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CTM 40th ANNIVERSARY

A GROUP OF TAXI DRIVERS IS UNDERTAKING LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THE TAXI METER COMPANY ON GROUNDS OF 'NON-CONSENSUAL FEES'

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COURT UPHOLDS VENETIAN LAWSUIT AGAINST EX-GREEK MYTHOLOGY CASINO DIRECTOR

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THE MACAU GRAND PRIX MUSEUM IS FINALLY READY TO OPEN ITS DOORS TO THE PUBLIC FROM NEXT WEEK FOR A TRIAL PERIOD: MGTO

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AP PHOTO

Indonesia A tourist bus plunged into a ravine on the main island of Java after its brakes apparently malfunctioned, killing at least 27 people and injuring 39 others, police and rescuers said yesterday. The bus was carrying a group of Islamic junior high school students, teachers and parents from the West Java province town of Subang when the accident happened.



AP PHOTO

Indonesia A rumbling volcano on Sumatra island unleashed an avalanche of searing gas clouds flowing down its slopes during eruption yesterday. No casualties were reported. Mount Sinabung in North Sumatra province was shooting smoke and ash as high as 1,000 meters into the air and hot ash clouds traveled up to 3 kilometers southeast.



AP PHOTO

Malaysia A court ruled that non-Muslims can use the word "Allah" to refer to God, in a major decision over a divisive issue for religious freedom in the Muslim-majority country. Two ethnic Malay political parties immediately voiced concern and yesterday urged the government to challenge the ruling. The High Court deemed unconstitutional a 35-year-old government ban on the usage of Allah and three other Arabic words by Christian publications.

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Top China, US diplomats to meet in Alaska next week P7



CITYU DORMITORY BUILDING TO UNDERGO MAJOR TRANSFORMATION

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THE NINE ARTICLES

- Improving the electoral system of the HKSAR must fully and faithfully implement the policy of "One country, two systems" under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy, uphold the constitutional order in the HKSAR as established by the Constitution and the Basic Law, ensure the administration of Hong Kong by Hong Kong people with patriots as the main body, effectively improve the governance efficacy of the HKSAR, and safeguard the right to vote and the right to stand for election of permanent residents of the HKSAR.

- The HKSAR shall establish an Election Committee which is broadly representative, suited to the HKSAR's realities, and representative of the overall interests of its society. The Election Committee shall be responsible for electing the Chief Executive designate and part of the members of the LegCo. The Election Committee shall also be responsible for nominating candidates for the Chief Executive and LegCo members, as well as for other matters. The Election Committee shall be composed of 1,500 members from the following five sectors: industrial, commercial and financial sectors; the professions; grassroots, labour, religious and other sectors; LegCo members and representatives of district organizations; Hong Kong deputies to the NPC, Hong Kong members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and representatives of Hong Kong members of related national organizations.

- The Chief Executive shall be elected by the Election Committee and appointed by the Central People's Government. Candidates for the office of the Chief Executive shall be nominated jointly by not less than 188 members of the Election Committee, among whom the number of members of each sector should be not less than 15. The Election Committee shall elect the Chief Executive designate by secret ballot on a one-person-one-vote basis. The election of the Chief Executive designate shall require a simple majority vote of all the members of the Election Committee.

- The LegCo of the HKSAR shall be composed of 90 members in each term. Members of the LegCo shall include members returned by the Election Committee, those returned by functional constituencies, and those by geographical constituencies through direct elections.

- A candidate qualification review committee of the HKSAR shall be established. The committee shall be responsible for reviewing and confirming the qualifications of candidates for the Election Committee members, the Chief Executive, and the LegCo members. The HKSAR shall improve the system and mechanisms related to qualification review, to ensure that the qualifications of candidates are in conformity with the Basic Law, the Law on Safeguarding National Security in the HKSAR, the NPC Standing Committee's interpretation of Article 104 of the Basic Law, the NPC Standing Committee's decision on the qualification of HKSAR LegCo members, and provisions of relevant local laws of the HKSAR.

- The NPC Standing Committee is authorized to, in accordance with the decision on improving the electoral system of the HKSAR, amend Annex I: Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Annex II: Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures, to the Basic Law.

- In accordance with the decision and the Basic Law's Annex I and Annex II amended by the NPC Standing Committee, the HKSAR shall amend relevant local laws, and organize and regulate election activities accordingly.

- The Chief Executive of the HKSAR shall submit in a timely manner reports to the Central People's Government on relevant important situations including the institutional arrangements for elections of the HKSAR and the organization of the elections.

- The decision shall go into effect as of the date of promulgation.

CHINA APPROVES PLANS TO OVERHAUL HONG KONG ELECTIONS

HONEY TSANG

THE National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, passed a resolution to reconstruct Hong Kong's electoral system yesterday to ensure the city is administered only by "people who love the country and love Hong Kong."

The nine-article resolution was ratified by an almost-unanimous vote — with 2,895 votes in favor, zero votes against, and one abstention — yesterday afternoon, which was the last day of China's annual parliamentary meetings, Two Sessions.

The Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council pledged to firmly support and implement a decision on improving the electoral system of the Hong Kong Special.

The approved proposal heralds an imminent overhaul in Hong Kong's electoral system.

China's state-run news agency Xinhua released a statement yesterday following the ballot, confirming that the Election Committee responsible for electing the city's Chief Executive (CE) next year will be composed of 1,500 members. The change translates to an addition of 300 seats from the previous 1,200 members.

The Election Committee will be expanded from the current four sectors to five sectors, each composed of 300 members. The new fifth sector will be made up of Hong Kong deputies to the NPC, Hong Kong members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), and representatives of Hong Kong members of related national organizations — who are deemed China's loyalists.

The other four sectors, namely the industrial, com-



mercial and financial sectors; the professional sector grassroots, labour, religious and other sectors; and Legislative Council (LegCo) members and representatives of district organizations, will continue to stay at 300 members each.

The bar for the CE election will also be lifted. A candidate running for CE election would need to garner at least 188 nominations from the Election Committee, compared to the 150 nominations adopted by the current system. Each candidate must secure at least 15 votes from each of the five sectors.

Apart from the above shake-ups, the number of seats at the LegCo, Hong Kong's legislature, will be increased from 70 to 90 seats in each term — who will be elected via the Election Committee, functional constituencies and geographical constituencies through direct elections.

A new watchdog body, responsible for "reviewing and confirming the qualifications" of candidates for the Election Committee, LegCo, and the CE, will also be established to ensure all

candidates conform to requirements warranted by the central government.

To this end, the NPC Standing Committee will amend Annex I and Annex II in Hong Kong's basic law — which stipulate the selecting methods for the city's CE and LegCo members, respectively.

Meanwhile, the 117 seats within the Election Committee elected by district councilors, dominated by the city's democratic party after the 2019 polls, are expected to be dismissed, according to South China Morning Post (SCMP).

The sweeping amendments to the electoral system, some critics said, are expected to bear greater clout to suppress opposition voices in town, SCMP stated.

In Xinhua's statement, the amendments are to "improve" the city's electoral system, ensuring it stays in line with the principles of "One country, two systems" and the city to be managed by patriots.

