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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

A KAI FONG SURVEY SHOWS THAT
NEARLY 70% OF STUDENTS WERE
WORRIED ABOUT DEMAND IN THE
EMPLOYMENT MARKET

IPIM PLEDGES TO
REVIEW IRREGULARITIES
FOLLOWING CCAC REPORT

THE TOURISM AUTHORITY EXPECTS THE
NUMBER OF VISITORS TO STEADILY GROW
OVER THE SUMMER HOLIDAY PERIOD,
ESTIMATING 40,000 ON WEEKENDS

P4

P2



India Doctors are fighting a fatal fungal infection affecting Covid-19 patients or those who have recovered from the disease amid a coronavirus surge that has driven the country's fatalities to nearly 300,000. The life-threatening condition, known as mucormycosis, is relatively rare but doctors suspect that the sudden increase in the infection could further complicate India's fight against the pandemic. India has reported more than 26 million confirmed cases of the coronavirus since the pandemic began, with almost half occurring in the past two months.



Myanmar The head of Myanmar's military-appointed state election commission said that his agency will consider dissolving Aung San Suu Kyi's former ruling party for alleged involvement in electoral fraud and having its leaders charged with treason. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy came to power after a landslide 2015 election victory, and won an even greater majority in last November's general election. It was set to start a second term in February when the military seized power in a coup.



Gaza Strip Palestinians rallied by the thousands after a cease-fire took effect in the latest Gaza war, with many viewing it as a costly but clear victory for the Islamic militant group Hamas. Israel vowed to respond with a "new level of force" to further hostilities.

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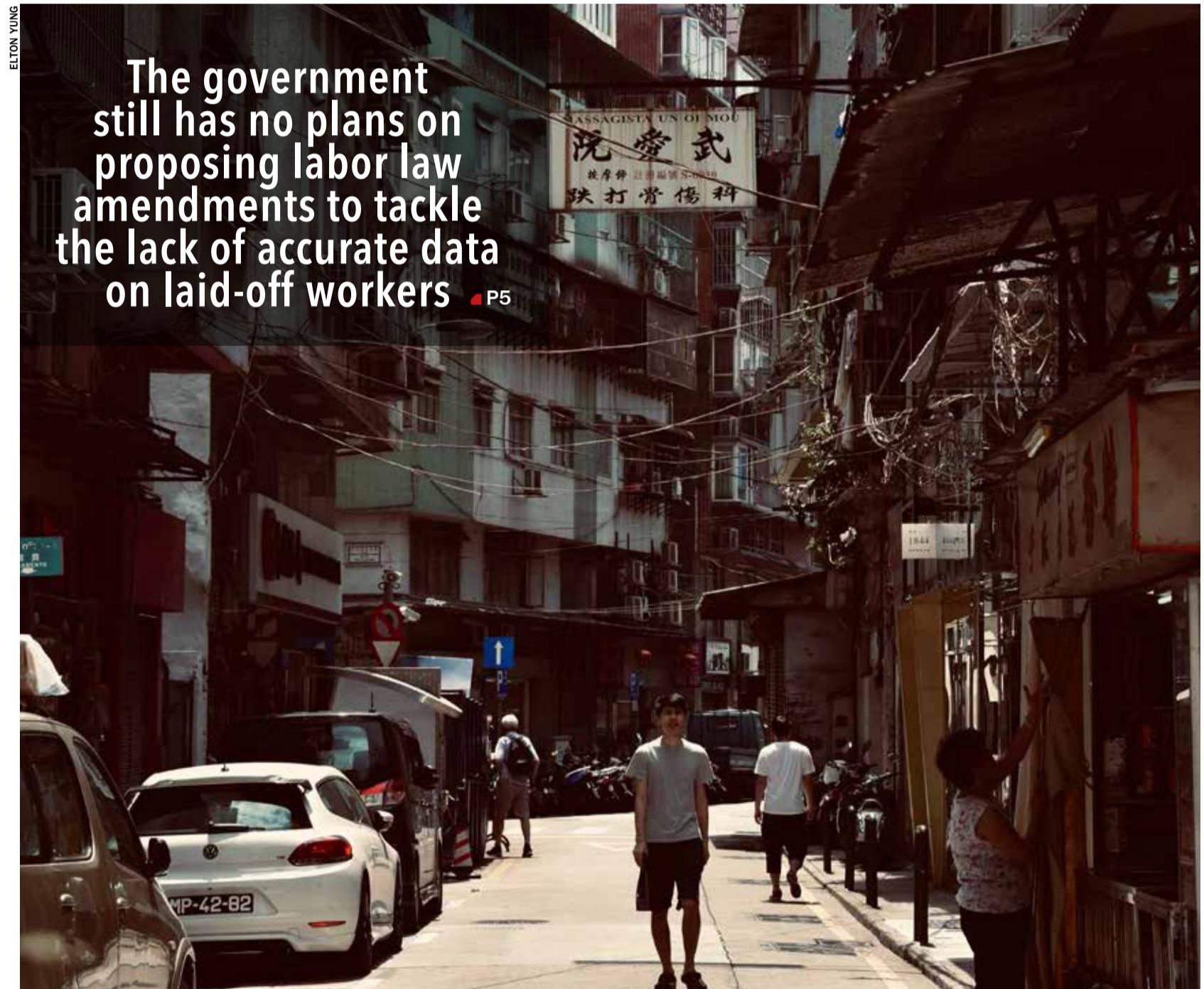
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MISSING DATA



The government
still has no plans on
proposing labor law
amendments to tackle
the lack of accurate data
on laid-off workers ▶P5

MELCO OFFERS
MOP16
MILLION
INCENTIVE FOR
INOCULATED
EMPLOYEES

P2



EUROPE SLOWLY OPENING TO TOURISTS
INCLUDING SAR RESIDENTS

P3

MELCO OFFERS MOP16 MILLION VACCINATION INCENTIVE FOR INOCULATED EMPLOYEES

HONEY TSANG

MELOCO Resorts & Entertainment sets aside nearly MOP16 million for a highly rewarding cash incentive program to encourage its staff to take the Covid-19 jabs. The move, the group stated, is to help accelerate Macau on its path to achieving herd immunity.

The program, dubbed "Get the Jab" immunity incentive program, was announced by the group on Friday, May 21.

Through the scheme, every fully vaccinated employee of Melco will be granted a cash handout valued at MOP1,000. This includes those who had received two jabs prior to the launch of the program.

On top of that, Melco will select and award six fully vaccinated staff by lot, each to be granted an award of MOP1 million — whenever the conglomerate achieves certain immunity rates. According to an official memo delivered to Melco's staff,

the lottery draw will be conducted when the group hits 25%, 50% and 75% inoculation rate among all its staff.

The group has earmarked a total of MOP6 million as the lottery fund. Every fully vaccinated staff will be deemed eligible to participate in the lottery.

"The health and safety of Melco colleagues, guests and community is a top priority," Lawrence Ho, chairman & CEO of Melco Resorts & Entertainment stated in the release.

"Through the efforts of the government, we are fortunate that vaccines are readily available. Our commitment to creating a safe environment and contributing to the government's goal of achieving herd immunity is demonstrated by our resources dedicated to the immunity incentive program," he added.

Melco has implemented a set of supporting measures to motivate its employees to get inoculated. These include: hosting

BLOOMBERG



SSM SEES NO IRREGULARITY IN VACCINATION REWARD PROGRAM

WHEN questioned about Melco's vaccination reward program, Kuok Cheong U, deputy director of the Health Bureau (SSM) disagreed that it was irregularly boosting the popularity of the vaccine or the vaccination program.

He added that each enterprise or entity can have their own ways of encouraging members or the public to get inoculated.

Taking his own case as an example, Kuok, who is a medical doctor and director of the government hospital, said he wants to encourage others to take the vaccine due to his three decades of medical experience and himself taking the vaccine.

Meanwhile, the SSM has the intention to conduct outreach vaccinations at different gambling concessionai-

res. Negotiation is in progress, according to Kuok. Further outreach program may be possible, he added.

