



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報® Times

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25 Aug 2021

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MOP 8.00
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NEWER GIG APPS COULD HELP EASE THE LABOR SHORTAGE IN ENGLAND, WHERE NEARLY ALL PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS WERE LIFTED LAST MONTH

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Japan The Paralympics began yesterday in the same empty National Stadium as the opening and closing ceremonies of the recently completed Tokyo Olympics. Japanese Emperor Naruhito got it all started again, this time under the theme "We Have Wings." Among the few on hand were Douglas Emhoff, husband of U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, International Paralympic Committee President Andrew Parsons and International Olympic President Thomas Bach.

Thailand yesterday decriminalized the possession and sale of kratom, a plant native to Southeast Asia whose leaves are used as a mild stimulant and painkiller and which has a following in the United States for its pain-relieving qualities. Justice Minister Somsak Thepsuthin said thousands of legal cases for the possession or sale of kratom were being dropped, and 121 inmates convicted in such cases would be released immediately. Possession of kratom had been punishable by up to two years in prison and a fine of as much as 200,000 baht for quantities of 10 kilograms or more.

Indian government forces killed two senior rebel commanders and three other militants in two separate counterinsurgency operations in disputed Kashmir, police said yesterday. The killings come during an intensified government offensive against anti-India rebels in Kashmir, which is divided between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan and claimed by both. Rebels have also killed several members of India's governing party in the region and carried out attacks on Indian troops.

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POISON OR CURE?
TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE SHOWS THAT CONTEXT CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

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ANALYSIS

POISON OR CURE? TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE SHOWS THAT CONTEXT CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

YAN LIU,
UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO

POISONS today typically evoke notions of harm and danger – the opposite of medicines for healing. Yet traditional Chinese medicine, which has been in practice for over two millennia, used a large number of poisons to treat a variety of illnesses. Chinese doctors knew that what makes a drug therapeutic isn't just its active ingredient – it depends on how you use it.

Biomedical researchers skeptical of the safety and efficacy of traditional Chinese medicine might not be surprised that Chinese doctors historically prescribed poisons. Some believe that the drugs used in traditional Chinese medicine often contain hidden toxic ingredients detrimental to health.

But this blurred boundary between poison and medicine is not unique to traditional Chinese medicine. Chemotherapy uses toxic drugs to treat cancer. And the U.S. opioid epidemic offers a sobering reminder of how a class of FDA-approved medicines used to treat chronic pain became lethal poisons through improper administration. Conversely, certain psychedelics deemed illegal today have ignited new interest in the medical community as potential treatments for anxiety, addiction and depression.

I am a medical historian who examined the therapeutic use of poisons in Chinese medicine in my recent book. Based on my research, I believe that Chinese doctors in the past recognized the healing capacity of poisons while being fully aware of their potential to kill. Understanding this practice compels modern biomedicine to reconsider how “medicine” is defined today.

WHAT IS AN ACTIVE INGREDIENT?

The debate on the safety and efficacy of traditional Chinese medicine often centers on the active ingredient of a drug. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration defines an active ingredient as “any component that provides pharmacological activity or other direct effect

THE CONVERSATION



in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease, or to affect the structure or any function of the body of man or animals.”

In other words, the active ingredient is a specific chemical considered to make up the essence of a drug. Because it carries the responsibility of curing a target disease, it's used as the gold standard to evaluate the utility of a drug in modern pharmaceuticals.

There is value to identifying active ingredients in drug discovery, including those in traditional Chinese medicine. Scientist Tu Youyou won the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for isolating malaria drug artemisinin from an herb used in traditional Chinese medicine. In the same vein, medical researcher Zhang Tingdong and his team identified arsenic trioxide as an effective treatment for leukemia by studying drug formulas in traditional Chinese medicine.

Despite these success stories, reducing a medicine to a single molecule is rather limited. This reductionist approach ignores the context in which a drug is used, which plays a crucial role in its end effects. To appreciate this perspective, it is necessary to go back in history to see how poisons were understood and used in premodern China.

POISONS IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

The Chinese word for poison is “du”. Unlike its negative meaning today, ancient texts written 2,000 years ago used the word to denote potency, or the ability to both harm and heal. There was no categorical distinction between poisons and nonpoisons in traditional Chinese medicine – they acted in a continuum defined by level of potency.

The dual potential of poisons laid the foundation for their use in medicine. Chinese doctors strategically deployed potent poisons to cure everything from blood clots to abdominal pain to epidemic diseases. For example, aconite “fuzi”, a highly poisonous herb grown in southwest China, was one of the most often prescribed medicines in the medieval era. Mercury was another poison used regularly in both medicine and alchemy to eliminate worms and prolong life. Overall, poisons consistently made up about 20% of the drugs in the ever-expanding Chinese pharmacopeia throughout the imperial era, speaking to their crucial role in healing.

One way Chinese doctors used poisons for healing was through the principle of using poison to attack poison (“yi du gong du”). In their eyes, these powerful substances could target and eliminate specific disease entities like worms

inside the body. They believed the strong sensations induced by poisons marked a process of purifying the body of its harmful burdens.

THE CONTEXT IN WHICH A DRUG IS USED MATTERS

Chinese doctors in the past were not looking for an active ingredient that defined the usefulness of any given substance. Rather, they considered the effect of each drug highly malleable. No better example illustrates this way of thinking than the medical use of poisons.

Doctors in China were keenly aware of how the effect of a poison varied greatly depending on how it was prepared and administered. Accordingly, they developed a variety of methods – such as dosage control, mixing with other ingredients and other drug processing techniques – to mitigate a poison's potency but still preserve its efficacy.

Chinese doctors were also aware that poisons worked differently from person to person. The same drug could have different effects depending on the patient's gender, age, setting, emotional status and lifestyle. For example, eminent 7th-century physician Sun Simiao offered remedies specific to women and the elderly.

Using a poison outside of its prescription often proved deadly. For instance, Five-Stone Powder, or “Wushi San”, a psychedelic drug

that contains arsenic, was one of the most popular medicines in medieval China. Despite medical recommendation that it be used only as a last resort to treat emergencies, many at the time regularly consumed it to invigorate their bodies and illuminate their minds. Unsurprisingly, this misuse led to numerous deaths. Going beyond its restricted usage, a poison could easily kill.

BEYOND THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT

The paradox of healing with poisons in traditional Chinese medicine reveals a key message: There is no essential, absolute or unchanging core that characterizes a medicine. Instead, the effect of any given drug is always relational – it is contingent on how the drug is used, how it interacts with a particular body and its intended effects.

Medicines are fluid substances that defy stable categorization. Looking beyond the biomedical standard of the active ingredient could help doctors and researchers pay more attention to the context of how medicines are used. This will allow for a more nuanced understanding of healing.

Ultimately, there is more to a medicine than its active ingredient. Poisons in traditional Chinese medicine, I hope, teach a compelling lesson. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

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For subscription and general issues: general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

FAOM lawmakers review AL work, economic crisis accounts for soaring labor disputes

RENATO MARQUES

THE economic crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in border restrictions and a significant decline in most economic activities in Macau, accounts for the soaring number of labor disputes in the SAR. As mentioned in a review of the Legislative Assembly's (AL) work over the past term by lawmakers linked with the Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), these disputes have frequently resulted in calls for their assistance.

The four lawmakers, who include directly elected Leong Sun Iok and Ella Lei, and the indirectly elected Lei Chan U and Lam Lon Wai, noted that since the pandemic began, their offices have been flooded with appeals relating to unemployment, unpaid leave, and lay-offs: troubles which have affected many resident workers.

"We have received cases from different [economic] sectors, mostly relating to situations of layoffs, wage arrears, or company



or shop closures. With the pandemic, these work-related situations became much more frequent," said Lei in a press conference organized by the lawmakers on Monday.

Leong also noted the exponential growth of the unemployment rate over the same period, noting

that it has reached its highest level in the last 10 years and that, with more people losing their jobs every week, the situation is not yet under control.

"We have received many complaints from workers, particularly from the sub-sectors of services, food and beverage industry, and

VIP rooms of the casinos, who have reported situations of company closures as well as many cases of forced unpaid leave," Leong told the media.

