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CHAN CHAK MO TO SUBSIDIZE F&B OUTLETS ON BACK END DIGITIZATION

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SANDS CHINA REMAINS CONFIDENT IN THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS NEWEST PROPERTY AND CONTINUES TO BET ON THE PREMIUM MASS MARKET

P2

China yesterday said it will add all synthetic cannabinoids to its list of banned drugs, in what it described as a first in the world, to curb their manufacturing, trafficking and abuse. It is the second time that Chinese authorities have imposed a class-wide ban on a substance, after all fentanyl-related drugs were controlled in 2019.

China Authorities used drones and hunting dogs to search for the last of three leopards that escaped from a safari park, which faced strong public criticism for concealing the breakout for more than two weeks. The leopards escaped from Hangzhou Safari Park on April 19 during a handover between zookeepers due to a lapse in operating procedures, officials said at a news conference.

AP PHOTO



Tokyo The Olympic torch relay is being pulled off the streets in Hiroshima prefecture as Covid-19 cases rise in Japan barely 10 weeks before the opening ceremony. Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki said that a ceremony next week without the relay is likely to still take place. This is at least the sixth change to the relay — from rerouting to cancellation — in the last several weeks.

AP PHOTO



Thailand Three senior journalists working for a news agency in Myanmar who fled after the military government ordered its operations to stop have been arrested by police in northern Thailand, their editor said. The three work for DVB, also known as Democratic Voice of Burma, an online and broadcast news agency, its executive director and chief editor, Aye Chan Naing, said in an email. Burma is the former name for Myanmar and is still used by some opponents of military rule.

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SANDS SHOPPING CARNIVAL TO RECONVENE IN JULY

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SANDS CHINA EXPECTING TO REACH NEW HEIGHTS ON OCCUPANCY RATES

LYNZY VALLES

SANDS China Limited (SCL) remains confident in the performance of its newest property and continues to bet on the premium mass market.

Based upon the gradual recovery of its business and also upon the recent May Golden week, Wilfred Wong, SCL president, said that the group is expecting "new heights" for the occupancy rates at its hotels in the city over the upcoming summer holiday.

Although the headcount is only a fraction of that of 2019, the gaming revenue this past holiday is much higher, the executive affirmed.

"So each player plays more [due to the] limited number of [trips]. In the past you had a lot of tour groups. You had the headcount but you didn't have the spending," he told the press on the sidelines of the press conference of the operator's upcom-

ing shopping carnival.

"Basically everyone is looking at the premium mass and the mass market. I would say there is a very good recovery in the premium mass sector," he added.

With a robust performance during the latest Golden Week, Wong said that the foot traffic to casinos, hotels and retails have been "terrific," adding that the occupancy of The Londoner is among the highest of SCL's properties.

"By summer, we would be installing many more attractions [at The Londoner] so people can take photos and engage in interactive moments. This is in the pipeline. We will install [them] probably in June and July," the executive said.

Since the newest property is only opening in phases, Wong said that he expects to complete the whole construction of the property by "December to January."

"The last to be completed will be the façade and the arena of about 6,000 seats. [...] but the other facilities will be completed before that," he added.

LONDONER COURT AIMED TO OPEN IN OCTOBER

Wong announced that SCL's The Londoner Court facility is slated to open "in phases" before the October Golden Week, adding that it is currently going through the government licensing process.

Londoner Court is a 370-suite hotel facility on the site of Londoner Macao.

The first phase was launched on February 8 before the Chinese New Year.

"What we want to do is to launch [Londoner Court] in phases: if the patrons are coming in large numbers, we could launch it faster; if not, we could launch it at a slower pace," he added.



SANDS SHOPPING CARNIVAL TO RECONVENE IN JULY

SANDS China Limited (SCL) is slated to reconvene its shopping carnival from July 23 to 25 at The Venetian, featuring over 560 booths, 10% more than the last carnival.

In a press conference held yesterday, the gaming operator announced that the three-day 2021 Sands Shopping Carnival will provide a free business platform for local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and retailers.

Last year, the carnival welcomed some 100,000 guests over a period of three days.

"We will adhere to our original intention of providing the exhibition platform for exhibitors free of charge and have increased booth capacity by around 10% to over 560," said Wilfred Wong, president of SCL.

The carnival not only offers a retail experience but also hosts events that allow families to participate in activities together.

This includes an expanded food court area serving international cuisine, shows, lucky draws and activities



for children.

Meanwhile, the vice president of the Macao Chamber of Commerce, Chui Yuk Lum remarked, "Last year, we saw many local SMEs achieve remarkable sales at the inaugural carnival and expand their customer base via this helpful business platform."

This carnival is aimed at alleviating burdens on SMEs and helping them reach a wider market.

Last year, SCL's investment in the project reached

MOP6.5 million.

In order to safeguard public health at the carnival, the company will implement a series of strict sanitization and safety measures to prevent the transmission of Covid-19.

The Sands Shopping Carnival is organized by SCL and co-organized by the Macao Chamber of Commerce. It is supported by the Macao Economic Bureau, the Macao Government Tourism Office and the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute. LV

WYNN MACAU RECORDS HIGHEST POST-PANDEMIC PROFIT AT MAY DAY HOLIDAY

HONEY TSANG

WYNN Macau Ltd posted USD43.9 million in adjusted property earnings before interest, taxation, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) during the first quarter of this year, up around 11% from the preceding quarter and 49.5% year-on-year, according to the quarterly finance report released by the group on May 10.

This is the second consecutive quarter the group generated a positive value in EBITDA, after suffering negative results for six months.

In an earning call following the release of the result, Matt Maddox, chief executive of Wynn Resorts Ltd, disclosed that the Macau operation raked in USD3 million in normalized EBITDA per



day over the May Day holiday, which is the highest tally since the coronavirus outbreak.

Maddox ascribed this strong performance to the group's shift in focus to the mass and premium mass market.

"In Macau, we experienced continued gradual improvement in visitation trends driving particular strength in premium mass casino and luxury retail," he stated in the financial report.

The occupancy rate at Wynn Macau's two integrated resorts during the May Day holiday stood at 93%, whilst retail sales also displayed a surge of 80% compared to 2019 levels.

Despite a sharp improvement in EBITDA in the first quarter of this year, the operating revenues for Wynn Palace and Wynn Macau dropped respectively 8.5% and 21.7%, year-on-year, in the first quarter of this year.

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Wong's office denies accusation over disallowing civil assembly

IN a reply to a written inquiry from lawmaker Sulu Sou, the Office of Secretary for Security denied that the security branch has overstepped its legal authority in not allowing civil assembly.

Sou's written inquiry raised the question of whether the authority has crossed a red line in allegedly discouraging an assembly in support of the protests in Myanmar.

In response, the security official's office has stressed that all decisions made by the authority were legal.

To support its claim, the Office of the Secretary said that in year 2019, two assemblies were

RENATO MARQUES



barred, while in 2020, five assemblies and two protests were barred. The reason given by the office for the interdictions was that the two 2019 events were barred because their themes

were illegal.

The events in 2020 were barred due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the office explained. The statement also stressed that the office was following guidelines

issued by the Health Bureau. Nonetheless, the office did not give an explanation why 69 assemblies and two protests were allowed during the year.

Sou also cited the Basic Law and the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to underline the importance of protecting the rights of civil assembly and protest in Macau.

However, Wong's office argued that there is no absolute freedom. It said the local laws do not allow civil assembly or protest of an unlawful nature. It stressed that permission for such activities is not at the discretion of the police. **AL**

DECORATION OF LUSOPHONE COMPLEX'S EXHIBITION HALL TO START Q3

Decoration work on the exhibition hall of the China-Lusophone Countries Trade Cooperation Service Platform Complex, located on the underground level of the building, is expected to start in the third quarter of this year. The exhibition hall is about 3,100 square meters in size. This project will also cover the complex from UG2 to the first floor, comprising 11,000 square meters of space, including the exhibition hall, multifunction rooms, storage and back offices.

LPG BOTTLE LEAKAGE ON ISTMO HANDLED WITHOUT INJURY

At about 10:45am yesterday near the Parisian Hotel in Cotai, some LPG leaked from its container as a truck was delivering the inflammable gas. The driver of the truck, which carried about 50 bottles of the gas, noticed white smoke coming from the cargo compartment. Fire fighters arrived at the scene and helped to unload the leaking bottle. They then sprayed water upon the container for nearly an hour and a half to cool it. The incident caused traffic congestion on the Istmo but no injury was reported.