Before the passage of the resolution, Hong Kong's CE Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor stressed in a press

briefing that the reform is a "timely, lawful and constitutional" move, and Hong Kong would still head towards a "greater democracy" after the transformation. She also rebutted that the shake-up is intended to eradicate the opposition camp.

"The Macau SAR Government resolutely supports and backs the passing, today, of a legal proposal at the National People's Congress (NPC) on improving the electoral system of the Hong Kong SAR," Macau's government released a statement yesterday in support of the approved resolution.

Earlier, Macau's Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng also declared his full support for the electoral reform in an interview with Chinese media during the Two Sessions. He stressed that Macau has had Article 23 of the Macau Basic Law in place since 2009, which is essential to safeguard national security and shield against any foreign interference in Macau.

On March 5, Wang Chen, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, first announced the draft proposal to reform Hong Kong's electoral system, stressing the intention is to rectify the "loopholes and deficiencies" in the existing electoral system, and to prevent any further "rioting and turbulence" in Hong Kong.

Ever since, the decision has sparked diverse opinions from countries and cities worldwide.

Earlier, the city's 47 opposition figures were charged with subversion under the national security law, which came into effect in Hong Kong last June. They were all involved in an unofficial election which authorities associated with an objective to overthrow the city's government.

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Landlords strive to retain lease: Savills

SOME shops were not rented despite landlords' willingness to lower the rent by half, Patrick Chan, vice director of Shop Sales and Lease at Savills said.

The resumption of travel to Macau for mainland tourists has not boosted tourist arrivals in the city, making it tight for retail operations in tourist districts. Chan revealed that landlords are willing to negotiate on rent with their tenants every quarter, in the hopes of retaining the contract. The vice director said it was because it can be hard for the landlords to secure a new contract if the existing tenants decide to leave.

He added that although some landlords agreed to lower rent to half of pre-Covid levels, tenants were still difficult to find. He explained that companies are more vigilant in terms



of the future.

For example, he said, if a shop's rental is HKD300,000 per month, the tenant needs to at least generate HKD600,000 of revenue per month, not taking into account storage and salary and wages costs. This has made it difficult for most business operators.

The number of residential and commercial property sales plunged in the

first half of the year in 2020. The situation was similar to 2014, when the property market was reeling from a sharp contraction in gross gaming revenue.

Retailers then pinned hopes on an influx of Chinese visitors to Macau in the middle of January, most of whom were expected to come for Lunar New Year shopping activities, to push receipts to new heights.

However, the holiday visitors fell short of the government's expectation as visitor arrivals to Macau during the entire week only totaled 90,615, down 65.3% from the prior-year period.

As previously reported by the Times, local property agents are seeing small businesses and neighborhood shops closing, stressing that 2021 seems to portend even darker days than 2020.

There were agents who claimed that since the year started, requests for contract termination have been growing.

Most of the requests come from small shop tenants that are closing their shops and want to terminate their rental contracts.

Earlier this year, JLL remarked that its outlook for the city's recovery is positive, despite estimating that about half a year will be needed to return to full throttle after the pandemic is under control. The emergence of the Covid-19 vaccinations was seen as shot in the arm to not only contain the spread of the virus, but also to save the real estate market. **AL/LV**

TAXI DRIVER GROUP PREPARES TO SUE METER COMPANY OVER COMPULSORY FEE

A group comprised of a number of taxi drivers is in the process of taking legal action against the taxi meter company on the accusation of "non-consensual fees."

The concerned group has disclosed that they have made a down payment to their lawyer. The 50 drivers forming the group are planning to sue the company for charging fees on no legal grounds.

The group accuses the company of forcing them to pay a deposit of MOP5,000, in addition to a monthly service fee of MOP300.

Meanwhile, the group has also revealed that two taxis, whose taxi meters had been newly installed, failed

the government vehicle test. It required the drivers to pay extra money in order to obtain a re-examination. The group, therefore, doubts the reliability of the new taxi meter.

Meanwhile, director-general of Associação dos Comerciantes e Operários de Automóveis de Macau, Leng Sai Vai, revealed that the government is paying only MOP150 per month to the company.

Moreover, approximately 500 taxi drivers have, as of the end of last year, refused to pay the monthly service fee.

He hopes the government can conduct further extensive communications with the taxi driver industry to clear up confusion. **AL**

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PJ WARNS OF FAKE TDM HIRING INFORMATION

The Judiciary Police (PJ) has recently received reports on fake recruitment by an entity pretending to be the local broadcaster TDM. A mainland resident has been "employed" by an entity claiming to be Macau Television Station, which asked the victim to pay RMB6,000 for a working visa. The victim called the TDM for verification. The PJ reminds members of the public to be vigilant against similar employment traps.

LABOR BUREAU RELEASES ENGLISH ONLINE COURSE

The Labour Affairs Bureau has recently released an online course in English on occupational safety in the hotel and catering industries. Meanwhile, the bureau has also planned to release a course in Portuguese in June. The release of the English and Portuguese courses are intended to cater to the needs of non-Chinese speaking communities in Macau. After completing the courses, individuals may apply to take the exam for the Occupational Safety Card. The bureau will also release more informational pamphlets in Tagalog, Vietnamese, Bahasa Indonesia and Burmese.

EDUCATION REGULATOR TO CONDUCT RAINSTORM DRILL

In association with the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau, the Fire Services Bureau, and several other public entities as well as some media organizations, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) will conduct a drill on March 14 to simulate the arrangements to take place during the issuance of rainstorm signals. The DSEDJ reminds the population that simulation text messages and announcements will be issued at 6 a.m. that day on the bureaus' websites and participating media organizations' platforms. The drill is expected to take about an hour.

COURT UPHOLDS VENETIAN ACTION AGAINST EX-GREEK MYTHOLOGY CASINO DIRECTOR

ANTHONY LAM

VENETIAN Macau Limited (VML), owned by gaming concessionaire Sands China Ltd., has had its legal actions in Macau against Chen Mei Huan, former director of the closed Greek Mythology Casino, upheld by the Court of First Instance.

The court announced on March 1 that Chen is in a state of bankruptcy and is ordered to repay the debt she owed to VML within 60 days. However, the whereabouts of the woman is unknown.

Previously, VML filed a lawsuit against the woman in Hong Kong. A Hong Kong court ruled against Chen in 2014, ordering the woman to repay a debt of HKD117 million to the Macau company.

In March 2019, as the woman could not repay the debt, VML filed another lawsuit with the Hong



Kong Judiciary, asking the court to issue a bankruptcy order against the woman.

The lawsuit, however, was not accepted by the Hong Kong Judiciary. It justified its refusal on the grounds that Chen had no business operations in Hong Kong between 2016 and 2019, which left

the court with no jurisdiction over the situation.

According to the Macau court, Chen's latest known residences or addresses are located in several places across the city, which includes residential and commercial buildings such as the Iat Teng Hou Commercial Center and the Edifi-

cio Wang On in Fai Chi Kei.

Chen started a company with Ng Man Sun, the former owner of the then New Century Hotel and the casino, to invest in the real estate market in Hong Kong. In 2006, Chen invested more than HKD100 million into the company to purchase the then New Century Hotel.

