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COVID-19
GOV'T JUSTIFIES DAY 11 OF
QUARANTINE WITH RESULT OF
LAST NAT, PROCEDURES

**LUSO-CHINESE INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL READY TO
OPEN FOR BUSINESS**

**DETROIT HONORS
VINCENT CHIN,
ASIAN AMERICAN
KILLED IN 1982**



AP PHOTO



North Korea reported a new “epidemic” of an intestinal disease yesterday, an unusual announcement from the secretive country that is already contending with a Covid-19 outbreak and severe economic turmoil. It's unclear how many people are infected in what the official Korean Central News Agency said was “an acute enteric epidemic” in southwestern Haeju city.

AP PHOTO



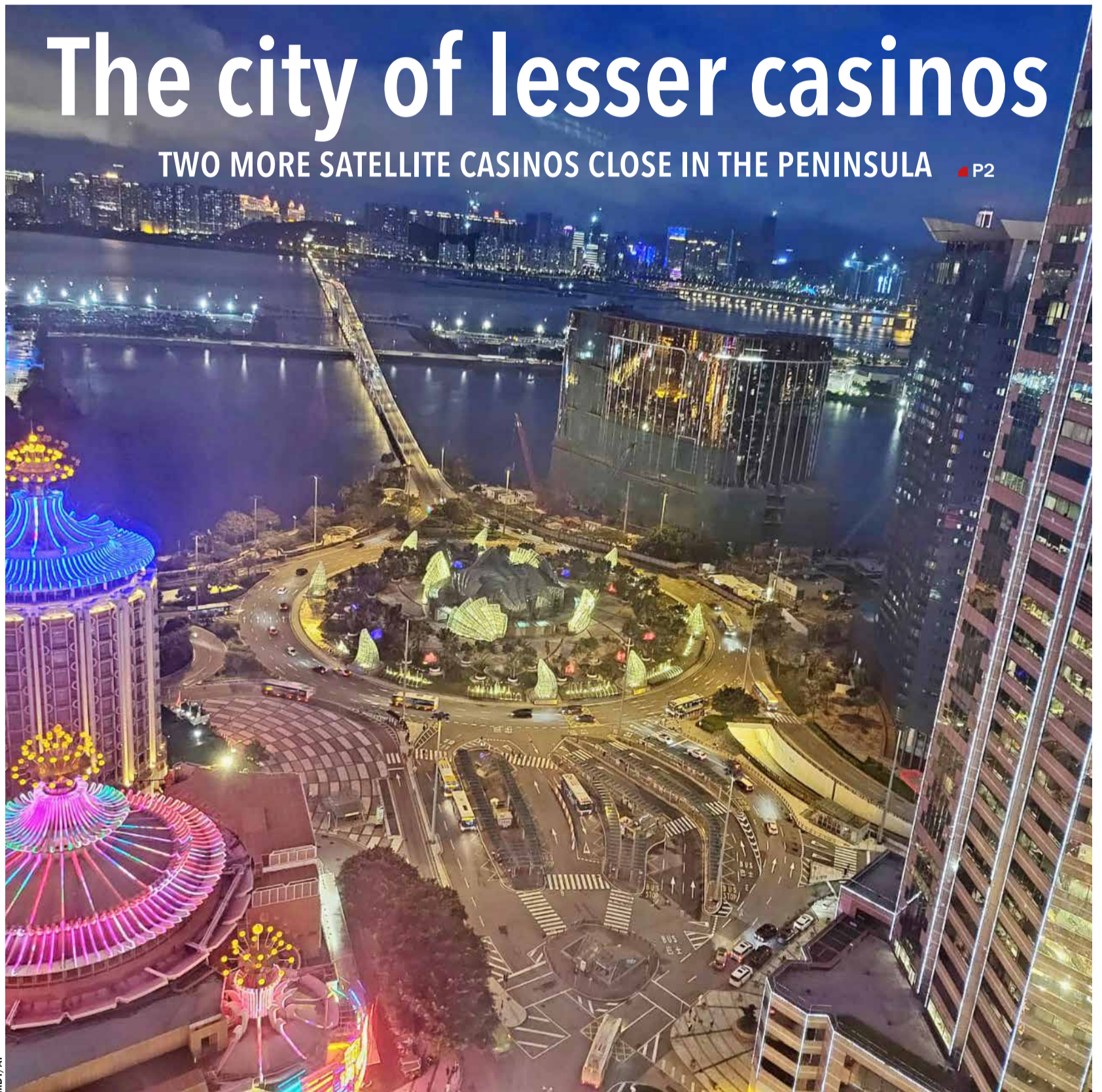
India Violence erupted yesterday with thousands of angry youths setting train coaches and vehicles on fire, blocking highways and attacking police with rocks to protest a new short-term government recruitment policy for the military. Police used batons and tear gas to disperse the protesters in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan states where they took to the streets and damaged government buildings.

AP PHOTO



Bangladesh Thousands of people marched in Bangladesh's capital yesterday to demand the governments of Bangladesh and India officially condemn comments by two Indian governing party officials deemed derogatory to Islam's Prophet Muhammad. The march began at the country's main Baitul Mukarram Mosque but was blocked by police as it headed toward India's Embassy, a few kilometers away.

More on backpage



The city of lesser casinos

TWO MORE SATELLITE CASINOS CLOSE IN THE PENINSULA P2

MDT/AT



DRIVE IN

P10



TASTE OF EDESIA

P11

GAMING

GALAXY'S PRESIDENT AND RIO CASINOS CLOSE; SJM EXTENDS GRAND EMPEROR CASINO

ANTHONY LAM

AS Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) abruptly closed a pair of satellite casinos yesterday midnight, reports about SJM Resorts, S.A.'s attempt to extend Grand Emperor Casino have emerged.

As the clock struck midnight yesterday, the doors of the casinos at Rio Hotel and President Hotel closed, seemingly for good. Both casinos are satellite casinos operated by GEG.

'Satellite casino' is non-legal terminology used widely to refer to casinos that are not located in properties owned by any gambling concessionaires.

News of the shutdown only emerged a couple of hours before the closure. It is still unclear why the gambling concessionaire decided to shut down the facilities.

In a statement concerning the closures of the duo of satellite casinos, GEG said that the two casinos "are currently taking inventory," as well as confirming the closures.

It added that GEG's employees working at the two "City Clubs" – the company's reference to satellite casinos – will be redeployed to its other casinos, with all of their



employment terms remaining unchanged.

"GEG will also provide them with a series of vocational training programs to assist them in adapting to their new working environment," the casino licensee said in a statement.

"GEG would like to thank Macau residents, patrons and different sectors of the community for their support [shown] to the Rio

Casino and the President Casino over the years," it went on saying. "As always, GEG remains fully committed to making positive contributions to the Macau's leisure and tourism industry."

Serial closures of satellite casinos have been rumored in the past months as the government first submitted a draft on the gaming law review that was understood to be giving the red light to all

similar facilities.

First to announce a shutdown was the Grand Emperor Casino, the satellite facility operated by SJM at the Grand Emperor Hotel in Praia Grande.

On April 2, the owner of the venue, the Grand Emperor Hotel and its parent company Hong Kong's Emperor Group, announced that they would cease the operation of their casino on June 26. The date was set to be the end of the current casino licenses period.

