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TWO PEOPLE WERE STABBED AND INJURED BY A MAN AT A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING IN TOI SAN DISTRICT YESTERDAY MORNING

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CHINA PUSHES ADOPTION OF LANGUAGE, CULTURAL SYMBOLS IN TIBET

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A FOOTPRINT TRACING FUNCTION, ENDORSED BY THE PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION OFFICE, WILL BE INTRODUCED TO THE HEALTH CODE SYSTEM SOON: GOV'T

▲ P5

Hong Kong Two Hong Kongers pleaded guilty yesterday to conspiring to collude with foreign forces as well as Next Digital founder Jimmy Lai to endanger national security, local media reported. Meanwhile, local media reported seven pro-democracy activists pleaded guilty to organizing and inciting others to take part in an unauthorized assembly held in 2019. *More on P6*



Malaysia The longest-governing political party appeared set to reclaim the premiership it lost in a shock 2018 election defeat, with its lawmakers summoned to the palace yesterday to verify their candidate has enough support to take office. The choice of former Deputy Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob (pictured) would essentially restore the ruling alliance of Muhyiddin Yassin, who resigned as prime minister on Monday after infighting in the coalition cost him majority support.



Myanmar When February's military coup led to the collapse of the central health care system, independent ethnic organizations that had operated for decades on the Southeast Asian country's borders stepped in. But a fierce new wave of cases, and myriad other challenges — closed borders, shrinking support from international donors, and a crackdown on aid by the military, which has been accused of hoarding medical supplies for its own use — are stretching their abilities to the limit.

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SINGAPORE OPENS BORDERS TO MACAU

Singapore lifts quarantine for travelers from the SARs, but Macau gov't doesn't reciprocate

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KIRILL PETROPVLOV



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NO FIA EVENTS FOR THIS YEAR'S MACAU GRAND PRIX

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COUTINHO'S BIG QUESTION PRESENTING ELECTORAL PLATFORM

“I don't know what has changed at the AL, since the system and the laws are the same, but something did change.”



RENATO MARQUES

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NO FIA EVENTS FOR THIS YEAR'S MACAU GRAND PRIX

RENATO MARQUES

THE Formula 3 World Cup, GT World Cup and final round of the WTCR – FIA World Touring Car Cup will not take place during this year's Macau Grand Prix event, the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) announced yesterday.

According to a statement from the FIA, the governing body of international motorsport received confirmation from the local government that "all those arriving into Macau SAR must undergo a quarantine of 21 days immediately after arrival." The measure was unlikely to be halted for the foreseeable future.

The FIA noted that, as the majority of competitors taking part in the FIA events would necessarily come from outside of Macau, this restriction "presents the drivers, teams, and suppliers with conditions that are

RENATO MARQUES



difficult to comply with."

As a result, the three main events of the local Grand Prix event will not be going ahead this year.

The FIA also said that the Macau-exclusive World Cup events (F3 and GT) will not take place this year, and that the Macau round of the WTCR will be hosted

by another locale at a venue still to be confirmed.

Regarding the matter, FIA secretary-general for Sport Peter Bayer said: "For many years,

the Macau Grand Prix has been a season-ending tradition for much of the motorsport world, and it holds special significance for the FIA as the only event to feature three different FIA World Cups on the same event schedule. While we will miss not being there ourselves, we wish the organizers a safe and successful Macau Grand Prix in November, and we will start working immediately towards the 2022 event." He added that FIA intends to return to Macau in 2022 with all three racing events.

With the final announcement on the non-participation of any of the FIA events in the 68th edition of the local Grand Prix, the idea that the event would follow a similar format in 2021 as it did in 2020 has regained momentum.

Previously, the Chinese F4, which replaced the F3 World Cup last year, had already presented Macau as the final round of its likewise shortened calendar for 2021.

The final announcement of the event program for this year's edition is expected to occur in the next few days.

July visitors rebounded 49% m-o-m

LYNZY VALLES

MACAU saw a total of 789,407 visitor arrivals in July, a rise of 49.4% month-on-month (m-o-m). This followed a plunge in numbers last month, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

The sharp drop in June arrivals was largely attributed to rigid anti-pandemic measures implemented in both Guangdong province and Macau in early June, designed to contain a fresh wave of Covid-19 cases.

In July, numbers of overnight visitors (412,735) and same-day visitors (376,672) bounced back by 1,634.5% and 650.2% year-on-year, respectively, according to data provided by the DSEC.

The number of mainland visitors rocketed by 989.4% year-on-year to

EVA BUCHO



724,342, with 293,927 travelling as part of the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS).

In late January 2020, the central government stopped issuing IVS visas as one of its measures to contain Covid-19. However, individual visas already issued by mainland authorities remained valid, despite the issuance of new permits having halted.

The scheme only re-

sumed on August 12 — hence the significant rise of mainland visitors, year-on-year.

Visitors from the nine Pearl River Delta cities in the Greater Bay Area totalled 426,991, 49.8% of whom came from Zhuhai. On top of this, there were 59,135 visitors from Hong Kong and 5,800 from Taiwan.

Compared to July 2020, the number of ho-

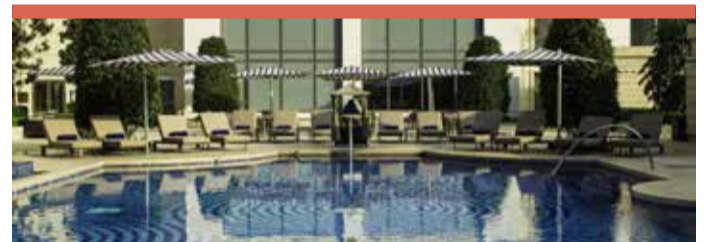
lidaymakers in July 2021 rose dramatically by 966.7% year-on-year.

In the first seven months of 2021, the number of visitor arrivals rose by 41.1% year-on-year to 4,717,236.

Previously, local tourism-related operators expressed optimism about the prospects for businesses during this summer holiday.

However, August tourism numbers in the first two weeks fell as much as to 78% compared to arrivals in July, due to the four Delta cases discovered in Macau, which resulted in the shortening of the validity of nucleic acid test (NAT) for tourists to 12 hours.

However, recent data is showing a rebound, as the SAR recorded a total of 16,700 and 16,900 tourists on Monday and Tuesday respectively — a 2.3% rise.



SHERATON GRAND, THE ST. REGIS REOPEN RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

THE Sheraton Grand Macao and The St. Regis Macao are set to reopen their swimming pools and fitness clubs today, the properties announced in a statement.

Due to the Delta cases discovered on August 3, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng ordered all recreational facilities to be shut down.

These facilities, including movie theaters, gyms and indoor amusement parks, were closed.

The restrictions were only lifted on Wednesday, August 18, allowing certain venues to resume full operation. This was due to the "the improvement in the epidemic situation in Macau."

The relaxed measures are intended to ensure a gradual resumption of normal economic activity and normal life in the city. In the statement, the hotel properties told the public: "rest assured, we will continue to adhere to strict prevention measures for the safety of our guests."

The Sheraton's pool will resume opening from 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., along with its fitness center from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. The Sheraton Club is closed until further notice.

Similarly, The St. Regis Macao's pool will open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m, while its bar will be open 2 p.m. to 1 a.m. LV

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DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles SENIOR WRITER_Honey Tsang
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Alban Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS_Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua
SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER_Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS_Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR

Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

Advertisement_advertising@macaudailytimes.com

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LYNZY VALLES

SINGAPORE is slated to lift its border restrictions for visitors from Hong Kong and Macau. Travelers will be able to apply for entry to the country as early as August 26.

