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Japan started sending military aircraft to Afghanistan yesterday to evacuate Japanese citizens and local staff as security deteriorates following the Taliban takeover, officials said. Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi said the planes will pick up Japanese nationals and Afghans who worked for the Japanese Embassy and development agencies. “The local situation is rapidly becoming fluid [...] and we are doing everything we can to get them out of the country,” Kishi said.



Egypt closed its main border crossing point with the Gaza Strip yesterday amid tensions with the territory’s militant Hamas rulers, officials said. It was the first time the Rafah crossing was shuttered during a workday since early this year. Egyptian authorities had kept it open during the 11-day war between Israel and Hamas in May.



Hungary The head of the World Health Organization yesterday called for a two-month moratorium on administering booster shots of Covid-19 vaccines as a means of reducing global vaccine inequality and preventing the emergence of new coronavirus variants. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters in Hungary’s capital, Budapest, that he was “really disappointed” with the scope of vaccine donations worldwide as many countries struggle to provide first and second doses to more than small fractions of their populations.

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KEEP IT CLOSED

MACAU REMAINS ADAMANT ON BORDER CLOSURES TO VACCINATED DOMESTIC WORKERS, ALL FOREIGNERS

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SCHOOLS TO NORMALLY RESTART, UNIVERSITIES CAN ENFORCE IN-PERSON CLASSES FROM SEPT. 6

RENATO MARQUES

LOCAL schools will be able to start the new academic year without any significant disruption, Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) deputy director, Kong Chi Meng, announced yesterday during the health authorities' press briefing on the Covid-19 situation in Macau.

Kong noted that there have been no significant changes on the infections in the city across the last few days. Given this stability, it was decided that from September 1, the start of the new school year with added restrictions will take place for all non-tertiary institutions.

He added that face-to-face classes of higher education institutions can resume as early as September 6.

"After an extensive evaluation, we decided to normally restart the new school year. This is a very important matter that influences a lot of the population and we want to ensure a smooth start of the school year," Kong said.

To ensure this, the DSEDJ will request all members of the schools' communities, including students, parents, teachers, and school staff members who have

RENATO MARQUES



been in places other than Macau, Zhuhai, or Zhongshan, to perform a mandatory nucleic acid test (NAT) at some point in the five days before class resumption.

The NAT will be available through a specific platform and will be conducted in six available testing venues between August 27 and 31 for all members of non-tertiary education. The same tests will be held for universities between September 1 and 5.

"A specific platform has been

established for the appointment booking of the schools' community members," Kong added, noting also that, similar to what took place during the mass testing of the whole population, the results of these tests will not be uploaded into the health code system, or be used to cross the border.

When asked about the number of people that have failed to return to Macau at least 14 days before the school year kickoff, Kong explained that in such cases, these

people will need to be absent from the schools until they complete the 14 days mandatory quarantine.

"There are few people that we know who did not return on time. We don't know exactly at the moment how many," the DSEDJ deputy director said, adding, "If they miss [for example] two days to complete the 14 days, this means that they can only return to school after those missing days are complete."

This means they will need to be absent from classes or work, Kong explained, noting that schools have been instructed to handle those cases carefully and try to understand the reasons behind the delay in returning.

Addressing the health authorities' previous announcement of the intention to enforce vaccination in schools, the coordinator of the bureau's Covid-19 Vaccination Operation, Dr. Tai Wa Hou, said that currently, authorities are gathering information on the number of people interested in an outreach program. He added, "we will start with the schools that have more people interested. For those who will have fewer [members interested], we might find a different solution through a centralized plan to aggregate them to other school institutions."

On the same topic, Kong noted that the current plan is for the DSEDJ to collect data and host seminars in schools across the first two weeks of the new year to promote the vaccination program.

For schools with fewer people interested in receiving a vaccination, the DSEDJ will potentially offer them free transportation so that they can get the vaccine at a different location.

NAT validity back to seven days for Guangdong

RENATO MARQUES

THE validity of the nucleic acid tests (NAT) undertaken to be eligible to cross the border have been restored to seven days for all locations within the Guangdong province, the representative from the Public Security Police Force (PSP) announced yesterday at the press briefing from local health authorities on the Covid-19 situation in Macau.

According to the PSP spokesperson, this measure was communicated by the Guangdong authorities and revokes the previously enforced validity period of 48 hours.

The new measure will be enforced from mid-

XINHUA



night of August 25 and will apply to all people crossing the border between Macau and Guangdong province, including cross-border drivers, the PSP said.

The same official also noted that in the week between August 16 and 22

there was a significant increase in cross-border movement compared with the previous week of August 9 to 15.

According to the figures shown and collected by the PSP, the total number of border movement has

increased by 57.64% week-to-week, while the number of visitors entering and exiting Macau has risen even further by 65.27%.

This means that on average, and for the past week, there was a daily movement of about 32,400 people on tourism visas. Still, such a figure is only a fraction of the total border crossing figures that reached an average of over 272,000 border crossings per day.

Questioned if the easing of restrictions regarding the NAT validity could affect the safety of locals, as happened on August 3 when a family of four was confirmed infected with the Delta variant of Covid-19 after their daughter returned

from a school trip in the mainland, the Coordinator of the New Coronavirus Contingency Coordination Center, Dr. Leong Iek Hou explained that prevention

and control measures are being decided according to the real-time situation and must be balanced. The factors to consider in this balance include the prevention of the disease and the movement of people and the economic activities on both sides of the border.

VACCINATIONS AMONG YOUNGER AND OLDER GROUPS ARE RISING

DR. Tai Wa Hou informed yesterday that the vaccination rate for the two groups that the health authorities have said they are targeting because their vaccination rates were very low in comparison with the other age groups, is finally rising. Tai said that in the week from August 12 to 19, the

vaccination rate of senior citizens raised from the 20% to 27%, the younger group aged between 12 and 19 recorded an exponential hike from around 20% to 43.3%. Tai also noted that the government efforts in directing specific campaigns to these groups are delivering successful results.

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Gov't has no plans to mimic Hong Kong's reopening for vaccinated domestic workers

LYNZY VALLES

DESPITE the Hong Kong government approving foreign domestic helpers to enter the city from as early as September, Macau has no similar plans.

Considering countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia as high-risk countries, authorities, for the meantime, stated that they will not follow Hong Kong's current plan.

From next Monday, the Hong Kong government will begin approving the entry of fully vaccinated Filipino domestic helpers.

These applicants must provide a proof of vaccination containing the worker's name, age, ID number and the specific vaccine received.

According to the Hong Kong Union of Employment Agencies, the Philippine authorities are expecting some 3,000 Filipinos to benefit from the special opening of Hong Kong borders for the specific group.

Yesterday, Macau authorities reaffirmed their hesitation about easing border measures, reasserting the Chief Executive's order of banning foreign nationals from entering the SAR.

In the regular Covid-19 press briefing, coordinator of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre Dr. Leong Iek Hou said, "In what concerns the domestic workers [from Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam as well as other South Asian countries] their pandemic situation is severe. So, for the time being, we do not see any possibility of [allowing] the import of workers from those countries."

A number of local families are finding it a challenge to hire domestic helpers since the closure of borders on March 25 last year, which made it more difficult for them to hire employees following the new labor law imposed in October 2020.

The new law bars foreigners on tourist visas from being employed if they have not entered the SAR with a work permit.

This issue was highlighted by the 2021 Legislative Assembly election candidate Agnes Lam who called on the government to ease measures against domestic workers as it is affecting local families.

Hiring helpers from mainland China is not an option for many families as the cost is significantly higher, ranging from MOP6,000 to MOP8,000 per month.

Also, there are many families who prefer English-speaking hel-

AP PHOTO



pers, for their children.

Official data shows that at end June this year, there are about 27,558 people involved in domestic work in the city.

CONTINGENCIES UNDER THE NEW NORMAL CAN BE MADE

President of the Macau Overseas Worker Employment Agency Association, Ao Ieong Kuong Kao, implied that the reopening of borders to eligible workers may be due to the fact that the ratio of families needing household help from Hong Kong is larger compared to Macau.