In the statement announcing the shutdown of its casino, Emperor Group cited vagueness in business prospects as a factor in its decision.

The story seems to be turning a brighter new leaf, though, because, according to several local media outlets, SJM would like to continue the operation of the Praia Grande gambling facility at least until the end of the year.

It was cited by media outlets that an indirect subsidiary of the Grand Emperor Hotel had made an agreement with SJM on June 15. The agreement is said to state that the hotel will provide accommodation, catering and other auxiliary services to SJM, while the latter will operate the casino for

the former.

It may be understood as both parties trying to work within the new framework set by the updated draft of the Gambling Law review. The updated draft has made proposals to clarify various parties in a casino operation business, such as intermediaries and management companies.

According to the said agreement, the value of the services is not likely to exceed HKD21 million.

Despite the original license cessation on June 26, the Macau government announced in March this year that all licenses would be extended to the end of this year on a by-application basis.

Later, as it updated the draft review of the aforementioned law, the government made adjustments that were understood to open the door to retaining satellite casinos.

All six casino operators in Macau have applied for the validity extension. It has been rumored that the government will sign new agreements to facilitate the temporary extension next week.

Next week will also see the draft review on the gaming law go to the parliament for second reading.

15 bids received to build Sewage Treatment Plant-Zone A bridges

ANTHONY LAM

THE Public Works Bureau (DSOP) has received 15 bids as part of the tender for the construction of a pair of bridges connecting the Macau Peninsula and the New Urban Zone A.

A bid revelation was held yesterday morning at the DSOP's headquarters.

The pair of bridges, comprising a motor overpass and a footbridge, will be the third connection between the two pieces of land, with the first being the bridge's exit right at the Pearl of the

Orient Roundabout.

This third connection, with bids revealed yesterday, is referred to as the A2 connection by the government. The 15 parties showing interest in building the project stipulated varying durations of construction, with the longest being 630 working days. Considering the impact of meteorological factors, the actual delivery date could be two years from now.

The 500-meter-long motor overpass will connect the section of Avenida 1 de Maio near the Sewage

Treatment Plant with the west end of Zone A. The bridge will have two lanes going in opposite directions.

To maximize the efficiency of this future piece of infrastructure, the driving direction of a lane on the road between the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) headquarters and the Choi Kou Middle School will be turned around.

As for the footbridge, the facility will be about 300 meters long and five meters wide. When built, it will be connected to an existing

footbridge that connects the Reservoir promenade with the area near the east side of the Sewage Treatment Plant.

Its exit on the Peninsula side will be near the sea embankment. Due to space factors, there will be no elevator, with a slope to be built instead. The Zone A exit, meanwhile, will have elevators.

Graphics pertaining to the construction indicate an S-shape entrance and exit on the Peninsula side for the motor overpass. The DSOP did not explain why



the design had been adopted. Existing infrastructure with similar designs, such as the Sai Van Bridge and the section of Avenida de Amizade that detours to StarWorld Hotel from Landmark Hotel, have proved that the design will exert pressure on the durability of the asphalt, which will have an impact upon traffic safety.

Under construction is the second link – an overpass linking Zone A and the Peninsula while crossing the Pearl of the Orient Roundabout. Its exit on the Peninsula will be about 100 meters from the roundabout, putting its ability to divert traffic in doubt.

According to the DSOP, its conclusion is expected to be in November.

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New Sino-Luso international school to start operations next year, sources say

A new Chinese-Portuguese international school will be in operation next year following the establishment of a topical association last November, the Times has learnt.

A source familiar with the project, who asked to remain anonymous, said that the new school will be led by a Portuguese academic, Rosa Bizarro, a former faculty member of Macau Polytechnic Institute.

She has experience in teaching foreign languages and translations and possesses a Ph.D. conferred by the University of Porto.

It was also said that the new teaching facility will rely on a staff of "quality teachers" as well as "a commitment to new technologies."

According to the source, the school may operate in the plot of land beside the One Oasis residential estate.

Meanwhile, it has come to the Times' attention that a new association concerning Chinese-Portuguese international schooling was formed last November. The Official Gazette (BO) entry announcing the



matter was published November 17, 2021.

It was disclosed in the BO that there are three founding members, namely former lawmaker and incumbent lawyer as well as member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Leonel Alberto Alves; local architect Nuno Maria Roque Jorge; as well as a pioneer of Chinese-Portu-

guese trade and an alumnus of the University of Macau, Cheong Lok Tin.

However, the names in Chinese, English and Portuguese featured discrepancies in the BO entry.

The Chinese and the Portuguese names of the association matched with each other, which translate to Association of the Sino-Luso International School of Macau (Associa-

ção do Colégio Sino-Luso Internacional de Macau, 澳門中葡國際學校協會).

However, the English name of the association in the BO is simply Sino-Luso International School of Macau.

In the Charter, three purposes of the "association" have been stated. It will work on "[the] development and administration of internatio-

nal schools dedicated to the teaching of Portuguese, Chinese and English languages and cultures, assuming the inherent pedagogical and financial responsibilities, [the promotion] of Macau's cultural values, as well as [interconnection] with institutions that pursue educational, cultural and sporting interests."

The Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) has been contacted for comment regarding the matter. As of press time, no reply has been received.

The Times also contacted the association but no reply was given by press time.

Back in April, the Chief Executive confirmed that two international schools have been approved and will soon be presented to the public.

The information revealed by the head of the government echoes earlier reports by the Times, unveiling plans for an international school in Coloane. Prior to Ho's comment, the DSEDJ confirmed that the land will be home to a school. **MDT**

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COVID-19

GOV'T JUSTIFIES 11TH DAY OF QUARANTINE WITH RESULT OF LAST NAT, PROCEDURES

RENATO MARQUES

LOCAL health authorities have explained the reasons for extending the 10-day quarantine period into the 11th day.

During the weekly press briefing of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, which took place yesterday, the coordinator at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Leong Iek Hou, explained that the reason for the extension of the quarantine period into the 11th day was the fact that to leave the quarantine hotel, people need to undergo a final nucleic acid test (NAT) on the 10th day, and it is necessary to wait for the results of this test, so in many cases, there is a need to wait to leave the hotel until the next day, she said.

Addressing the matter, Leong said that the authorities have already communicated with the company that collects and analyses the NAT samples so that the sample collecting is done, as much as possible, during the morning period of the 10th day to allow enough time for the results to be obtained and to complete other check-out procedures.

"We are asking the company to collect the samples on the morning of the 10th day so we can have the result in the afternoon or evening. Still, there are also other procedures to be done before the checkout, so it is likely that, in some cases, it will be necessary to stay a little longer," Leong noted.

The same official explained

RENATO MARQUES



that the counting of the days in quarantine follows a regular procedure, exemplifying, "If a person arrived at the quarantine hotel on July 1, only on the next day [has] this person completed one full day of the quarantine," she said, remarking that the seven NAT tests are performed on Day 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 10.

The official also noted that, under the new "10+7" quarantine system, people also need to undergo an additional seven days of health self-observation, which means that the alleged "extra" day of quarantine is also the first of this period.