Recalling the previous outreach vaccination at other entities and higher education institution, the government hospital director was satisfied with the turnout.

He was also asked if people with intellectual disabilities will be taken for inoculation. The government has been stressing that Covid-19 vaccination must be conducted under the recipient's full understanding of the matter and consent.

Kuok explained that during the pre-vaccination health assessment, the doctor will try their best to explain the matter to the recipient and their parents or guardians and ensure the shot is given with their consent. AL

MGTO EXPECTS DAILY AVERAGE OF OVER 30,000 VISITORS DURING SUMMER

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) expects that the number of visitors coming into Macau will continue to steadily grow over the summer holiday period. The office estimates that the number of daily visitors would stay over 30,000 during the weekdays and even reach 40,000 over the weekends the director of MGTO, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, said on Saturday at the sidelines of the opening of the new water park facility at Studio City.

According to Fernandes, the hospitality industry is confident about the sum-

mer vacation period, adding that the government will continue to promote Macau as a destination in several cities in the mainland through the "Macao Week" events as well as online promotions.

Speaking to the media about the new water park, Fernandes mentioned that she believes the new amusement parks and similar facilities "will add new elements to the tourism industry and tourists in Macau."

However, she rejected the idea of the government potentially authorizing any large-scale theme park in Macau due to "restrictions and geographical cons-

traints."

Instead, she believes that the best way to attract more visitors to Macau is by increasing the cooperation with the cities that comprise the Greater Bay Area.

Commenting on the possibility of relapse of Covid-19 in several cities in the Mainland where Macau is holding promotion activities to attract visitors, the director of the MGTO said that if an area suddenly becomes a potential pandemic risk, the authorities will immediately act and make the appropriate adjustments to ensure that Macau continues to be Covid-19 free.

STUDIO CITY WATER PARK ATTRACTS NEARLY 1,000 GUESTS ON FIRST DAY

THE Studio City Water Park officially opened on Saturday, welcoming nearly 1,000 guests on the first day of its operations.

The water park features a variety of water rides and attractions such as: Highpoint Twister with its five colorful high-octane slides; Golden Bucket, which features more than 60 water features; RiverScape, a 450-meter action river for all ages; and Little Lagoon, a kid-friendly area.

Studio City is offering a season pass for MOP1088, allowing unlimited entries until October. A standard ticket, meanwhile, costs MOP388.

The water park is part of Studio City's second

LYNZY VALLES



phase of expansion, which was budgeted at USD1.35 billion to USD1.4 billion.

This second phase offers non-gaming attractions, including a cineplex, a water park, fine dining restaurants, and meeting and exhibition spaces.

Melco International Development Limited posted a net loss of HKD12.38 billion for the full year of 2020. Covid-19 and ensuing travel restrictions significantly impacted the group's financial performance throughout 2020. IV

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Europe slowly opening to tourists including SAR residents

EUROPE is slowly rolling back border restrictions set in place to stop the spread of Covid-19, providing an opening for sightseers and sun-seekers to finally make plans for a summer holiday.

In Germany, citizens from Australia, Israel, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand can enter without restrictions. China, Hong Kong and Macau residents will also be allowed when Germans are granted equivalent entry rights, according to the interior ministry.

In the Macau SAR, tourists and non-residents from outside Greater China are still banned from entering the region. As implied by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng earlier, the government may only allow entrants from countries that were Covid-19 free for 14 days prior to entering the city.

Meanwhile, from today, tourists from Japan and the U.K. can enter Spain without a PCR test. This

BLOOMBERG



should give a major boost for the country's tourism sector, since the Brits are its biggest source of visitors — but there's a hitch. With Spain on the U.K.'s amber list, the

Brits will have to self-isolate once they get home. There is also a testing requirement on departure as well as return, which will quell some of the enthusiasm. Some

European Union (EU) and European Economic Area arrivals can also go to Spain without a test, along with people from Australia, China and Hong Kong — places that are also mostly shut off.

Meanwhile, Germany, along with the U.K., provides more visitors to Europe's beaches than any other nation. It loosened borders with member countries of the EU and the Schengen free-travel zone on May 13, giving its citizens access to more destinations than their British counterparts.

Fully vaccinated or recovered people no longer need a negative Covid-19 test and do not have to quarantine when they re-enter the country from those locations, removing a hurdle for Germans considering a holiday on the continent. Those who do not meet those tests will, for now, still have to quarantine from designated risk zones, including all of Italy and Greece, as well as swaths of Spain. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

Visitor expenditure surges 24% in Q1

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



LYNZY VALLES

THE total spending of visitors arriving in Macau - excluding gaming expenses - increased by 23.5% year-on-year to MOP6.18 billion in the first quarter of 2021 (Q1).

Affected by Covid-19 for more than a year, tourism activities in Macau had been subdued. This has led to an accumulation of consumption capacity among visitors, according to the latest data from the Statistics and

Census Service (DSEC).

The total spending of overnight visitors rose by 48.0% year-on-year to MOP5.59 billion, while that of same-day visitors dropped by 52.1% to MOP589 million.

The per-capita spending of visitors surged by 128.6% year-on-year to MOP3,556 patacas in Q1.

In terms of visitors' per-capita spending in Q1, spending of visitors from mainland China leapt by 103.8% year-on-year to MOP3,647, with spending of those travelling under

the Individual Visit Scheme (MOP7,132) soaring by 230.4%. Per-capita spending of visitors from Hong Kong (MOP2,687) and Taiwan (MOP3,026) shot up by 215.9% and 146.4% year-on-year respectively.

Visitors primarily spent on shopping, food and beverage and accommodation in Q1. Per-capita shopping spending of visitors jumped by 238.6% year-on-year to MOP2,280, of which spending on cosmetics and perfume; handbags and shoes; and clothing saw substantial growth of 232.0%, 559.1% and 407.4% respectively.

QUARANTINE IMPOSED ON ENTRANTS FROM GUANGZHOU CITIES

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation in Guangzhou, where a domestic case of Covid-19 was confirmed on Saturday, a 14-day quarantine is mandatory for anyone who arrives in Macau and has been in Jinlong, Longjin Sub-district and Liwan District, Guangzhou two weeks prior. Mandatory quarantine is also applied to residents from: Jin'an District and Yu'an District, Lu'an City, Shangpai Town, Feixi County and Hefei City in Anhui Province.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX DECREASES SLIGHTLY

The Composite Consumer Price Index (CPI) for April 2021 (102.47) went down by 0.64% year-on-year, which was 0.33 percentage points lower than the decrease in March of 0.97%. The drop in the Composite CPI in April was attributed to lower charges for package tours and telecommunication services, according to the data from Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). Increased airfares and higher charges for electricity, eating out and outpatient services, coupled with rising wages of domestic helpers, partially offset the decrease. Among the various sectors of goods and services, price indices of Recreation & Culture and Communication declined by 9.87% and 7.70% year-on-year respectively.

LAWYERS SAY CONTROL NEEDED AGAINST CYBERCRIME

ANTHONY LAM

SOME lawyers see control of cybercrime, which normally concerns foreign jurisdictions, as necessary and that law-enforcement entities should find ways to gather digital evidence.

The comment was made during a seminar held as part of this year's Lawyer's Day. Several lawyers, as well as officials from the Personal Data Protection Office (GDPO)

and the Judiciary Police (PJ) spoke at the event. Lawyer José Filipe Salreta, who spoke at the seminar, is supportive of the Cyber Security Law. He also introduced the legislation background of the Personal Data Protection Law.

Meanwhile, Iu Ian, senior technical officer at the GPDP, pointed out that handling of personal data exists in various aspects. She added that the current legislation is not enough.

She hoped in future there will be more specific laws on personal data protection in each aspect.

She recommended the public to take measures, such as changing computer passwords regularly and avoid using public WiFi for confidential matters so as to protect their own personal data.