Currently, there are nearly 400,000 helpers from Indonesia and the Philippines in Hong Kong.

He, however, recommended Macau to make relevant contingencies.

"I think Macau should observe the practice in Hong Kong and make contingencies with [respective] consulates. I agree that it can help solve the lack of domestic helpers in Macau," Ao Ieong told the Times.

"Employers can also hire from other countries [but] contingencies should be made under the new normal," he added.

However, up to now, only en-

trants from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan are allowed in the city, meaning that the only option for now are employees from the mainland.

Ao Ieong also noted that local employers are worried about the possible relapse of infections, even with quarantine measures and vaccination.

"I recommend observation and contingencies," he stressed.

In Hong Kong, the government believes that under its existing quarantine measures, the health risk is minimal if the helpers have been inoculated with two doses of Covid-19 vaccine and that multiple nucleic acid tests (NAT) are conducted upon arrival and across the quarantine period.

The workers must present a negative Covid test result within 72 hours of their flight departure, as well as premade arrangements for 21 days of hotel quarantine.

The Hong Kong Labour Department has announced that foreign domestic workers will be "centrally quarantined" in specified hotels.

MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR SCHEME

Migrant associations are pleased with Hong Kong's relaxation

of borders for domestic helpers, and have expressed hopes that Macau could also follow.

President of the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (IMWU), Yosa Wariyanti, said that such a move is the "hope of many prospective migrant workers, as well as the hopes of Macau families who need their domestic workers."

"It will be good if the Macau government can provide concessions for prospective workers. It needs to be considered in addition to the needs of workers in the household sector, which are

currently in great demand," she told the Times.

Echoing the sentiment, Jassy Santos, chairperson of the Progressive Labor Union of Domestic Workers, said that a number of local families are having a difficult time searching for employees.

This can also be seen across a handful of groups who post job vacancies for full time domestic helpers on social media.

"It's going to be a very good news for [stranded] workers in the Philippines when Macau reopens its borders," said Santos.

DATA SHOWS INCREASING NUMBERS OF MAINLAND HELPERS

FIGURES from the Labour Affairs Bureau shows that domestic workers from the Philippines still account for the majority of the sector, totaling 15,373 as at end June. This was followed by 5,783 from Vietnam, 3,849 from Indonesia and 1,043 from Myanmar. Such figures represent a drop compared to January this year, which recorded 16,255 from the Philippines,

6,259 from Vietnam, 4,177 from Indonesia and 1,582 from Myanmar. However, it is worth noting that since October 2020, when the new labor law was imposed, the number of employees from the mainland have increased by 59%, as at end June. Currently, Macau has a total of 887 household helpers from the mainland, compared to 528 in October last year.

ANTHONY LAM

TWO men have been separately arrested for allegedly buying and controlling underage sex services, the Judiciary Police (PJ) announced yesterday.

Surnamed Fan, the individual who is accused of buying sex is 43 years old from mainland China. He was charged with engaging in sexual services from a minor.

In mid-July, the PJ busted a case of procuring minors, and buying sexual services from minors. The procurer, two sex workers, aged 17 and 19 years, as well as two sex buyers were apprehended.

In this case, business cards and condoms were found and seized by the police.

Further investigations led to the discovery of other buyers of sexual services, among them, Fan. From viewing hotel surveillance camera footage, the police observed that the 17-year-old sex worker spent 25 minutes in a hotel room rented by Fan, leading to the suspicion that the two were having sex in the room.

When the police discovered this, Fan had already left Macau.

On August 20, when he was trying to reenter Macau at the Border Gate, he was stopped and arrested by the authorities. The PJ disclosed that Fan declined to cooperate during interrogations.

CRIME

MEN ARRESTED FOR BUYING AND PIMPING UNDERAGE SEX



WOMAN LOSES RMB65,000 IN SHAM ONLINE ROMANCE

A divorced woman, aged 49, has fallen victim to a sham online romance, losing nearly 65,000 Chinese yuan to a supposed boat engineer. The PJ disclosed that investigations are ongoing and nobody has been apprehended at this time.

According to the PJ, on June 1, the woman began speaking with a man who introduced himself and said that he was a boat engineer. The two developed a relationship that led the woman to consider it a romance.

The man subsequently claimed that he would retire in July and relocate to mainland China.

He promised the woman that he would visit Macau and marry her.

Days later, the man claimed that he was on a boat berthed on the coast of the western Indian Ocean. He told the woman that he feared his valuable belongings would be robbed by pirates and that he wanted to send them to Macau.

He then asked the woman to wire 16,400 yuan to him as shipment fee, which she did. Later, an individual claiming to be a courier worker asked for 48,000 yuan for customs clearance in Malaysia, as the parcel contained a large sum of money. She also paid this sum.

The woman was later asked to pay 160,000 yuan to save her supposed paramour from being arrested on allegations of conducting illicit activities. She discussed the matter with a friend because she did not have sufficient funds, and her friend told her that she might have been scammed. She then approached the PJ for help.

SEXAGENARIAN MAN SLAPS PHARMACY STAFF

A 61-year-old man slapped a pharmacy staff member and pushed her to the ground when she asked him for a health code upon entry. He then fled the pharmacy via Avenida do Colonel Mesquita when the staff member called the police, the Public Security Police Force announced yesterday.

Surnamed Brito, the suspect was arrested by the police on August 20 on Avenida de Horta e Costa.

On that day, the police attempted to approach him at his residence on the same road but nobody answered the doorbell. They thus waited nearby and intercepted the suspect when he appeared.

SICHUAN STATE-OWNED FIRM LISTS USD400M SENIOR NOTES ON DUAL LISTING BOND

LYNZY VALLES

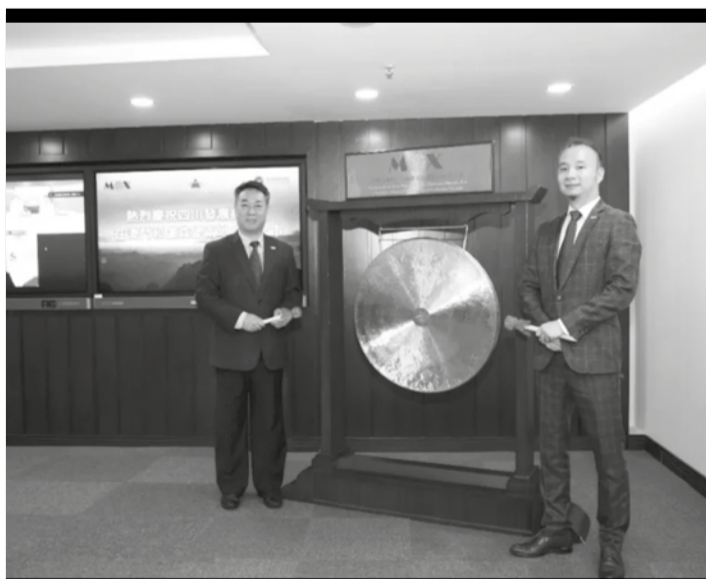
SICHUAN Development Holding Co., Ltd. (SDH) recently listed USD400 million senior unsecured notes on both the local Macau and overseas Luxembourg bond markets, representing the first dual listing bonds.

This comes after Chongwa (Macao) Financial Asset Exchange Co., Ltd. (MOX) launched a one-stop dual listing initiative in both regions.

SDH, the first investment-grade corporate issuer to be dual-listed on MOX & Luxembourg Stock Exchange (LuxSE), priced USD400 million five-year 2.8% senior fixed rate notes with an A- rating from Fitch.

The issuance is a drawdown from the group's USD2 billion medium-term notes (MTN) programme, according to a statement issued by the group.

Li Lingna, deputy general manager of SDH said, "The bonds dual listed on MOX and LuxSE not only marks



a breakthrough in overseas financing for Chinese enterprises, but also plays an important demonstration of cross-border financial cooperation between Sichuan province and Macau."