The announcement was made by Singapore's Transport Minister S. Iswaran yesterday, who also noted that Singapore will be unilaterally open to visitors from Hong Kong, which is in Category I.

Along with visitors from other very low risk countries and regions like mainland China (excluding Jiangsu province), New Zealand and Taiwan, visitors from Hong Kong will be allowed to enter Singapore with just an on-arrival polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

The unilateral opening was extended to visitors from Macau, which is also listed in Category I, the city-state announced. "As you would be well aware, Singapore and Hong Kong have been in discussion on an Air Travel Bubble since last October, when vaccinations were not yet available. Unfortunately, we have not been able to launch the [travel bubble], due to the surge in community cases in both our cities at different points in time," he recalled.

The minister also announced

Singapore lifts quarantine for travelers from Macau, Hong Kong



that, together with Hong Kong counterpart Secretary Edward Yau, they have concluded that the two regions will not be able to launch or sustain a travel bubble in its present form.

Regardless of the traveler's vaccination status, Hong Kong and Macau tourists can

apply for an air travel pass to enter Singapore.

They will be required to under-

go a Covid-19 test upon arrival, and self-isolate until they receive a negative test result. However, these visitors should have spent the last 21 consecutive days in the SARs prior arrival.

Meanwhile, arrivals to Macau from Singapore are required to undergo a 21-day quarantine.

These visitors should have spent the last 21 consecutive days in the SARs prior arrival

Also, Singapore will reopen its borders to arrivals from Germany and Brunei without the need to undergo quarantine under the so-called "vaccinated travel lane," that will open in September.

"We will augment this framework with the launch of Vaccinated Travel Lanes for Germany and Brunei. This is a new modality in our reopening, which has been enabled by the progress in vaccination in Singapore and other parts of the world," the minister explained.

"As an open and small economy, our connectivity with the rest of the world is essential, if not existential. That is why we need to start reopening. The longer our borders remain closed, the greater the risk of lasting damage to our economy, our livelihoods, and our status as an aviation hub," the official added.

Singapore closed its borders on March 24 in order to curb the spread of Covid-19.

AD



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PEREIRA COUTINHO EVALUATES AL TERM, FORECASTS UPCOMING CHALLENGES

RENATO MARQUES

CCANDIDATE for the Legislative Assembly (AL) 2021 elections José Pereira Coutinho has presented an evaluation of the AL's work over the past four years in a specially organized press conference on Wednesday.

In the press conference, the candidate also took the opportunity to forecast the upcoming challenges of the next AL term, which will start after the September 12 elections.

In a review of his work, Pereira Coutinho noted to he made a total of 201 inquiries to the government over the past four years, along with 11 debate proposals and five bill proposals.

Looking back, he expressed conflicting feelings about the developments of the AL.

On the one hand, he said that "the AL improved [somewhat in regards to concerns of] the transparency of its work," and on the other, he also claimed that the new developments of how the AL works have to transformed it into a "rubber stamp."

"I don't know what has chan-



ged at the AL, since the system and the laws are the same, but something did change," he said, adding: "We have only been able to present five bill proposals — we did try to present others but they were rejected by the house of rules and by the AL president."

Pereira Coutinho noted that, especially during the last term, there was also an observable, increased difficulty in presenting debate proposals on themes that

were of public interest.

"There were 13 [debate proposals] rejected, only on my initiative. I don't know why the AL and the large majority of the lawmakers do not like to debate matters of public interest, even those related to social matters. This means that AL has [effectively] turned into a rubber stamp and that rubber stamping gives it a very bad image to the citizens," he said.

The candidate drew upon his experience of the last term to forecast that, in the next term, it "will be even more difficult to fulfill what the Basic Law regulates as one of the duties of the lawmakers: to present bills and new draft laws."

Regarding the work he expects to continue after being reelected in September, Pereira Coutinho said that, although the government has said it

will present a bill next year that aims to finally install a Trade Union law in Macau, he intends to continue to push the matter and remain ready to present his initiative once again if needed, if the government does not do it first.

The candidate reiterated his opinion that lawmakers should be performing their duties as a full-time job, and not as a part-time activity. "We need to be ready to attend, in person, the request for help and support — as well as the complaints — from citizens, and [to] help them to find solutions," he remarked.

For the candidate, the government should continue to reinforce its support to the local citizens and to the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have been suffering from the effects of the pandemic.

"It is time to use the [financial] reserves to avoid social disaster," he said. "The SMEs are bleeding and dying. This will bring even more unemployment and will add a significant pressure to the social welfare system," he concluded.



Crime increased 26% during the first half of 2021

RENATO MARQUES

THE number of crimes reported in Macau during the first half of this year (H1) rose by 26.1%, official statistics released yesterday by the Secretariat for Security show.

Topping the list of incidents are cybercrimes, which registered a growth of 382% when compared

with the same period last year.

In the first half of 2021 the number of cybercrimes recorded reached 617 incidents — 489 more than in 2020.

Also growing significantly was criminal activity that facilitated illegal immigration, which rose 81.9% year-on-year from 182 cases in 2020 to 331 re-

ported this year.

Also on the rise were cases of sexual assault committed against underage people, which doubled from two to four this year.

Scams and document forgery also contributed to the H1 spike in 2021. Both crimes grew by about 50%, while the crime of making false declarations to the authorities rose by 65%.

By contrast, crimes that have traditionally been linked to casinos have reduced due to border restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The crime of kidnapping fell by 41.4%, the unlawful use of ID belonging to a third-person fell by 76.6%, and the distribution of forged currency by 19.4%.

Violent crimes committed against individuals, including rape and sexual assault, were highlighted for their statistical increase in H1. The number of reported rapes increased by 23.1% to a total of 16 in the first half of 2021 — three more cases than in 2020.

In the report, the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, noted the increase in the number of incidents, but nonetheless expressed satisfaction with the fact that, in general, violent crimes have recorded a slight decrease of 0.8% y-o-y.

Wong also noted that, since the numbers of the gaming industry remained low for the first half of this year, the Secretary has not conducted a specific analysis of criminality related to the industry, as was usual in crime reporting before the pandemic.

REOPENED SHOPPING DISTRICT SEES FEW SHOPPERS

VENDORS at the reopened San Kio shopping district are struggling to get shoppers through the door, given the area's recent cordoning off by health authorities due to disease control operations.

The area was placed under a 14-day lockdown when one of the four most recent patients diagnosed with Covid-19 works there. The workplace was not merely sanitized — the block was closed to the public as well.

Two days ago, the area was reopened.

However, business has not immediately bounced back, as vendors have reported reduced visitation and a lack of enthusiasm for spending. A shopkeeper said that

sales have not yet resurged following the lockdown, but she was not sure if it was because of low confidence among consumers generally or in the district itself. She does not foresee revenue returning soon.

Furthermore, she disclosed that she had to dispose of a significant quantity of stock, as the lockdown from two weeks ago came down suddenly, costing her quite an amount of money.

Another vendor who sells fruits revealed that she lost MOP20,000 during the lockdown. She added that even her operator license was removed by the authorities out of hygiene concerns. She hopes confidence in the shopping area will return soon. **AL**

ANTHONY LAM

COVID-19

A footprint tracing function, endorsed by the Personal Data Protection Office, will likely be introduced to the Health Code system soon, Dr Leong Iek Hou, coordinator of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said at the regular health press conference yesterday.

