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THE ELECTORAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 17 COMPLAINTS OF ALLEGED ELECTORAL ILLEGALITIES P3

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THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA AND THE CITYU SIGNED AN AGREEMENT CREATING A JOINT POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA COURSE FOR LOCAL STUDENTS P5

China-NATO NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg urged China this week to join international efforts to limit the spread of nuclear weapons amid concerns that the Asian superpower is rapidly developing missiles capable of carrying atomic warheads. Laying out his priorities for nuclear disarmament at NATO's annual arms control conference, Stoltenberg said that more countries must be included in future missile restriction talks, not just Russia. "As a global power, China has global responsibilities in arms control."



Japan A court has summoned North Korea's leader to face demands for compensation by several ethnic Korean residents of Japan who say they suffered human rights abuses in North Korea after joining a resettlement program there that described the country as a "paradise on Earth," a lawyer and plaintiff said yesterday. Kim Jong Un isn't expected to appear in court for the Oct. 14 hearing, but the judge's decision to summon him is a rare instance in which a foreign leader was not granted sovereign immunity.



USA Jill Biden is going back to her whiteboard. After months of teaching writing and English to community college students in boxes on a computer screen, the first lady resumes teaching in person today [Macau time] from a classroom at Northern Virginia Community College, where she has worked since 2009. She is the first first lady to leave the White House and log hours at a full-time job. "I can't wait to get back in the classroom," she said recently.

More on backpage

ANOTHER WAY OUT

Travelers arriving in Hong Kong from China and Macau will no longer need to quarantine, easing curbs for those who wish to travel out of the SAR P2



ALIPAY TO ALLOW REMITTANCES BETWEEN MACAU AND MAINLAND CHINA P3

AP PHOTO

HONG KONG SCRAPS QUARANTINE FOR MACAU, MAINLAND ARRIVALS



LYNZY VALLES

TRAVELERS arriving in Hong Kong from China and Macau will no longer need to quarantine, Hong Kong's top official said yesterday, easing curbs imposed after summer outbreaks of the coronavirus on the mainland.

Chief Executive Carrie Lam announced in a news conference that those who have not traveled to medium- or high-risk areas on the mainland or Macau may enter the city, with arrivals capped at 2,000 travelers per day starting from next Wednesday, September 15.

The strategy is Hong Kong's Come2hk scheme that was

launched mid-May as part of the measures designed "to gradually resume the cross-boundary flow of people between Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macau in an orderly manner," as initially announced.

Travelers will still need a negative Covid-19 test prior to their arrival and must take several tests while in Hong Kong to ensure they are not infected.

Back in August, Hong Kong halted quarantine-free travel and imposed a mandatory quarantine period of either seven or 14 days, depending on the traveler's vaccination status.

Thus, Lam said that the

scheme had been put on hold because of the "fluctuating" pandemic situation in Hong Kong and on the mainland.

However, Hong Kong's "zero-Covid" strategy has seen authorities impose strict border restrictions and ban flights from high-risk countries, in the hopes that an absence of local community spread would allow it to reopen borders with mainland China.

"We have safely passed the virus incubation period and can say that we have achieved zero infections," Lam said.

With the Come2hk scheme, mainland and local residents will be able to enter the city without quarantine via the

Shenzhen Bay port and via the Hong Kong-Macau-Zhuhai Bridge, capped at 1,000 visitors each port.

Lam also said that, according to the new mechanism,

Hong Kong will also recognize vaccination records issued by several countries such as India, Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand, after similar official documents released by the Philippines and Indonesia were previously accepted by the Hong Kong authorities.

Meanwhile, the top official also announced that the government will resume the Return2hk scheme on September 15 after it was suspended in early August.

On November 23, the HK-SAR government implemented this scheme in a bid to ease travel restrictions for Hong Kong residents returning to the city from Guangdong Province and Macau by welcoming them back without a compulsory quarantine.

In Hong Kong, more than 7.88 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been administered since the launch of its vaccination drive on February 26 this year.

Yesterday, the city's Center for Health Protection (CHP) reported six new imported cases of Covid-19, taking the total tally to 12,129.

According to the CHP, a total of 66 cases have been reported in the past 14 days and all of them were imported cases.

QUARANTINE FACILITIES FOR HK'S DOMESTIC WORKERS TO OPEN

THE Hong Kong government is set to open the first and second phase of the Penny's Bay quarantine facilities to incoming foreign domestic workers on September 20, as cited in a report issued by Hong Kong Free Press. Around 800 rooms will be provided with daily fees of nearly HKD500. The Hong Kong Labour Department

previously announced that foreign domestic workers will be "centrally quarantined" in specified hotels. Domestic workers coming in from the Philippines and Indonesia are required to undergo a 21-day quarantine under special arrangements negotiated with the governments of the two countries.

RENATO MARQUES

CRIME

A 77-year-old man working as a doorman at a private building is being accused of sexually abusing two boys aged seven and nine years old in the public toilet of a shopping mall located at the Rua da Tribuna in the surroundings of Toi San neighborhood, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) reported.

The case was discovered through a complaint made

Man accused of sexual abuse of two children

to the PSP on Friday, September 3, from a woman who was taking care of the two children at the time of the alleged incident.

According to the report, the woman and the two children entered the shopping mall in the area to use the bathroom.

The suspect allegedly

followed the two children as they entered the men's room. Once inside, he attempted to remove their pants, fleeing the scene once they resisted him.

The children told the woman who was waiting for them and she reported to the nearest police station.

The PSP deployed officers to the location and they immediately requested to review the surveillance camera footage to identify the man and commence a search for him.

Not long after they spotted and detained the man who was still within the premises on a different floor.

Taken into custody for questioning, the man said that earlier he became intoxicated and that he does not remember any of the events reported by the children. He added that he did not remember meeting any children in the men's room that day and denied the accusations.

Nevertheless, based on the testimonies collected from the victims and the evidence gathered from the surveillance camera footage, the PSP has forwarded the case to the Public Prosecutions Office for the accusation of the man of the crime of sexual abuse of minors.

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Alipay launches Macau-mainland transfer feature

ANTHONY LAM

USERS of a mobile payment app originally from mainland China can now conduct immediate cross-border transfers with real-time currency conversion, the Ant Bank in Macau announced yesterday.

The service is facilitated by Alipay (Macau), the local version of the popular mainland mobile

payment service provider. Ant Bank is the operating entity of the app in Macau.

Alipay is widely used in Macau at both physical and online outlets. For example, many Macau shoppers on Taobao, a Chinese online shopping portal, choose to pay using the mobile payment app.

To enjoy better privileges, users may choose to process bank account or identity verification.

The former option will accord a mid-level accreditation to the user, who will be allowed to process funds of up to MOP10,000 daily and MOP100,000 annually. The latter will accord a high-level accreditation and will allow the user to process as much as MOP30,000 daily and MOP250,000 annually.

To use the instant cross-boundary transfer and currency exchange features, users must

obtain at least the mid-level accreditation. After which, they will be allowed to transfer their funds to the Mainland bank account in Macau patacas in the name under which their Alipay account is registered. The funds arriving in the mainland bank account will be automatically converted to the Chinese yuan as per the daily conversion rate of Ant Bank.

During the early stages of the

new service, the platform is offering perks to its users. Users will receive a MOP10 payment fund for the China Telecom and a 30 Chinese yuan spending credit in their mainland Alipay account.