In 2014, Ng and Chen mortgaged the hotel to an offshore company owned by Alvin Chau, current boss of the Suncity Group, for a loan of HKD1.5 billion. They failed to repay the debt to Chau, so Chau obtained the ownership of the hotel.

However, Ng argued that Chen sold the hotel privately, making Chau's acquisition of the hotel difficult.

In 2013, Chen was arrested by the Judiciary Police over allegations of issuing dishonored cheques totaling HKD3 million.

REVAMPED GP MUSEUM REOPENS DOORS NEXT WEEK

RENATO MARQUES

AFTER a long period of closure for a complete renovation, the Macau Grand Prix (GP) Museum is finally ready to open its doors to the public, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) announced in a media invitation to preview the museum yesterday.

According to the information from the MGTO, the museum should open its doors to the public from next week for a trial period, inviting specific groups to experience and try some of the new facilities and equipment.

As the Times reported in late January this year, the director of the MGTO, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, announced that the museum would finally open its doors within the first quarter of 2021.

Fernandes noted that despite the main construction works ending last year, the museum was not able to open due to delayed interior decoration works.

According to the official, there were delivery delays of some items to Macau, including a total of eight wax figures produced by the world-famous "Madame Tussauds wax



museum," as well as interactive games, which are currently being installed.

She also added that the main issue was that the installation of such items required technical expertise from people abroad. The travel and border restrictions currently in place made it impossible to bring them to Macau.

As also previously announced, in the first phase, the museum will allow local people and groups to visit and experience the museum as a preview to test all the operations before fully opening to the general public and tourists.

The museum will be fully opened to the public during the second or third quarter of this year after other support facilities,

such as a cafeteria, become operational.

The revamp of the Grand Prix Museum was tendered in 2017 and was originally intended to be completed in November 2018.

Consecutive delays to the project led to the conclusion of the main construction works only at the end of 2020. According to the latest information from the government, the initial budget of around 300 million patacas has also been significantly exceeded, with the latest forecast pointing to a total cost of around 830 million patacas, almost three-times the initial budget.

The museum closed its doors temporarily to undergo renovation works on 1 July 2017.

AREIA PRETA RESIDENTIAL PROJECT TO COMMENCE IN H1

LYNZY VALLES

MACAUI Urban Renewal Limited (MUR) has been granted a lease concession over the future residential project in Areia Preta where construction works will commence in the first half of this year and are scheduled to be completed in the second half of 2024, the company has announced in a statement.

MUR recently presented the layout plan as well as the tendering and construction schedule for Lot P Temporary Housing and Home Swap Project to the local construction sector during the company's visits to local associations in a bid to brief the sector about the project's details and scale for their preparation.

The overall plan and the draft design were completed last year. Lot P, where the failed Horizon project was planned, consists of three land lots: Lot A, Lot B and Lot C. Lot A includes six residential towers providing about 2,000 Home Swap units that are for eligible Pearl Horizon pre-sale buyers, who had been affected by the cancellation of the previous land concession, to purchase. Lot B and Lot C include eight residential towers providing about 2,800 Temporary Housing units that are designated for property owners affected by urban renewal projects to rent.

The design of the buildings will adopt a podium design concept, including a podium green roof, retail space, a public transport interchange, two public roads, an emergency passageway for fire engines, pedestrian zones and a footbridge, among other amenities to connect to nearby communities and improve auxiliary facilities in the area.

MUR will adopt a pre-qualification tendering approach for the project's four tenders, respectively, including the Lot A Home Swap Construction, and the Lot B and Lot C Temporary Housing Construction. Lot C will be divided into two tenders according to the design layout plan.

In addition, MUR is currently formulating the purchase method and guidelines for Home Swap units. MUR expects the arrangement for flat unit selection process for eligible buyers, as stipulated under the current legal framework, to take place this year.

CityU dormitory building to undergo major transformation

RENATO MARQUES

THE seven-story building located at the Avenida da Praia Grande 701-723 which has been used as one of the student dormitories of the City University of Macau (CityU) is expected to undergo a major transformation and will be at least tripled in height.

The information comes after the approval of the urban conditions plan (PCU) made in the last meeting of the Urban Planning Committee (CPU).

According to the plan, the building connects not only with the Avenida da Praia Grande but also with Rua Formosa 12-14. It will have a maximum height capped at 75 meters, with the number of stories ranging between 20 and 24.

According to the PCU approved by the committee late last month, the new building needs to have a parking lot, in which a minimum of 25% of the parking places need to be reserved for motorcycles.

To avoid traffic issues, the building



also needs to have a waiting space of at least one vehicle for accessing the parking lot without blocking the flow of traffic.

The building will also include a podium with a leisure area and garden space in which the uncovered area needs to have a minimum of 50% plants, while the

lower area of the building can be used for common spaces as well as common use facilities such as a clubhouse.

The purpose of the building is non-industrial, hence will only include residential or commercial units.

The PCU, which was subjected

to public consultation for a period of 15 days between February 3 and 17, received only one opinion in which it was noted that the land plot is located just outside the limits of the buffer zone of the historical center, adding that the maximum height allowed for the building (of 75 meters) would hinder the view of the skyline, and hide the world heritage listed buildings.

This opinion also notes that for the approval of the PCU of the current buildings, the government has been using the rules provided in the Chief Executive Order No. 83/2008, which has been criticized for "lacking in revision and updates" and was never subjected to public consultation before being enforced in the first place.

The same opinion also calls for more effective and proactive intervention of the Cultural Affairs Bureau within the scope of the city's Master Plan to respond to the calls of the society and increase requirements aimed to protect the urban landscape of Macau.

IFT, IPM INCREASE TUITION FEES

Local students are now required to pay MOP30,000 in annual fees at the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT), MOP6,000 more than the fees currently. Students from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan are required to pay MOP50,000, while students from other countries are required to pay MOP63,000 – the latter having increased by MOP9,100. At the Macao Polytechnic Institute (IPM), local students; students from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan; and international students will now pay MOP120,000, MOP192,000 and MOP252,000 for a bachelor's degree programme respectively.

ADVISED REGULATION ON STAMP DUTY TAX TO TAKE EFFECT ON MARCH 31

The advised regulation on stamp duty tax will come into force on March 31. In the new regulation, the government has scrapped 21 stamp duty items in a bid to simplify the settlement of tax and its collection procedures. The adjustments are intended to align with the growing trend of electronic payments and to support the city's economic development. An explanatory seminar on the new regulation will be held on March 20.

NOMINATION FORMS FOR AL ELECTION AVAILABLE

The nomination form for the Legislative Assembly (AL) poll is now available in the public administration building at Rua do Campo. Interested parties who wish to organize a nomination committee and run for the upcoming AL election can take the form from the aforementioned location or online. Nomination forms are required to be submitted by June 15, and the AL election will be on September 12.

HEALTH BUREAU LAUNCHES SELF-AIDS TESTING PILOT SCHEME

The Health Bureau has launched a self-AIDS testing pilot scheme. Interested individuals aged 18 years or above can register and purchase a testing kit online, which can be collected in a smart locker later. The individual can conduct the AIDS testing on his or her own, and no longer needs to show up at clinics for testing.