COLOANE RESIDENTS GROUP CALLS FOR REFINEMENT OF LEISURE FACILITY

The Seac Pai Van Residents' Mutual Help Association sees the need for improvement of the nearby facility. For example, it noted that although there are zebra crossings between the Seac Pai Van government housing and the Seac Pai Van Reservoir Promenade, extra signals should be installed as vehicles normally travel at a higher speed there. Extra washrooms should also be constructed, as the group foresees great demand when the promenade opens. The group also hopes that more shelters might be built in case of sudden rainfall.

ASSOCIATION HOPES GOV'T CAN CONSOLIDATE PUBLIC SERVICE POINTS

The General Union of Macau Residents Association hopes that the government can open the new office building near Waldo Hotel and designate office space to homogenous bureaus in order to provide more convenient services to residents. Moreover, it will also improve operational efficiency. According to the group, the problems associated with government rental of private office space include the spending of public funds and the taking of parking spaces. The group also asks the government to create additional parking spaces in the future political and judicial district.

Population stood at around 680,000 in Q1

THE city's population in the first quarter (Q1) of this year dropped to 682,500, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) announced.

In the previous quarter, the city had 600 more people.

The gender balance across Q1 was 53.2% female (363,400) to 46.8%

male (319,100). Year-on-year comparison against the same quarter in 2020 showed that the female proportion went up a slight 1%, as last year, there were 696,100 in the city. "The increment was driven by an increased number of non-resident workers living in Macau as some of those initially

living outside Macau moved back to the city before the latest entry restrictions took effect on 20 February," the DSEC explained in the statement issued last year.

As such, the drop of the population recorded in the first quarter of this year may very likely be related to the departure of

non-resident workers.

There were 189,518 non-resident workers in the first quarter of last year. By comparison, the same quarter this year saw only 173,113 of these workers in Macau.

A total of 1,173 live births were recorded in the first quarter of 2021. Male babies totaled 650 and the

sex ratio at birth stood at 124.3, corresponding to 124.3 male babies per 100 female babies.

The mortality figure was 586 in the first quarter. The top three underlying causes of death were neoplasms (222), diseases of the circulatory system (163) and diseases of the respiratory system (99). **AL**

HK GOV'T TO RECOGNIZE 10 VACCINES FOR REDUCED QUARANTINE

THE Hong Kong government announced that it will recognise 10 different coronavirus vaccines to allow Hong Kong residents to have shorter quarantine periods when they return from overseas.

These vaccines include those manufactured by AstraZeneca, BioNTech and Moderna, as well as those produced by Sinovac and Sinopharm.

The neighboring region is set to ease quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated inbound travellers starting from midnight tonight (May 12) from low-risk countries including Australia, New Zealand and Singapore.

According to the new

measure, the mandatory quarantine period will be reduced from 14 to seven days for incoming travellers.

Following their release from mandatory quarantine, the individuals will be required to self-monitor for seven days and undergo compulsory testing on the 12th day of their arrival in Hong Kong.

Those who arrive in Hong Kong who have stayed in areas in mainland China, Macau and Taiwan are currently subject to 14-day compulsory quarantine at home if they did not return under the Return2hk Scheme, according to Hong Kong authorities.

On November 23, the

HKSAR government implemented a scheme dubbed the Return2hk Scheme. This initiative eased travel restrictions for Hong Kong residents returning to the city from Guangdong Province and Macau by welcoming them back without a compulsory quarantine.

"Based on the 'vaccine bubble' concept and the risk levels, the government will further shorten the compulsory quarantine periods suitably for persons arriving at Hong Kong from overseas places, who have not stayed in extremely high-risk or very high-risk places, and who have completed their vaccination course," Hong Kong authorities stated. **LV**

SSM ADMITS HEALTH CODE BUMPS AMID SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

SYSTEM maintenance on the Macau Health Code platform was conducted yesterday morning, the Health Bureau (SSM) told the Times.

Concerned that the system was facing another wave of cyber attacks, a reader told the Times about the suspension in the system's operation. The reader was attempting to obtain a Macau Health Code in order to run through certain procedures at a local hotel.

When questioned about the situation, the bureau admitted that there was system maintenance and a

technical adjustment yesterday afternoon.

Several cyberattacks to the SSM computer system were recorded last Friday and Saturday. The attacks caused several disruptions to the system – namely "affecting the normal operations of the health code system, the booking systems for vaccination against Covid-19, and the nucleic acid tests (NAT)." The bureau noted that besides users facing difficulties in accessing the system, there were no other complications on SSM's operations reported. **AL**



THREE LARGE MICE EVENTS TO BE HELD BY JUNE

THREE large conferences – mainly corporate conferences – will be held in Macau by the end of June, the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) announced in a statement.

It is estimated that over 8,000 people will attend the conferences and it is expected that this will “boost the peripheral industries such as retail, catering and hotels, and stimulate the economic recovery of the community.”

IPIM said that the organiser will follow the epidemic prevention guidelines issued by the Health Bureau to ensure that the events are conducted in compliance with the current epidemic prevention measures of Macau.

Moreover, in order to capitalise on the cross-departmental and cross-industry syner-

gistic effects, IPIM will work hand in hand with the Economic and Technological Development Bureau, the Macao Government Tourism Office, and industry and commerce associations of various districts to organize and arrange community tours during the events

MICE events can bring visitors with higher spending power into Macau and stimulate local market. The per capita spending of tourists who participated in MICE events in Macau in 2020 was MOP 3,117, which is 1.5 times that of general visitors and 1.4 times that of individual travellers (independent visitors).

In the future, IPIM said that it will continue to work in tandem with the MICE industry to introduce more MICE projects on a diverse range of themes. LV

CATERER ASSOCIATION TO SUBSIDIZE OUTLETS ON BACK END DIGITIZATION

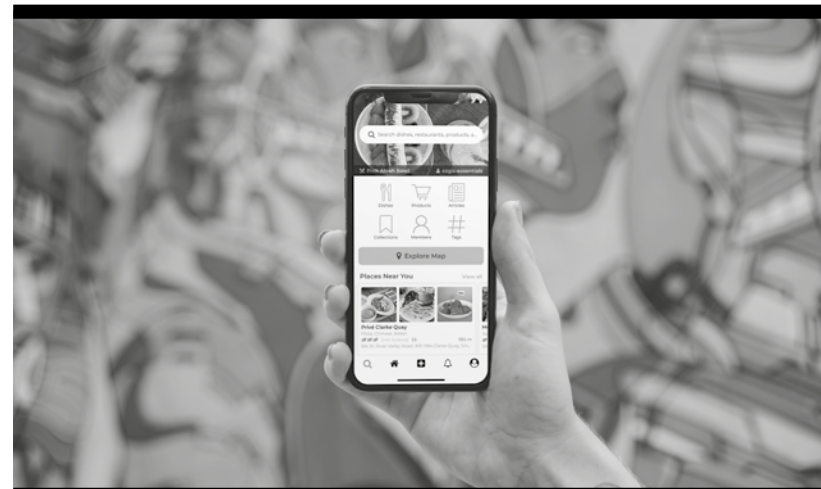
ELIGIBLE local food and beverage (F&B) operators, when digitizing their back end operations, may receive a subsidy of 80% of the cost with a cap of MOP12,000, the United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macau announced.

The application period for the subsidy will be from May 17 to 31.

Chan Chak Mo, president of the association, revealed that the project has a budget of MOP2 million. He estimated that it will be able to cater to a maximum of 150 F&B outlets.

The scheme is co-administered by the Macao Productivity and Technology Transfer Centre (CP-TTM) and the Economic and Technological Development Bureau. Although the association's head did not reveal the anticipated demand for the scheme, Chan said that if the program attracts more outlets than the association expects, it will negotiate further measures with the government.

Encouraging outlets to apply for the subsidy, he explained that back end digitization is beneficial to the



operation of F&B outlets.

According to Chan, digitization improves management operations, saves staff time and simplifies consumption. Through back end digitization, he hopes that the industry will be able to upgrade service quality and competitiveness, as well as boost economic recovery and sustainability.

Digitizing back end operations, a key aspect of which is the automatic placement of electronic orders, will allow businesses to compile data

on the consumption habits of their customers.