Li added that the move further solidifies the company's overseas financing channels, which is a milestone in its efforts to build international financing channels for multi-currency

and a cross-border two-way capital operation system to bridge domestic and overseas markets.

SDH was incorporated in January 2009, with registered capital of USD11.8 billion. The firm invests and operates in a number of specialized business sectors including finance, emerging industry, modern services, infrastructure and real estate, and international business.

EUROPEAN BANKING AWARDS CONFERRED TO BOC MACAU

FOUR accolades, conferred by financial magazine The European, were won by Bank of China, Macau Branch (BOC Macau), the bank recently announced in a statement.

The four awards are: Best SME Partner Bank in Macau, Best Bank in Macau, Best Bank for Cash Management in Macau and Most Innovative Digital Transformation Bank in Macau.

This is the first time the bank has been chosen as Best Bank in the territory. "It not only embodies the recognition from the international community about BOC Macau's quality and efficient financial services, but also its place as a mainstream banking institution in Macau," the BOC Macau said in the statement.

The bank emphasized its efforts in strategic



development, digitization, support for small and medium sized enterprises and economic recovery, integration with the Greater Bay Area and mainland China, and connections with lusophone countries.

The European is a quarterly business publication, published by Chase-Publishing in London. Available

in hard copy and digital format, the publication is accessible at various trade fairs around the world.

It covers a spectrum of global business affairs, including Energy, Banking and Finance, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Shipping, Aviation, Executive Education, Technology, Lifestyle and Business Travel. **AL**

Dreams to compete at Tokyo Paralympics shattered for Macau athletes

THE Paralympics is the only Olympic-level competition in which Macau has the right to compete, but this year, the city's residents will not see its athletes at the mega-event.

Due to its history, Macau, unlike Hong Kong, cannot send a team to compete in the Olympics, but this does not extend to the Paralympics, as the city has fielded a team at several previous games.

However, many local athletes have lost the chance to qualify for the Tokyo Paralympics due to tightened immigration and quarantine measures which barred them from participating in overseas competitions to obtain necessary points and rankings for qualifications.

A swimmer, who has obtained a wild card from the Organizing Committee of the Tokyo Paralympics, will not be able to chase his dream and represent Macau's



Members of Chinese Paralympic delegation arrive at the Narita airport for the Tokyo Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Japan

sporting spirit on a global stage, because the Macau-China Paralympic Committee & Macau-China Recreation and Sports Association for the Disabled (MPC) declined the wildcard offer.

Not surprisingly, the MPC defended the decision by describing the pandemic condition as unstable. "[The decline] was on

the grounds of safety," the MPC explained. It also cited that more than 200 individuals linked to the Tokyo Olympics have been diagnosed with Covid-19.

According to the World Economic Forum, there were 11,500 athletes competing at the Tokyo megaevent, while 79,000 other individuals, such as journalists,

officials and supporting staff, undertook various roles at the Olympics.

It means that about 0.22% of these individuals who attended the event have been diagnosed with Covid-19.

The MPC added that the decision to not send anyone was made after discussion with families of athletes.

The 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games is scheduled from today to September 5.

Hong Kong delegation has 64 members, including 24 athletes for eight events, half of whom are debutants.

China, meanwhile, has 132 female and 119 male participants that will compete in 20 of the 22 sports on the Tokyo 2020 program, including first-time Paralympic events of taekwondo and badminton, representing a record for the most sports China has competed in at an overseas Paralympic Games. **AL**

AVIAN INFLUENZA H5N6 REPORTED IN GUANGZHOU

Guangdong reported one new case of human infection with avian influenza H5N6 in Guanzhou Province, the Health Bureau (SSM) announced in a statement last night. The 52-year-old female, resident of Huizhou City, had onset of symptoms on July 31 and was admitted for treatment. The patient is in critical condition. SSM noted that she had contact with domestic birds. Therefore, the bureau urged residents to avoid contact with birds and pay attention to hygiene and food. Since April 2014, cases of the influenza have been registered in Sichuan, Guangzhou, Yunnan, Hubei, Hunan, Anhui and Guangxi and Jiangsu.

MACAU FORUM NOW PROVIDES MRNA JABS

The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center has included BioNTech mRNA vaccination services in the Community Vaccination Center at the Macau Forum. Prior to this arrangement, the vaccination center only provided the SinoPharm inactivated vaccines. A total of 1,000 mRNA shots per day will be provided from 9:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. In Macau, individuals aged between 12 and 17 years can only be given the mRNA vaccine.

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DIGITAL YUAN DEBUTS IN FUTURES TRANSACTION

CHINA'S digital fiat currency, or the e-CNY, has been used for the first time for transactions in the domestic futures market, the China Securities Journal reported yesterday.

The e-CNY has been used by the Dalian Commodity Exchange (DCE) for the payment of storage fees to a delivery warehouse, assisted by the local branches of Bank of Communications and Bank of China.

The application of e-CNY in the futures market provided an efficient, zero-cost and safe payment alternative for future exchanges and market participants through real-time inter-bank payment, the newspaper reported, citing sources from the banks.

Jiang Bin, manager of the deli-

very warehouse, said e-CNY payment charges no transaction fee and is not restricted to the operation period of the high-value payment system, which would bring convenience to enterprises by showing real-time transaction progress.

The DCE said it plans to further promote business innovation and seeks to expand the use of the digital yuan while ensuring a safe and stable operation in the market.

China has launched e-CNY pilots in several cities since the end of 2019, which was joined by Dalian in November 2020. As of June 30 this year, e-CNY has been applied in over 1.32 million scenarios, covering utility payments, catering, transportation, shopping, and government services. **XINHUA**

TAIWAN

Tsai receives domestically developed vaccine

TAIWANESE President Tsai Ing-wen received her first dose of the island's domestically developed coronavirus vaccine yesterday, launching its rollout to the public.

The vaccine, made by Medigen Vaccine Biologics Corp., was given emergency approval by regulators in July using a shortcut that prompted fierce opposition from parts of Taiwan's medical and scientific community.

Taiwanese regulators bypassed the large-scale, longer term studies that are typically used to approve vaccines. Instead, they compared the level of antibodies that Medigen's vaccine was able to generate with that of AstraZeneca's vaccine, which has been approved by many governments and has undergone the full three stages of clinical trials.

The two-dose Medigen protein subunit vaccine uses a piece of the coronavirus to teach the body to mount an immune response.

The decision to give approval based on the new standard prompted an expert from the advisory committee on vaccines to resign.

Critics say granting approval before finishing full clinical trials does not provide adequate information on how effective the vaccine is in the real world in protecting from COVID-19, although initial studies may have promising results.

The level of antibodies in the blood is known to correlate with protection from the disease, but scientists do not yet know what the exact level is.



Taiwanese leader Tsai Ing-wen receives her first shot of the island's first domestically developed coronavirus vaccine at a hospital in Taipei

Regulators said Medigen will be required to submit real-world efficacy data within a year of the approval. They said when approving the vaccine that data provided by Medigen showed that it produced 3.4 times the level of neutralizing antibodies as that of AstraZeneca's vaccine.

Tsai received her first dose of the vaccine yesterday morning at a gymnasium at National Taiwan University in Taipei. Like other patients, she checked in for her appointment by slotting her national health insurance card into the computer system.

After a nurse gave her the shot, she flashed an OK sign with her hand.

As of last Friday, 40% of Taiwan's population of 23 million had received at least one dose of

a COVID-19 vaccine. The island's vaccination policy is to prioritize first shots, with only the most high-risk groups initially getting the full two doses, such as medical workers.

That's a large leap from May, when less than 5% of the population had received a vaccine.

Taiwan had remained largely free of COVID-19 for a year and half during the pandemic until an outbreak driven by the alpha variant spread across the island in May, prompting a large-scale lockdown.

At that point, Taiwan had received only about 700,000 doses of the vaccines it had purchased. However, it was able to obtain roughly 5 million vaccines which were donated by Japan and the United States. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

DIRECTOR OF LIAISON OFFICE URGES THE SAR TO SEIZE HISTORIC OPPORTUNITIES FROM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LUO Huining, director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, yesterday urged Hong Kong to firmly seize a new round of historic opportunities from the national development for its long-term prosperity and stability.