She added that the addition of the function to the platform is now in progress, and she anticipates its forthcoming roll-out.

Regarding personal data security concerns, the public health doctor stressed that no data will be uploaded to any shared server owned or operated by the government. She said that the function will operate in such a way that data recorded will only be stored on the mobile device of the user.

Similar to the footprint functions used in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China, users are required to scan a QR code posted at various – if not all – public venues to develop records of their movements.

Leong did not explain how follow-up operations will be conducted. Given precedents set by the aforementioned territories, text messages are likely to be sent to users who have been to the same venues visited by a patient to notify them of any precautionary measures that need to be taken.

The function has become increasingly anticipated by certain members of the public, as the four newest patients in the city were not able to clearly recall their movements in the days preceding their diagnosis.

On another topic, Leong asked the public to update their addresses on the health code platform. She blamed users with incorrect addresses registered for putting extra workloads onto the Health Bureau during this “time of intense epidemic control.”

“Because of a non-updated address, they had their health code turned to red, and they [then] pushed to have the code corrected, which at the end of the day put a heavier burden to our team,” Leong recalled.

NO MASS EVENTS ALLOWED

Leong referred to epidemiology to justify the current policy that no mass event can be held for the time being, as Macau is still not completely safe from new contagion or even outbreaks.

She stressed that Macau can only be considered totally safe when it achieves zero new cases for 28 consecutive days.

However, this does not mean that the 28-day target is an immovable threshold. “The consideration should take into account the impact on economic performance,” she said.

A similar scenario took place last year when the government stressed that the risks of outbreaks were still high, but gave green lights to the Food Festival and the Grand Prix.

DSEDJ UNDECIDED ON SCHOOL YEAR START

With most schools having set their school year start between September 1 and 6, and as mass gatherings and events are discouraged by the health authorities, there may be an as yet unannounced delay on the commencement of the new academic year.

Wong Ka Ki, head of the Education and Youth Development Bureau's Non-Tertiary Education Department, said at the press conference that guidelines regarding the matter have been distributed to schools.

Cross-border students will be allowed to begin their new school year several days later than normal, Wong added.

CASE OF BELL'S Palsy RECORDED

Health authorities reported another adverse events following immunization (AEFI) yesterday as a 31-year-old man suffered from Bell's palsy after being administered with the second dose of Sinopharm vaccine.

The man received his second jab on August 12 and reported his case on August 18.

In April, three residents also suffered from Bell's palsy after being inoculated with Covid-19 jabs.

cuts on both of her hands and her neck. The two are neighbors but not spouses as some reports have stated.

The law-enforcement authorities did not release much information at press time, but witnesses said that the two were found on the ground floor with wounds, and the rescue team was notified soon after. Police were also notified.

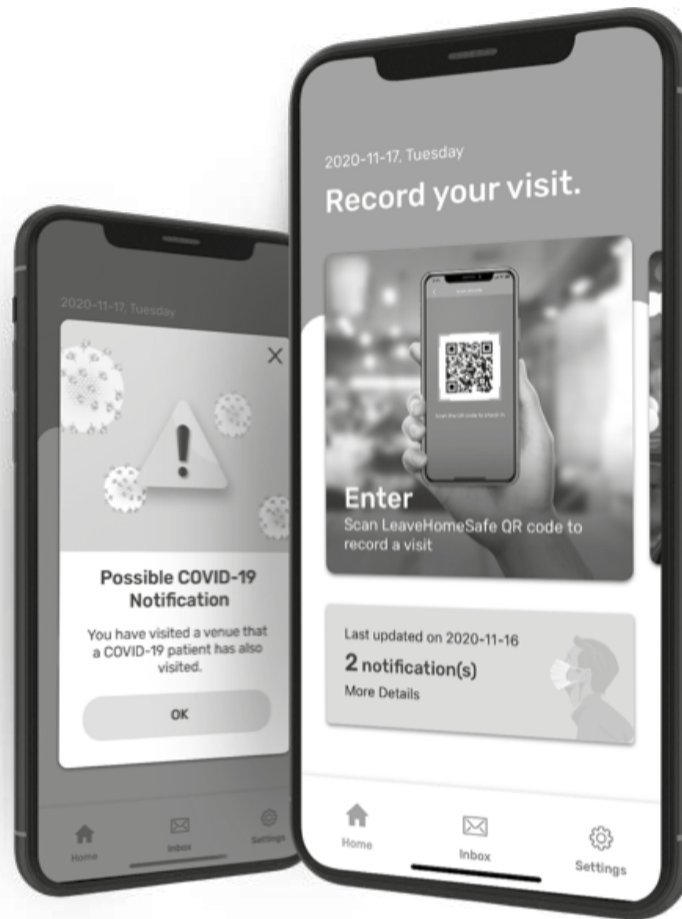
The Judiciary Police apprehended a suspect at

about 2:30 p.m. yesterday.

According to witness reports, the suspect had an argument with one of the two victims several months ago. Someone suspected the victim in question gave shelter to an alleged thief and that the suspect requested he be able to check the victim's apartment, which was rebuffed by the victim.

The Times is aware that the victims have given statements to the police. **AL**

Footprint records on health code soon to become reality



LeaveHomeSafe, a digital contact tracing app launched by the Hong Kong Government

CRIME

Two injured in Toi San stabbing

A man and a woman were injured by another man at a residential building in Toi San yesterday morning.

A credible source told the Times that the families of the suspect and the two victims have been neighbors on the 18th floor for about three decades.

The man, who is 63 years old, suffered a cut on his neck which led to 30 medical stitches. The woman, 54 years old, suffered multiple

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BEIJING PUSHES ADOPTION OF LANGUAGE, CULTURAL SYMBOLS IN TIBET

A top Chinese official said yesterday that “all-round efforts” are needed to ensure Tibetans speak standard spoken and written Chinese and share the “cultural symbols and images of the Chinese nation.”

Wang Yang made the remarks before a handpicked audience in front of the Potala Palace in Lhasa, the home of Tibet's traditional Buddhist leaders, at a ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the Chinese invasion of the vast Himalayan region.

China's ruling Communist Party says it “peacefully liberated” Tibetan peasants from an oppressive theocracy and restored Chinese rule over a region under threat from outside powers.

Critics say such moves toward cultural assimilation spell the demise of Tibet's traditional Buddhist culture and that Tibet was effectively independent for most of its history.

China has highlighted its efforts to boost the economy in the region and condemned the exiled Dalai Lama as a separatist.



Wang Yang, chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference waves as he arrives in Lhasa to attend the ceremony to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Tibet liberation

Wang, who is a member of the Politburo Standing Committee — the apex of party power — and who oversees policy toward ethnic minorities, said “separatist and sabotage activities committed by the Dalai (Lama) group and hostile external forces

have been crushed.”

Since 1951, Tibet has “embarked on a path from darkness to brightness, from backwardness to progress, from poverty to prosperity, from autocracy to democracy, and from closeness to openness,” Wang said.

Wang said Tibetans had been included in representative bodies. The region hosted close to 160 million tourists last year, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. Even before the coronavirus pandemic, China limited entrance to Tibet by foreigners.

“Only by following the CPC leadership and pursuing the path of socialism, can Tibet achieve development and prosperity,” Wang was quoted by Xinhua as saying.

