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19 Aug 2021  

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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

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AP PHOTO

A person in a military uniform is pointing towards a sign that reads 'Vaccination Centre' with a large white arrow pointing upwards. Other people are visible in the background.

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BLOOMBERG

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SLIGHT REBOUND IN VISITOR ARRIVALS TWO WEEKS AFTER DELTA CASES

LYNZY VALLES

MACAU has seen a recent increase in daily arrivals following the 78% drop from the July numbers in the second week of August due to the strict entry measures imposed after the city recorded four Delta variant cases.

Data released by the Public Security Police yesterday shows that the SAR recorded a total of 16,700 and 16,900 tourists on Monday and Tuesday respectively, registering a 2.3% rise.

Last Wednesday, Macau recorded 9,500 tourists, an increase of 123.2% from the day before.

Following the discovery of Delta cases on August 3, the go-

vernment immediately imposed stricter regulations on border entrants, discouraging tourists in neighboring regions from visiting the city.

Zhuhai reduced the validity period of nucleic acid tests from 24 hours to 12 hours.

Therefore, Macau saw a sharp fall in cross-border population flow on August 3 — the first day that the government mandated all people leaving Macau to present proof of a negative Covid-19 test result conducted within 12 hours.

The total passenger flow number stood at 193,700 on August 3, down 39.7% from the previous day. Only 12,900 of this figure

were tourists, a drop of 46.1%.

As for gaming, brokerage Sanford C Bernstein Ltd reported that the gross gaming revenue (GGR) for the period between August 9 to 15 was down 37% week-on-week, registering the lowest weekly result since September 2020.

The MOP78 million profit was the “lowest daily GGR since late September.”

Red and yellow zones reopened at 12 midnight yesterday as Macau saw no further cases after residents in the zones were quarantined for two weeks.

Entertainment and recreational venues and facilities have also re-opened.

EVA BUCHO



Visitor spending grows despite June arrivals dip

LYNZY VALLES

TOTAL visitor spending (excluding gaming expenses) grew 15.9% quarter-to-quarter to MOP7.16 billion in the second quarter of 2021. This growth can be attributed to the 25.9% increase in visitor arrivals.

Data from the Statistics and Census Service from March to June shows that the total spending of overnight visitors (MOP6.38 billion) and same-day visitors (MOP777 million) rose 14.1% and 32% quarter-to-quarter respectively, despite the downturn in tourist arrivals in June due to the new outbreak in neighboring regions.

In the first half

of 2021, total visitor spending amounted to MOP13.34 billion.

From May to June, the city reached nearly 2.15 million visitor arrivals. However, June recorded a sharp drop, mainly attributed to stricter anti-pandemic measures implemented in both Guangdong province and Macau in early June, designed to contain the fresh wave of Covid-19 cases.

Per capita visitor spending was MOP3,271 in the second quarter, a drop of 8.0% quarter-to-quarter.

Visitor spending from mainland China dropped 6% quarter-to-quarter to MOP3,427 per capita, with the spending of people travelling under

the Individual Visit Scheme (MOP6,673) falling by 6.4%. Overnight visitors spent MOP5,603 on average, a decrease of 7.9% quarter-to-quarter.

In the second quarter, visitors mostly spent on shopping (65% of per capita spending), food and beverage (15.9%) and accommodation (15.4%).

Recently, several lawmakers called on the government to bring forward some sort of economic stimulus for the city's travel industry and small and medium enterprises — considered the industries hardest-hit by the Covid-19 pandemic — to ease their financial hardship during the resurgence.

MDT ARCHIVE



EDUCATION

UM, MPI HOLD ACADEMIC OPENING CEREMONIES ONLINE

THE University of Macau (UM) and the Macao Polytechnic Institute (MPI) held their opening ceremonies online, welcoming a new cohort of students from Macau, mainland China and the Greater Bay Area.

In an online orientation, rector Yonghua Song welcomed almost 3,500 new undergraduate and postgraduate students to UM.

Because of the pandemic, UM has moved all orientation activities for the new academic year online. All classes in August will be conducted online. Class arrangements for September will be determined later, depending on the changing pandemic situation.

Last year, UM welcomed

more than 3,000 new undergraduate and postgraduate students at the convocation ceremony for the 2020/2021 academic year. Entry numbers have thus risen by about 17%.

In the rector's speech, Song said that this year marks the 40th anniversary of the university, “a time to take stock of the past and set sail for new horizons.”

“UM is a university of and for Macao; it is also an active participant in the development of the Greater Bay Area and the nation, with the ambition to ‘go global,’” he said.

The official expressed his aspirations for the university to become internationally recognized for “learner-centered education, impactful research, and social responsibility.”

Meanwhile, MPI welcomed more than 1,300 new students in its opening ceremony held on Tuesday.

MPI president Professor Im Sio Kei encouraged students to practice “patriotism and shoulder responsibilities and commitments; to work hard at their studies to broaden their horizons and to equip themselves with adequate knowledge to make contributions to the development of the country and Macau.”

In his speech, the president indicated that this year marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of Macao Polytechnic Institute, and also sees the establishment of a comprehensive talent cultivation system for undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels.

This year MPI and Peking University formed a cooperative partnership to set up the “Peking University Health Science Center-Macao Polytechnic Institute Nursing Academy” to cultivate nursing talent for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

The president recalled that MPI has continuously increased its investment in academic research, establishing research and testing centers jointly with global universities and local SAR government departments. LV

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A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

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Advertisement advertising@macaudailytimes.com

For subscription and general issues:

general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

ANTHONY LAM



Mr. Lao, owner of a Macanese restaurant in Mei Lin Building

RED ZONE

Residents await for the clock to struck midnight as quarantine ends

ANTHONY LAM

FOLLOWING two weeks in which several buildings in two different districts in the city were cordoned off, the government reopened the areas colloquially known as the red and yellow zones at midnight last night.

Four cases of Covid-19 were announced by the government on August 3. Since the patients were mobile in the community prior to their diagnoses, residents in the communities where they live and work were quarantined from

physical community interactions. They were required to remain in their residences for two weeks. The quarantine period ended at midnight last night.

During the two weeks, a series of polymerase chain reaction tests were conducted on these residents.

A resident named Lao, who runs a Macanese restaurant on the ground floor of Mei Lin Building, in the middle of the red zone near Kiang Wu Hospital, has spent the past two weeks at the apartment in the building which he uses as storage.

As the clock struck midnight, Lao left his storage apartment and posed at the entrance of the building for a "photo opportunity." He was happy about the release but expressed his surprise about "infections at the doorstep."

The health authorities earlier revealed that residents in the red zone have each been tested six times over the two weeks. Lao explained that it was quite intense because each of the tests required a nasopharyngeal swab. "My nasal tract almost broke down," he joked about the experience.

Another resident named Kuan, who was quarantined at the San Kio District, went straight to check on his car after being released. It was also his intention to visit his friends and relatives afterwards.

He recalled that the last minute announcement of the quarantine was slightly confusing and disorderly, but the situation was later improved.

Alvis Lo, director of the Health Bureau, was also present when the cordon ended. However, he did not give an interview to the press.

54% OF F&B OUTLETS RECORD RISE IN PROFIT

Data from the Statistics and Census Service reveals that 54% of restaurants and similar establishments interviewed reported a year-on-year rise in receipts in June 2021, a drop of 4 percentage points from May. Concerning business expectations for July, 50% of interviewed restaurants and similar establishments expected their receipts to increase month-on-month, a growth of 34 percentage points from June. The corresponding shares of Chinese restaurants (65%) and Western restaurants (46%) rose 56 percentage points and 42 percentage points respectively. Meanwhile, 62% of interviewed retailers anticipated a month-on-month rise in sales in July, a growth of 40 percentage points from June.

VACCINATION RATE OF AIRPORT EMPLOYEES AT 68%

The vaccination rate of all employees of the Macau International Airport Company Limited (CAM) and its subsidiaries has reached 68%, the company announced in a statement.

