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THE APPROVAL MECHANISM FOR NON-RESIDENT WORKERS MAY SOON FACE REVIEW IN LIGHT OF GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT P3

IC DEPARTMENT HEAD WINS APPEAL OVER 30-DAY SUSPENSION P4

CASINO OPERATORS ARE EXPECTED TO POST AN ENORMOUS LOSS FOR THE THIRD QUARTER, WITH AN INDUSTRY AVERAGE EBITDA OF -135% P4

Japan's government said yesterday it will pursue its nuclear fuel recycling program that would involve extracting plutonium from spent fuel, despite international concerns about the country's already huge plutonium stockpile and lack of prospects for effectively consuming it as nuclear fuel.

Philippines yesterday lifted a ban on non-essential foreign trips by Filipinos, but the immigration bureau said the move did not immediately spark large numbers of departures for tourism and leisure. The government has gradually eased travel restrictions to bolster the economy, which slipped into recession in the second quarter following months of lockdown and quarantine to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Indian army said yesterday that it returned Cpl. Wang Ya Long, from the People's Liberation Army, who had strayed into the Indian side in the remote Ladakh region, where the two countries are locked in a monthslong military standoff.



Afghanistan At least 11 women were trampled to death when a stampede broke out yesterday among thousands of Afghans waiting in a soccer stadium to get visas to leave the country, officials said. Attaullah Khogyani, the spokesman for the governor of the eastern Nangarhar province, said another 13 people, mostly women, were injured at the stadium, where they were trying to get visas to enter neighboring Pakistan. He said most of those who died were elderly people from across Afghanistan.

Pakistan A powerful blast ripped through a multistory building in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi yesterday, killing at least three people and wounding 15 others, police and rescuers said. It was not immediately clear what caused the blast, but it appeared to be an accidental explosion, likely caused by the ignition of a cooking gas canister.

More on backpage

WELCOME BACK TO BBQ

A controversial policy barring non-residents from booking time at the grills appears to have been overturned P2



CHINA IS NATURAL CHOICE FOR THAILAND'S TOURISM RESTART P6



A LOOK INSIDE MELCO'S PLAYGROUND FOR THE ULTRA-WEALTHY P5



DANIEL BEITLER

FIRE SERVICES REPORT DROP IN RESPONSE SERVICES THIS YEAR

RENATO MARQUES

THE Fire Services Bureau (CB) has reported a drop in all its services during the first nine months of this year, partly due to the reduction in the number of tourists.

According to the CB report, the whole activity from the Bureau has registered a drop by 11.4% from January to September this year when

compared with the same period last year.

Leading the decrease was a 22% drop in the number of times that ambulances were called to attend incidents and transport injured people to the local hospitals.

The decrease in the number of ambulances dispatched was related to the epidemic impact and the fall in the number of visitors to

Macau, the CB said.

Cases of fire outbreaks registered a drop of 11.5% compared to the same period in 2019.

The CB also noted that from the total of 606 cases reported in the first three quarters of this year, 116 were due to small domestic incidents that caused burned food. In 384 cases there was also no need to use any firehose

equipment to extinguish the fires.

On the topic, the CB also remarked that in the first nine months of 2020, the main reasons for the occurrence of fires was due to people leaving their stoves on by mistake or forgetfulness and the burning of incense and votive papers, calling on citizens to pay special attention to such factors.

DOCTOR AT PUBLIC HOSPITAL CONCEALS TRAVEL TO QINGDAO

A plastic surgeon at the Conde São Januário Hospital failed to declare to his employer that he had traveled to Qingdao, China before resuming work. He has been asked by his employer to refrain from attending work for seven additional days for safety reasons.

Qingdao has recently recorded new infections of Covid-19. The health authority in Macau has announced that from October 13, all entrants who have traveled to Qingdao in the preceding 14 days should be quarantined as a precaution.

The Health Bureau has already changed the Macau Health Code of people with such travel history from green to yellow, hinting that they should conduct stricter

health monitoring.

The surgeon in question traveled to the mainland city between September 25 and October 5. Although not violating general measures, the Health Bureau has required its medical staff to declare their travel history to the mainland city, so that superintendents can make special work arrangements when required.

The surgeon, however, did not make such a declaration. In addition, he maintained his work in the clinical sector of the hospital, meaning that he has treated patients in the preceding days. He also has not presented his Health Code every day before work.

The surgeon has tested negative for Covid-19. **AL**

ALL NOW WELCOME

IAM seen to overturn policy barring non-locals from BBQ

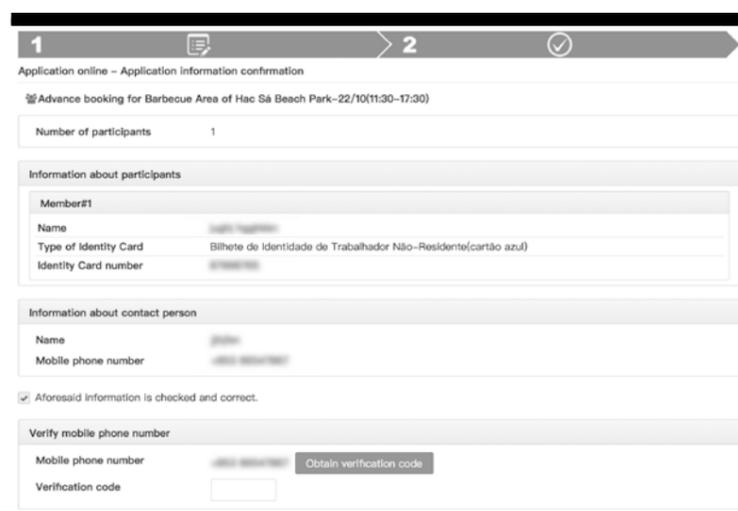
DANIEL BEITLER

THE Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) appears to have overturned a controversial policy to bar non-residents from making appointments for barbecue (BBQ) facilities in public parks.

A statement issued last night by the municipal authority acknowledged changes to the regulations currently governing the use of BBQ sites.

The IAM statement did not directly mention a change to the policy, however it implied that certain restrictions were being eased "after assessing the number of users and the use of the re-opened barbecue area of Hac Sá Beach Park."

Macau Daily Times was yesterday able to select the non-resident TNR card (commonly known as the bluecard) as the



identification document use in the booking system. The Times proceeded to complete the booking using the non-resident identification card and received a confirmation from the IAM shortly afterward.

Earlier this month, the IAM introduced new rules to govern the reopening of BBQ facilities at the Hac Sá Beach Park in Coloane.

The IAM required all interested parties to make an online appointment before being able to

use the grillers, but the booking system was to accept local resident identification cards only. This provoked a backlash from many in Macau who turned to social media to vent their anger.

In accordance with social distancing measures recommended by the city's health authorities, the initial rules also mandated a maximum of four people for each of the 55 grillers made available to the public.

Under the amended regulations announced yesterday, the maximum number of people for each griller has been expanded to eight, while the number of barbecue pits has grown to 78 across the three venues of Hac Sá Beach Park, Taipa Grande Natural Park and Hac Sá Reservoir Natural Park.

The trial program for the reopening of the BBQ pits at

Hac Sá Beach Park was intended to last from October 16 until October 29. The revision to the booking system entered into force yesterday, however the barbecue areas of Taipa Grande Natural Park and Hac Sá Reservoir Natural Park will reopen only starting from tomorrow.