Running as a candidate for another term at the AL, Leong added that the new tender for gaming licenses would be a perfect

opportunity to include additional guarantees and rights for workers, extend labor rights to a significant portion of the labor market, and thereby set an example for other companies in the private sector to follow.

Leong also thinks that gaming operators should participate further in the government's social and welfare schemes in order to assume a greater share of their corporate social responsibility.

FAOM lawmakers also mentioned the public works sector, emphasizing that residents' access to work must be protected. They said that the government should set an example by enforcing regulations to protect the priority of residents in hiring.

Addressing the plans implemented by the government to try to control unemployment and promote career changes for local workers so far, the lawmakers expressed their dissatisfaction with the work of the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) and the programs it enforced, characterizing DSAL's efforts as ineffective.



Group calls for investigation on TNR drivers

LOCAL group Macau People Power has handed a letter to the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) requesting an investigation of non-residents working as professional drivers.

According to the group, some job agencies are running social media advertisements in an attempt to hire drivers from outside Macau.

According to Macau law, individuals who drive vehicles for an

income must be local residents. Therefore, non-resident workers may not be hired to drive buses, taxis, hotel shuttles and even private limousines.

Cheong Weng Fat, secretary of the group, presented a printout of a digital job advertisement to the press during the letter submission. It was stated on the printout that "a company in Macau is in search of an off-site driver."

Compiled in Simplified Chinese, the advertisement is expected to target mainland job-seekers.

The company is looking for a male aged between 33 and 50 years who speaks Cantonese to fill the position. The salary being offered is MOP9,000 per month.

It requires the candidate to hold a light vehicle driving license and an international driving license. It also requires the candidate to have "slight knowledge" of Macau's road networks.

The daily hours of work are from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. with a one-hour lunch break. Four days of leave will be allowed to the employee every month.

Citing this evidence, the group's secretary urged DSAL to begin an investigation on the employment of non-resident drivers. He stressed that with local unemployment rising, it is unreasonable for job agencies to hire new non-resident workers to Macau.

Cheong said that non-resident workers are not only being hired in the transport industry, but also in the food delivery industry. "Apparently the DSAL is not doing a good job," he said.

In addition, he pointed out that non-resident workers are taking up jobs in supermarkets, tea houses, restaurants, shopping malls, hotels, and many other establishments. **AL**

RETAIL SALES REACH MOP21B IN Q2

THE value of retail sales leapt by 200.0% year-on-year to MOP20.70 billion in the second quarter (Q2) of 2021, and the sales volume index soared by 219.0% after the effects of price changes are removed.

The significant growth was due to the relatively low base of comparison in the same quarter last year.

Most of the major retail trade activities recorded a year-on-year increase in sales value, with Watches, Clocks & Jewelry (+957.9%), Leather Goods (+504.0%) and Communication Equipment (+460.4%) showing notable year-on-year growth, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

In the first half year of 2021, the value of retail sales reached MOP39.46 billion, a rise

of 118.4% year-on-year and the sales volume index jumped by 130.4%.

Concerning retailers' comments, 40.9% of the retailers expect the sales volume to remain stable year-on-year in the third quarter (Q3) of 2021, while 42.9% anticipate a decrease and 16.2% forecast an increase. Meanwhile, 78.0% of the retailers predict that the retail prices would remain steady year-on-year in Q3, 15.3% foresee a decrease and only 6.7% expect an increase. Compared to Q2 of 2021, about 44.7% of the retailers envisage sluggish business in Q3, whereas retailers expecting stable performance (35.7%) and those anticipating a favorable outlook (19.6%) together account for 55.3% of the total. **LV**



UM TO RESUME IN-PERSON CLASSES FROM SEPT. 15

The University of Macau (UM) will resume face-to-face classes on September 15 with the current mode of online teaching to continue until September 14. Regarding the arrangements for returning students, according to government guidelines, all students are required to return to their residences in Macau, Zhuhai, or Zhongshan at least 14 days prior to the resumption of classroom teaching. Students who will be residing in UM's residential colleges or the Postgraduate House are required to return to the campus on or before August 31, the university said in a statement. Non-residential students are also required to return to their places of residence in Macau, Zhuhai, or Zhongshan on or before August 31.

COMPOSITE INTEREST RATES RECORD SLIGHT DECLINE

The composite interest rates of Macau's banking sector for the pataca (MOP) and the Hong Kong dollar (HKD) registered a decline in the second quarter of 2021, according to data from the Monetary Authority of Macao. From the end of March to the end of June, the composite interest rate for the MOP fell 6 basis points from 0.56% to 0.50%, while the HKD fell 7 basis points from 0.93% to 0.86%. This reflects a general decline in of the cost of finance in the local banking sector during the second quarter. Macau's composite interest rates are the weighted average interest rates of all interest-bearing liabilities and non-interest-bearing demand deposits on the books of local banks.

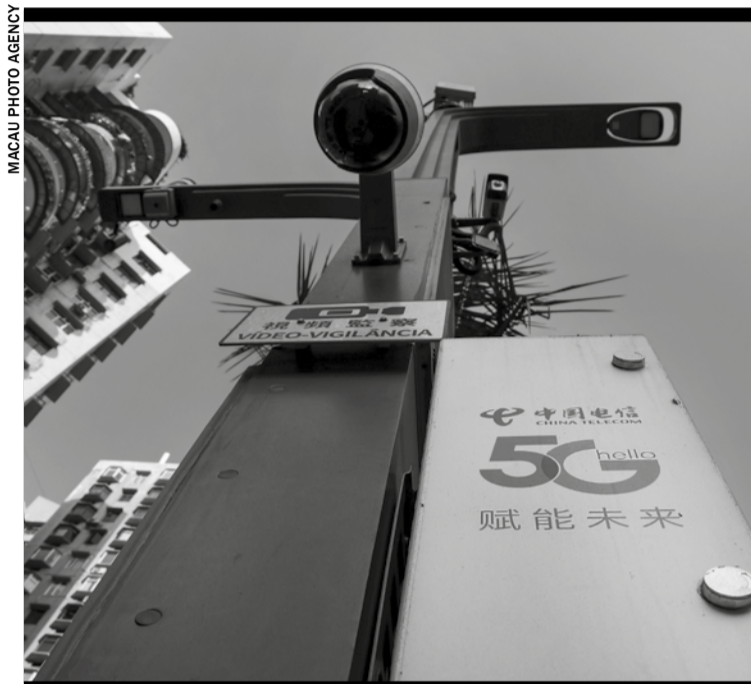
GOV'T SAYS 5G WILL ACCELERATE TECH ADVANCEMENT OF LOCAL COMPANIES

RENATO MARQUES

DIRECTOR of the Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT), Derby Lau, has said that the establishment of the 5G network in Macau as well as the continued optimization of the local infrastructure and communication technologies "can contribute positively to support the digital transformation of local companies and the development of technological innovation." Lau was replying to a written inquiry to the government on the subject, which was submitted by lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho.

In his reply, Lau stressed that the government wants to promote the construction of smart infrastructure and a digital economy, which includes promoting the use of information technology by small and medium-sized companies to update their systems to better match new consumer habits and market development trends.

Nevertheless, the director failed to give a concrete explanation, as requested by the lawmaker, of the exact role of the 5G network in this process



and how it could generate economic progress for the community in general.

Not much was said in reply to the most pressing questions asked by Pereira Coutinho on the subject, with Lau declining to provide any information on the current status of the licensing process for the usage of the 5G network.

The lawmaker wanted to know from the government the exact conditions for the awarding of 5G licenses to the operators.

Lau only replied that the government, "is planning to start work on the 5G licensing according to the current legislation," adding that any details would be announced in due course.

Several professionals from the telecommunication field under the Macao Communications Development Association (MCDA) told the Times in an exclusive interview earlier this

year that Macau's geographic location and size could be an advantage for the implementation and testing of new technologies. This could not only lead to the advanced development of information and communication technologies locally but also boost economic diversification.

The MCDA also noted that one of the most relevant aspects that could shift technology back onto the right track would involve the establishment of a free market for communications in which all players could compete fairly, presenting new services and technological advancements to benefit everyone.

Pereira Coutinho also questioned the government on the favoritism that has been shown over the years to the telecom service provider CTM. However, the government refused to comment, with Lau only noting that the relevant law concerning the public telecommunications service contract and convergency contract is already in the legislative process. He added that its enforcement, "will create, in the future, more favorable conditions for the local telecommunications sector and the construction of the 5G network."

