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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

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THE TRIAL VERSION OF AN ITINERARY TRACING APP IS EXPECTED TO BE ONLINE WITHIN THE MONTH: HEALTH BUREAU

AS MANY TRY LIVING WITH VIRUS, CHINA KEEPS UP ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

SINGLES' DAY IS TAKING ON A MUTED TONE THIS YEAR AS REGULATORS CRACK DOWN ON THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY AND XI PUSHES FOR 'COMMON PROSPERITY'



China A snowstorm that has lingered for several days in northeastern China has forced schools to close, suspended rail services, crushed greenhouses and left one person dead. More than 50 centimeters of snow was reported in some cities in Liaoning province and China's Inner Mongolia region. Snow fell for 46 hours, the longest since at least 1951, state broadcaster CCTV said.



Japan Fumio Kishida was reelected as Japan's prime minister yesterday after his governing party scored a major victory in key parliamentary elections. Elected just over a month ago by parliament, Kishida called a quick election in which his governing party secured 261 seats in the 465-member lower house — the more powerful of Japan's two-chamber legislature — enough to maintain a free hand in pushing legislation through parliament.



Myanmar A court has sentenced two members of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi's political party to 90 years and 75 years in prison after finding them guilty of corruption, their lawyer said. The sentences appeared to be the most severe so far for any of the dozens of members of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy who were arrested after the military seized power on Feb. 1.

More on backpage

FULL HOUSE FOR 'HOME' GRAND PRIX

133 drivers from Macau, HK, mainland to race next week in Guia Circuit, tickets pre-sale surpasses 60%



QUARANTINE-FREE TRAVEL MOVES 'GOAL-POST': ACADEMIC



TOURISM ASSOCIATION LEADER SEES NO BLOCKAGE OF BACKPACKERS UNDER NEW LAW

THE CONVERSATION

ARE PEOPLE LYING MORE SINCE THE RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND SMARTPHONES?

DAVID MARKOWITZ
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

TECHNOLOGY has given people more ways to connect, but has it also given them more opportunities to lie?

You might text your friend a white lie to get out of going to dinner, exaggerate your height on a dating profile to appear more attractive or invent an excuse to your boss over email to save face.

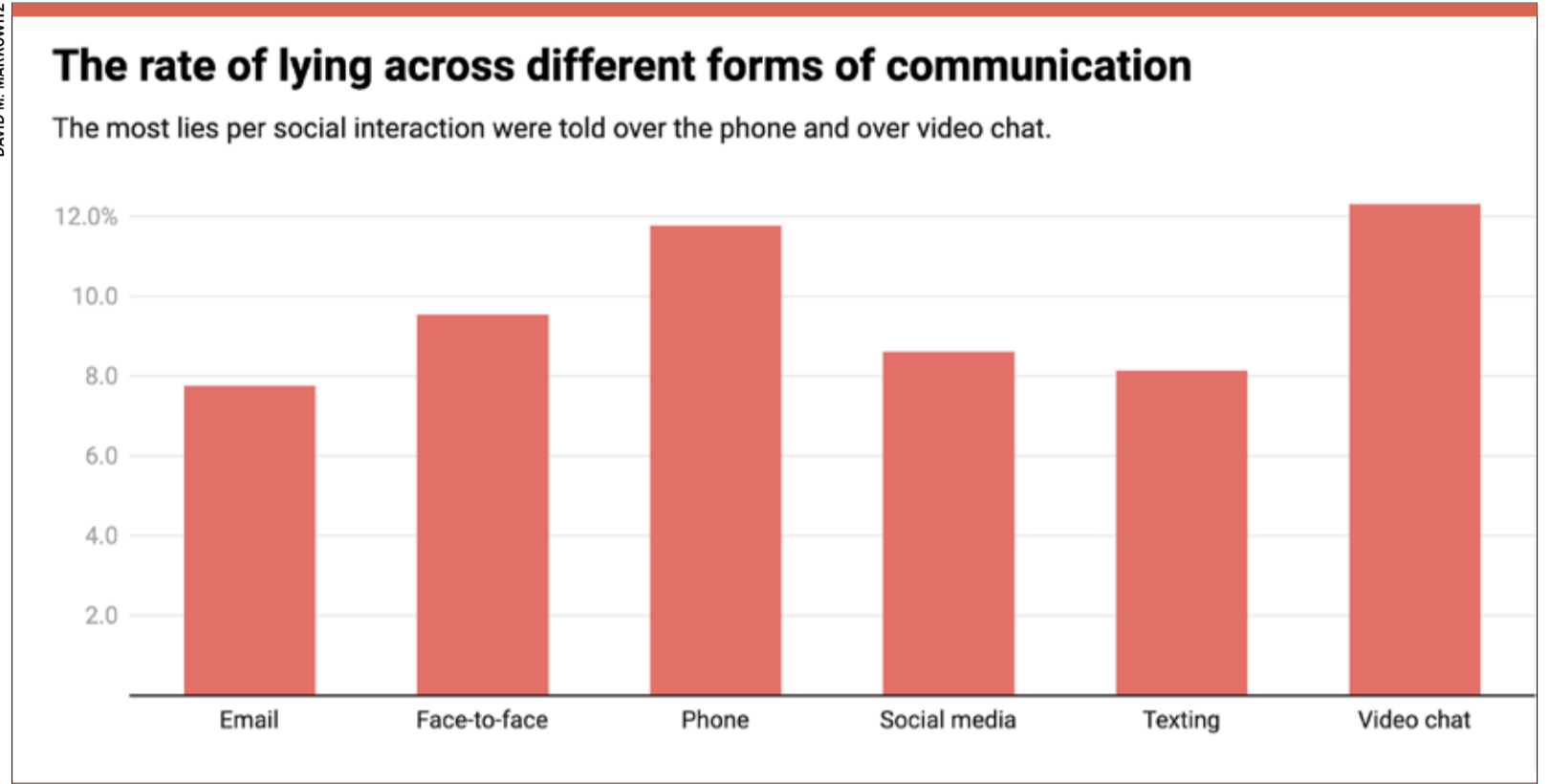
Social psychologists and communication scholars have long wondered not just who lies the most, but where people tend to lie the most – that is, in person or through some other communication medium.

A seminal 2004 study was among the first to investigate the connection between deception rates and technology. Since then, the ways we communicate have shifted – fewer phone calls and more social media messaging, for example – and I wanted to see how well earlier results held up.

THE LINK BETWEEN DECEPTION AND TECHNOLOGY

Back in 2004, communication researcher Jeff Hancock and his colleagues had 28 students report the number of social interactions they had via face-to-face communication, the phone, instant messaging and email over seven days. Students also reported the

DAVID M. MARKOWITZ



number of times they lied in each social interaction.

The results suggested people told the most lies per social interaction on the phone. The fewest were told via email.

The findings aligned with a framework Hancock called the “feature-based model.” According to this model, specific aspects of a technology – whether people can communicate back and forth seamlessly, whether the messages are fleeting and whether communicators are distant – predict whe-

re people tend to lie the most.

In Hancock’s study, the most lies per social interaction occurred via the technology with all of these features: the phone. The fewest occurred on email, where people couldn’t communicate synchronously and the messages were recorded.

THE HANCOCK STUDY, REVISITED

When Hancock conducted his study, only students at a few select universities could create a Facebook account. The iPhone was in its early stages of development, a highly confidential project nicknamed “Project Purple.”

What would his results look like nearly 20 years later?

In a new study, I recruited a larger group of participants and studied interactions from more forms of technology. A total of 250 people recorded their social interactions and number of interactions with a lie over seven days, across face-to-face communication, social media, the phone, texting, video chat and email.