The IAM continues to urge members of the public to strictly comply with the disease prevention guidelines issued by the Macau Health Bureau.

In accordance with the guidelines, users of the barbecue areas are urged to display their Macau Health Code valid for the day upon entry, have their body temperature measured and wear a face mask, as well as keep a social distance of at least one meter from other people. Those who have a fever or respiratory symptoms will be refused entry.

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Government reviewing non-residents labor quota

LYNZY VALLES

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng has said that the government is considering a change to the approval mechanism for qualified non-resident worker labor quotas.

In a meeting with the representatives of the National People's Congress in the SAR, the city's top official said that workers from outside the SAR who seek to migrate to the region would need to make a substantial contribution to Macau, taking into account the employment situation of local residents, and that non-resident workers must be introduced appropriately.

He explained that, in general terms, the approval of the non-resident workers' permits must be due to the demands associated with the adequate diversification of the economy and social development.

Ho made the comments after noting that he hoped for the region's commercial sector to make more suggestions and actively encourage the diversification of Macau's industries.

If the sector introduces good projects, Ho pledged that the government would be sure to provide the necessary support.

The current employment situation in Macau continues to weaken due to the impact of the coronavirus crisis on the city's economy. Macau's unemployment rate for the June to August period rose to 4% for the resident workforce, and to 2.8% overall.

Recent official data shows that during this period, the city had a total labor force of 404,000 and a labor force participation rate of 70.2%. A total of 392,500 were employed, 276,600 of which were local residents. These figures decreased by 2,900 and 1,100, respectively.

With the downturn of the economy, many local residents are finding it difficult to find another job, which implies that the hiring of non-local residents may be even tougher – particularly given the new employment law, which came into effect in early October.

Since the new law prohibits people on tourist visas from seeking work and being directly employed by local companies, these foreign workers will find it more difficult to get hired as the city still currently bans foreign people from entering Macau, even if a company is willing to hire them.

It is yet to be disclosed how the government will improve the approval mechanism of labor quotas for non-resident workers, but until the economy recovers, it is likely that there may be a freeze in hiring non-locals, noting that it is a priority for the government to employ local residents prior to foreign workers.

SMG CONSIDERS HOISTING TYPHOON SIGNAL TODAY

LYNZY VALLES

Atropical cyclone signal may be considered today depending on the development of the northeast monsoon that has been affecting Macau since late afternoon yesterday, with the northerlies expected to strengthen.

In an update from the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau yesterday, it noted that tropical storm Saudel was set to come within 800 kilometers of the SAR.

Since it is expected to move slowly and remain at a distance from Macau, it will not pose an immediate direct threat to Macau today.

According to the SMG, it will be slightly dry and cool in Macau over the days to come.

Tropical storm Saudel entered the South China Sea yesterday morning.

The bureau said earlier that the northeast monsoon will affect Macau later this week.

As its forecast path and intensity are still uncertain, the tropical cyclone signal may still be considered, depending on the

storm's development. The public is advised to pay attention to the latest weather information.

Saudel will move across the central part of the South China Sea towards the vicinity of Hainan Island and the central part of Vietnam in the next couple of days, where over 90,000 have already been displaced after weeks of bad weather.

According to the Hong Kong Observatory, Saudel will also remain at a distance from Hong Kong and will be rather slow-moving for most of today, also posing no direct threat to the territory. With Saudel edging gradually closer to the coastal areas of Guangdong, and depending on the track of Saudel and the changes in local wind strength, the observatory will consider whether to issue the Standby Signal, No. 1, later today.

Yesterday, the tropical storm lashed the Philippines, causing widespread flooding in provinces south of Manila. The rainfall was set to have coincided with La Niña and the high tide, which has caused waist-deep floodwaters in the provinces south of the capital.

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Macau denies Ao Man Long request for Portugal transfer

THE local government has denied a request from the former Secretary for Transport and Public Works to serve the remainder of his 29-year sentence in Portugal.

Citing an unnamed source in the Portuguese government, Macau Business reported that the request has been denied on account of Ao holding Chinese nationality.

Former Secretary Ao Man Long, who was sentenced in 2008 to 29 years behind bars for the crimes of corruption, money laundering and abuse of power, had invoked his status as a Portuguese citizen to make the request. The request is made possible by an Agreement for the Transfer of Sentenced Persons between the two jurisdictions.

However, the unnamed source from the Portuguese attorney-general's office told Macau Business that Ao "was considered to be of Chinese nationality, thus not meeting the conditions to be able to be transferred."

If Macau had approved the transfer, the case would have been transferred to the central government to have its final say. The transfer would only have been possible if all the concerned parties had agreed to it.

Ao is currently being held in a high-security section of the Coloane Prison.

There is no recourse for Ao to appeal this decision. **DB**

IC OFFICIAL WINS APPEAL OVER 30-DAY SUSPENSION

RENATO MARQUES

A department head from the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has won an appeal to the Court of Second Instance (TSI) over a decision by former Chief Executive Chui Sai On that, following a disciplinary procedure, imposed a penalty of 30 days of suspension from duties. The appeal victory was announced by the Office of the President of the Courts of Second Instance and Final Appeal (TUI) has announced.

The subject of the appeal was a case in which the IC official hired staff directly and without a

tender under a "service provision agreement."

According to the report by the person responsible for carrying out the disciplinary procedure, the official had violated the duty of diligence and the specific duties to which the government management and leadership staff are bound.

Trusting this report, the former Chief Executive issued an order, mandating a disciplinary sentence of 30 days' suspension from duties for the IC department head.

Not pleased with this decision, the civil servant appealed to the

TSI, which, after analyzing the case, concluded that the penalty had been given on the basis that she had failed to care for her professional duties. According to the TSI, this reason does not have a legal justification or proof, since the department head was subjected to performance evaluations that classified her performance at work as zealous and gave the rating "very good" several times.

Her appointment as department head had resulted from this strong performance at work, on account of which the court established that such an allegation, used in the final report to justify

her penalty, does not have legal grounds.

For this reason, and because the official has no legal training and the work contracts signed were assessed by other people that did possess such legal knowledge and did not intervene promptly, the TSI considered that the act was deficient in its justification and must be voided.

Nevertheless, the TSI judges maintain that the actions of the defendant go against the Macau Public Administration Workers Statute (ETAPM) rules and that, for this reason, the department head should be held responsible for some wrongdoing.

Is it likely that the government will continue to pursue legal liability from the IC department head by filing an appeal regarding the sentence to the Court of Final Appeal.

CASINOS EXPECTED TO POST COMBINED \$823 MILLION QUARTERLY LOSS

MACAU casino operators are expected to post a combined loss of more than \$800 million in earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) for the quarter ended September 30, according to a Bloomberg survey of analysts' estimates.

Each of the six operators, which will begin reporting earnings in the coming weeks, will likely show negative quarterly EBITDA, according to the survey of seven brokera-

SJM Holdings Ltd. and MGM China Holdings Ltd. are expected to report the biggest percentage changes from a year earlier at -171% and -150% respectively, according to the analysis. The smallest percentage change is expected to be recorded by Galaxy Entertainment Group and Melco Resorts at -127% and -129% respectively.

The industry average will be a -135% change to EBITDA compared to the same quarter a year earlier.

Macau's casino industry has seen gaming revenue plunge by no less than 90% for six straight months as the pandemic forced countries to shut borders.