Alipay is confident in the popularity of the new service, believing that it will help users to travel within the Greater Bay Area, in which Macau is a key jurisdiction.

CRIME

WOMAN CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN ROBBED OF HKD15,000 ON BUS

A local woman has filed a complaint to the Judiciary Police (PJ) claiming that she was robbed during a bus trip between Taipa and Macau.

According to the complainant, she took a bus from route 25B at Taipa's Avenida de Sun Yat Sen/CTM bus stop to Praceta de 1 de Outubro on the peninsula.

After alighting from the

bus, she realized that some of the money she was carrying in her pockets had disappeared.

According to the woman, she had two bundles of cash in different pockets. One bundle was to the value of HKD15,320 and the other was to the value of HKD63,500.

She claims that the bundle totaling HKD15,320 was stolen by someone during the

bus trip without her noticing.

The PJ is conducting investigations to try to find any possible suspects. At this point, it is not yet clear whether the woman was robbed or whether she dropped the money and a fellow passenger picked it up and kept it.

She did not explain to the police why she was carrying such a large sum in her pocket, but she asserted that the cash belongs to her. **RM**

ELECTIONS2021

CAEAL REPORTS 17 CASES OF POTENTIAL ELECTORAL ILLEGALITIES

FROM the start of the election campaign up until Monday, the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) received a total of 17 complaints of alleged electoral illegalities, the president of CAEAL, Tong Hiu Fong, said during a visit of CAEAL members to the mock polling station at the Tap Seac Multisport Pavilion.

According to Tong, and

after a preliminary analysis, nine of the 17 cases are suspected of having some form of illegality and hence were forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

Two were referred to the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC), five to the Public Security Police Force (PSP), and the last two to the Judiciary Police (PJ), for further investigation.

Among the causes of the

complaints were the illegal posting of campaign materials and incidents in which campaign activities were disrupted.

Additionally, a complaint was received about a person suspected of offering money in exchange for votes. The case has been referred to the CCAC.

The city's parliamentary election will take place this Sunday, September 12. **RM**

Master Plan of the Development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin



Mutual Discussion, Joint Construction, Joint Administration and Shared Benefits

Overview

President Xi Jinping visited Macao six times and Hengqin four times during the past ten years. He emphasised:

“What is particularly important is to ensure good collaboration between Zhuhai and Macao in developing Hengqin.”

“The original intention of developing the Hengqin New Area is to create a favourable environment for Macao's industrial diversification.”

Make the best effort in the development and opening up of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin

- A significant layout for intensifying the practice of “One country, two systems”
- A great driving force for Macao's long term development
- Beneficial to Macao for maintaining long term prosperity and stability and integrating into the overall national development

Area of Hengqin: 106 square kilometres

Area of Macao: 32.9 square kilometres



Master Plan (full version)



Corresponding Contents

AD



ANALYSIS

GUANGDONG-MACAU COOPERATION ZONE IN HENGQIN TO BRING GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

THE Chinese central authorities' plan for building the Guangdong-Macau in-depth cooperation zone in Hengqin has been hailed as a "major good news" for the Macau SAR.

Bringing with it new opportunities and new space for Macau, a city rather small in terms of its land area, the plan, issued by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council and made public on Sunday, is expected to create new impetus for Macau's development by facilitating its better integration into overall national development.

Experts from various sectors of Macau have told Xinhua that the plan will inject fresh vitality into Macau's higher education, scientific research and development, the tourism and leisure industry, and finance.

GENERAL GUIDELINES, POLICIES

The plan defines the strategic position of the zone as a new platform to boost Macau's appropriate economic diversification, a new space that provides convenience to Macau residents' life and employment, a new model to enrich the practice of "One country, two systems," as well as a new high ground for building the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area.

The plan prioritizes people's livelihood with a set of concrete

measures to build Hengqin into a new home for Macau residents to live and work in, such as exemption of income tax margins, lowering and gradually calling off charges for long-distance phone calls and cross-border internet connections between the two places, further facilitating Macau-registered vehicles into and out of Hengqin in a more convenient manner, and the joint building of regional medical centers by Guangdong and Macau.

Ho Teng Iat, president of the General Women's Association of Macau, told Xinhua that the plan could bring opportunities for the SAR to share the land resources, the pool of professionals and large scientific and technological equipment with Guangdong under the mechanism of mutual discussion, joint construction, joint administration and shared benefits between the two sides.

"It will help enhance the sense of gain, happiness and security for residents at the Greater Bay Area, including Macau," Ho said.

Ian Soi Kun, chairman of the Macau Jiangmen Communal Society, said Macau should step up its efforts to invite outside investments on major projects in

the industries of health, high-tech, exhibition, modern finance and culture and sports, in accordance with the strategic positioning and overall planning of the in-depth cooperation zone and on the basis of the city's practical situations.

Lao Chi Ngai, chairman of the Macau Economic Association, said the plan has set guiding policies on various fronts such as management system, industrial

The plan will greatly benefit the SAR's tourism and leisure industry with its simplification of the cross-border flow of goods and personnel, investments and financing

development, residential living and cross-border linkage, which gives clear directions coupled with maneuverability and flexibility.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIFFERENT SECTORS

Song Yonghua, rector of the University of Macau, said the plan will help Macau explore appropriate marketization for its

higher education sector, which has long been held back by limited space and market.

"According to the plan, the cooperation zone will continuously improve the convenience of customs clearance between Macau and Hengqin, which will help promote cross-border personnel exchange and therefore, effectively stimulate the vitality of teaching, learning and scientific research," said Song.

Experts from the tourism industry believed the plan will greatly benefit the SAR's tourism and leisure industry with its simplification of the cross-border flow of goods and personnel, investments and financing.

Wong Fai, president of the Macau Leisure Tourism Services Innovation Association, said the cooperation zone will provide bigger development space for Macau's leisure and tourism industry employers and help push for the upgrading and transformation of the industry.

"Measures such as exemption of investment income tax will attract more small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to invest in the zone," Wong said.

Ip Sio Kai, president of the

Macau Association of Banks, said the plan laid out major arrangements for supporting the development of modern finance and cross-border finance, with the new policy of free flow of cross-border capital and convertible capital accounts between Macau and Hengqin being a major innovation in the financial industry.

"This will provide a broad market and powerful policy support for the future development of Macau's financial industry," said Ip.

Ip Kuai Peng, pro-rector of the City University of Macau, said the city should take full advantage of the "One country, two systems" principle and its status as an international free trade port, as well as Hengqin's advantages in geographical location, resources and space, to make utmost efforts to focus on prioritized sectors and develop new industries, in aligning with the Guangdong provincial government and the Zhuhai municipal government.

"Macau should endeavor to help build a new integrated high-level opening up system between Hengqin and Macau to make the cooperation zone a new demonstration of the practice of 'One country, two systems,'" he said, suggesting efforts to start with hierarchical management and talent introduction. **MDT/XINHUA**

University of Coimbra and CityU offer joint postgrad program aimed at local students

RENATO MARQUES

THE Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra in Portugal and the City University of Macau (CityU) signed an agreement yesterday creating a joint postgraduate diploma course for local students who wish to engage in the field of International Economic Relations.

At the signing ceremony which took place at the Portuguese Consulate General in Macau, it was explained that besides economic relations, the program also includes Portuguese and English language courses, specifically the technical use of them in economics.