Director-general of the CPTTM, Shuen Ka Hung, noted that businesses will bear at least 20% of the cost for the digitization. Moreover, outlets will need to request quotes from one of the three accredited system suppliers.

Shuen added that outlets that which have already digitized their back end operations can also apply for the subsidy to upgrade their systems. AL

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LOCAL CANOE TEAM TRIUMPHS IN SHANGHAI NATIONAL-LEVEL MARATHON

THE Baía do Mar Canoeing Club has performed satisfactorily in a national canoe and stand-up paddle marathon tournament in Shanghai, winning three gold medals, two silver and one bronze.

Held on the Dianshan Lake in Shanghai, the “Paddle Jiangnan” Water Marathon took place during the May 1 holidays. The marathon event covered a distance of 18 k.m.. The tournament also had a canoe relay for three and a mixed relay for four.

The lake is famous for geographical features that generate “boiling water waves,” meaning that the surface is normally unstable. In addition, the track is also generally narrow.

The special characteristics of the lake made the match exceptionally difficult. However, the tournament managed to attract nearly 500 athletes to compete at the special racetrack.

The Macau canoeing



club sent eight members to compete in the tournament. Among them was 13-year-old debuting Chan Hei Nga, who won in the youth marathon event against athletes from Tianjin and Shanghai.

Meanwhile, 15-year-old Choi Keng Wah, despite capsizing in the middle of the race due to unstable waves, finished the race in third place. Leong Lap Chong lost to

the champion in the open category race with a tight 30 second- difference.

Experienced athlete Racy Leong gained the lead in the last 10 k.m. of the race and was crowned in the women's category.

Veteran athlete Sum Siu Heng managed to lead for most of the race but took a wrong turn near the end. With a time difference of 20 seconds, he got second place in the senior category race. AL



When spur-of-the-moment idea of the daring duo comes into fruition

HONEY TSANG

IN the arts, mustering the courage to make a bold move always leads to huge rewards.

Catarina Lio, vice president of Brand Marketing of MGM China Holdings Limited has long been attuned to the importance of such a spontaneous practice in the creative arts industry.

In October last year, she was invited by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) to watch the award-winning Chinese dance drama "Awakening Lion" at the Macao Cultural Center — alongside some 20 chirpy children enrolled in the MGM Junior Lion Dance Training Program.

The Lingnan folk dance drama is China's first large-scale dance drama employing Cantonese lion dance as its core theme, which, to Lio, meshes well with MGM's "lion" brand image.

After seeing the show, Lio made an intrepid move — she reached out to Shi Qianjin, president of the Guangzhou Song and Dance Theatre (GSDT) and director of the "Awakening Lion," and asked if he could pay a visit to the MGM Theater. Despite a packed schedule, Shi said yes.

It was a difficult yet resolute decision for Lio. That day was a public holiday, meaning she had to rally efforts across various MGM departments to set up the stage up for Shi's visit.

The move wound up with both

Lio and Shi sitting at the stage of the MGM Theater, feverishly exchanging opinions about the differences between traditional and modern theatres. On the spur of the moment, Lio asked Shi: "Do you think your troupe can have a residence show here at MGM?"

Fast-forward to May 2021: Lio's off-the-cuff invitation has blossomed into the realization of an ambitious theatric residence project titled "MGM Awakening Lion" — which is set to make its debut in July and amaze theatergoers and travelers in Macau.

On Monday, the duo gathered on the same stage, but this time they were presiding over the launching ceremony of their brainchild, the "MGM Awakening Lion," an adapted and trimmed play from "Awakening Lion," before hundreds of guests and media.

In an exclusive interview following the unveiling ceremony, the two shared with the Times the story of how they pulled off the joint venture.

"In retrospect, I was quite 'lion-hearted', daring to invite Shi and his troupe, who thought that the MGM theatre was not deep enough in dimension to offer them sufficient performance space for the show," Lio said.

Shi had reason to worry about the stage design. For most theatrical performances, ample backstage space enables performers or technicians to wait or move around. Without it, it is almost

impossible for a large-scale show, with a sizeable number of performers, props and equipment, to be staged.

However, since its establishment in 2018, the MGM Theater, Asia's first dynamic theater to offer immersive and multi-sensory theatric experiences to spectators, has hosted several residency shows over the past years.

"With these past experiences, we gave a strong dose of confidence to Mr. Shi that it is indeed technologically possible to put his show on our stage," Lio said.

BUMPY AT FIRST; GLORIOUS AT LAST

Sitting near Lio in a room next to MGM theater, Shi recalled the unforgiving paths the troupe had gone through before they arrived at today's achievements.

Under Shi's watchful leadership and coaching, the original dance drama "Awakening Lion," has received many loyal followers among Chinese audiences, in addition to winning China's top dance award — the "Dance Drama Award" at the 11th Lotus Awards in 2018.

With such an august title, some might have thought the show had a long history. In fact, Shi created the first 25-minute version of "Awakening Lion" in 2016. A year later, he conceived a fuller plot for a two-hour version of the dance drama. In 2018, the official brand of "Awakening Lion" was launched, with its debut show put on

stage in September that year.

The show features a plethora of deep-rooted Chinese cultural elements, ranging from lion dance, China's martial art forms Southern Fist (Nanquan), traditional Chinese dance, and other intangible aspects. It is a dialogue-free drama that draws on every movement and facial expression of performers to breathe life into the plot.

Shi told the Times that the troupe had spent a total of three years from 2016 to 2018 — some were novices at the lion dance — picking up the skills from scratch to later excel in them.

"Those three years were particularly physically tough for all of us. We encountered challenges we had never expected," he remarked.

Dancing whilst hauling a heavy lion head is one of those challenges. It fatigued all the dancers at the beginning. This prompted Shi to re-schedule an even more challenging and compact practice, asking performers to receive lion dance training every afternoon and Nanquan practice every other day. The rationale was to prepare their bodies for the physically demanding performance that lasts for two hours.

He still vividly remembers how thrilling the first time was when actors and actress managed to rehearse the 2-hour show without interruption, as they all burst into "happy" tears immediately afterward.

APPEAL TO YOUTHS

Over the past years, Shi has been experimenting with ways to reframe traditional art forms, striving to strike a perfect balance between presenting the most authentic forms of Chinese cultures whilst appealing to modern viewers, especially younger ones.

"To me, the key success factor in a drama lies in whether it can evoke a resonance with viewers. If we kept all the performances at their traditionally basic form, it could only entice those who are interested in these cultures, but failed to resonate with most others," Shi said.

To that end, he instilled a series of modern elements into components of the show, including the dance, costume, props, music, to give the show a strong cinematic vibe.

Alongside the performance, he invited a professional team to film a 30-minute documentary and forged partnerships with Hong Kong and Guangdong comic artists to create a namesake graphic novel for the show. These creative art and cultural products, Shi said, are some draw cards to keep young audiences engaged.

So far "Awakening Lion" has garnered a significant following from Chinese young audiences, as is evident by the large number of young people lining up at the show's previous autograph sessions.

The main intention behind MGM bringing "Awakening Lion" to Macau is to "pass on the Lingnan heritage," and "deepen the exchanges of cultural tourism in the Greater Bay Area (GBA)," Pansy Ho, co-chairperson and executive director of MGM stated earlier.

"Art is always the powerful and resonant platform to communicate Chinese traditional cultural values to today's young audiences," Shi said.

Macau, positioned as a leisure destination with a harmonious blend of Chinese and Western cultures, will be a great gateway for "Awakening Lion", with its embedded Chinese cultural elements, to reach other parts of the world.

"It is a cinema-like dance drama. The emotive movements of the performance render dialogue unnecessary. The whole experience is as if you were reading a history book, in which you can grasp the gist of Chinese cultures and heritage, but can call the memories in mind with so much ease later," Lio said.

The adapted version "MGM Awakening Lion" — truncated to 70 minutes from its original version of two hours — will be staged at the MGM Theater at MGM Cotai for four rounds, starting from July and running until February next year.

COVID-19

New outbreaks threaten status of places that had virus contained

TAIWAN and Singapore are reimposing pandemic restrictions as the return of a small number of virus cases challenges what have been some of the most successful places at containing and snuffing out Covid-19.

In Taiwan, indoor gatherings will be limited to fewer than 100 people and outdoor events capped at 500 for the next four weeks, Taiwan's Centers for Disease Control said in a statement yesterday. It's the first time the island has tightened anti-Covid measures since it began easing curbs mid-last year, and comes after the government reported seven new cases in the community and four in travelers from overseas.