Gross gaming revenue in the third quarter fell 93.1%, compared to a 95.6% contraction in the second quarter. That sequential improvement amounted to a 51.1% increase quarter-to-quarter.

A slow recovery is underway after China gradually eased travel restrictions over the past quarter and formed a travel bubble

with the world's largest gambling hub. However, inconvenient entry requirements are still making it difficult for mainland patrons to visit the city. As a consequence, Macau trails other gambling hubs in bouncing back from Covid-19.

Many in Macau were left disappointed this month after the Golden Week period failed to resuscitate the city's stagnant economy. Many small businesses had been hoping for a tourism bounce signaling that the worst of

the pandemic was over.

Mainland Chinese visitor arrivals during the Golden

Week holiday were still 84% lower compared with a year earlier. **DB/BLOOMBERG**

PROJECTED CHANGE IN THIRD QUARTER EBITDA*

Operator	% change
Sands China	-132%
Wynn Macau	-144%
Melco Resorts	-129%
MGM China	-150%
Galaxy Entertainment Group	-127%
SJM Holdings	-171%
Sector average	-135%

* AS PREDICTED BY A BLOOMBERG SURVEY OF ANALYSTS' ESTIMATES



Alpine A110



BAC Mono



Beau Lake



Ehang AAV

IAM PLANS TO EXTEND TAIPA BICYCLE TRAIL TO FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE

In response to lawmaker Lei Chan U's recent written inquiry, José Tavares, president of the Executive Committee of the Municipal Affairs Bureau, has disclosed that the bureau has sourced design plans for the coastal leisure area and cycling trail that would extend the trail from Sai Van Bridge to Amizade Bridge. The design is expected to be concluded by mid-2021. The actual work should commence after the design's completion and take place in two phases. Meanwhile, Tavares also disclosed that his bureau is considering the possibility of extending the trail to connect the cycling trail next to Broadway Macau.

A-MA CULTURE AND TOURISM FESTIVAL'S PARADE TO RUN AT ONE-TENTH SCALE

The organizing entity of the A-Ma Culture and Tourism Festival has recently disclosed that the parade section of the festival will remain this year amid the pandemic, but at one-tenth of its original scale. While last year's festival saw 3,000 participants, this year will only see 300. The entity stressed that attendees will also be local residents. The parade will start at 3 p.m. this coming Sunday and will travel from Fai Chi Kei to Lao Hon Garden. Meanwhile, the main component of the festival, which involves a different parade across the city, will be postponed for a year to take place in October 2021.

GOV'T HAS NO PLAN TO CENTRALIZE VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION

The government, in its response to lawmaker Sulu Sou's inquiry on the administration of government vehicles, has said that it has no plan to centralize their management. The government is administering a total of 2,028 public vehicles, but the management is conducted by different bureaus. The lawmaker submitted the inquiry to ask whether the government is willing to take unified control over the management of public vehicles to improve efficiency. The Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau added that it is working on digitizing government correspondence which, in the future, will help reduce the need for public vehicles delivering the correspondence to different bureaus.

Melco's wealthy toy playground launches into second phase

ANTHONY LAM

THE City of Dreams integrated resort welcomed new merchandise to the second version of "TheArsenale" pop-up store, with new products including a NASA-branded basketball, a sports car and hydrofoil, among other products that appeal to the ultra-wealthy.

TheArsenale is the first worldwide marketplace dedicated to the motion universe, according to its organizer, which connects the world's best niche vehicle-makers, brands and talented designers with petrolheads, discerning collectors and art nuts. The store brings together a remarkable array of rare cars, private jets, submarines, custom motorcycles, exclusive branded boats, bicycles and graphic skateboards, timepieces, artworks and more.

Titled TheArsenale V2, the new store is, as the resort operator describes, "still the world's most insane garage." From extravagant toys to eye-opening art, visitors can explore a thrilling collection of products fusing art and technology.

In TheArsenale V2, observers, enthusiasts and prospective customers can have the chance to see some of the rarest vehicles and merchandise on land, sea, air, and space.

These include the world's most advanced passenger drone "Ehang", the most extreme road legal mono-driver machine "Bac Mono", the world's first recreational electrical foil boat "Quadrofoil Q2", as well as the Alpine A110 designed and manufactured by the Formula 1's newest entry for the 2021 season.

The Ehang is manufactured by a Guangzhou company and is gradually being developed as an "air taxi" in the city. On the outside, it appears to be a large version videography drone, with a total of eight rotors along its circumference.

On the inside, the machine has two seats and a luggage compartment. It can take up to a maximum weight of 250 kilograms. A dedicated app can be used to call the machine to the pickup point and it will transport passengers or cargo to their destinations automatically.

The manufacturer aims to market it as an intercity or inter-district transporter, as it has a maximum range of around 30 kilometers, which is more or less the straight-line distance between Macau and Zhongshan.

As for the Quadrofoil, it looks like a speedboat that comes with four "supporters" – two on both sides – to raise up the boat when it goes fast enough. It resembles the Jetfoil. The boat comes without a roof and can take two people, one after the other.

The boat feeds on electricity and can be fully recharged within four hours. No dedicated power outlet is required. Meanwhile, it has a seven-meter minimum turnaround radius, appropriate for smaller ponds or lagoons.

The Bac Mono, on the other hand, is a roofless, single-seat sports car that generates 332hp and 400Nm of torque. With a feather light body at 570kg only, it can easily reach a maximum speed of 274km/h. From static to 100km/h, it only needs 2.8 seconds.

At the same venue, there are two video-racing simulators for viewers to experience driving on

the Guia Circuit. The resort operator is organizing a Greater Bay Area e-race championship at later date, that will employ the simulators.

TheArsenale V2 is now displaying daily at The White Gallery, the high-ceiling exhibition space at City of Dreams. Entry is free-of-charge so anybody can visit the gallery to explore modern race cars and exotic watercrafts, incredible flying machines and legendary motorcycles. The resort does not require visitors to make any purchase in order to visit the gallery.

Following the launch of high-profile locations in Paris, Miami and Dubai, TheArsenale showroom at City of Dreams has featured more than 40 extraordinary machines and other unique items guaranteed to excite collectors and speed demons alike. These included a Formula 1 and Formula E, two speed machines showcasing the ultimate racing technology from one of the fastest motorsports disciplines in the world, together with Roborace, the first pilot-less car ever to compete in racing events, and Centauri's pioneering Valkyrie.

39 CHINESE ARE THAILAND'S FIRST FOREIGN TOURISTS IN SEVEN MONTHS

JERRY HARMER, BANGKOK

THAILAND'S tourist industry took a modest step toward reviving its coronavirus-battered fortunes this week by welcoming 39 visitors who flew in from Shanghai, the first such arrivals since regular travelers were banned almost seven months ago.

The visitors who arrived at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport are pioneers in a "Special Tourist Visa" program devised by Thai authorities to restore step by step a sector of the economy that welcomed almost 40 million foreign visitors last year and by some estimates accounts for more than 10% of the country's GDP.

China was a natural choice for restarting tourism. Thailand was one of the top overseas destinations for Chinese tourists in 2019, when they accounted for by far the largest number of visitors to Thailand by nationality. Just as crucial is that China has largely contained the virus domestically, in sharp contrast to other countries.

Thailand has had only a handful of domestic cases since June, and China's few local outbreaks have dissipated quickly after authorities took steps such as testing entire cities and qua-



A Chinese tourist in from Shanghai, who arrived at Suvarnabhumi airport on a special tourist visa, in Bangkok

ranting communities with potential exposure.