BOC TO TURN MACAU BRANCH TO SUBSIDIARY WITH MOP13B INVESTMENT

THE Bank of China (BOC), the parent company of Bank of China, Macau Branch, has received the greenlight from the authorities in mainland China and the Macau SAR to open a subsidiary in Macau.

A total of MOP13 billion will be invested to facilitate the move, the BOC announced in a filing dated August 23, 2021.

It will not involve external financing as all funds will be from the bank's reserves, the same filing stated.

The name of the new company will be Bank of China (Macau) Limited, similar to its counterpart in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong company actualized the public listing of the firm.

When inaugurated, the BOC (Macau) Ltd. will be a Tier-1 fully owned subsidiary of the mainland banking giant.

In the filing, the BOC explained that this in-



vestment is "a prominent move to serve the national strategy, support the construction of the Greater Bay Area, satisfy the needs of the Macau SAR in developing financial services with

special characteristics."

According to the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, a subsidiary is an independent legal entity with a separate name, charter and struc-

ture. It operates on its own finances and manages its own debts. A parent company also indirectly controls its subsidiaries usually by appointing the Board of Directors.

In a reply to the Times on the prospects of the bank, the BOC, Macau Branch noted that both the Macau branch and the Macau subsidiary will be "operating entities" in Macau. It stressed that there will be no impact on customer experience and service efficiency.

"In the future, the new subsidiary and the existing Macau Branch will fully utilize the advantages from unification to further deepen wealth financing, consumption financing, inter-jurisdictional financing, green financing and other aspects of services [...] to assist in the economic and social stability of Macau," the BOC, Macau Branch noted in its reply. **AL**

GOV'T ATTRIBUTES CONTAINMENT OF COVID-19 TO 'LUCK' AND USE OF FACEMASKS

THE local health authorities have attributed the successful Covid-19 containment and avoidance of a community outbreak to both "luck" and the promotion of the use of facemasks.

The remarks were made on Monday during the regular press briefing on the Covid-19 pandemic situation in Macau.

At the briefing, Dr. Leong Iek Hou, coordinator of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, said, that Macau "was lucky" in being able to contain a community outbreak after the four delta variant cases regis-

tered in early August.

The same official also said that the use of facemasks by most of the population at all times has also contributed decisively to the containment of the virus.

She revealed that a total of 200 million masks have been distributed over the last 32 rounds of facemask distribution organized by the government. Dr. Leong also announced that the 33rd round starts today, in which facemasks will be provided to the population following the same methods used in previous rounds and will be of the same cost at 24 patacas for a pack of 30 facemasks. **RM**

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



Airport recorded nearly 680,000 passengers in H1

DESPITE the apparently worsening pandemic situation in the region, the Macau International Airport (MIA) handled about 678,000 passengers in the first half of the year (H1), data from the Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. (CAM) has revealed.

The performance of the local airport has recovered from the trough between April and August last year, which saw passenger counts of only four digits. The count climbed

up to five digits in September 2020 and has retained a gradual upward momentum until 82,000 were registered in December last year.

In January there was a slight drop to 62,000 passengers. In February, there was a further decline to about 42,000, as the government in Beijing discouraged travel during the Chinese New Year holidays.

With the epidemic in mainland China gradually stabilizing, the figure saw a further increase during the second quarter of the year.

In April, the MIA handled nearly 140,000 passengers.

The figure further moved up to 175,000 in May and 160,000 in June.

Despite the reviving passenger counts, the airport has only handled slightly more than 8,000 flights in H1, with most flights handled in May, amounting to 1,807 flights.

MIA's flight handling figure topped in 2019, with the year seeing more than 77,000 flights arriving at and departing from the airport. **AL**

ELECTIONS 2021

CAEAL REMINDS VOTERS TO BE MINDFUL OF MASK COLORS ON SEPT. 12

THE Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) has reminded voters to select their masks carefully on election day in order to avoid accidental legal infringements.

The CAEAL has previously announced that mask-wearing at polling station is required, citing guidelines issued by the Health Bureau.

Currently, surgical masks sold in Macau come in various patterns, colors and designs. There is a possibility that a mask worn by a voter may coincidentally resemble or be identical to a campaign color, pattern or design of a particular

list participating in the election.

For example, over the past year, several lawmakers have worn mask matching the color of their organization at parliament's plenary meetings, and committee meetings.

Since the law prohibits any form of campaigning on the election day, the CAEAL reminds voters to be mindful of the masks that they wear to polling stations.

Voters may have a shorter waiting time in this election than in past elections, because the CAEAL will set up more voting booths at each polling station to avoid crowd gathering. **AL**



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HONG KONG TO AMEND LAW TO STEP UP FILM CENSORSHIP

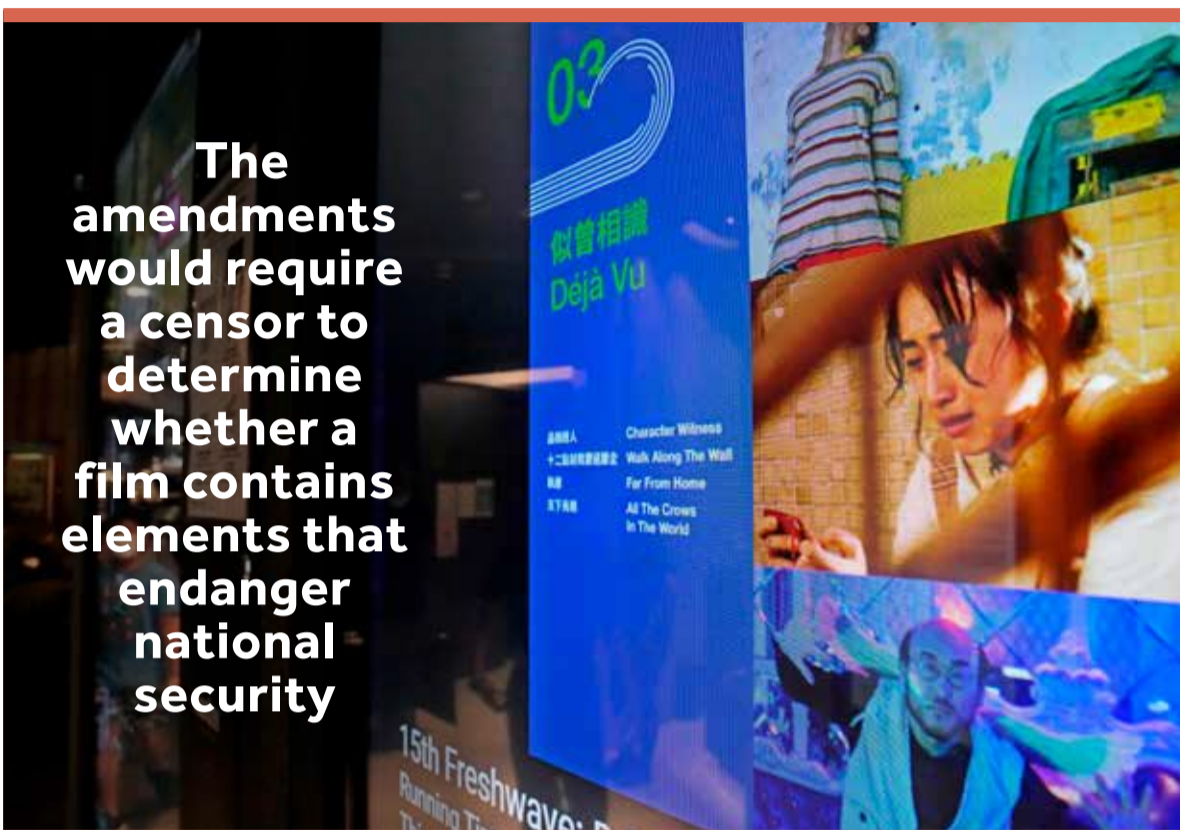
HONG Kong authorities yesterday said they plan to amend a film censorship law to forbid screenings of movies deemed contrary to national security.

The proposed changes to Hong Kong's Film Censorship Ordinance would step up censorship of movies in the semi-autonomous city, expanding an ongoing crackdown on political dissent that has led to the closure of various pro-democracy organizations and the arrests of dozens of activists.