Singapore - the city-state that is ranked the best place to be in the coronavirus era by Bloomberg's Covid Resilience Ranking - has also been tightening up restrictions amid a sudden recurrence of local infections, limiting social gatherings and upping border curbs. The co-chair of Singapore's virus task force, Lawrence Wong, said yesterday that companies looking to bring in foreign workers from higher-risk nations could face delays of more than six months because of the greater vigilance. The country has also begun mass testing all hospital staff in an attempt to fence off infections, after a cluster of cases emerged at a medical center.

The two places are among the handful in the world that have virtually eliminated Covid domestically, among them Australia, New Zealand and China - where cases of the new coronavirus first emerged more than a year ago. The return to tighter curbs risks disrupting what has been months of largely normal social activity in Taiwan and Singapore should the outbreaks persist.

While having a zero tolerance approach to infections has meant very few deaths in these places, they're now lagging countries like the U.S. and Israel on vaccination, which could put them at a disadvantage as parts of the world start to open up to international travel.

After an initial outbreak of cases very early in the pandemic, Taiwan has managed to basically keep the virus out,

even going more than eight months without a single domestic infection between April and December. The island has had just over 1,200 cases and 12 deaths in total since Covid-19 first emerged.

Taiwan's success has meant it never imposed stringent restrictions internally, like lockdowns. Businesses, government offices and schools have remained open throughout much of the pandemic, although municipal authorities canceled their usual large-scale Lunar New Year holiday celebrations in February as a precaution.

In recent weeks, health authorities in Taiwan have been battling a steady rise in infections centered around a hotel used to quarantine pilots for local carrier China Airlines returning from overseas. Investors showed their concern by selling Taiwanese shares, with the benchmark Taiex index falling almost 3.8% Tuesday, the biggest decline among Asian markets. The Taiwan dollar weakened by the most since March 26.

Elsewhere in Asia, cases are also coming back, with India now the epicenter of the global crisis, recording more than 329,000 new cases yesterday. Malaysia is tightening curbs on people's movements across the country after daily cases exceeded 3,000 this month for the first time since February.

The detection of the one case with Indian Covid-19 variant has added to the risk, and Malaysia is struggling with the pace of vaccinations. Less than 3% of the population had completed their vaccination series as of May 9, data compiled by Bloomberg show. That tally trails Indonesia and Singapore, and puts Malaysia at risk of falling short of its vaccination target for the year.

The absence of widespread infections and an export-driven economy meant Taiwan avoided the impact seen in most of the rest of the world from the pandemic. The economy grew 3.1% last year, driven by a surge in demand for Taiwan's computer chips but also supported by a rebound in consumer spending. The government has hinted in recent weeks it may raise its 2021 gross domestic product forecast to above 5% from its current estimate of 4.6%.
MDT/BLOOMBERG

POPULATION

China adds few babies, l

JOE MCDONALD AND
HUIZHONG WU, BEIJING

THE number of working-age people in China fell over the past decade as its aging population barely grew, a census showed yesterday, adding to economic challenges for Chinese leaders who have ambitious strategic goals.

The total population rose to 1.411 billion people last year, up 72 million from 2010, according to the once-a-decade census. Weak growth fell closer to zero as fewer couples had children.

That adds to challenges for Chinese leaders who want to create a prosperous society and increase their global influence by developing technology industries and self-sustaining economic growth based on consumer spending.

The ruling Communist Party has enforced birth limits since 1980 to restrain population growth but worries the workforce is shrinking. It has eased birth limits, but couples are put off by high costs, cramped housing and job discrimination against mothers.

The population of potential workers aged 15 to 59 fell to 894 million last year, the National Bureau of Statistics reported. That would be down 5% from a 2011 peak of 925 million. The percentage of children in the population edged up compared with 2010, but the group aged 60 and older grew faster.

Changes in birth limits and other policies "promoted a rebound in the birth population," the bureau director, Ning Jizhe, said at a news conference.

However, Ning said 12 million babies were born last year, which would be down 18% from 2019's 14.6 million.

China, along with Thailand and some other developing Asian countries that are aging fast, faces what economists call the challenge of whether it can grow rich before it grows old. Some warn China faces a "demographic time bomb."

The potential shortage of workers needed to generate economic activity and tax revenue comes as President Xi Jinping's government boosts spending on its military and efforts to create global competitors in electric cars and other technologies.

Reflecting the issue's sensitivity, the statistics agency took the unusual step last month of announcing the population grew in 2020 but gave no total. That looked like an effort to calm companies and investors after The Financial Times reported the census might have found a surprise decline.

"We are more concerned about the fast decline in the proportion of the working age population compared to the total population," said Lu Jiehua, a professor of population studies at Peking University.

The working-age population will fall from three-quarters of the total in 2011 to just above half by 2050, according to Lu.

"If the population gets too old, it will be impossible to solve the problem through immigration," said Lu. "It needs to be dealt with at an early stage."

Couples who want a child face daunting challenges.

Many share crowded apartments with their parents. Child care is expensive and maternity leave short. Most single mothers are excluded from medical insurance and social welfare payments.

Some women worry giving birth could hurt their careers.

"We are more concerned about the fast decline in the proportion of the working age population compared to the total population."

PROF. LU JIEHUA
PEKING UNIVERSITY

"When you have a kid, you take pregnancy leave, but will you still have this position after you take the leave?" said He Yiwei, who is returning from the United States after obtaining a master's degree. "Relative to men, when it comes to work, women have to sacrifice more."

Japan, Germany and some other rich countries face the same challenge of supporting aging populations with fewer workers. But they can draw on investments in factories, technology and foreign assets. By contrast, China is a middle-in-



come country with labor-intensive farming and manufacturing.

The decline in the working-age population "will place a cap on China's potential economic growth," said Yue Su of the Economist Intelligence Unit in a report. That is a "powerful incentive to introduce productivity-enhancing reforms."

The International Monetary Fund is forecasting Chinese economic growth of 8.4% this year following a rebound from the coronavirus pandemic. The Communist Party wants to double output per person from 2020 levels by 2035, which would require annual growth of about 4.7%.

The numbers reported Thursday reflect a gain of 11.8 million people, or 0.8%, over the official estimate for 2019, when the government says the population edged above 1.4 billion for the first time.

The working-age population fell to 63.3% of the total from 70.1% a decade ago. The group up to age 14 expanded by 1.3 percentage points to 17.9%. Those 60 and older - a group of 264 million people who on their own would be the world's fourth-biggest country - rose 5.4 percentage points to 18.7% of the population.

"Labor resources are still abundant," said Ning of the statistics agency.

The party took its biggest step in 2015 when rules that

loses workers as its 1.4 billion people age



would have been a further fall in the number of children per family.

The one-child limit, enforced with threats of fines or loss of jobs, led to abuses including forced abortions. A preference for sons led parents to kill baby girls, prompting warnings millions of men might be unable to find a wife, fueling social tension.

Thursday's data showed China has 105.7 million men and boys for every 100 women and girls, or about 33 million more males.

The ruling party says the policy averted shortages of food and water by preventing as many as 400 million potential births. But demographers say if China followed Asian trends, the number of additional babies without controls might have been as low as a few million.

After limits were eased in 2015, many couples with one child had a second but total births fell because fewer had any at all.

Some researchers say China's population already is shrinking.

Yi Fuxian, a senior scientist in obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Wisconsin-Ma-

dison, says the population started to fall in 2018. His book "Big Country With An Empty Nest" argued against the one-child limit.

"China's economic, social, educational, tech, defense and foreign policies are built on the foundation of wrong numbers," said Yi.

Chinese regulators talk about raising the official retirement age of 55 to increase the pool of workers.

Female professionals welcome a chance to stay in satisfying careers. But others resent being forced to work more years. And keeping workers on the job, unable to help look after children, might discourage their daughters from having more.

The latest data put China closer to be overtaken by India as the most populous country, which is expected to happen by 2025.

India's population last year was estimated by the U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs at 1.38 billion, or 1.5% behind China. The agency says India should grow by 0.9% annually through 2025. MDT/AP

limited many couples to having only one child were eased to allow two.

However, China's birth rate, paralleling trends in South Ko-

rea, Thailand and other Asian economies, already was falling before the one-child rule. The average number of children per mother tumbled from above

six in the 1960s to below three by 1980, according to the World Bank.