Thailand's newest visitors cannot freely traipse around the country, however.

Under the program approved by the Thai Cabinet in September, foreign tourists who commit to a stay of at least 30 days are issued 90-day visas that can be renewed twice. After arriving, they must stay in government-

-approved quarantine at a hotel or hospital for 14 days and prove they have long-term accommodations. They must have special insurance policies, undergo pre-departure testing for the virus and download an official coronavirus-tracking application for use during their stay.

An operations manager at Suvarnabhumi Airport said it is ready for tourists with a

testing system that gives the result within 90 minutes. He said arrivals have to go through three thermal scans as they make their way through the airport.

"We can assure everyone that all our measures are systematic and meet international standards," the manager, Kittipong Kittikachorn, told The Associated Press.

Members of the media were not allowed to meet with the arriving tourists.

At least two other flights from China are expected later this month, and Thailand's tourism ministry expects about 400 foreign visitors in early November. Future flights may land in destinations other than Bangkok, such as the southern resort island of Phuket. AP

Strongest yuan in two years tests China's tolerance for gains

TRADERS are testing China's tolerance for a strong yuan, which keeps rallying no matter what officials do to rein in appreciation.

The currency climbed as much as 0.55% to its strongest since July 2018 yesterday, even after the People's Bank of China set its daily reference rate weaker than analysts had expected. Traders have pushed the yuan stronger than the so-called fixing for six days, a sign of confidence that it will continue to rally.

The offshore yuan, whose moves aren't limited by the fixing, suggests traders based beyond mainland China are even more bullish. The rate has been stronger than its onshore counterpart for the longest stretch in more than a year. Deutsche Bank AG strategists were the latest to join a growing chorus of market watchers pre-

dicting the yuan will gain if the Democrats win the U.S. elections.

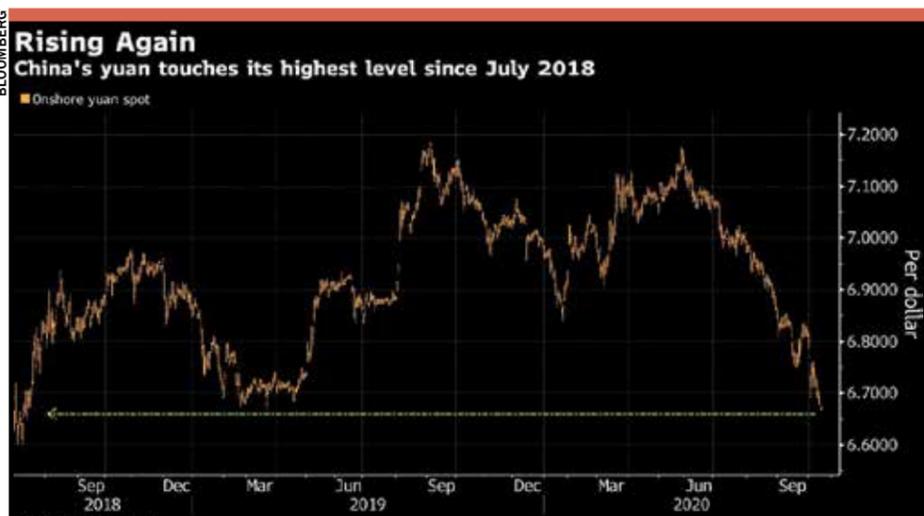
History shows taking a one-way view on China's currency is often a dangerous strategy and something officials have repeatedly acted to prevent. While it's unclear whether Beijing is growing uncomfortable with the pace of the yuan's rally, what's certain is that the government would have to do a lot more to deter traders from driving up the exchange rate.

"The market has probably become overly complacent now, with no risks being priced in properly at all," said Stephen Chiu, a strategist at Bloomberg Intelligence. It would be "easy" for Beijing to rein in the advance, he said, adding the government may next relax capital controls to allow more outflows. "While fundamentals support the yuan to keep

appreciating in the coming months, one should turn more cautious from a risk-to-reward standpoint."

Less than two weeks ago China scrapped a two-year rule that made it expensive to bet against the yuan, which was widely interpreted as a tactic to rein in the advance. While the yuan tumbled the most in nearly seven months afterward, it quickly reversed the losses. The government had allowed domestic institutional investors to buy more overseas assets in September - which can encourage some capital outflow - but that has also failed to slow the yuan's ascent.

The currency of the world's second-largest economy has surged almost 5% over the past three months, the most in Asia after the South Korean won. The onshore yuan traded at 6.6565 a dollar as of 5:24 p.m. in



Shanghai.

In addition to dollar weakness, the yuan is being underpinned by a wide interest-rate premium over the rest of the world. China's 10-year government bond yield has been trading around 3.2%, sending the gap versus the yield on U.S. Treasuries to near the highest on record.

The PBOC has a raft of other tools in its kit. One

of its preferred measures is to set the daily fixing - which limits moves to 2% in either direction -- at levels weaker than market watchers expect. It could also relax capital controls installed after a shock devaluation five years ago and mobilize state-backed banks to sell the yuan.

The rally has also been aided by the economy's rebound from the virus

pandemic. That recovery continued in the July-September period, when gross domestic product expanded by 4.9% from a year earlier. The prospects of a victory by Joe Biden over Donald Trump in the upcoming U.S. presidential election are also supporting the currency. Trump's trade war with China last year sent the currency to its lowest since 2008. BLOOMBERG

NINIEK KARMINI
& MARI YAMAGUCHI, JAKARTA

Japan PM pushes closer Southeast Asia ties in China counter

JAPAN'S new prime minister pledged yesterday to help Southeast Asian nations increase their maritime security capabilities, as he used his first overseas trip as leader to push his country's vision for greater international cooperation to counter China's influence in the region.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, speaking in the Indonesian capital, also took a thinly veiled dig at China's activities in the disputed South China Sea, where it has built and militarized manmade islands and is pressing its claim to virtually all of the sea's key fisheries and waterways.

A number of Southeast Asian nations dispute China's claims to the waters.

"In the Indo-Pacific that connects maritime transport between Japan and ASEAN, we can achieve the peace and prosperity only by fully implementing rule of law that allows anyone freedom and openness," Suga told a news conference in Jakarta. ASEAN is the 11-country Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"But in the South China Sea, opposite actions are being taken and we are closely watching with grave concern," Suga said. "Japan opposes to any action that would increase tensions in the South

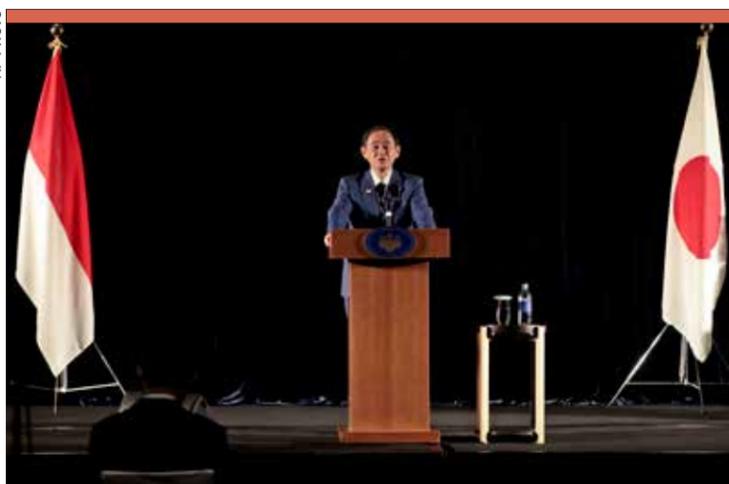
China Sea."