The amendments would require a censor to determine whether a film contains elements that endanger national security. Older movies that were previously allowed to be screened could also have their approvals revoked on national security grounds.

"We need this provision to cater for circumstances where a film which was created or approved before — but given the new law enacted and the new guidelines issued — there might be chances that we need to reconsider such cases," Edward Yau,

AP PHOTO



The amendments would require a censor to determine whether a film contains elements that endanger national security

secretary for commerce and economic development, said at a news conference yesterday.

The changes would apply to films made in Hong Kong as well as those produced el-

sewhere. Hong Kong's film industry is widely known for directors such as Wong Kar-wai, Tsui Hark, John Woo and Stanley Kwan and actors including Jackie Chan, Chow Yun-fat, Jet

Li, Tony Leung Chiu-Wai and Maggie Cheung.

Those who violate the ordinance and screen banned movies could face up to three years in jail and a fine of 1 million

Hong Kong dollars (\$128,400).

The changes to the law, if passed, take the city a step closer to censorship levels in mainland China, where authorities have the power to block movies, TV shows and content deemed politically sensitive or contrary to the values of the Chinese Communist Party.

Britain handed Hong Kong over to mainland China in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" framework that allowed it freedoms not found on the mainland for 50 years, including free speech, freedom of the press and freedom of expression.

But critics say Hong Kong is fast losing those freedoms after Beijing's imposition of a tough national security law on the city in June last year following months of political strife and anti-government protests in 2019.

The law — which outlaws secession, subversion, terrorism and foreign collusion to intervene in the city's affairs — has been used to arrest over 100 pro-democracy figures.

Multiple pro-democracy organizations, such as rally organizer Civil Human Rights Front and the pro-democracy Professional Teachers' Union, have disbanded amid allegations they violated the security legislation. **MDT/AP**

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SINGAPORE

Harris rebukes China in major speech on Indo-Pacific

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris delivered a sharp rebuke to China for its incursions in the South China Sea, warning its actions there amount to “coercion” and “intimidation” and affirming that the U.S. will support its allies in the region against Beijing’s advances.

“We know that Beijing continues to coerce, to intimidate and to make claims to the vast majority of the South China Sea,” she said in a major foreign policy speech yesterday in Singapore in which she laid out the Biden administration’s vision for the Indo-Pacific. “Beijing’s actions continue to undermine the rules-based order and threaten the sovereignty of nations.”

Her rebuke to Beijing amounted to her sharpest comments yet on the U.S. foe. And China hit back, with Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin invoking Afghanistan in his response to a question about Harris’ comments, saying the messy withdrawal from Kabul showed the U.S. had lost credibility.

He charged that the U.S. “can smear, suppress, coerce, and bully other countries at will in order to maintain America first, without paying any price.”

“This is the order that the U.S. wants. The U.S. always tries to make use of the rules and order to justify its own selfish, bullying and hegemonic behavior, but who still believe it now?” Wang said.

Harris, who is on a weeklong swing through Southeast Asia,



U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris delivers a speech at Gardens by the Bay in Singapore

declared that the U.S. “stands with our allies and our partners” in the face of threats from China.

The speech sought to cement the U.S. commitment to supporting its allies in an area of growing importance to the Biden administration, which has made countering China’s influence globally a centerpiece of its foreign policy. And it came during a critical moment for the United States, as the Biden administration seeks to further solidify its pivot toward Asia while America’s decades-long focus on the Middle East comes to a messy end with the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Harris underscored this shift, calling the Indo-Pacific “critically important to our nation’s security and prosperity.” She said that while the U.S. is focused on closing out its Afghanistan engagement by evacuating as many people as possible, “it is also imperative that as we address developments in one region, we continue to advance our interests in other regions, including this region.”

In her remarks, Harris was careful to emphasize that the U.S. is seeking greater engagement in the Indo-Pacific region not just to counter China, but to advance an “optimistic vision that we have for our participation and partner-

ship in the region.” In deference to Singapore’s staunch neutrality in the U.S.-China dispute, Harris also affirmed that the U.S. isn’t looking to “make anyone choose between countries.”

Speaking in a country that serves as the anchor of the U.S. naval presence in Southeast Asia, Harris emphasized the significance the region holds for U.S. defense. She also emphasized the significant U.S. economic ties there, noting that Southeast Asia represents America’s fourth largest export market.

On Monday, Harris told sailors aboard a U.S. combat ship at the Changi naval base in Singapore

that “a big part of the history of the 21st century will be written about this very region” and that their work defending the region was pivotal.

“It is in our vital interest to stand united with our allies and our partners in Southeast Asia in defense of a free and open Indo-Pacific,” she said.

Harris also met Monday with Singapore President Halimah Yacob and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. The vice president’s office announced a number of agreements out of that meeting aimed at combating cyberthreats, tackling climate change, addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and alleviating supply chain issues.

After her speech yesterday, Harris held a roundtable discussion with business leaders on supply chain issues. Later, she planned to travel to Vietnam, where she’ll meet with top officials today.

President Joe Biden himself has repeatedly emphasized his focus on China as one of America’s main adversaries. In recent months, his administration has ramped up outreach to the Indo-Pacific region, with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman both visiting the area in the spring and summer. Secretary of State Antony Blinken also held a number of virtual meetings with Southeast Asian officials earlier this month.

The chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, however, complicated that message of support to the region, raising questions about the U.S. commitment to its allies. While Biden said last week that an indefinite engagement would have benefited “true strategic competitors” China and Russia, China has seized on the images of violence from the evacuation to slam the U.S. for its engagement there. **MDT/AP**

INDONESIA

Afghans protest Taliban, demand resettlement

HUNDREDS of Afghan refugees living in Indonesia, mostly members of the Hazara ethnic minority, held a rally yesterday decrying the Taliban’s takeover of their country and calling for resettlement in third countries.

Indonesia is not a signatory to the U.N. Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol, and the government doesn’t allow asylum seekers to work or have access to schools and public hospitals.

The protesters took to the streets outside the U.N. refugee agency’s of-

fice in the capital, Jakarta, with many saying they’re extremely worried about their families back home. Most Hazaras are Shiite Muslims, despised by Sunni Muslim radicals and discriminated against by many in the Sunni majority country.

“Everyone is scared due to the current situation and are desperately trying to escape,” said 28-year-old protester Hakmat Ziraki.

Ziraki said his relatives, unable to bear years of living in limbo without jobs, eventually returned to Afghanistan. On Friday, he re-

ceived a text message from his sister, saying she was distraught and that everyone in their village had sent their young daughters out of the country.

Banners at Tuesday’s rally read “Afghanistan is not safe” and “Resettle Afghan refugees from Indonesia.”

“Waiting for more than eight years without resettlement has been absolutely terrible,” Ziraki said.

Officials with the U.N. refugee agency in Jakarta could not immediately be reached for comment.

The protesters dispersed

after a few hours, as police threatened to arrest them for violating a health state of emergency in Jakarta, which has been hit hard by the coronavirus.

Afghans accounted for a little more than half the 13,400 refugees in Indonesia, according to U.N. figures from April.

Many asylum seekers fled to Indonesia as a jumping-off point to reach Australia by boat. But since 2013, the Australian government has sent the often barely seaworthy vessels back to Indonesian waters.

MDT/AP



G-7 grapples with Afghanistan, an afterthought not long ago

MATTHEW LEE,
WASHINGTON

TWO months ago, the leaders of the world's seven major industrialized democracies met at the height of summer on England's southwest coast. It was a happy occasion: the first in-person summit of the Group of Seven nations in two years due to the coronavirus pandemic and the welcomed appearance of President Joe Biden and his "America is back" message on matters ranging from comity to COVID-19 to climate change.

The smiles and sunshine seem distant as G-7 leaders meet again today [Macau time], in virtual format, for crisis talks on Afghanistan. The country's burgeoning refugee crisis, the collapse of its government and fears of a resurgence in Afghanistan-based terrorism have left the G-7 allies scrambling and threaten the unity of the bloc.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the host of the June summit in the English resort of Carbis Bay, is reconvening the leaders amid widespread unhappiness from America's allies about Biden's handling of the Afghanistan withdrawal. Complaints have come from Britain, France, Germany and others in the G-7, which includes only one non-NATO member, Japan.