Meanwhile, Ho Weng Kin, head of the Cyber Security Division of the PJ, stressed that the PJ is not

legally permitted to store, restore or even view the obtained cyber data. The entity may only view the size of the data flow and the characteristics of known hacker activities.

Lawyer Sou Sio Kei pointed out that cybercrime normally takes place outside of Macau, meaning that it involves foreign jurisdictions, laws and regulations. There have been difficulties for local law-enforcement entities in obtaining evi-

dence or details from foreign entities.

Sou thought it was important to raise awareness across the globe and determine a shared standard among various jurisdictions. He stressed that the cyberworld should not become a utopia for violators. He hopes for more work to be done on policing collaborations and, in a better case, international covenant and judicial collaborations.

SURVEY: 70% OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ANXIOUS ABOUT EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

ANTHONY LAM

NEARLY 70% of respondents were worried about demand in the employment market and saw a surplus of human resources, a survey conducted by the General Union of Neighbor Associations of Macau discovered.

Meanwhile, nearly 60% of respondents in the same survey were worried about their remunerations at work. In both surveys, respondents expressed mid to high level of stress.

The group recommends youths adjust their approach according to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, parents can proactively discuss career planning with their children. They can also provide support or suggestions where necessary.

The survey was conducted in the second half of last year. The group distributed 702 questionnaires in nine higher education institutions across the city and managed to retrieve 681 valid responses.

In terms of stress felt about the employment market and hiring, 69% of respondents felt stressed when seeing the low de-



mand for employees in the market. They feared that there is a surplus in the employment market.

Approximately 67% of respondents felt stressed about job seeking and job interviews, worrying that they might not attain the chance offered to them. Around 59% of respondents fear having low remunerations and approximately 57% saw no distinguishing characteristics or strong points in themselves.

The group concluded that it is a reflection of heavy pressure on youths and prospective university graduates.

The survey also looked into the supporting factors

on career development. Half of the respondents thought that people should consider their career planning and development in high school. About 70% of respondents found Macau lacking career development support.

With regards to discussing career planning with someone, 35% reported to have done so with classmates, friends, or colleagues. Only 14% have done so with teachers or parents. About one in 10 respondents have not discussed the topic with anyone.

It means that, according to the general union, there is an absence of official or reliable channels for em-

ployment counselling.

Among the respondents who thought Macau did not have enough support for career planning, 60% saw support in personal career counselling, résumé writing, mock interview and information on training necessary at career planning facilities.

All respondents found internship opportunities outside of Macau helpful with their future career planning. Three-quarter of the respondents showed willingness to have an internship within the Greater Bay Area, while 30% were willing to have an internship outside the Greater Bay Area.

THIRD STIMULUS

Over 416,000 have registered for e-consumption benefits; card tops choices

SOME 416,000 residents have completed their registration for the third round of economic stimulus that will grant a total of 8,000 patacas per person on electronic consumption payment methods, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDT) and the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) announced in a statement.

The figure, which accounts for completed registrations up to yesterday morning, also demonstrates that the consumption card continues to gather the preference of more Ma-



cau residents. Card registrations account for a total of 238,000 registrations (57.2%), while the option

that grants the funds via one of the mobile payment platforms has so far been chosen by 178,000 people.

Those who have completed the registration, and whose request have been approved and confirmed before May 20, will be able to receive the funds as early as today (May 24) from 9 a.m. via their preferred method.

The DSEDT and AMCM also noted that requests submitted on or after May 20 should receive an approval within two working days.

The utilization of the economic stimulus that includes 5,000 patacas of initial funds and extra 3,000 patacas in automatic direct discounts will start for everyone from June 1. RM

IPIM PLEDGES TO REVIEW IRREGULARITIES IN RESIDENCY APPLICATION APPROVALS

LYNZY VALLES

THE Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) announced that it will conduct revisions to the permanent residency approvals of several cases, following the graft buster's recent report that a businessman is suspected of forging documents to support applications for a Macau ID.

According to the Commission Against Corruption's (CCAC) latest report, a businessman was involved in assisting over 11 cases of acquiring residents under the IPIM's Investment Residency category.

In a statement issued by IPIM, the bureau clarified, "In the process of reviews and inspections, if any irregularities are found, the initiative will be taken to forward the process in question to the judicial bodies."

The IPIM pledged that it will "strictly comply with the law in the

performance of its own functions and, in addition, to continuously inspect and review [applications]."

CCAC's investigation shows that the businessman, together with his subordinates and business partners, submitted false employee information to various government departments to misrepresent the company's size and operating conditions.

CCAC confirmed that this occurred during the tenure of the former IPIM president, Jackson Chang, who last year was convicted of leaking confidential information concerning IPIM's criteria in granting residence permits to investors or skilled professionals to another defendant.

In the statement, the IPIM said it will review periodically the effectiveness of the work, in order to constantly improve and optimize the relevant administrative procedures.

IAM SUBMITS TO CCAC REPORT

THE Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) is "highly concerned with the Commission Against Corruption's (CCAC) annual report and have made corresponding improvements," IAM stressed in a statement following the issuance of the report last week.

In the report, the CCAC deemed the IAM as having doled out inappropriate punishments in two separate cases. One of them concerned air conditioning drips and, in the other, an IAM employee violating their responsibility.

In the first case, the IAM fined the complainant even when they had fixed the dripping from their air conditioner.

In the other case, a then-employee of the bureau left the office during

work without superintendent approval for 10 days in March 2019. The IAM commenced an investigation into the individual and decided to apply work suspension as punishment.

However, when the decision was made, the individual had retired from work. The IAM fined the individual instead. The CCAC pointed out that fine and work suspension are from two tiers of punishment – a fine is from a lower tier.

After the CCAC's follow-up, the IAM has refunded the punishment on the complainant in the first case. In the second case, the IAM accepted the conclusion of the CCAC and have made alterations to its supervisory mechanism. AL

DSAL not proposing amendments to take control on real layoff data

RENATO MARQUES

THE government is not, for the time being, proposing labor law amendments to tackle the lack of accurate data on workers experiencing layoffs, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) acknowledged in a reply to the Times.

The Times inquired if the DSAL had plans to propose an amendment to the current laws in place so as to solve the aforementioned issue. In response, the DSAL said that "the Labour Affairs Bureau will continue to review the implementation of current labor laws and regulations, carefully listen to the opinions and suggestions put forward by the community, and analyze the actual situation in Macau."

The department also noted in the same written reply to the Times that "according to Articles 9 and 10 of the Labour Relations Law, employers are obliged to arrange work and pay remuneration [to the workers]. As for unpaid leave, both parties must negotiate and agree [on the decision as it is] not being possible to decide [on the matter] unilaterally."

The DSAL further ad-



ded, "Since employees are paid for their work, and unpaid leave needs to be agreed between the employer and the employee, the employee [also] does not need to provide work to the employer without being paid." The bureau remarked that this situation is different from the salary reduction cases, which are of a mandatory report to labor authorities. The DSAL explained, "This is different from the nature of reducing the basic remuneration for normal work, and so the treatment [on law provisions] is also different."

The bureau also emphasized that if the employer decided to dismiss the employee be-

cause they fail to reach an agreement on unpaid leave, "this is not considered a reasonable justification to terminate the labor contract. In this case, the employer must follow the provisions of Law 7/2008 that specify the need for the payment of a dismissal compensation to employees."

Referring to the current impacts on labor from the Covid-19 pandemic, the DSAL has called "on both the employers and employees to be considerate, respectful, negotiate work and holiday arrangements in good faith, to tide over the difficulties and to meet the dawn together, so that harmonious labor relations can be sustained."

On previous occasions, both the DSAL and Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, noted the lack of real and concrete data on worker layoff rates was due to the absence of a precipitating context that required a mandatory report.

CRIME

PJ ARRESTS RECIDIVIST SUSPECT FOR SEXUALLY ASSAULTING SCHOOLGIRL

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) has arrested a 25-year-old local man suspected of sexually assaulting a schoolgirl.