Luo made the remarks when addressing the first of a series of activities on the introduction of the outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for national socio-economic development.

A central government delegation started yesterday its special tour here to help various sectors in Hong Kong to better understand the national 14th Five-Year Plan and grasp the fresh opportunities from the national development scheme.

The 14th Five-Year Plan sets out major requirements for Hong Kong's development in a full-spectrum of areas including politics, economy and culture, which reflects the central authorities' strategic consideration that combines both the inter-

national and domestic situations, and promotes Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability, he said.

Hong Kong's economic status as an international financial, trade and shipping center and a global hub for offshore renminbi business lies in its geographical position of being connected to the mainland and its favorable investment and business environment, Luo said, pointing out that the biggest opportunity for global development lies in China, and the biggest opportu-

nity for Hong Kong's development lies in the mainland.

With the implementation of the 14th Five-Year Plan and the establishment of the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035, Hong Kong is facing a new round of historic development opportunities, thus it must seize them tightly, he said.

"Development is an eternal theme and the gold key of solving all kinds of problems," Luo said. "Over the past year and more, Hong Kong's efforts to set things right have been ai-

med at safeguarding and developing the fundamental well-being of the Hong Kong residents, achieving long-term prosperity and stability in Hong Kong, and advancing the steady and long-term implementation of 'one country, two systems,'" Luo said.

The Chinese central authorities have been paying close attention to Hong Kong's economic development and the improvement of people's livelihood, he said, adding that as the 14th Five-Year Plan has once again defined the orientation of Hong Kong's

development and provided more policy support, it is necessary for the Hong Kong society to take further actions, he said.

The delegation is composed of officials from central government departments including the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the People's Bank of China.

The activities are aimed at helping Hong Kong comprehensively and accurately grasp the spirit of the outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan, reach social consensus, and better integrate into the overall development of the country. **XINHUA**

ALEXANDRA JAFFE, SINGAPORE

DIPLOMACY

Harris meets with Singapore officials to begin Asia visit

THE White House yesterday announced a series of new agreements with Singapore aimed at combating cyberthreats, tackling climate change, addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and alleviating supply chain issues. The announcements coincide with Vice President Kamala Harris' visit to the region, as part of the Biden administration's efforts to counter Chinese influence there.

On cybersecurity, the Treasury and Defense Departments, as well as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, have each inked a memorandum of understanding with their Singapore counterparts expanding information sharing and training to combat cyber threats.

On climate, the two nations are launching the U.S.-Singapore Climate Partnership, a new effort between the Departments of Commerce, Energy, Transportation and Treasury and their counterparts in Singapore to develop new climate standards and collaborate on projects to expand clean energy infrastructure development and improve sustainability.

The two nations agreed to cooperate more closely to track COVID-19 variants and engage in research on coronavirus treatments. And the Department of Commerce is joining with the Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry to create a partnership focused on strengthening trade throughout a handful of key industries.

The White House announced additional agreements between the two nations fostering cooperation on space exploration and defense issues as well. The announcements came after Harris met with Singapore President Halimah Yacob, and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Harris' Southeast Asian trip, which brings Harris to Singapore and then later to Vietnam this week, is aimed at broadening cooperation with both nations to offer a counterweight to China's growing influence in the region.

Yesterday morning, Harris par-

AP PHOTO



U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, right, is welcomed by Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Istana in Singapore yesterday

ticipated in a welcome ceremony outside the Istana, the presidential palace, where she held her hand over her heart while a marching band played the Star Spangled Banner. She then walked around the courtyard, reviewing the band, accompanied by Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Loong then showed her a species of an orchid that was named in her honor, and Harris participated in a brief courtesy call with President Halimah Yacob, before heading into a series of bilateral meetings with the prime minister.

After her meetings, the vice president will participate in a joint news conference, and later visit the Changi Naval Base, where she'll speak to American sailors aboard the USS Tulsa, a combat ship.

On Tuesday, Harris will deliver a speech outlining the Biden administration's vision for the region, and meet with business leaders to discuss supply chain issues.

The trip marks Harris' second foreign trip — she visited Guatemala and Mexico in June — and will be the first time a U.S. vice president has visited Vietnam.

Singapore is the anchor of the U.S. naval presence in Southeast Asia and has a deep trade partnership with the U.S., but the country also seeks to maintain strong ties with China and a position of neutrality amid increasingly frosty U.S.-China relations.

Relations between the U.S. and China deteriorated sharply under Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, and the two sides remain at odds over a host of issues including technology, cybersecurity and human rights.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin made their first overseas trips to Japan and South Korea. Austin traveled to Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines last month and he vowed U.S. support against Beijing's intrusions in the South China Sea.

Harris is expected to emphasize the need for a free and open Indo-Pacific region in her conversations with Singapore's and Vietnam's leaders.

Alexander Feldman, president and CEO of the US-ASEAN Business Council, said Harris will have to be careful in her conversations with Singapore's leaders not to focus too heavily on China, but to emphasize a positive, productive U.S. relationship with Singapore and Vietnam.

"Where she could fall into a trap is really trying to pit this as a U.S. versus China trip. It should be a U.S. trip to our friends and partners in Southeast Asia," Feldman said.

If China becomes the main focal point, he said, "that makes it harder for our friends to move forward across the region, not only in Singapore and Vietnam but beyond that."

Indeed, Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said in a recent interview that Singapore

will "be useful but we will not be made use of" in its relations with both countries, and the nation's prime minister previously warned the U.S. against pursuing an aggressive approach to China.

Beijing, however, has seized on the visit, with China's official Xinhua News Agency issuing an editorial Saturday on Harris' trip portraying it as part of a drive to contain China.

Visits to Southeast Asia by senior Biden officials are aiming to "woo these countries to form a ring of containment against China. But Southeast Asian countries are reluctant to choose sides between China and the United States, and America's 'wishful plan' will end in failure," Xinhua said.

The U.S. approach is based on "outdated Cold War thinking and is intended to provoke troubles in their relations with China, create division and confrontation, and try to create a ring of containment," the editorial said.

While Harris navigates the challenging diplomacy surrounding the issue of China, she'll also face the task of reassuring key U.S. allies of America's commitment to Southeast Asia, in the wake of the tumultuous Afghanistan exit. Images of desperate Afghans mobbing American planes leaving Kabul have drawn comparisons to images from the fall of Saigon at the end of the Vietnam War.

Harris' aides have been careful to emphasize that while she remains deeply engaged on the situation in Afghanistan, the Southeast Asia trip was planned well before the recent events, and they say Harris' work in Singapore and Vietnam is important, independent of the developments in Afghanistan. **MDT/AP**

PRESIDENT Joe Biden is raising concerns that the Islamic State poses a threat as American troops seek to evacuate thousands of U.S. citizens and Afghan allies from Afghanistan.

Biden in remarks at the White House yesterday [Macau time] noted that the terror group is a "sworn enemy of the Taliban" and said that the longer U.S. troops are on the ground increases the chance that the group will attempt to strike innocent civilians and American personnel near

AFGHANISTAN

Biden warns of IS threat to Kabul evacuation

the Hamid Karzai International Airport.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has been warning Americans to avoid traveling to the airport in part because of concerns about Islamic State fighters.

The extremist group has long declared a desire to attack America and U.S. interests abroad and it has been active in Afghanistan for a num-

ber of years, carrying out waves of horrific attacks, mostly on the Shiite minority.

The group has been repeatedly targeted by U.S. airstrikes in recent years, and faced Taliban attacks.

President Joe Biden says 11,000 individuals were evacuated from Kabul over the weekend and he remains committed to assisting all Ame-

AP PHOTO



ricans who want to leave Afghanistan get out.

Biden affirmed that

his first priority is getting American citizens out of Afghanistan "as quickly

and safely as possible."

In the president's words: "We're working hard and as fast as we can to get people out. That's our mission. That's our goal."