The lawmakers who head the G-7 nations' foreign affairs committees urged leaders in a letter yesterday to "avoid arbitrary dates for ending military support to the evacuation."

Johnson and others, including French President Emmanuel Macron, are pushing Biden to extend his self-imposed Aug. 31 deadline for the total withdrawal of U.S. forces in order to ensure the evacuation of all foreign nationals as well as Afghans who worked for or supported the American-led NATO operation that vanquished the Taliban in 2001 and has now accepted defeat.

"The British position is we want to stay longer if it is possible to do so," said U.K. Defense Secretary Ben



June 11: Leaders of the G7 pose during a group photo at the group's meeting in Cornwall, England

Wallace.

But he said the 1,000 British troops at Kabul's airport would be unable to keep up the operation when the much larger American contingent leaves.

Despite Biden's April announcement that the U.S. would completely withdraw from Afghanistan by the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the nation was almost an afterthought when the G-7 met in June. COVID-19, China and climate change dominated the agenda. And expectations for Biden's impending summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin were at the top of people's tongues.

The leaders put Afghanistan as number 57 out of 70 points in their final 25-page communique — behind Ukraine, Belarus and Ethiopia. Afghanistan didn't even feature in the one-and-a-half page summary of the document. NATO had already signed off on the U.S. withdrawal and all that appeared to be left was the completion of an orderly withdrawal and hopes for a peace deal between the Afghan government and Taliban.

"We call on all Afghan parties to reduce violence and agree on steps that enable the successful implementation of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire and to engage fully with the peace process. In Afghanistan, a sustainable, inclusive political settlement is the only way to achieve a just and dura-

ble peace that benefits all Afghans," the leaders said, without a hint of urgency.

The leaders said they were determined "to help the people of Afghanistan, including women, young people and minority groups, as they seek to preserve hard-won rights and freedoms."

But as summer swings into fall, those hopes have been dashed.

On the eve of the meeting, the White House said Biden and Johnson had spoken by phone and discussed "the importance of close coordination with allies and partners in managing the current situation and forging a common approach to Afghanistan policy."

Johnson's office said the two leaders "agreed to continue working together to ensure those who are eligible to leave are able to, including after the initial phase of the evacuation has ended."

Biden administration officials have refused to be pinned down about whether an extension is likely or even possible given the Taliban's demand that all U.S. forces leave by the Aug. 31 deadline.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said she expected questions about the Afghanistan evacuation timeline to be part of the G-7 meeting. Psaki would not predict any announcements from the meeting but said the focus would be to evacuate Americans and Afghan allies as quickly as

possible.

White House aides have said they think the meeting could grow contentious, as U.S. allies have looked on with disapproval at the tumultuous American draw-down.

Senior British military officers have expressed anger over the U.S. pullout, saying it exposes the hollowness of the trans-Atlantic "special relationship" — a phrase used since World War II to stress the bonds of history, friendship and shared diplomatic interests between London and Washington.

And the German government is expressing impatience with the pace of the evacuation effort. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said the majority of local staff who worked for his country in Afghanistan haven't yet been gotten out and called G-7 meeting "very important" for discussing international access to the Kabul airport beyond Aug. 31.

British defense minister Wallace, who has called the U.S. deal with the Taliban that set the deadline a "mistake," was downbeat about the prospects of an extension to the evacuation effort.

"I think it is unlikely," he told Sky News. "Not only because of what the Taliban has said but if you look at the public statements of President Biden I think it is unlikely.

"It is definitely worth us all trying, and we will." MDT/AP

this day in history

1944 PARIS IS LIBERATED AS GERMANS SURRENDER



After four years under German occupation, Paris is now free.

Last night, the French 2nd Armoured Division under General Philippe Leclerc was the first Allied force to enter the city, greeted by loud cheers from Parisians after many days of fighting between the Resistance and the German occupiers.

The new Free French wireless station reported the German commander of the Paris region, General Dietrich von Choltitz, signed a surrender at Montparnasse station in front of General Leclerc and Colonel Rol, commander of the Forces Francaises de l'Interieur (FFI) in the Paris region.

Colonel Rol praised the Resistance forces that fought the occupying Germans and opened the way for the Allies to enter the capital.

At 1900 local time, General Charles de Gaulle - leader of the Free French who has been living in exile in London since the Fall of France in 1940 - entered the city.

In a broadcast to the nation from the Hotel de Ville he said: "I wish simply from the bottom of my heart to say to you: Vive Paris!"

"We are here in Paris - Paris which stood erect and rose in order to free herself. Paris oppressed, down-trodden and martyred but still Paris - free now, freed by the hands of Frenchmen, the capital of Fighting France, France the great eternal."

He said the French could now stand up as a great world power and would not rest until the enemy had been defeated on its own territory.

This evening French, American and Senegalese troops marched triumphantly down the Champs Elysee to ecstatic cheers of Parisians, young and old.

But celebrations were brought to a swift halt by sniper fire from German troops and French Fascists.

The battle for Paris is not quite over and tonight, as the French 2nd Armoured Division reached the Porte d'Orleans district in the south of Paris, the FFI are still fighting German soldiers and taking prisoners.

Earlier today, Canadian and British forces joined up with American troops on the left bank of the River Seine south of Rouen.

And on the French coast, Honfleur has been captured by the Allies.

In the south of France, Americans have taken Cannes and Grasse, the capital of the Alpes-Maritimes.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Once the Allies, under General Dwight D. Eisenhower, had landed in France in June, many groups of Parisian workers went on strike as they sensed the Allied approach.

An uprising began on 19 August and young Frenchmen built barricades and shot at German soldiers. Raoul Nordling, the Swedish Consul General to Paris arranged a ceasefire and also persuaded General Choltitz to disobey Hitler's orders to destroy the French capital.

General Eisenhower was reluctant to march on Paris and engage his forces in running street battles, but he finally relented and allowed General Leclerc's 2nd Armoured Division to enter the city first.

The day after liberation General de Gaulle led a parade down the Champs Elysees with General Leclerc all the way to Notre Dame. He braved sporadic sniper fire inside the cathedral itself from pockets of German resistance that remained.

Colonel Rol's real name was Colonel Henri Rol-Tanguy, a Communist leader of the Resistance in Paris. His signature appears alongside Leclerc's on the German surrender document to recognise the Resistance's efforts.

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Luna's meet-up with disciplined Saturn offers the chance to steadily chip away at your goals, but her opposition with lover Venus may stoke relationship tensions.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Hide from the tribulations of the real world today. The moon's presence in individualistic Aries encourages solitude, recharging through nature, or reconnecting with your sense of spirituality.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Luna's link with disciplined Saturn lends steady focus for educational endeavors, but her opposition with Venus may prompt relationship clashes later on.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

It's an ideal day to plug away at projects involved with your highest aspirations, as Luna's link with steady Saturn offers focus and follow through. Later, Luna's tiff with Venus may ruffle feathers among family connections.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

As a Leo, you tire easily of mundane routines and obligations. Let yourself breathe fresh life into your own fire today, as the moon treks through adventure-hungry Aries.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Today's skies call for quiet contemplation and intimate connections. The moon slides through solitary Aries, sending your focus towards unresolved feelings that need acknowledgement.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

As a Libra, you learn about yourself through the intimate exploration of relationships. Today's skies hone in on this story, as the moon floats through your opposite sign of individualistic Aries.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You're ready to sharpen your focus and get productive today, Scorpio. The moon cruises through go-getter Aries, helping you cross things off your to-do list quickly and efficiently.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Today's skies light up your creative fires, Sagittarius. Give yourself an outlet to pour your excitable energy into, as the fearless Aries moon urges you towards self-expression.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Today's skies momentarily pull you into a deeper awareness of your foundations, family connections, and living space, as the moon floats through solitary Aries.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Let yourself seek the movement you crave today. The moon cruises through self-assertive Aries all day, encouraging you to share your voice and seek out fresh perspectives in your local environment.