Suga reiterated that all parties involved in the South China Sea disputes must make peaceful efforts toward resolution, not by force or threat.

Suga pledged to strengthen bilateral defense ties with Southeast Asian nations and promised further assistance to step up their maritime policing, including training and equipment transfer from the Japanese Coast Guard.

Suga was wrapping up his visit to Indonesia, the second leg of his four-day tour that started from Vietnam. Suga chose Vietnam and Indonesia for his first overseas trip since succeeding Shinzo Abe as prime minister last month in order to demonstrate the region's importance to Japan.

Japan considers China's growing military activity to be a security threat and its defense papers have accused China of unilaterally changing the status quo in the South China Sea with its actions there. Japan is also concerned about China's claim to the Japanese-controlled Senkaku Is-



Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga speaks to the media during a press conference in Jakarta

Beijing criticizes the initiative as an attempt to create a NATO in Asia

lands, called Diaoyu in China, in the East China Sea.

In both Indonesia and Vietnam, Suga has stressed that Southeast Asian countries are key to achie-

ving what Japan terms a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," a vision of economic and security cooperation between nations that was started by Abe as a way to counter China's

growing might and influence.

Suga denied China's criticism that the initiative is an attempt to create a NATO in Asia.

"Achieving a rule-based free and open Indo-Pacific in this region contributes to the peace and prosperity for the entire world," Suga said. The plan is not intended for special membership but "we can cooperate with any country that shares the view," he added.

Suga agreed with Indonesian President Joko Widodo to work toward holding a fresh round of foreign and defense ministerial talks and to speed up ongoing negotiations for defense equipment and technology transfer. Suga signed a defense equipment export agreement with Vietnam on that leg of his trip.

Japan has defense equipment transfer deals with 11 other countries, including the U.S., Britain, the Philippines and Malaysia, and is negotiating with Thailand.

Japan eased its arms exports ban in 2014 and has since been promoting exports of defense equipment. AP

AD

FRANCE MACAU Chamber of Commerce
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Macau 2025: What Gaming would look like in the near Future
Speaker: Mr Alidad Tash, Founder and Managing Director of 2nt8 Limited

FMCC Breakfast Meeting
Wednesday, 28 October 2020

Introduction:
The local gaming industry is living through an unprecedented transition. How will the new Macau look like once it emerges from the current turbulent times? Will VIP gaming return to its glory days? Will online gaming become legal? What can we expect in terms of gaming licenses? How are the gaming operators mitigating the risks and preparing for this uncertain horizon? Join us and hear from gaming expert Mr. Alidad Tash about the shifts in the industry that will reshape Macau's future.

Date: Wednesday, 28 October, 2020
Time: 9:00a.m. - 10:30a.m. (Reception: 8:45am)
Venue: Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16
Baccara Ballroom, 6th floor

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DEB RIECHMANN,
WASHINGTON

Growing N. Korean nuclear threat awaits US election winner

WHERE'S the war? That's how President Donald Trump defends his North Korea policy at campaign rallies even though he's joined the list of U.S. presidents unable to stop the ever-growing nuclear threat from Kim Jong Un. That threat will transcend the November election, no matter who wins.

Despite Trump's three meetings with Kim, the North Korean leader is expanding his arsenal. This month, Kim rolled out a shiny new, larger intercontinental ballistic missile during a nighttime parade in Pyongyang.

Arms experts said the missile could possibly fire multiple nuclear warheads at the United States. It serves as a reminder that despite Trump's boasts, North Korea remains one of the biggest dangers to U.S. national security.

North Korea hasn't been a major campaign issue, though it could surface in Thursday's debate, which is supposed to include a national security segment. Democrat Joe Biden has blasted Trump's chummy relationship with Kim, saying that, if elected, he would not meet the North Korean leader unless diplomats first draft a comprehensive agreement. Trump, meanwhile, predicts he can get a deal quickly if reelected, citing the dire conditions in North Korea.

Talk of a quick deal is probably just talk because there's no sign of significant contacts between Washington and Pyongyang, says Bruce Klingner, a research fellow at the Heritage Foundation and former CIA Korea deputy chief. He and other North Korea watchers say they are bracing for Kim to showcase his military might again after the U.S. election.

"North Korea already has an ICBM that can range all over the United States, down to Florida and beyond, so the only reason to have an even larger missile is to be able to carry a larger payload," Klingner said. He said it's likely that North Korea will "do something strongly provocative early next year, regardless of who is



June 30, 2019: Donald Trump meets Kim Jong Un at the border village of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone, South Korea

elected president."

North Korea is continuing to produce nuclear material, according to a Congressional Research Service report. In addition, between May 2019 and late March 2020, North Korea conducted multiple short-range ballistic missile tests in violation of United Nations Security Council prohibitions.

Multiple diplomatic initiatives during both Democratic and Republican administrations have failed to get North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons in exchange for sanctions relief. Trump dared to be different, opting for in-person meetings with Kim in Singapore, Hanoi and the Demilitarized Zone.

But despite the summits and exchanges of what Trump called "love" letters, his administration has been unable to get traction on denuclearizing North Korea. The last known working group meeting was last October.

Even so, Trump is still claiming victory, saying he's kept the U.S. out of war with North Korea.

"Where's the war?" he asked supporters last week in Greenville, North Carolina. He's used the same line in other campaign speeches in battle-

ground states.

"We have a good relationship with Kim Jong Un," he said in Freeland, Michigan. "Who knows what likely happens? All I know is we're not in war and that's OK."

Biden says that if he's elected, he will inherit a North Korean challenge that is worse than when Trump took office.

"After three made-for-TV summits, we still don't have a single concrete commitment from North Korea," Biden said in a statement on North Korea. "Not one missile or nuclear weapon has been destroyed. Not one inspector is on the ground. If anything, the situation has gotten worse."

He added: "North Korea has more capability today than when Trump began his 'love affair' with Kim Jong Un, a murderous tyrant who, thanks to Trump, is no longer an isolated pariah on the world stage." Biden has pledged to work with allies to press Kim to denuclearize.

Biden's advisers say the former vice president is not averse to sitting down with Kim, but not before a comprehensive negotiating strategy is outlined at working-level meetings by diplomats on both sides. The Biden campaign also

criticizes Trump for scaling back military exercises with South Korea.

North Korea typically fires off missiles or conducts tests in a show of force before key U.S. and South Korean elections. This time, experts predict, Kim will engage in saber-rattling after he knows who wins.

"Kim would like to deal with President Trump, rather than Biden," said Sue Mi Terry, a former intelligence analyst specializing in East Asia who is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. She said Kim does not want to make trouble for Trump by conducting a major provocation before the election. "In January," she said. "That's the time we need to watch out for it."

If Biden wins, the North Koreans will want to engage with the new administration from a position of strength, according to Victor Cha, who negotiated with North Korea during the George W. Bush administration. If Trump wins, Cha thinks the president might want to move quickly to begin negotiations because he went "all in" on his man-to-man diplomacy with Kim and doesn't want to accept personal defeat. AP

this day in history

1966 DOUBLE-AGENT BREAKS OUT OF JAIL

One of Britain's most notorious double-agents, George Blake, has escaped from prison in London after a daring break-out believed to have been masterminded by the Soviet Union.