Biden also said he is also activating the civilian reserve air fleet provided by commercial airlines to help move evacuees from third country waystations on to the United States. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



U.S. Special Representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, left, and South Korea's Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs Noh Kyu-duk during their meeting in Seoul yesterday

DIPLOMACY

Biden's special envoy urges North Korea to return to talks

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

U.S. President Joe Biden's special envoy for North Korea said yesterday he's ready to meet his North Korean counterparts "anywhere and at any time" as he held discussions with South Korean officials over stalled nuclear talks with the North.

Sung Kim's visit to Seoul comes amid declining expectations for a quick resumption of talks and new tensions over ongoing U.S.-South Korean military exercises. North Korea has described the exercises as a rehearsal for an invasion and has threatened unspecified countermeasures that would cause a "security crisis" for the U.S. and South Korea.

After meeting with senior South Korean diplomat Noh Kyu-duk, Kim reiterated that the Biden administration has no hostile intent toward North Korea and that the joint drills are routine and defensive in nature.

Kim and Noh told reporters they discussed possible ways to facilitate diplomacy, including humanitarian cooperation with North Korea in providing anti-virus resources, sanitation and safe water. They did not announce any specific plans.

Kim also is to meet Russian

Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov, who is also visiting Seoul.

"The United States does not have hostile intention for (North Korea)," Kim said. He said the joint U.S.-South Korea military exercises are "long-standing, routine and purely defensive in nature and support the security of both our countries."

"I continue to stand ready to meet with my North Korean counterpart at anywhere and at any time," Kim said.

Talks between the United States and North Korea have stalled since the collapse of a summit between former President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in 2019, when the Americans rejected the North's demand for a major easing of economic sanctions in exchange for a partial reduction of its nuclear capabilities.

Kim has since pledged to bolster his country's nuclear deterrent while urging his people to stay resilient in a struggle for economic self-dependence in the face of U.S. pressure. His government has so far rejected the Biden administration's overtures for talks, demanding that Washington abandon its "hostile" policies first.

North Korea has closed its borders since the start of the pandemic, but it will eventually have to open itself to

humanitarian assistance and dialogue with the United States to carry out vaccinations, said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul. That doesn't necessarily mean it will abstain from a missile test during or after the U.S.-South Korea drills, Easley said.

While North Korea has yet to report any coronavirus infections, experts have expressed skepticism about its claim of a perfect record, given its poor health care system and the porous border it shares with China. Edwin Salvador, the World Health Organization's representative to North Korea, told The Associated Press last week that the North has yet to complete the "technical requirements" that are needed to receive vaccines under the U.N.-backed COVAX program.

The atmosphere for diplomacy deteriorated further this month when Kim's powerful sister released a statement saying the drills were the "most vivid expression of the U.S. hostile policy" toward North Korea and that the North will work faster to strengthen its preemptive strike capabilities.

The United States and South Korea are conducting a nine-day joint military exercise that began last Monday which Seoul's Defense Ministry

says is mostly computer-simulated and doesn't involve live field training. There have been no known missile tests by North Korea since the start of the drills, although South Korean military officials have said the North is currently staging its own summertime exercises.

North Korea has long bristled at U.S.-South Korea military drills and often responds to them with its own weapons demonstrations. The allies in the past few years have canceled or downsized some of their joint training exercises to provide space for diplomacy or because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some analysts say North Korea's recent threat may signal a resumption of its weapons testing. North Korea ended a yearlong pause in ballistic tests in March by firing two short-range missiles into the sea, continuing a tradition of testing new U.S. administrations with weapons demonstrations aimed at measuring Washington's response and wresting concessions.

There haven't been any known test launches since then as Kim has focused national efforts on fending off the coronavirus and salvaging a broken economy damaged further by pandemic border closures and food shortages. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1967 PENGUINS COOL OFF IN HEAT WAVE



Two penguins from Chessington Zoo have been taken on a day trip to a local ice-rink to cool off during London's sweltering temperatures.

As temperatures in the London area reached nearly 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27 degrees Celsius), Rocky the Rockhopper penguin and his female companion, who did not have a name, joined skaters at Streatham ice-rink.

Zoo-keepers at Chessington, concerned about the welfare of the two penguins in the sweltering heat, contacted the owners of the ice-rink who were only too happy to be of service.

And the penguins, who are more used to the cooler temperatures of the Antarctic, seemed delighted with their new icy surroundings.

They arrived at the Silver Blades ice-rink accompanied by their keepers Philip Gunstone and Jane Redding.

Miss Redding said: "These are Rockhopper penguins from the Falkland Islands.

"Rockhoppers are more bothered by the heat than our other kind - Humboldt penguins.

"Humboldts don't mind the hot weather."

As they were released from their box the pair waddled purposefully through the door of ice-rink which bore a sign reading "It's cooler inside."

As they made their way towards the ice they appeared completely unphased by the other skaters and once on the slippery surface conducted themselves with dignity and grace.

Staff at the ice-rink were so impressed they extended an invitation to the zoo's other 20 penguins and said the seals could even come along too!

IN CONTEXT

There 17 species of penguin - Adelie, African, Chinstrap, Emperor, Erect Crested, Fairy, Fjordland, Galapagos, Gentoo, Humboldt, King, Macaroni, Magellanic, Rockhopper, Royal, Snares Island and Yellow Eyed.

Penguins only live in the Southern Hemisphere. They cannot fly.

There are several explanations as to how the word penguin came into being. Some say it originally meant 'fat one' in Spanish/Portuguese or could come from the Welsh "pen gwyn" (white head), from the Latin 'pinguis' (fat) or from a corruption of 'pin-wing' (pinioned wings)

Penguins have been known to live as long as 40 years but their average life-span is between 15 and 20 years.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Today's skies might make it hard to see things clearly, Aries. Mental Mercury locks into a hard aspect with daydreamy Neptune, creating a hazy fog around your workflow and job environment.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 You're likely to be lost in a romantic fog or be drifting off into inspired visions for personal creative projects, as messenger Mercury falls into an opposition with spaced-out Neptune.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 It's been critical for this stage of your growth. Tuesday's skies momentarily point your focus towards the future, as your ruler, messenger Mercury, locks into an opposition with dreamy Neptune.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Today's cosmic landscape is wonderfully aimless, Cancer. Your leading lady, the shapeshifting moon, transitions from spacey Pisces into initiative-hungry Aries.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 It's easy to pull the trigger on a purchase that may not be as realistically satisfying down the road, as messenger Mercury locks into a disorienting opposition with deceptive Neptune.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 The universe is warping your perception of reality today, Virgo. Your ruling planet, expressive Mercury, wanders into a spaced-out opposition with dissolving Neptune.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Today's skies bring you a welcome sense of security and stabilization, Libra. Your ruling planet, bond-building Venus, forms a supportive connection with self-disciplined Saturn.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Mental Mercury's opposition with foggy Neptune creates a hazy fog around your creative ambitions and deepest aspirations, making it difficult to fully believe in their potential.