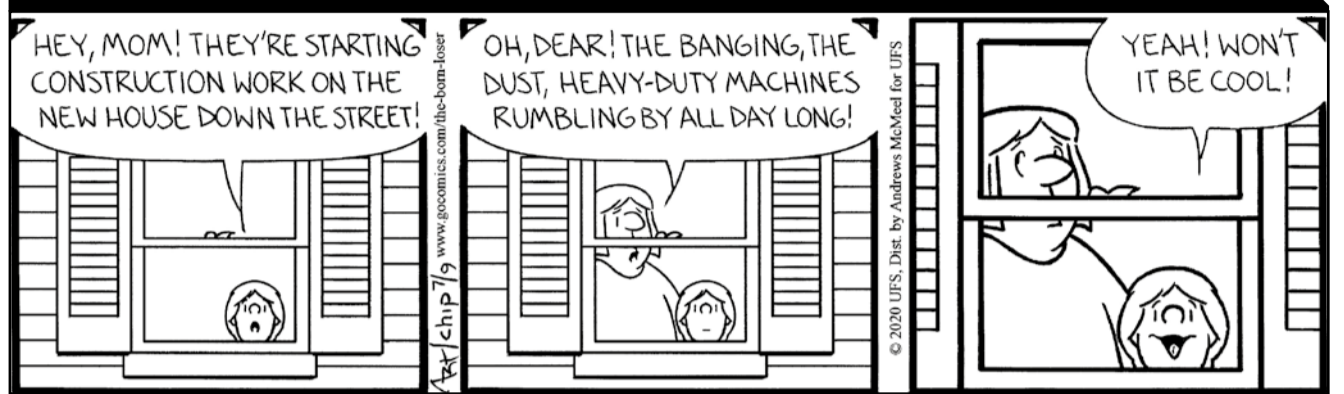


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Send your focus towards the current state of your finances today, Pisces. The moon glides through initiative-taking Aries today, encouraging you to re-examine your resources and to balance out your budget.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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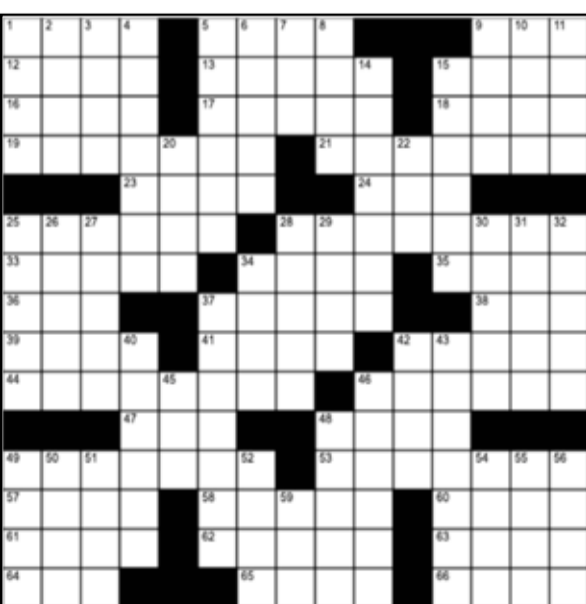
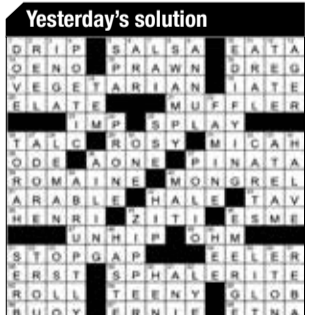
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	19	27	rain
Harbin	19	26	thunderstorms
Tianjin	23	27	rain
Urumqi	19	27	rain
Xi'an	25	30	rain
Lhasa	22	28	thunderstorms
Chengdu	26	35	cloudy
Chongqing	26	35	thunderstorms
Kunming	27	34	cloudy
Nanjing	20	27	showers
Shanghai	25	33	thunderstorms
Wuhan	25	31	rain
Hangzhou	18	24	thunderstorms
Taipei	22	31	overcast
Guangzhou	11	20	cloudy
Hong Kong	21	29	fine
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- Quantity of paper; 5- Mogul capital until 1658; 9- Month after avril; 12- Sicilian smoker; 13- Buy alternative; 15- Hearing organs; 16- ___ impasse; 17- Pains; 18- Final Four org.; 19- Reconsider; 21- Secondary school; 23- Mixed bag; 24- In the manner of; 25- Guys; 28- Forlorn; 33- Narrow street; 34- Osteologist's concern; 35- Watch; 36- Carrere of "Wayne's World"; 37- Orange container; 38- Sault ___ Marie; 39- Look ___, I'm Sandra Dee; 41- Submarine; 42- Part of Hispaniola; 44- Like overly tanned skin; 46- Gun; 47- Dot follower; 48- Colombian city; 49- Waterflea; 53- Illness; 57- Shrek, e.g.; 58- Body of honeybees; 60- Calculus calculation; 61- Burrow; 62- Outer coat of a seed; 63- Hog fat; 64- Common street name; 65- Actor Connery; 66- Portico;

DOWN: 1- Be a mother to; 2- Novel ending; 3- Med school subj.; 4- Sewer system entrance; 5- Singer Morissette; 6- Nocturnal tropical lizard; 7- It's a bit of cheer; 8- In the Black?; 9- Clublike weapon; 10- Composer Khachaturian; 11- ___, old chap!; 14- One on the run; 15- Ultimate purpose; 20- Now ___ me down...; 22- Schooner fill; 25- Causing death; 26- Best of a group; 27- South American ruminant; 28- White with age; 29- Fully aware of; 30- Red fluorescent dye; 31- ___ voce; 32- Loose coil of yarn; 34- ___ Fox; 37- Druggist; 40- One engraving; 42- Auditorium; 43- Creatures; 45- Sweetie; 46- Tropical American crocodilian; 48- Magna ___; 49- Distribute, with "out"; 50- I've Got ___ in Kalamazoo; 51- Prissy; 52- Amazes; 54- Quod ___ demonstrandum; 55- Roman emperor; 56- I did it!; 59- Peer Gynt's mother;



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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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

JOBS FOR THE BOYS

GIG APPS FOR A PANDEMIC ECONOMY: PART TIME, NO COMMITMENT

UROOBA JAMAL, LONDON

FOR months, Gabrielle Walker had been looking for a part-time job. She applied to restaurant chains and retailers like Nando's and Primark, and she scoured the job search site Indeed.

Nothing. Then one day, Walker, a 19-year-old student at University College London, was scrolling through TikTok and stumbled on a video about an app called Stint. A face on the screen explained that Stint could help students earn money by working brief temporary stints at places like restaurants and bars that require little training or experience.

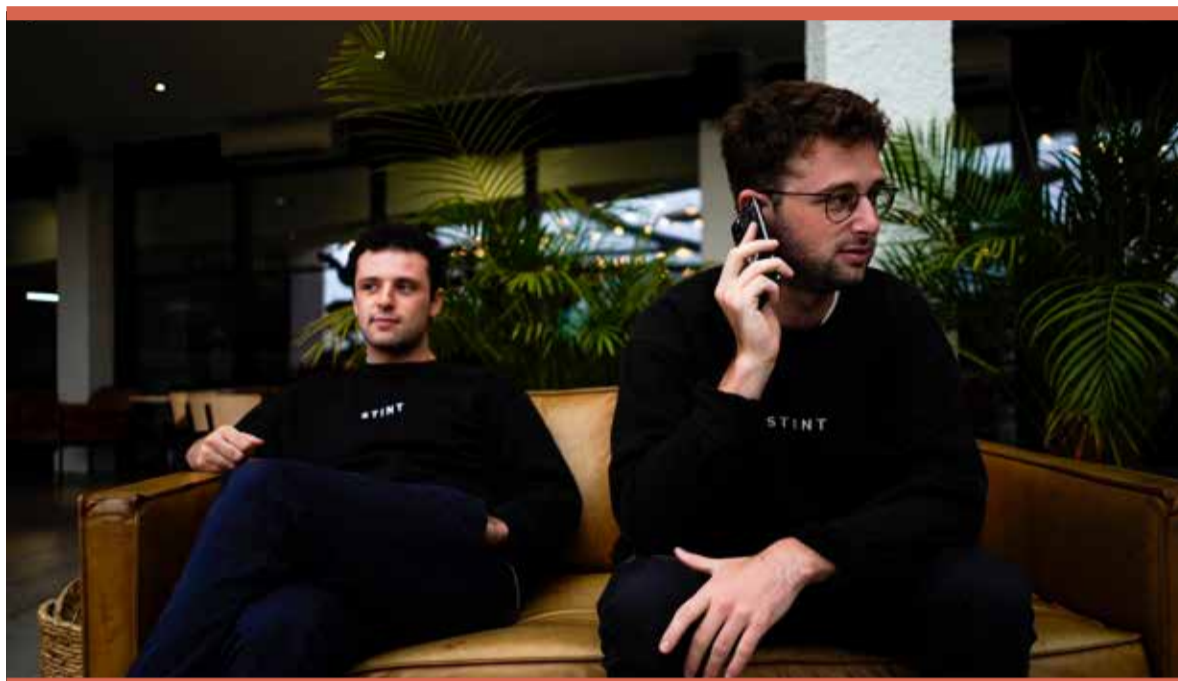
Walker downloaded the app, took a 15-minute intro course and days later snagged a job polishing cutlery at a Michelin-star restaurant in London — for one day. Between May and June, she took on several other gigs, squeezing them into her class schedule where she could.