As in Hancock’s study, people told the most lies per social interaction over media that were synchronous and recordless and when communicators were distant: over the phone or on video chat. They told the fewest lies per

social interaction via email. Interestingly, though, the differences across the forms of communication were small. Differences among participants – how much people varied in their lying tendencies – were more predictive of deception rates than differences among media.

Despite changes in the way people communicate over the past two decades – along with ways the COVID-19 pandemic changed how people socialize – people seem to lie systematically and in alignment with the feature-based model.

There are several possible explanations for these results, though more work is needed to understand exactly why different media lead to different lying rates. It’s possible that certain media are better facilitators of deception than others. Some media – the phone, video chat – might make deception feel easier or less costly to a social relationship if caught.

Deception rates might also differ across technology because people use some forms of technology for certain social relationships. For example, people might only email their professional colleagues, while video chat might be a better fit for more personal relationships.

TECHNOLOGY MISUNDERSTOOD

To me, there are two key takeaways.

First, there are, overall, small differences in lying rates across media. An individual’s tendency to lie matters more than whether someone is emailing or talking on the phone.

Second, there’s a low rate of lying across the board. Most people are honest – a premise consistent with truth-default theory, which suggests most people report being honest most of the time and there are only a few prolific liars in a population.

Since 2004, social media have become a primary place for interacting with other people. Yet a common misperception persists that communicating online or via technology, as opposed to in person, leads to social interactions that are lower in quantity and quality.

People often believe that just because we use technology to interact, honesty is harder to come by and users aren’t well served.

Not only is this perception misguided, but it is also unsupported by empirical evidence. The belief that lying is rampant in the digital age just doesn’t match the data.

MDT/THE CONVERSATION



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IMMIGRATION LAW

New law brings city in line with highly visited countries: experts

LYNZY VALLES
& ANTHONY LAM

THE new immigration law will not have significant impact on tourist arrivals in the city, but will bring the SAR into line with other highly visited countries, according to industry experts.

From November 15, under a new Legal Regime for Immigration Control, Permanence and Residence Permits coming into force, all visitors arriving in Macau will have to provide evidence that they have financial reserves of at least MOP5,000 for each week of their stay.

The minimum required is less than the average daily spend of visitors to the city.

Data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) show that the average daily spend of visitors in 2019 was MOP1,626, while for those from mainland China, the sum was MOP1,834.

Based on these data, director of the IFTM Tourism Research Centre, Leonardo Dioko noted that a stay of three days comes to MOP4,878, meaning the MOP5,000 requirement "reasonably



reflects the ongoing behavior of visitors."

Speaking to the Times, Dioko revealed that according to the center's Visitor Profile Surveys (VPS), the figures for 2019 (Q2) show that overall spending by visitors to Macau was MOP5,417 (for mainland Chinese visitors it was MOP6,312).

"So again, there is not much departure from the actual behavior of visitors," the professor said.

"The new law is not [much] different from other countries that impose visa requirements

or other minimum conditions to ensure that visitors do not burden the host destination. So I think the new law just brings Macau into line with accepted border control practices of other highly visited destinations around the world," Dioko commented.

Under the new law, for the first seven days of stay, visitors must prove by way of cash held or via electronic bank statements that they have at least MOP5,000, which increases to MOP10,000 for intended stays ranging between seven and 14 days.

However, the director of the IFTM research center warned that this measure should be well publicized to ensure that visitors arriving at the border should not be greatly inconvenienced.

"Being smart, efficient, and [wide reaching] in the communication of the policy as well as being smooth in the administration of such policies will avoid hiccups in the experiences of arriving visitors to Macau," said Dioko.

Echoing the same sentiments, Andy Wu, chairman of the Travel Industry Council of Macau, rejec-

ts the idea that the new immigration law is unwelcoming to budget travelers.

"This updated requirement simply [brings clarity to] the matter," he said.

"What matters is that the government gives sufficient notice about the updated rules so that tourists clearly understand the requirement prior to their trip. It's a big problem if they're not aware and arrive in Macau without sufficient funds – that's trouble," Wu added.

Meanwhile, on the rationale for the requirement, Wu thinks the government is using it as a tool to tackle "those who arrive in Macau as tourists but have other intentions, such as illegal work." It has long been commonplace for some individuals entering Macau as tourists to overstay and work in Macau.

In response to concerns about whether Macau will only see big spenders and gamblers but not culture-oriented travelers, he said that he does not see the requirement as a deterrent.

"Breaking the number down, we're talking about MOP700 per day for those staying [up to] seven days," he explained. "Let's say having two meals in Macau can easily cost MOP200, and with transportation and accommodation, the threshold isn't too high for general tourists."

In addition, he raised the fact that only about 1,000 visitors had been barred from entering Macau when the city saw 40 million visitor arrivals at its peak.

MACAU DESIGNER CREATES ADOBE INDESIGN 2022 COVER IMAGE

A Macau design company has been invited to design the cover image for the 2022 version of Adobe InDesign.

It is the first time a Macau designer has collaborated with Adobe.

Adobe is the global app maker behind various graphic and video design products, such as the famous Photoshop and Acrobat, as well as Premiere, the brand's video editing app. About 77 million users actively use products made by Adobe.

InDesign is a professional graphic design and processing software with a focus on printed works. It services layout and design needs, and is popular for work on books, posters and product catalogs.

A statement from Untitled Macao, the design house winning the honor, noted that the collaboration was due to an invita-



tion from Adobe.

According to Au Chon Hin, the designer of the graphic, the colorful design was initially inspired by DNA.

"The InDesign is like the DNA of each design made using the software," Au said in the statement. "But with imagination and creativity, a designer can create graphics with their distinctive styles and elements," he added.

The graphic inclu-

des a series of elements present in several Adobe products, such as the crop mark, the assistive lines and function board.

In an interview with the Times, Au stressed that he considers this occasion a signal to the world that Macau designers can create works that have both artistic and commercial value.

Discussing the collaboration, another local graphic designer who

requested to remain anonymous told the Times that he does not find the collaboration a matter of surprise.

"Many of their works on Adobe Behance has garnered a featured position issued by Adobe," the designer said.

Adobe Behance is a professional social media network for designers. It can be understood as the LinkedIn exclusively for designers. **AL**

COVID-19

Health Bureau's itinerary tracing app expected online this month

The trial version of the itinerary register app is expected to be online within the month, pulmonologist Alvis Lo, director of the Health Bureau, revealed yesterday. The registration platform will be an auxiliary function of the health code platform, which will be transformed into an app, Lo added. Depending on how smoothly the app runs, its functionality may be expanded.

Users arriving at individual venues can scan posted QR codes using the app to have their visit registered.

The idea of the register has raised privacy concerns. Lo reiterated that the data will only be stored on users'

cellphones, and will not be uploaded to the government's databases.

Meanwhile, the bureau director said that the choice to scan or not to scan the QR codes will be at the discretion of the users.

He added that the technology is being employed to allow users to evaluate their level of risk during an outbreak.

Lo was also questioned if SARS-CoV-2 antibody test will be conducted in Macau, to which he replied that there is no such plan, adding that due to the manner in which samples are collected, the tests will not discover cellular antibodies. **AL**

COVID-19 RELAPSE RECORDED AT AIRPORT

The government announced last night that a positive relapsed case of Covid-19 was recorded at the Macau International Airport in a returnee from the Philippines. The 48-year-old woman arrived from the Philippine capital November 3 after a stop in Singapore. Upon arrival she took the nucleic acid test which yielded a mild positive result. A test taken in Manila August 30 had also yielded a positive result and she had been diagnosed with the disease. She is now in quarantine at the Public Health Clinical Center in Coloane. She is fully vaccinated with the inactivated vaccine.