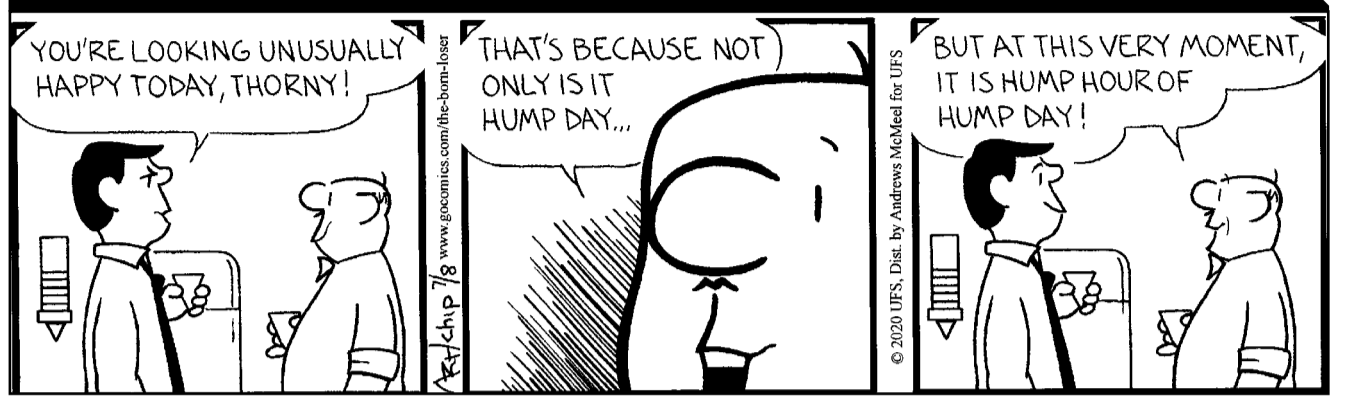
SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 This time of year highlights your highest career aspirations, Sagittarius. Yet, today's skies require you to look deep within at your shifting foundations before you can cultivate forward growth.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 You're likely to be longing for greener pastures today, Capricorn. Mental Mercury floats out to sea with daydreamy Neptune, creating a mental fog that can be hard to shake.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Thought-provoking Mercury locks into an opposition with reality-dissolving Neptune, creating a strong need to reflect on relationship matters.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Fortunately, you're not a stranger to that mindset! Messenger Mercury falls into a disorienting opposition with dreamy Neptune, creating confusing or overly idealized circumstances around relationship matters.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	20	29	cloudy
Harbin	19	28	rain
Tianjin	26	31	rain
Urumqi	21	32	cloudy
Xi'an	23	31	cloudy
Lhasa	23	27	rain
Chengdu	26	35	cloudy
Chongqing	27	35	thunderstorms
Kunming	27	34	showers
Nanjing	21	27	showers
Shanghai	25	34	cloudy
Wuhan	26	34	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	16	27	cloudy
Taipei	23	27	rain
Guangzhou	10	20	rain
Hong Kong	22	31	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	9	19	overcast
Frankfurt	11	23	overcast
Paris	16	22	overcast
London	13	23	overcast
New York	23	33	sunny

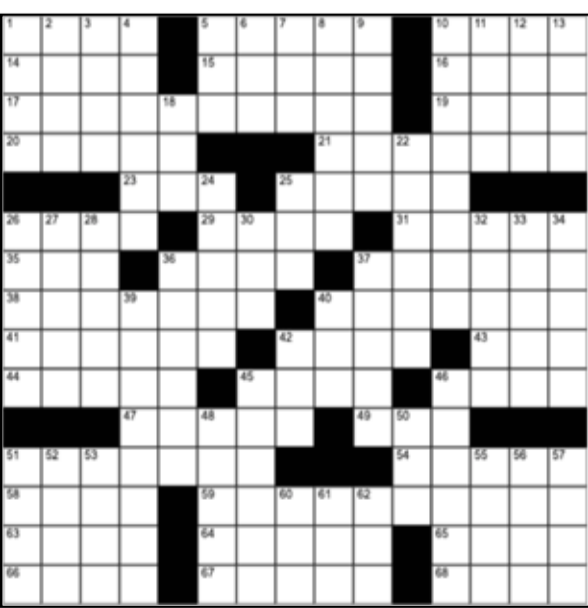
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Faucet problem; 5- Chip dip; 10- I could ___ horse!; 14- Vintner's prefix; 15- Shrimp; 16- Remnant; 17- Person who doesn't eat meat; 19- Must've been something ___; 20- Overjoy; 21- Neck scarf; 23- Babysitter's handful; 25- Spread apart; 26- Apply powder to oneself; 29- Looking up; 31- Book after Jonah; 35- Poem of praise; 36- Tops; 37- Party animal?; 38- Variety of lettuce; 40- Dog of mixed breed; 41- Fit for cultivation; 42- In fine fettle; 43- The last letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 44- Painter Rousseau; 45- Tubular pasta; 46- Salinger girl; 47- Square; 49- Unit of electrical resistance; 51- Improvised; 54- Conger catcher; 58- Formerly, formerly; 59- Zinc sulfide; 63- Drum sound; 64- Itty-bitty; 65- Dollop; 66- Anchored float; 67- Journalist Pyle; 68- Sicilian smoker;

DOWN: 1- Bird of peace; 2- Spool; 3- Actress Swenson; 4- Beautifully imaginative; 5- Health haven; 6- Sheet music abbr.; 7- Chou En-___; 8- Like the Everglades; 9- Invalidate; 10- Improving the mind; 11- Sea east of the Caspian; 12- Mal de ___; 13- Antiquing agent; 18- Pro ___; 22- Starvation; 24- Recumbent; 25- Wind dir.; 26- Law of Moses; 27- Love deeply; 28- Geneva's lake; 30- Washington bill; 32- Wagons; 33- First-stringers; 34- Cleave in two; 36- Sick; 37- Salk's conquest; 39- Subito; 40- Slip preventer; 42- In; 45- Slide fastener; 46- Develop; 48- Speed; 50- Tee follower; 51- Belgrade native; 52- Drop ___ (moon); 53- Christiania, today; 55- Rhythmic swing; 56- School founded by Henry VI; 57- First name in country; 60- Female fowl; 61- Singer DiFranco; 62- Bleaching agent;

Yesterday's solution

ADOS	AFOUL	CHET
DART	COBRA	HEAR
ALAR	QUOIN	AARE
RIDICULE	GENTLY	
POI	LURE	
FLUENT	DOARLOCK	
SLIDE	AGOG	REA
RAN	TWINE	DAR
ANT	OATS	KAISA
LOAFERS	SEPTET	
ARTURO	PERTAINS	
SEEM	IBEAM	REAP
TBSP	SANTO	ERNE
ASHY	ETHAN	LEAD



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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FOR SALE

Buckingham **HKD 11,770,000**
 Ref: 1904 5004
 1,439 ft² 2 1/2 2 1/2

FOR RENT

Nova Grand **HKD 13,500/mth**
 Ref: 2108 1001
 969 ft² 2 1/2 1 1/2

Rain Dance Property
 "We dance until it's SOLD!"

Traditional apartment **HKD 2,680,000**
 Ref: 2103 6001
 788 ft² 2 1/2 1 1/2



ANALYSIS

HOW TO BOUNCE BACK WHEN YOUR INCOME DROPS

KIMBERLY PALMER

LOSING income is never easy, but it's become increasingly common over the last year and a half: According to the Pew Research Center, 44 percent of U.S. adults say their household has experienced either job loss (including temporarily) or a pay cut since the beginning of the pandemic, with Hispanic and Asian adults most likely to say so.

That creates an incredible strain as people scramble to cover basic expenses like food and housing as well as monthly bills and everyday expenses, even if the reduction in income is temporary. Having a sense of your budget and avoiding procrastination is the key to doing well post-pay cut, says certified financial planner

Manisha Thakor, founder of MoneyZen, a financial educational consultancy in Portland, Oregon.

She says your odds of surviving and perhaps thriving go up exponentially "if you know your expenses beforehand, immediately acknowledge something bad has happened and you need to adjust them — and open your mind to the notion that it's really likely that by downsizing, you could actually end up having a richer life."

ACKNOWLEDGE THE EMOTIONS

"It's OK to admit that it's a crappy situation and you are going through it. I think a lot of people don't give themselves that grace," says Athena Valentine Lent, founder of the Money Smart Latina website.

There can be grief involved in losing income as you mourn your previous lifestyle, says Daisy Luther, founder of The Frugalite website. "I grew up in a well-to-do-family and never heard, 'We can't afford that,' and then got divorced and I had to accept that my life had changed," she says. She could no longer go out to pizza with her kids every Friday night, for example. Gym memberships and nail salon visits were out, too. She suggests giving yourself a set amount of time to feel sad and then start focusing on how you are going to move on.

AUDIT YOUR SPENDING

If you review all of your spending, Thakor says, then you can get tactical about which items to cut: "Anything you're spending

money on that doesn't bring you joy, like cable bills, activities for kids, things that have crept into your life about 'who looks the best?' — just step out of that competition," Thakor advises.