The program is aimed at local graduates from the fields of economics and finance who possess a good command of the English language.

With certain delays that have been revealed, the program will take two academic years (four semesters), of which three semesters will take place in Macau. An



HENRIQUE MACEDO

additional semester will be held in Portugal, where students will enroll in subjects such as Political Economy and European Union (EU) governance as well as a range of other optional subjects according to their field of interest.

A range of activities including field trips and visits to companies operating in the field will also be part of the program, which will be mostly taught in English.

At the event, the Consul-General of Portugal for Macau and Hong Kong, Paulo Cunha Alves, noted the current good relations between China and Portugal that have been developed recently through creativity and cultural exchange as well as in the education field.

Cunha Alves also said, "the sustainable growth of student exchange between the two coun-

tries is a trend that benefits the role of Macau."

Attending the event virtually, the director of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra, Álvaro Garrido, underlined the contribution of the multi-disciplinary focus of the schools involved, on the development and qualification of postgraduate education at the faculty. He noted that the cooperation between the

two institutions set to begin in the next academic year is an ambitious project.

In his turn, and representing CityU, the director of the Faculty of Economics, Adrian Cheung, was very optimistic about the partnership, expressing hopes that other cooperation programs between the two universities could begin after this initial project.

Professor Jun Liu, CityU's rector, also added that the institution is proud to be able to offer this opportunity to the CityU students to advance in their studies and increase their skills and proficiencies to help the future development of Macau.

Representing the Portuguese university, Derio Chan said that the new program "opens a new door so that local students can know in detail the political and economic structure of the EU as well as take advantage of the accumulated knowledge that the University of Coimbra has on the matter."

Economic official says new Hengqin plan to help city diversify

DESCRIBING the new Hengqin plan as "a new page in the development of Macau," Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong is confident in the city's diversification.

Lei made the comment when in an interview by a mainland media. The senior official hopes that further collaborations with neighboring Zhuhai city will help the "appropriate economic diversification" of Macau. It will also help to make further progress in boosting tourism in the two jurisdictions.

On Sunday, Beijing announced the implementation of the Guangdong-Macau Intensive Cooperation Zone masterplan in Hengqin, which clarified the positions, responsibility and missions of Guangdong, Hengqin and Macau in the collaboration.

Lei stressed that the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the city's weakness in having a concentrated eco-



nomy. "[The Cooperation Zone] will give Macau sufficient space to develop new industries," Lei said in the interview. "Especially in Big Health, modern finances, high and innovative technologies, as well as cultural base."

The senior official said that these new economic perspectives will enable and promote synergies and interactions between Zhuhai and Macau. He especially stressed that Macau has the lowest tax rate of the 11 cities in the Greater Bay Area. "Our free port policy will have its impact," Lei added. "We will also conti-

nue working on China-Lusophone countries interactions."

In addition, he pointed out that Zhuhai, Hengqin and Macau each have their own tourism resources. The collaboration plan will help integrate these resources and lead to stronger synergies.

"Macau has ample resorts, Hengqin has quality theme parks and Zhuhai has rich island tourism resources," Lei said. "These are all good for integration and interactions."

He added that collaborations will be further enhanced. **AL**

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PROSECUTORS DROP SEXUAL ASSAULT CASE AGAINST ALIBABA MANAGER

CHINESE prosecutors have dropped a case against a former Alibaba manager accused by a female colleague of sexual assault, weeks after the case caused a backlash against the e-commerce firm over how it handles sexual misconduct allegations.

Police detained the former manager, whose last name is Wang, in August after a female Alibaba employee accused him of sexual assault while they were on a business trip to the northern Chinese city of Jinan.

The woman accused Wang of turning a blind eye when she was plied with alcohol and molested during a dinner with a client. She said Wang later entered her hotel room and then sexually assaulted her while she was drunk.

Prosecutors in Jinan did not approve Wang's arrest and he received a 15-day detention instead, according to a statement



posted on the social media site Weibo by Jinan police late Monday night.

The move drew widespread criticism online, with many lamenting the lack of protection for women in sexual assault cases. Some said Wang's 15-day detention suggested he was not entirely innocent.

On Weibo, Wang's wife thanked his team of lawyers in a post early yesterday. She pre-

viously accused the female employee of framing her husband for sexual misconduct. Wang was not reachable for comment.

Wang was fired from his job after the woman posted an 8,000-word essay with the accusations in an internal post on the company's intranet and said Alibaba's human resources department ignored her complaints.

Alibaba also asked two senior

executives to resign over their handling of the case. Alibaba CEO Daniel Zhang pledged to establish an anti-sexual harassment policy with "zero tolerance" for sexual misconduct.

"Alibaba Group has a zero-tolerance policy against sexual misconduct, and ensuring a safe workplace for all our employees is Alibaba's top priority," the company said in a statement yesterday.

The global #MeToo movement against sexual harassment has gained prominence in China in recent years, with accusations made against several academics, a TV anchor and celebrities. But convictions are few and far between.

In a recent high-profile case, celebrity Kris Wu was arrested in Beijing on suspicion of rape after a Chinese influencer accused him of forcing girls to drink alcohol and then sexually assaulting them. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

ACTIVISTS SLAM GOVERNMENT FOR FOREIGN AGENT LABEL

THE Hong Kong government is arbitrarily labeling pro-democracy organizations as foreign agents, making them subject to prosecution under a tough national security law, a leader of the group that has organized the city's annual Tiananmen candlelight vigils said yesterday.

Chow Hang-tung, vice chair of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, made the comment shortly before the group submitted a letter to police rejecting their request for details of the alliance's operations and finances.

"It's a senseless, arbitrary labeling by the government right now," Chow said. "That's just wrong."

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said earlier yesterday that law enforcement agents may request information from suspected foreign agents or foreign political organizations in accordance with the law.

"If someone openly says that they will flout the law, they can't call themselves a civic society group," Lam said. **MDT/AP**

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MYANMAR

Opposition calls for national uprising against army

THE main underground group coordinating resistance to Myanmar's military government issued a sweeping call for a nationwide uprising yesterday, raising the prospect of spiraling unrest.

The National Unity Government, which views itself as a shadow government, was established by elected legislators who were barred from taking their seats when the military seized power in February.

The group's acting president Duwa Lashi La declared what he called a "state of emergency" and called for revolt "in every village, town and city in the entire country at the same time." A video of his speech was posted on Facebook.

Some 1,000 civilians have been killed in the seven months of clashes that followed the army takeover.

A spokesman for the ruling military downplayed the call for renewed protests.

Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun blamed exile media for exaggerating the opposition's strength, in a statement posted on the Telegram app by state television MRTV.

Myanmar has been wracked by unrest since the military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, with initially peaceful demonstrations against the ruling generals morphing into a low-level insurrection in many urban areas after security forces used deadly force.

There has been more serious combat in rural areas, especially in border regions where ethnic minority militias have been engaging in heavy clashes with the government troops.

The shadow government's prime minister, Mahn Winn Khaing Thann, said in a separate statement posted online that the new move was taken due to "changing circumstances" that required the complete abolition of the ruling

AP PHOTO



This image of Duwa Lashi La, the acting president of the National Unity Government, was posted yesterday on Facebook

military government. He did not elaborate.