TNRS DOWN TO 171,400

The total population as at end-September 2021 decreased by 200 quarter-to-quarter to 682,300, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service. The number of non-resident workers (TNRs) at end-period (171,418) went down by 843. In the first three quarters of 2021, a total of 3,734 live births were recorded, down by 466 year-on-year. New arrivals from mainland China with one-way permit (673) and individuals granted right of abode (136) increased by 12 and 19 quarter-to-quarter respectively. A total of 683 cases of marriage registration were recorded in the third quarter, down by 126 quarter-to-quarter.



MACAU'S QUARANTINE-FREE TRAVEL MOVES 'GOAL-POST'

LYNZY VALLES*

A government adviser in Hong Kong said that the neighboring SAR might open to global travel in about six months, once officials have successfully navigated the introduction of quarantine-free borders with mainland China and boosted the local vaccination rate, as cited in a Bloomberg report.

"Hopefully by then, we have opened up the border with China and we might [be in a position] favorable to open up the border to other places," said Lam Ching-choi, a member of Hong Kong's Executive Council.

China, Hong Kong and Macau are pursuing a "Covid Zero" strategy which aims to eliminate the transmission of the virus through quarantine. In Macau, the quarantine period increases to 28 days for

passengers arriving from high-risk countries such as the Philippines, Nepal, India and Brazil, among others.

Elsewhere, many other countries have opened their borders to fully-vaccinated travelers after year-long border closures.

Andy Wu, chairman of the Travel Industry Council of Macau, said that he did not understand the logic behind the claim. On the contrary, he said that recent the epidemiological situation in Hong Kong has been relatively stable.

News released has advised that Hong Kong and mainland China will head toward border normalization by the end of December.

"Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng has said that when the mainland and Hong Kong resume normal border crossings, Macau will follow suit," Wu said, offering support for his confidence in the

forthcoming Macau-Hong Kong border normalization.

He also told the Times that based on 2020 figures when the number of visitor arrivals from mainland China dropped drastically, once Macau-Hong Kong border normalization is achieved, there should be at least 10,000 extra visitor arrivals to Macau each day.

"After all, Hong Kong tourists account for 20% of the city's tourist arrivals," Wu said.

Meanwhile, on the opening up of Macau to quarantine-free travel, Leonardo Dioko, director of the IFTM Tourism Research Centre, believes that the question is "a constantly moving goal-post."

Next to Guangdong Province and connected to Hong-Kong by the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, Macau must align its policies with those of its neighbors.

"The pressure for Hong Kong and Macau to open up, however, will probably build as more countries allow greater air travel, given that Macau and Hong Kong have many international links and Macau is often a gateway to the mainland," the tourism scholar explained.

Vaccines continue to play a major role the easing of border restrictions.

Recent data shows that over 465,000 people in Macau have been vaccinated with at least a dose of either Sinopharm or BioNTech vaccines.

For Dioko, there are key determining factors remaining, such as the anti-body or immunity levels of Macau's population; the vulnerability of younger and older people; and hospital capacity. On these scores, Macau remains vulnerable compared to its immediate neighbors.

"It is interesting that last year, many experts touted a return to normalcy once the vaccines were rolled out," said the professor.

"We are now almost a year from the time the first vaccines were administered but the vulnerability of Macau and many destinations remain," he added.

Meanwhile, the recent anti-viral treatments announced by the U.K. and the U.S. are a new factor, which change the game in returning to quarantine-free travel.

Last week, Pfizer Inc. said that its experimental antiviral pill for Covid-19 has cut rates of hospitalization and death by nearly 90% in high-risk adults, as the drug manufacturer joins the race for an easy-to-use medication to treat the coronavirus.

Pfizer said it will ask the FDA and international regulators to authorize the pill as soon as possible, after independent experts recommended halting the company's study based on the success of its results. Once Pfizer applies, the FDA could make a decision within weeks or months.

*Additional reporting from Anthony Lam

Obstacle Challenge open for registrations

THE city's second Obstacle Challenge, which will take place on December 12, is now taking registrations, the Sports Bureau (ID) announced yesterday at a press conference.

The registration period will run from now until noon on December 6. A total of 1,200 spaces will be offered this year. The event will be held at the Macao East Asian Games Dome and surrounding area.

Obstacle course is a sport that involves participants who are required to cross physical challenges in

the form of obstacles, such as ninja crawling, rope climbing and rotational column crawling.

This year's Obstacle Challenge will have two groups: the Fun Group and the Challenge Group. Participants in each group will face obstacles of differing levels of difficulty.

Lau Cho Un, vice president of the ID, told the press yesterday that both groups have more obstacles than in the previous year. The number of obstacles has increased from 10 to 13 in the Fun Group and

from 15 to 18 in Challenge Group. He expects the event to be more challenging as a result.

The Fun Group will be a 3.2km event offering participants a low-stakes opportunity to exercise. Meanwhile, the Challenge Group will be a 3.5km event with more challenging obstacles such as pulling a 30kg sandbag up to a height of 7m and traversing a 2-meter tall slope. The latter group is further categorized into the male, female and team categories.

The Top 10 in the Fun

Group and in each individual category will each receive a trophy. Meanwhile, the top three in each individual category will also receive coupons ranging from MOP500 to MOP1,000 redeemable in exchange for sport-related merchandise.

The top three in the team category will each receive a trophy and coupons ranging from MOP1,000 to MOP3,000.

The event is expected to become a regular event in the future, the ID vice president said. **AL**



Grand Prix has 133 drivers, up 12% from last year

RENATO MARQUES

THE 68th Macau Grand Prix will have the participation of 133 drivers including local drivers and those coming from the mainland and Hong Kong, the president of Sports Bureau and Coordinator of the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC), Pun Weng Kun said yesterday.

Questioned by the media, Pun said, "In this edition, all the drivers are coming from the mainland, Hong Kong or are local drivers. Some are undergoing quarantine."

"Last year we had 119 drivers and this year we are having 133," Pun added, adding that to this point, the MGPOC is not aware of any driver who, due to Covid-19, cannot travel to Macau in time to take part in the event.

"[To date], and from the information we have, all [drivers] can [meet out expectations] and come to Macau to compete," he said. Pun added that the pandemic situation in several mainland provinces is reportedly stabilizing and returning to normality, thus it hopefully will not affect the Grand Prix event.

As for pandemic-related prevention and control measures, the MGPOC coordinator said that while all Grand Prix staff members and drivers must be vaccinated and take a nucleic acid test (NAT) to enter, spectators will not be subjected to such procedures. Spectators have only to comply with the normal measures: namely tem-



perature checking, the presentation of a valid green health code and use of facemasks.

As for the members of the media, they are required to take a NAT with a validity pe-

riod of seven days.

Pun also revealed that during the event, GP staff and

drivers will have to take additional NATs which have a validity period of 48 hours.

ALMOST FULL-HOUSE EXPECTED

Questioned on ticket sales for the event which is set to begin on November 19, Pun admitted that he did not have the current figures on hand, but noted that a few days ago ticket pre-sales had already reached around 60% of the tickets available.

The MGPOC coordinator said that the sales are going well, and that given the recent requests from several companies and organizations for more tickets, he anticipates a good turnout.

Pun also noted that, like last year, due to pandemic restrictions the total capacity of the spectator stands is reduced to about 30% of the current 10,000 seats.

"We have more than 10,000 seats in the stands. We had to reduce [in comparison to 2019, about 30% of the capacity] due to social distancing," Pun said, adding, "We trust that we can have the [available seats] full. We have been receiving requests for tickets so we trust that we will have good attendance."

TCR CHINA CHAMPION, RUNNER-UP OUT OF MACAU GP RACE

ALTHOUGH already rumored since last weekend, it has finally been confirmed that neither this year's TCR China Champion, Rodolfo Ávila, nor his teammate, first runner-up of TCR China and title contender to TCR Asia Championship, Zhang Zhendong, will compete on the streets of Macau on the third weekend of November.