"Everyone could do it," Walker said.

Stint, in use across the U.K., has grown in popularity, alongside similar apps in the United States like Instaworks and Gigpro, as one response to the peculiar ways in which economies have been rebounding from the pandemic recession. Uncertainty about the durability of the recoveries and the tentative re-openings of businesses still threatened by the coronavirus have made flexibility a top priority — for workers and employees alike.

As the hospitality industry, in particular, confronts worker shortages, these apps are helping form an ultra-short-term worker-em-

AP PHOTO



ployee relationship, something that hasn't widely existed in recent decades. Walker noted that even students with no relevant experience could sign up with one of these apps and likely find paid work — as brief as a couple of hours — that fits their schedule from week to week.

In contrast to Stint, Instaworks and Gigpro are suited more for skilled or experienced workers who want or need short-term shifts. Collectively, the newer apps represent a variation on the many gig apps that sprang up in recent years — from Uber and DoorDash to TaskRabbit and Thumbtack — that typically serve households in need of a one-time service. What distinguishes the latest apps is that they link workers with employers that have a steady need for labor but don't necessarily want to commit to permanent hires given the uncertainties from the pandemic.

"It's no surprise that during COVID, when everything became virtual that these ... marketplaces might have exploded," said Fiona Greig, co-president of the JP-Morgan Chase Institute, a global financial thinktank, whose research expertise includes the online platform economy.

The newer gig apps could potentially help ease the labor shortage in England, where nearly all pandemic restrictions were lifted last month. Most recently, its "pingdemic" — by which the National Health Service alerted people to self-isolate if they had been in close proximity to someone who had tested positive for the virus — disrupted businesses. Many workers had to isolate themselves, and some stores had to shut down temporarily for lack of labor.

"Gig economy workers can help plug the gap," said Mariano Mamertino, a senior economist at LinkedIn.

While Mamertino holds out hope that pandemic-related shortages will ease as England's economy reopens and vaccine rollouts continue, "one question mark that remains for the UK," he said, "is whether firms will have to permanently adapt to a new post-Brexit status quo."

Not everyone is celebrating the trend. UKHospitality, the leading trade association for Britain's hospitality sector, suggested that while businesses are used to innovating, the economic forces that have created staff shortages in the industry could pose enduring problems.

The association, along with the British Beer and Pub Association and the British Institute of Innkeeping, asserted that the road to recovery requires that the government "put in place the right trading environment," including an expansion of business tax cuts.

Sol Schlagman, who co-founded Stint along with his brother, Sam, drew from his own experience as a college student in creating it.

"It's the student that needs to have money to pay their rent," he said, "but it's also the student that wants to buy a pair of shoes they wouldn't necessarily buy otherwise."

The restaurant chain Chipotle uses Stint to recruit workers "at short notice to cover peak times in our restaurants," said Jacob Sumner, its director of European operations. Chilango, another food chain, said its stores use the app when they need "extra pairs of hands during busy times."

The use of apps to connect businesses and workers for short-term gig work appears to be a growing trend in the United States as well.

"The biggest change we see is this desire for flexible staffing on both sides," said Sumir Meghani, CEO and co-founder of Instaworks, which connects businesses with temporary or short-term hourly workers.

Greater flexibility in the worker-employer relationship during the pandemic period is also what Gigpro's founder, Ben Ellsworth, has observed. His app, which operates in three Southern U.S. states, is expanding, to try to address staffing shortages exacerbated by the pandemic.

Ellsworth, who spent years in the restaurant industry, said that with eateries in particular, workers have been "plagued with low wages, lack of incentive, no real focus on flexibility or quality of life." Stuck at home after being laid off, many of these workers either turned to other industries, Ellsworth suggested, or came to recognize gig work as an opportunity to tailor their work hours to their own needs. That realization arrived just as businesses, too, sought workers to fill part-time hourly slots — at least temporarily — as business restrictions eased. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Churchill's Table offers 'creative menus'



The Londoner Macao's British-themed Churchill's Table Dessert Tasting Journey continues to offer "creative evening menus," each of which is presented in an entertaining theatrical performance beside the table.

An executive lunch menu will satisfy health-conscious

guests with a choice of salads and soups, artisanal pies, Scotch eggs and other specialties. To conclude the meal on a sweet note, ice cream is also available from the signature Churchill trolley.

On Fridays, weekends and public holidays, afternoon

tea is served with a Mad Hatter theme, inspired by the whimsical world of Alice in Wonderland and served with specially designed tableware and in a magical wooden box.

According to a statement by The Londoner Macao, "the experience includes roving entertainment, with magic and tricks performed by the Mad Hatter, who appears with Alice, the Queen of Hearts and other Wonderland characters to interact with diners."

Churchill's Table also offers a retail area featuring branded patisserie, tea collection, coffee, decadent chocolate treats, cakes and gifting items, for dining in and takeout customers.

Sands China honors long-serving elderly team members



Sands China Ltd. has recently honored a group of more than 180 long-serving elderly team members in the company's popular Golden Age Programme at a Golden Age Navigation Ceremony

held at The Venetian Macao. Introduced last year, the voluntary program recognizes elderly team members who are ready to embark on a new chapter of their lives, providing them with a wide

range of post-career benefits.

A total of 540 Sands China team members have signed up so far, representing 60% of all those eligible for the program.

"Our elderly team members have made tremendous contributions to the company's development, and some of them have served Sands China for as long as 10 or even 15 years during the prime of their lives," said Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

"With the Golden Age Programme, we hope to reward their devoted service as they move on with enthusiasm to the next phase of their lives," he added.

ANALYSIS | BOXING

Even Manny Pacquiao finds Father Time undefeated

TIM DAHLBERG, LAS VEGAS

MANNY Pacquiao's story is so remarkable that anyone familiar with it can't help but root that it doesn't come with a bad ending.

Fighting his way out of abject poverty in the Philippines was an accomplishment all by itself. Winning titles in eight different divisions and becoming a star pay-per-view attraction cemented his status as a boxing legend.

And don't forget about Pacquiao's second career as a politician. There's an outside chance he could end up as president of the Philippines if he plays his cards right.

The fact Pacquiao has options out of the ring might make it easier to retire following his decision loss Saturday to Yordenis Ugas. Hopefully he also has some of his millions left over to help him resist the urge to lace up the gloves again.

Yes, he could conceivably still fight, even at the age of 42. And, yes, people would probably still line up for tickets to watch.

But for all intents and purposes, it's over, something Pacquiao himself seemed to acknowledge, even if he wasn't quite ready to announce his retirement.

"Thank you to all of you," he said in a post-fight press conference that sounded a lot like the last one he will have. "Thank you boxing."

Boxing history, of course, is littered with fighters who couldn't quit on their own terms. Even Muhammad Ali wasn't immune, fighting in a cow pasture in Bermuda in a forgettable last fight and then having to fight Parkinson's the remainder of his life.

Here's hoping we've seen the last of Pacquiao in the ring. Not because it seems like boxing will have a big hole to fill with



Manny Pacquiao, of the Philippines, wipes his eye at a news conference after his loss to Yordenis Ugas, of Cuba, last Saturday

his departure, but because time has taken its toll on Pacquiao like it has for so many fighters before him.