Wardens at Wormwood Scrubs prison last saw him at the evening roll call, at 1730 GMT.

An hour-and-a-half later, his cell was discovered to be empty.

After a short search, the escape route was found.

Bars in a window at the end of a landing had been sawn away and a rope ladder hung down inside the prison wall.

Blake is believed to have taken advantage of the free association allowed between prisoners on Saturday afternoons in the long-term wing, where he had his cell.

He had served a little over five years of his 42-year sentence.

He was not under high security at the prison, and the privileges he enjoyed have been heavily criticised in the wake of his escape.

He was removed from the list of likely escapers after only a year, and wardens were said to have been lulled into a false sense of security by his seeming acceptance of his exceptionally long sentence.

Blake was charged under the Official Secrets Act in May 1961. During his trial, part of which was held in camera, he pleaded guilty to five counts of passing on secrets to the Soviet authorities.

He was sentenced to the maximum of 14 years on each of three counts, to run consecutively - a total of 42 years. It was the longest jail term any British court had handed down to an individual to date.

He spent nine years as a double-agent after being converted to Communism while a prisoner of war in Seoul, during the Korean War.

During this time, he is believed to have betrayed the names of more than 40 British agents to the Soviets. Many disappeared, and were thought to have been executed.

His actions devastated British secret service operations in the Middle East. He is believed to have passed on the names of almost every British agent working in Cairo, Damascus and Beirut.

Lord Parker, Lord Chief Justice, the judge sentencing him, likened his actions to treason, and said, "It is one of the worst that can be envisaged other than in a time of war."



Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

After escaping from Wormwood Scrubs, George Blake made his way to Moscow, where he has lived ever since in a state-owned flat.

He left his three children behind, divorcing his wife and starting a new family in Russia. Once in the USSR, he was treated as a national hero.

He published his autobiography, *No Other Choice*, in 1990. He received about £60,000 from the book's British publisher before the government stepped in to freeze the remaining £90,000 he had been promised.

In May 2003, he accused the British government of breaching his human rights by confiscating the money. He was awarded £5,000 compensation in September 2006.

In a television interview broadcast by the state television channel in 2002 to celebrate his 80th birthday, he described the years he has spent in Russia as "the happiest of my life".

He has always insisted that none of the spies he betrayed was executed.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

HUAWEI, CHINA FIRMS SAID TO SEEK CURBS ON NVIDIA'S ARM DEAL

CHINESE technology companies including Huawei Technologies Co. have expressed strong concerns to local regulators about Nvidia Corp.'s proposed acquisition of Arm Ltd., people familiar with the matter said, potentially jeopardizing the \$40 billion semiconductor deal.

Several of the country's most influential tech firms have been lobbying the State Administration for Market Regulation to either reject the transaction or impose conditions to ensure their access to Arm technology, the people said. Chief among their concerns is that Nvidia may force the British firm to cut off Chinese clients, they said, asking not to be identified discussing private deliberations.

China's fear is that Arm - whose semiconductor designs and architecture are central to most of the world's electronics from smartphones to supercomputers - will become yet another pawn in a U.S.-Chinese struggle for tech supremacy. Nvidia is buying the British firm from Japan's SoftBank Group Corp., bringing it under American jurisdiction and theoretically threatening its cherished status as a neutral party in the chip industry. SoftBank's shares erased gains Wednesday to close slightly lower in Tokyo.

Any review of the deal in Beijing is likely to be colored by what it perceives as growing U.S. attempts to contain its largest technology companies. It has the power to approve the deal because China is the world's largest market for semiconductors, importing about \$300 billion worth of chips annually.



Any review of the deal in Beijing is likely to be colored by what it perceives as growing US attempts to contain its largest technology companies

That dependence on foreign silicon may convince regulators there to try and wring major concessions from Nvidia to preserve the Arm relationship, for instance by keeping the business independent and separate.

"I doubt why China would make it easy, since allowing Nvidia to take over Arm could worsen Huawei's access to the U.K. company's chip design," Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Anthea Lai said. Arm designs are fundamental to a plethora of the company's products, including its Kirin smartphone processors, Kunpeng server chips and Ascend for AI applications.

A Huawei representative declined to comment. The Chinese regulatory agency didn't

respond to calls and a faxed request for comment. Nvidia representatives pointed to remarks this month from Chief Executive Officer Jensen Huang, who expressed confidence the deal will pass muster.

"As soon as we explain the rationale of the transaction and our plans, the regulators around the world will realize that these are two complementary companies," Huang said at Arm's developer conference. "The two companies being complementary when combined will create new innovations, which is good for the market."

Nvidia's record deal to buy Arm was always expected to encounter major hurdles from regulators in countries sparring

over trade, as well as customers concerned the transaction will limit competition and unfairly favor Arm's future owner. The Chinese watchdog has yet to view a formal application for approval, but the opposition there is likely to be fiercest given its reliance on American technology at a time of mounting U.S. hostility. Beijing's authority has proven fatal for at least one previous chip deal: Qualcomm Inc. gave up its pursuit of NXP Semiconductors NV in 2018 after failing to win approval from China over more than 21 months.

Clearance in China will likely be the biggest challenge and take the most time. Because China's government could

use Nvidia's deal approval as a pawn in its trade conflicts with the U.S., as some believe it did with Qualcomm-NXP, it's difficult to predict yet whether the purchase will clear there. Still, the ability to impose conditions allows China to extract advantageous licensing terms for Chinese companies, which may be viewed as the better route.

China has determined it must build its own world-class chip industry, given rising tensions with the U.S. administration of Donald Trump. That goal is unlikely to be affected by the American elections in November, although the outcome may change the dynamics between the two countries and by extension the Arm review.

Nvidia is a major provider of processors for computers and high-end computing, pitting it against players from Intel Corp. to Qualcomm and Huawei. And Arm's designs and instruction set - the code used by chips to communicate with software - are an integral element of phones, self-driving cars and billions of sensors. They're also growing more essential for servers and laptops.

The Cambridge, U.K.-based company has thrived on its neutrality as the Switzerland of the industry: it licenses technology to hundreds of companies, competing with none of them. While the Nvidia acquisition threatens this, executives have argued it's in their best interest to maintain Arm's neutrality to avoid alienating potential customers.

The deal still needs sign-offs from China, the U.K., the European Union and the U.S., a process that often requires government agencies to solicit or be open to comment from customers and competitors. Nvidia and Arm have said they're confident they'll get through it but it may take as long as 18 months to secure the necessary approvals. **BLOOMBERG**

CORPORATE BITS

Shine Spa at Sheraton Grand Macao rolls out treatment packages



Shine Spa at Sheraton Grand Macao is offering a new range of great value offers and treatment packages, available now until December 19 and starting from MOP588, the integrated property has announced in a statement.

Paying homage to the five elements of traditional Chinese medicine, treatments at Shine Spa offer guests Elemental Herbology products that incorporate the restorative benefits of the five elements of Feng Shui - Wood,

Fire, Earth, Metal and Water - and focus on skin nutrition to increase vitality and youthfulness.

For a special weekday escape, guests can enjoy the 'Weekday Rejuvenation' 60-minute Shine Spa Signature massage, which is available from Monday to Thursday from MOP588.