According to information obtained by the Times, the team MG XPower Racing decided to withdraw all three cars from the final round of the TCR Asia event to take place in Macau between November 19 and 21.

In doing so, the team prevents the participation of the three drivers, including Ávila, Zhang, and Martin Cao, in the final round of the championship.

The drivers place currently in the third, fourth, and fifth position of the championship behind the championship leader Jason Zhang Zhiqiang and Ma Qinghua, both from Shell Teamwork Lynk & Co Racing. This round will decide which of the two will win this year's TCR Asia championship in Guia circuit.

Although the team refused to comment on the decision, according to infor-

mation available to the Times, the decision to withdraw the three MG 6 XPower TCR cars might be related to an event that occurred last year, when MG XPower Team racer Rob Huff was stripped of the Macau Guia race victory following a polemic post-race penalty for an incident with Ma Qinghua at the Mandarin's Bend. Huff crossed the finish line in first position but was handed a post-race 30-second penalty by the stewards, dropping to 23rd position.

Victory in the race was then handed to Jason Zhang, followed by Sunny Wong. **RM**

GAMING

Melco Q3 revenue plunges, 'prepared for the worst'

MELCO Resorts' operating loss was USD182.2 million in the third quarter of 2021, compared with an operating loss of USD275.0 million in the third quarter of 2020.

Total operating revenues in the third quarter of 2021 were USD446.4 million, representing an increase of approximately 110% from USD212.9 million for the same period in 2020. The increase in total operating revenues is mostly attributable to the improved performance of all gaming

segments and non-gaming operations as a result of the increase in tourism this year over 2020, according to the operator's report.

Lawrence Ho, chairman and CEO, commented, "Continued travel restrictions and quarantine measures in Macau and the region negatively impacted our third quarter operating and financial performance."

In its Macau operations, Ho said the company remained EBITDA positive this quarter despite a sequen-

tial decline in industrywide gross gaming revenue levels from the prior quarter.

"Our cost control measures were a primary factor of our EBITDA performance. We remain optimistic that our whole business in Macau will recover back to pre-pandemic level once travel restrictions are eased," said Ho in an earnings call with analysts.

The CEO wants to see more investment in non-gaming, noting that it is "going to be the future, because with the VIP sector being

impaired the way that it is [...] it's going to be focused on mass, and mass is going to need more amenities and more non-gaming attractions."

Commenting on expectations of reopening later this year or in 2022, Ho said, "we are prepared for the worst and [it is] part of our budgeting."

"I think we're really going to be range-bound for the next six months to 12 months, as long as China continues with the zero Covid path," he added. **LV**



HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

As many try living with virus, China

WANG Lijie planned to spend three days in the Gobi Desert last month to take in the area's famous poplar forest as its trees turned a golden yellow.

Instead, the Beijing resident has been stuck for more than three weeks, much of it in quarantine, after authorities discovered a cluster of COVID-19 cases in a nearby city. He was among more than 9,000 tourists who became trapped in Ejin Banner, a remote part of China's Inner Mongolia region that is in the Gobi.

As vaccination rates rise in many parts of the world and even countries that previously had strict COVID-containment strategies gingerly ease restrictions, China is doubling down on its zero-tolerance policy.

China pioneered that approach — of strict lockdowns, multiple rounds of mass testing and centralized quarantine — during the world's first major outbreak of the coronavirus in Wuhan. And it continues now, even as it says it has fully vaccinated 77% of its 1.4 billion people and started giving booster shots.

"The cost is truly rather high, but compared with not managing it, relaxing (the zero-tolerance

policy), then that cost is even higher," Zhong Nanshan, a top government doctor, said in a recent TV interview.

The impact of the restrictions is not widespread — but unpredictable. Unlucky travelers can find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, like the tourists in the Gobi Desert, some of whom were bused 18 hours to finish their quarantine in another city. People from Beijing have complained online about leaving for a work trip and not being able to return home.

In a sign of the effect the regulations can have even on thriving businesses, the wildly popular hotpot restaurant chain, Haidilao, decided to shutter 300 outlets in part because of the pandemic and is scaling back a plan to add 1,200 new ones. The strain has been particularly felt in places like Ruili, a city in the southwest that has been locked down repeatedly this year.

But for authorities in Beijing, control over the virus has become a point of pride, a potent tool of propaganda — and proof, they say, of a superior form of governance. They often trumpet their success at keeping deaths relatively low, especially in con-

XINHUA



People in lockdown in Yunnan province

trast to the United States, whose COVID-19 response the Foreign Ministry spokesman has called

a "total failure."

China has reported about 4,600 deaths — compared to

more than 755,000 in the U.S., a country with less than a quarter the population.

AD



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China keeps up zero tolerance



"It's becoming part of the official narrative that promotes that approach and links that

to the superiority of the Chinese political system," said Yan-zhong Huang, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

It's impossible to tell how much popular support the policies have since opinion polls are rare and criticism often censored. When Zhang Wenhong, a doctor in Shanghai who has been compared to top American health official Anthony Fauci, briefly raised the prospect of living with the virus, he was shut down by official criticism and a plagiarism investigation.

But the head of China's Center for Disease Control, Gao Fu, recently suggested the country could open up once it is 85% vaccinated — a sign the government is aware that at least some are eager for that.

In the last three and a half weeks, Wang has had 18 tests for COVID-19. Yet, he isn't complaining. He's able to work remotely and has started a vlog of his daily life, interacting with residents of Inner Mongolia online.

"Regardless of the time you sacrificed, or how much money you spent, in the face of life, in

front of health, those things are not worth mentioning," said Wang. "For everyone's health, for society to be more stable, some people have to make sacrifices."

But China's strategy sets it apart, as many countries shift to trying to live with the virus, especially as it continues to mutate and vaccines cannot fully prevent infection. Most notably, New Zealand, which had long pursued a zero-tolerance approach, announced last month a cautious plan to ease restrictions, despite a simmering outbreak. Australia, Thailand and Singapore — all of which imposed severe travel restrictions for much of the pandemic — have also begun to open their borders.

China, by contrast, slashed the number of international passenger flights allowed into the country by 21% last month to 408 flights per week until late March, while increasing the number of cargo flights by 28%.

In Singapore, which started allowing quarantine-free entry to fully vaccinated travelers from certain countries, the number of new cases has jumped to thousands a day from

less than 100 before. But most are not winding up in the hospital.

"It's just completely unrealistic to think that you can stay at zero," said Dale Fisher, a professor in the National University of Singapore's medical school.

But even if only a small percentage of infected people end up in hospitals, that could be a problem in China, with its huge population — and would be especially complicated for a government that has staked its reputation on keeping numbers very low.

"I think what the government leaders, and scholars and public health officials are worried about (is), even a small opening may lead to bigger outbreaks on a much larger scale," said Huang, of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Some of the most dramatic examples of China's policy come from Ruili, which is bordered on three sides by Myanmar and has struggled to keep the virus at bay.

Videos of a 21-month-old boy with round cheeks who has been tested 78 times have circulated widely online. The boy's father declined an interview but confirmed he shot the videos, which have inspired empathy, but have also been used by state media as propaganda to show how tough Chinese citizens are.

One Ruili resident, who gave only his last name Xu, said he's lost count of how many tests he's taken. At the height of one lockdown, community volunteers threatened to fine him when he went to throw out the trash.

To leave the city, he must pay for seven days of hotel quarantine — just go to a town 10 kilometers (6 miles) away. The restrictions have devastated his business, which sells jade from Myanmar.

The Ruili government announced in late October that it would give 1,000 yuan (about \$150) to residents who had experienced hardship, and that it would allow small- and medium-sized businesses to defer loan payments.