'7+7' REQUIRES FURTHER STUDYING

Questioned on the matter of the possibility of a further reduction from the "10+7" model

to "7+7," Leong said that further reduction of the quarantine period requires further consideration and careful analysis of the situation.

"We have diverse opinions in society. While some call for a further reduction in the quarantine period, others fear that this might not be safe. We need to base our decision on studies and scientific data," said the official.

"We are now observing [whether] this reduction [from 14 to 10 days] of the quarantine period poses any risks to society or not. Only after this and in case it does not cause any problem, can we consider the '7+7,'" the official said, adding, "We are not just considering Macau cases in this study but also the results obtained on the mainland. We know that in most cases the Omicron

variant can be detected within seven days, but sometimes it is difficult to ascertain when the infection might have occurred."

VISITOR ARRIVALS CONTINUE TO DROP

During the same press briefing, the representative of the Public Security Police Force (PSP), Ma Chio Hong, addressed usual figures regarding the number and type of border crossings over the last week. Analyzing the figures from the seven days that started on June 9 and went until June 15, it was possible to observe that while the general number of border crossings has grown by 8.4% to a total of almost 2.8 million, the number of border crossings pertaining to visitors has dropped by 1.4% to just about 288,000 in seven days, a figure that accounts for a daily average of just 20,600 visitors entering Macau per day. This number represents, on average, 300 fewer visitors per day, when compared with the week between June 2 and June 8.

NO ROOM TO REDUCE NAT PRICE IN THE HOTELS

THERE is no room for reducing the cost of the nucleic acid tests (NAT) performed at the quarantine venues during the medical observation period, the coordinator at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Leong Iek Hou, said yesterday in response to an inquiry from the media. Leong said that, although there is a new company preparing to enter the market to provide NATs to the public at more affordable prices, this does not influence the

current procedures and resources needed to collect the NAT samples at the quarantine hotels, which have a much higher cost. The official also noted that a special benefit (50% discount) has already been granted to local students returning to Macau, a discount that is absorbed directly by the company, without any additional costs for the government, as part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility program.

ROTARY CLUB

75th anniversary recalls living up to 'serve to change lives'

THE Rotary Club of Macau's 75th Anniversary Charity Ball has drawn attention to this year's international theme, which is "Serve to Change Lives," with the group believing it has lived up to its tradition of serving those in need - in the city and abroad.

Themed "Starry Starry Night," participants dressed up as sci-fi characters, while at the same time, contributing to funds for Rotary Club of Macau's many humanitarian service projects.

"Today, just like three-

quarters of a century ago, Rotarians at the Rotary Club of Macau remain faithful to the motto 'Service Above Self' as a driving force for our activity in the community," said Ball Chair and president elect Li Ying.

Li pledged to continue to strive to serve those in need in the community. She took the opportunity to express her gratitude to the event's sponsors, saying, "Your support is of great importance to us for carrying out our service projects."

Among the projects

undertaken by the Rotary Club of Macau are the "Joy to the World - Xmas Party" for children with special needs and their families; a wellbeing project entitled "Sportarians," aiming to improve the participants' health quality; "Together We Go Eco," an environmental project aimed at teenagers and trying to instill the concept of "up-cycling"; and the Blood Donation Event.

The anniversary was celebrated last week at Grand Pavilion, Grand Lisboa Palace, with over 200 guests. LV



Wynn Promotes Sustainable Hospitality to Build Green Future

AS a long-term member of the tourism and catering industries, Wynn places great value on food sustainability and ecological conservation, and is equally committed to the responsible use of Earth's invaluable resources. By organizing a variety of activities and workshops, Wynn endeavors to share and promote the latest trends and developments in this field among its own team members and other professionals in the industry, and thereby make a valuable contribution towards building Macao into a modern green city.

FIRST AND ONLY ENTERPRISE IN MACAO WITH MSC AND ASC CERTIFICATIONS

Last year, Wynn Palace successfully qualified for the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Chain of Custody (CoC) and the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) Chain of Custody (CoC) certifications, making Wynn the first and only enterprise in Macao to hold these two prestigious international accreditations, which ensures the wild-caught and farmed seafood provided by Wynn complies with the international standards for sustainable fishery and seafood traceability.

Through these certifications, Wynn hopes to provide customers with more eco-friendly dining options and protect the Earth's precious resources by strictly complying with sustainable fishing practices and actively promoting the environmental and social sustainability of farmed seafood.

INTRODUCING SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD DISHES

To remind world citizens of how precious and fragile our oceans are, and to reiterate the impact that our diet has on glo-



Wynn becomes the first and only enterprise in Macao to acquire MSC CoC and ASC CoC certifications.



Wynn is the first integrated resort in Macao to develop an automated water refilling system with Nordaq.

bal ecology, the United Nations declared June 8 as "World Oceans Day" and June 18 as "Sustainable Gastronomy Day." In celebration of these important occasions, Wynn has introduced a selection

of sustainable seafood dishes at eight restaurants in Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace throughout June. This pioneering initiative seeks to raise awareness amongst customers of the importance of

eco-friendly fishing and marine farming practices.

By serving dishes that feature certified, premium sustainable seafood, Wynn hopes to draw public attention to the protec-

tion of the ocean and ecological resources, thereby ensuring the long-term safeguarding of marine resources.

FIRST RESORT IN MACAO TO INTRODUCE NORDAQ WATER FILTRATION SYSTEM

Wynn has worked closely with internationally acclaimed Swedish company Nordaq over the past two years to co-design and develop the "Nordaq 2000" to tackle the high demand for water bottles in large-scale integrated resorts.

After adopting Nordaq's distilled and sparkling water in its food and beverage operations across the board at Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace in 2019, Wynn has become the first integrated resort in the world to install and operate an on-site Nordaq automated water bottling plant on a significant scale, which can fill 2,000 bottles of water per hour and is expected to save 8 million plastic bottles every year.

TAILORED SUSTAINABILITY TRAINING COURSES

Wynn has launched a sustainable catering education series exclusively for chefs and other catering team members. The series, which includes a course on "Beneficial Foods for Humans and Environment", discusses the importance of environmental protection and enhances participants' awareness of the catering supply chain's impact on overall sustainability. Top international companies such as Green Monday, Moët Hennessy Diage, and Oatly were invited to share their strategies in this field with Wynn's team members, and also give some insight into their efforts in promoting vegetarian culture and eco-friendly packaging design.

Furthermore, Wynn is also hosting a "Masterclass in Sustainable Wines" for the industry professionals at Wynn Palace on June 20, to summarize how the wine industry is sustainably developed. The masterclass will be delivered by internationally renowned sommelier Jennifer Docherty, who will present various wines made with different farming and production methods.



Wynn invites top international companies to share their insight in promoting vegetarian culture and eco-friendly packaging design.



Wynn is hosting "Masterclass in Sustainable Wines" for industry professionals.

OVERSEAS CHINESE

DETROIT HONORS VINCENT CHIN, ASIAN AMERICAN KILLED IN 1982

COREY WILLIAMS, DETROIT

DECADES before Chinese immigrant Yao Pan Ma was attacked while collecting cans in New York and Thai American Vicha Ratanapakdee was fatally assaulted in San Francisco, Vincent Chin was beaten to death with a baseball bat in Detroit by two white men who never served jail time.