THE World Press Photo (WPP) Contest nominated a total of 45 photographers from 28 countries for the 2021 event, the WPP announced.

According to the WPP, this year's nominated photographic works reflect the unprecedented year of 2020, which was "marked by the Covid-19 pandemic and social justice protests around the globe."

"The nominees share a diversity of interpretations and perspectives to these and other urgent issues such as the climate crisis, transgender people's rights, and territorial conflicts," the WPP

Nominees of 2021 World Press Photo Contest unveiled



added.

The contest is currently under the judges' final evaluation, who will

unveil the grand winners of the 2021 contest on April 15.

Among the nominees

are several photographic works that focus on the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes works from

Danish photographer Mads Nissen, Indonesia's Joshua Irwandi, and Mexico's Iván Macías.

Only a few of this year's nominated works come from major international news agencies when compared with previous years, with independent and freelance photojournalists in the spotlight with many of the stories, especially those concerning Covid-19.

As for major conflicts that featured in the contest, a prominent theme of this year's works was the racial and social unrest in the USA as a result of the death of George Floyd, dubbed the "Black Lives Matter" movement. **RM**

EDUCATION

UM TO LAUNCH NEW DEGREES, TUITION FEE SURGES UP TO 40%

THE University of Macau (UM) will launch two new doctoral programmes in the 2021/2022 academic year, namely the Doctor of Education Programme, offered by the Faculty of Education, and the Doctor of Public Administration Programme, offered

by the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The university also announced in the statement that the Master of Science in Data Science programme, offered by the Institute of Collaborative Innovation, will include a new specialisation, namely

Smart Governance, and will revise three of its specialisations to Marketing Analytics, Computational Linguistics, and Analytics in Teaching and Learning.

A dispatch recently published in the Official Gazette indicated that the UM has increased its bachelor's

degree tuition fees for local residents by 21% for the upcoming school year.

The new tuition fees for these students in the four-year course is MOP120,000, while those in five-year programs is MOP150,000.

Overseas students, in-

cluding those from Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China, will see a staggering tuition fee hike of 40%. From the next academic year, they will be required to pay MOP104,200 per year – totaling to up to MOP521,000 for those in five-year degree programs. **LV**

BEIJING BLASTS BBC REPORT AFTER SUMMONING UK AMBASSADOR

CHINA is complaining anew about recent reporting by the BBC, days after summoning the British ambassador to Beijing to register displeasure over a recent article she penned defending press freedom.

The Chinese Embassy in London posted a statement on its website yesterday saying it had written to the BBC expressing "strong dissatisfaction" and urging the broadcaster to "abandon bias, correct its mistake and report China in a objective, fair and balanced manner."

On Tuesday, China's Foreign Ministry summoned Ambassador Caroline Wilson over her article posted on the embassy's Chinese microblog in which she said critical reporting of China did not imply hatred or disrespect for the country itself. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian on Wednesday said Wilson's article reflected her "deep-rooted ideological prejudices."

The criticism reflects deep Chinese anger both over the BBC's reporting on sensitive issues such

AP PHOTO



as the coronavirus outbreak and abuses against Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, and the British government's decision to open a pathway for residency and eventual citizenship for millions of Hong Kong residents.

China last month banned the BBC from the small number of hotels, residential compounds

and offices where it had been shown, in apparent retaliation for its reporting on China and Britain's revocation of the license of state-owned Chinese broadcaster CGTN.

Britain has condemned a Chinese crackdown on civil liberties in the former British colony of Hong Kong that has gathered

pace with the imposition last year of a sweeping national security law and the Chinese parliament's moves to eliminate even the possibility of government critics running for office in the semi-autonomous city.

Scores of activists have been rounded up and accused of violating the law, while free speech

and assembly have been severely curtailed.

In its letter, the Chinese Embassy singled out a BBC Radio 4 report titled "The Disinformation Dragon" that aired on Tuesday. The report made "groundless accusations against China on issues related to, among others, information, COVID-19 and diplomacy."

"China has always been a country of propriety and deeply values harmony. We have never been the one that starts provocations and have no intention to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries. It is the others who keep meddling in our domestic affairs and smearing China," the letter said.

In his criticism of Wilson's article, Zhao said China had stated to her its "solemn position on the relevant issue."

"Ambassador Wilson's article, with a confused logic, avoids all the facts, including the British media's disinformation and false reporting on China," Zhao said.

He accused Wilson of ignoring the alleged suppression of Chinese media in the West and of praising "the so-called Western experience in an arrogant tone" and making "irresponsible remarks about China's system and media." **MDT/AP**

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HONG KONG

COURT GRANTS BAIL TO FIFTH ACTIVIST, JAILS ANOTHER

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

AHong Kong court yesterday granted bail to a fifth pro-democracy activist and former lawmaker but revoked bail for another, after both were charged with subversion under the national security law.

They're part of a group of 47 activists and former lawmakers who were arrested over their involvement in an unofficial primary election last year, aimed at determining the strongest candidates in a legislative election that was later postponed due to the pandemic.

Authorities say the primary was part of a plot to paralyze the government and subvert state power, as at least some of the activists had planned to vote down major bills and force Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam to resign if their pro-democracy camp had gained a legislative majority.

The city's High Court yesterday granted bail to former Democratic Party lawmaker Helena Wong, who was one of the candidates in the primaries.

Her bail conditions include surrendering all travel documents and observing a curfew. She is also banned from speaking with foreign officials, making speeches or engaging in acts that violate the national security law, and running for office.

Despite releasing Wong, the court revoked bail granted to another activist, district councillor Ng Kin-wai. Ng will be remanded in custody.

Both Wong and Ng are part of a group of 15 defendants who were initially granted bail last week, although they were all later kept in custody while the Department of Justice filed an appeal.

Prosecutors have since dropped their appeal against four other defendants, who were released last Friday.

The other nine defendants will have their bail reviewed on Saturday and Monday.

The remaining 32 defendants who last week were either denied bail or withdrew their applications for bail will continue to stay behind bars. The next hea-

ring is May 31.

The mass charges against the activists marked the most sweeping action taken against the city's pro-democracy camp since the national security law was implemented last June.

Under Hong Kong's common law system, defendants are usually granted bail for non-violent crimes. But the national security law removed the presumption of bail, with a clause saying it will not be granted unless the judge has sufficient grounds to believe defendants "will not continue to commit acts endangering national security."

The national security law criminalizes secession, subversion, collusion with foreign forces to intervene in the city's affairs as well as terrorism. Serious offenders could face life imprisonment.

Critics say the law, which was imposed by Beijing in response to sometimes violent pro-democracy protests in 2019, erodes the rights and freedoms promised to Hong Kong under the "one country, two systems" framework. **MDT/AP**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

SENIOR U.S. and Chinese officials will meet next week in their first face-to-face talks since President Joe Biden took office to confront growing strains in the relationship between the world's two largest economies.

The White House and State Department said early today [Macau time] that Secretary of State Antony Blinken and national security adviser Jake Sullivan will see China's top foreign policy officials, State Councilor Wang Yi and the foreign affairs chief of the Chinese Communist Party, Yang Jiechi, on March 18 in Anchorage, Alaska, the Associated Press has reported.