The call for an uprising came a week ahead of the convening of the U.N. General Assembly. The National Unity Government is hoping to have the assembly formally recognize Kyaw Moe Tun, who supports the opposition group, as Myanmar's legitimate envoy to the world body. He had been the official representative of the government previously, but switched his loyalty to the resistance in late February.

"It's not uncommon for armed resistance forces to seek media attention ahead of a major event," noted David Mathieson, an independent analyst of Myanmar politics.

"Calls for an armed insurrec-

tion, beyond what is already unfolding, will likely evince concern from many U.N. members states", Mathieson said.

Military spokesman Zaw Min Tun also suggested the call for an uprising was timed to coincide with the U.N. General Assembly's opening.

Mathieson said the call to arms was unlikely to be welcomed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which has been seeking to broker an end to Myanmar's crisis. The organization's special envoy for Myanmar recently proposed a four-month ceasefire to carry out humanitarian activities.

Duwa Lashi La called on the ethnic militias, some of whom have declared themselves in alliance with the resistance, to "imme-

diately attack" government forces.

There were no immediate signs of heightened resistance activity, though solidarity was expressed online by some student groups and two of the most powerful ethnic armed groups, from the Kokang and Kachin minorities. Fighting was reported in the eastern area controlled by the Karen, the ethnic group perhaps most sympathetic to the resistance.

The National Unity Government is popular inside Myanmar, but its previous statements declaring the military government and its actions invalid and illegal have had little measurable political impact. The group controls no territory or state armed forces, nor has it won any diplomatic recognition from the international communi-

ty. Members of its shadow cabinet are in hiding inside Myanmar and in exile.

Fighting in the ethnic areas generally predates February's military takeover, often by many decades.

The ethnic armed groups have an ambivalent relationship with the shadow government, which is closely identified with the former civilian government of Suu Kyi. Her ousted administration failed to offer regional minorities the local autonomy they have sought.

Analyst Mathieson noted that some of the ethnic militias have offered only limited opposition to the army rulers or are "sitting the whole post-coup crisis out."

Duwa Lashi La's statements, however, appeared to offer confidence in his group's calls for resistance.

He warned people to avoid unnecessary travel, as well as to stock up on food and medicine, ahead of a "people's revolution".

At one usually quiet supermarket in Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city, about 60-80 shoppers crowded checkout counters to purchase meat, rice, cooking oils, and other essentials. There were reports of similar scenes in other food stores and open-air markets in the city.

It was not immediately clear if these crowded markets were driven by concerns over further unrest.

In his statement, military spokesman Zaw Min Tun dismissed "rumors" that people should stock up any essential commodities. **MDT/AP**

JAPAN

Ex-official gets prison term in casino bribery case

ATokyo court yesterday sentenced to four years in prison a former top government official for taking bribes from a gambling company, in a high-profile case that has added to the political woes of Japan's outgoing prime minister ahead of elections this year.

The Tokyo District Court found Tsukasa Akimoto, who was a vice-minister in charge of tourism and casino promotions, guilty of taking 7.6 million yen (\$69,200) in bribes from a Chinese gambling operator that was aiming

to start a casino business in Japan. The court also fined Akimoto the amount in bribes he received from the Chinese company.

The court's decision comes as Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga is already facing criticism for his government's coronavirus policies and hosting the Olympics despite widespread health concerns.

Three other former ministers and a lawmaker from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party have been found guilty in separate bribery and election fraud cases over the past few years.

AP PHOTO



Tsukasa Akimoto (center), a member of the governing Liberal Democratic Party, arrives at Tokyo District Court yesterday

Suga on Friday announced that he will not seek another term, paving the way for a new party leader

ahead of parliamentary elections to be held by late November.

Akimoto, who has since

left the ruling party, was also found guilty of offering bribes to his former advisors to make false testimony in court to cover up his wrongdoing.

The former vice-minister pleaded not guilty of any charges in his trial. Prosecutors alleged that Akimoto accepted the bribes in 2017-2018, including 3 million yen (\$27,000) in cash and other gifts, from the Chinese company in return for his support for a plan to build a casino in Japan.

Judge Toshihiko Niwa said in his ruling that

Akimoto's obstruction of legal proceedings by bribing witnesses showed his complete lack of compliance with the court, NHK public television reported.

Akimoto, who was released on bail, will have to return to jail following the sentencing. Akimoto's former aide, Akihiro Toyoshima, received a suspended prison term.

Japan passed a controversial law allowing casino gambling in 2016, a measure promoted by the ruling LDP as a way to stimulate the country's economy and find new sources of revenue, including capitalizing on the surging number of Chinese tourists. **MDT/AP**



FRANCE

Emotions raw before Paris trial for Islamic State carnage

LORI HINNANT

FOR the music lover, it was nearly three hours at gunpoint, wondering if he would become yet another body on the floor of the Bataclan concert hall in Paris.

For the grieving mother, the night of carnage robbed her of her son and tarnished her view of the vibrant neighborhood they both loved.

For the French president, a celebration of the national soccer team transformed into sleepless days of facing down a shocking extremist attack.

The survivors of the Islamic State group attack on Paris the night of Nov. 13, 2015, and those who mourn the 130 dead, are bracing for the long-awaited trial and hoping for justice.

It begins today in a secure modern complex embedded in Paris' original 13th-century courthouse. The main chamber and 12 overflow rooms can accommodate 1,800 victims, 330 lawyers and 141 accredited journalists for the nine-month trial.

Twenty men are going on trial, six of them in absentia. All but one of the absent men are presumed dead in Syria or Iraq. Most are accused of helping create false identities, transporting the attackers back to Europe

from Syria, providing them with money and phones, and supplying explosives and weapons.

The attacks sent France into a state of emergency. For Stéphane Toutlouyan and the others held hostage inside the Bataclan, the transformation was intensely personal.

"The reaction to this, afterwards, was to try and take back control of our lives and do the things that maybe we'd not done before, because we had no time to lose," he told The Associated Press.

On that fateful Nov. 13, a cell of nine IS supporters armed with automatic rifles and explosive vests struck across French capital. Nearly all were from France or Belgium, as were the cell's 10th member and sole survivor, Salah Abdeslam.

Abdeslam, who ditched his car and malfunctioning explosive vest, is the only defendant facing murder charges in the trial. Another key defendant, Mohammed Abrini, reappeared months later in footage of the IS attack on the Brussels airport and subway.

Many of the dead attackers, along with Abdeslam and Abrini, were childhood friends from the Brussels neighborhood of Molenbeek. Some joined the Islamic State group in

Iraq and Syria, including the Paris attack ringleader, Abdelhamid Abaaoud. Driving three rental cars, they took their "convoy of death" to the highway linking Brussels and Paris on Nov. 12, 2015, and scattered in reserved hotel rooms.

The next day, the German and French soccer teams faced off at the Stade de France, the country's national stadium just outside Paris.

It was a balmy Friday evening, and the city's bars and restaurants were packed. Victor Muñoz, a 25-year-old native of Paris' 11th arrondissement, was with old friends. At the nearby Bataclan concert venue, the American band Eagles of Death Metal were playing to a full house, including Toutlouyan, an enthusiastic fan of live rock.

The sound of the first suicide bombing at 9:16 p.m. barely carried over the noise of the stadium's crowd. The second came four minutes later. French President François Hollande, at the soccer game with Germany's foreign minister, was told about the dead bombers outside.