According to the police, the man was previously involved in a similar crime nine years ago when he was a teenager. At the time, he was sentenced to 18 months of imprisonment.

The PJ informed that the man met the girl of an undisclosed age

through an online messaging app last Sunday, May 16, and conversed with her for a period of three days. Following that, he arranged a meeting with the girl at an internet cafe in the Northern District.

On the grounds of having to visit a sick family member, he brought the girl from their meeting spot to an apartment and requested to have sex with her. When she

refused the request, he allegedly began sexually assaulting the girl, the PJ informed.

The case was revealed after the girl reported the event to a social worker who works at her school. She then alerted the police and notified the Education and Youth Development Bureau.

The man was detained by the PJ and taken into questioning on May 21. RM

COLLISION OF THREE SHIPS IN MACAU WATERS REPORTED

RENATO MARQUES

led away in the direction of Zhuhai.

THE collision of three ships reportedly occurred on Saturday, May 22, according to maritime authorities.

Although the accidents caused no casualties, the maritime authorities have expressed concerns on the lack of compliance with the maritime regulations, which they claim are the cause of the accidents.

According to the report, the incident occurred around 5 a.m. on Saturday, when a cargo ship collided with a fishing vessel while crossing under the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge.

The accident was said to cause some damage to both vessels but without any significant impacts that could cause any risk to the sailing of the ships.

The maritime authorities also noted that the fishing vessel did not remain at the scene and sail-

Around noon, a cargo ship and a tanker also collided near the entrance of Macau's water jurisdictions in the surrounds of the northern airport runway.

The cargo ship incurred several impacts, although none were sufficient to cause the wrecking of the ship, while the tanker did not report any damage.

Additionally, a third cargo ship has reportedly lost its anchor while sailing between the Sai Van Bridge and the Governor Nobre de Carvalho Bridge. Upon receiving the alert, the maritime authorities deployed an operation to help salvage the anchor and ensure the safety of navigating in the area.

AD

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TWENTY-ONE people running a mountain ultramarathon have died in northwestern China after hail, freezing rain and gale-force winds hit the high-altitude race, state media reported yesterday.

After an all-night rescue operation in freezing temperatures involving more than 700 personnel, rescuers were able to confirm that 151 people were safe, out of a total of 172 participants. Twenty-one had died, according to the official Xinhua News Agency, which said the runners suffered from physical discomfort and the sudden drop in temperature.

The runners were racing on an extremely narrow mountain path at an altitude reaching 2,000-3,000 meters. The 100-kilometer race was held Saturday in the Yellow River Stone Forest tourist site in Baiyin city in Gansu province.

Participants were not rookies. One of the deceased was a well-known runner Liang Jing, who had won a 100-kilometer race in Ningbo, reported the Paper, a state-backed newspaper based in Shanghai.

The race also followed a relatively established course, having been held four times, according to an account posted online by a participant in the race who quit and managed to make his way to safety.

But the weather caught them off guard, and on the morning of the race Saturday, he already sensed things were not normal. The runners were not dressed for winter-like conditions, many wearing short-sleeved tops.

"I ran 2 kilometers before the starting gun fired to warm up [...] but the troublesome thing was, after running these 2 kilometers, my body still had not heated up," the com-

21 DIE IN EXTREME WEATHER IN CHINA ULTRAMARATHON

AP PHOTO



petitor said in a first-person account that has been viewed more than 100,000 times on his WeChat account "Wandering about the South."

He later told the Paper that the forecast the day prior to the race did not predict the extreme weather they encountered.

The most difficult section, from kilometer 24 to kilometer 36, climbed 1,000 meters. There, he said the path was just a mix of stones and sand, and his fingers grew numb from the cold.

When he finally decided to turn back, he already felt dazed. He said he was able to make it to safety and met a rescue crew. He did not respond to a request for comment left on his social media account.

Some runners farther along the course had fallen off the trail into deep mountain crevices.

TWO SEPARATE QUAKES CAUSE DAMAGE; THREE DEAD, DOZENS HURT

A strong, shallow earthquake shook southwestern China near the border with Myanmar, killing at least three people and injuring more than two dozen, while a separate, more intense quake early Saturday collapsed a bridge and caused other damage in central China.

The first, 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit Yunnan province late Friday. The second 7.3 magnitude quake occurred hours later in the southern part of Qinghai province, about 1,000 kilometers to the south, according to Chinese measurements.

U.S. Geological Survey geophysicist Jonathan Tytell said the two quakes were not related.

The Qinghai earthquake was followed by 453 aftershocks throughout the early morning into midday, according to the official People's Daily newspaper. At least eight people were injured.

While no deaths have been reported so far in Qinghai province, the quakes tore up roads and bridges, with one collapsing completely, broken into segments.

The Yunnan province seismological bureau gave the magnitude of Friday night's quake and said it struck 8 kilometers below the surface northwest of the city of Dali.

Shallow quakes often cause more damage, especially in populated areas.

The earthquake caused strong shaking around Dali, but Chinese news reports showed relatively little damage.

Three people died and 28 were injured, Yunnan province's publicity department said Saturday.

Relief efforts were underway, with the provincial authorities sending emergency rations and tents to the affected areas. In Qinghai, authorities set up temporary safety shelters due to continuous aftershocks.

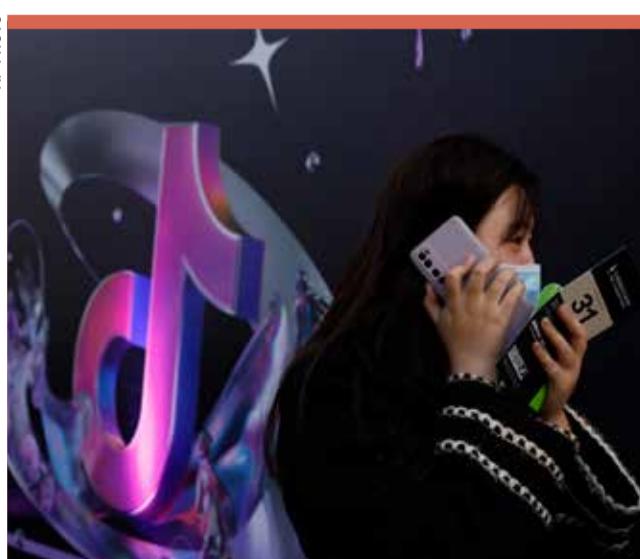
Last year, a magnitude 5 earthquake in Yunnan killed four people and injured 23.

China's worst earthquake in recent years struck the mountainous western portion of Sichuan province to the north of Yunnan in 2008, killing nearly 90,000 people. MDT/AP

Authorities name 105 apps for improper data practices

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

AP PHOTO



CHINA'S internet watchdog said Friday it had found Bytedance's Douyin, Microsoft Bing, LinkedIn and 102 other apps were engaged in improper collection and use of data and ordered them to fix the problem.

The Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) said that the 105 apps violated laws by excessively collecting and illegally accessing users' personal information, according to a statement posted on its site Friday.

Other companies it named included short video

app Kuaishou, search engine Sogou and Baidu. The watchdog said companies had to fix the problems wi-

thin 15 working days or face legal consequences.

The CAC has stepped up scrutiny of Chinese apps as

authorities beef up protection of personal information and seek to prevent breaches of online privacy. One concern in China and elsewhere is that many internet companies have collected excessive user information to target consumers with advertisements.

The crackdown comes even as the Chinese government itself collects information about its citizens on a massive scale. Critics accuse the authorities of using facial recognition to profile and track Uyghurs in Xinjiang, where over a million have been detained in "re-education" camps.

Provisions outlining how apps should collect personal information came into effect May 1. They hold app makers accountable for excessive data collection and collection of information without users' consent.

The internet watchdog earlier ordered security apps developed by Tencent Holdings and Alibaba Group Holding to stop gathering information from users without their consent.

Technology companies in China are facing increasingly harsh scrutiny as authorities seek to counter the influence of giant companies like Alibaba and Tencent.

The broad range of services they provide, from payments and e-commerce to gaming and messaging has made them ubiquitous in everyday life.