Macau International Airport (MIA) conducts a nucleic acid test (NAT) on air cargo frontline personnel every day. Also, all frontline staff in the airport must take a NAT daily, frontline support service personnel must take one every three days, and managers and back office staff take one every week. There are now 347 NATs conducted by various operating units of the airport every day.

CHINESE OC OPPOSES BUSINESSES REGISTERING COPYRIGHTS WITH ATHLETES' NAMES

The Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) vowed yesterday to help protect Chinese Olympians against the illegal use of their names as trademarks. Following their success at the Tokyo Olympics, several star Chinese athletes including Yang Qian, Chen Meng and Quan Hongchan had their names registered as trademarks in various market sectors, including alcohol, sportswear, and tutoring. The COC reiterated the rights of athletes and their legal guardians to pursue legal action against such exploitative registration of their names.

Two candidates withdraw from AL election

THE upcoming Legislative Assembly election will have two fewer candidates participating, it was announced at a Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) press briefing yesterday, with both withdrawing from the election.

Tong Hio Fong, president of the CAEAL, announced that two candidates from two different lists had filed a withdrawal from the election. The two candidates are Ho Ion Kong, first on list No. 10 – Ou Mun Kong I, and Wong Tit Kuan, second on list No. 13 – Macau Basic Law Marketing and Promotion Federation.

Although lists with fewer than four candidates were not accepted onto the ballot during the no-

mination phase, now that the lists have been confirmed by CAEAL, whether or not a list contains at least four candidates will not affect the list's eligibility, Tong explained.

Trustee of the Ou Mun Kong I list, Lei Sio Kuan, told local media outlet All About Macau that he did not know the reason behind Ho's withdrawal from the election. Lei underlined that the decision to run or not run in the election is a matter for Ho's personal consideration. "He has the freedom to decide that," Lei said.

Lei does not see any impact on the race with Ho's departure, adding that campaign activities will go on as usual.

Lei was originally the first can-

didate on the list but was disqualified by the CAEAL – alongside 20 other original candidates – on the allegations of not upholding the Basic Law of Macau and not showing allegiance to the Macau Special Administrative Region.

ELECTION CONTINGENCIES

Tong revealed that, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, special measures will be levied on the election day. He reminds voters to screen capture their Health Code on the day prior to their departure for the polling station. Upon entry, their body temperature will be taken and their Health Code checked.

As in other venues, mask-wearing is mandatory.

A postponement of the election date cannot be ruled out should the situation deteriorate, Tong said.

Voters with a yellow health code will be allowed to cast their votes, but if necessary they will be required to take precautionary measures, such as glove-wearing while voting. Meanwhile, red health code bearers will be prohibited from voting and referred to the health authorities.

Backup polling stations will be set up in case certain stations are put under cordon.

The CAEAL will also regularly update reports on the flow of voters through various media to help voters decide when to visit a polling station. **AL**

MIGUEL IAN

FORMER HEAD LOSES FP JOB FOLLOWING PRISON SENTENCE

THE term of appointment of the former head of the Retirement and Pension System Department of the Public Pension Fund (FP), Miguel Ian, has automatically expired, the FP announced in a statement yesterday.

The FP noted that, according to the law, the appointment of

the former official ended when he became unable to fulfill his duties for 12 months or more, which is the current situation.

Ian was involved in a corruption case concerning the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM). He was sentenced by a court to four years in prison.

Prior to the cessation of the appointment, former Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sónia Chan, ordered his appointment be terminated, an order which was due to have taken effect on September 9.

However, the Court of Final Instance has deemed the order procedurally unlawful, on the

grounds that the administration did not provide a hearing to Ian in advance, thus denying him the chance to defend himself.

The recent statement issued by the FP also confirmed the cancellation of the unlawful order.

The IPIM case involved a total of 26 suspects, including Ian. **AL**

FU HONG'S SOCIAL RESTAURANT HELPS TRAIN RECOVERED PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS

Local charity Fu Hong Society has opened a social restaurant in Fai Chi Kei that serves Macanese and Portuguese food at lunch to help train recovered psychiatric patients and provide them with more opportunities to get in touch with different people, which will gradually rebuild their confidence to reenter the community. The restaurant provides homely Macanese and Portuguese delicacies under the instruction of a dozen of experienced chefs, such as Chef Joe Chan from the StarWorld Hotel. The organization hopes the restaurant will also warm diners' hearts.

ELLA LEI CALLS FOR BETTER WORKPLACE SAFETY LAW

After Monday's construction casualty at the Galaxy Macau's Phase-3 Site, Ella Lei, candidate for 2021 elections, issued a statement to call on the legislation governing the construction industry's workplace safety and health to "raise awareness on safe management in construction projects in the first place through completing the laws and strengthening supervision and implementation." In addition, her comments on lowering the possibility of workplace accidents are to rigorously remind employers and workers to practice safety, and use legal means to supervise safety measures.

MAN SENT TO ICU AFTER BEING PUNCHED

Two men fell into a quarrel over a female friend while having a smoke outside a restaurant in the Northern District. One man, a competition Thai boxer, punched the other man, who fell to the ground suffering severe head injuries. The victim is now being treated in the Intensive Care Unit. The attacker fled the scene but was apprehended by the Judiciary Police at a later date. The suspect is aged 26 years and the victim 25; both men are of Thai nationality.

RETURN TO SCHOOL MIGHT BE DELAYED, GOV'T ADMITS

RENATO MARQUES

The return of students to non-tertiary education facilities in Macau may be delayed, Wong Ka Ki, Department Head of Non-Tertiary Education from the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), admitted yesterday during the regular briefing from health authorities on the Covid-19 situation.

According to Wong, depending on the development of the pandemic in coming days, the start of the new academic year planned for the beginning of next month might be subject to some adjustment and delay, he said.

In limbo are approximately 3,000 cross-border students and other school staff members, including teachers, who are likely to be unable to return to Macau 14 days ahead of the launch of the new academic year as the DSEDJ had previously expected.

According to the same official, no decision has yet been taken on the matter and the plan for the start of the school year is still in place, although he warned that changes may be made as the date approaches.

"Our priority is to ensure the safety of our students and school communities," Wong said while explaining the reasons behind the potential postponement.

At this point, the DSEDJ department head preferred not to speculate on the possible length of any postponement nor whether any delay would apply to all schools or just to particular cases.

"We plan that if the situation [with Covid-19] becomes unstable, we can consider the postponement of the start of the school year," Wong remarked.

Questioned on the matter, Wong also noted that, according to the DSEDJ plan, students, teachers and other school staff members should undertake at least one nucleic acid test (NAT) to guarantee that

EVA BUCHO



there is no risk of contagion.

Expanding on the subject, he admitted that the main target of the NAT requirement could be local members of the school

community, "since the cross border ones must already [according to regulations] repeat the test every seven days." Despite his statement that no final

decision had yet been reached on the matter, Wong said that the DSEDJ services and the Health Bureau, are "still evaluating."

COVID-19

NO CONSENSUS YET REACHED ON VACCINE MIXING, RECOGNITION FOR SINOPHARM VACCINE

RENATO MARQUES

DR. Tai Wa Hou, medical director from the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center and coordinator of the Health Bureau's Covid-19 Vaccination Operation, issued a clarification at the regular press briefing on the Covid-19 situation yesterday that no consensus has yet been reached concerning the possible effects of mixing doses of different Covid-19 vaccines.

The comments from Tai came after a question from the media as to whether the government has found a solution for Macau residents who have been vaccinated with the Sinopharm inactivated virus vaccines and who now cannot travel to the USA, where this vaccine is not recognized.

Admitting that there is no solution for such cases, Tai said that "the mixing of vaccines is something that is still being studied, and has not yet been approved. And the same goes for the third [booster] dose for the current vaccines."

Continuing on the subject, the doctor added that the inoculation of persons under 18 years of age with the Sinopharm vaccine is still in an experimental and restricted stage and requires special authorization from mainland authorities.

"The vaccination of children and adolescents with the inactivated virus vaccine is just for emergency cases and a large majority of people are not included in this emergency plan," he said.