The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 following an abortive uprising against Chinese rule and his supporters have documented human rights abuses in Tibet related to an ongoing security crackdown.

“Judging by developments in Tibet over the past 70 years, the Tibetan people have no cause for jubilation, as Chinese policies have turned Tibet itself into an ‘open-air prison’ with restrictions on all aspects of Tibetan life,” the U.S.-based International Campaign for Tibet said in a statement.

As China tightens its hold over Tibet, questions are arising over the future of its diaspora community. China has refused any contact with the self-declared Tibetan government in exile and the Dalai Lama has long separated himself from politics. **MDT/AP**



Pro-democracy activist Raphael Wong gestures, signifying the “Five demands - not one less,” outside a local court in Hong Kong yesterday

HONG KONG

Two plead guilty to foreign collusion, media reports

TWO Hong Kongers pleaded guilty yesterday to conspiring to collude with foreign forces as well as Next Digital founder Jimmy Lai to endanger national security, local media reported.

In a separate case, local media reported seven pro-democracy activists pleaded guilty to organizing and inciting others to take part in an unauthorized assembly held in 2019.

The cases are part of a broad crackdown on dissent following antigovernment protests that roiled the semiautonomous Chinese territory in 2019. The protests were sparked by concerns that Beijing was infringing on the freedoms promised to the former British colony when it was handed to Chinese control

in 1997.

In the first case, activist Andy Li and legal assistant Chan Tsz-wah pleaded guilty to a conspiracy where they sought to attract international sanctions against Beijing and the Hong Kong government, according to the South China Morning Post newspaper.

Lawyers for the defendants in both cases could not be reached for comment and calls to the court went unanswered.

Li was one of 12 Hong Kongers who last year attempted to leave Hong Kong by boat and travel to the self-ruled island of Taiwan. They were detained at sea by mainland authorities and 10 of them were sentenced to prison on the

mainland for crossing borders illegally.

Li served seven months in Shenzhen jail before returning to Hong Kong, where he was remanded in custody.

The seven activists appearing in court in the second case included Raphael Wong, the former chairman of the League of Social Democrats political party, and Figo Chan, who led the Civil Human Rights Front, a now disbanded group that organized protests.

“I was protesting based on the principle of civil disobedience. One of the key elements of civil disobedience is to accept the charges. So that is what we are going to do later, to plead guilty,” Wong said ahead of the proceedings.

“Another key element is that the people carrying out civil disobedience actions know being jailed is just part of the process,” he said. “We are not worried about being jailed. Instead, we hope we can achieve democracy after this process.”

Local news outlets Ming Pao and Stand News later reported all seven pleaded guilty.

Beijing responded to the 2019 protests by imposing a strict new national security law last year that has effectively criminalized much of the opposition to the government and silenced dissent.

Most of the city's most prominent activists, including Joshua Wong and Lai, the media mogul, are currently behind bars. Many of them were prosecuted for taking part in unauthorized protests in 2019.

Of the seven defendants yesterday, only Wong was not held in custody prior to appearing in court. The other six are currently behind bars after being convicted of other offences related to their activism. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

POLICE SEIZE METH, HEROIN WORTH USD25 MILLION

HONG KONG police said yesterday that they seized 195 million Hong Kong dollars (\$25 million) worth of illegal drugs as part of a monthslong investigation, the largest seizure of the year.

Police said the drugs, including 148 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine and 86 kilograms of heroin, were uncovered Wednesday in an industrial building. A suspect was arrested and was due to appear in court today.

Police said at a news conference that the drugs were linked to a syndicate that had been under investigation for months.

In May and July the investigation led to the arrests of eight men and four women aged between 16 and 45 on suspicion of manufacturing and trafficking drugs as well as obstructing the police. **MDT/AP**



ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Sands China Hosts Guangdong Medical Team Assisting Macao's Mass Nucleic Acid Testing

Sands China Ltd. has been proactively cooperating with the Macao SAR government's epidemic prevention policy during the pandemic period. With the support of the central government and under the coordination of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR, Guangdong province recently organised more than 300 medical professionals to assist Macao with its mass nucleic acid testing programme. During this period, Sands China provided comprehensive service arrangements for the medical team at one of its integrated resorts during their stay.

Sands China held a farewell ceremony Aug. 8 for the departing medical team and gave them gift bags in appreciation of their hard work. Around 100 guests attended the ceremony, including Ao leong U, secretary for Social Affairs and Culture of the Macao SAR; Yan Zhichan, deputy director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR; representatives of the Guangdong medical team; Chai Hongliang, deputy director of the Zhuhai Health Education Office; Song Li Hong, director of the general office of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR; Wan Su Cheng, director general of the Department of Publicity and Culture of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR; Alvis Lo Iek Long, director of the Health Bureau of the Macao SAR; and Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

Dr. Wong said: "In response to a potential outbreak, the Macao SAR government acted swiftly and decisively to launch a series of emergency measures, which has won public support from all sectors of society. Our deepest gratitude goes to all Macao healthcare workers for their selfless dedication, and to mainland authorities for sending more than 300 medical professionals to Macao for support – together helping the city successfully complete its mass testing programme in three days. Sands China was honoured to have the opportunity to host the Guangdong medical team during their stay and to play our part in assisting in the fight against COVID-19 and safeguarding our community."



State firms invest in TikTok sibling, Weibo chat app

THE Chinese government has made investments in two of the nation's most significant technology firms — ByteDance, the Chinese company that owns global video app TikTok, and Weibo, China's version of Twitter — in a move apparently intended to bolster its sway over the nation's flourishing technology sector.

In April, ByteDance sold a 1% stake in its Chinese subsidiary, Beijing ByteDance Technology Co., to WangTouZhongWen (Beijing) Technology, a state-backed firm, according to public government records and the corporate information platform Qichacha.

WangTouZhongWen is owned by three Chinese state entities, one of which is linked to a fund backed by the Cyberspace Administration of China, the nation's internet watchdog, according to government records and Qichacha data.

The Information, a U.S. tech site, earlier reported that ByteDance had also given a board seat to a Chinese government official as part of the deal.

A ByteDance spokesperson declined to answer questions about the investment and board seat. But the company said that its Chinese subsidiary doesn't own TikTok, which operates outside of China. Instead, the subsidiary "relates to some of ByteDance's China-market video and information platforms, and holds some of the licenses they require to operate under local law."

The Chinese version of TikTok is called Douyin. ByteDance also owns the Chinese news app Toutiao.

Beijing has recently been clamping down on its technology sector. It has launched investigations into some of the country's largest internet companies and introduced

new draft rules to strengthen data security and to prohibit companies from engaging in anti-competitive behavior after years of runaway growth in the industry.

In China, massive technology firms such as Alibaba and Tencent provide services such as e-commerce, payments, gaming and social media that are ubiquitous and used by hundreds of millions of Chinese people.

News of the Chinese investment renewed some national-security concerns around TikTok in the U.S., where the video app has millions of users and is particularly popular with young people.

Last year, then-President Donald Trump sought to bar TikTok and other Chinese apps and services from the U.S. President Joe Biden earlier this year dropped Trump's attempt to ban TikTok, but the Biden administration has said it is reviewing the national security risks of Chinese apps.

Officials are concerned about apps that collect users' personal data or have connections to Chinese military or intelligence — worries that may mirror those of Chinese officials across the Pacific.

A national-security review of TikTok by a government group called the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, or CFIUS, is ongoing. CFIUS had set deadlines for TikTok to divest its U.S. operations, but such a sale never happened.