The announcement was confirmed later yesterday by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian.

According to Xinhua, Zhao said that China urges the U.S. side to view China and China-U.S. relations in an objective and rational way, abandon the Cold War and zero-sum mentality, respect China's sovereignty, security and development interests, stop interfering in China's internal affairs, focus on cooperation and manage differences in accordance with the spirit of the conversation between the two heads of state, and bring China-U.S. relations back on the right track of sound and stable development.

Top China, US diplomats to meet over intense divides



Wang Yi and Antony Blinken

Earlier, in his first appearance before Congress since being confirmed as America's top diplomat, Blinken told lawmakers the meeting would be an opportunity to discuss intense disagreements over trade and human rights, as well as the coronavirus pandemic. Cooperation on North Korea and its nuclear weapons program are also likely to top the agenda.

In his testimony, Blinken also touched on the administration's positions toward Iran, Cuba, Ethiopia, Russia and Venezuela. But he gave no hints about any potential

policy changes. In each case, he pledged to work with lawmakers on their concerns, and his staid demeanor stood in sharp contrast to the often confrontational tone that his predecessor, Mike Pompeo, adopted in similar settings.

The meeting with the Chinese officials in Alaska will come just days after Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin see their Japanese and South Korean counterparts in Tokyo and Seoul to reaffirm U.S. treaty alliances with those nations. It will also come less than a week after Biden holds a vir-

tual summit with the leaders of India, Japan and Australia to discuss Indo-Pacific policy.

"It's pretty simple," Blinken told the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "This is an important opportunity for us to lay out in very frank terms our concerns."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said earlier that the meeting would be "an opportunity to address a wide range of issues, including ones where we have deep disagreements."

"We'll be frank in explaining how Beijing's actions and beha-

viour challenge security, prosperity and our concerns about challenges they pose to the security and values of the United States and our allies and partners," she told reporters. She added that the talks would also focus on areas, such as climate change, where the U.S. and China can cooperate. "We approach our relationship with the Chinese from a position of strength and in lockstep with our allies and partners," Psaki said.

U.S.-China relations nose-dived while Donald Trump was president, with his administration taking multiple actions against Beijing for its actions against Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in Xinjiang and in Tibet, its crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, aggressive actions toward Taiwan and staking claims to territory in the South China Sea.

Since moving into the White House, however, Biden has yet to make any significant overtures to China, signaling that many of Trump's policies toward the country will continue. **MDT/AGENCIES**

AD

Easter Concert - **Stabat Mater**

Macao Cultural Centre Grand Auditorium

01/04/2021
20:00

PROGRAMME
Pergolesi: Stabat Mater
Mozart: Concerto for Flute No. 1 in G Major, K. 313

Approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes, including one interval

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ANALYSIS

Myanmar's searing smartphone images flood a watching world

TED ANTHONY

THE images ricochet across the planet, as so many do in this dizzying era of film it, upload it, tell it to the world: scenes from a protest-turned-government crackdown, captured at ground level by smartphone users on the streets of Myanmar.

Images shot across barricades and furtively through windows. From behind bushes and through smudged car windshields. Horizontal video. Vertical video. Video captured by people running toward chaos and away from it. People shouting. People helping. People demanding.

People dying.
The world is watching violent events unfold in Myanmar for many reasons, but perhaps one above all: because it can.

It is a dynamic completely unlike the uprising that spread through the Southeast Asian nation in the pre-internet, pre-smartphone summer of 1988. Then, when student-led demonstrations were violently put down by the government, cementing Myanmar's global notoriety as an isolated, repressive state, it took months, even years, for the outside world to understand the full story of what had happened.

This time around, the imagery is plentiful and unsettling. Filmed by participants on the ground and

uploaded, sometimes immediately, the protests and crackdowns are reaching millions of handheld devices around the planet, also almost immediately.

It's a vivid example of a technological truism in an age when capturing images has become utterly democratized: If you can glimpse it up close, you're more likely to pay attention.

"You know the old adage that a picture speaks a thousand words. It makes you feel like, 'This is happening, this is true,'" says Kareem El Damanhoury, a media scholar at the University of Denver who is writing a book about visuals in times of conflict.

In Myanmar today, he says, "The images are not just complementing what's happening. Over time they become defining of the conflict itself."

As of Wednesday, more than 60 people were dead from the government crackdown on mass protests in Myanmar after a coup early last month. Nearly 2,000 are estimated to be imprisoned, and media outlets are being targeted. Among those held: Thein Zaw, an Associated Press journalist taken into custody in a chokehold by authorities while doing his job 10 days ago — an arrest also captured on video and widely shared.

"The video is extremely disturbing," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said last week of footage chronicling

attacks on journalists — footage captured in some cases by non-professional, non-media sources.

The ability of on-the-ground imagery from amateurs to define a conflict, through still photos and particularly video, has been accelerating for more than a decade.

Many media scholars cite the 2009 election protests in Iran and the chronicling of government violence there, particularly the shooting death of a young musician named Neda Agha-Soltan, as an inflection point.

That came four years after the dawn of YouTube and two years after Apple introduced the iPhone, which ushered in a trio of watershed moments: Amateur video became easily shareable, smartphones with decent-quality video and instant uploads became affordable, and many humans suddenly always had cameras in their pockets.

The decade that followed brought many opportunities for democratized, phone-shot imagery — from the 2011 Arab Spring to the Hong Kong protests of 2014 and the increasing government crackdown against them in ensuing years.

Last year in the United States, the killing of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer was captured on nearly nine minutes of anguished video — only the latest imagery of police violence against Bla-

ck Americans to command worldwide attention.

Floyd's death set off a summer of anti-racism protests and law-enforcement responses, both of which sometimes turned violent — and were chronicled by millions of minutes of shared on-the-ground video, which became central to Americans' understanding of the events. Same story with amateur video shot by participants in the siege of the U.S. Capitol in January, which has been used to understand the events, to propagandize them and to prosecute suspected insurrectionists.

In the case of Myanmar, the sheer amount and quality of the amateur video is particularly striking when contrasted with "8.8.88" — the August 1988 pro-democracy uprising against dictator Ne Win that produced a military coup the following month in the nation then known as Burma.

Imagery from those days was relatively scant, and communications from within the country — visual and otherwise — were vigorously muzzled.

It's different this time. Though YouTube has taken down some Myanmar military channels for violating its terms of service, citizen video is plentiful. And representatives of governmental bodies from the United States to the United Nations have cited the video as a muscular reminder of the power of the image to impact perception and, possibly, policy.

"I was struck by the vibrancy of the images I have seen — the color, the kinetic energy in them, which seemed pretty distinctive," says Mitchell Stephens, a New York University professor and author of "The Rise of the Image, the Fall of the Word."

The imagery out of Myanmar, he says, "brings back bad memories of all the failed democracy protests we've had in recent decades around the world. I can't help thinking of the Arab Spring, which was such an immense disappointment and tragedy, or Tiananmen Square."