"Once we have the documentation that proves the safety and efficiency of the use of vaccines in different ways [compared to what is being done currently] we will inform [the public] about this and we will consider it," he added.

Tai also clarified that of the eight severe cases of potential adverse events following immunization (AEFI), only one is currently being considered as directly related to the vaccine. The other seven have been dismissed either as cases of medical conditions surfacing coincidentally with the vaccine or inconclusive cases.

In the case involving a myocardial inflammation (myocarditis), the physician said that the government would assume responsibility over the treatment of the patient.

Questioned whether the patients concerned could make a claim using the vaccination's insurance, Tai said that there is no such possibility in any of the cases, since, "the insurance only covers cases of death or severe incapacity due to AEFIs."

22 vacancies provided to retired seniors: IAS

In two recently approved social enterprise projects, 22 positions will be filled by senior residents, Hon Wai, president of the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS), disclosed.

Of the 22 positions, 16 are full-time and six are part-time.

In order to make progress with the projects, the IAS has signed service contracts in the first half of this year with the service providers. The projects are expected to be launched in the second half of the year.

The IAS added that,

citing the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), employers who have the will to hire senior job-seekers or without competent skills are eligible to apply for subsidies from the government.

Meanwhile, in order to follow up with senior

employment needs, the DSAL operates a senior employment service priority channel, the IAS revealed. The channel focuses on job-matching services for residents of or above 65 years of age.

Vocational support services are also provided to

senior job-seekers to prepare them for the employment market once more.

The DSAL and the Social Security Fund (FSS) are exchanging opinions on the review of the Regulations on Employment Assistance and Training. **AL**

Pereira Coutinho declines to comment on disqualification of AL candidates

RENATO MARQUES

CANDIDATE for the Legislative Assembly (AL) 2021 elections, José Pereira Coutinho, has refused to comment on the disqualification of a significant number of candidates from the pro-democracy wing.

Questioned on the subject at a press conference organized by the candidate to present a summary of the work of the AL's sixth term yesterday, the candidate refused to comment on the matter. "The Court of Final Appeal (TUI) has already [made] a ruling on that matter and this decision is already final so I do not have anything to add besides what was said by the TUI," he said, adding, "the only thing I can do is to respect and to follow scrupulously the Basic Law."

Also questioned on how this decision might affect the upcoming AL term, Pereira Coutinho briefly responded that any chan-

RENATO MARQUES



ges will depend on the new AL composition after the September 12 elections.

"Regarding the AL, it will change or not, depending on the fu-

ture composition of the AL," he said.

"On my side I feel that I did my duty over the past four years and I want to take this opportunity to

thank all citizens who have supported us, providing us with information and even criticizing us so we could keep improving our work," he added.

After several journalists pressed him for answers, he finally admitted that is likely that "the work of overseeing [the government] done by AL will be weakened [without the lawmakers]."

He also added that he would not speculate on how he avoided the disqualification of almost the entire pro-democracy wing, stating, "I cannot judge my own case, so it is best if you seek answers from the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL)," he replied to questions from the media.

Questioned how he rates the work of the disqualified candidates, specifically Sulu Sou and Ng Kuok Cheong in the AL's last term, Pereira Coutinho again refused to comment, stating only, "I am not qualified to evaluate the work of my colleagues, I can only evaluate a little what I do in my own conscience. However, one thing is certain: I would never do anything against my moral conscience."

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HONG KONG

POLICE ARREST FOUR FROM UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION

FOUR members of a Hong Kong university student union were arrested yesterday for allegedly advocating terrorism by paying tribute to a person who stabbed a police officer and then killed himself, police said.

Police arrested four men between 18 and 20 years old who were committee members and members of the student council at the University of Hong Kong, said Li Kwai-wah, senior superintendent of the police national security division. He said the arrests were in relation to a council meeting that "promoted terrorism."

Those arrested included the president and council chairman, who were among more than 30 students who attended a meeting last month at which they passed a motion to mourn the "sacrifice" of the attacker, local media reported.

The arrests are the latest use of a strict national security law that Beijing imposed on semi-autonomous Hong Kong last year after months of anti-government protests in 2019. The demonstrations often led to clashes between demonstrators and police.

Authorities have said the man who stabbed the police officer in the shoulder on July 1 before killing himself had material in his home decrying the national security law as well as notes in which he declared his hatred for the police.

Police previously cautioned people against mourning the attacker, saying it was "no different from supporting terrorism."

The student union withdrew its motion mourning the attacker after facing criticism from the government and the university and some union members quit. The university responded by severing ties with the union.

Li said the four arrested yesterday were still in custody.

More than 100 pro-democracy activists have been arrested under the national security law, which outlaws subversion, secession, terrorism and foreign collusion to interfere in the city's affairs.

Critics say the law has been used to stifle dissent and restrict freedoms Hong Kong was promised it could maintain for 50 years following its 1997 handover to China. **MDT/AP**

BEIJING SAYS WAITING BEFORE RECOGNIZING GOVERNMENT

CHINA says it is waiting for the establishment of an "open, inclusive, and widely representative" government in Afghanistan before it decides on the issue of recognition.

"If we are going to recognize a government, we will have to wait till the government is formed," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said yesterday.

"Only after that, will we come to the question of diplomatic recognition," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing.

Zhao reiterated Beijing's hopes for a "a smooth transition" following the Taliban's sweep to power to avoid further violence or a humanitarian disaster.

"China will continue to support the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan and provide assistance to Afghanistan's economic and social development within its capacity," Zhao said.

The Taliban must make good on its commitment not

AP PHOTO



Taliban fighters patrol in Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood of Kabul yesterday

to give shelter to terrorists or allow foreign elements to operate within its territory, singling out the East Turkestan Islamic Movement that Beijing blames for attacks in its northwestern region of Xinjiang, which shares a nar-

row, remote border with Afghanistan.

Beijing long called for the U.S. to leave Afghanistan, but has condemned what it calls the "hasty" retreat of American forces for the current instability.

China has sought good relations with both the former Afghan government and the Taliban, hosting the group's top political leader, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, for talks with Foreign Minister Wang Yi late last month. **MDT/AP**

Communist Party expels censor accused of corruption

CHINA'S ruling Communist Party has expelled a leading internet censor and accused him of a range of crimes and rule breaking from corruption to failing to properly guide public opinion.

Peng Bo had been deputy head of the Leading Group for the Prevention and Handling of Cults, a body set up after the party launched a sweeping crackdown against the Falun Gong meditation sect that it viewed as a threat to its authority.

An investigation found that Peng's "ideals and belie-

fs collapsed, and that he had been disloyal to the party, deviated from the Party Central Committee decisions on the online public opinion struggle (and) gave up on positions taken on managing the internet," the party's disciplinary watchdog body said on its website.

Peng also "engaged in superstitious activities and illegally received large amounts of property," said the notice, dated Tuesday. Along with being expelled from the ruling party, he is stripped of all pay and benefits and is

being referred for criminal prosecution for numerous violations of discipline and on suspicion of bribery, it said.

The public announcement was unusual both for the sensitivity of Peng's position and the accusations of losing faith and defiance of party orders. Such notices are generally brief and provide little information of the charges, almost always related to some form of corruption.

China heavily censors the internet and social media

platforms for content not in alignment with party policies or that questions the party and state media's version of history and current events or its tight controls over religious expression.

Party officials and internet companies are expected guide public opinion by deleting postings seen as deviant, while content seen as insulting the party or nation can result in a massive backlash from online nationalists and possible criminal prosecution.

President and party leader Xi Jinping has also led a year-long crackdown on corruption that has ensnared numerous serving and retired officials in what some see as politically motivated prosecutions. **MDT/AP**

NEW MONUMENT WILL HONOR CARLIN'S FIRST CHINESE PIONEERS

A monument memorializing a northeast Nevada mining town's first Chinese pioneers will be unveiled in Carlin next month.

Three years ago, the remains of 13 Chinese men were buried in the Carlin Cemetery after they were discovered in 1996 during an excavation behind a house.