Forty years later — and amid a rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans — Detroit has partnered with The Vincent Chin 40th Remembrance & Rededication Coalition on a four-day commemoration to honor civil rights efforts that began with Chin's death and declare the city's commitment against such violence.

"Although hate crimes existed, Vincent Chin did bring out a flash point for Asian Americans," Stanley Mark, senior staff attorney at the New York-based Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, said, calling Chin's death "a seminal moment among Asian Americans."

Chin, a 27-year-old Chinese immigrant, was at the Fancy Pants Tavern strip club in the Detroit enclave of Highland Park for his bachelor party on June 19, 1982, when a fight erupted. Federal authorities said two autoworkers blamed Chin for layoffs at car factories due to Japanese imports. After Chin left the club, the two men tracked him down at a fast food eatery and attacked him, authorities said. Chin later died at a hospital.

The Vincent Chin 40th Remembrance & Rededication commemoration starts today [Macau time].

It comes as crimes against people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent have increased, fueled in part by the COVID-19 pandemic.



In this 1983 photo, Lily Chin holds a photograph of her son Vincent, 27, who was beaten to death on June 23, 1982

Some in the U.S. say bigots have been emboldened by then-President Donald Trump, who often disparagingly referred to the virus as the "Chinese virus."

"This recent spike of anti-Asian violence because of COVID and anti-China rhetoric deals with geopolitical things," Mark said. "The rhetoric is: China is the boogeyman."

From March 19, 2020, through the end of last year, people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent reported 10,905 incidents — from taunting to outright assaults, ac-

cording to Stop AAPI Hate, a national coalition based in California.

The Justice Department said that in 2020, more than 8,000 single-bias incidents involved 11,126 victims — up from 7,103 incidents the previous year. Bias over race, ethnicity and ancestry was behind nearly 62% of the incidents.

Ratanapakdee was among the Asian Americans who have been attacked in recent years. He was on a morning walk when he was shoved to the ground and

his head hit the pavement. The 84-year-old died two days later.

Ma, 61, was knocked down and repeatedly kicked in the head in an attack last year. He died Dec. 31.

Last month, three women of Asian descent were shot in a hair salon in Dallas' Koreatown. The suspect's girlfriend later told investigators he has delusions that Asian Americans are trying to harm him.

"This recent spike of anti-Asian violence because of Covid and anti-China rhetoric deals with geopolitical things.

STANLEY MARK
ATTORNEY

President Joe Biden last year signed the bipartisan COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which expedited Justice Department reviews of anti-Asian hate crimes. His administration has spent recent weeks in meetings with Asian American leaders to discuss the violence. K-pop sensation BTS visited the White House last month to speak with Biden about combating the rise in hate crimes targeting Asian Americans.

Helen Zia, an activist in Detroit at the time Chin was slain and now executor of an estate named after Chin and his mother, Lilly, said anti-Asian racism that was going on in the 1980s is similar to what is happening today.

"This is a common thread for the history of Asians in America whether it's an economic crisis or

somebody to blame for the World Trade Center being destroyed: It's Asians, yellow and brown people that have historically been scapegoated and blamed for these things," she said.

"It goes to a threat that is more than a couple of hundred years old — blaming a group that is seen as the forever-enemy alien."

To the horror of Zia and many others, neither of the two men accused of beating Chin received any jail time. Ronald Ebens pleaded guilty to manslaughter, while his stepson, Michael Nitz, pleaded no contest.

Each was sentenced to three years' probation and fined \$3,700.

"These men are not going to go out and harm somebody else,"

Wayne County Circuit Judge Charles Kaufman, who has since died, explained at the time. "You don't make the punishment fit the crime; you make the punishment fit the criminal."

The declaration shocked many.

"The sentence put a target on every Asian American's head," said Zia, who is now an author li-

ving in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Ebens and Nitz also were later acquitted of federal civil rights charges.

Federal prosecutors had said Ebens blamed people of Asian descent for problems in the U.S. auto industry, and killed Chin because of his race. The defense admitted Ebens killed Chin, but said he was drunk and had been provoked.

The Associated Press was unable to reach Nitz for comment this week. A voicemail message was left Wednesday at a telephone number listed for Ebens.

"There was a full expectation (Ebens and Nitz) would receive the full wrath of the criminal justice system," Zia said. "I think the family — people — thought the justice system was going to work."

MDT/AP

WAR GAMES

Chinese destroyer on long-distance exercises in Sea of Japan

ONE of China's largest and most capable combat ships is conducting long-distance exercises in the Sea of Japan, state media reported yesterday, in a display of China's increasing naval reach.

The Communist Party newspaper Global Times said the mission was the first for the Type 055 destroyer Lhasa since its commissioning last year.

It is accompanied by the

Luyang-class Type 052D destroyer Chengdu and the Type 903 oiler Dongpinghu, the paper said, citing Japan's Defense Ministry. The Sea of Japan lies to the north of China between the Japanese archipelago, Sakhalin Island, the Korean Peninsula and the Russian Far East mainland.

Japan's Defense Ministry said the three ships were spotted about 200

kilometers west of Fukue island in Nagasaki on Sunday traveling east toward the Sea of Japan.

It said it also spotted a Dongdiao-class intelligence ship on Sunday operating near the Tsushima Strait which later sailed into the Sea of Japan.

China's navy has been building ships at a furious pace and now boasts the largest naval force in the world by number of hulls.

Those ships have been growing in sophistication as well, with the Type 055, also known as the Nanchang class, featuring a stealthy design and packing air-defense missiles and anti-ship and anti-land cruise missiles, as well as torpedoes.

China is believed to have commissioned five out of a planned first batch of Type 055 destroyers.

The U.S. military cate-

gorizes the Type 055 as a Renhai-class cruiser and sees them partly as a carrier escort. China operates two aircraft carriers with the launch of a third believed to be imminent.

Citing military experts, Global Times said the destroyer was part of China's military buildup aimed at deterring a foreign intervention in the event of an attack on Taiwan, the self-governing island Chi-

na claims as its own and threatens to annex by force.

Such a conflict would almost certainly draw in the United States, which provides Taiwan with defensive weapons and is legally required to treat threats to the island as matters of "grave concern," along with its treaty allies, the most important and closest in geographical proximity being Japan. MDT/AP

JAPAN

Kishida's cautious course sets up potential long-term rule

MARI YAMAGUCHI,
TOKYO

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida did not look like he'd last long when he took office eight months ago.

He was seen as nice, but indecisive and subservient to party heavyweights. Many believed that, like his short-lived predecessor, he was not up to the task of winning over a public battered by months of pandemic restrictions and economic worries.

A recent surge in popularity, however, likely portends a victory in July elections that could set up a long stretch of uninterrupted power. That's saying something in a country where many past prime ministers had only relatively brief periods in office.

The secret to his surprising success?

By mostly playing it safe, and for the time being holding back on contentious policy goals, he has avoided the mistakes that doomed his predecessors, such as appearing autocratic and not paying attention to public opinion.

He has also been helped by an easing of public worries about the pandemic as well as growing concerns about global conflicts. The confluence of good fortune, experts say, created a public image of a steady, sensible leader with a shot at lifting Japan from decades of economic and security woes.