On Tuesday, Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida called on the White House to block TikTok, citing news of the Beijing stake and the board seat.

China's foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said Wednesday that Rubio's comments "disregarded the facts and unremittently made anti-China remarks" to pursue his own political interests. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO





Taliban fighters patrol in Kabul

AFGHANISTAN

People protest Taliban in emerging challenge to their rule

AHMAD SEIR, KABUL

AFGHAN protesters defied the Taliban for a second day yesterday, waving their national flag in scattered demonstrations that were met with renewed violence by the militants who are facing growing challenges to their rule.

A U.N. official warned of dire food shortages in this nation of 38 million people reliant on imports and experts said the country was severely short on cash, highlighting that the Taliban face the same problems as the civilian government they dethroned without the level of international aid it enjoyed.

In light of these challenges, the militants have moved quickly to suppress any dissent, despite their promises that they have become more moderate since they last imposed draconian rule on Afghanistan. Many

fear the Taliban will succeed in erasing two decades of efforts to expand women's and human rights and remake the country.

Yesterday, a procession of cars and people near Kabul's airport carried long black, red and green banners in honor of the Afghan flag—a banner that is becoming a symbol of defiance since the militants have their own flag. At another protest in Nangarhar province, video posted online showed one demonstrator with a gunshot wound bleeding, as onlookers tried to carry him away.

In Khost province, Taliban authorities instituted a 24-hour curfew yesterday after violently breaking up another protest, according to information obtained by journalists monitoring from abroad. The militants did not immediately acknowledge the demonstration or the curfew.

Protesters also took the streets in Kunar province, ac-

ording to witnesses and social media videos that lined up with reporting by The Associated Press.

The demonstrations — which come as Afghans mark the Independence Day holiday that commemorates the 1919 treaty that ended British rule — were a remarkable show of defiance after the insurgents violently dispersed a protest Wednesday. At that rally, in the eastern city of Jalalabad, demonstrators lowered the Taliban's flag and replace it with Afghanistan's tricolor. At least one person was killed.

Meanwhile, opposition figures gathering in the last area of the country not under Taliban rule talked of launching an armed resistance under the banner of the Northern Alliance, which allied with the U.S. during the 2001 invasion.

It was not clear how serious a threat they posed given that the militants overran nearly the entire country in a matter of days with little resistance from Afghan forces.

The Taliban so far have offered no specifics on how they will lead, other than to say they will be guided by Shariah, or Islamic, law. They are in talks with senior officials of previous Afghan governments. But they face an increasingly precarious situation.

"A humanitarian crisis of incredible proportions is unfolding before our eyes," warned Mary Ellen McGroarty, the head of the U.N.'s World Food Program in Afghanistan. Beyond the difficulties of importing food, she said that drought has seen over 40% of the country's crop

lost. Many who fled the Taliban advance now live in parks and open spaces in Kabul.

"This is really Afghanistan's hour of greatest need, and we urge the international community to stand by the Afghan people at this time," she said.

Hafiz Ahmad, a shopkeeper in Kabul, said some food has flowed into the capital, but prices have gone up. He hesitated to pass those costs onto his customers but said he had to.

"It is better to have it," he said. "If there were nothing, then that would be even worse."

Two of Afghanistan's key border crossings with Pakistan, Torkham near Jalalabad and Chaman near Spin Boldak, are now open for trade. Hundreds of trucks have passed through, Pakistani Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said. However, traders still fear insecurity on the roads and confusion over customs duties that could push them to price their goods higher.

Amid that uncertainty and concerns that the Taliban will reimpose their brutal rule, which included largely confining women to their homes and holding public executions, many Afghans are trying to flee the country.

At Kabul's international airport, military evacuation flights continued, according to flight-tracking data. However, access to the airport remained difficult. Taliban militants fired into the air to try to control the crowds gathered at the airport's blast walls. Men, women and children fled. Fighter jets later roared overhead, but no airstrike accompanied their pass.

Overnight, President Joe Biden said that he was committed to keeping U.S. troops in Afghanistan until every American is evacuated, even if that means maintaining a military presence there beyond his Aug. 31 deadline for withdrawal.

Indirectly acknowledging the resistance they face, the Taliban asked preachers to urge congregants to remain in the country and counter "negative propaganda" against them.

The Taliban have also urged people to return to work, but most government officials remain in hiding or are themselves attempting to flee. Questions remain over Afghanistan's \$9 billion in foreign reserves, the vast majority now apparently frozen in the U.S. The International Monetary Fund, meanwhile, said the militants for now would not be allowed to access loans or other resources.

The head of the country's Central Bank warned that the supply of physical U.S. dollars is "close to zero," which will batter the currency, the afghani, and raise the prices of much-needed food. **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1992 IRAQ JAILS 'LOST' BRITON



Iraq has sentenced a British man to seven years in jail for what it called "illegal entry" into the country.

Paul Ride, a catering manager from east London, was working in Kuwait before he disappeared two months ago.

Last week the Red Cross tracked Mr Ride, 33, to a jail cell in Baghdad.

Diplomats believe he may have got lost in the desert and accidentally driven across the Iraqi border.

The Foreign Office has protested to Iraq about the severity of the sentence and demanded Mr Ride's release.

Efforts to gain his freedom have been hampered by the fact that Britain no longer has an embassy in Baghdad.

The Briton's case is being handled by the Russians who still have diplomatic representation in Iraq.

They were successful last year in gaining the release of a British businessman, Ian Richter, who had served five and a half years in an Iraqi jail.

Another Briton, Daphne Parrish, was also released in 1991.

But her companion, Iranian-born journalist Farzad Bazoft, was executed in 1990 after being convicted of spying.

Two days ago Mr Ride's wife, Julie, appealed to the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, to free her husband.

A spokesman from Mr Ride's employer in Kuwait, John Gibbs, said everybody at the company was "very shocked" by what had happened to Mr Ride.

Courtesy BBC News

CALLS FOR BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY RAAB TO RESIGN

BRITAIN'S foreign secretary is rejecting calls to resign for not interrupting his holiday on the Greek island of Crete to make a call to help translators flee Afghanistan. According to the Daily Mail newspaper, Dominic Raab did not call his Afghan counterpart Hanif Atmar on Friday after officials suggested he "urgently" do so in order to arrange help for those who supported British troops. Two days later, the Taliban captured Kabul and Raab cut short his holiday and headed back to

the U.K. to deal with the crisis. Defense Secretary Ben Wallace told BBC radio that the suggested phone call would not have made "any difference whatsoever" given the Afghan government was "melting away quicker than ice." Keir Starmer, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, said on Twitter: "Who wouldn't make a phone call if they were told it could save somebody's life?" On entering 10 Downing Street, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office, Raab was asked if he would resign. In response, he said "no."