The dedication ceremony for the new Carlin 13 monument is planned Sept. 6 at the cemetery, followed by a visit to the Carlin Chinese Garden and museum tours, the Elko Daily Free Press reported.

A local viewing also is planned of the short film "Going Home" documenting the immigrants' journey.

The bodies were exhumed and studied by archaeologists from the Nevada State Museum, U.S. Forest Service, Elko County Chapter of the Nevada Archaeological Association and anthropologists from the Smithsonian Institution.

The remains were eventually moved to UNLV in Las Vegas. Research on the men

was published in the 2005 book "Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors."

Lijuchin "Lee" Chin, owner of Chin's Café, led a campaign to bring back "the oldest citizens of Carlin" and presided over a traditional Chinese ceremony at the 2018 reburial.

A year later, the Carlin 13 were recognized with a cemetery plaque in conjunction with the 150th Golden Spike Anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



A student of Hong Kong University is escorted by police officers yesterday

SAMYA KULLAB

AFGHANISTAN

WITH hundreds of Afghans rushing the tarmac of Kabul's international airport desperate to flee the return of the Taliban, a young Afghan woman stood in limbo between two worlds.

In one world, the 22-year-old would board a flight to a country she did not know, destined to become a refugee. In another, she would stay in an Afghanistan under Taliban rule, forced to wipe out the last 20 years of all that she had built and achieved.

Sleepless, hungry and scared she has been waiting for hours at the airport for a flight she feared would never come with questions she could not answer.

"I am in the airport, waiting to get a flight but I don't know to where," she said, speaking to The Associated Press over the phone. "I am here, confused, hungry and hopeless. I don't know what is coming my way. Where will I go? How will I spend my days? Who will support my family?"

A data analyst working for a U.S. contractor helping Afghan businesses, she said she had gotten the call on Sunday afternoon, informing her she had just 10 minutes to leave for the airport. She had been put on an evacuation list heading to the United States or Mexico — she was told nothing more. She did not have a visa in her passport.

She left a friend's apartment in Kabul with just the clothes on her back, a knapsack, laptop and her phone.

"My dreams and my plans, are all inside this small backpack," she said, speaking to the AP on condition that her name not be used for safety reasons.

As the Taliban swept into Kabul on Sunday after President Ashraf Ghani fled the country, bringing an end to a two-decade campaign in which the U.S. and its allies had tried to transform Afghanistan, she and a group of Afghans working for U.S. media were rushed to the city's international airport by their American friends.

The speed of the Afghan government's collapse, the ensuing chaos and the near-complete takeover of the country — just two weeks before the final pullout of the last U.S. and NATO troops — has shocked many in Afghanistan and beyond. For Afghan women, it raised fears that all they had achieved in women's rights, the right to go to school and work, would be swiftly taken away.

On the way to the airport, she looked out the window, taking in the last glimpses of Kabul streets, "filled with a scary silence."

There was barely time to call her family in the western province of Herat, seized by the Taliban last week in the insurgents' relentless sweep. Before the fall, she had fled the city of Herat, the provincial

Woman in limbo at Kabul airport after Taliban sweep

AP PHOTO



capital and her hometown, for the Afghan capital, "with hope that Kabul would resist."

"But everything changed," she said. "Everything collapsed in front of my eyes."

Her family did not object to her leaving even though at 22, she was their breadwinner. That role brought her respect and pride — something the Taliban could take away. She also knew that by staying, she would become a liability for her loved ones — a you-

ng woman, educated at an international university and working with foreigners.

"When I left Herat I thought I cannot leave my family like this, but staying there I become a risk for them," she said. If the Taliban found out, she is convinced "they will hurt my family."

Before leaving Herat, she destroyed all evidence linking her with international organizations, including newspaper clippings. Apart from working as a U.S. con-

tractor, in July she was also featured in a prominent U.S. paper.

"I burned them, I buried them, and I left," she said.

Once at the airport, she saw Afghans waiting desperately for a plane out, some breaking into tears. She was tired, she had not slept in three days. Rumors circulated that the planes may even be cancelled. Others asked why there was no security and who would protect them.

"The Taliban can come at any

time," she said, her voice faltering.

Six hours passed. She heard shots ring out from the outside — was it the Taliban?

From where she was, she could see a plane on the tarmac, but it wasn't hers. A mad rush of men and women followed, people overtaking one another, desperate to get out. She watched from a cold steel bench, and for a moment, thought of the unknown that awaited her on the other side.

"I might end up on the other side of the world, in a refugee camp. I have no food, no money with me," she said. And she missed her family. "I am worried for their lives," she said. "All these years of education and hard work, in the hope of making a better life and helping other Afghans ended up being for nothing."

By midnight on Sunday, she thought of giving up and taking a taxi back to Kabul. Herat was out of the question. She got up, but just as quickly changed her mind again.

Sleep would not come. She said looters were causing havoc inside the terminal. She left with her travel companions to wait outside on the runway.

At daybreak, thousands of Afghans had streamed into the airport. She said she saw U.S. soldiers fire shots in the air. Her flight would be here soon, she was told.

Earlier this week, U.S. military officials said the chaos at the Kabul airport had left seven people dead, including some who fell from a departing American military transport jet.

"I will never forgive the world for staying silent," she said. "I didn't deserve this. No one deserves this." **MDT/AP**

THE Taliban vowed yesterday [Macau time] to respect women's rights, forgive those who fought them and ensure Afghanistan does not become a haven for terrorists as part of a publicity blitz aimed at reassuring world powers and a fearful population.

Following a lightning offensive across Afghanistan that saw many cities fall to the insurgents without a fight, the Taliban have sought to portray themselves as more moderate than when they imposed a strict form of Islamic rule in the late 1990s. But many Afghans remain skeptical — and thousands have raced to the airport, desperate to flee the country.

Older generations remember the Taliban's previous rule, when they largely confined women to their homes, banned television and music, and held public executions. A U.S.-led invasion drove them from power months after the 9/11 attacks, which al-Qaida had orchestrated from Afghanistan while being sheltered by the Taliban.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's longtime spokesman, emerged from the shadows in his first-ever public appearance to address those concerns at a news conference.

He promised the Taliban would honor women's rights within the norms of Islamic law, without elaborating. The Taliban have encouraged women to return to work and have allowed girls to return to school, handing out Islamic headscarves at the door. A female news anchor interviewed a Taliban

TALIBAN VOW TO RESPECT WOMEN, DESPITE HISTORY OF OPPRESSION



Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid speaks at his first news conference in Kabul

official Monday in a TV studio.

The treatment of women varies widely across the Muslim world and sometimes even within the same country, with rural areas tending to be far more conservative. Some Muslim countries, including neighboring Pakistan, have had female prime ministers, while ultraconservative Saudi Arabia only recently allowed women to drive.

Mujahid also said the Taliban would not allow Afghanistan to be used as a base for attacking other countries, as it was in the years before 9/11. That assurance was part of a 2020

peace deal reached between the Taliban and the Trump administration that paved the way for the American withdrawal.

The Pentagon said U.S. commanders are communicating with the Taliban as they work to evacuate thousands of people through Kabul's international airport. It said the Taliban have taken no hostile actions there.

Kabul, the capital, has remained calm as the Taliban patrol its streets. But many remain fearful after prisons and armories emptied out during the insurgents' sweep across the country. **MDT/AP**

COVID-19

Britain urges halt to Myanmar clashes to allow vaccination

EDITH M. LEDERER,
UNITED NATIONS

THE United Kingdom called yesterday [Macau time] for an immediate and sustained pause in clashes and unrest in Myanmar to allow vaccinations as an intense COVID-19 surge is ravaging the country.

Britain's deputy U.N. ambassador, James Kariuki, told reporters after closed Security Council discussions that the call for a humanitarian pause and a strong international response was joined by Foreign Minister Dato Erywan of Brunei, the new special envoy for Myanmar from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations who joined the meeting virtually.

