affect the mainland at night before making landfall in western North Korea early today. The agency warned of possible severe damage caused by very strong winds and heavy rainfall.

More than 460 domestic flights in and out of Jeju were canceled as yesterday afternoon, the Korea Airports Corp. said. South Korean authorities were also



High waves crash onto Haeundae Beach in Busan, yesterday

shutting down public parks and moving hundreds of fishing boats and other vessels, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety said.

In capital Seoul, health workers dismantled some makeshift COVID-19 testing stations over worries that the tents and booths may not withstand strong winds.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said that during a ruling party meeting on Tuesday, the country's leader, Kim Jong Un, called for thorough preparations to minimize casualties and damage from the typhoon. The storm comes weeks after torrential rains caused flooding and massive damage to homes and crops in North Korea, inflicting further

pain to an economy ravaged by U.S.-led sanctions over the North's nuclear weapons and border closures amid the pandemic.

KCNA said earlier that a typhoon warning was issued in most areas of the country, with officials moving fishing boats and applying protective measures on buildings, farms and railroads.

In China, authorities suspended ferry services across the Yellow Sea from the northern port of Dalian to the cities of Weihai and Yantai on the Shandong Peninsula as the typhoon closed in on the region. The government of Dalian, a city of 7 million people, issued a statement calling on the public to stay indoors whenever possible yesterday and today. AP

USA

LAURA NOW FORECAST TO BE A CATASTROPHIC CATEGORY 4 HURRICANE

HURRICANE Laura is forecast to rapidly power up into a "catastrophic" Category 4 hurricane, even stronger than previously expected, as it churns toward Texas and Louisiana, swirling wind and water over much of the Gulf of Mexico.

Satellite images show Laura has become "a formidable hurricane" in recent hours, threatening to smash homes and sink entire communities. It has undergone a remarkable intensification, "and there

are no signs it will stop soon," the National Hurricane Center said yesterday.

"Some areas, when they wake up Thursday morning, they're not going to believe what happened," said Stacy Stewart, a senior hurricane specialist.

"We could see storm surge heights more than 15 feet in some areas," Stewart said. "What doesn't get blown down by the wind could easily get knocked down by the rising ocean waters pushing

well inland."

Laura grew nearly 70% in power in just 24 hours to reach Category 3 status, with maximum sustained winds around 185 kph early yesterday. It was about 450 kilometers out from Lake Charles, Louisiana, moving northwest at 24 kph.

Top winds of 209 kmh are now predicted before landfall, pushing water onto more than 724 kilometers of coast from Texas to Mississippi. MDT/AP



China has suspended a flight from Abu Dhabi to Shanghai for a week after five passengers on board tested positive for the coronavirus. Etihad flight EY862 was put on hold. For the 10th consecutive day, China has reported only imported cases, with another 15 added yesterday. China currently has 347 people in treatment for COVID-19, while another 365 people are being monitored in isolation for having tested positive for the virus without showing symptoms.

Australia's hard-hit State of Victoria yesterday recorded one of its deadliest days of the pandemic despite new COVID-19 infections continuing to trend down. The 24 fatalities in the latest 24-hour period is the largest death toll since Aug. 17. Victoria's Health Department reported 149 new cases yesterday following 148 infections on Tuesday. Wednesday's count brought the weekly average to 175 new cases a day, down from 279 in the previous week.

Scotland has recorded the first coronavirus deaths in more than a month. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon says two people have died in Scotland after testing positive for COVID-19. Sturgeon says it's the first coronavirus deaths reported in Scottish since July 16. Both deaths were recorded in the past day and bring the total confirmed death toll in Scotland to 2,494.



Vatican City Pope Francis will resume weekly audiences with the faithful present, starting next Wednesday. The pope held his last public audience on Feb. 26, just days after the first locally transmitted coronavirus outbreaks were identified in northern Italy. Since then, they've been held in the pope's private library. The Vatican announced audiences in September will be held outdoors in the San Damaso courtyard, part of the Apostolic Palace.