In the Xinjiang region in China's west, Li Hui has been sealed up for about a month in the city of Yili, where a few cases were discovered in early October.

His mother, who lives in a nearby village, twisted her wrist, but initially could not come into the city for treatment because of the restrictions. After much pleading, he got an ambulance to take her to a hospital a week after her injury. He still can't visit her.

"I don't know how long Yili's residents can endure," he said. "I really can't endure it anymore." MDT/AP

Chinese forces exercise near Taiwan in response to US visit

CHINESE military forces are holding exercises near Taiwan in response to a visit by a U.S. congressional delegation to the island.

The drills in the area of the Taiwan Strait are a "necessary measure to safeguard national sovereignty," China's Defense Ministry said in an announcement this week that gave no details on the timing, participants and location of the exercises.

It said the "joint war preparedness patrol" by the Eastern Theater Command was prompted by the "seriously incorrect words and actions of relevant countries over the issue of Taiwan" and the actions of those advocating the self-governing island's independence.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said China considers the delegation's visit a "serious violation" of U.S. commitments not to have formal relations with Taiwan, which China claims as its territory.



Military airplanes at Airshow China in Zhuhai, earlier this year

"China is firmly opposed to that and has made solemn representations to the U.S.," Wang said at a daily briefing yesterday.

"All risky and provocative actions against China's reunification is like an ant trying to topple over a giant tree and is doomed to fail," Wang said.

The U.S. has strong but informal relations with

Taiwan, and tensions have been rising between the U.S. and China over several issues including Hong Kong, the South China Sea, the coronavirus pandemic and trade. Details on the U.S. delegation that reportedly arrived in Taiwan on Tuesday were not immediately available.

A Chinese Defense Ministry statement from an

unidentified spokesperson strongly condemned the visit, saying "no one should underestimate the firm determination of the People's Liberation Army to safeguard the Chinese people's national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

China regards Taiwan as its own territory to be annexed by military force

if necessary. The sides split in 1949 during a civil war and, following a brief period of rapprochement, relations have grown increasingly tense under Taiwan's independence-leaning President Tsai Ing-wen.

During China's National Day weekend in early October, China dispatched 149 military aircraft southwest of Taiwan in strike group formations, causing Taiwan to scramble aircraft and activate its air defense missile systems. Taiwan's Defense Ministry said this week such tactics were aimed at wearing down the island's defenses and degrading morale.

In Washington, Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby said congressional visits to Taiwan "are relatively common and in keeping with U.S. obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act," which requires the U.S. government to ensure Taiwan has the ability to defend itself and regard threats to the island as matters

of "grave concern."

The delegation arrived in Taipei on Tuesday evening aboard a C-40 Clipper jet, which departed soon afterward, according to Taiwan's official Central News Agency. Kirby said traveling on a U.S. military jet was customary for such delegations.

Taiwanese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Joanne Ou said the ministry had worked with the American Institute in Taiwan, which is the de facto U.S. embassy, on arrangements for the visit but gave no details. She said further information would be released at the "appropriate time."

Although the U.S. switched diplomatic ties from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, it retains strong informal political and military relations with Taiwan. As a vibrant democracy, Taiwan also enjoys strong bipartisan support in Congress and the U.S. government has been boosting relations through high-level visits and military sales. MDT/AP

Seoul rejects refugee claims by Chinese-North Korean defectors

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea has rejected refugee status for ethnic Chinese people who have been "stateless" since they fled North Korea years ago, two of the applicants and an activists' group said yesterday.

Unlike North Korean defectors, who receive citizenship, almost-free apartments and other economic assistance in South Korea, ethnic Chinese from the North are denied access to such benefits if they maintained Chinese nationality in North Korea. About 30 of them have been designated as "stateless" in South Korea, after authorities detected their attempts to pose as North Korean nationals and detained them, observers say.

The "stateless" designation makes it extremely difficult for them to get jobs and receive basic government-provided services. Four of them subsequently applied for refugee status in 2019, saying they wanted better treatment because their families have lived in North Korea for generations and suffered similar political suppression and economic difficulties to what most ordinary North Korean citizens face.

Last week, however, South Korea's Justice Ministry notified them that their refugee claims had been turned down, said Kim Yong-hwa, a North Korean defector-turned-activist who helped the four with their refugee applications.

Kim's organization sent The Associated Press a photo of the ministry notification to an applicant surnamed Yoon. According to it, the ministry said he didn't appear "to have experienced threats that amounted to persecution in China and North Korea." It also said the ministry could not help but determine he is a Chinese national based on its review of his testimony and



Kim Yong-hwa, a North Korean defector-turned-activist, speaks during an interview in Seoul earlier this year

the comments by South Korea's spy agency.

Kim said the three other applicants received near-identical notifications.

The Justice Ministry didn't immediately respond to requests by the AP to confirm the claims were rejected. However, the rejections were widely expected as South Korea's acceptance rate for refugee status applications has been less than 2% in recent years.

"It totally doesn't make sense to rule that there was (no evidence) that they suffered oppressions

Reached by phone, Yoon and another applicant Cho Guk-gyeong confirmed the rejections.

"I have no hopes at all now as my refugee application was turned down," Cho said in a statement provided by Kim. "I have nowhere to return. I want to live with a minimum level of human dignity."

Kim said the ministry has told the four applicants it could improve their alien residential status if they file a petition asking for a government help for their settlement in South Korea. Kim said he doesn't

It would be very difficult to resettle in China as they don't speak Chinese and have lost touch with relatives

in North Korea. They can get killed if they return to North Korea and get caught there," Kim said.

He previously said that at least one ethnic Chinese was executed in North Korea after failing to resettle in South Korea and returning home.

understand why they have to file a petition asking for leniency but they planned to check on what improvements in their status they could get.

In previous interviews with the AP, Cho and other ethnic Chinese said they considered themselves

as North Koreans as they were born and grew up in the North. They said they were still allowed to maintain Chinese nationality in North Korea and visit China once or twice a year for cross-border business. They said authorities monitored them more intensely than North Korean nationals.

They said they would face harsh punishment if they returned to North Korea. They also say it would be very difficult to resettle in China as they don't speak Chinese and have lost touch with relatives there and that it could take years to get local residence cards in China.

Cho spent one year in prison and Yoon 20 months in a government-run detention center for lying about their nationality in North Korea.

Some experts say an estimated 3,000-5,000 ethnic Chinese live in North Korea and they are the only foreigners with permanent residents' rights among North Korea's 26 million people. About 34,000 North Koreans have fled to South Korea for economic and political reasons since the late 1990s. **MDT/AP**

this day in history



2004 VETERAN LEADER YASSER ARAFAT IS DEAD

The veteran Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has died in hospital in Paris, France, aged 75.

The man who led his people's struggle for more than 40 years suffered multiple organ failure at 0330 local time (0230 GMT).

He had been in a coma since 3 November and two days ago suffered a brain haemorrhage.

He was brought to a military hospital near Paris from Ramallah on the West Bank at the end of last month as his condition deteriorated.

The exact nature of his illness remains a mystery, although doctors ruled out cancer and rejected the allegation by Palestinian militant groups that he had been poisoned.

His body was flown this evening to Cairo, Egypt, where his funeral will be held tomorrow, attended by Arab and other leaders.

He will be buried in Ramallah on Saturday.

In the Palestinian territories news of his death was greeted with open displays of grief. The authorities have declared 40 days of mourning.

Tributes came in from around the world. The French President, Jacques Chirac, said the Palestinian leader was "a man of courage and conviction who for 40 years incarnated the Palestinians' fight for recognition of their national rights".

The White House simply described the death as a "significant moment in Palestinian history" and offered condolences.