A 'Weekend Spa Getaway' is also available, priced at MOP780 for a 60-minute treatment and MOP980 for a 90-minute treatment. Special offers are available should the guest brings a friend.

A 'Shine from Head to Toe' is also available in the salon, allowing hair salon guests to enjoy a 50% discount on spa treatments on the same day.

Lai Heen at The Ritz-Carlton launches two new tasting menus



The Michelin-starred Lai Heen at The Ritz-Carlton, Macau has introduced two tasting menus to feature the flavors crafted by the restaurant's Executive Chef, Jackie Ho, which capture the essence of contemporary Cantonese cuisine.

Guests will be able to indulge in an array of dishes in the "Signature Lunch Experience," priced at MOP500 per person. The appetizer platter is made up of dim sum choices such as the Deep-fried Wonton in Thai Sauce and the Steamed Pork

Dumpling with Cuttlefish and Sakura Shrimp.

Chef Jackie showcases his cooking skills with the Wok-fried Wagyu Beef and Foie Gras with Thai Basil, layered with a crispy rice cracker shell, and topped with diced foie gras and Australian M6 Wagyu striploin, as well as a hint of sweet basil leaves to enliven the aroma.

The "Degustation Dinner Journey," meanwhile, is a luxurious 8-course adventure featuring Chef Jackie's contemporary interpretations on classic Cantonese cuisine. Priced at MOP1,000 per person, the journey starts with Lai Heen's signature Barbecued Iberico Pork and Crispy Taro Paste Puff.



David Byrne, foreground, in a scene from "David Byrne's American Utopia"

As for Byrne, at 68 a remarkable font of quirky energy, he shifts seamlessly from somber moments like this to ebullient renditions of Talking Heads classics like "I Zimbra," "Once in a Lifetime," and "Road to Nowhere." But nothing gets the audience out of their seats like the rollicking version here of "Burning Down the House." Chances are you won't stay in yours.

On the show's closing day in February — I happened to be there with my sister and cousin — there was happy news during curtain calls. Byrne announced to cheers that the show would return in September.

Then the pandemic happened. The show has just announced a return for September 2021 — a year later than planned. Until that one fine day, let's thank Lee and Byrne for giving us something a little better — no, a lot better — than merely the next best thing.

"David Byrne's American Utopia," an HBO Films release, is unrated by the Motion Picture Association of America. Running time: 105 minutes.★★★★

DRIVE IN

Spike Lee, David Byrne take us on a hypnotic journey

JOCELYN NOVECK

EVER since the pandemic darkened theaters earlier this year, sending the entire performing arts world into a catastrophic state of limbo, we've seen all manner of creative virtual substitutes: Digital dance seasons, clever musical mashups, a live-captured version of "Hamilton."

Many of these have been good, some great. Yet none have truly matched the visceral experience many of us crave so profoundly: live performance, in a theater. And honestly, how could anything come close?

Well, now we have Spike Lee's mesmerizing film version of David Byrne's terrific Broadway concert "American Utopia," which feels so thrillingly alive, you may actually forget you're not in a theater. Or perhaps you'll feel like the stage has somehow been lifted from its moorings and delivered straight to your living room — or, as Byrne might prefer, right into your brain. In any case, this hypnotic film experience is a badly needed shot in the arm for all of us — music lovers, theater lovers, dance lovers, culture lovers, life lovers. It's also one of the best concert films in recent memory.

Of course, "David Byr-

ne's American Utopia," a major Broadway happening that was due to return to the Hudson Theatre this fall, feels like far more than a concert. It's based on Byrne's music, yes, from his 2018 album of the same name but also other solo work and some iconic Talking Heads tracks. But that's just the launching point.

The show, which one could broadly describe as a reflection on community and connectedness, is filled with pungent Byrniean commentary, on everything from brain function to Dadaism to climate change. "Meeting people is hard," he muses at one point. But he can also get more political, as when he chides Americans for low voter turnout, especially in local elections.

A crucial element of the show's success is its enormously talented multicultural supporting cast of 11 musicians and dancers, who hail from Brooklyn to Brazil. Dressed just like Byrne in silver-gray suits and bare feet, they play fascinating percussion instruments, and also sing and dance; everyone here does double or triple duty. Standouts include the exuberant Bobby Wooten III on bass and the elegant Angie Swan on guitar.

Then there's the endless-

sly inventive choreography by Annie-B Parson, not so much dancing as a holistic system of movement performed joyfully by lead dancers Chris Giarmo and Tendayi Kuumba. "I dance like this because it feels so damn good," goes the Byrne song "I Dance Like This," and yes, it does feel damn good, both to watch and to emulate. By the way, go ahead and try to get through this film without dancing yourself.

Lee's cameras constantly find new and exciting angles on the action (the cinematography is by Ellen Kuras) — overhead, underneath, behind the performers or half an inch from their faces. And yet we never glimpse a camera, even though 11 operators were involved.

The set is spare and stylish, surrounded by shimmering metallic curtains in the same silver-gray as the suits. "I thought, what if we could eliminate everything from the stage, except the stuff we cared about the most?" Byrne explains. "What would be left? ... Us, and you."

Lee has made a few additions to the Broadway show. For example, when Byrne and the cast sing Janelle Monae's stirring protest song "Hell You Talm-bout," chanting names of Black men and women

who died in racial violence or at the hands of police, Lee provides powerful vi-

suals and adds more recent names like Breonna Taylor and George Floyd.

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2020 ARTFEM WOMEN ARTISTS INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL OF MACAU

WEBINAR

3.8 B artfem

"2020 ARTFEM Women Artists International Biennial of Macau" will hold a sharing on October 23rd, 2020 (Friday) to invite renowned artist and Godmother of ARTFEM 2020, Xiang Jing to share. At the same time, exhibition curators and participating artist will also be present to exchange views. The event is held online at the same time, welcome to participate.

Moderator
Curator
Carlos Marreiros
President of the Organizing Committee

Participants
Curator Alice Kok
Curator Angela Li
Curator James Chu
Curator Leonor Veiga
Artist Kay Zhang
Artist Gigi Lee
Artist Vibha Galhotra
Artist Arahmaiani

Special Appearance
Artist and Godmother
Xiang Jing

Venue
Wynn Palace - Lotus Room

Date
23 / 10 / 2020 (Friday)

Time
5:30pm - 7:30pm

Language
English & Mandarin
(Simultaneous translation to English)

On-site Seminar
Registration QR Code (First come, first served)

Zoom Webinar Registration
Please send your name and telephone number to email creativealbergue@gmail.com

Registration Deadline
October 21st 6:00pm

Free Admission

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OPINION

World Views

Tara Lachapelle, Bloomberg



NETFLIX MAY TEST JUST HOW ESSENTIAL IT IS

Forget dinner and a movie. As cinemas remain desolate, cooler weather puts an end to the enjoyment of safe outdoor dining and Covid-19 roars back across the world, takeout and Netflix sound more appealing than ever. And when something's as in demand as Netflix is, prices go up.

Netflix Inc. released results for its latest quarter on Tuesday afternoon, showing it added fewer subscribers to its base than Wall Street analysts predicted. That sent the stock price tumbling 6% in after-hours trading. Still, investors don't need a report card to tell them of the increasing utility of the streaming-video service or its market dominance.