Lent adds that you can make trade-offs: "I might need the Internet but not cable. I need a phone, but not that extra stuff on the phone plan. I need groceries, but I don't need to eat out. I don't need Netflix, I can go to the library. Anything you don't need to spend on, don't spend it," she says.

ZERO IN ON FOOD

Food is a major spending category for a lot of people, and it's a prime target for cuts, says Valerie Rind, author of "Gold Diggers and Deadbeat Dads: True Stories of Friends, Family, and Financial Ruin," who experienced a major income drop when she changed careers about 16 years ago. "I cut back on eating out, even though I like it and I'm not much of a cook," she says. She also changed the way she shopped for groceries, bypassing the \$4 orange juice and using a crock pot for

more meals, which also generated leftovers for the freezer.

Recently, she has gotten inspiration for meals from TikTok chefs, who break down recipes in short video segments. "It makes things easy and simple," she says, adding that her favorite chef is @thatdudecancook.

ADJUST YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Thakor suggests asking yourself if you could get by with less, such as whether you can trade in for more economical vehicles or consider having only one car. "People are driving more expensive cars than they can comfortably afford. Look at pre-owned certified cars," she suggests. It's easier to handle income loss, even a temporary one, without a large car payment each month.

RELISH THE CHALLENGE OF BEING FRUGAL

Luther suggests treating frugality like a game. When it comes to food, home decor or an accessory, she suggests asking yourself if you can make it for less than the cost of purchasing it.

"It really can be a lot of fun," she says. She enjoys growing tomatoes and lettuce to make her own salads, which she estimates saves at least \$10 a week.

SAVE UP FOR NEXT TIME

If you've had to deplete your emergency fund or don't have one, consider deepening your cuts to allow savings that will cushion you in the next financial crisis. Thakor suggests a \$2,000 emergency fund goal and then continuing to build — but even \$500 can protect you from financial shocks.

"If you know you will be in a cash deficit in a few months, start stacking cash," Lent says. Look for ways to make extra money, for example — perhaps ride-sharing, freelance work or selling items you no longer need, she adds.

MDT/NERDWALLET VIA AP

Pfizer to pay USD2.26b for cancer treatment developer Trillium

PFIZER is spending more than \$2 billion in cash to buy a drugmaker focused on cancer treatments.

Pfizer will pay \$18.50 for each share of Trillium Therapeutics Inc., or more than double the stock's 60-day weighted average price.

Trillium has no products on the market. Its potential treatments include biologics that aim to prime a patient's immune system to detect and destroy cancer cells.

Its two lead candidates are in early-stage testing and fo-

cus on hematology. That includes blood, bone marrow and lymph node cancers like leukemia or lymphoma.

The deal announced Monday will need approval from Trillium shareholders.

Pfizer, based in New York, invested \$25 million in Trillium last September, and one of the leaders of Pfizer's cancer research was named to Trillium's scientific advisory board.

Pfizer Inc. said last month that its COVID-19 vaccine brought in nearly half of its

second-quarter revenue, but cancer treatments also have been a growing sales generator for the company.

Cancer treatments brought in \$10.9 billion in revenue last year, and Pfizer's oncology products include treatments for breast, colorectal, blood and lung cancers.

Pfizer's stock climbed almost 3% at the opening bell. Shares of Trillium, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, nearly tripled to \$17.73. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



FOOTBALL

Lukaku marks Chelsea return with goal, Kane back for Spurs

STEVE DOUGLAS

ARSENAL 0, CHELSEA 2

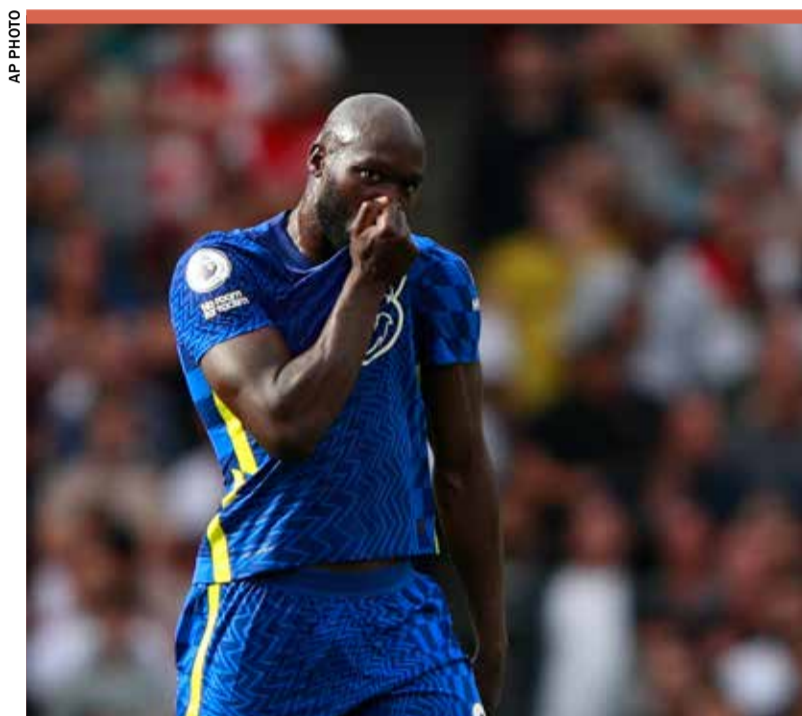
ROMELU Lukaku and Harry Kane, two of the world's best strikers, were back in action in the Premier League yesterday [Macau time] after some time away.

Lukaku made the better impression.

Making the first appearance of his second spell at Chelsea, the Belgium international marked his return to England's top division after a two-year absence by scoring one goal and playing a part in the other in a 2-0 win at Arsenal.

"Dominant," was how Lukaku described his display that saw him bully Arsenal's patched-up defense into submission at Emirates Stadium.

Kane, the Tottenham striker heavily linked with a move to Manchester City, hadn't been seen in the Premier League since the final day of last season, having re-



AP PHOTO

Chelsea's Romelu Lukaku reacts after scoring his side's first goal

turned late for preseason training amid growing intrigue over his future.

The England captain entered as a 71st-minute substitute against

Wolverhampton — to applause from Spurs fans despite his apparent desire to join City — and wasted a one-on-one opportunity before his team sealed a 1-0 win at

Molineux. The only goal came in the ninth minute, a penalty earned and converted by Dele Alli.

"Harry is still in the process of increasing and improving his level of fitness," said Tottenham manager Nuno Espirito Santo, who coached Wolves for the last four seasons, "but he is one of the best players in the world."

In just the second tweet sent from his account in the past two weeks, Kane wrote "Brilliant battling win" alongside two photos of him on the field at Molineux.

With a little over a week remaining of the summer transfer window, his future is still uncertain.

Both Chelsea and Tottenham have opened the season with two straight victories. Manchester United couldn't quite join them.

Mason Greenwood's second-half goal earned United a point from a 1-1 draw at Southampton. Paul Pogba set up the goal with his fifth assist already this season, having set up four in United's 5-1 win over Leeds on the opening

weekend.

Lukaku failed to score in 15 appearances for Chelsea in his first spell at the London club from 2011-14 — two seasons of which were spent out on loan. It took him 15 minutes to score against Arsenal, having been thrown into the team at the first opportunity by Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel.

The way he pinned Arsenal center back Pablo Mari and then shrugged off the same player as he ran into the area to convert Reece James' cross demonstrated a striker at the top of his game. It was just what Chelsea missed last season, even though the team managed to win the Champions League.

Lukaku was also involved in Chelsea's second goal, scored by James in the 35th. A pass from the left was dummed by Lukaku, who had dragged Arsenal's defense out of position, and that allowed Mason Mount to set up the right back for a rising finish into the net.

"He proved his value for the squad already," Tuchel said of Lukaku, who joined from Inter Milan for a club-record fee of \$135 million. "He linked really well with Mason and Kai (Havertz) up front."