Now pretty much everyone has that infrastructure in their pockets. But does that mean the global attention will last? If precedent is any indication, global news consumers in a landscape weighed down by a glut of imagery may surrender to short attention spans — even if the scenes coming out of Myanmar exhort them to do otherwise. **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1964 HOFFA FACES EIGHT YEARS BEHIND BARS



The president of the powerful American Teamsters union has been sentenced to eight years in jail on bribery charges.

James Hoffa has also been fined \$10,000 (£3,570) for trying to bribe a Federal Court jury which was hearing a conspiracy charge against him in 1962.

He was accused of attempting to secure an acquittal on a charge of "shaking down" a local haulage company owner for a million-dollar contribution to the union funds in return for 18 months of workforce co-operation.

This was Hoffa's first conviction - although he has now stood trial on four previous occasions. Past charges include trying to bribe a lawyer to spy on a Senate Committee and tapping the telephones of his subordinates in the Detroit office of his union.

Hoffa will remain free on bail pending an appeal.

If the sentence is upheld, it could mean the loss of his job as head of the 1.7 million-strong American Teamsters union - the nation's largest.

US District Judge Frank Wilson told Hoffa: "You stand here convicted of corrupting the administration of justice, of having struck at the foundation of this nation. Without fair, lawful administration of justice, there would be no civilisation in this country."

Hoffa replied: "I am not guilty. I believe this will be substantiated when the evidence is ultimately considered coolly and calmly."

Hoffa and three others were found guilty on 4 March of trying to fix a jury which could not agree on a verdict in his 1962 trial on a conspiracy charge.

The other three have been sentenced to three years each. They have not received fines. They include Ewing King, former president of the Nashville Teamsters local; Larry Campbell, a Detroit Teamsters official and Thomas Ewing Parks, a handyman from Nashville.

Grounds for appeal include allegations that US marshals plied the jury with alcohol. Staff of the hotel where several jurors were confined during the trial have supported these claims.

As head of the Teamsters union, Hoffa commands a salary of \$75,000, has an unlimited expense account and presides over an empire with pension and welfare funds worth \$1bn.

Hoffa and Attorney General Robert Kennedy have had a running feud for years.

Mr Kennedy later issued a statement congratulating the prosecutors who won the conviction.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In July 1964, Hoffa was found guilty of misusing the union's pension funds. He appealed against this conviction as well. Hoffa was re-elected president of the lorry drivers' union in July 1966 - despite two prison sentences totalling 13 years hanging over him.

The convictions against Hoffa were upheld and he served four years in prison, during which time he lost his job as Teamsters president.

On his release, he began working to regain the leadership but vanished in mysterious circumstances in 1975. He has not been seen since.

Investigators believe he may have been the victim of a feud within the world of organised crime.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Friday's skies highlight this ongoing narrative, as the dreamy Pisces moon merges with lover Venus and reality-dissolving Neptune. This cuddle puddle stirs up dreams of lovers past and present;



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Your focus today primarily rests on friends, community, and the long-term goals you've carved out for yourself. Luna's evening squabble with Mars can highlight financial tensions.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You may still feel as if you're caught in a mental fog today, Gemini. The moon glides into deep-feeling Pisces today, pointing your attention towards career concerns and ambitions.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

The universe is pressing you to define the terms of how you love, Cancer. Friday's skies are deeply sweet and romantic, as the Pisces moon merges with heartfelt Venus and blissed-out Neptune.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

The deep-feeling Pisces moon merges with lover Venus and mystical Neptune, showing you how good it can feel to share your tender side... your fears and fantasies... with a trusted special someone.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Let yourself drift into your vision of love but also remember that you're wearing rose-colored glasses. It's an ideal date night (think: sharing music, watching movies, and melting into relaxed bliss).



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

This pairing is deeply romantic, magical, and emotionally effusive. Yet, it also can leave you feeling entranced by illusions and unsure of your boundaries.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

This gathering is ideal for a magical date night or for connecting with creative projects that need an extra dose of inspiration. Whichever suits your mood, let yourself enjoy the bliss and leisure.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

It's an ideal day to patch up rocky family relationships or to reach out and re-establish ties with your closest of kin. It's also a great day for redecorating your home, as your aesthetic senses are fine-tuned today.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You've got romance on the brain, Capricorn. Let yourself drift into the dream today, as the cosmos are working to soften your approach to relationships.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Let your approach to romance soften and stretch under this palpably sweet influence today, as you're being shown what's truly important to you in your heart of hearts.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

This romantic, magical gathering of planets helps you attract people with ease—while also putting you under a spell of your own illusions around love. Let yourself drift and put your charms to good use!

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	7	10	drizzle
Harbin	-5	8	clear
Tianjin	7	14	drizzle
Urumqi	-1	7	clear
Xi'an	8	19	cloudy
Lhasa	0	14	cloudy
Chengdu	13	20	overcast
Chongqing	13	20	drizzle
Kunming	10	22	clear
Nanjing	8	14	cloudy
Shanghai	10	14	overcast
Wuhan	7	19	cloudy
Hangzhou	10	16	overcast
Taipei	17	20	drizzle
Guangzhou	19	27	cloudy
Hong Kong	20	25	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-17	-5	flurry
Frankfurt	5	13	drizzle
Paris	5	15	drizzle
London	5	11	drizzle
New York	11	22	drizzle

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Rope fiber; 5- Painter Rousseau; 10- Bar bills; 14- Jai ___; 15- Extra-terrestrial being; 16- Wings; 17- Round object, often used to store computer data; 18- Model airplane wood; 19- Leaf tool; 20- Scrubby conifer; 22- Displayed dirty laundry; 23- Cornerstone abbr.; 24- Drudge; 26- Layers; 29- Open air blaze; 33- Heron, usually white; 34- Roman god with two faces; 35- Casino cube; 36- Airline to Tel Aviv; 37- Reef material; 38- Type of phone; 39- "As if!"; 40- Decaf brand; 41- Oil source; 42- Predict; 44- Fuel transport; 45- Goes bad; 46- Med school subj.; 48- Chart anew; 51- Very hot day; 55- How sweet ___!; 56- Model Campbell; 58- Gap; 59- German composer; 60- ___-ski; 61- Semicircular recess; 62- Hang around; 63- Sucker; 64- Bound;

DOWN: 1- Pilgrimage to Mecca; 2- "East of Eden" director Kazan; 3- Not fem.; 4- Young pike; 5- Nun wear; 6- Gnu cousin; 7- Egypt's river; 8- In medias ___; 9- One ___ million; 10- Import or export duty; 11- Chemical used on trees; 12- Harden by heat; 13- Bird feed; 21- Hey, over here!; 22- Mars, to the Greeks; 24- Capital of Yemen; 25- Hebrew month; 26- Mall frequenters; 27- Inuit dwelling; 28- Sister of Calliope; 29- Like a tree trunk or a yipping dog; 30- Utopian; 31- Lunar valley; 32- Conger catcher; 34- Dr. Salk; 37- Support for a broken limb; 38- Gossip; 40- Hit the mall; 41- Fly; 43- Of inferior quality; 46- Tops; 47- Like a subway; 48- Barbecue fare; 49- Coup d'___; 50- Flaky mineral; 51- Rifle (through); 52- Snake dancers; 53- More; 54- Oboe, e.g.; 56- Doze; 57- Therapists' org.;



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TASTE OF EDESIA

NOT JUST FOR TEA LOVERS

IRENE SAM, MDT

FOR people who have lived in cities like Paris or New York, chances are many would be delighted to have lifestyle boutiques like The Conran Shop or “home” section in department stores where a space is dedicated to display beautiful lifestyle accessories such as exquisite teapots and vessels that one can use to enhance daily life.