With his support ratings now over 60%, well above the 40% when he first took over, a strong victory for his Liberal Democratic Party in elections next month seems certain, helped by the continuing weakness of Japan's opposition. That, in turn, likely means up to three years without another election that could drive him from power.

"Because there weren't high expectations for Mr. Kishida when he launched his administration, he can be seen as stable just by doing things normally at a safe cruising speed," said Yu Uchiyama, a politics professor at the University

AP PHOTO



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida

of Tokyo. "But he cannot stay popular just by looking stable, and his success depends on whether Mr. Kishida responds flexibly to changing situations."

Several years in power would allow Kishida to focus on long-term issues such as Japan's fast-aging, fast-shrinking population, the economy, and a contentious revision of the constitution, a long-cherished goal of his conservative party that is opposed by those worried that its war-renouncing Article 9 will be watered down.

Kishida's continued success depends on delivering concrete accomplishments, analysts say. Until now, his actions have mostly been responses to the pandemic and global conflicts, and he has remained vague about his policy goals.

When Kishida came to power, public support for the governing coalition had been badly hurt by his predecessor, Yoshihide Suga, who struggled with a worsening pandemic and insisted on pushing through with hosting the Tokyo Olympics despite a worried public, and was out of power after only about a year.

Kishida's current high support ratings are partly a result of his tough response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and his careful

COVID-19 measures, including strict border controls that foreign critics have described as xenophobia. A decline in new cases has further boosted his support, as has his announcement of a gradual reopening to foreign tourists.

As Japanese worry about growing Chinese and North Korean assertiveness in the region, he has called for a stronger alliance with Washington and for the repair of ties with South Korea, long marred by bitter tensions over historical issues such as Japan's past colonization of the Korean Peninsula.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has increased Japanese fears that a Chinese attack on Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing claims as its own, could embroil Japan in a war. That has prompted a surge in support for Kishida's plan to bolster Japan's military spending and defense power.

"Ukraine today may be East Asia tomorrow," Kishida said last Friday at the Shangri-La Dialogue, an Asian security forum in Singapore.

Last week, Japan's Cabinet approved an annual policy plan calling for a drastic strengthening of defense capabilities and spending. Officials cited growing tensions over

Taiwan and a commitment by NATO members to spend 2% of their gross do-

mestic product on defense, twice as much as Japan's current military spending of just over 1% of GDP.

It calls for pre-emptive strike capabilities as well as the development and strengthening of space, cyber and electromagnetic defense and of unmanned weapons. That's a major shift that critics say goes beyond Japan's self-defense-only policy under its war-renouncing constitution.

Kishida's government has also approved legislation to guard Japanese technology and reinforce critical supply chains, while imposing tighter oversight of Japanese companies in sensitive sectors, to enhance security against China.

In a recent commentary, the liberal-leaning Asahi newspaper warned the Kishida government against "capitalizing on the

Ukraine crisis" to bolster Japan's military. Japan, with a huge national debt, can't compete militarily against China and must instead "focus on deterrence by diplomacy," it said.

Kishida, who describes himself as good listener, has avoided party infighting over divisive issues. In parliament and in news conferences, he patiently listens to tough questions, often avoiding confrontations and clear policy pronouncements.

That helps his inclusive image but blurs his own principles and policy goals.

Kishida initially called for better wealth distribution as part of his centerpiece economic policy, which he calls a "new form of capitalism," but has since shifted to a growth strategy based on greater fiscal spending, a policy backed by party heavyweights who can influence his future grip on power.

"The Kishida administration needs a powerful growth strategy and whether he can present concrete measures after the July elections will be key" to his success, said Yasuhide Yajima, chief economist at NLI Research Institute. MDT/AP

AD

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COMMONWEALTH

As Rwanda hosts summit, bloc's role questioned

RODNEY MUHUMUZA & IGNATIUS SSUUNA, KIGALI

WITH fresh coats of paint and streets swept clean, Rwanda's capital is preparing for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit, which will bring leaders of the 54-nation group of mostly former British colonies whose relevance is sometimes questioned.

President Paul Kagame will host Prince Charles, U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson and scores of world leaders in a glittering summit, which takes place between June 20 and 25, that he hopes will promote this East African country's standing.

The summit is an opportunity to highlight Rwanda's stability and relative prosperity under Kagame's rule. It also will focus attention on Rwanda's widely criticized deal with Britain to deport asylum-seekers from the U.K. to Rwanda. Legal challenges stopped a flight that would have brought the first group just days before the summit.

The Commonwealth is a bloc of many developing nations but includes richer ones such as Singapore and Australia. Members range from established democracies such as Canada to more authoritarian ones like Rwanda itself.

Homeless people and sex workers have recently been removed from Kigali's streets as the government detained them ahead of the summit, according to Human Rights Watch.

What do the Commonwealth's countries have in common aside from their colonial past? Where is the bloc's voice in international affairs? And how does Africa, a continent of 1.3 billion people, benefit?

Climate change, and how to rebuild the global economy facing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, will be high on the summit's agenda, organizers say. The event also will discuss business, civil society, youth and gender issues.

Rwanda, a former Belgian colony now ruled by an Anglophile leader, seeks to show how the country of 13 million people has progressed since the genocide in 1994. It is the sixth African country to host the Commonwealth's biennial summit since 1971. Neighbo-



The Rwandan capital of Kigali is seen from one of the overlooking hills

ring Uganda hosted the summit in 2007.

Commonwealth summits in Africa have been noteworthy. The 1979 gathering in Zambia helped to bring an end to white minority rule in Rhodesia, which became majority-ruled Zimbabwe in 1980. The 1991 summit in Zimbabwe saw the Commonwealth increase international pressure to bring an end to South Africa's racist system of apartheid.

"The Commonwealth is relevant, but the question is to whom? Do governments get political capital out of it? You profile your country, you profile your name," said Mwambutsya Ndebesa, a political historian at Uganda's Makerere University. "You can derive political legitimacy out of hosting such an event."

That rare opportunity is why countries such as Rwanda appear eager to "spend their meager resources" to host the summit, he said.

Rwandan authorities said they would spend roughly \$10 million improving infrastructure ahead of the summit, which was initially scheduled to happen in 2020 but was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hotels and restaurants are fully booked, ensuring the summit's popularity among some Rwandans.

"The bottom line is to showcase what products we Africans have, and visitors will always come back to buy or invest," said teacher Agnes Nadin. "This is the beauty as CHOGM attracts a big gathering."

But others who spoke to The Associated Press were less

enthusiastic, asking what the Commonwealth means for Africans.

"The former master's underlying motivation is not good governance in Africa or improvement on the human rights platform but influence-seeking," said Dias Nyesiga, a business consultant in Kigali.

The Commonwealth should establish a peer-review mechanism of steps each member should take to achieve the bloc's values, including good governance and the protection of human rights, he said.

The Commonwealth would be more influential if it worked boldly to address global challenges such as "the consequences of pandemics," said Eric Ndushabandi, a professor of political science at the University of Rwanda.

Representing 2.5 billion people, the Commonwealth notably monitors elections among member countries and makes recommendations in its reports.