IN CONTEXT

Soon after Mr Ride was sentenced, another Briton, Michael Wainwright, was jailed for 10 years after cycling across the Iraqi border. The following June, Simon Dunn a Briton resident in Kuwait was jailed for eight years for illegal entry into Iraq. There were suspicions the British men were being held as "human shields" to deter attack from Britain and the US - a tactic employed unsuccessfully by Iraq before the Gulf War. Michael Wainwright and Paul Ride shared a jail cell for much of their imprisonment. All three Britons were released in December 1993.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Instructions belong in a board game, not in your romantic relationship. It's important to do things your own way, and yes, that may include making your own mistakes.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

You might be put on the spot today. Try to think first before you say something. It would be out of character for you to blurt out something, but it could be risky.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You definitely shouldn't set aside your happiness because you're afraid it might make them feel bad, though. They wouldn't want you to do it. Besides, it's a bad habit to get into.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Choose a type of communication that's out of the ordinary today. Not only will it get you noticed more quickly, but it will also help your message get across a lot more clearly.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Teamwork will play an important role in your success. Sure, it might not be the fastest way to get things done, but there's no denying that it will be the most pleasurable.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

There is plenty of room for a fair compromise between what you want and what someone else wants right now, so don't be too stubborn about getting your way.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

If you're in the middle of any business dealings, be extra careful today. You shouldn't have to worry about anyone's honesty or integrity, but you should be very mindful of details.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

It's also a prime day for people watching, so go outside and watch the world go by for a while. You could be immensely entertained by the normal behavior of normal people.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

If you're feeling overwhelmed now, you need to let some things go. These things could be hopes, work projects, relationships, or even goals. The fact is that you are only one person.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Getting more closely connected with the people you really value is easier than ever. Right now, everyone's schedules fit together, and everyone is on the same page.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

It's time to bring out your secret weapon: your amazing conversational skills. If someone has you feeling flummoxed, why not talk to them about it? They aren't going to react any way but positively.

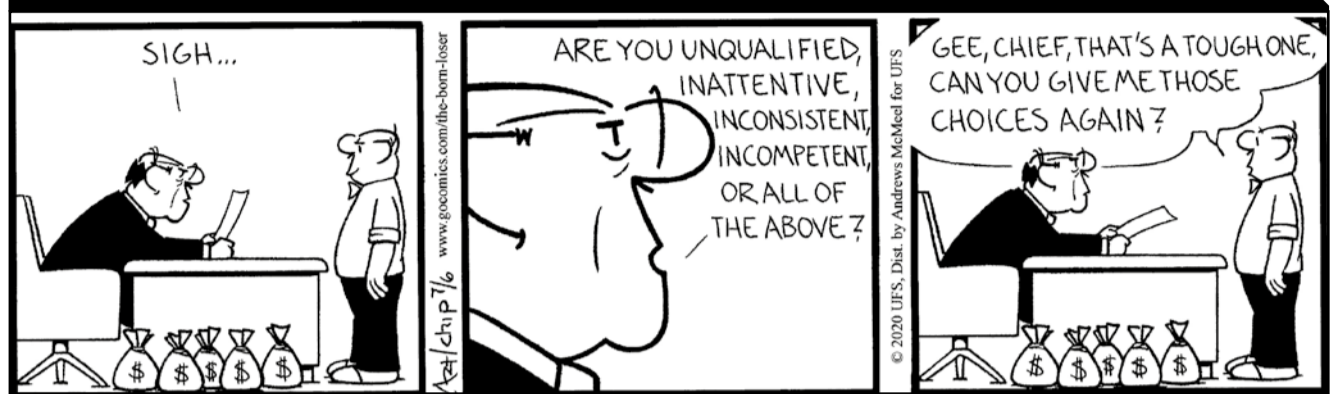


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

They'll just be a bunch of headaches. Let things unfold on their natural timetable. It might be torture to do so, but you can get through it. Distract yourself with something fun. That always helps!

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

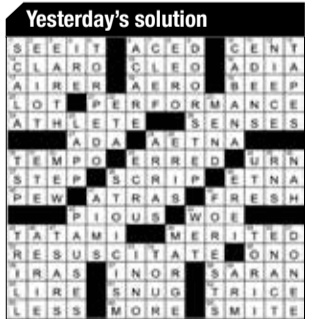
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	22	29	cloudy
Harbin	18	25	thunderstorms
Tianjin	25	32	rain
Urumqi	22	25	showers
Xi'an	26	35	cloudy
Lhasa	21	27	thunderstorms
Chengdu	26	33	rain
Chongqing	26	34	cloudy
Kunming	25	33	cloudy
Nanjing	20	27	cloudy
Shanghai	24	34	cloudy
Wuhan	24	30	overcast
Hangzhou	17	27	cloudy
Taipei	22	31	cloudy
Guangzhou	17	30	cloudy
Hong Kong	22	31	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	19	28	overcast
Frankfurt	11	22	rain
Paris	13	22	overcast
London	12	19	cloudy
New York	22	27	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- E.g., e.g.; 5- Contented sighs; 9- Broad; 13- Flip out; 15- Faint, with "over"; 16- Put a lid ___; 17- Antagonist; 18- "The Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer; 19- Not fern; 20- Decoration at the top of a chair leg; 21- Tickle doll; 23- Long narrow excavation; 25- Hunk; 26- Observes Yom Kippur; 27- Underwater missile; 30- Curved bone; 31- Red as ___; 32- German physicist; 37- Horse of mixed color; 38- Put a new price on; 40- Longfellow's bell town; 41- Belongs; 43- Soup utensil; 44- Words of commitment; 45- Roof item; 47- Woolen braid; 50- Inlets; 51- Zealot; 52- German Helmut; 53- Singer Torne; 56- Molecular component; 57- Manipulator; 59- Wear down, physically or emotionally; 61- Network point; 62- Actress Olin; 63- Twilled fabric; 64- Employs; 65- Earth Day subj.; 66- Change direction;

DOWN: 1- Author James; 2- ___ fide; 3- Boxer Max; 4- LP speed; 5- With hands on hips and elbows bent outward; 6- Saab model; 7- Fashion line; 8- Boards that support a mattress; 9- What girls will be; 10- Mindlessly stupid; 11- Flat circular plates; 12- Draw with acid; 14- Place for a lace; 22- Boy; 24- Holds up; 25- Used up; 26- Melody; 27- Diamond cover; 28- It's blown among the reeds; 29- The back end of something; 32- Aliens, for short; 33- Ribbons; 34- Harrow rival; 35- Wrinkle remover; 36- Simone of jazz; 38- Make fun of; 39- Seth's son; 42- Verdi opera; 43- Fashions; 45- Away from the mouth; 46- Nope; 47- The Younger and The Elder; 48- Cathode's contrary; 49- Small change; 51- Hindu lawgiver; 52- Vegas game; 53- Additional; 54- Upper hand; 55- Lecherous look; 58- Brief instant; 60- Increase, with "up";



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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HKD 8,380,000
1,404 ft² 4 2 1

Rain Dance Property
"We dance until it's SOLD!"
Traditional apartment
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HKD 2,680,000
788 ft² 2 1 1

AD

BOOK IT

'BABY GIRL' ABOUT AALIYAH IS A SINGER'S TRAGIC TALE

MAE ANDERSON, MDT/AP

R&B singer Aaliyah is best known for two events that bookended her career: becoming involved with infamous singer R. Kelly as a teen, and the tragic plane crash that ended her life at age 22, just days before 9/11.

"Baby Girl: Better Known as Aaliyah," by veteran music journalist Kathy Iandoli, aims to fill in the story between those two events, for Aaliyah fans new and old. The book traces Aaliyah's musical development and collaboration with many different R&B producers and artists, her burgeoning film career, and indelible imprint on fashion. But 20 years after her death, a sense of Aaliyah's personality still remains elusive.

With a silky smooth voice, Aaliyah Haughton was signed for a record deal with her uncle in Detroit when she was just 12. Two years later, she teamed with R. Kelly to make her first record "Age Ain't Nothing But a Number." She became involved with R. Kelly

and the two were secretly married when Aaliyah was just 15. Her parents discovered this and quickly annulled the marriage.