Kariuki said U.N. special envoy Christine Schraner Burgener and U.N. deputy humanitarian chief Ramesh Rajasingham told the council that the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar is worsening daily.

"Prior to the coup, Myanmar had a strong vaccination record and was developing a COVID-19 plan," he said. "Now, Myanmar's health system is barely functioning, unacceptable attacks on hospitals, doctors and nurses continue, and only 3% of the population are vaccinated."



Myanmar has been struggling with one of the worst COVID-19 surges in Southeast Asia, and the military leadership that ousted Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's democratically elected government Feb. 1 has been accused of diverting critical medical supplies to itself and its supporters.

Last week, Schraner Burgener said that more than 333,000 cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Myanmar, including 3,611 new cases Aug. 9.

At the council meeting, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Rajasingham "outlined what is basically a collapsing health care system, resurging wave of the virus, increased hostilities and violence, (and) significant displacement."

Schraner Burgener called on U.N. member states to support pandemic and

other humanitarian efforts in Myanmar and she also called on the parties to allow a vaccination campaign "to go forward through all available avenues in the country," Dujarric said.

Kariuki said that "the UK is calling for an immediate and sustained humanitarian pause to allow vaccines to get to all in need, and for medical and humanitarian staff to work without fear or attack."

He said that at the council meeting "we had a lot of calls for a humanitarian pause," but members did not take any action.

Kariuki said U.N. officials will work with Security Council members, other U.N. members and international partners such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization "to ensure the people of Myanmar get access to vaccines in an equitable way — regardless of politics,

ethnicity or religion."

"Vaccines must be tools of protection, not politics," he said, stressing that the political situation is having an impact on the humanitarian crisis.

Myanmar for five decades languished under strict military rule that led to international isolation and sanctions. As the generals loosened their grip, culminating in Suu Kyi's rise to leadership in 2015 elections, the international community responded by lifting most sanctions and pouring investment into the country. The Feb. 1 takeover followed an overwhelming victory by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party in November elections that the military contested as fraudulent.

The military takeover was met with widespread protests that have resulted in a lethal crackdown by security forces, which routinely fire live ammunition into crowds. Armed resistance to the military is growing in both urban and rural areas.

Myanmar's Assistance Association for Political Prisoners reported Tuesday that 999 people have been killed since Feb. 1. It said 7,320 have been arrested, of whom 5,712 are still detained, including Suu Kyi and ousted President Win Myint. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2003 UN ENVOY DIES IN BAGHDAD BOMBING



A massive bomb has wrecked the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, killing at least 17 people including the UN's chief envoy to Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello.

Three floors of the concrete building collapsed in the explosion. Hundreds of people were still at work, and it was an especially busy period since a news conference had just begun.

Rescue efforts to dig out those trapped in the rubble are continuing into the night.

Alice Yacoub, a UN employee, was sitting in the cafeteria when the blast happened.

"Everything came down on our heads," she said. "I can't find my colleagues and I'm worried about them."

The UN's spokesman at the scene, Salim Lone, was working in his office when the bomb went off.

"There was a huge, shattering explosion. I was working on the computer, the glass in the window blew - the woodwork, everything came out of the roof."

"I ran in to the corridor. Everybody was very severely wounded, very badly hurt, bleeding, people with blood on their face."

A US military spokeswoman said the blast was caused by a truck bomb, possibly in a suicide bombing.

Eyewitnesses said a concrete mixing lorry believed to have been carrying the bomb was parked just outside Mr de Mello's office when it went off at about 1640 local time (1240 GMT).

The highly-respected 55-year-old Brazilian diplomat died after being trapped under rubble for several hours.

He was one of the UN's most experienced envoys, and had been on many of the most sensitive and dangerous peace missions of recent years.

The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, said in a statement that everyone at the UN was "shocked and dismayed" at the attack.

"Nothing can excuse this act of unprovoked and murderous violence against men and women who went to Iraq... to help the Iraqi people," the statement said.

The bombing is the latest in a steady stream of attacks by groups opposed to the US occupation of Iraq.

The United Nations has just increased security measures around the Baghdad building in the wake of several recent attacks, including the bombing of the Jordanian embassy 12 days ago in which at least 14 people died.

Courtesy BBC News

CAMBODIA

KHMER ROUGE DEFENDANT GUILTY OF REGIME'S CRIMES: PROSECUTOR

IN his position of authority, the former head of the Khmer Rouge shared joint culpability for the regime's atrocities in Cambodia in the 1970s, prosecutors said yesterday, rejecting defense arguments that he should not be held responsible.

Khieu Samphan, 90, is appealing his 2018 conviction for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. He is the last surviving member of the inner circle of Pol Pot's radical communist regime that ruled Cambodia with an iron fist from 1975 to 1979 and was responsible for the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million people.

His defense team has argued there were proce-

dural errors in the original Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia trial and challenged the evidence against him.

In the third day of arguments, defense attorney Anta Guissé questioned the use of the principle of joint criminal enterprise in his conviction, under which individuals can be held responsible for the actions of a group to which they belong.

Guissé told the international tribunal the reasoning was hazardous, arguing that it replaces "belonging to a political project" with a "criminal objective and intent" to commit a crime.

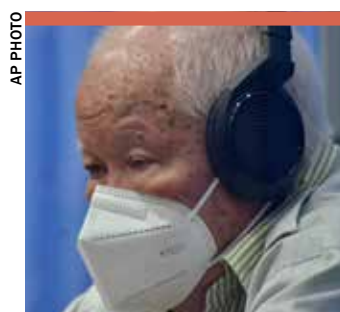
The court, she said "had to establish that he intended to

commit a crime and that he associated with other persons in order to achieve this objective and, furthermore, that he broadly contributed to the crime."

"Short of that," she said, "one cannot say that there was proof, that there was intent, to commit the crimes."

Khieu Samphan sat behind Guissé as she spoke, wearing earphones to hear the proceedings and a mask as part of the COVID-19 precautions.

Prosecutor William Smith rejected her argument, telling the ECCC's Supreme Court chamber that precedent from trials of war crimes from the former Yugoslavia had established that it's not required to show a defendant had know-



Khieu Samphan

ledge of specific incidents.

"Indeed, it would be artificial, impractical and defeat the purpose of having (joint criminal) liability in the first place to require the precise intent or precise knowledge of each and every crime committed in the course of a large-scale ongoing joint criminal enterprise," Smith argued. "As long as the appellant intended, or was aware of the general types of crimes being committed pursuant to the common purpose, that is all that is required." **MDT/AP**

IN CONTEXT

The death toll later rose to 23. Following the attack, all but about 50 foreign UN workers were pulled out of Baghdad. The remainder were withdrawn in October 2003 following an attack on the Red Cross headquarters in which 12 people died. Many other aid organisations have since left Baghdad as the security situation continues to deteriorate. In December 2003, Kofi Annan named New Zealand official Ross Mountain as an interim envoy to Iraq to replace Mr de Mello. In February 2004, a UN team returned to Baghdad for the first time since the attack, on a fact-finding mission to discuss the handover of political power. Iraq was run by the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), headed by American diplomat Paul Bremer until 28 June 2004 when power was officially handed back. Elections to choose a full, sovereign Iraqi government were held in 2005.

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You can breathe a great big sigh of relief today - that issue you were afraid would rear its ugly head at the last minute is not going to be bothering you (at least not today).

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Don't be too surprised if you feel a little bit weird or out of place amongst the people you'll be with today. It is only natural for you to feel like a fish out of water during such a transitional time in your life.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
This day is well-suited for action, but not so perfect for deep thought or contemplation. Your brain is a bit sluggish when it comes to new plans right now, but your physical self is ready to get moving.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
This is an educational time for you, when you start to learn about things you never thought you'd ever have any interest in. Your brain is ready - to soak up some heavy stuff, so feel free to pour it on.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Touchy, touchy, touchy! The people who are disagreeing with you today are not trying to be difficult, they're just trying to follow through on what they believe to be the right way of doing things.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
A friend's recent advice is still humming in your mind - maybe it's something you should follow, after all! Do an experiment today. Try out what they suggested. See how it feels for you.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You just have to start seeing things in a more idealistic, beautiful, and hopeful way. The rest will take care of itself. All you need to do is start to focus on the positive possibilities.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
A problem might pop up around your home today. A family member might not know how to react, but you will. Take over and show them there's nothing to fear.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Don't be surprised if you feel like no one in your circle of friends and associates understands where you're coming from, today. They are in their own world...