Earlier this year, authorities imposed a record \$2.8 billion fine on Alibaba for violations of anti-monopoly rules. Food delivery company Meituan is currently under investigation for alleged anticompetitive behavior.

Dozens of other internet companies including Baidu, Tencent and ride-hailing firm Didi Chuxing have also been fined for not properly disclosing investments or acquisitions. MDT/AP

Gov't touts success building Tibet less focused on religion

CHINA'S top leader in Tibet lauded the progress his country has made developing the region, touting an ethnic-assimilation campaign that has fueled international accusations of human-rights abuses.

"More and more believers have been trained from pursuing a good afterlife to living a good life in this life, and religion has been increasingly compatible with a socialist society," Wu Yingjie, the Communist Party chief of Tibet, said at a press briefing in Beijing Saturday.

Wu also listed a wide array of ways the ruling party has transformed the region where most people are Buddhist - from building schools and paved road to improvements in health care - as China marks the 70th anniversary on Sunday of an agreement giving it control of the region.

The event puts a renewed focus on Tibet as China deals with broad criticism of its policies in Xinjiang, where the U.S. and lawmakers in several other Western countries say Beijing is carrying out genocide. Both Tibet and Xinjiang have long endured intense social, security and religious controls, as

AP PHOTO



Wu Yingjie

China strives to suppress what it calls terrorist and separatist elements while providing economic opportunities.

In September last year, prominent Xinjiang researcher Adrian Zenz released a report alleging that Beijing was instituting a mass labor system in Tibet similar to the one that has ensnared Muslim Uyghurs. Tibet Governor Qi Zhala said at the time that forced labor transfer "does not exist," maintaining the local government was focused on providing job training.

EQUITABLE EDUCATION

On Saturday, both Qi Zhala and Wu focused on the Chinese government's efforts to provide education for Tibetans.

"Almost all the best buildings are schools," Wu said. "Fair and equitable education is taken very seriously by government at all levels. There is a lot of funding and input."

Wu said that "Chinese culture at large has all along provided a sentimental bond and a sense of belonging for all ethnic groups" in the western region he leads.

"Tibetan Buddhism is an important part of Chinese culture, and Tibetan cultures are important components of the Chinese culture," he said.

The People's Republic of China asserted sovereignty over Tibet in 1951 as part of a broader effort by Mao Zedong's communists to consolidate control over territory historically claimed by China before decades of colonialism, war and internal strife. The Dalai Lama fled to India with help from the Central Intelligence Agency to escape a government crackdown

in 1959, and a Tibetan-independence movement has endured ever since.

Riots erupted in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa in 2008 over allegations of religious oppression, leaving at least a dozen dead. A spate of self-immolations by ethnic Tibetans followed a few years later.

Beijing has blamed the Dalai Lama for fomenting the unrest, and that sentiment continues to be expressed by Chinese officials who see religion as the root cause of some of Tibet's biggest challenges. China's Communist Party is officially atheist.

DEADLY SKIRMISHES

The Dalai Lama's continued presence in India complicates China's relationship with the South Asian nation. China and India fought sometime deadly skirmishes along their 3,488-kilometer disputed boundary last year and early in 2021, though tensions have eased in recent months.

Earlier in May, Foreign Policy reported that China was building villages inside Bhutan, the Buddhist kingdom with which it also shares a border. The magazine concluded this was part of a campaign by Chinese leader Xi Jinping to "fortify the Tibetan borderlands."

Neither Wu nor Qi Zhala would take questions from Bloomberg News at the briefing, one of several held by Communist Party officials as President Xi prepares to celebrate the ruling party's 100th anniversary in July. **BLOOMBERG**

STRAIT TENSIONS

PHILIPPINES, CHINA HOLD 'FRIENDLY' DIALOGUE ON SOUTH CHINA SEA

THE Philippines and China held talks on the South China Sea through a bilateral online forum set up by both nations to promote dialogue and cooperation over the disputed waters.

"The two sides had friendly and candid exchanges on the general situation and specific issues of concern in the South China Sea," according to a statement released by the Philippines Foreign Affairs Department on Saturday. "There was mutual recognition of the importance of dialogue in easing tensions and understanding each country's position and intentions in the area."

The latest forum is the sixth since the platform was established in 2016 by President Xi Jinping and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte. Tension between the two nations has escalated in recent months, with the Philippines repeatedly

AP PHOTO



protesting the presence of Chinese ships in a disputed area of the South China Sea.

In Friday's dialogue, the Philippines said it "reiterated its long-standing call for full respect and adherence to international law,

including the 1982 UNCLOS (United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea) and its authoritative interpretation and application - the final and binding 2016

The Philippines also said that the nation's Justice Department will lead talks next month for compensation of Filipino fishermen abandoned by a Chinese ship that hit their boat in the West Philippine Sea two years ago. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

SPACE

CHINA'S MARS ROVER TOUCHES GROUND ON RED PLANET

CHINA'S first Mars rover has driven down from its landing platform and is now roaming the surface of the red planet, China's space administration said Saturday.

The solar-powered rover touched Martian soil at 10:40 a.m. Saturday Beijing time, the China National Space Administration said.

China landed the spacecraft carrying the rover on Mars last Saturday, a technically challenging feat more difficult than a moon landing, in a first for the country. It is the second country to land and operate a spacecraft on Mars, after the United States.

Named after the Chinese god of fire, Zhu-rong, the rover has been running diagnostics tests for several days before it began its exploration Sa-

AP PHOTO



turday. It is expected to be deployed for 90 days to search for evidence of life.

The U.S. also has an ongoing Mars mission, with the Perseverance rover and a tiny helicopter exploring the planet. NASA expects the rover to collect its first sample in July for return to Earth as early as 2031.

China has ambitious space plans that include launching a crewed orbital station and landing a human on the moon. China in 2019 became the first country to land a space probe on the little-explored far side of the moon, and in December returned lunar rocks to Earth for the first time since the 1970s. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



MIDEAST

Israeli police allow Jews to visit flashpoint Jerusalem site

JOSEPH KRAUSS,
JERUSALEM

ISRAELI police yesterday escorted more than 120 Jewish visitors to a flashpoint holy site in Jerusalem where police actions in recent weeks had ignited protests and violence that triggered war in Gaza, according to the Islamic authority overseeing the site.

The U.N. humanitarian coordinator meanwhile said hundreds of homes in Gaza had been completely destroyed and many more had been badly damaged in the 11-day war, which was brought to a fragile halt on Friday.

Police cleared young Palestinians out of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and barred entry to Muslims under the age of 45, according to the Islamic Waqf, which oversees the site under Jordanian custodianship. Muslims who entered were required to leave their IDs with police at the entrance. It said six Palestinians were detained, with four later released.

Israeli police denied there was any age restriction and said they arrested five suspects who "violated the public order." Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said the site was open

for "regular visits" and that police had secured the area to prevent "incidents."

Israeli police had briefly clashed with Palestinian protesters after Friday prayers in an early test for the truce, which had taken effect hours earlier.

The Waqf said yesterday was the first time Jews had been allowed to visit the site since May 4, a week before the war broke out.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque is the third holiest site in Islam. It sits on a sprawling hilltop in Jerusalem's Old City that is revered by Jews as their holiest

site because it was the location of the biblical temples. The site has often been the scene of Israeli-Palestinian violence over the years and was the epicenter of the 2000 Palestinian intifada, or uprising.

Israeli police repeatedly clashed with Palestinian protesters in the days leading up to May 10, when Gaza's militant Hamas rulers fired long-range rockets at Jerusalem. The threatened eviction of dozens of Palesti-

nian families from a nearby Jerusalem neighborhood was cited as another major trigger of the 11-day war, which was halted by a cease-fire on Friday.