Demographers say official birth limits concealed what

AD

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SENEGAL

Hit by Covid, women find renewed hope in fishing

CARLEY PETESCH,
BARGNY

SINCE her birth on Senegal's coast, the ocean has always given Ndeye Yacine Dieng life. Her grandfather was a fisherman, and her grandmother and mother processed fish. Like generations of women, she helps support her family in the small community of Bargny by drying, smoking, salting and fermenting the catch brought home by male villagers. They were baptized by fish, these women say.

But when the pandemic struck, boats that once took as many as 50 men out to sea carried only a few. Many residents were too terrified to leave home, let alone fish, for fear of catching the virus. When local women managed to get their hands on fish to process, they lacked buyers, as markets shut down and neighboring countries closed borders. Without savings, many families went from three daily meals to one or two.

Dieng is among more than a thousand women in Bargny, and many more in other villages dotting Senegal's coast, who process fish — the crucial link in a chain that constitutes one of the country's largest exports and employs hundreds of thousands of its residents.

"It was catastrophic — all of our lives changed," Dieng

said. But, she noted, "Our community is a community of solidarity."

That spirit sounds throughout Senegal with the motto "Teranga," a word in the Wolof language for hospitality, community and solidarity. People tell each other: "on est ensemble," a French phrase meaning "we are in this together."

Last month, the first true fishing season since the pandemic kicked off, bringing renewed hope to processors, their families and the village. The brightly painted vast wooden fishing boats called pirogues once again each carry dozens of men to sea, and people swarm the beach to help fishermen carry in their loads.

But challenges from the coronavirus — and so much more — remain. Rising seas and climate change threaten livelihoods and homes; many can't afford to build new structures or move inland. A steel processing plant rising near Bargny's beach raises fears about pollution and will join a cement factory nearby.

"Since there is COVID, we live in fear," said Dieng, 64, who has seven adult children. "Most of the people here and women processors have lived a difficult life. ... Little by little, it's getting better."

Dieng and fellow processors weathered the pan-

demic by relying on each other. They're accustomed to being breadwinners — one expert estimated that each working woman in Senegal feeds seven or eight family members. Before the pandemic, a good season could bring Dieng 500,000 FCFA (\$1,000). Last year, she said, she made little to nothing.

Dieng's husband teaches the Quran at the mosque next door to their home, and the couple pooled their money with their children, with one son finding work repairing TVs. Other women got help from family abroad or rented out parts of their refrigerators for storage.

They survived, but they missed their work, which isn't just a job — it's their heritage. "Processing is a pride," Dieng said.

Most fishing in Senegal is small-scale — carried out in traditional, generations-old methods. It's referred to as artisanal fishing. Once processed, fish is sold to local and international buyers. In Senegal, fish accounts for more than half of protein eaten by its 16 million residents — key for food security.

Industrial fishing is carried out in Senegal's waters as well, via motorized vessels and trawlers. More than two dozen companies also specialize in industrial processing in the country alongside fishmeal factories

and canning plants. Fishmeal factories price women like Dieng out by paying more for fish and depleting resources — 5 kilos of fish are needed for 1 kilo of fishmeal, a lower-grade powder-like product used for farm animals and pets.

Senegal's government also has agreements with other countries allowing them to fish and imposing limits on the hauls. Monitoring what these boats from Europe, China and Russia harvest has proven difficult. Locals say outsiders devastate supply.

Dieng has become a local leader and mentor whose neighbors come to her for advice on everything from money woes to their marriages, and she and others are part of a rising collective voice of women in Senegal working for change along the coast and beyond.

Senegal has designated land near Bargny as an economic zone in its efforts to invest in redevelopment. Dieng's neighbor Fatou Samba — a town councilor and president of the Association of Women Processors of Fish Products — has testified about challenges in artisanal fishing.

"If we let ourselves be outdone, within two or three years, women will not have work anymore," Samba said. "We are not against the creation of a project that will develop Senegal. But we are against projects that must make women lose the right to work."

The pandemic has taught villagers a crucial lesson: Money from fish may not always be there, so it's important to try to save.

The pandemic also is not over, so Dieng and other women go door to door to raise awareness and urge people to get vaccinated. Senegal imposed strict measures at the start of the pandemic. The government was widely commended, and restrictions largely eased. But the country's had more than 40,000 cases. Volunteer and government campaigns aim to keep another wave at bay.

At the end of a long day of work, and before she goes home to break fast of Ramadan with her family, Dieng stands in front of her smoking fish and records a video she hopes will to motivate the women working in the industry.

"It's our gold. This site is all, this site is everything for us," Dieng said of the coast and its importance to Bargny. "All the women must rise up." **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2000 FORD QUITS DAGENHAM AFTER 70 YEARS



Ford has confirmed that car production at its Dagenham plant in Essex is to end after more than 70 years.

In total, it will mean the loss of around 3,000 jobs with car assembly at the plant ceasing within two years.

Ford unions reacted angrily to the news. They say the real number of redundancies is closer to 5,000 because Ford's numbers do not include job losses among caterers, cleaners and suppliers.

Two years ago Ford had promised to give Dagenham the contract for the new Ford Fiesta. That now goes to Germany and Spain.

"We're extremely angry. There is no justification for the 3,000 job losses and the closure of this assembly plant," said Tony Woodley of the Transport Workers' Union.

"My view is simply this. To be in the car manufacturing industry, quite simply, you've got to make cars."

Outside the factory, union members made their feelings plain. "I'm sickened to tell you the truth," said one Dagenham worker. "I've been working here 23 years. I'm not old enough to take a pension or leave. I'm just sickened."

Ford's European operations have been struggling recently, hit by falling car sales and intense competition.

The company has the capacity to produce 2.25m cars in its European factories, but sold only 1.65m during the past year.

The decisive factor in moving production from Dagenham to its German factory in Cologne was that facilities there were more flexible, with a second assembly line, enabling Ford to switch to other models quickly.

The company tried to soften the blow by saying the losses would be offset by investment in diesel manufacturing at the plant.

Nick Scheele, chairman of Ford Europe, said Dagenham would become Ford's "global centre" for the production of diesel engines, creating 500 jobs over four years.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In October Ford's chief executive, Jacques Nasser, was forced out of the company as Ford Europe continued to make a loss of around £700m (\$1bn) a year.

The Ford family took back the helm and William Clay Ford Jr, the new chief executive, launched a major restructuring of the company in the hope of bringing it out of the red.

But two years later Ford sales were still lower than hoped for and it sold off UK car repair firm Kwik-Fit at a loss.

For more than 70 years, the Dagenham plant, one of Europe's first major car assembly sites, was regarded as a focal point of the UK car industry. So it was a sad day when the last Ford Fiesta rolled off the production line in February 2002 and the factory was downsized to produce engines and gearboxes.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

The moon departs from practical Taurus and slides forward into playful Gemini, prompting you to find mental and verbal outlets for your creative self-expression.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Luna's union with your ruler, value-defining Venus, makes it an ideal day for making long-term purchases or selling. Meanwhile, Mercury's trine to secure Saturn helps you make solid plans on the career front.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Today's skies find Mercury in a supportive connection to stabilizing Saturn, helping you ground down and become increasingly realistic about your vision.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Mercury's stabilizing connection to grounded Saturn helps you explore important plans or conversations concerning the future of intimate partnerships.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You can make it all happen today, Leo. The moon glides into playful Gemini, turning your attention toward your long-term aspirations and your involvement in friend groups.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Don't stop now! The moon glides into quick-thinking Gemini and spends the day merged with beneficial Venus, attracting positive circumstances to your career realm.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Aim to break out of routine to help achieve the refreshed perspective you're seeking. Mercury's harmonious connection to stabilizing Saturn helps you ground down any creative projects in the works.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

As a Scorpio, you crave intimate encounters that offer you authentic connections. This natural craving runs high today, as the story-telling Gemini moon merges with lover Venus.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Today's skies are deliciously romantic, Sagittarius. Don't miss out on the opportunity for an ideal date night, as the playful Gemini moon merges with bond-building Venus.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

If you've been waiting for the right moment to submit a job application, launch a work project, or have a smooth-running conversation with a boss - look no further!