But the scandal tarnished Aaliyah's reputation more than R. Kelly, who is currently on trial for sex trafficking charges stemming more than two decades. She was portrayed as a teen seductress rather than one of the first of R. Kelly's many victims.

The scandal led to Aaliyah becoming extremely private in ensuing years, but she kept recording hit records. She teamed with then-unknowns Timbaland and Missy Elliot for her second record "One in a Million," which has sold 8 million copies worldwide.

Meanwhile, she was making her mark in the fashion and movie industries. Her signature style of a crop top or bandeau top paired with baggy jeans, with long hair partially covering her left eye, is emblematic of her "sweet but street" style and still emulated today. She had roles in the movies "Romeo Must Die" and "Queen of the Damned" and was set to act

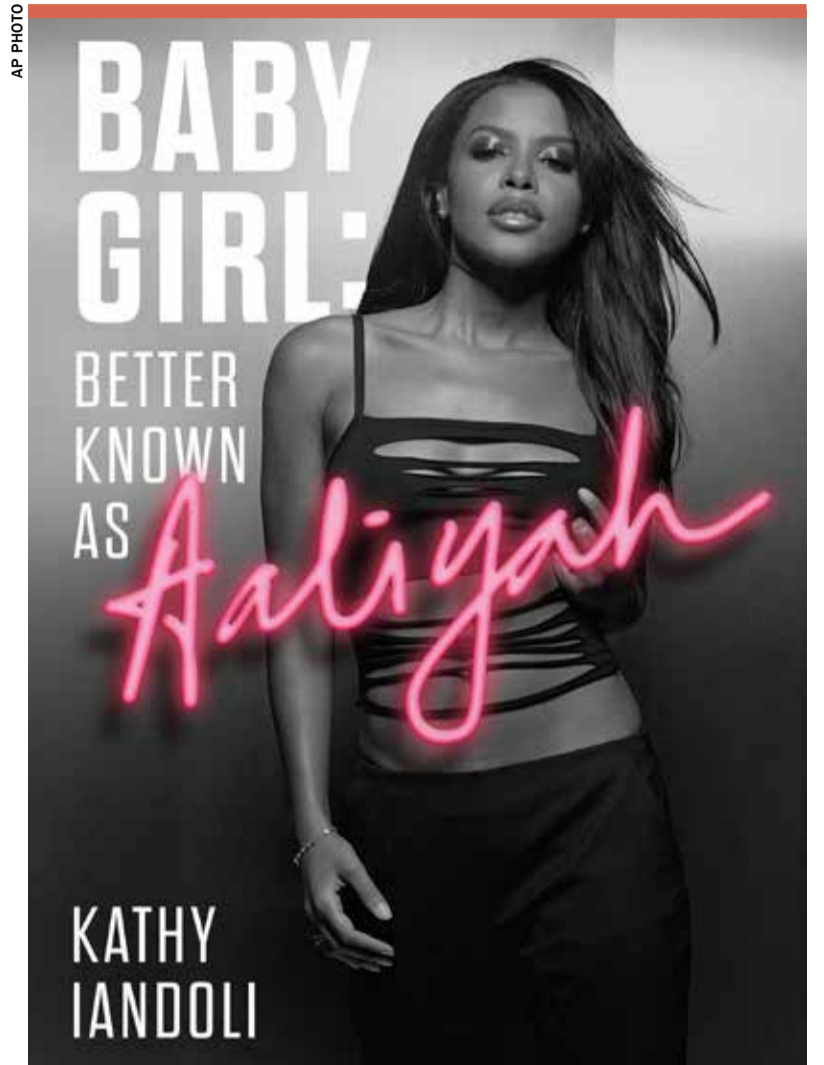
in the "Matrix" sequels before she died.

Aaliyah's "Try Again" beat out Britney Spears' "'Oops!... I Did It Again" video and Christina Aguilera's "What a Girl Wants" to win best female video at the MTV video awards in 2000, another sign she was poised for super stardom.

But that was not to be. On August 25, 2001, Aaliyah died in a plane crash in the Bahamas, where she was shooting a music video for her third and final self-titled album, "Aaliyah." The plane was found to be badly overloaded.

For years, Aaliyah's music has been unavailable on streaming platforms, with the exception of her first album, "Age Ain't Nothing But a Number."

But following a fan campaign on social media with the hashtag #FreeAaliyahMusic, Blackground Records said it plans to release the albums to streaming services on Aug. 20, in time for the 20th anniversary of Aaliyah's death. The move is not without controversy. Aaliyah's family estate does not support the release.



"Baby Girl: Better Known as Aaliyah," by Kathy Iandoli (Atria Books)

But it will give a new generation of fans an easier way to hear more of Aaliyah's body of work. And "Baby Girl: Better Known as

Aaliyah" should serve as a useful companion to those discovering Aaliyah's music for the first time via these platforms.

AD

合夥人 PARTNERS:
官樂怡 Rui José da Cunha^o
山度士 Álvaro Rodrigues^o
馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata^o
趙魯 Zhao Lu^o
馬傑安 João Nogueira Marques

大律師 ASSOCIATES:
高文軒 Adelino Correia^o
羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues^{*}
白秀蘭 Susana Batalha
馬潔冰 Maria João Marques
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

LIFESTYLE SILKY SUMMER SKIN

THIS summer, Aesop is launching a skin-supportive daily-use serum for city dwellers. Central to the anti-oxidant-rich Parsley Seed Skin Care range, Parsley Seed Anti-Oxidant Intense Serum is formulated to hydrate while providing an effective environmental barrier. Suited to normal, combination and sensitive skin, the lightweight daily hydrator is ideal for those living in urban environments, and warm or humid climates.

Parsley Seed Anti-Oxidant Intense Serum is distinguished by the breathable film it forms on the skin thanks to extracts of Red Algae and Tara Gum, leaving an imperceptible yet effective barrier. This formulation delivers impressive anti-oxidant benefits, supported by nourishing Vitamin E. Lightweight and rapidly absorbed, Parsley Seed Anti-Oxidant Intense

Serum leaves the skin feeling hydrated, with a pleasingly matte finish, making it an astute choice for those seeking an alternative to cream or oil-based moisturisers.

"We've always advocated for skin care that considers the whole picture," says Suzanne Santos, Aesop's Chief Customer Officer. "High-quality ingredients are vital, of course, and we take a rigorous approach to our research and development process, but there's also a human dimension to new products: a consideration of how they fit within our customers' day-to-day lives. Parsley Seed Anti-Oxidant Intense Serum has been formulated to benefit those in urban areas, where skin is subject to all manner of strains. And, importantly, a little goes a long way. The serum's light texture is quite deceptive, and it delivers potent nourishment to the skin."



TASTE OF EDISIA

A buffet unlike any other

IRENE SAM, MDT

The Grand Buffet, once Macau's most popular buffet restaurant with the longest buffet line at Grand Lisboa, is now back at the Grand Lis-

boa Palace. Featuring a reinterpreted Asian marketplace concept, its lively atmosphere is most suitable for big family gatherings and ultra casual dining. With 18 live-cooking stations serving an extensive array of in-

ternational delicacies embracing Chinese, Pan-Asian and Western cuisines, the buffet presents classics like Portuguese caldo verde, Taiwanese seafood noodles, laksa soup, fresh clams, mussels, large variety

of fruits and juices, as well as salads and cheese. Out of all, the dessert section is most impressive, offering mini egg tarts, yogurt ice-cream, cookies, and even ginger milk curd prepared à la minute.

Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu, MDT



THE PENGLAI PAVILION 1350 METRES SAND 2021-08-20 | Fri | 20:15

MILITARY STRONGMAN was so unlucky in his last sand start, he raced all the way without cover and at the concluding stages his jockey asked for his response and he responded well; and the race before **Military Strongman** was slowly away and leaving the 250 metres he was taken away by Winnie Star. But looked closely in these two races he still got plenty left in his tank to fight back. **Military Strongman** gives me the impression that he is really keen to win a race, his trainer again booked his usual jockey L. Corrales this evening, this time he draw barrier four which is perfect for L. Corrales to get near to the pace and ready to get a good firing position to cross the line, I can see his connection is quite keen to get him a win before the season close. I am confident that **Military Strongman** can win today.

Race 3 Horse no. 4 **MILITARY STRONGMAN** Win & Place bets



OPINION

World Views

Maria Cheng, Medical Writer, MDT/AP

VIRAL QUESTIONS ON COVID

What is being done to distribute COVID-19 vaccines globally?

Several groups are working to get shots to poor countries, but they're falling far short of what's needed to curb outbreaks around the world.

Among the efforts is COVAX, which relies on donations from rich countries and private funders. The group has missed its own distribution targets largely because it didn't have the resources to secure vaccine supplies early on in the pandemic.

As of mid-August, COVAX has distributed about 207 million doses to 138 countries and territories. That's compared with more than 417 million doses distributed in just the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

COVAX was created last year to try and ensure vaccines are distributed fairly and is led by public health agencies including the World Health Organization. Without enough purchased vaccines, COVAX is now relying on donated shots from wealthy countries, but most of the pledged doses won't be delivered this year.

Logistics are another problem. To get vaccines from COVAX, countries have to show how they'll distribute the shots and prioritize high-risk people like health workers and the elderly. But some countries that are in desperate need of vaccines haven't been able to show they can carry out such plans and lack the funds to carry out immunization campaigns.

Other groups have been stepping in to help. In July, the African Union said it bought 400 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson shot for 45 African countries. China, Russia and the U.S. have donated millions of vaccines to countries. And in June, the leading industrial nations known as the Group of Seven said they would donate 1 billion doses to poor countries. The G-7 countries are Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

Still, that's far short of the 11 billion doses WHO says are needed to stop the pandemic.

To protect people at high risk for severe illness in poor countries, WHO has urged rich countries to immediately donate more doses and to stop plans for immunizing children and giving booster doses.

"We are making conscious choices right now not to protect those in need," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

What should I know about the delta variant?

It's the most contagious coronavirus mutant so far in the pandemic, but COVID-19 vaccines still provide strong protection against it. Nearly all hospitalizations and deaths are among the unvaccinated.

Still, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cited the delta's surge for its updated advice that fully vaccinated people return to wearing masks indoors in areas with high transmission. The change is based on recent research suggesting that vaccinated people who get infected with the delta variant can spread it to others, even if the vaccinated don't get seriously ill.

The new guidance helps protect the unvaccinated, including children who aren't yet eligible for the shots, and others who are at high-risk for serious illness if infected.

Some breakthrough cases with mild or no symptoms were always expected, since the vaccines were designed to prevent serious illness. The CDC no longer publicly counts those milder breakthrough cases, but a Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of data from states that keep a tally found they make up a tiny share of all COVID-19 infections.

A Canadian judge reserved her decision on whether a senior executive for Chinese communications giant Huawei Technologies should be extradited to the U.S. after a Canadian Justice Department lawyer wrapped up his case by saying there's enough evidence to show she was dishonest and deserves to stand trial in the U.S.

Associate Chief Justice Heather Holmes said that on Oct. 21 she will likely announce when she will rule on whether Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer for Huawei's Technologies and daughter of its founder, will be extradited.

Meng was arrested at Vancouver's airport in late 2018 at the request of U.S. authorities. Her arrest infuriated Beijing, which sees her case as a political move designed to prevent China's rise.

The U.S. wants Meng extradited to face fraud charges, alleging she committed fraud by misleading the HSBC bank about the company's business dealings in Iran. It accuses Huawei of using a Hong Kong shell company called Skycom to sell equipment to Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions.

Defense lawyers have argued there isn't enough evidence to justify her extradition.

AP PHOTO



Nicole Kidman is shooting 'Expats' new series in Hong Kong

HONG KONG GRANTS QUARANTINE EXEMPTION TO NICOLE KIDMAN

HONG KONG'S government said yesterday that it has granted a quarantine exemption to an individual to perform "designated professional work" following reports that Hollywood actress Nicole Kidman did not have to spend time in quarantine when she arrived in the city to film a TV series.

"The case in discussion has been granted permission to travel to Hong Kong with a quarantine exemption for the purpose of performing designated professional work, taking into account that it is conducive to maintaining the necessary operation and development of Hong Kong's economy,"

the government said in a statement, without identifying Kidman by name.

It said people granted such exemptions must comply with disease prevention measures to minimize transmission risks and contact with the public.

Kidman, who reportedly flew into Hong Kong from virus-hit Sydney, Australia, was spotted out and about in the city this week. She is here to film a new Amazon Prime Video series called Expats.

Her quarantine exemption comes as Hong Kong tightened entry restrictions, requiring those arriving from high-risk countries such as the U.S. to spend 21

days in quarantine and fully vaccinated travelers from medium-risk countries to spend 14 days starting today.

The city previously allowed travelers from medium-risk countries to stay just seven days in quarantine at designated hotels if they are fully vaccinated and had a positive antibodies test.

Nicole Kidman visited Macau in October 2013 when she was awarded the Global Best Actress in Motion Pictures title during the 10th edition of the Huading Awards, the so-called Chinese Oscars, in a ceremony held at the Venetian. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Russia When the Taliban swept over Afghanistan, Russia was ready for the rapid developments after working methodically for years to lay the groundwork for relations with the group that it still officially considers a terrorist organization. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov emphasized that Moscow was "in no rush" to recognize the Taliban as the new rulers, but he added there were "encouraging signals" of their readiness to let other political forces join the government and allow girls into schools.

European Union's foreign policy chief yesterday called the fall of Afghanistan's capital and the resurgence of the Taliban "a catastrophe" and "nightmare" that laid bare a failure of intelligence and trans-Atlantic cooperation. EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell further criticized U.S. President Joe Biden for underplaying the commitment to nation-building in Afghanistan. **More on p8**

AP PHOTO



USA President Joe Biden announced that his administration will require that nursing home staff be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition for those facilities to continue receiving federal Medicare and Medicaid funding. Biden unveiled the new policy yesterday [Macau time] in a White House address as the administration continues to look for ways to use mandates to encourage vaccine holdouts to get shots.

AP PHOTO



Haiti Tensions have been growing over the slow pace of aid reaching victims of a powerful weekend earthquake that killed more than 2,100 people and was trailed by a drenching tropical depression. At the airport in the southwestern community of Les Cayes, throngs of people gathered outside the fence yesterday when an aid flight arrived and crews began loading boxes into waiting trucks. Angry crowds also massed at collapsed buildings in the city.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Dmitrijs Sujzics



Masks off. Protesters, one of them holds a poster reading 'Life without masks' march during a protest against mandatory vaccinations, in Riga, Latvia, yesterday [Macau time].