The bloc has suspended member states in response to events deemed to be in violation of its values. Nigeria was suspended for years after a harsh military government executed environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others in 1995.

Zimbabwe left the bloc in 2003 as President Robert Mugabe's government faced criticism over disputed elections and seizures of farms owned by white people. Zimbabwe's current government now seeks readmission, and analysts say President Emmerson Mnangagwa is pushing for greater international legitimacy after

taking power from Mugabe in 2017. Zimbabwe remains under international sanctions.

"Mnangagwa sees it as politically expedient to be added back into the Commonwealth because in as much he has been described as 'worse than Mugabe,' he wishes to be seen as a good global citizen," said Zimbabwean political analyst David Chikwaza. "The Commonwealth's association is something he believes will cement his mantra of reengagement."

The Commonwealth undermines its influence by appearing to be more of a nostalgic political group rather than a trading bloc, Chikwaza said.

Commonwealth leaders at a summit in 2018 pledged to boost trade within the bloc to \$2 trillion by 2030. But trade between Britain and Commonwealth countries was so low by 2020 that the bloc accounted for only about 9% of the U.K.'s total trade, with the value of exports to the Commonwealth falling by 16% between 2019 and 2020, according to the U.K.'s Office for National Statistics.

With China now Africa's leading trade partner, the U.K.'s political influence in its former colonies has waned. In Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, a mountain-top parliamentary building erected by the Chinese is set to replace the Victorian-style chamber.

Edson Sangwa, a Zimbabwean vendor of cheap electronics and children's toys imported from China, quipped: "What is the Commonwealth? We know China!" MDT/AP

this day in history

1961 RUSSIAN DANCER IN FREEDOM DASH



Principal dancer of the Kirov Ballet, Rudolf Nureyev, has broken free from Russian embassy guards at a Paris airport and requested asylum in France.

The 23-year-old Russian dancer dashed through a security barrier at Le Bourget airport shouting in English: "I want to be free."

It is understood Nureyev was approached by two Russian guards as he was waiting, with the rest of his troupe, to board a BEA Vanguard plane to London.

The guards informed him that he was required to return to Moscow instead of going to London, but, as he was being escorted to a waiting Russian aircraft, he made his dash for freedom.

He was taken into the airport police station by two French police officers, followed by the two furious Russian guards, and a heated argument ensued.

He was immediately granted temporary asylum in France and his case was referred to the Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons.

The Leningrad Kirov Ballet troupe continued their journey to London without their principal dancer. They are due to begin a four-week season at Covent Garden next week, having just finished a three-week season in Paris.

There has been widespread speculation that during his time in Paris, Rudolf Nureyev has fallen in love with 21-year-old Clara Saint, daughter of a wealthy Chilean painter based in Paris.

His association with Miss Saint and other members of Paris society had caused concern to the Russian authorities and was apparently a major reason behind his summons back to Moscow.

But Miss Saint said she was simply a friend of Mr Nureyev's and that there had been "nothing serious" between them.

She said: "I have no idea why he asked for political asylum here. At a party last night he seemed perfectly normal and happy."

"I believe it was only after two Soviet Embassy officials told him he had to go back to Moscow instead of to London that he decided to ask for French protection."

Mr Nureyev is also known to have become friendly with Serge Lifar, former director of the Paris Opera and star of Russian impresario Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in the 1920s.

And it is thought the prospect of a future career under Mr Lifar's guidance may have influenced Mr Nureyev's decision to stay in France.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Within a week of his defection, Rudolf Nureyev was signed up by the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas in Paris.

He never returned to Russia, settled in the West and soon became an international star. He is regarded by many as the greatest male dancer of the 20th century.

In the early years of his career Nureyev struggled to come to terms with his homosexuality. However after he settled in the West he had relationships with several well-known men, including Eric Bruhn, director of the Royal Swedish Ballet, and film star Anthony Perkins.

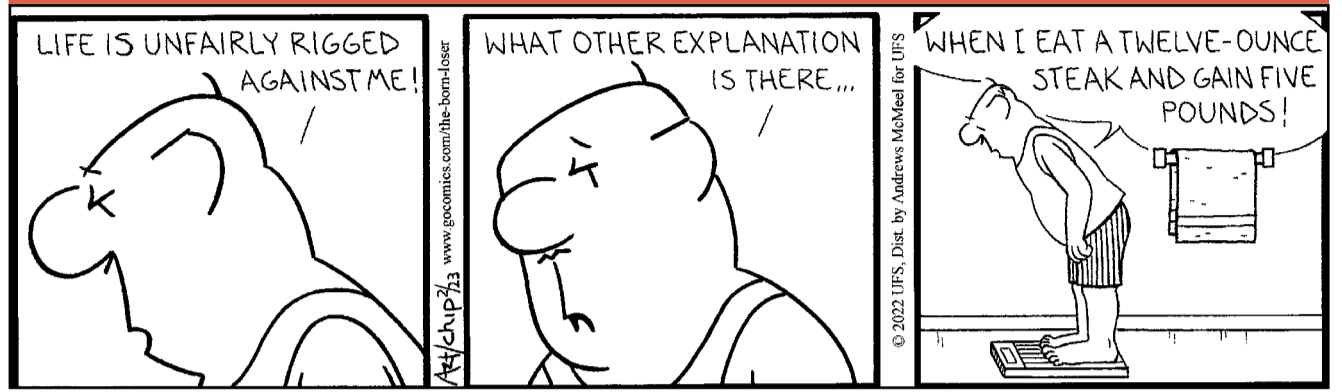
He died on 6 January 1993 from an Aids related illness. According to his last wishes, Rudolf Nureyev was buried in the Russian cemetery at Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois, near Paris.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You may be out of sorts if you have been extravagant or have let children or friends take advantage of you financially. Home improvement projects will run smoothly.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 You can raise your standard of living if you pick up some freelance work on the side. Don't let your boss make you feel guilty enough to take work home with you.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Put your emotional energy into passion not anxiety. You will be drawn to individuals who can provide you with both intellectual conversation and physical passion.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You need to sit back and enjoy. This could be the cause of a dispute that may result in estrangement. Minor accidents could cause trauma and major setbacks.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You'll have problems with authority figures if you don't play by the rules. You may want to make changes that will turn your entertainment room into a real family affair.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 You need to spend some time getting to know this person all over again. Your ability to come up with original ideas will bring recognition from superiors.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Voice your opinions and contribute to the debate. You must not make unnecessary changes today. You will find it easy to learn and excel.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 You can gain valuable cultural knowledge through dealing with foreigners. Your magnetic, outgoing personality will capture hearts.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Be prepared to deal with groups and organizations of greater magnitude. You will find it easy finalizing personal papers if you make an effort.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Don't expect support from your mate. Chronic health problems are likely to surface if you are keeping your problems locked up inside.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Talk to the party involved and make sure that they are informed as to what actually happened. Your ability to work with detail will bring recognition.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Delve into worthwhile causes that will show results if you put in the effort. Your main concern will be to spend as little as possible of your own cash in the process.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	19	32	cloudy
Changchun	18	27	rain
Chengdu	22	29	overcast
Chongqing	24	31	overcast
Fuzhou	23	26	rain
Guangzhou	24	30	rain
Guiyang	16	25	showers
Haikou	25	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	23	34	cloudy
Harbin	16	27	cloudy
Hefei	21	34	fine
Nanjing	23	35	fine
Shanghai	23	33	fine
Taipei	22	27	rain
Wuhan	23	33	fine
Hong Kong	26	28	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	12	21	showers
Frankfurt	16	30	overcast
Paris	21	35	overcast
London	18	33	overcast
New York	18	33	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Organ of sight; 4- Words to live by; 9- City in Tuscany; 14- Big ___; 15- Actor's parts; 16- ___ vincit amor; 17- The showing of a motion picture; 19- Indian chief; 20- Sorbonne, e.g.; 21- Expenditure; 23- Stool pigeon; var.; 24- Helicopter part; 27- Bronte heroine; 30- Stiffly; 32- Broadcast; 33- Not just bad; 37- Living in a city; 39- Vinegary; 40- Balloon car; 42- Driving hazard; 43- Illness; 44- Tiny bit; 45- Ship hospital; 48- School founded by Henry VI; 50- Fastener; 51- Offer; 55- Lover of Juliet; 57- Eagle's home; 58- A&M student; 60- Welfare; 64- Way to cook; 65- Snare; 66- Early bird?; 67- Singer Tucker; 68- Muzzle; 69- Tofu base;