"I stayed in my place for a few minutes to avoid a panic effect. People see me from their seats, and they can't make the link between the detonations and my departure, or there's the risk of

stampede," Hollande told Le Parisien newspaper this month.

By then, a squad of gunmen including Abdeslam's brother and Abaaoud had opened fire at La Bonne Bière and other bars and restaurants in the neighborhood. Muñoz was among the dead.

That bloodshed outside came to an end at 9:41 p.m. at the Café Voltaire when Brahim Abdeslam detonated his explosives. The other two attackers fled.

Worse was to follow. At 9:47 p.m., three more gunmen burst into the Bataclan, firing indiscriminately. Ninety people died within minutes. The gunmen singled out a dozen people, including Toutlouyan. To this day, he doesn't know why they were spared.

"We stood behind a window for 2½ hours, watching what was going on, all the while wandering whether they would shoot us in five minutes, in two hours or in two days. At that moment, and for 2½ hours, we weren't the masters of our own lives," he said.

Their instructions: To report on the locations of police, then to act as go-betweens during sporadic negotiations. Shortly after midnight, Hollande gave the order to move in. Two of the gunmen blew themselves up; the third was shot by police.

Now there are questions that only the men on the stand can answer.

Abdeslam's decision to abandon the Renault Clio in northern Paris and call Brussels for help is a puzzle. Two friends drove through the night to fetch him, and on the road back to Belgium he slipped through three police checkpoints.

Abdeslam was finally arrested in his Brussels neighborhood of Molenbeek in March, days before the IS network attacked the Brussels airport and subway, killing 32 more people.

Abrini's role is murky as well. He spent a night with the IS attackers, but left Paris on Nov. 12, hiring a driver to take him three hours back to Brussels because he had missed the last train. He popped up again in Brussels months later, accompanying two suicide bombers to the airport but walked away as the bloodshed started.

The day after the murderous evening, a Frenchman in Syria claimed responsibility for the attacks in the name of IS. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1986 PINOCHET SURVIVES REBEL AMBUSH



The president of Chile has escaped an attempt on his life in a fierce attack which killed five of his bodyguards and wounded 11 more.

General Augusto Pinochet's motorcade was ambushed by at least 12 rebel fighters as he made his way back from his country home to the Chilean capital.

The Patriotic Front of Manuel Rodriguez - one of the country's Marxist guerrilla groups - are believed to be behind the attack. None of those involved have yet been captured.

The president has declared a 90-day "state of siege" - which gives him sweeping powers of detention and censorship.

The gunmen fired on the presidential convoy with machine guns, rifles, bazookas and hand grenades.

Despite the ferocity of the assault, the driver of the president's armour-plated Mercedes managed to speed back to the leader's residence at El Melocoton.

General Pinochet - who sustained only minor injuries to his hand during the assassination attempt - described the attack to reporters just hours after the attack.

"My first reaction was to get out of the car, but then I thought of my grandson at my side and I covered his body with mine," he said.

This attempt on the general's life comes at a time of increasing political and civil unrest in the South American country.

Amnesty International have said human rights violations in the country are now at the same level as they were before the bloody 1973 coup which brought General Pinochet to power.

This first attempt on the president's life marks an escalation in the scale of opposition to the 70-year old military leader who recently announced he wanted to remain in power for another 12 years.

But General Pinochet told reporters he did not fear his opponents.

"Try to kill me: I'm a soldier, I'm ready," he said.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Three years after the assassination attempt Augusto Pinochet lost a referendum on whether he should remain in power.

Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin won a presidential election in 1989.

The general stepped down as president in 1990, but remained commander-in-chief of the army.

He retired in 1998 but was arrested in Britain on murder charges at the request of the Spanish Government.

In 2000, the UK Home Secretary ruled the former dictator was unfit to be extradited to Spain and he returned to Chile.

A Chilean court ruled in 2001 he should be tried for human rights abuses, but later suspended the charges, declaring him unfit for trial.

However, in May 2004 the court ordered his immunity be lifted to enable a fresh investigation into human rights abuses.

General Pinochet died aged 91 in Santiago in December 2006.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Aren't you curious to know what that is? Give them some but not all of your time. Make it clear that you have boundaries that you have no intention of crossing for them, at least not yet.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Luna's steady alignment with grounded Saturn and mentally sharp Mercury makes it an ideal day to face heavy workloads as you can sail them with ease.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Your extroverted twin is finally getting some stage time today. The moon's presence in artful Libra pushes you to reconnect with your creative projects and to indulge your craving for romance.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Cancer folks require regular solitude, peace, and privacy in the comfort of their homes. Let yourself seek out that restorative space today as the moon meanders through balance-seeking Libra.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You've got the gift of a silver tongue today, Leo. It's easy to sweet talk people over to your way of seeing things as the moon meanders through charming Libra.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You prefer to approach the world with a realistic mindset. Let that craving for practicality seep back in today as the moon's presence in balance-seeking Libra points your focus towards your finances.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

As a Libra, you're always taking care of the people around you. Let yourself soak up some of that TLC back today as the nurturing moon's presence in your sign calls for self-care and pampering.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Luna's supportive alignment with communicative Mercury and grounded Saturn makes it an ideal day for journaling, therapy, and engaging in other healing modalities.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

The moon's harmonious connection with communicator Mercury and steady Saturn makes it an ideal day to put your charisma on display to a large audience.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

What's happening in your current career story, Capricorn? Spend some time today mulling over your trajectory and diving deeper into honing your next direction.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Let yourself tap back into this natural mode of action today as the harmony-seeking Libra moon helps you step back and view your own outgrown issues from a fresh vantage point.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Pisces people are always highly-tuned into the environment. Let yourself carve out some much-needed social downtime today as the moon wades into peace-seeking Libra.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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EASY+

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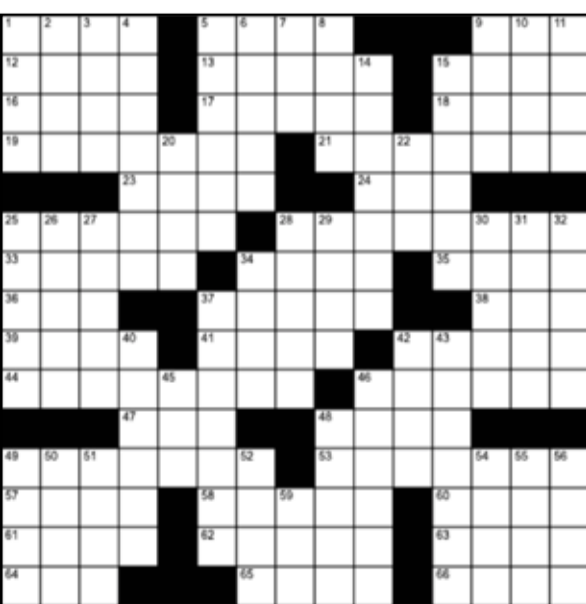
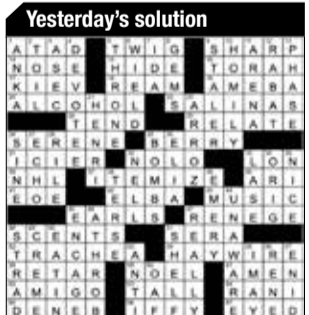
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	17	28	cloudy
Harbin	13	22	cloudy
Tianjin	19	30	cloudy
Urumqi	20	32	fine
Xi'an	15	28	fine
Lhasa	9	19	cloudy
Chengdu	20	28	showers
Chongqing	21	30	cloudy
Kunming	16	23	cloudy
Nanjing	22	27	cloudy
Shanghai	24	27	cloudy
Wuhan	20	29	cloudy
Hangzhou	23	29	overcast
Taipei	26	32	fine
Guangzhou	26	34	thunderstorms
Hong Kong	27	31	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	16	13	rain
Frankfurt	28	14	bright
Paris	30	17	fine
London	29	20	fine
New York	25	18	fine