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
No one will ever do a better job of creating your future than you - so why are you modeling your decisions on someone else's? Your vision of the future has to come from inside you, organically.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
It will help you figure out what is a real problem - and what is merely just an inconvenience that you can ignore. Pick your battles, and you will end up in a lot fewer than you think.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Today you will gain a key insight into how you can create a healthier, happier life. Your physical health is something you can influence more than you have been.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

MEDIUM									HARD								
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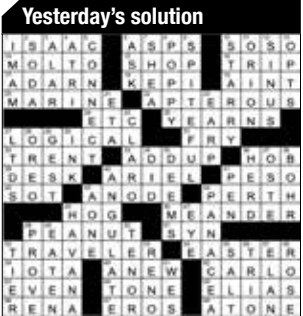
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	22	29	cloudy
Harbin	18	23	rain
Tianjin	25	30	rain
Urumqi	21	29	showers
Xi'an	24	29	rain
Lhasa	22	29	fine
Chengdu	27	34	thunderstorms
Chongqing	26	33	thunderstorms
Kunming	27	33	showers
Nanjing	21	26	rain
Shanghai	25	34	thunderstorms
Wuhan	24	27	rain
Hangzhou	17	23	cloudy
Taipei	23	26	cloudy
Guangzhou	27	31	cloudy
Hong Kong	27	31	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	14	24	overcast
Frankfurt	16	31	overcast
Paris	17	31	overcast
London	13	22	overcast
New York	26	35	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Now you ____; 6- Scored 100 on; 10- 1/100 of a monetary unit; 14- Mild cigar; 15- Singer Laine; 16- 1998 Sarah McLachlan hit; 17- Broadcaster; 18- Saab model; 19- High-pitched tone; 20- Destiny; 21- Accomplishment; 24- Jock; 26- Faculties; 27- Oklahoma city; 28- MetLife competitor; 30- Beat; 33- Made a mistake; 34- Coffee container; 37- Dance move; 38- Temporary paper currency; 39- Gas burner or Sicilian volcano; 40- Sunday seat; 41- Gillette razors; 42- Newly made; 43- Sanctimonious; 44- Trouble; 45- Thick woven straw mat; 48- Deserved; 52- Revive; 55- John Lennon's middle name; 56- Nest eggs, briefly; 57- Are you ____ out?; 58- It's a wrap; 60- Italian bread?; 61- Cozy; 62- Instant; 63- Minus; 64- Additional; 65- Strike hard;

DOWN: 1- Milan's La ____; 2- Prufrock's creator; 3- Soil; 4- Intense anger; 5- Underwater missile; 6- Without ____ in the world; 7- Staff leader?; 8- Architect Saarinen; 9- Threshold; 10- Bathhouse; 11- Parades; 12- Family tree member; 13- Ribbons; 22- Zeta follower; 23- Repair; 25- Reindeer herder; 28- Tapestry; 29- Goddess and sister of Ares in Greek mythology; 30- Sugar amt; 31- Hot time in Paris; 32- Cry of a cat; 33- Beige cousin; 34- U of U athlete; 35- Hosp. staffers; 36- Uh-uh; 38- Philosophy of Zeno; 39- ____ saw Elba; 41- Intentions; 42- Tree plantations; 43- Hesitates; 44- Rainy; 45- Run of bird-song; 46- Eagle's home; 47- Former Russian rulers; 48- A Simpson; 49- Japanese gateway; 50- Perform or portray; 51- Recipient; 53- ____ uncertain terms; 54- Travel from place to place; 59- Upper limb;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	



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AP PHOTO

HOSPITALITY

BAD FOOD, SLIVERS OF SUN: LIFE IN SYDNEY'S HOTEL QUARANTINE



MARK BAKER, SYDNEY

WITH our long journey to reach Australia behind us, and 14 days isolated in a hotel ahead of us, the police officer on our bus tried to inject some humor: "If you're looking to save some money on the hotel," he joked, "this is your last chance to hook up and share a room."

As a photographer for The Associated Press, I had spent the past 20 days in Japan covering the Olympics. In a bid to limit transmission of COVID-19, officials imposed tough rules on visiting media and athletes that kept us in an "Olympic bubble" for our first 14

days in Tokyo. During that time, we were only allowed to move between the main media center, Olympic venues and our hotel; our meals were mostly from convenience stores. On Aug. 9, I returned to Australia, where I faced another 14 days in a hotel bubble.

Australia shut its borders to the world shortly after the pandemic erupted in 2020. Most Australians who want to travel abroad — be it for work, or to move, or to visit a dying family member in another country — must apply for permission from the government to leave Australia. Those lucky enough to be granted permission to travel must then spend two weeks

quarantining in a hotel when they return, at their own expense — approximately US\$2,400. The system has stranded tens of thousands of Australians abroad, as there are a limited number of quarantine hotel rooms available, and thus a limited number of Australians are allowed to return home each week.

Many have wondered what these quarantine hotels are like — and how those of us cloistered inside pass the time during those 14 days.

After landing in Sydney, we were welcomed by friendly local health officials who ushered us through customs and baggage

collection and then onto the bus, where the jovial police officer ran through what to expect over the next two weeks. We were checked into the hotel one at a time, and then finally — three hours after landing — I walked into my room.

I was lucky enough to be placed in a one-bedroom apartment with every luxury included — a washing machine, two TVs and a kitchen. A friend dropped off gym equipment for me, and I rented an exercise bike to try and meet some fitness goals.

The provided meals are the biggest challenge. After two weeks of convenience store food in Japan, the grim, plastic-wrapped meals

that arrive three times a day aren't a whole lot better. The meals vary daily, but there is no choice.

My savior has been my wife, who every few days has delivered some great food and wine (we are allowed one bottle per day — more than enough for me!). Her deliveries have made my time here bearable.

My Olympics colleagues who are in other quarantine hotels across Australia are all experiencing slightly different conditions. None appear to be as lucky as me with the room, though some have better food options — even a choice!

As a photographer, I have passed much of my time documenting the world outside my window. Though Sydney is normally a bustling and vibrant city, a COVID-19 outbreak has forced residents into lockdown for the past two months. Life in the streets below is now quiet.

I perk up when I spot hints of normality: garbage trucks, parking inspectors, food delivery staff, a few office workers. I see the sun for around one hour a day as it passes between tall office towers.

The hotel staff have been wonderful. I enjoy my daily "mental health" calls from the in-house nurses. Less enjoyable are the three "up your nose" coronavirus tests we do on days 3, 7 and 12. Once I have completed my time here, I will have had nearly 30 such tests in the past six weeks.

As I pass the halfway mark, I have set my sights on seeing my wife in person and not just from a balcony. I'm also looking forward to a hot, home-cooked meal and stretching my legs during a walk in the sunshine.

And I am really looking forward to a day when the toughest part of coming home to Australia is the long plane ride to get here. **MDT/AP**

TRADE

Japan's imports, exports grow on overseas economic rebound

YURI KAGEYAMA,
TOKYO

JAPAN'S exports in July jumped 37% from a year ago, the government said yesterday, highlighting an overseas recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Imports also grew, rising 28.5%, according to Finance Ministry data, for the second straight month of a trade surplus for the world's third largest economy.

Japan's exports grew to the U.S., Asia and Europe; while imports increased from Brazil, Belgium and Kuwait. By category, ex-

ports grew in food, iron and steel products, and electronic parts. Imports rose in food, auto parts and oil. Japan marked a trade surplus with the U.S., but a deficit with China in July.

The strong trade numbers come even as Japan is seeing a surge in COVID-19 cases that are causing some hospitals to turn away patients.