In recent years, increasing numbers of religious and nationalist Jews have visited the site. Palestinians fear Israel plans to eventually take over the compound or partition it. The Israeli government has repeatedly said it has no intention of changing the status quo, in which the Waqf oversees the site under Jordanian custodianship.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said that the war may have also left hundreds of unexploded munitions, which could cause further casualties and hinder efforts to rebuild

The Gaza war saw Israel unleash hundreds of airstrikes across Gaza at what it said were militant targets. Hamas and other armed groups fired more than 4,000 rockets toward

Israel, most of which were intercepted or landed in open areas. More than 250 people were killed, the vast majority of them Palestinians.

The Israeli strikes leveled a number of large buildings in the impoverished coastal territory, which is home to more than 2 million Palestinians. Gaza has been under a crippling Israeli-Egyptian blockade since Hamas, an Islamic militant group, seized power from forces loyal to the internationally backed Palestinian Authority in 2007.

Lynn Hastings, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories, said some 300 buildings in Gaza — including an estimated 1,000 housing units — had been completely destroyed. She said hundreds more had been heavily damaged. She cautioned that those were "very, very preliminary numbers" as the damage is still being assessed.

Hastings said a total of six hospitals and 11 primary health care centers were damaged, and that one hospital was not functioning because of a lack of electricity. She said around 800,000 people lack access to tap water and 400,000 people do not have proper sewage treatment because of damage to local infrastructure.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said Friday that the war may have also left hundreds of unexploded munitions, which could cause further casualties and hinder efforts to rebuild.

Israel says it made every effort to avoid harming civilians and only targeted militant infrastructure, including a vast tunnel network and rocket launchers. It blames the war and its devastation on Hamas.

Yesterday morning, hundreds of municipal workers and volunteers started a one-week campaign to clear rubble from Gaza's streets. The work began outside a high-rise building that was flattened by Israeli warplanes during the early days of airstrikes on Gaza, with workers loading rubble into donkey carts and small pickup trucks. MDT/AP

this day in history

2001 ISRAEL WEDDING PARTY TRAGEDY



At least 20 people have been killed and hundreds have been injured at a wedding party in Jerusalem after the dance floor collapsed.

Guests were left clinging to the sides of the Versailles wedding hall when the third floor suddenly gave way at about 2245 local time and crashed through two storeys below.

There were nearly 700 guests in the building, which is in the industrial Talpiot area of Jerusalem. Many were left trapped by the falling rubble which left a gaping hole through the centre of the building.

Reports say about 250 people have been taken to hospital but rescuers say there are signs of life beneath the debris. A special Israeli army rescue unit is at the scene.

The father of the groom, Zion Dror, said: "We were dancing, and all of a sudden three storeys collapsed. My family is fine, thank God."

The bride, Keren Dror, who was standing with the groom in the centre of a circle of dancers fell with him when the floor collapsed. She is reported to have injuries to her head and limbs and has been taken to hospital.

One wedding guest Efraim Rino told Israel Radio: "I grabbed my son as the floor collapsed. We fell one floor, and then the next floor collapsed. And the next. And I'm trying to hold my son's hand all the time. He's ten years old. We dropped all the way down. We were in the ruins. We had to be pulled out."

"People were flying through the air, the orchestra, the loudspeakers, everything fell."

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert has already visited the scene and rejected suggestions of a terror attack.

There are some reports the Versailles banquet hall was built using a cheap method of construction, known as Pal-Kal, which was outlawed five years ago.

A caller to Israel's Army Radio said he had organised a wedding at the hall a week ago and had called the owners afterwards to say he was worried about the state of the dance hall floor.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The final number of dead was 23. Ten people were arrested by the Israeli authorities. They included the hall's owners, the engineer who invented the Pal-Kal method of cheap and lightweight ceiling construction and contractors and builders involved with recent renovations. An immediate safety check of all buildings using Pal-Kal was ordered. However, there were reports the checks were not thoroughly carried out and in the first six months after the disaster only one building, Lev Hagiva, was partly closed. Seven weeks after the banquet hall collapse families of the victims won their battle to have the tragedy declared a national disaster, so they could be entitled to compensation from the state. In December 2003 a report into the Versailles wedding hall disaster found it a "miracle" there had been no other collapses given the lack of action taken on sub-standard buildings. In October 2004 two of the owners of the hall were convicted of causing death through negligence. Two other employees were acquitted.

YOUR STARS**ARIES****Mar. 21-Apr. 19**

Discord could be unnerving. It's time to reevaluate your motives. You can find out important information if you listen to friends and relatives. Social events will be plentiful.

**GEMINI****May. 21-Jun. 21**

You may be fortunate while traveling. Don't let other people meddle in your private affairs. You are ahead of your time, and trying to stay in one spot could be asking too much.

**LEO****Jul. 23-Aug. 22**

Be sure that the person you're drawn to is not already involved. Be prepared to lose friends or alienate loved ones due to your stubborn nature lately. Your outgoing nature will win hearts.

**LIBRA****Sep. 23-Oct. 22**

Your input into their activities will help bring you closer together. You haven't been totally honest with yourself and it's time to review your motives. You are likely to reveal information unintentionally.

**SAGITTARIUS****Nov. 22-Dec. 21**

You will be able to borrow money in order to invest. Nagging has never been something that you could tolerate, and it's once again driving you into a lonely state of affairs.

**AQUARIUS****Jan. 20-Feb. 18**

Don't be too eager to give a piece of your mind or even your opinion today. You are best not to confront situations that deal with in-laws or relatives. Try a barbecue or a day at the beach.

**TAURUS****Apr. 20-May. 20**

Don't bother trying to make someone you live with see your point of view. Try to be a bit more understanding or you may end up spending the evening alone. You must try to include your mate in your activities today.

**CANCER****Jun. 22-Jul. 22**

Don't allow colleagues to stand in your way. You need an outlet that will not only stimulate you but also challenge your intelligence as well. Pleasure trips should be on your agenda.

**VIRGO****Aug. 23-Sep. 22**

Your ability to take hold of a situation will surely bring you popularity and leadership. The danger of minor accidents will increase with the turmoil. Talk to those in a position of power about your intentions.

**SCORPIO****Oct. 23-Nov. 21**

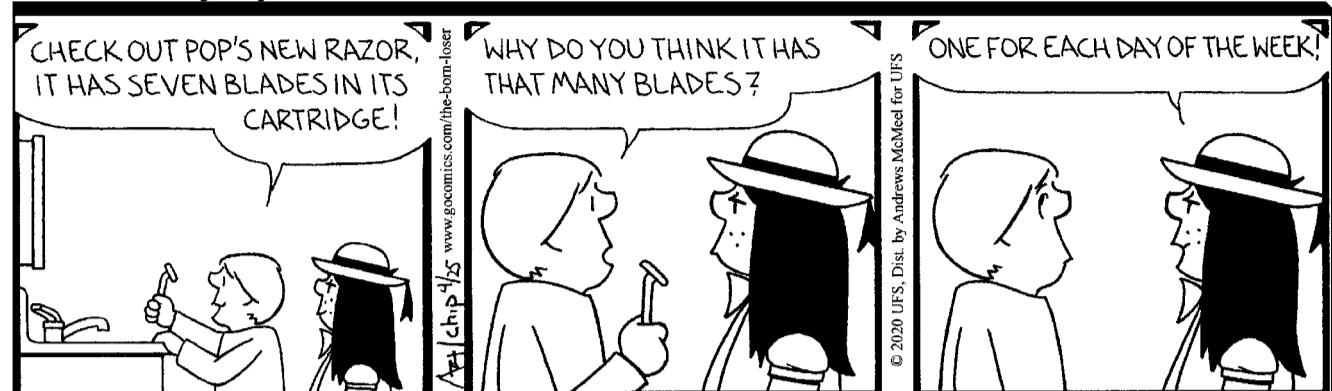
There's lots to be done and if you meet your deadline you'll be in your boss's good books. The only thing you'll accomplish is a bad reputation. This will not be the day to lend money to friends or family.

**CAPRICORN****Dec. 22-Jan. 19**

Get busy doing all those things at home that you have been putting off for so long. Be sure that the person you're drawn to is not already involved. Use your creative abilities to come up with new ideas and directions.