DOWN 1- Ruhr city; 2- New Mexico's state flower; 3- Diamond flaw?; 4- Canadian tribe; 5- Jockey Turcotte; 6- Yalie; 7- Thieves' place; 8- Newsman Charles; 9- Kind; 10- Picture; 11- Pleasurable; 12- Vardalos of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"; 13- Satisfied sound; 18- Wild bugler; 22- Modern address; 24- Barbecue fare; 25- Stare; 26- No-win situation; 28- Iranian money; 29- Sea eagles; 30- Mob scenes; 31- Disgusting; 33- Sip; 34- Dazzling display; 35- Keyboard instrument; 36- Numbered rd.; 38- Stimp's pal; 40- Penpoints; 41- Put ___ on (limit); 43- Musical style with similarities to reggae; 46- Vanilla ___, American rap star; 47- Buffoons; 49- Rip-roaring; 51- Visit; 52- Great Lakes tribesmen; 53- Vernacular; 54- Having long gams; 56- Introduction to physics?; 57- Assist, often in a criminal act; 58- Singer Garfunkel; 59- Indian holiday resort; 61- Many, many moons; 62- John in England; 63- Baton Rouge sch.;



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DRIVE IN

A WINNING CHARMER IN 'GOOD LUCK TO YOU, LEO GRANDE'

LINDSEY BAHR,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

FEMALE desire is not a topic that gets a lot of space in mainstream Hollywood movies. And the desire of women north of 45? Well, that's been almost exclusively the province of Nancy Meyers, Meryl Streep and Diane Keaton. There have been others, sure, but it's often either played for humor or scrubbed and sanitized of anything remotely carnal. Usually it's some horrifyingly infantilized combination of both. It's as though someone decided that audiences couldn't possibly bear to watch a woman of menopause age acting or even feeling sexual and few have dared to challenge that notion.

That's all to say that it is a small miracle that "Good Luck to You, Leo Grande," a smart, nuanced and adamantly sex-positive film about a 55-year-old woman, exists. In the film, written by Katy Brand and directed by Sophie Hyde, Emma Thompson plays said woman. Nancy is a retired religion teacher and somewhat re-

AP PHOTO



Emma Thompson (left) and Daryl McCormack in a scene from "Good Luck to You, Leo Grande" (Searchlight Pictures)

cent widow who hires a handsome young sex worker, the titular Leo Grande (Daryl McCormack), for a night.

We're introduced to the characters, essentially the only ones in the film, in a perfect, dialogue-free sequence right before they meet. It tells you a lot about who they are and how they exist in the world, but not everything. There's basically 90 minutes of wide-ranging

conversations to follow that will help flesh out that whole conundrum.

Together they're not much different: She starts questioning her choice, chalking it up to a fit of madness and wondering what it says about her. He, meanwhile, continues to be cool, calm, charming and armed with a perfect response to everything.

The main reason for this "fit of

madness" is that Nancy has never had an orgasm.

She can't quite see or appreciate how lucky she is to have found Leo, who is patient and clever and not easy to write off. This drives her a bit mad, too, having lived life according to a set of principles that she knows haven't brought her happiness and are outdated but that she's not quite ready to let go of yet. And she will at various

points over the next 90 minutes sabotage things.

Leo, both as a person and a character, is self-consciously styled as a bit of a fantasy. He's there to be whatever his clients need him to be. The film doesn't go especially deep into the world of sex work, though there are some references to bad clients and how it can be more unsafe for women. It is, for the most part, a rose-colored glasses version of what it could be.

Thompson is truly better than ever and brings to life a complex and evolving person with humor, grace and a sharp edge. McCormack, meanwhile, is a star in the making. And together, the two are magnetic in this wonderfully adult film that is funny, sad, awkward, empowering and illuminating.

The truth is, you don't really know what audiences want if you're not giving them the option. "It's Complicated" and "Something's Gotta Give" made almost \$500 million at the box office, after all. "Leo Grande," in 2022, shouldn't really be a revelation. And maybe it's not, but I'm still celebrating.

"Good Luck to You, Leo Grande," a Searchlight Pictures release on Hulu Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "sexual content, graphic nudity and some language." Running time: 97 minutes. ★★★★★

AD

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Black Pearl for Summer

IRENE SAM, MDT

THIS summer, **The Black Pearl Diamond Restaurants** Gastronomic Series will be launched. Indeed, it is one of the most exciting events for gourmands organized by Melco Resorts and Entertainment in partnership with the 2022 Black Pearl diamond restaurants. Inaugural dinner will take place on June 24-25 with Macau's unprecedented six-diamond feast featuring Jade Dragon at City of Dreams and Jin Sha at Four Seasons Hotel Hangzhou at West Lake. The Gastronomic Series will continue to run throughout 2023 showcasing a total of 10 four-hands dinners which will cover a wide variety of cuisines between Melco's signature restaurants across **City of Dreams, Studio City and Altira Macau** and the 2022 Black Pearl diamond restaurants.

These extraordinary collaborations will offer gourmands the opportunity to discover and savor the regional specialties from all over China, while helping to promote some of the greatest restaurants of Macau. While preserving Macau's diversity in food culture



Sous Chef Calvin Yu

Executive Chef Otto Wong

through "Inheritance, Innovation, and Exchange", Melco is dedicated to promoting Macau as a Creative City of Gastronomy both locally and beyond.

In July, a second banquet featuring the crossover collaboration between the Michelin one star Pearl Dragon at Studio City and the Black Pearl one diamond Xi-



Pearl Dragon at Studio City



zhou Hall at Park Hyatt Suzhou will ride on the mega debut that will bring to Macau its first-ever six-diamond feast. Highlights on the menu includes Braised Deer

Sinew with Australia Abalone, Giant Grouper Skin and Rock Rice in Superior Sauce and Braised Beef Rib with Matsutake in Wagyu Beef Sauce.

