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CTM

**SOME RESIDENTS AT THE PARISIAN WILL HAVE THEIR PERIOD OF QUARANTINE EXTENDED AFTER DETECTION OF INFECTIONS IN THE HOTEL**

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**MAN IN RED ZONE DISPLAYS SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS, ATTEMPTS TO JUMP FROM BUILDING**

▲ P2

**PHILIPPINE GOV'T TO EXTEND SUPPORT TO FILIPINO WORKERS AS 5,300 AFFECTED BY PARTIAL LOCKDOWN**

▲ P6



**Japanese** Prime Minister Fumio Kishida yesterday blamed inadequate police protection for the death of former leader Shinzo Abe, who was shot last week while giving an outdoor campaign speech. Abe, one of Japan's most influential politicians, was assassinated last Friday in western Japan, shocking a nation known for its low crime rate. Photos and videos of the shooting show the gunman was able to come close to Abe from behind, while security guards were focused toward the front.



**Sri Lankan** protesters began to retreat from government buildings they seized and military troops reinforced security at the Parliament yesterday, establishing a tenuous calm in a country in both economic meltdown and political limbo. Embattled President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled a day earlier under pressure from demonstrators furious over the island nation's economic collapse. But he failed to resign as promised — and further angered the crowds by making his prime minister acting leader.



**Solomon Islands** Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare said yesterday that his country's new security pact with Beijing would not allow China to build a military base on the South Pacific nation and make his citizens "targets for potential military strikes." Sogavare struck an agreement with Beijing in April to provide security support. Details of the pact haven't been made public but the deal has raised fears of a permanent Chinese military facility within 2,000 kilometers of the northeast Australian coast.

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# LOCKDOWN DILEMMA

Authorities hinted at a potential alternative being considered to the current partial confinement measure as lawmakers and community leaders fear extension ▲ P4-5



UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

## DSAL GRILLED OVER ABSENCE OF A MINIMUM WAGE FOR DOMESTIC HELPERS



UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

# DSAL: ABSENCE OF DOMESTIC WORKERS' MINIMUM WAGE DUE TO 'SPECIAL' WORK NATURE

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) was yesterday grilled by the UN Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) over the absence of a minimum wage for domestic helpers.

The UNHRC is currently holding online meetings with Macau officials to discuss the SAR's human rights situation.

Yesterday, as part of the "135th Session of the Human Rights Committee (CCPR) - "Consideration of Macao, China," the committee questioned the government about its alleged impartiality on the treatment of resident workers and domestic helpers.

Among the list of questions, Vice-chair of the committee Shuichi Furuya demanded an answer to the question, "Could you please explain why domestic workers are treated in a different manner? The basic law literally says that there can't be discrimination on any ground such as race, ethnicity or social origin. Can you explain this disparity?"

DSAL deputy director, Chan Chon U, defended the government's decision to exclude domestic workers from the minimum wage by noting, "The



UN Human Rights Committee vice-chair, Shuichi Furuya

minimum wage is applied to foreign workers but not to domestic workers. The main reason for it is because domestic helpers are special and families [who] employ domestic workers are providing jobs and the domestic workers are not there [to help them] make profit."

Back in February 2019, several groups of migrant workers gathered at DSAL calling for a review of policies on domestic workers

including a review of an outdated housing allowance and requesting a review of the minimum wage proposal.

That year was the first time that Filipino and Indonesian migrant groups organized a meeting with an official government department.

In the letter addressed to the former Chief Executive Chui Sai On, migrant groups listed a total of 12 items that they believe need

review. These include the need to institute a standard labor contract that clearly defines labor standards in the city, a minimum wage of MOP4,500, and an increase in the outdated housing allowance from MOP500 to MOP1,000.

Meanwhile, Furuya has also questioned the city's law on employment agency activities, which stipulates that agencies may charge no more than 50% of a worker's monthly salary.

He cited that according to the information the committee has received, there are still cases where migrant workers are seeing their wages being deducted to pay the recruitment agencies.

"How has the new legislation actually worked to improve the situation of migrant workers?" he questioned.

"If the employers deduct from their salary, it is illegal. If the employers are found to be doing so, they will be fined MOP20,000," the DSAL director said.

He added that the bureau "considers the social status, situation and condition" of the employer before granting a quota.

"If the employers meet a lower standard, their application would not be approved. Through this system, [we can] ensure that foreign domestic helpers can have their basic right guaranteed."