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

An ideal energy for either a date night, a creative project, or just unwinding. Mercury's supportive connection with your ruler, Saturn, allows for clear communication about future commitments.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Reconnect with your home base today, Pisces. The moon glides into reflective Gemini, turning your attention towards family dynamics and the state of your living space.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

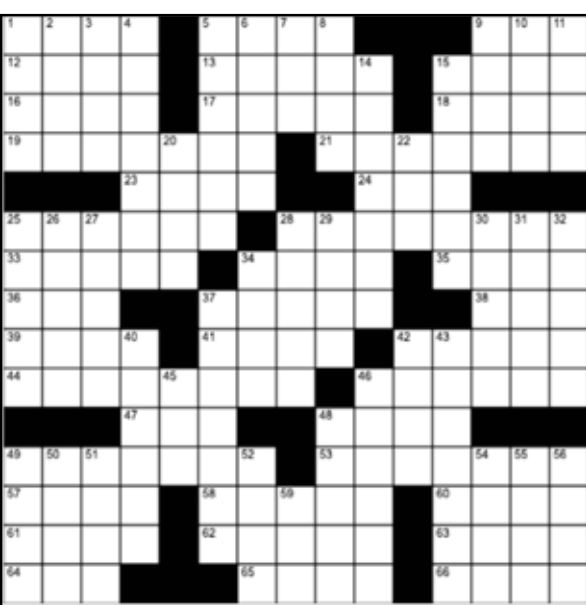
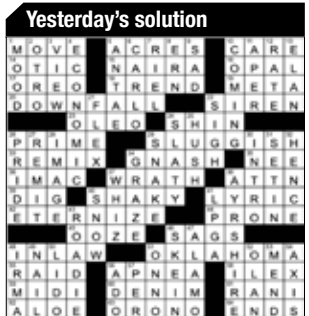
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	14	26	clear
Harbin	8	13	moderate rain
Tianjin	16	25	clear
Urumqi	17	32	clear
Xi'an	13	27	clear
Lhasa	6	19	cloudy
Chengdu	16	28	cloudy
Chongqing	17	27	cloudy
Kunming	15	26	cloudy
Nanjing	16	27	cloudy
Shanghai	20	28	overcast
Wuhan	16	28	overcast
Hangzhou	20	31	cloudy
Taipei	22	27	cloudy
Guangzhou	23	31	thundershower
Hong Kong	24	31	clear
WORLD			
Moscow	5	13	drizzle
Frankfurt	5	8	drizzle
Paris	5	11	drizzle
London	3	11	clear
New York	8	20	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Get as a result; 5- Apartment, e.g.; 9- Absorb, as a cost; 12- "The Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer; 13- Frasier's brother; 15- Foot part; 16- Coconut-husk fiber; 17- The end of ___; 18- Ceremony; 19- Dancing party; 21- Pleasant fragrance; 23- Comply; 24- Little one; 25- Soviet leader Brezhnev; 28- Guns, knives, etc.; 33- Minimum; 34- Carnivorous mammal; 35- Gothic-type arch; 36- High-pitched; 37- Bring about; 38- Pompous person; 39- Bump into; 41- Look at lustfully; 42- Connected series of rooms; 44- Put in order; 46- Beyond; 47- Charge carrier; 48- Fly in the ointment; 49- Farm laborer; 53- Generous; 57- Hot rock; 58- Apartment sign; 60- Brief letter, paper money; 61- Algerian seaport; 62- Go into; 63- Pleasingly pretty; 64- Fashion monogram; 65- It is in Spain; 66- Planetary revolution.

DOWN: 1- Having wealth; 2- Switch back?; 3- Gallic girlfriend; 4- Forgives; 5- Not impressed; 6- Simpleton; 7- ___ de France; 8- Actress Hatcher; 9- "___ Brockovich"; 10- Plays are divided up into these; 11- Of ___ I Sing; 14- Capital of New Mexico; 15- Playground retort; 20- Passing notice; 22- One with a beat; 25- Wool source; 26- Conger catcher; 27- Western; 28- Past tense of will; 29- Additional; 30- Mystery writer Marsh; 31- Reposes; 32- Affirmatives; 34- Hourly rate; 37- Related by birth; 40- Island off the SE coast of China; 42- Strike breaker; 43- Insistence; 45- ___ de guerre; 46- "Peer Gynt Suite" dancer; 48- Driving hazard; 49- Ruse; 50- Metallica drummer Ulrich; 51- Track; 52- Zilch; 54- Libertine; 55- Kofi ___ Annan; 56- Lewd look; 59- Mil. officers;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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





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AD

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



GAMING

WYNN TO TAKE ONLINE-BETTING BUSINESS PUBLIC IN SPAC MERGER

WYNN Resorts Ltd. is taking its nascent online-betting business public by merging it with a special purpose acquisition company (SPAC), the latest in a line of such casino-industry deals.

The Las Vegas-based gambling giant said yesterday [Macau time] it will merge its online operations with Austerlitz Acquisition Corp. I, a blank-check company created by title-insurance magnate William P. Foley II. Wynn will retain 58% of the business, which as a whole will be valued at \$3.2 billion.

The deal with Austerlitz brings about \$640 million in cash to the venture. Foley's Cannae Holdings Inc. may also invest.

The new entity will trade on the Nasdaq Stock Market under the name Wynn Interactive Ltd., with

trading symbol WBET. Wynn Resorts shares gained as much as 3.1% to \$129.67 in after-hours trading. They were up 11% this year through the close Monday in New York.

"We are confident that this transaction will unlock the tremendous potential of Wynn Interactive to further accelerate growth and enable the business to capture the massive opportunity in North America," Chief Executive Officer Matt Maddox said in a statement. Maddox will remain chairman of Wynn Interactive after the transaction.

Wynn Interactive currently operates in six states and has access to 15. The transaction is expected to close by the end of this year.

The company projected online revenue of \$708 million in 2023, based on a 5% to 7% share of the U.S.

market. Its current annual run rate is about \$100 million, executives said on a conference call for investors. The new entity will also take over the sports books at the Wynn properties in Las Vegas.

Foley, the chairman of Fidelity National Financial Inc., is also an owner of the Golden Knights pro hockey team in Las Vegas.

The Wynn deal follows other gaming companies that have gone public through a SPAC, including DraftKings Inc., Golden Nugget Online Gaming Inc. and Rush Street Interactive Inc.

Separately, the company reported first-quarter revenue that was less than analysts expected and a loss its core casino business that exceeded Wall Street expectations.

MDT/BLOOMBERG

ECONOMY

Australia to reveal big-spending plan for next fiscal year

THE Australian government will release its big-spending economic plan for the next fiscal year yesterday designed to create jobs and repair pandemic damage and with an eye toward winning votes at looming general elections.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said the economy was already recovering from the pandemic and his economic blueprint for the fiscal year starting on July 1 would create more economic strength.

"We must secure Australia's economic recovery. Tonight's budget will do exactly that," Frydenberg told reporters at Parliament House.

"Tonight's budget will invest in infrastructure and skills to create more jobs and provide incentives to businesses to do what they do best -- to hire, to innovate and to grow," he added.

The pandemic last year derailed the political calendar that sets the budget as an annual event in May. The 2020-21 budget was delayed until October. It forecast a deficit of 214 billion Australian dollars (\$168 billion) in the current fiscal year. That deficit was revised down to AU\$109 billion (\$85 billion) in a December review.

Economists expect an even smaller deficit of around AU\$80 billion (\$63 billion) to be forecast Tuesday, with factors including high prices paid by China for iron ore improving the nation's bottom line.

With Prime Minister Scott Morrison to call an election within 10 months, his conservative coalition has said paying down debt will not be a priority in the 2021-22 budget.

The government has said it would not focus on reducing debt until the

unemployment rate was below 5%. The jobless rate was 5.6% in March.

Australia's benchmark cash interest rate was at a record low of 0.1% since November and the central bank has said it will not be reduced further.

Australia has been relatively successful in containing the spread of the coronavirus. However there have been criticisms of the slow vaccination rollout.

The rollout began in February with plans to have 4 million doses of Pfizer and AstraZeneca administered in a population of 26 million by the end of March. But by Monday, only 2.66 million doses had been injected.

Morrison is expected to wait until many more people are inoculated before he seeks a fourth three-year term for his government at an election. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



CORPORATE BITS

MUST students visit MGM's F&B facilities



The Macau University for Science and Technology (MUST) recently led students from the Food and Beverage Management (BFBM) to visit MGM Cotai with the objective to give the students a better understanding on the restaurant and kitchen operations within an integrated resort.