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Evils; 5- Graven image; 9- Pampering place; 12- Feline line; 13- Legal right; 15- Smart; 16- Pearl Mosque city; 17- One in prison for good; 18- Bang-up; 19- Dog of mixed breed; 21- Lounges; 23- Female child; 24- Curve; 25- Evaluate; 28- You can't fight them.; 33- Steeple; 34- Method; 35- It's used to walk the dog; 36- 10th letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 37- Effluent system; 38- Queue after Q; 39- Author ___ Stanley Gardner; 41- Salt Lake City hoopsters; 42- The Younger and The Elder; 44- Mail-goer, often; 46- Monetary unit of Saudi Arabia; 47- Children's game; 48- Cotton seed pod; 49- Greek goddess of justice; 53- Christmas item; 57- Caucus state; 58- Point in the desired direction; 60- Audacity; 61- Faucet problem; 62- Bottom line; 63- Periphery; 64- Hosp. readout; 65- ___ a soul; 66- Faculty head;

DOWN: 1- Mosque leader; 2- Building block brand; 3- Bereft; 4- Bluster; 5- Loafers; 6- Hand tool; 7- Gut reaction?; 8- Untruths, tells falsehoods; 9- Jeff MacNelly comic strip; 10- Yearn deeply; 11- Breezes through; 14- Tab grabber; 15- Easily remembered; 20- Greet the day; 22- Endeavor; 25- Until now; 26- Future fern; 27- Move sideways; 28- Crouch in fear; 29- Bad time in the Senate; 30- Main artery; 31- Disinfectant brand; 32- ___ luck; 34- Allot; 37- Propose; 40- Catch in a sting; 42- Equal a bet; 43- Supposed; 45- Battery size; 46- Every 60 minutes; 48- One way to play; 49- Assistant; 50- Miffed; 51- Thin offshoot; 52- Lots and lots; 54- Put aboard; 55- Gymnast Korbut; 56- Small secluded valley; 59- Hellenic vowel;



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
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- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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Ref: 2108 1002 1,510 ft² 3 2 1

Rain Dance Property
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Traditional apartment **HKD 2,680,000**
Ref: 2103 6001 788 ft² 2 1 1

AD



ECONOMY

CHINA'S TRADE ACCELERATES IN AUGUST DESPITE CORONAVIRUS

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

CHINA'S import and export growth accelerated in August despite disruptions due to the spread of the coronavirus's delta variant.

Exports rose 25.6% over a year earlier to \$294.3 billion, up from July's 18.9% growth, customs data showed yesterday. Imports rose 33.1% to \$236 billion, up from the previous month's 28.7%.

That came despite lingering disruptions in industrial production chains due to last year's global economic shutdown and a renewed rise in infections in the United States and some other markets that has dampened consumer sentiment.

China has so far defied forecasts that export demand would level off as anti-disease controls eased, entertainment and other service industries reopened and foreign rivals returned to global markets.

"Exports and imports were much stronger than anticipated last month thanks to buoyant demand, even as the data point

to some lingering supply shortages," Sheana Yue of Capital Economics said in a report.

This year's trade figures are distorted by comparison with 2020. Global demand plunged in the first half after governments shut factories and shops to fight the pandemic. Chinese exporters reopened after the ruling Communist Party declared the virus under control in March 2020, while its foreign competitors were hampered by anti-virus curbs.

China's exports to the United States rose 15.5% in August over a year earlier to \$51.7 billion, accelerating from July's 13.4% growth despite U.S. tariff hikes imposed in an enduring battle over Beijing's technology ambitions. Imports of American goods increased 33.3% to \$14 billion, up from the previous month's 25.5% gain.

President Joe Biden, who took office in January, has yet to say whether he might roll back penalties imposed on Chinese imports by his predecessor, Donald Trump. Envoys from the two sides have talked by video link but

have yet to announce a date for negotiations.

China's global trade surplus narrowed by 1% in August over a year earlier to \$58.3 billion.

The politically volatile surplus with the United States widened by 10% to \$37.7 billion.

Chinese exports to the 27-nation European Union declined 9.9% from a year ago to \$46.2 billion while imports of European goods fell 22% to \$25.3 billion. The trade surplus with Europe widened by 10.9% to \$20.9 billion.

China's economic growth slowed to a still-robust 7.9% over a year earlier in the latest quarter as a rebound from the pandemic leveled off.

Economic growth in the April-June period compared with the previous quarter, the way other major economies report results, was 1.3% as factory and consumer activity returned to normal. That was up from the January-March period's 0.6% expansion over the final three months of 2020 but still among the past decade's weakest quarters. **MDT/AP**

TECH

When digital services meet 600-yr-old Forbidden City

CHINA'S Palace Museum, also known as the Forbidden City, is stepping up the use of digital technology to boost its public appeal and international exchanges.

At the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services, a series of digital technologies, such as panorama photography, high-precision three-dimensional data collection, AI-powered smart glasses and voice interaction have rendered the museum fashionable and vibrant.

The 285-square-meter pavilion of the museum, showcasing the applications of digital technologies in archaeology, cultural relic protection and exhibition, was a hit at the services fair.

The digitalization of the Palace Museum has spanned more than 20 years, said Yu Zhuang, deputy head of the museum's digital and information department.

The fundamental purpose of the move is to permanently preserve, inherit and utilize such a large and precious human cultural heritage via digital technology, Yu added.

Currently, over 700,000 cultural relics have been digitalized in the Palace Museum, and basic digitalization is being promoted and accelerated in an orderly manner with 70,000 to 80,000 pieces being digitalized each year.

"We are trying to give all tangible cultural relics a digital identification," Yu said.

Frequent defacement of and damage to cultural relics across

the world also make Yu feel an urgent need to speed up the digitalization of the Palace Museum.

Yu mentioned the dismantling and repair of an antique -- a clock decorated with a tower and an elevated pagoda. He said the whole process of the repair and every piece of the clock were recorded using three-dimensional data collection.

"If the collection and measurements are precise enough, we can use three-dimensional printing and other technologies to replicate this complex and sophisticated clock in the future," Yu added.

Museums in China have accelerated the pace of digitalization amid the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing housebound visitors to enjoy online exhibitions over the internet.

In the future, cultural relics in museums from all over the world can be easily gathered together in the virtual form to organize an international exhibition, facilitating dialogues and exchanges between civilizations and cultures, Yu said. "This is very exciting."

The achievements that the Palace Museum made in digitalization have been introduced to more than 200 countries and regions.