**PISCES****Feb. 19-Mar. 20**

Stomach problems could prevail if you haven't been watching your diet. Spend some quality time with the one you love. Do not let them in on your plans if you want things to run smoothly.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**SUDOKU****EASY**

9		4	3	6							
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EASY+

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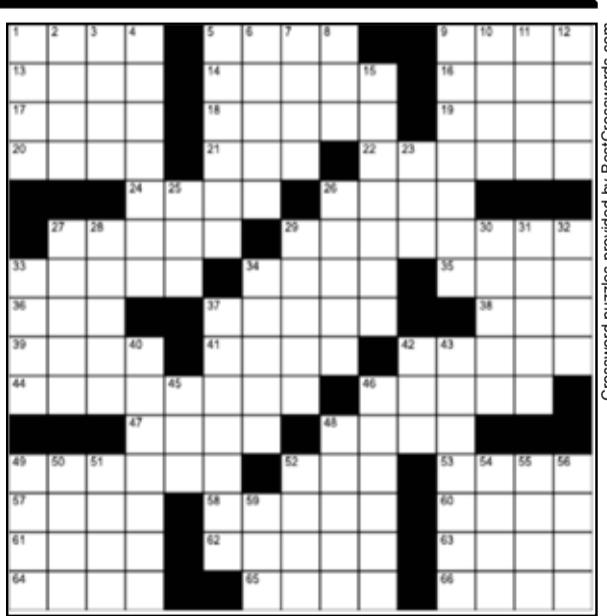
HARD

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CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Heran from Iran; 5- Engendered; 9- Thiom of footwear; 13- The ___ Valley is a Californian wine land; 14- Buenos ___; 16- Long ago; 17- One of the Baldwin's; 18- Thorn; 19- Organization to promote theater; 20- Flesh of a hog; 21- Litigate against; 22- Out, in bed; 24- Part of a process; 26- Gulp from a flask; 27- Expect; 29- Mild laxative; 33- Inflated; 34- "A Death in the Family" author James; 35- Food thickener; 36- Cabinet dept.; 37- Walk; 38- Caviar; 39- Lame movement; 41- Blink; 42- Antagonist; 44- Pastoral poet; 46- Part of Hispaniola; 47- Bang-up; 48- Mongrel dog; 49- Trust; 52- "Losing My Religion" band; 53- "___ Rider" starred Clint Eastwood; 57- Roundish shape; 58- Cornerstone abbr.; 60- Secured, as victory; 61- French father; 62- Reside; 63- Manitoba native; 64- Formerly, formerly; 65- Being, to Brutus; 66- "Ol' Man River" composer;

DOWN: 1- Pass the breaking point; 2- Nimbus; 3- Mimic; 4- Fine-toothed blade; 5- Hunting dog; 6- Shred; 7- HOMES part; 8- Lair; 9- Pain in the muscles; 10- Circle at bottom, point at top; 11- Commedia dell'___; 12- Type of tide; 15- Kelp; 23- Round Table title; 25- Can metal; 26- Talk; 27- Chilly; 28- Like bad apples; 29- Representative; 30- Everglades bird; 31- Model Campbell; 32- Low card; 33- Neighbor of Java; 34- Spring up; 37- Paired; 40- Short drama; 42- Chow down; 43- Niggle; 45- Canterbury can; 46- Modest; 48- Three squares; 49- Weapon in Clue; 50- Anon's partner; 51- Metallica drummer Ulrich; 52- Hwy.; 54- Plot unit; 55- Lewd look; 56- Elysium of Genesis; 59- Nor. neighbor;

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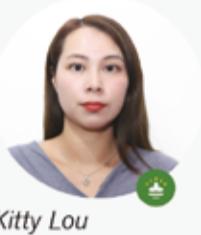
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4
3



SCAN ME

Ref: 2103 1002



Houston Court

HKD 11,800/mth

840 ft²

2
1



SCAN ME

Ref: 2105 1003

More Listings

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- [Taipa] Old Taipa studio 1 1 650 ft² **HKD 3,780,000** Ref: 20076001
- [Taipa] Taipa Village 2 1 750 ft² **HKD 4,800,000** Ref: 21036002
- [Taipa] Chun Fok 2 1 640 ft² **HKD 6,200,000** Ref: 21031001
- [Macau] Macau, ZAPE 2 1 720 ft² **HKD 7,450,000** Ref: 21016002
- [Taipa] Chun U Villa 4 3 1,979 ft² **HKD 12,880,000** Ref: 21046001

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BASKETBALL

National teams wait on NBA stars for Olympic qualifier games

GRAHAM DUNBAR, MIES

WITH the NBA playoffs starting Saturday, national team coaches are watching and waiting to get star players back for last-minute qualification games to the Tokyo Olympics.

The 11,000-athlete lineup for the Olympics will not be complete until four men's basketball qualifying tournaments — in Canada, Croatia, Lithuania and Serbia, each with one ticket to Tokyo — are played from June 29-July 4.

So if the Milwaukee Bucks are eliminated before the Eastern Conference Finals, then Giannis Antetokounmpo could play in Victoria, Canada, for the Greece national team coached by Rick Pitino.

Nikola Jokić can join his Serbia teammates at home in Belgrade if the Denver Nuggets don't go all the way, and Slovenia will want to get Luka Doni

AP PHOTO



Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo shoots during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Miami Heat in Milwaukee

to Kaunas in Lithuania, if the Dallas Mavericks are eliminated.

The extra days allowed beyond the official June 29 qualifying deadline for other Tokyo Olympics sports were key for basketball's world go-

verning body.

"We are the very last (to finish)," International Basketball Federation (FIBA) secretary general Andreas Zagklis told The Associated Press in a recent interview. "We are thankful to the IOC and Tokyo for the collabora-

a serious virus outbreak after 20,000 PCR tests.

"There is a very high level of operational capacity that we have as a global organization," Zagklis said. "The four (local organizers) know very well how to implement this protocol. I expect really high health standards and a high number of vaccinated players."

There are more Olympic qualifiers still to play though the 12 women's tournament teams were set last year.

Starting Wednesday in Graz, Austria, 20 men's and 20 women's teams in the 3-on-3 street version of basketball — including the U.S. in both competitions — will compete for three tickets each to the inaugural Olympic tournaments.

The eight-team Tokyo lineups in 3-on-3 will be completed when a qualifier for lower-ranked nations is played June 4-6 in Hungary.

Some of the women's teams had a warmup tournament this month at FIBA headquarters near Geneva, which is named for Zagklis' predecessor Patrick Baumann.

Baumann, who steered 3-on-3 onto the Tokyo program, died aged 51 at the 2018 Buenos Aires Youth Olympics. He was enshrined on May 15 into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. MDT/AP

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OPINION

World Views

Adam Minter, MDT/Bloomberg



RECYCLING ISN'T DEAD. IT'S BOOMING

Recycling is "dead," say the obituaries. And if it's not dead it's "broken," "not working," "in the bin," "failing," a "charade," "a lie," and of course "too good to be true."

This gloomy narrative has gained momentum over the past three years as cities struggled to find places to send the stuff that people toss in their blue bins. Some areas reduced or eliminated recycling programs; others passed along higher costs to residents. Then Covid upended the supply chains that turn detergent bottles, junk mail and old beer cans into new products.

All that doomsaying turned out to be misplaced, however. Far from becoming another Covid casualty, the U.S. recycling industry is in fact booming. It's a story equal parts economics and ingenuity.

Most Americans view recycling in environmental terms. But practitioners know it as something quite different: a commodity business that meets roughly 40% of the world's raw-material needs. About two-thirds of American steel is made from recycled resources. The Covid-related toilet-paper shortage was exacerbated by a scarcity of the recycled office paper from which those rolls are often manufactured.