The Israeli government, which has long labelled Mr Arafat a terrorist, said his death could be a turning point for peace in the Middle East.

Mr Arafat spent his last three years held a virtual prisoner by the Israeli authorities in his partially-destroyed compound in Ramallah.

Relations between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government deteriorated since 2000, when he was blamed by Israel and the United States for the failure of peace talks at Camp David.

Mr Arafat always insisted the deal he was offered was less generous than it has since been portrayed.

Under the Bush administration, he has been shunned by the United States as complicit in terrorism.

Since the 1950s Mr Arafat has been the public face of Palestinian opposition to Israel, first as the leader of Fatah, the Movement for the Liberation of Palestine, and then at the head of the PLO.

There is a long-standing question mark over his involvement in attacks by Palestinian guerrillas from various factions. Mr Arafat refused to discuss such attacks, though he always denounced terrorism as a tactic.

Then in 1993, he began negotiating with Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, in secret talks in Oslo.

He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, along with Mr Rabin and Shimon Perez, after signing the Oslo Accords, seen as a breakthrough towards an independent Palestinian state and a permanent peace with Israel.



Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

After his funeral in Cairo, attended by leaders and representatives from 40 countries, Yasser Arafat was buried in Ramallah amid chaotic and emotional scenes.

Soil from the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, where Palestinians hope he can one day be reburied, was used in his grave. Elections were held in January 2005. They were won by former Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, who had already succeeded Yasser Arafat as leader of the PLO after serving as his deputy since 1969.

In September 2005 Israel pulled out of the Gaza Strip and evicted Jewish settlers, and there have been tentative moves towards renewed peace talks despite continuing violence on both sides.

Yasser Arafat's medical records were released in 2005, and appeared to show that doctors could not determine the underlying cause of his death.

The records said Mr Arafat died from a stroke that stemmed from an unknown condition.

Speculation continues over the cause of his death, with many Palestinians believing he was poisoned by Israel. The Israeli government has denied this.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Thursday's skies see the arrival of the first quarter moon in gregarious Aquarius, highlighting the divide between your intimate relationships and your larger sense of community.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

This time of the year has you fully immersed in your close relationships, Taurus. Single or taken, you're diving deep into your experience of emotional give and take in this all-important terrain.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Today's skies witness the arrival of the first quarter moon in progressive Aquarius, highlighting the changes to be made between your existing day job and achieving your larger life plans.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Today's skies show you changes to be made in your relationship approach, as the first quarter moon in future-oriented Aquarius illuminates the divide between sheer romance and mature commitments.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Thursday's skies work to highlight important changes to be made between your childhood upbringing and your current relationship story as you become more aware of how the past colors the present.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Today's skies encourage change-making and action-taking, Virgo. The first quarter moon emerges in progressive Aquarius, highlighting the current gap between your mental world and your physical one.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Today's skies witness the first quarter moon in Aquarius, which illuminates the divide between your raw natural skills and your ability to bring them onto a stage of your choosing.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

All eyes are on you this time of year, Scorpio. You're knee-deep in the process of re-structuring your sense of identity and independence as you begin to redefine yourself in a new capacity.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Today's skies welcome the first quarter moon in progressive Aquarius, illuminating what needs changing between your mental health and self-defeating patterns.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You're here to choose one of the most daunting goals you can dream of and see it through fearlessly. Scorpio season currently has you deeply re-evaluating your list of aspirations and experience of community.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Career matters are all important during this time of year. Whether you're re-evaluating your current trajectory or climbing up a steady path, you're intended to be untangling any knots in this arena.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Thursday's skies usher in the first quarter moon in solution-seeking Aquarius, which shines a revealing light on self-defeating patterns that need better dismantling.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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	3			1				
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4							6	1
2			5	8				
		3						

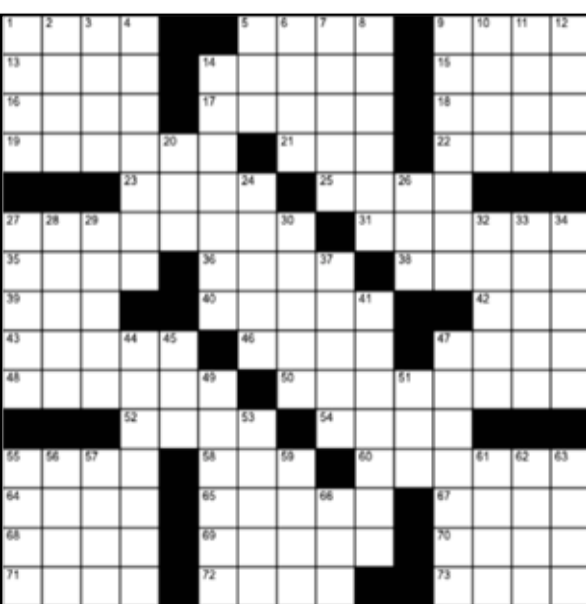
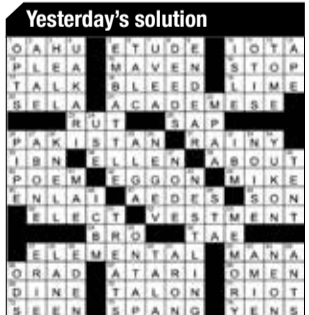
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	2	11	fine
Harbin	-5	-1	snow
Tianjin	6	20	fine
Urumqi	8	15	cloudy
Xi'an	8	13	overcast
Lhasa	5	9	cloudy
Chengdu	10	21	fine
Chongqing	12	21	cloudy
Kunming	6	10	rain
Nanjing	17	25	cloudy
Shanghai	6	18	cloudy
Wuhan	-6	-2	snow
Hangzhou	3	15	cloudy
Taipei	-8	4	fine
Guangzhou	11	23	fine
Hong Kong	20	24	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	0	2	snow
Frankfurt	0	7	overcast
Paris	2	11	overcast
London	10	14	fog
New York	15	17	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Go sky-high; 5- Actress Singer; 9- Precious stones; 13- Goad; 14- Bill attachment; 15- Uh-huh; 16- Tombstone lawman; 17- Confuse; 18- Go out with; 19- Caught; 21- Transgression; 22- Couples; 23- How sweet ___!; 25- Large town; 27- Foolish person; 31- Ticket; 35- No. 2; 36- Dresden denial; 38- Suppose; 39- Animal pouch; 40- Domingo, for one; 42- ___ Lingus; 43- Glide along smoothly; 46- Fountain of jazz; 47- Sometimes you feel like ___; 48- Composite plant; 50- Evolves; 52- Concerning; 54- Round object, often used to store computer data; 55- Some DVD players; 58- Overhead trains; 60- Fireman; 64- First-class; 65- Recess in a wall; 67- Possess; 68- Judge's seat; 69- Whispered sweet nothings; 70- Minerals; 71- Leave; 72- Web address starter; 73- Missing;

DOWN: 1- Takes to court; 2- Algerian seaport; 3- Pearl Mosque city; 4- Later edition; 5- It may be flipped; 6- Vegas line; 7- Museum piece; 8- Conciliatory; 9- Command to a horse; 10- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 11- Take ___ your leader; 12- Gets the picture; 14- Shining; 20- Catchall abbr.; 24- Bed down; 26- In addition; 27- Large and dense; 28- City near Kobe; 29- Academy award; 30- Penalized; 32- Device with 88 keys; 33- Get the better of; 34- Drat!; 37- Well-known; 41- Updated; 44- Divide into three parts; 45- Great length of time; 47- Intoxicating liquor; 49- Twist suddenly; 51- Ballpark fig.; 53- Prufrock's creator; 55- Broccoli ___ (leafy vegetable); 56- Cajole; 57- Years in old Rome; 59- Inverness inhabitant; 61- Syrup brand; 62- Holiday lead-ins; 63- Repose; 66- Like cool cats;



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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AD

TECH CHINA'S SINGLES' DAY SHOPPING FEST MUTED AMID TECH CRACKDOWN

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINA'S biggest online shopping day, known as "Singles' Day" on Nov. 11, is taking on a muted tone this year as regulators crack down on the technology industry and President Xi Jinping pushes for "common prosperity."