Leng Hanzhang, a member of Yu's department, said that the image segmentation technology used to offer clearer and closer sights of the painting masterpieces in the Palace Museum's collection at a pixel level is now widely applied in museums at home and abroad. **XINHUA**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China expresses support to Guangdong-Macau master plan



Sands China Ltd. "greatly welcomes and fully supports" the master plan of the Development of the Guangdong-Macau Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin promulgated by the central government

Sunday, according to a statement the gaming operator issued.

An important initiative for the in-depth implementation of the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong

Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the master plan seeks to create a favourable environment for Macau's industrial diversification, while providing fresh impetus for Macau's long-term development.

It recalled that the company has held a series of initiatives to enhance team members' understanding of the nation's development and in turn "deepen their love for China and Macau."

"Sands China is fully committed to supporting the master plan, and will continue to contribute to the economic diversification and long-term prosperity of Macau for its integration into the overall national development plan as the city begins a new chapter in its development journey," the statement read.

GEG relaunches 'U-LEAD Graduate Internship Program'



This year, in support of the 2021 internship career experience program organized by the Labor Affairs Bureau (DSAL) for the second year, Galaxy Entertainment Group relaunched the U-LEAD Graduate Internship Program (U-LEAD).

Offering a three-month integrated resorts internship to university graduates, U-LEAD aims at giving participants the work experiences needed to develop their professional skills and enhance their competitiveness.

An opening ceremony was

held earlier at the ballroom of Banyan Tree Macau in Galaxy Macau.

This year's U-LEAD continues to provide a variety of internship opportunities across a number of departments, including Hotel Operations, Housekeeping, Marketing and Facilities Management, and others. Integrating comprehensive skills training and professional guidance.

U-LEAD will provide up to 200 hours of corporate, departmental and on-the-job training to all participants so that they can enhance their professional skills, accumulate work experiences and obtain a deeper understanding of the operations of large-scale integrated resorts.

FOOTBALL | WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

Pressure mounts on US after two draws

RONALD BLUM, NASHVILLE

PLAYERS walked off the field dejected. Nervous American fans are in an uproar.

No, this wasn't four years ago. This is the here and now for the U.S. soccer team, which has just two points after its first two World Cup qualifiers, three injured regulars and a team leader sent home for violating COVID-19 protocols.

A 1-1 draw at home against Canada, which last reached soccer's showcase in 1986, caused concern and ratcheted pressure. Instead of a revival under coach Gregg Berhalter, the Americans are sputtering heading into Wednesday night's game at Honduras, their third in a seven-day span. The U.S. hasn't won a qualifier since 2013 in Central America, where it has one win and three draws in its last eight matches.

"The hole's starting to get a little deeper," former American defender Marcelo Balboa, now a commentator for Univision, said yesterday [Macau time]. "It puts more emphasis on the away game in Honduras, which we know, the grass will be thick. It'll be hot. It'll



United States forwards Christian Pulisic (10) and Josh Sargent (9) leave the pitch following a 1-1 draw with Canada

be humid. The fans will weigh — the buzzing sound for three hours leading up to the game surrounding the stadium."

Defender Sergiño Dest (sprained ankle), goalkeeper Zack Steffen (back spasms, positive COVID test) and midfielder Gio Reyna (strained hamstring) won't make the trip. Jordan Morris, Paul Arriola and Tim Weah already were hurt before the opener.

Midfielder Weston McKennie, a member of the team's six-man

leadership council, was told to return to Italy by Berhalter after violating team COVID-19 protocols. McKennie, among the top American players, was kept off Sunday's game-day roster by Berhalter for the rules violation. Breaking COVID-19 protocols by hosting a party caused him to be dropped by Juventus for its Derby della Mole against Torino in April.

"There are high expectations for those who are a part of the U.S. men's national team, and in order

to be successful it's important that everyone in the group is accountable," Berhalter said in a statement.

San Jose midfielder Jackson Yueill was added to the roster and trained with the team yesterday at Lipscomb University.

This team has its most accomplished roster, led by players headed to this season's Champions League in Christian Pulisic (Chelsea), Tyler Adams (RB Leipzig), McKennie, Dest (Barcelona), Steffen (Manchester City), Reyna

(Borussia Dortmund), Brenden Aaronson (RB Salzburg), John Brooks (Wolfsburg) and Jordan Pefok (Young Boys).

They have managed only slightly better than the awful start to the previous cycle, when the U.S. opened with a 2-1 home defeat to Mexico and 4-0 thrashing at Costa Rica.

"It's a team sport," Adams said. "It doesn't matter where we come from. If we don't go out there and do the things that we're good at, that we're just a group of names on a piece of paper. Other teams, maybe they don't have the players that play for these big clubs, but it doesn't matter."

And suspensions may become a factor soon. Defenders John Brooks, DeAndre Yedlin and Mark McKenzie have received yellow cards along with Adams and Pefok. Any of those would receive a one-game ban for an additional single yellow card.

Play in the first two games was subpar.

"We needed much faster ball movement. Everyone could see from the outside it took just way too long on the ball," Berhalter said. **MDT/AP**

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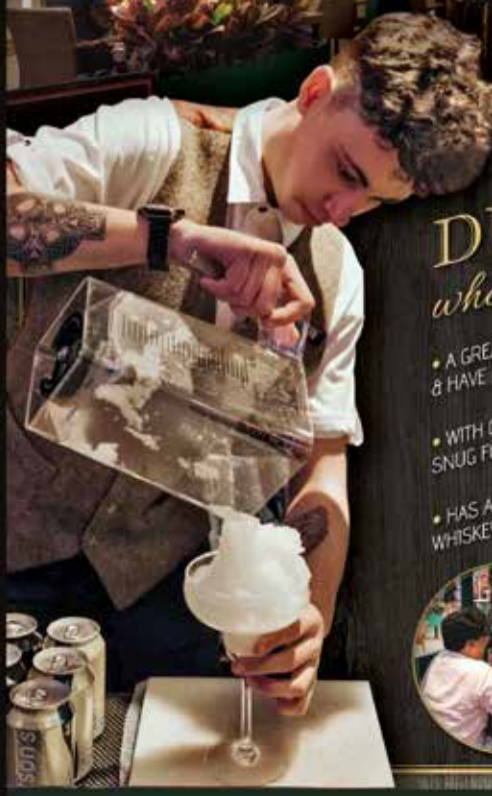



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OPINION

World Views

Jay L. Zagorsky, Boston University
 MDT/The Conversation



BITCOIN IS NOW 'LEGAL TENDER' IN EL SALVADOR - HERE'S WHAT THAT MEANS

The government even went a step further in promoting the cryptocurrency's use by giving US\$30 in free bitcoins to citizens who sign up for its national digital wallet, known as "Chivo," or "cool" in English. Foreigners who invest three bitcoins in the country - currently about \$140,000 - will be granted residency.

Panama is considering following El Salvador's lead. Does making bitcoin legal tender mean every store and merchant in El Salvador will now have to accept digital payments? If more countries do the same thing, what will this mean for consumers and businesses around the world?

As an economist who studies wealth and money, I believe that briefly explaining what legal tender is will help answer these questions.

Legal tender refers to money - typically coins and banknotes - that must be accepted if offered in payment of a debt.

The front of every U.S. banknote states "This note is legal tender for all debts public and private." This statement has been enshrined in federal law in various forms since the late 1800s.

The greenback is not legal tender in just the U.S. El Salvador, for example, switched from the colon, its previous currency, to the U.S. dollar in 2001. Ecuador, Panama, East Timor and the Federated States of Micronesia also all use the dollar as legal tender.