The government state of emergency" was extended Tuesday through Sept. 12. It had previously been set to end this month.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga also ex-

panded the regions under emergency and a less strict quasi-emergency to about two-thirds of the nation. He promised hospital systems will be reorganized to increase wards to care for COVID-19 patients.

Japan has been trying to balance curbing infections while keeping the economy going. Japan's economy grew at an annual rate of 1.3% in the April-June quarter.

The emergency is centered around having restaurants and bars close early and not serve alcohol and asking department stores and

shopping malls to limit crowd size. Some government advisers have suggested stricter measures may be needed.

Japan has had more than 15,000 COVID-19-related deaths. But worries are growing about the new more contagious delta variant. After the Tokyo Olympics were held without fans, the Paralympics open later this month with similar anti-virus measures in place.

Although the vaccine rollout started slowly, about 40% of the population now is fully vaccinated. **MDT/AP**



GOLF

US ASSOCIATION EMPLOYEE CHARGED IN EMBEZZLEMENT SCHEME

A former United States Golf Association employee has been charged in a scheme to embezzle funds from the unauthorized sale of U.S. Open Championship tickets, Acting United States Attorney Jennifer Arbittier Williams announced yesterday [Macau time].

According to a statement released by Williams, Robert Fryer, 39, of Perkasi, Pennsylvania, faces conspiracy, wire fraud, and mail fraud charges.

Fryer allegedly used his position ahead of the 2013 U.S. Open held at the Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, through the 2019 U.S. Open held at the Pebble Beach Golf Links in Pebble Beach, California, to obtain 23,000 tickets that he sold to third-party ticket brokers for nearly \$1

million. The face value of the tickets is over \$3 million.

"The defendant allegedly stole revenue from a legitimate business that pays taxes, employs many, supports a non-profit organization, and brings excitement and income to our district with U.S. Open events at courses like the Merion Golf Club," Williams said. "Criminals that conduct ticket schemes like this prey on the excitement surrounding big events; fans should remember that any item with a low price that seems 'too good to be true' should be cause for caution and concern."

Fryer faces a maximum of 300 years in prison, three years of supervised release, a \$3,750,000 fine, and a \$1,500 special assessment. **MDT/AP**

MOTORSPORT

Japanese GP canceled because of coronavirus pandemic

THIS year's Japanese Grand Prix was canceled following discussions between the government and race promoters, Formula One organizers said yesterday.

The race in Suzuka had been scheduled for Oct. 10, between the events in Turkey and the United States.

"The decision has been taken by the Japanese government to cancel the race this season due to ongoing complexities of the pandemic in the country," F1 said in a statement. "Formula 1 is now working on the details of the revised calendar and will announce the final details in the coming weeks."

The decision creates another dent in F1's calendar of Asia-based races this season following the cancellation of the Australian and Singapore GPs and the indefinite postponement of the Chinese GP in Shanghai.

The cancellation and postponement of races last year at the start of the pandemic meant the 2020 season didn't start until July, and was compressed to a 17-race schedule through December.

AP PHOTO ARCHIVE



"Formula 1 has proven this year, and in 2020, that we can adapt and find solutions to the ongoing uncertainties and is excited by the level of interest from locations to host Formula 1 events this year and beyond," F1 said in the statement.

Most of the series is being staged in Europe and the Middle East this season, with organizers initially planning 23 races.


The 11th race was held last

weekend, when French driver Esteban Ocon won a chaotic Hungarian Grand Prix ahead of Lewis Hamilton.

The Japanese government pushed ahead with the Tokyo Olympics, which were delayed by a year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

New infections in Tokyo tripled during the 17 days of the Olympics, which finished on Aug. 8, although medical experts said the surge was not directly linked to the Games. **MDT/AP**

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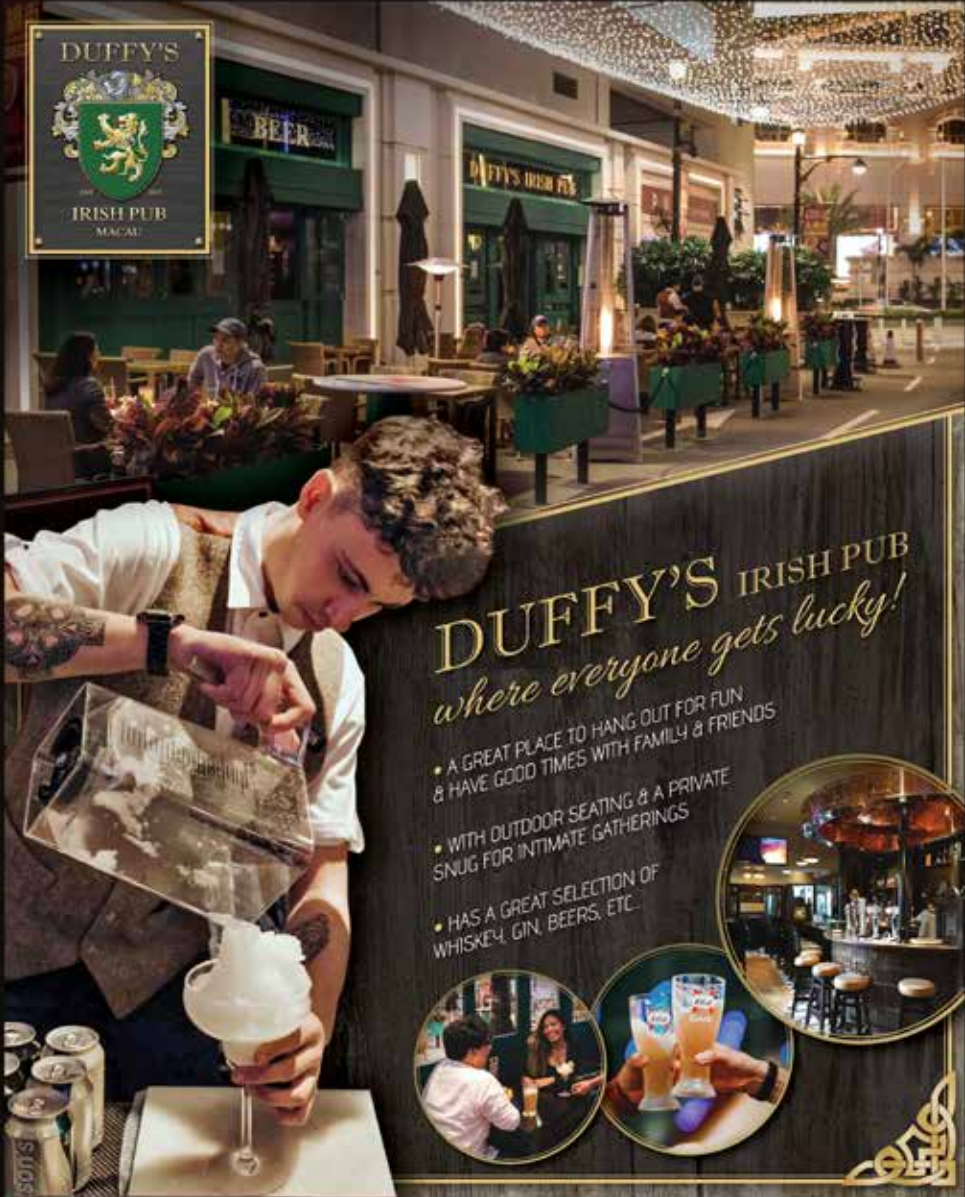
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OPINION

World Views

Gordon Adams, AUSIS
MDT/The Conversation



AFGHANISTAN ONLY THE LATEST US WAR TO BE DRIVEN BY DECEIT AND DELUSION

In Afghanistan, American hubris – the United States' capacity for self-delusion and official lying – has struck once again, as it has repeatedly for the last 60 years.

This weakness-masquerading-as-strength has repeatedly led the country into failed foreign interventions. The pattern first became clear to me when I learned on Nov. 11, 1963, that the U.S. embassy and intelligence agencies had been directly involved in planning a coup to depose the president of South Vietnam and his brother, leading to their executions.