In July 2019, the DSAL has required local employers of domestic helpers to increase the salary of their helpers to MOP3,000 – far lower than the HKD4,630 minimum wage for domestic workers imposed in Hong Kong.

The meeting commenced July 13 and ran for two hours between 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Macau time.

EDUCATION

# Schools to offer tutoring services for failing students

STAFF REPORTER

**S**OME local schools are set to arrange tutoring services to assist students who have failed to advance to the next grade and to help students keep up in the next academic year.

Schools are reportedly evaluating students based on their academic performance and are working with teachers to deal with the policy on promoting or demoting students through the school grades.

The academic year has unexpectedly ended due to the current outbreak of Covid-19.

Last month, schools were suspended to deter the spread of the virus.

According to Lai Sai Kei, director of Keang Peng School, "There are only a few students who fail to advance to the next grade. For some students whose study is not ideal, the school will arrange review and homework to help them.

Echoing the same sentiments, Pui Ching Middle School director Kou Kam Fai said, "The school will make special arrangements to evaluate students using multiple assessment methods such as their school performance, online quizzes, review situations. In addition, the school will provide information to help with university entrance for their graduates," the director said.

The Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) ordered the school year to end early, but the curriculum of most schools has been basically completed as face-to-face teaching was not likely to be resumed in the short time remaining.

Thus, it has been decided to end the 2021/2022 academic year from June 22 to cooperate with the pandemic prevention work of the Macau government.

Meanwhile, Lei Weng Si, the acting director of School of Hospitality Management of Macao Institute for Tourism Studies, said that due to the pandemic, a number of courses for this academic year have been moved to online teaching. Furthermore, the internship program for students coming to the institution has been suspended, and arrangements will be made according to the situation.

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COVID-19 OUTBREAK

# Gov't detects infections at The Parisian

ANTHONY LAM

**S**OME quarantined at the Parisian will have their period of quarantine extended after detection of infections in the hotel, the government public health doctor, Leong Iek Hou, announced at yesterday's press briefing.

According to the doctor, 29 people will have their stay in quarantine extended, while 144 others, who have already concluded their quarantine, will return to the hotel for five more days of confinement.

Seven staff members working at the Parisian have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. Five of them work as security guards and two as floor runners, distributing food and other resources. These cases were detected between July 10 and 14.

Due to the detection of infection, 30 staff members have been identified as being at risk of exposure and placed under quarantine.

The situation is not of great concern though, the public health doctor explained, because the health agency had expected infections to be detected in quarantine hotels.

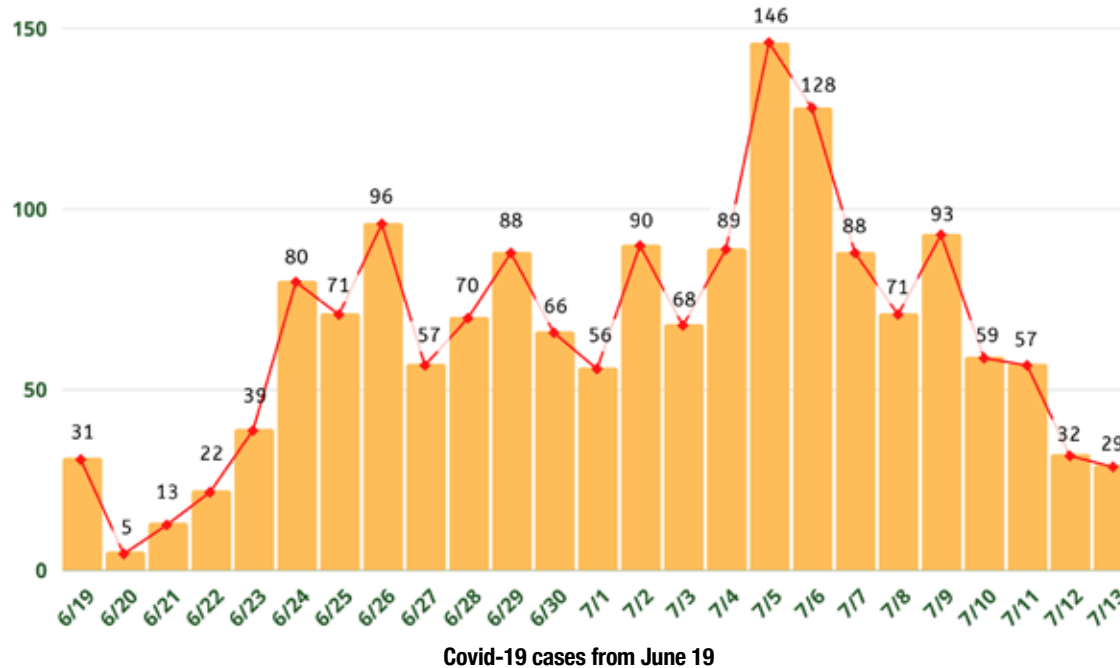
"Because those staying in these hotels are relatively risky," Leong said. She remarked that in light of the situation, the health agency had already compiled a new set of guidelines for quarantine hotels to minimize risks. The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) will help implement and supervise the implementation of the guidelines.