The Singles' Day shopping festival — also known as Double 11 — is a massive event for China's e-commerce companies. Last year, consumers spent \$74 billion on Alibaba's online shopping platforms over the 11 days of the festival. Smaller rival JD.com reported \$40 billion in sales during a similar time frame.

Alibaba — China's largest e-commerce firm — usually holds a massive gala the night before Nov. 11. Past galas have featured superstars such as Katy Perry and Taylor Swift and even acrobatic acts by the Cirque du Soleil.

A glitzy live counter starts ticking at midnight to tally in real time how much consumers have spent on Alibaba platforms like Taobao and Tmall. The festival is viewed as a barometer of consumption in the world's most populous country.

This year, Alibaba has toned down the hype. The Singles' Day online gala today will be live-streamed due to COVID-19 outbreaks in parts of China. Alibaba says it is focusing on sustainability, supporting charities and inclusivity — themes that align with Beijing's climate goals and Xi's calls for "common prosperity" that aims to curb inequality and excessive consumption.



AP PHOTO

"This year's muted festivities are a perfect storm of economic, competitive and regulatory pressures," said Michael Norris, research strategy manager at Shanghai-based consultancy AgencyChina.

"In terms of regulation, e-commerce platforms are coming to grips with how to align consumption extravaganzas with 'common prosperity' themes," he said.

Earlier this year, e-commerce platform Pinduoduo pledged to give \$1.5 billion in profits to farmers to boost their incomes, while Alibaba has committed \$15.5 billion to subsidies for small and medium-sized enterprises and supporting workers in

the gig economy, such as delivery drivers, according to local news outlet Zhejiang News.

This year, Alibaba has also spotlighted sustainability, setting up packaging recycling points and partnering with brands to develop more eco-friendly packaging. Customers can donate a portion of the profit from their purchases to a charity organization or project of their choice.

The shift to emphasizing sustainability comes after Alibaba was fined a record \$2.8 billion for violating antitrust rules. The government has been stepping up scrutiny of the technology sector and moving to curb monopolistic

practices that hurt consumers' rights.

The squeeze on this year's Singles' Day sales may also reflect weaker consumer demand and shortages of some products due to shortfalls in materials and energy, as well as difficulties in moving products through snarled shipping and delivery channels.

"Merchants have had a soft year so far, due to weak retail growth and decreasing consumer confidence," Norris said. "To add insult to injury, power rationing in manufacturing hubs has meant many merchants have dialed back their expectations — even if there is a burst of demand, they can't necessarily meet it."

Jacob Cooke, CEO of WPIC, a marketing firm that helps Western companies sell online in China, says ultra-deep discounts will be less commonplace than in past Singles' Day sales.

"We're going to see strategies like limited edition gifts being more prevalent as opposed to merchants dumping (items) at a 90% discount . . . due to a lack of inventory, a lack of supply," he said.

Meanwhile, popular short-video platforms such as Kuaishou and Bytedance's Douyin, which have veered into e-commerce, are giving traditional e-commerce platforms like Alibaba and JD.com a run for their money.

Live-streamers on the video platforms can sell directly to shoppers through their streams. Last year, Douyin reported 2 billion yuan (\$313 million) worth of transactions just on Nov. 11.

"In terms of (short-video) commerce, it's going to be huge because that's where all the eyeballs are," WPIC's Cooke said.

The Singles Day festival boosts sales of live-streaming hosts like Yang Guang, who hawks everything from clothing to home appliances on live-streams, by half, he said.

But he said prolonged festivities and complicated discount schemes can be frustrating for both shoppers and sellers.

"As live-streamers, we have to think up different strategies to make it fun during every stream to keep customers interested," he said. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China makes donation to local charity for 18th consecutive year



Sands China Ltd. presented a ceremonial cheque for MOP 600,000 to Macau Tung Sin Tong Charitable Society yesterday at The Venetian Ma-

cao, to support the nongovernmental organisation's annual December-February fundraising campaign. Since 2004, Sands China

has been making annual donations to Tung Sin Tong to support its fundraising campaign, totalling more than MOP8.3 million over 18 consecutive years, including this year's donation.

Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd., and Sam Chongnin, vice president of corporate communications and community affairs for Venetian Macau Limited, represented the company at the ceremony, where they presented the donation cheque to José Chui Sai Peng, president of the board of directors of Tung Sin Tong, and board members Charles M. Choy, Teresa Chui and Terry Sio.

Wynn donates MOP600,000 to support 'Walk for a Million'



Wynn has continued to fully support and takes part in the "Walk for a Million" fundrai-

sing event organized by the Charity Fund from the Readers of Macao Daily News,

donating MOP600,000.

The gaming operator also encouraged its team members to take part in the online "Walk for a Million" event, in line with the SAR government's pandemic prevention measures.

Every year, Wynn has formed a group of over 1,000 staff and their family members to participate in this vital fundraising activity.

"The company hopes to build enthusiasm among the public, encouraging all walks of life to continue supporting and participating in charity fundraising initiatives," the company said in a statement.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FOOTBALL

Socceroos feeling right at home ahead of World Cup qualifier

AFTER 763 days, the Australian team will finally get to play on home soil when it hosts group-leading Saudi Arabia today in Asian qualifiers for the World Cup.

Croatia-born, Italy-based defender Fran Karacic has played five times for the Socceroos since his debut in June, but only made his first visit to Australia this week.

It's a rare trip for the Saudi squad, too, after playing almost entirely at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Saudis are on an eight-game winning streak, including four victories in this round of qualifying against Japan, China, Vietnam and Oman, but have never beaten the Socceroos in Australia.

That's not surprising, considering the Australians have a formidable record in World Cup qualifying games at home. All the more reason for Australia's head coach Graham Arnold to be confident ahead of the Group B game at the Western Sydney Stadium.

"We know the Saudis are on a good run and they've played a lot of games at home in that run," Arnold said. "I expect our mentality to be one of getting in their faces and making sure we're on the front foot right from the start and not giving them any time to play."

Australia's last game at home was a 5-0 win over Nepal in Oc-

AP PHOTO



tober 2019, when Jamie Maclaren scored three goals and Harry Souttar netted twice on debut.

The Socceroos have been forced to play all of their games abroad since then because of Australia's closed borders and COVID-19 restrictions. Now they'll have a home

crowd backing them, with Sydney out of lockdown and fans allowed at the stadium.

"It's great to be able to play in our country against Saudi and I expect a performance," Arnold said, but "it's about the three points tomorrow night."

Australia can move level with the Saudis atop the group with a win in Sydney before traveling back to the Middle East to play China five days later. The Saudis could move six points clear by winning the first of its two back-to-back away matches in Australia and Vietnam.

In other Group B games, a rejuvenated Japan lineup is coming off a narrow win at home over Australia ahead of its trip to Hanoi to face Vietnam, and China is playing a home-away-from-home game against Oman in Sharjah. Japan and Oman have six points each and are still in contention for the two of the group's automatic qualifying spots for Qatar 2022.

Iran leads Group A with three wins and a draw ahead of its trip to Lebanon, and is two points ahead of second-place South Korea.

For Lebanon, the game at Saida Municipal Stadium will be its first at home since a 2-1 win over Turkmenistan in 2019. They're on a 14-game unbeaten streak in games played in Lebanon.