Golfers can play long past their prime, as evidenced by Phil Mickelson's PGA Championship win at the age of 50. There's a football player Pacquiao's age in Florida who is coming off a Super Bowl win and showing no signs of wanting to hang up his cleats.

But you don't play boxing, where there's always a chance the next big punch may be the last.

Boxing will miss him, even as others take his place. Pacquiao was always entertaining to watch, always faithful to his sport

No, Pacquiao didn't look horrible in the ring when he dropped a unanimous decision to Ugas. But he sure didn't look like a fighter who could beat Errol Spence Jr., a dominant welterweight who was scheduled to be his opponent before being diagnosed with a detached retina

two weeks before the fight.

Pacquiao caught a break by escaping a possible beating. But even the unheralded Ugas was able to beat him going away — a clear sign that after 26 years fighting as a pro it's time to hang them up.

"I am a fighter inside and outside the ring and I have work to do now for my people," Pacquiao said. "In the future, you may not see Manny Pacquiao again in the ring but I am so happy what I accomplished."

Those accomplishments are many, and they are well earned. Pacquiao fought the best, beat most of them, and — except for his surprisingly lackluster performance in his hugely hyped fight with Floyd Mayweather Jr. — delivered every time he stepped in the ring.

He's not only a Hall of Famer but an inspiration to fighters everywhere. Once a street urchin, he became one of the most celebrated and highly paid fighters ever — and did it

by fighting anyone who was in his path.

His fights were national occasions in the Philippines, where life stopped for a few hours every time he went to battle. He would become famous in America, too, and spent long hours learning English so well that he could easily do interviews in his second language.

Now, there's nothing left to accomplish. No more belts, no more talk about a second fight with the retired Mayweather.

And certainly no fights at his age with the likes of Spence or Terence Crawford.

Luckily for Pacquiao, he's got other options.

Already a senator in the Philippines, he has teased the possibility of a presidential run next year. The polls so far don't favor him but Pacquiao has been competitive in any fight he's ever been in.

Boxing will miss him, even as other fighters take his place. He was always entertaining to watch, always faithful to his sport.

But in the end, the one battle Pacquiao was never going to win was with Father Time.

No one does. MDT/AP

AD

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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

TO REACH AGREEMENT, A FRIEND NEEDS TO ONLY MAKE ONE VISIT

In a bid to create the impression that China is isolated in the region, the Joe Biden administration announced Vice-President Kamala Harris would visit Singapore and Vietnam late last month when at least three other senior US officials were visiting, or were to visit, the Indo-Pacific region.

Yet it was not until Friday that Harris departed, and what has happened in Afghanistan prior to that, due to the irresponsible and disastrous withdrawal of US forces from the country, will have unavoidably changed the tenor of her discussions and she will have to restore her hosts' trust in the United States honoring any commitments it makes.

All the countries that the US is eager to draw to its side in its rivalry with China will likely have a similar takeaway from the situation in Afghanistan.

Harris will have a hard time persuading them that the US is a staunch friend and partner as it is clear that whenever the going gets tough the US will be gone, leaving its partners in the lurch without so much as a second thought.

While the Biden administration recognizes the prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region, it is well aware that the prosperity stems from the peace and stability in the region and countries' close economic and trade cooperation with China.

As such, when Harris on Monday reaffirmed Washington's commitment to work with regional countries on a rules-based order and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, she merely highlighted that it is the US that is stirring up trouble in the region, attempting to replace the United Nations Charters-based rules with rules of its own.

The high frequency, if not stubbornness, with which the Biden administration has been trying to close ranks with the Southeast Asian countries against China over the past few months only serves to expose the resistance it has encountered to these efforts.

Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has repeatedly expressed concerns about the region being forced into an either-or choice between the US and China. And his concerns have been echoed by other leaders in the region. That explains why some experts have reminded Harris to not make China a focal point in her meetings to avoid killing the talks.

Washington is not making friends in the region by trying to contain, smear and sanction their largest trade partner and neighbor.

But Harris will not return home empty-handed, as at least she will know from her trip that countries in the region want a new framework for the relations between the US and China that enable the two countries to develop areas of common interest, while constraining their disagreements.

Washington should bear in mind that East and Southeast Asia bore the brunt of the consequences of the US' Cold War militarism, and the countries that it is trying to drag to its side have no desire to be its proxies in any repeat of the geostrategic games that led to that.

The head of Germany's national labor agency says the country needs significantly more immigrants to plug gaps in the work force as the population ages.

Federal Labor Agency Chairman Detlef Scheele said in Tuesday's edition of the daily newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung that he expects the number of working-age people in Europe's biggest economy to decline by nearly 150,000 this year.

"In the coming years, it will be much more dramatic," the paper quoted him as saying.

Scheele said that immigrants would be key — "this is not

about asylum, but about targeted immigration for the gaps in the labor market."

"We need 400,000 immigrants per year, so significantly more than in recent years," Scheele said. "From nursing care via climate technicians to logisticians and academics, there will be a shortage of skilled workers everywhere."

Germany has 83 million inhabitants. Last year, the number of foreign nationals living in the country grew by about 204,000, 1.8% more than the previous year and the lowest growth rate in a decade.



AP PHOTO

SUPPLY ISSUES TAKE SHAKES OFF THE MENU AT BRITISH MCDONALD'S

MCDONALD'S says it has pulled milkshakes from the menu in all 1,250 of its British restaurants because of supply problems stemming from a shortage of truck drivers.

The fast-food chain says it is also experiencing shortages of bottled drinks.

"Like most retailers, we are currently experiencing some supply chain issues, impacting the availability of a small number of products," McDonald's said in a statement yesterday. "Bottled drinks and milkshakes are temporarily unavailable in restaurants across England, Scotland and Wales."

It said it was "working

hard to return these items to the menu."

It is the latest in a series of shortages to parts and products in Britain blamed on a combination of Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic. Britain's exit from the European Union at the end of last year has made it harder for the bloc's citizens to work in the U.K., and businesses have also been hit by large numbers of employees having to self-isolate because of possible exposure to the virus.

Industry body the Road Haulage Association says pandemic restrictions over the past 18 months have delayed many new recruit-

ts taking their driving tests. The group says Britain is short about 100,000 drivers, from a pre-pandemic total of 600,000.

Last week, chicken chain Nando's temporarily shut about 50 outlets because of a shortage of poultry. KFC also warned recently that supply chain issues meant it was unable to stock some menu items.

Supermarkets have also reported problems getting some products onto shelves.

The U.K. government has temporarily eased restrictions on the number of hours drivers can work in an attempt to improve the situation. MDT/AP

Israeli warplanes struck targets in Gaza overnight, drawing machine-gun fire from Hamas in the heaviest cross-border fighting since an 11-day war in May. In the occupied West Bank, officials said a Palestinian teen was killed in a clash yesterday with the Israeli military. Palestinian authorities said the 15-year-old boy died after being shot in the head during clashes with soldiers in the city of Nablus. The Israeli military said soldiers were carrying out an arrest raid in the Balata refugee camp when they came under attack from nearby rooftops.

Germany Seven people at a university in western Germany have received medical treatment after showing symptoms of poisoning, and prosecutors have opened an investigation into suspicions of attempted murder, authorities said yesterday. The employees and students at the Technical University in Darmstadt, south of Frankfurt, experienced medical problems on Monday. Police say that milk cartons and water containers in one of the buildings on the campus appear to have been contaminated with a harmful substance between Friday and Monday.



AP PHOTO

Ukraine's president yesterday urged closer ties between the ex-Soviet nation and NATO and the European Union in a speech marking the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's independence. Ukraine celebrated its independence day yesterday with a military parade and massive festivities in the capital Kyiv. Opening the parade, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that a strong Ukraine is "a country that dreams ambitiously and acts decisively."

Poland's government said yesterday that it sent tents, blankets, power generators and other items to help a group of refugees and migrants who have been stuck at the country's border with Belarus for more than two weeks. Polish officials insisted the group of some 30 migrants from Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere remain on Belarusian territory. They said an aid transport the government sent was waiting at the border for permission to enter Belarus.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Andy Wong



Hub's troubles. Asia Pacific's manufacturing hubs, like Shanghai here, are the current hotspots for Covid-19 in the region.