In Macau, there are stores such as Zara Home or New Yaohan where beautiful glassware and kitchen supplies are available, but for the discerning few who are looking for handmade art pieces that truly

enchant the soul, **Toyosu** on Avenida de Horta e Costa is the place to be.

Toyosu is a boutique that mainly sells tea, clay vessels and crystals that were carefully selected by curator Randa, who spends half of her time in Japan before the pandemic. From Yunnan rose tea to exquisite Pu'er produced with secret methods discovered in ancient China, there is something for everyone, but it is the collection of clay vessels at the back of the store that is beyond impressive.

Made in the Kyushu region of Japan, clay vessels containing minerals exuding earthy sen-

sations can elevate the taste of tea that is served in it. “If you look at the clay vessels under a microscope you will see holes that allow tea or whatever that is contained inside the container to breathe, so that moisture or other elements are not easily trapped. The ecosystem inside the vessel is different than in other containers,” says Randa.

Randa personally is a crystal collector and is well-versed in the world of minerals and energies. Shoppers will find rare elstial quartz, museum quality amethyst and other one-of-a-kind items that are hard to come by anywhere else in Macau.



Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu, MDT



THE ANGANG 1350 METRES SAND

2021-03-14|Sun|16:20

I will give a good outsider's chance on a runner from K.M Chin's yard in **Sheng Li Superstar** this Sunday. Looking closely at his barrier trail yesterday, smooth as silk ridden relaxingly ease by T Appie, I am really impressed by this piece of work. This trail indicates that he is on fire and is coming back to his long overdue racing fitness again, although he has shown nothing this season so far, I believe you will see something good from him this Sunday. He drawn wide in the 10 hold, but don't worry he is full of energy in taking the rough path. I will bank on him and fingers crossed he can oblige in the first three, and with a little bit of luck he may be first cross the line with big odds.

Race 5 Horse no. 2 Sheng Li Superstar Place and Win bets



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

AP PHOTO



Julia Sarah Stone appears in a scene from "Come True," a film by Anthony Scott Burns

DRIVE IN

A moody and unsettling lo-fi dream in 'Come True'

LINDSEY BAHR,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

THE murky and illogical territory of dreams and nightmares has always provided fertile ground for filmmakers. Not only can your imagination run wild on screen, but there's even less of an expectation that it make any sense in the end. How could a creative soul resist?

In "Come True," a lo-fi indie from director Anthony Scott Burns, the nightmare is always the same for a runaway teen, Sarah (Julia Sarah Stone), who sleeps on a playground slide and guzzles coffee to stay awake as long as she can. When you see the muscular, shadowy figure with the glowing eyes that looms in her dreams, you'll start to understand why she has a perpetually haunted and twitchy demeanor. Sleep is not peace for Sarah and she's starting to crack.

So when she spots a flyer at the local coffee shop for a university sleep study that pays, she heads right there. It seems like business as usual, with a peppy research assistant and a few repeat subjects coming back for more monitored sleep. But she soon discovers that it's a little more experimental than she thought and possibly even sinister. They're not just studying sleep. They're mapping the dreams. Cue the "Inception" music.

With David Cronenberg overtones, "Come True" is a slow-burn experience that also feels very independent. The cast is scarcely recognizable and it was made with a slim crew. Burns not only wrote and directed, but also shot the film and helped

compose the moody, synth-y score. It's why it feels so much like a singular vision, which in this case has pros and cons. The film is a striking exercise in tone and builds to a few terrific crescendos that will surely leave viewers with some goosebumps. He's not an impatient filmmaker and the steady hand pays off. Burns has an affinity for deserted hallways, nighttime vistas and distorted video screens. Stone, too, is excellent in a difficult and taxing role. She fills the frame with nervous and vulnerable energy.

The story itself and the dialogue leave something to be desired, however. It's a smart film, certainly, but maybe not as smart as it wants to be. And there are a couple of clunkers that bring the mostly meditative experience to a halt.

Then there's a subplot with a researcher (Landon Liboiron) who develops a crush on his teenage subject that just feels far too icky for a modern movie. That she is technically 18 does not make it better. The end, too, is oddly specific and gimmicky for a film that has thus far basked in its own vagueness. And it might leave you incredulously asking "what" a la Oprah during the Meghan and Harry interview.

But for as frustrating as it sometimes is, "Come True" is hard to resist, not unlike a dream itself.

"Come True," an IFC Midnight release in theaters and on demand Friday, has not been rated by the Motion Picture Association of America. It contains disturbing images. Running time: 105 minutes. ★★☆☆

JOIN DAVID BECKHAM AT THE LONDONER MACAO

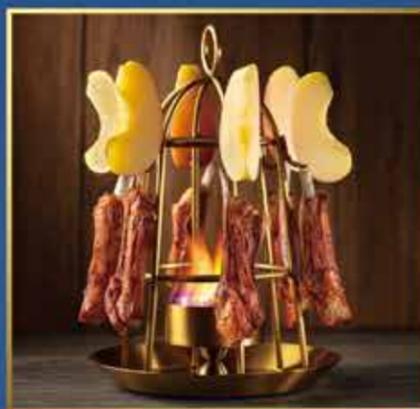


You might be amazed to see an authentic London cab in Macao but jump in the Black Cab Escape at The Londoner Macao and there is a further surprise in store, when you find yourself going on a quirky adventure with the one and only David Beckham. He will take you on a ride around the streets of London then bring you back to Macao. Don't forget to take a selfie as a souvenir of this exciting trip!

You can continue experiencing London life with a visit to the British-themed restaurant next to the Crystal Palace. This all-day restaurant offers both fun and refined dishes as well as Afternoon Tea and evening cocktails along with roaming entertainers. Its retail corner features branded confectioneries including pastries, crafted chocolate and other sweet delicacies to dine in or take away.



Another new restaurant showcases the very best of Northern Chinese cuisine, specializing in whole roast lamb from Inner Mongolia, Beijing roast duck and Xinjiang specialties. You will be delighted by the spectacle and aromas of the open kitchens and the decor of a classical Chinese mansion.



Come and explore the new sights and flavors of The Londoner Macao!



THE LONDONER
— 澳門倫敦人 —

OPINION

World Views

Shuli Ren, MDT/Bloomberg



REFLATION, ROTATION, HOT MONEY, COLD FEET, LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF

A lot of speculative capital, so-called hot money, has flowed into China lately. Last year, foreigners — lured by Beijing's successful Covid-19 containment and swift economic recovery — snatched up a record \$408 billion worth of the country's bonds and stocks. It was also a bet that U.S.-China geopolitical tensions would ease as Donald Trump's second bid for the White House faltered. The yuan rose as much as 10% against the greenback as foreign portfolio managers advocated a "buy China" thesis.