The Koreans are at home to the United Arab Emirates today and Iraq and Syria will meet in Doha, each aiming for its first win of the round. Iraq has three draws and a loss, and Syria has three losses and draw. **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

World Views

Brooke Schedneck, Rhodes College
 MDT/The Conversation



WHAT THE WORLD CAN LEARN FROM THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT LOVING-KINDNESS

As the world deals with the trauma caused by COVID-19, World Kindness Day, observed on Nov. 13 annually, is a good opportunity to reflect on the healing potential of both large and small acts of kindness. Indeed, it was the kind acts of essential workers that helped save many lives.

Some of the earliest Buddhist teachings developed in India – which are recorded in the Pali canon, the collection of scriptures in the Pali language – emphasized the idea of “metta,” or loving-kindness. One teaching from this collection of scriptures is the “Karaniya Metta Sutta,” where the Buddha exhorts the good and wise to spread loving-kindness by making these wishes toward all beings:

In gladness and in safety,
 May all beings be at ease.
 Whatever living beings there may be;
 Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,
 The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,
 The seen and the unseen,
 Those living near and far away,
 Those born and to-be-born —
 May all beings be at ease!

In order to put these words into practice, several Buddhist teachers from North America teach meditation practices meant to develop one’s own metta, or loving-kindness.

During meditation sessions, practitioners can visualize people and chant wishes of loving-kindness using variations of phrases based on the Karaniya Metta Sutta. A commonly used version is from a well-known Buddhist meditation teacher, Sharon Salzberg.

May all beings everywhere be safe and well.
 May all beings everywhere be happy and content.
 May all beings everywhere be healthy and strong.
 May all beings everywhere be peaceful and at ease.

Practitioners spread this kindness toward themselves, people close to them, people they do not know – even distant people or enemies – and finally all beings throughout the world. After visualizing this attitude of loving-kindness, practitioners find it is easier to radiate kindness toward others in real life.

In addition to metta, Buddhists also practice compassion (karuna), sympathetic joy (mudita) and equanimity (upekkha) for a peaceful state of mind.

Later forms of Buddhism in East Asia and Tibet developed the idea of compassion further through the figure of the bodhisattva.

The bodhisattva is a practitioner who has vowed to work selflessly for the enlightenment of other beings. The development of this state of mind is known as “bodhicitta.” Bodhicitta provides the motivation and commitment to this difficult path of putting others before oneself.

One practice for cultivating bodhicitta is exchanging self for others. In this practice, those on the bodhisattva path would regard the suffering of others as if it were their own and would offer help to others as if helping oneself.

As the Indian Buddhist monk Santideva writes in his classic eighth-century work on the path of the bodhisattva, “The Bodhicaryavatara,” one should meditate with this sentiment in mind: “all equally experience suffering and happiness. I should look after them as I do myself.”

The Buddhist figure most focused on kindness is the bodhisattva of compassion, known originally as Avalokitesvara, who became popular in India by the sixth century A.D. A popular way to depict Avalokitesvara is with 11 heads and 1,000 arms, which he uses to benefit all sentient beings. Tibetan Buddhists believe that all Dalai Lamas are manifestations of this bodhisattva.

This bodhisattva is known by various names across Asia. In Nepal, the bodhisattva is known as Karunamaya, and in Tibet as Lokesvara and Chenrezig. In China, the bodhisattva is a female figure called Guanyin and portrayed as a woman with long, flowing hair in white robes, who holds a vase tilted downward so she can drop the dew of compassion upon all beings.

Throughout East and Southeast Asia this is a popular figure. People make offerings to seek help, especially in regards to success in business and starting a family.

With practices that urge people to practice compassion toward others and with figures who can be asked to bestow it, Buddhism offers unique and diverse ways to think about and express kindness. [Abridged]

STUDY: FOX VIEWERS MORE LIKELY TO BELIEVE COVID FALSEHOODS

THE BUZZ

People who trust Fox News Channel and other media outlets that appeal to conservatives are more likely to believe falsehoods about COVID-19 and vaccines than those who primarily go elsewhere for news, a study has found.

While the Kaiser Family Foundation study released this week found the clear ties between news outlets that people trusted and the amount of misinformation they believe, it took no stand on whether those attitudes specifically came from what they saw there.

Kaiser polled people on whether or not they believed seven widely-circulated untruths about the virus, among them that the

government is exaggerating the number of deaths attributable to the coronavirus, hiding reports of deaths caused by vaccines or that the vaccines can cause infertility, contain a microchip or can change DNA.

For people who most trusted network or local television news, NPR, CNN or MSNBC, between 11% and 16% said they believed four or more of those untrue statements, or weren’t sure about what was true.

For Fox News viewers, 36% either believed in or were unsure about four or more false statements, Kaiser said.

AP PHOTO



THOUSANDS OF RED UK PHONE BOXES TO BE PROTECTED FROM CLOSURE

THOUSANDS of Britain’s iconic red phone boxes will be protected from removal under new rules, the U.K.’s telecommunications regulator said yesterday [Macau time].

The public payphone boxes may look like obsolete relics in an age of ubiquitous smartphones, but regulator Ofcom said they can still be a “lifeline” for people in need.

The regulator is proposing rules to prevent 5,000 call boxes in areas with poor mobile coverage from being closed down. It said that phone booths in areas considered accident or suicide hotspots, and those that have had more than 52 calls made from them in the past 12 months,

would also meet the criteria.

Ofcom said there are still around 21,000 phone boxes across the country, and that almost 150,000 calls to emergency services were made from phone boxes from May 2019 to May 2020. Some 45,000 calls were also made to other helplines like the Samaritans.

“Some of the call boxes we plan to protect are used to make relatively low numbers of calls. But if one of those calls is from a distressed child, an accident victim or someone contemplating suicide, that public phone line can be a lifeline at a time of great need,” said Selina Chadha, Ofcom’s director of connectivity.

“We also want to make sure that people without mobile coverage, often in rural areas, can still make calls,” she added.

BT Group, formerly British Telecom, says nearly half of the phone boxes in the U.K. have been removed due to the growth of the mobile phone industry.

It said more than 6,500 unused call boxes have so far been converted into mini community libraries, art galleries or storage units for public defibrillators under a plan called “Adopt a Kiosk,” which allows local organizations to buy a red phone box for 1 pound (\$1.40) and turn it into something useful. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Sri Lanka At least 16 people have died in floods and mudslides in Sri Lanka following more than a week of heavy rain, officials said. The disaster management center said more than 5,000 people have been displaced from their homes and have taken shelter in relatives’ homes or government-run relief centers. Most deaths have occurred due to drowning and lightning strikes.

Vietnam An oil tanker earlier seized by Iran was free in open water yesterday, ending the latest maritime confrontation involving Tehran amid stalled negotiations over its tattered nuclear deal with world powers. The Sothys left a position off Iran’s Bandar Abbas port and had reached international waters in the nearby Gulf of Oman early Wednesday. The vessel appeared anchored there, but there was no information about its crew.

India yesterday hosted senior security officials from Russia, Iran and five Central Asian countries to discuss the ramifications of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in talks that were boycotted by rival Pakistan and its ally China. A joint statement released after the meeting said the eight participating nations also discussed threats arising from terrorism, radicalization and drug trafficking as well as the need for humanitarian assistance.

AP PHOTO



EU A court yesterday rejected Google’s appeal of a 2.4 billion euro fine from regulators who found the tech giant abused its massive online reach by giving its own shopping recommendations an illegal advantage in its search results. The European Commission, the 27-nation bloc’s competition watchdog, punished Google in 2017 for unfairly favoring its own shopping service over competitors.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti



A house is covered by ash from a volcano as it continues to erupt on the Canary island of La Palma, Spain. The erupting volcano continues to emit vast amounts of magma, gases and ash, after days of intense seismic activity and more than five weeks since it first erupted.