At the visit, students were first taken through the warehouse to experience the receiving and handling process of ingredients from unloading, verification, storage, to transferring the items to restaurant kitchens. The studen-

ts were then led to the Cold Kitchen, Butcher Kitchen, Pastry Kitchen, Hot Kitchen, and Employee Dining Room.

Executive sous chef of MGM Cotai, Ugo Rinaldo, gave the students a tour of the property's signature restaurant Grill 58, and introduced the restaurant's concepts including the grill section, Bar 58, and Teppanyaki 58.

Chef Ugo specifically showed the students around Macau's only Himalayan Salt Meat-aging Room within the restaurant, where chefs prepare aged premium meats of various cuts and homemade sausages.

"The students stepped out of their classroom to get to know experience first-hand what it is to be operating an actual restaurant and kitchens at an integrated resort environment such as MGM Cotai. These two sessions together are intended to give them a holistic culinary learning experience," said Chef Ugo.

In addition, Sous Chef of Grill 58, Pio Duque Gonzalez, demonstrated two dishes on the teppanyaki grill: Hokkaido Scallop with Ikura & Yuzu Butter, and Teppan Flambé Brioche with Wagyu Tallow Ice-cream.

FOOTBALL

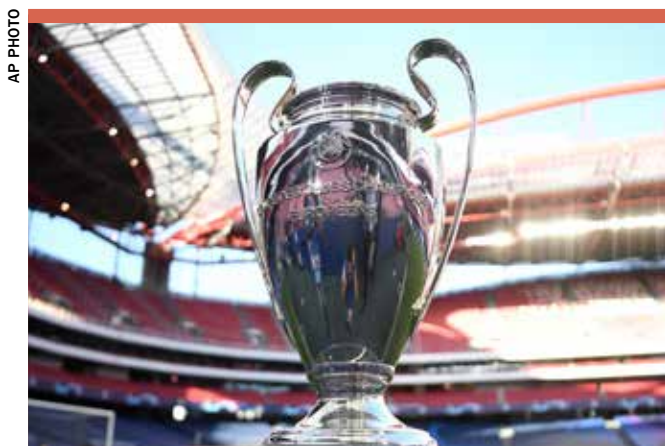
UEFA has issues with CL switch to London, Portugal a backup

ROB HARRIS

PLAYING the all-English Champions League final on home soil at Wembley is proving problematic. Instead, the players and fans of Chelsea and Manchester City could be headed to Portugal.

UEFA's hopes of playing its club showpiece in Istanbul have been scuppered for a second consecutive season, this time by Turkey being added to England's "red list" of countries with severe coronavirus outbreaks.

The British government decision that made it impossible for supporters to travel to Turkey from England came on Friday, two days after the semifinal lineup was completed. But the government immediately talked with UEFA about the possibility of moving the May 29



AP PHOTO

final to Wembley.

Discussions between UEFA and the government failed to reach a resolution yesterday [Macau time] with the competition organizer wanting waivers to allow media, sponsors and guests to fly in without having to quarantine, people familiar with the talks told The Associated Press. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to

discuss the talks.

UEFA has given the British government until today to decide whether authorities can offer all of the travel waivers required. If not, UEFA will consider taking the final to Portugal just like last season. While Benfica's stadium in Lisbon was the scene of Bayern Munich's victory over Paris Saint-Germain, Porto is one of the backup options to play this season's final in the

50,000-capacity Estádio do Dragão.

Portugal is on England's "green list" of 12 low-risk territories where people aren't required to quarantine upon their return from next Monday, making it easier for thousands of City and Chelsea fans to be able to travel. Portugal would have to lift its current block on tourists from Britain.

Switzerland, where UEFA is based, is among the amber list of countries from which people arriving in England have to quarantine for 10 days, albeit organized individually rather than via the mandatory hotel isolation in place for arrivals from red-list countries.

But UEFA has already secured exemptions from quarantine for officials and media for the European Championship in England, with eight games at Wembley including the July 11 final. **MDT/AP**

RUGBY

HOME NATIONS COULD HAVE CROWDS FOR JULY TESTS

WHILE the cream of Britain's and Ireland's rugby players are in South Africa, their national teammates will have tests of their own in the July window.

England, Wales, and Ireland could have crowds in attendance, while Scotland is going to Romania and Georgia in a schedule forged by World Rugby after the test windows last June and November were canceled.

The northern hemisphere teams usually head to the south in July, but the effects of the coronavirus pandemic have drawn many teams to Britain and Ireland, where restrictions on public life are being increasingly eased as vaccine rollouts reduce the risk of deaths and transmission.

France has already confirmed two tests in Australia, but Italy has canceled its two-test tour of New

Zealand. Italy is the highest-ranked team to go without a match in July.

"The current conditions made it preferable for the national team to concentrate energies ahead of the autumn series," the Italy Rugby Federation said.


Italy will host the All Blacks in the autumn as some consolation.

Instead of going to North America, England is bringing the United States and Canada to Twickenham on July 4 and 10 respectively.



The English Rugby Football Union hopes to sell 10,000 tickets to each game, "with the potential to increase these numbers if government guidelines allow in the coming weeks."

They would be the first supporters at 82,000-seat Twickenham since 2,000 were allowed at the Autumn Nations Cup final last December. **MDT/AP**


AD



HOLIDAY RENTAL HOUSES

Lugar das Letras  Casa de Gouvães 

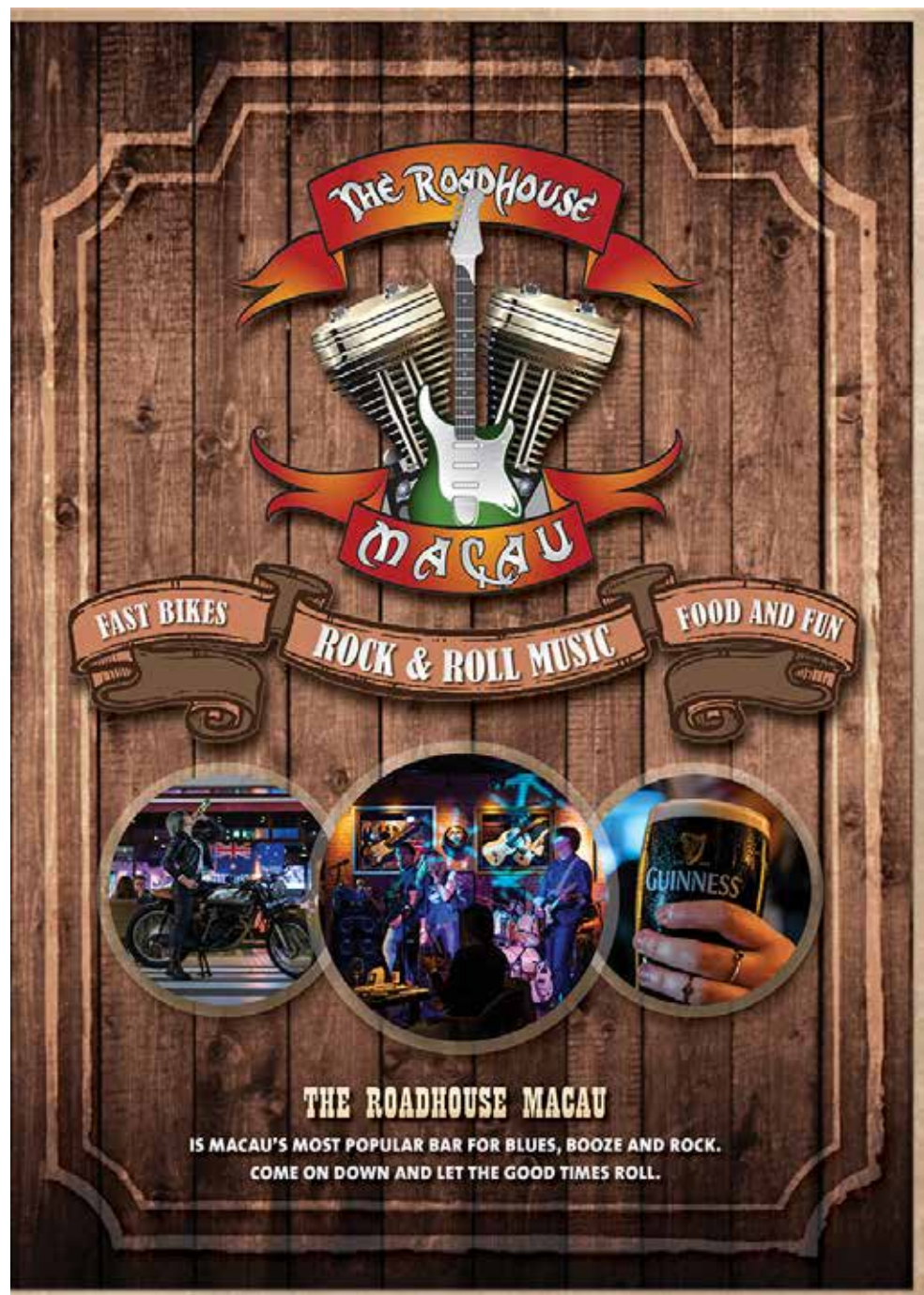
The houses are set in the heart of the World Heritage Site of the Douro Valley and its famous winery landscape where the worlds Ports are produced. Both restored relics overlooking the Rio Douro, these eight rooms houses have been blessed with gorgeous wooden floors, plush queen beds and marble baths; the best have dazzling river views. But it is the welcome that makes this place stand out from the crowd.