I was a Fulbright Fellow, starting a long career in national security policymaking and teaching, studying in Europe. On that day, I was in a bus on a tour of the battlefields of Ypres, Belgium, led by a French history professor.

As I watched the grave markers sweep by, I was reading a report in Le Monde exposing this U.S. effort to overthrow another government and I thought, "This is a bad idea; my country should not be doing this." And the war, in which the U.S. was directly involved for 20 years, marched on.

The American people were told we had no hand in that coup. We did not know that was a lie until The New York Times and Washington Post published the Pentagon Papers in 1971. By then, 58,000 Americans and possibly as many as 3.5 million Vietnamese soldiers and civilians had died – and the goal of preventing the unification of Vietnam had died as well.

For 15 years, the American foreign policy establishment struggled to overcome what it called the "Vietnam Syndrome" – the rational reluctance of the American people to invade and try to remake another country.

American hubris reemerged, this time as "the global war on terror." Afghanistan is now the poster child for the sense that the U.S. can remake the world.

Osama bin Laden gave American interventionists eager for the next fight a huge justification – an attack on the U.S., which washed the Vietnam Syndrome away in a sea of righteous retribution against al-Qaida.

And now the country faces the dark at the end of the tunnel in Afghanistan, where lying and self-delusion have continued for 20 years.

The mission expanded: create a modern democracy, a modern society and, above all, a modern military in a country with little history of any of those things.

A new generation of U.S. officials in uniform and policymaker suits and dresses fooled the American people and themselves by lying about how well the effort was going.

Three times now this country has been lied to and the media deluded as America marched stolidly over the cliff into failure.

Recriminations are flying back and forth – who lost Afghanistan is the latest version of who lost Vietnam, Iraq and, for those with long memories, all the way back to 1949 and "who lost China." What America has lost is, I believe, the capacity to learn, to learn from history and from our own experience.

I'd argue that no one who was paying attention should be surprised that the Taliban swept back into Kabul in a nanosecond. Or that a failed enterprise like the Afghan national army collapsed. Army and special operator trainers who went there could see the corruption, the personnel who left in the night and the disdain for corrupt political authorities in that army.

Many brave, honorable Afghans fought there, but the cohesion and commitment, the belief in their mission, was not there.

By contrast, the Taliban were organized, dedicated and coherent, and armed and trained for the actual combat taking place, not for European-style trench and tank warfare. The Taliban clearly had a plan that worked for that country, as the speed of the takeover shows. It succeeded; the U.S. and the Kabul regime failed in what became mission impossible.

The fall of Kabul was inevitable. Washington, once again, deluded itself into thinking otherwise. The secretary of state said, "This is not Saigon."

It is Saigon. It is Baghdad. It is Kabul. [Abridged]

US FAMILIES MID-ADOPTION TRYING TO GET AFGHAN CHILDREN OUT

After five frustrating years mired in bureaucratic delays, Bahaudin Mujtaba and wife Lisa had hoped to finally bring the 10-year-old Afghan boy they're adopting to their home in Florida this year for a chance at a different future.

But with the collapse of the Afghan government, the couple is desperately trying to get the boy, Noman, on a flight out of Kabul – going anywhere – before the chance to leave disappears.

In the chaos following the Taliban takeover, Noman and another family tried to get to the airport Tuesday through clogged

streets, checkpoints and gunfire but were forced to turn back.

Mujtaba, who spoke to the boy and the family early Tuesday, said they hope to try again to get to the airport yesterday.

"I have tears in my eyes this morning and my wife has tears in her eyes," he said.

The Taliban's dramatic takeover of Afghanistan has reverberated worldwide, and for families like the Mujtabas, the fallout has been swift, deeply personal and potentially life-altering.

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WOMAN COMES FACE-TO-FACE WITH SNAKE IN AUSTRALIA SUPERMARKET

ROD MCGUIRK,
CANBERRA

HELAINA Alati was browsing the spice aisle of an Australian supermarket when she came face-to-face with a huge snake.

The head of the three-meter-long non-venomous diamond python emerged through a space in a shelf above the spice jars in the Sydney store.

"I was in the spice aisle just looking for something to put on my chicken that night so I didn't initially see it because it was curled up way back behind the little jars of spices," Alati said yesterday. "I kind of turned to my right and it poked its head out."

Alati, who coincidentally is a trained snake catcher, said the snake's head came to within 20 centimeters of her own.

"Thankfully, I have a background in snakes so I was pretty calm about it. It definitely shocked me a little bit because I wasn't expecting it," she added.

Supermarket chain Woolworths confirmed in a statement that a "slippery and rare customer was spotted in the spice aisle" on Monday morning at its store in the suburb of Glenorie on Sydney's northwest outskirts.



"Once it was sighted, our team members reacted quickly and calmly to cordon off the area for the safety of customers," the statement said.

Alati said she used her phone to video the snake as it extended its body from the shelf into the aisle before reporting the intruder to supermarket staff.

"I said: 'I'll go get my snake bag.' I think they thought I was a bit crazy to be honest. I don't think they knew what to say when I said there's a 10-foot python in your aisle," Alati said.

She retrieved the snake-catching bag from her nearby home and caught the snake, which had by then retreated back into

the shelf. She then released it into nearby woodlands.

It's unclear how or when the snake entered the supermarket.

Alati, who was trained to catch venous snakes when she was a volunteer working for a Sydney wildlife rescue organization several years ago, suspected the snake was a male looking for a mate.

"I knew straight away it was non-venomous, it was non-aggressive, it wasn't going to be a problem for anyone," Alati said.

"If anything, I think everyone was a little bit excited. We're all in lockdown so it was kind of like the most excitement we've had for a while," she added. MDT/AP

WAY TO GO

QANTAS AIRLINE REQUIRES ALL WORKERS TO BE FULLY VACCINATED BY MID-NOVEMBER

QANTAS Group said the Australian airline company will require all of its workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Front-line employees — including cabin crew, pilots and airport staff — must be fully vaccinated by Nov. 15, while remaining Qantas employees have until the end of March, the Sydney-based company said in a statement.

Exemptions will be

made for employees unable to be vaccinated for documented medical reasons, the statement said. Such exemptions are expected to be "very rare."

Qantas said a survey found that 89% of its workers were already vaccinated or planned to be. U.S. airlines are divided over whether to insist on their staffs getting vaccinated.

Qantas has become the

second Australian company outside the health and aging care sectors to make COVID-19 vaccinations compulsory.

The Transport Workers Union, which represents workers for Qantas Airways and subsidiary Jetstar, criticized the company for making the announcement without a plan to ensure employees could secure vaccine shots. MDT/AP

Southeast Asia The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies says Southeast Asia is battling the world's highest COVID-19 death toll, driven by the delta variant and unequal distribution of vaccines. Southeast Asia recorded 38,522 deaths from COVID-19 in the last two weeks, nearly twice as many as North America, it says. Seven of the top 10 countries where COVID-19 deaths have doubled the fastest are in Asia and the Pacific, with Vietnam, Fiji and Myanmar in the top five.



Cambodia A prominent labor union leader who is a longtime government critic was sentenced yesterday to two years in prison for inciting social unrest with sensitive comments about the country's border. Rong Chhun (pictured), president of the Cambodian Confederation of Unions, has been in custody since July 2020 after the government claimed he spread false information about Cambodia's border with Vietnam.



USA A major Thai asphalt company has been implicated for money laundering in a criminal complaint against a Miami businessman accused of violating U.S. sanctions for doing maintenance work on Venezuela's fleet of Russian fighter jets. Jorge Nobrega was arrested Sunday at Miami's international airport, according to his attorney, Francisco Alfonso Marty, who said it was premature to comment further.



Vatican Pope Francis is adding his voice to a campaign to overcome vaccine skepticism, issuing a public service announcement insisting that vaccines are safe, effective and an "act of love." The video message released yesterday is aimed at a global audience but directed particularly at the Americas. It features six cardinals and archbishops from North, Central and South America as well as the Argentine-born pope.