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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

**BILL TO PROMOTE
IDEOLOGICAL ATTACK
ON CHINA NOT
FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

The so-called China Social Media Reciprocity Act some House Republicans proposed to the United States legislature on Tuesday represents the latest attempt by some US politicians to prevent Sino-US relations from being put back onto the right track.

The act would "prohibit the provision of services by social media platforms to individuals and entities on the Specially Designated Nations List and certain officials and other individuals and entities of the People's Republic of China" unless China verifiably "removes prohibitions on officials of the US government from accessing, using, or participating in social media platforms in China".

The justification given for the move is that banks and US insurance companies are not allowed to provide accounts to sanctioned individuals or entities, but due to the current loophole in the sanctions law, social media companies are allowed to provide the accounts because they are related to freedom of information.

In fact the move is further evidence of the discrimination against anything Chinese that prevails in Washington. As long as Chinese individuals and entities abide by the relevant laws and regulations while using social media platforms run by companies from the US or any other country, they should not be excluded simply because of where they are from, who they work for or what their beliefs are.

Officials of the US are allowed to use Chinese social media platforms so long as they abide by the laws of the country. The US embassy in China has official accounts on Chinese social media platforms as do many senior officials of its allies who welcome the chance to exchange views with Chinese netizens. That US government officials don't is either because they choose not to or because they know what they say would be prohibited under Chinese law.

US social media companies do not appear in China because their internal management rules and the supervisory regulations they follow are not in line with the relevant laws in China. And they have not been willing to adjust them. But the Chinese social media companies, ranging from ByteDance, owner of TikTok, to Tencent, owner of WeChat, are always ready to adapt to the legal environment in the US, in order to enter the US market.

The proposed US act would set a very bad example as it shows that a handful of US lawmakers can easily block the communication between the two peoples.

Although the Joe Biden administration has apparently softened its China rhetoric recently, the proposed act shows that China hawks in Washington are unwilling to let go of their zero-sum mentality.

While there should be guardrails for Sino-US relations, they should not be fences built by the US side with the aim of containing China.

Police in Kosovo reported a series of bomb threats to schools in Serb-dominated areas yesterday, some of which have been confirmed as hoaxes.

A police statement said about 30 locations received early morning electronic warnings or phone calls. It did not identify the precise areas.

Most of the country's ethnic Serb minority lives in northern Kosovo.

Police said they evacuated people from the threatened areas and sent in demining units to look for bombs. Law enforcement agencies

urged the public not to panic.

Bomb threats in Serbia's capital, Belgrade, last month brought rush-hour traffic to a standstill. No explosive devices were found.

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in 2008. The United States and most of the West recognized its sovereignty, but not Serbia or its allies Russia and China.

Ethnic Serbs are Kosovo's biggest minority group and entitled to having 10 representatives serving as lawmakers in the country's 120-seat parliament, as well as in governmental posts.

**ETHICS ADVISER TO
SCANDAL-HIT UK LEADER
BORIS JOHNSON QUILTS**

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

The ethics adviser to Britain's scandal-hit Prime Minister Boris Johnson has quit and accused the Conservative government of planning to flout conduct rules, weeks after a separate investigation criticized the U.K. leader for overseeing a culture of government rule-breaking.

Christopher Geidt stepped down yesterday [Macau time] with a terse statement saying "with regret, I feel that it is right that I am resigning from my post as Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests." Johnson's office said it was surprised by the decision.

In a resignation letter, which was published yesterday by the government, Geidt said he was put in an "impossible and odious position" because the government asked him to advise on measures that would "risk a deliberate and purposeful breach of the Ministerial Code" that regulates government conduct.

He did not elaborate but said: "I can have no part in this."

In a response, Johnson indicated the issue concerned tariffs imposed to protect a "crucial industry" which might "be seen to conflict with our obligations" under the World Trade Organization.

The government declined to confirm reports that the industry is steel-making, citing "commercial sensitivity." Britain has imposed anti-dumping tariffs on Chinese steel to protect its domestic industry, and has recently proposed extending them for five more years.

Johnson's spokesman said "no decisions have been taken" on what to do about the tariffs.

Geidt had stayed in his job as Johnson was buffeted by allegations about his judgment and ethics



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaks during Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons, Wednesday

culminating in the "party-gate" scandal over parties in government buildings during Britain's coronavirus lockdowns. Johnson was one of 83 people fined by police, and a civil servant's report said Johnson and senior officials must bear responsibility for "failures of leadership and judgment" that created a culture of rule-breaking in government.

When he was quizzed by lawmakers this week, Geidt acknowledged he had felt "frustration" in his job, noting that he was appointed by the prime minister and so was not "truly independent."

The resignation of his hand-picked ethics adviser is the latest blow for Johnson, who survived a no-confidence vote by his own Conservative Party last week. He has been left a weakened leader after 41% of Conservative lawmakers voted to remove him.

Johnson still faces a parliamentary ethics probe that could conclude he deliberately misled Parliament over "party-gate" — traditionally a resigning offense

Geidt's predecessor as ethics adviser, Alex Allan, also quit, stepping down in November 2020 after the prime minister ignored his finding that a Cabinet member had bullied her staff and broken the ministerial code of conduct — also usually a resigning offense.

"For the prime minister to lose one adviser on ministers' interests may be regarded as a misfortune. To lose two looks like carelessness," said Conservative lawmaker William Wragg, a critic of Johnson.

Geidt, a former private secretary to Queen Elizabeth II, had been accused of going easy on top officials in his investigations. Last year he cleared Johnson of breaking the ministerial code when the leader failed to disclose that a Conservative party donor had funded a pricey refurbishment of the prime minister's official residence.

In April he cleared Treasury chief Rishi Sunak of wrongdoing over his wife's tax affairs and his possession of a U.S. permanent resident's card. **MDT/AP**



NATO defense ministers gathered yesterday for talks focusing on bolstering forces and deterrence along the military alliance's eastern borders to dissuade Russia from planning further aggression. The war by the Kremlin in Ukraine since February has led allies to rethink strategies and to agree that NATO forces should be present in greater numbers on that flank. They have already beefed up the deployment of troops and material and want to guarantee a long-term presence of forces.

European Union is beefing up its code of practice on disinformation by enlisting more tech companies beyond Google, Twitter and Facebook parent Meta and adding measures to prevent online purveyors of fake news from profiting. The EU's executive Commission unveiled an update Thursday to its four-year-old voluntary code that, together with sweeping new rules in the pipeline for digital companies, will step up its efforts to fight the spread of false information in the 27-member bloc.



Germany's vice chancellor is stepping up an appeal for the country's residents to save energy after Russia's Gazprom announced significant cuts in natural gas deliveries through a key pipeline. State-owned Gazprom announced on Tuesday that it was cutting gas flows through the undersea Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Germany by 40%, then, a day later, announced a further cut that brings the overall reduction to about 60%.

Nigeria At least 35 teenage girls held captive and forced to work in a prostitution ring in southeastern Nigeria have been rescued after police raided a hotel where they were being held, police said. The girls between the ages of 14 and 17 were found by police acting on a tipoff in Nkpor town in Anambra state, according to a statement issued by Tochukwu Ikenga, Anambra police spokesman.