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OPINION

World Views

Daniel Moss, MDT/Bloomberg



IF CHINA SHRINKS, IT'S THE WORLD'S PROBLEM

China's slowest population growth in decades may be felt more acutely beyond its borders than within them. The economy will keep humming and incomes can continue to climb, albeit at a slower rate. The rest of us, however, will need to adjust to a persistently slacker pace of global expansion and the prospective ebbing of deflationary pressure. The caricature of China as an unlimited supplier of cheap labor holding down the cost of everything from dishwashers to dolls should be consigned to the history books.

Beijing's once-in-a-decade census showed there were 1.412 billion people in China last year. The annual average growth of 0.53% in the past decade was the slowest since 1953. Longstanding trends became more pronounced: The working-age population slumped to 63.4% from more than 70% a decade ago, while the share of residents aged 60 and above jumped. More than half of Chinese citizens now live in cities.

While it's possible that China's headcount will actually decline in a few years, that doesn't mean a crisis is looming. Some of the world's wealthiest economies have wrestled with population retreat — or something close to it. Japan's population peaked in 2010 and South Korea logged its first dip in 2020. Singapore reported its first decline since 2003 last year. Each of these nations has long contended with an aging society and a diminished fertility rate, while citizens have consistently resisted prodding by officials to churn out more kids. Yet each has first-class infrastructure, great schools, high standards of living and a niche in technology supply chains that gives them a shot at long-term prosperity in the pandemic era.

China need not fear for its commercial viability just because this inevitable byproduct of progress has caught up with it. After all, it's a relatively common pattern of economic development: Living standards rise, people spend more time in school, get married later, wrestle with more expensive living costs and want to spend more on the children they do have. Even if Beijing has taken steps to reverse the damaging one-child policy imposed under Mao Zedong, I doubt it will make much difference. The broader global trend may be too entrenched for even Beijing's state muscle.

The consequences for the rest of the planet may be more significant. The world's economic output has been driven by China the past few decades, especially since the financial crisis of 2007-2009. Its gross domestic product has increased at an average annual rate of about 8% since 2000. The equivalent figure for the U.S. has been a bit less than 2%. As things stand, China will contribute more than one-fifth of the total increase in global GDP in the five years through 2026, according to Bloomberg calculations based on International Monetary Fund forecasts published April. The U.S. will account for 14.8%, with India and Japan chipping in 8.4% and 3.5%, respectively. Anemic population growth, or an outright drop, is likely to mean slower overall expansion, even if GDP per capita may continue to climb. Assumptions about any expected contribution may need to be rethought.

Also up for debate is persistently low inflation, something central banks everywhere first welcomed but now increasingly worry about.

This isn't all bad news, at least right away. A Chinese model no longer based on inexpensive labor pumping out bargain-basement goods will erode one of the props that has kept inflation low, dangerously so in the view of doves at the Fed. Meanwhile, a stroll around parks, nightlife areas and shopping malls of pre-pandemic Tokyo show a declining population can still have plenty of vitality. The U.S. saw the second-slowest population growth rate in history last decade at 7.4% — just ahead of 7.3% during the Depression era — yet life goes on.

If China aspires to world economic leadership, this is what it looks like. Sluggish demographics are part of the deal. [Abridged]

CLOCK IS TICKING FOR EU VACCINE CERTIFICATES AS SUMMER LOOMS

As strict lockdowns are loosened across Europe and many EU citizens dream about holidays in the sun, the 27-nation bloc has yet to agree on how to quickly implement a virus certificate scheme to boost summer travel and tourism.

European affairs ministers gathered in Brussels to assess progress in discussions with European lawmakers. A deal between the Parliament and EU countries is required in May to ensure the system will be up and running by the end of June, but several sticking points remain.

When it proposed the scheme in March, the EU Commission

said coronavirus certificates would be given to EU residents who can prove they have been vaccinated or those who tested negative for the virus or have proof they recovered from it.

EU lawmakers and nations agree on that, but the Parliament insists that COVID-19 certificates should be enough to allow EU citizens to move about freely and that EU countries shouldn't be allowed to impose extra restrictions on certificate holders such as quarantines, tests or self-isolation measures.

That's a major roadblock, since border controls are a national responsibility. **More on macaudailytimes.com**

COVID-19

HONG KONG SCRAPS PLAN TO REQUIRE VACCINES FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

CHLOE LO & JINSHAN HONG

HONG KONG backtracked on a plan to require foreign domestic workers to be vaccinated to secure work visas, caving in to criticism that the policy was discriminatory.

The Asian financial hub's authorities reached out to the Indonesian and Philippines consulates and decided not to pursue such a requirement, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam said at a regular briefing yesterday.

"If we use compulsory vaccination, we will face a series of problems, including legal problems," Lam told reporters. "So the government decided not to carry out the requirement for foreign domestic helpers to have compulsory vaccination when applying for work visa permits."

The flip-flop is the latest in a string of sudden policy changes for Lam's administration as it seeks to keep virus infections to almost zero. While the changes have triggered confusion and complaints, the city has handled the pandemic relatively well compared with other major cities, with



fewer than 12,000 total cases reported since the pandemic began.

But Lam added that foreign domestic workers will need to undergo a second round of tests by May 30. There are more than 370,000 foreign domestic workers, accounting for about 5% of the population, in Hong Kong.

The city's administration had floated the policy idea late last month after a small outbreak of a Covid-19 variant infected some domestic workers.

Authorities announced then that foreign domestic workers would need to undergo mandatory testing, and the city eventually tested around 340,000 foreign domestic workers — with the rest exempted because

they received two doses of a Covid-19 vaccine. The mass testing exercise uncovered three positive cases, Lam said.

Last month's announcement of the mandatory vaccination plan sparked a backlash from workers groups, residents and consulates that the policy was discriminatory. That led to Lam saying last week that the government would review the policy.

Yesterday, Lam said the city's precautions successfully prevented variants of concern from spreading in Hong Kong.

"It looks like the worrying mutant strain has not taken root and spread in our community," she said. "However we will not let our guard down." **MDT/BLOOMBERG**



Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard yesterday rejected the U.S. Navy's claim that fast-approaching Iranian speedboats in the Strait of Hormuz sparked a tense encounter in the already sensitive region. The Guard's website, sepahnews.com, published a statement saying Americans were guilty of using "false narratives and unprofessional behavior" and should more strictly "abide by international regulations."



Israel Palestinian militants launched dozens of rockets from Gaza and Israel unleashed new air strikes against them yesterday, in an escalation triggered by soaring tensions in Jerusalem and days of clashes at an iconic mosque in the holy city. Twenty-four people, including nine children, were killed in Gaza overnight, most of them in Israeli strikes. More than 700 Palestinians were hurt in clashes with Israeli security forces in Jerusalem and across the West Bank in 24 hours, including nearly 500 who were treated at hospitals.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Amit Sharma



A man runs to escape heat emitting from the multiple funeral pyres of Covid-19 victims at a crematorium in the outskirts of New Delhi, India.



Russia A gunman attacked a school yesterday morning in the city of Kazan, sending students running out of the building as smoke poured from its windows. At least eight people were killed in the attack — seven eighth-grade students and a teacher — and 21 others were hospitalized, Russian officials said. Officials said the attacker has been arrested and police opened a criminal investigation into the shooting.