But despite the definition above, legal tender doesn't mean all businesses must accept it in payment for a good or service.

That requirement applies only to debts owed to creditors. The ability for a store to refuse cash or other legal tender is made explicit on the websites of both the U.S. Treasury, which is in charge of printing paper money and minting coins, and the Federal Reserve, which is in charge of distributing currency to the nation's banks.

This is why many companies such as airlines accept payments exclusively by credit card, and many small retailers take only cash.

As the U.S. Treasury points out, there is "no federal statute mandating that a private business, a person or an organization must accept currency or coins as payment for goods or services. Private businesses are free to develop their own policies on whether to accept cash unless there is a state law which says otherwise."

And this would be no different if the U.S. made bitcoin legal tender. Private businesses would not be required to accept it.

There is clearly some confusion in El Salvador over the issue, however. Its original bitcoin law, passed in June 2021, states that "every economic agent must accept bitcoin as payment when offered to him by whoever acquires a good or service."

This led to protests and resulted in skepticism from economists and others. As a result, El Salvador President Nayib Bukele tweeted in August that businesses did not have to accept bitcoin.

El Salvador is betting that being the first to open its doors completely to bitcoin will help boost its economy. President Bukele said he believes this will encourage investors with cryptocurrency to spend more of it in his country. He even has a plan to have El Salvador's state-run geothermal utility use energy from the country's volcanoes to mine bitcoin.

Creating, or mining, bitcoin takes a lot of energy, so mining makes sense only in places with cheap electricity.

The \$30 given to every citizen who joins the cryptocurrency craze will temporarily stimulate the economy. However, the overall impact will likely be a short-term boost. The impact of similar payments in other countries, like COVID-19 stimulus payments, appear to end after people have spent the money. Moreover, it's unclear El Salvador's increasingly indebted government can even afford it.

And the widespread adoption of bitcoin will likely take years. El Salvador has been installing 200 bitcoin ATMs to allow people to convert cryptocurrency into dollars.

Since just 30% of the Central American country's population even has a bank account, I believe the U.S. dollar will still be used in El Salvador for a long time, even if its president wants to move toward bitcoin.

MERKEL SAYS VACCINATED AREN'T 'GUINEA PIGS'

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has publicly rebuked a top rival politician's comments describing people who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 as "guinea pigs."

The long-serving leader said yesterday in a speech before Parliament that "none of us was and is any way a guinea pig when it comes to vaccination."

Vice Chancellor Olaf Scholz, whose center-left Social Democrats Party currently leads polls ahead of Germany's Sept. 26 elections, recently said that fully vaccinated people have been

"the guinea pigs for those who so far have held off." He added that he was vaccinated and others should follow.

Merkel, however, did not appear to agree with her deputy's messaging in her Tuesday speech.

The chancellor said that "neither Olaf Scholz nor me, and no one else" was a "guinea pig" in taking the fully tested and approved vaccines in Germany.

Merkel's center-right bloc is struggling in polls ahead of nationwide elections.

THE BUZZ

UN CLIMATE CHIEF: NO COUNTRY IS SAFE FROM GLOBAL WARMING

PETER DEJONG & FRANK JORDANS, ROTTERDAM

THE U.N.'s top climate official urged governments yesterday [Macau time] to stop their "deferral and delay" tactics and instead embrace rapid, widespread measures to curb and adapt to global warming.

Amid a season of extreme weather and new temperature records, Patricia Espinosa warned that no nation is safe from the impacts of climate change. Greece on Monday created a new ministry to address the impact of climate change following the country's worst heat wave in decades.

"There is not anymore a situation where we can say these are the vulnerable countries and these are the not vulnerable countries," she said.

With less than three months to go before this year's U.N. climate summit, Espinosa appealed for governments that have signed up to the 2015 Paris accord to back what she called "ambitious, rapid, widespread, transformative efforts" to limit global temperature rise and prepare for the inevitable im-



acts of a warming world. "We need to see that parties move beyond politics of deferral and delay and widen the narrow scope of self-interest," she said.

Espinosa's comments came at the opening of a new floating office for the Global Center on Adaptation in the Dutch port city of Rotterdam.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte called the office "a perfect example of how we can adapt to the changing climate," noting that the building is off-grid, carbon neutral, self-sufficient and ready to adapt to future rising sea levels.

Such high-tech facilities are beyond the reach of millions in poorer nations, whose leaders have demanded that developed countries pay some of the costs

they face in adjusting to climate change.

The president of Congo, Felix Tshisekedi, said he hoped the U.N. climate summit in November would see a commitment for rich nations to double their existing pledge of providing \$100 billion a year to developing countries to combat the effects of climate change.

Frans Timmermans, the European Commission vice president, called upon the United States to help meet the \$100 billion target - which itself is still \$30 million short.

China, one of the world's biggest polluters, should also increase its efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, said Timmermans, whose portfolio covers environmental issues. MDT/AP

WIGGLING TWIN PANDA CUBS ARE BORN AT THE MADRID ZOO

MADRID'S panda family grew with the birth of twin cubs, a boost to the popular species that is considered China's national treasure.

The twins were born to their mother, Hua Zuiba, and father, Bing Xing, a pair of giant pandas on loan from China, the Madrid Zoo announced in a statement.

The births took place with a four-hour difference Monday, the zoo said. Veterinarians were waiting to determine the pair's sex, weight and vital signs. But the zoo statement said the birth had been "calmer" due to the mother's experience.

Madrid's adult pandas have had four other cubs



earlier, including another pair of twins in 2010. They were all sent back to China after a few years in the Madrid Zoo.

In a video released by the zoo, Hua Zuiba can be seen vocalizing while moving into the labor position. A cub appears in just a few seconds, wiggling energetically before the mother takes the newborn

with her mouth and licks it while holding it in her lap.

Panda cubs are born without hair and with pink skin, and are completely depend on their mother for at least four months.

There are about 1,800 pandas living in the wild in China and about 500 in captivity worldwide, where twin births are not uncommon. MDT/AP



USA The resurgence of Covid-19 this summer and the national debate over vaccine requirements have created a fraught situation for the United States' first responders, who are dying in larger numbers but pushing back against mandates. It's a stark contrast from the beginning of the vaccine rollout when first responders were prioritized for shots. The mandates affect tens of thousands of police officers, firefighters and others on the front lines.



Chilean health authorities approved the use of the Sinovac vaccine against the coronavirus for 6-year-old children and older, the first Latin America's country to take that step. Heriberto Garcia, director of Chile's Public Health Institute, said the institution approved the new measure by five votes in favor and one against. Now, the Health Ministry has to determine dates and the mechanism to start vaccinations.

New Caledonia France's overseas territory of New Caledonia has reported its first three cases of confirmed COVID-19 infections. The remote Pacific Ocean archipelago has, until now, been coronavirus-free. A doctor in the Department of Health and Social Affairs, Sébastien Mabon, said that the first cases had been confirmed yesterday [Macau time].



Ethiopia A least 150 people starved to death last month in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region amid a near-complete blockade of food aid by federal and allied authorities, the Tigray forces say, while close to half a million people face famine conditions. The starvation deaths occurred in six communities as well as in camps for hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people in the town of Shire, according to a briefing by the Tigray External Affairs Office.