The changing leaves are making way for frostier temperatures, which pose an added challenge this year for eateries and other indoor locales given how the novel coronavirus thrives in not-well-ventilated confines. Movie theaters also have nothing to show for the time being. For those reasons, it's going to be the winter of Netflix — and Netflix knows it.

As the company improves its product, it will "occasionally go back and ask those members to pay a little bit more to keep that virtuous cycle of investment and value creation going," Greg Peters, Netflix's chief operating officer, said when asked about the potential for higher rates during Tuesday's pre-recorded earnings video call.

For further signs that Netflix is thinking differently about pricing: It's phasing out free trials, so forget about creating phony Gmail addresses to avert a steeper bill. At this point, Netflix doesn't need to offer free trials as the popularity of its shows travel by word of mouth and meme. Just before the September quarter ended, Nielsen reported that Netflix's "Ratched" starring Sarah Paulson was the top streaming program across Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+ and Hulu. In fact, Netflix hogged nine of the top 10 spots. It also expects to have a greater number of new original programs in 2021, though they may lean toward the second half of the year because of the Hollywood shutdown. And there's simply not much else on television lately.

While it may be in bad form to raise prices during a recession, users continue to suggest they wouldn't mind paying more for Netflix. That's because Netflix still provides the biggest bang for your buck relative to any other forms of TV entertainment, and that's been especially true during the Covid-19 pandemic. Netflix had a relative advantage going into the pandemic because unlike its rivals, most of its productions for the year were already wrapped up.

Regardless of how long the pandemic persists — and as much of a leader as it is now with 195 million paying members — Netflix's growth is slowing in the U.S., and so it's going to need another way to pay for its immense content bills. The company added only 2.2 million net new subscribers globally during the period, missing its own forecast of 2.5 million. And once Hollywood can fully return to filming, the company is likely to ramp up spending again and resume burning cash, as executives reiterated in Tuesday's letter. Plus, there's the impending Disney threat. Walt Disney Co. just announced a shakeup that entails reorganizing its media operations around its streaming initiatives. That means the full force and imaginative brilliance of Disney is behind its budding streaming business, and its studios have been given direct orders to make it their life's mission to propel Disney+. Until now, Disney+ has thrived mostly on brand power while lacking much in the way of actual new content — that's about to change.

The streaming wars haven't been as brutal as the moniker indicates. Netflix has been enjoying an easy lead, and executives may be thinking now's the time to cash in on its primacy before other fledgling rivals such as HBO Max figure out what they've been doing wrong.

[Abridged]

POPE ENDORSES SAME-SEX CIVIL UNIONS IN NEW DOCUMENTARY FILM

THE BUZZ

Pope Francis endorsed same-sex civil unions for the first time as pope while being interviewed for the feature-length documentary "Francesco," which premiered yesterday at the Rome Film Festival.

The papal thumbs-up came midway through the film that delves into issues Francis cares about most, including the environment, poverty, migration, racial and income inequality, and the people most affected by discrimination.

"Homosexual people have the right to be in a family. They are children of God," Francis said in one of his sit-down interviews

for the film. "What we have to have is a civil union law; that way they are legally covered."

While serving as archbishop of Buenos Aires, Francis endorsed civil unions for gay couples as an alternative to same-sex marriages. However, he had never come out publicly in favor of civil unions as pope.

The Jesuit priest who has been at the forefront in seeking to build bridges with gays in the church, the Rev. James Martin, praised the pope's comments as "a major step forward in the church's support for LGBT people."

CATHAY PACIFIC CUTS 8,500 JOBS, SHUTTERS REGIONAL AIRLINE

AP PHOTO



ZEN SOO

HONG Kong airline Cathay Pacific Airways said yesterday it would cut 8,500 jobs and shut a regional airline as it grapples with the plunge in air travel due to the pandemic.

About 5,300 employees based in Hong Kong and another 600 elsewhere will likely lose their jobs, and 2,600 unfilled positions will be cut. The cuts are about 24% of the company's workforce, Cathay Pacific said in a statement.

"The global pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on aviation and the hard truth is we must fundamentally restructure the group to survive," Cathay Pacific CEO Augustus Tang said in a statement.

"We have to do this to protect as many jobs as possible, and meet our responsibilities to the Hong Kong aviation hub and our customers," Tang said.

The company said it will also shut down Cathay Dragon, its regional airline unit, with operations ceasing yesterday. It will seek regulatory approval for most of the routes to be operated by Cathay Pacific and its budget airlines subsidiary HK Express.

The restructuring is aimed at reducing Cathay

Pacific's cash burn to 500 million Hong Kong dollars (\$64.5 million) a month, from about 1.5 billion Hong Kong dollars to 2 billion Hong Kong dollars a month currently, the company said.

The plan will cost about 2.2 billion Hong Kong dollars, it said.

The cuts are about 24% of the company's workforce, Cathay Pacific said

Executive pay cuts will continue throughout 2021 and there will be no pay increments for 2021 nor bonuses for this year for all Hong Kong employees, Cathay Pacific said. Ground staff will be offered a voluntary leave plan in the first half of next year.

In a news conference, Cathay Pacific Airways chairman Patrick Healy estimated that passenger levels will only return to pre-pandemic levels in 2024.

"The future remains highly uncertain. This crisis is deeper and the road to recovery slower and more patchy than anyone thought possible just

a few short months ago," he said.

Healy said Cathay Pacific is more affected than its peers as the airline is "100% reliant on cross-border travel," much of which has stopped as passengers remain wary of flying amid travel restrictions. Major destinations

such as mainland China and other countries like Singapore and Thailand have temporarily closed their borders to visitors.

Cathay Pacific will be operating at less than 25% of capacity for the first half of 2021, and under 50% of capacity for the rest of the year as a whole, Healy estimated. That might pick up in the second half of the year as travel constraints will hopefully ease, he said.

In June, Cathay Pacific raised 39 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$5 billion) in a recapitalization plan that gave the city's government a stake of about 6% in the airline.

The vice chairwoman of Cathay Pacific Airways Flight Attendants Union, Amber Suen, said in a news conference that the union is "completely disappointed" with the company's decision, and said there are others who worry that there may be future redundancies. AP

Australia A range of law enforcement and corruption agencies are examining a reported transfer of money from the Vatican that Italian media have speculated might be linked to the overturned convictions of Cardinal George Pell for child sex abuse. The national financial crime intelligence agency, two police forces and a public sector corruption watchdog have been drawn into the Vatican scandal, although details of what has piqued their interest in Australia remained scant.

AP PHOTO



UN More than 20 donors pledged nearly \$1 billion for the three countries at the epicenter of a humanitarian crisis in Africa's Sahel region for this year and over \$700 million for 2021 and beyond, the United Nations announced this week. U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the funds will help some 10 million people in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger with nutrition, food, health services, water and sanitation, shelter and education.

AP PHOTO



Vatican A day after donning a face mask for the first time during a liturgical service, Pope Francis was back to his mask-less old ways yesterday despite surging coronavirus infections across Europe and growing criticism of his behavior and the example he is setting. Francis shunned a face mask again during his general audience in the Vatican auditorium, and didn't wear one when he greeted a half-dozen mask-less bishops at the end.

AP PHOTO



Nigerians protesting against police brutality stayed on the streets in Lagos yesterday, breaking the government curfew following a night of chaotic violence in which demonstrators were fired upon, sparking global outrage. Shots were fired as young demonstrators set up barricades, causing numerous injuries although officials said no deaths.