All that hot money has got Beijing hot and bothered. Just a week ago, Guo Shuqing, China's banking czar, warned of asset bubbles abroad and at home. And in the last couple of days, the National People's Congress announced a conservative economic agenda, which has tamped down the country's frenetic bourses.

Now, the investing stratagem is getting a big shake-up. First and foremost, there's the effect of rising U.S. bond yields. Last year, foreigners bought a record \$187 billion of Chinese bonds, mostly government issued. But the interest rate differential between U.S. and China debt that underpinned that inflow has been narrowing. The trend suggests more pain for those investments.

Second, global stock markets are witnessing a dramatic rotation from growth to value stocks, with investors dumping high-flying names such as Tesla Inc. and Cathie Wood's tech-heavy ARK Innovation ETF for shares in banks and energy companies.

Take a look at the composition of the benchmark S&P 500 Index. Growth sectors, such as technology, healthcare and consumer discretionary, make up for more than half of it, while value plays, such as financials and energy, account for only 12% and 3%. The current rotation — the so-called reflation trade — explains why the U.S. market has been so volatile lately.

But Chinese stocks are hardly prettier. If the U.S. concentration in FAANG stocks is worrisome — their outside representation increasing the pain of violent sell-offs — investors should really be concerned about the lopsidedness of the Chinese equivalent: Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., Tencent Holdings Ltd. and food delivery super-app Meituan. The trio — nicknamed ATM — account for almost 35% of the MSCI China Index, which has tumbled as much as 16% from its mid-February high.

Last but not the least, Beijing's ever-shifting economic priorities can quickly sink markets. Back in 2018, mainland Chinese stocks experienced a deep, depressing bear run, as Beijing's draconian corporate deleveraging campaign, first launched in late 2017, led to debt-ridden, distressed companies all over China. Three years ago, local governments were desperate for money themselves and not paying their bills to private enterprises in time. As a result, businesses that were active in the so-called public-private partnerships, such as Beijing Orient Landscape & Environment Co., struggled.

We are seeing a hint of that again. China Fortune Land Development Co., the country's largest industrial park developer, has accrued 19.4 billion yuan (\$2.92 billion) in overdue debt. As of September 2020, accounts receivable at the developer — essentially bills municipals need to pay — ballooned by 41% from a year earlier to 55 billion yuan. That's roughly the same size as its annual cost of goods sold. That is a lot.

Buyers beware! As the NPC goes on, President Xi Jinping and his top lieutenants are again talking up bubbles and deleveraging. The sprawling bureaucracy apparatus is prone to going overboard to prove its fealty to his schemes and will likely implement the policies at a fanatical rate.

To be sure, the tech bulls — in both the U.S. and China — have not yet capitulated to the reflation trade.

But even if growth stocks manage to stay in fashion, the calculus has changed. Last year, because China was the only major economy growing amid the pandemic, global investors had no choice but to invest in mainland stocks and bonds, despite the nation's patchy governance record. But now that the U.S. is back on the path to recovery, they don't have to stomach Beijing's shifting policies any longer. As any emerging market knows, hot money can get cold feet — and flee.

[Abridged]

EU REGULATOR RECOMMENDS USING J&J'S ONE-SHOT VACCINE

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) yesterday gave the green light to Johnson & Johnson's one-dose coronavirus vaccine, handing the European Union's 27 nations a fourth vaccine to try to speed up the bloc's much-criticized vaccination rollout.

The EU medicines regulator advised that the vaccine be cleared for use in all adults over 18 "after a thorough evaluation" of J&J's data found the vaccine met the criteria for efficacy, safety and quality.

"With this latest positive opinion, authorities across the European Union will have another option to combat the pandemic and pro-

tect the lives and health of their citizens," said Emer Cooke, EMA's executive director.

The EMA has already recommended COVID-19 vaccines made by Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca — but all of those vaccines require two doses, several weeks apart. Production delays have also plagued all three vaccine manufacturers.

In its statement, the EMA said the J&J vaccine was about 67% effective. It said most side effects were usually mild or moderate and cleared within a couple of days after vaccination.

AP PHOTO



CAMBODIA REPORTS FIRST COVID-19 DEATH, ONE YEAR INTO PANDEMIC

SOPHENG CHEANG, PHNOM PENH

Cambodia yesterday confirmed its first death from COVID-19 since the pandemic began more than a year ago as it battles a new local outbreak that has infected hundreds of people.

The 50-year-old man was confirmed infected last month while working as a driver for a Chinese company in coastal Sihanoukville and died at the Khmer-Soviet friendship hospital yesterday morning, the Health Ministry said in a statement.

Cambodia has confirmed only 1,163 cases of infection with the coronavirus since the pandemic

began, but it is battling a new local outbreak that has infected several hundred people.

According to the Health Ministry, the new outbreak was traced to a foreign resident who broke quarantine in a hotel and went to a nightclub in early February. That caused a slew of infections and led the government on Feb. 20 to announce a two-week closure of all public schools, cinemas, bars and entertainment areas in Phnom Penh.

The government has since extended the closures for more two weeks for schools, gyms, concert halls, museums and other entertainment venues in Phnom Penh, nearby Kandal province and the coast-

tal province of Sihanoukville.

On Thursday, the Health Ministry said 39 cases were reported from local transmission.

As the outbreak grows, a defunct luxury hotel in the capital has been converted into a 500-room coronavirus hospital, and authorities are enforcing a new law imposing criminal punishments for violating health rules.

The country began its vaccination campaign in February with 600,000 doses of the Chinese-produced Sinopharm vaccine. It also received 324,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine this month that were donated by and produced in India.

Thailand is considering an expansion of prison space as it arrests more political prisoners, the justice minister said. Somsak Thepsuthin said Bangkok Remand Prison and Klong Prem Central Prison, where most recently detained political prisoners are held, become congested when families and supporters come to visit. "Therefore, we are discussing finding a larger area that can accommodate more people for everyone's convenience," he told reporters.

AP PHOTO



US A new agreement with South Korea on sharing the cost of keeping U.S. troops on the Korean peninsula is early evidence that President Joe Biden is shifting America's approach to alliances in Asia and beyond. It shows he will cut allies a break to build unity in competition against China and Russia. President Biden's view is that well-functioning alliances are central to competing with China, which his administration sees as America's biggest long-term security challenge, along with Russia.

Russian authorities said they are slowing down the speed of uploading photos and videos to Twitter over its failure to remove banned content — part of growing efforts to curb social media platforms that have played a major role in amplifying dissent. The state communications watchdog, Roskomnadzor, said it began the slowdown after it said Twitter failed to remove content encouraging suicide among children and containing information about drugs and child pornography.

AP PHOTO



Turkish police have detained 13 people who participated in a Women's Day march for allegedly insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, officials and news reports said yesterday. Thousands of protesters had walked along a street in central Istanbul on Monday to denounce violence against women in Turkey, where more than 400 women were killed last year. Unlike previous years when police broke up similar demonstrations, the march ended peacefully.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Xinhua/Wang Guansen



Fly by treat. A tourist holds up a treat to black-headed gulls in Kunming, southwest China's Yunnan Province.