Arsenal also lost its opening game 2-0, at Brentford. It is the first time the team has opened a league campaign with two losses without scoring. **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

World Views

Brandon Guthrie, University of Washington
 MDT/THE CONVERSATION



SCHOOLS CAN REOPEN SAFELY - AN EPIDEMIOLOGIST DESCRIBES WHAT WORKS AND WHAT'S NOT WORTH THE EFFORT

Just when schools were getting ready to reopen for the new school year, cases of COVID-19 started surging in the United States, driven in large part by the more contagious delta variant. School administrators around the country are working to bring students back into the classroom safely, while still providing kids an enriching learning environment.

As an infectious disease epidemiologist at the University of Washington, I have spent the past year and a half working with a group of epidemiologists and health professionals to collect, review and evaluate the scientific evidence about COVID-19 for state and local public health agencies.

Our group concluded that vaccines and masking work well for preventing COVID-19 outbreaks in schools, but other strategies like plexiglass barriers and temperature checks are probably not worth the effort.

A COVID-19 vaccine is the single most important tool for preventing COVID-19 in schools, as well as nearly everywhere else. All the vaccines currently authorized for use in the U.S. have been shown to help prevent infections and protect against moderate and severe disease. Some variants, such as delta, may be more likely to cause breakthrough infections, but vaccinations have shown protection against symptomatic disease caused by delta.

The more people in a school who are vaccinated, the lower the risk of an outbreak in the school and the lower the likelihood that someone will develop severe disease if infections occur. COVID-19 vaccines are currently available to anyone age 12 or older, and it is possible that at least one of the vaccines will be authorized for younger school-age children in the later months of 2021 or early in 2022.

Masks are important, too. Not everyone in a school can be or will choose to be vaccinated, and there is also a risk of breakthrough infections, especially from the delta variant. Masks reduce the risk of an infected person spreading the virus and provide some protection for the wearer against becoming infected. During the past academic year, mask-wearing was shown to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools. Masks also don't disrupt the school day in the way that other measures might, such as keeping students in fixed cohorts or shortening the school day for split shifts.

It's also probably not worth testing everyone on a regular basis. Frequent testing is expensive, and real-world examples and mathematical models indicate that routine asymptomatic testing for COVID-19 in schools provides little additional benefit beyond widespread vaccination and masking.

Students should wear masks whenever they are not actively eating. As challenging as it is to manage a rambunctious lunchroom, shouting, singing and loud talking spread more virus and should be discouraged, especially without masks. And good ventilation, particularly in spaces where people are eating, is important.

Students also need to keep their distance from one another while they eat. Schools may consider having more lunch periods, having children eat in their classrooms, or using other spaces in the school to reduce crowding.

The strongest driver of COVID-19 in children, teachers and families is not school - it's the level of community transmission.

Given what we currently know, schools can continue to operate in person without widespread transmission linked to schools. When community transmission is high, schools should take extra care to stick to their prevention strategies. But the main way to protect students is to stop the spread of COVID-19 outside of school.

COVID-19 never fails to provide new surprises. Many aspects of the next school year remain unknown, but by learning from what worked and didn't work over the past school year, we have evidence that in most situations students can safely return to school in person as long as these layered prevention measures are put in place and adhered to. [Abridged]

Vietnam's largest metropolis, Ho Chi Minh City, has begun a tightened lockdown to battle the coronavirus, a day ahead of U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris's visit to the capital, Hanoi.

Police and army troops have mobilized to enforce the lockdown and deliver food and supplies to households. People in "high risk" districts must stay home under the stricter measures, imposed for at least two weeks.

The Health Ministry on Sunday reported 737 virus-related deaths, its highest single-day total. That raises the death toll since the

pandemic began to 8,277. Hanoi is also under lockdown.

The U.S. has been Vietnam's largest donor of vaccines, sending 5 million doses of Moderna. Separately, Vietnam has signed commercial agreements with U.S. vaccine makers Moderna and Pfizer to secure at least 80 million doses.

Last year Vietnam was praised for keeping the virus in check. But with the spread of the delta variant of the virus, the country is experiencing its worst outbreak by far, with more than half of the country's 98 million population under lockdown orders.



Internet celebrity nicknamed "Yijinyexing Yan Gong Zi"

CHINA'S WEIBO SHUTS ACCOUNTS DEFENDING KRIS WU ALLEGATIONS

CHINA'S microblogging platform Sina Weibo yesterday closed 145 accounts, some of which had defended pop star Kris Wu over his rape allegations, for publishing what it called "information harmful for maintaining social order."

Wu, a Chinese-Canadian pop star, was detained on July 31 for "deceiving young women multiple times into having sexual relations" with him, according to Beijing police. His arrest came after several women said they were plied with alcohol and then either pressured to have sex with him or sexually assaulted.

Some of the Weibo accounts which were shut down had previously defended such allegations against Wu, according to state-run media outlet Global Times.

It was not immediately clear how many of the 145 accounts were shut down for defending Wu. Several other celebrities, such as debater and media personality Ma Weiwei, also had their accounts suspended after they defended earlier allegations against Wu in 2016, and have since apologized for

their actions, according to the Global Times.

The state-run paper said the banned accounts include an internet celebrity nicknamed "Yijinyexing Yan Gong Zi" who has been swirled in controversy for remarks on some hot topics, such as the sex scandal of Kris Wu.

'Yijinyexing Yan Gong Zi' has been swirled in controversy for remarks on some hot topics, such as the sex scandal of Kris Wu

"Yijinyexing Yan Gong Zi" has a total of 5,201,686 followers on Weibo. She was banned on August 2 for voicing support for Wu, who was recently arrested for alleged rape charges.

Weibo, often described as China's Twitter, said in a post published yesterday that the 145 accounts were shut down for publishing harmful information related to current affairs, defined as anything from "spreading rumors, disrupting state order and undermining social stability" to "publishing negative information that breaks the bottom line of social morality and the system."

The shutdown of Weibo accounts highlights how internet and social media platforms are required to strictly comply with content guidelines and censorship rules in China, where authorities dictate what can or cannot be published online.

Authorities in China are quick to censor keywords and search terms deemed politically sensitive or harmful to society, and internet platforms are expected to comply according to the law.

Certain search terms, such as the names of Chinese artist-activist Ai Weiwei or late Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, turn up no results when searched on platforms like Weibo.

The shutdown of accounts also come at a time when the Chinese government has tightened its grip over the internet and technology sector.

In recent months, authorities have implemented anti-monopoly rules and data privacy laws to curb unfair market practices and prevent companies from unfairly collecting and profiting off users' data. MDT/AP

Germany Many train drivers with the national railway walked off the job yesterday as their union embarked on its second two-day strike this month in a bitter dispute with the company. The GDL union called on passenger train drivers to strike from 2 a.m. yesterday to 2 a.m. tomorrow. Freight train drivers already started their strike on Saturday afternoon.



Ukraine's president yesterday vowed to do all he can to bring back the peninsula of Crimea, annexed by Russia seven years ago, and urged international allies to support the effort. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke at the Crimean Platform summit, called by Ukraine to build up pressure on Russia over the 2014 annexation that has been denounced as illegal by most of the world. Russia's relations with the West have sunk to post-Cold War lows as a result.

Albanian police yesterday said they have arrested two people for allegedly hurling tear gas canisters during a concert by a Bosnian Serb musician whom many in the country accuse of not condemning the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo. A statement said Redon Leka, 21, was arrested after hurling a tear gas canister while songwriter and composer Goran Bregovic was performing Sunday night at the Korca Beer Fest, 165 kilometers southeast of the capital, Tirana.

Greece's fire department scrambled firefighting aircraft and ground forces as at least two new blazes broke out in areas already scarred by wildfires this summer, with strong winds complicating efforts to contain them. The first broke yesterday morning in the south of Evia, Greece's second-largest island, whose north was decimated earlier this month by a blaze that burned for more than 10 days. The second was burning in the Vilia area northwest of Athens, where a major blaze was brought under control Friday after burning for five days.