Like other commodity businesses, recycling is subject to booms and busts. But up until 2018, the U.S. industry had seen three decades of boom (interrupted briefly by the financial crisis). In the 1990s, Chinese manufacturers powered a decades-long commodities super-cycle that required huge amounts of recycled raw materials. At the same time, thousands of U.S. local governments began offering curbside recycling programs. Supply met voracious demand, and prices climbed, encouraging more local governments to get into the profitable business of recycling.

It was a mostly virtuous cycle that benefited the environment, municipal budgets and American consumers. But it also blinded the industry to how reliant it had become on China. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Chinese paper mills upgraded their technology to recycle the confounding and often food-stained mix of papers typically found in blue bins. American mills didn't. As a result, they were soon unable to compete on prices and largely left the business to China.

The consequences were dire. In 2017, China announced that it planned to restrict the import of recyclables, including mixed paper. Two years later, recyclers had gone from receiving more than \$100 a ton for mixed paper to actually paying for disposal. According to one analyst, in 2018 about 500,000 tons of once-valuable mixed paper were collected for recycling — and then landfilled. Local governments understandably feared that their one-time cash cow was dead.

But the industry didn't stand pat. Beginning in 2018, more than a dozen paper recyclers announced that they were expanding their facilities to process grades no longer accepted by China (plastics recyclers made similar investments). One company, Green Bay Packaging, just opened a \$500 million facility that can manufacture 685,000 tons of paper from recyclables each year. As a result of these and other expansions (including some overseas), demand for recycled paper has actually increased since China closed its doors.

Thanks partly to Covid, other recyclables are surging as well. The e-commerce boom has created historic demand for the return of old cardboard boxes to make new ones. Prices are soaring for recycled plastic. Waste Management Inc., the largest U.S. recycler by revenue, reported that its first quarter average price for recyclables was up 97% over the same period last year.

More good news for the industry is on the horizon. In 2022, California will require that plastic bottles contain recycled content, and other states are likely to follow suit. Increasingly, large consumer brands are making recycled-content promises that will be hard to fulfill without more supply than is currently available. If they manage to follow through, the U.S. recycling industry will not only become bigger and more profitable, but far more resilient. The good times won't last forever. "Any time the revenue is based on commodity prices, there will be ups and downs," says Joe Pickard, the chief economist at the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, a trade association. "My main concern is a correction in commodity markets."

Corrections are, of course, inevitable. But the obituaries are premature: American recycling is alive and kicking.

CHINA'S TOP DIPLOMAT TO VISIT RUSSIA FOR STRATEGIC TALKS

China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi, will visit Russia for the 16th strategic and security consultation between the two countries starting today, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

Yang, director of the Communist Party's central committee for foreign affairs who sits on the 25-member Politburo, will also visit Slovenia and Croatia, ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said in a statement posted on its website. The trip will end May 27.

Beijing and Moscow have been seeking to further bolster bilateral ties, with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov saying in

March that relations between the two countries were the "best in history."

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for further collaboration on nuclear power between the two countries on Wednesday as he and Russian President Vladimir Putin watched the launch via a video link of a cooperation project building four nuclear reactors in China.

In a phone call at the end of 2020, Xi and Putin vowed to strengthen "strategic coordination" as the world enters "an era of global turbulence," in a reference to the challenges posed by the U.S.

THE BUZZ



US Virgin Galactic has made its first rocket-powered flight from New Mexico to the fringe of space in a manned shuttle, as the company forges toward offering tourist flights to the edge of the Earth's atmosphere. High above the desert in a cloudless sky, the VSS Unity ignited its rocket to hurtle the ship and two pilots toward space. A live feed by NASASpaceFlight.com showed the ship accelerating upward and confirmed a landing later via radar.

Croatia has widely reopened its stunning Adriatic coastline for foreign tourists, becoming one of the first European countries to drop most of its pandemic measures. Now, the ability of people to go there depends on each country's travel rules. Virus cases are dropping in Croatia, and after a slow start to the country's vaccine rollout, inoculations are picking up. Officials predict that some 50% of the population of 4 million will be fully vaccinated by mid-summer.



Italy A cable car taking visitors to a mountaintop view of some of northern Italy's most picturesque lakes plunged to the ground yesterday, killing at least nine people and sending two children to the hospital, authorities said. A photo of the wreckage taken by Italy's fire department showed the crushed and crumpled remains of the cable car in a clearing of a thick patch of pine trees near the summit of the Mottarone peak overlooking Lake Maggiore.

UK Animal rights protesters are blockading four McDonald's distribution centers in the U.K. in an attempt to get the burger chain to commit to becoming fully plant-based by 2025. Animal Rebellion said Saturday that trucks and bamboo structures are being used at the distribution sites in Hemel Hempstead, Basingstoke, Coventry and Heywood, Greater Manchester, to stop trucks from leaving the depots.

KEN RITTER, LAS VEGAS

MALAYSIA-based owner of one of the biggest casino projects ever on the Las Vegas Strip won regulatory approval Thursday to deal cards, roll dice and welcome gamblers when Resorts World Las Vegas opens on June 24.

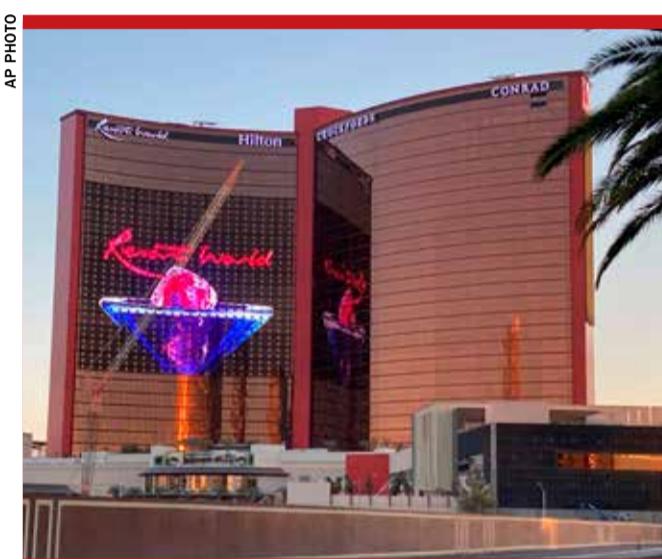
With praise for the USD4.3 billion development and the boost it could provide in a pandemic-battered economy, the Nevada Gaming Commission granted licenses to Genting Group, based in Kuala Lumpur, and its publicly traded subsidiary, Genting Malaysia Berhad.

"We look forward to seeing it open and running," Commission Chairman John Moran Jr. said after the unanimous vote.

Scott Sibella, president of Resorts World Las Vegas, said the project six years in construction was being completed "on time and on budget."

"We want to be the most sophisticated, state-of-art casino in the world," Sibella declared as he spoke about technological advances built into what will be the first new resort to open in more than a decade on the Strip.

It will incorporate natural outdoor light in many restaurant and convention areas and a ventilation system Sibella said was design-



ned to produce "the best air quality money can buy."

By videoconference, Genting Chairman Kok Thay Lim traced the company history to his father opening a first Resorts World-branded resort, a 200-room hotel in 1971 in Pahang, Malaysia. The company now has properties in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, the Philippines and United Kingdom.

The Las Vegas resort will be its biggest in the U.S., where Resorts World operates a casino at Aqueduct Racetrack in the New York borough of Queens and is scheduled to open an 18-story casino hotel called Resorts World Catskills later this year in Monticello, New York, about 100 miles northwest of New York City.

"We are on the cusp of opening our latest Resorts World property with 3,500 hotel rooms," Lim said.

The opening comes as Las Vegas sheds more than a year of person-to-person distancing and mask-wearing rules imposed to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Local lawmakers on Tuesday approved fully reopening stores, shows and restaurants beginning June 1. That will meet Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak's goal of allowing 100% capacity at businesses that have reopened in increments after being ordered shut down in March 2020.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board has already approved full occupancy for almost all properties in Las Vegas. **MDT/AP**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Bullit Marquez



Migrant crisis. A man lies on the ground on the beach after swimming to the area at the border of Morocco and Spain, at the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, last week