Leong revealed that the health agency had immediately initiated an investigation on the chain of infection. Staff at quarantine hotels have been managed under confinement, meaning that they are not allowed to return home or to their dormitory after work. Instead, they are accommodated centrally by the government.

This mode of handling is referred to by the government as "closed-loop management."

In addition, Leong said that quarantine hotels for groups at relatively high risk are expected to be filled with positive cases of the virus. With this said, if flaws, mistakes or misconduct occur in any link of the chain, hotel staff or guests will see an increased risk of getting infected.

"This is an objective risk," the public health doctor said.



When questioned why the announcement was only made yesterday when the first intra-hotel infection was detected as early as July 10, the public health doctor said that initially, there were only scattered infections, which the health agency attempted to confine.

However, as the situation deteriorated with more cases recorded, the health agency decided to take tighter control. It also considers it crucial to make the event known to the public.

On Wednesday, while responding to a question from the press, the same official admitted that three staff members at the Imperial House Dim Sum restaurant at the Venetian Macao resort had tested positive for SARS-CoV-2.

The three staff members were temporarily accommodated at the resort and thus

had more interactions with co-workers. Following the detection, the health agency

cordoned off the restaurant immediately and quarantined all staff.

## ANOTHER OCTOGENARIAN PASSED AFTER VIRUS CONTRACTION

**A**N 86-year-old woman who had tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 succumbed yesterday morning to multiple conditions, Accident and Emergency doctor, Lei Wai Seng, medical director of the public hospital, announced yesterday.

The city has since 2020 recorded five deaths with Covid-19.

A resident at Fai Fu Building in Fai Chi Kei, the deceased had been admitted to the Public Health Clinical Centre in Coloane July 6.

She had been suffering from dementia, chronic kidney problems and bleeding in the digestive tract. She had also received two doses of the inactivated vaccine from SinoPharm, according to the A&E doctor.

When she was first admitted to hospital, she was in a stable condition with mild pneumonia, but the condition later deteriorated and digestive tract

bleeding started developing. Her pneumonia was also exacerbated.

It was later discovered that her pneumonia was caused by both viral and bacterial infections.

Lei said that her family did not want intrusive therapy.

She was pronounced dead at 11:10 am yesterday.

Yesterday, Lei also disclosed that the condition of a patient who was previously on a respirator had improved. The patient is now considered stable.

Four other patients at the Coloane facility have required oxygen.

In addition, eight patients needed oxygen and are considered severe cases. Lei said most of them are elderly and have backgrounds of chronic diseases.

Most pneumonia onsets detected are mild cases, Lei added. **AL**

The health agency has also issued a requirement through MGTO to direct all Venetian staff members to take SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test (NAT) every day. Other staff members accommodated at the resort should avoid moving in the community.

Casa Real Hotel, located near the Guia Hill Tunnel's NAPE exit, has been identified as Red zone with three staff members testing positive for the virus.

As for recovery figures, Leong announced there was 43 people released from treatment or quarantine yesterday. Of them, 18 had been hospitalized and 25 quarantined. Since June 18, 281 people have been discharged.

### STANDSTILL MEASURES UNDER EVALUATION

Health officials refrained from confirming or denying the possibility of the de-facto lockdown being extended into next week, but warned that loosening certain measures may bring about tightened management in other areas.

At the same time, the public health doctor added that the health agency has been giving consideration to several factors, including the impact on daily life and economic activities, just to name a few.

These will be evaluated before any changes are to be made to current restrictions.

Measures that will undermine the achievement of "dynamic Covid zero" will be ceased, the public health doctor said, warning that the coming round of the citywide NAT might detect an exponential number of new positives and urging people to stay vigilant.



# Lawmakers and community leaders fear

RENATO MARQUES

**L**EADERS of local social and community associations and groups, as well as lawmakers, have expressed concerns over the possibility of an extension of the period of "relative confinement" slated to continue until end of July 17 at midnight.

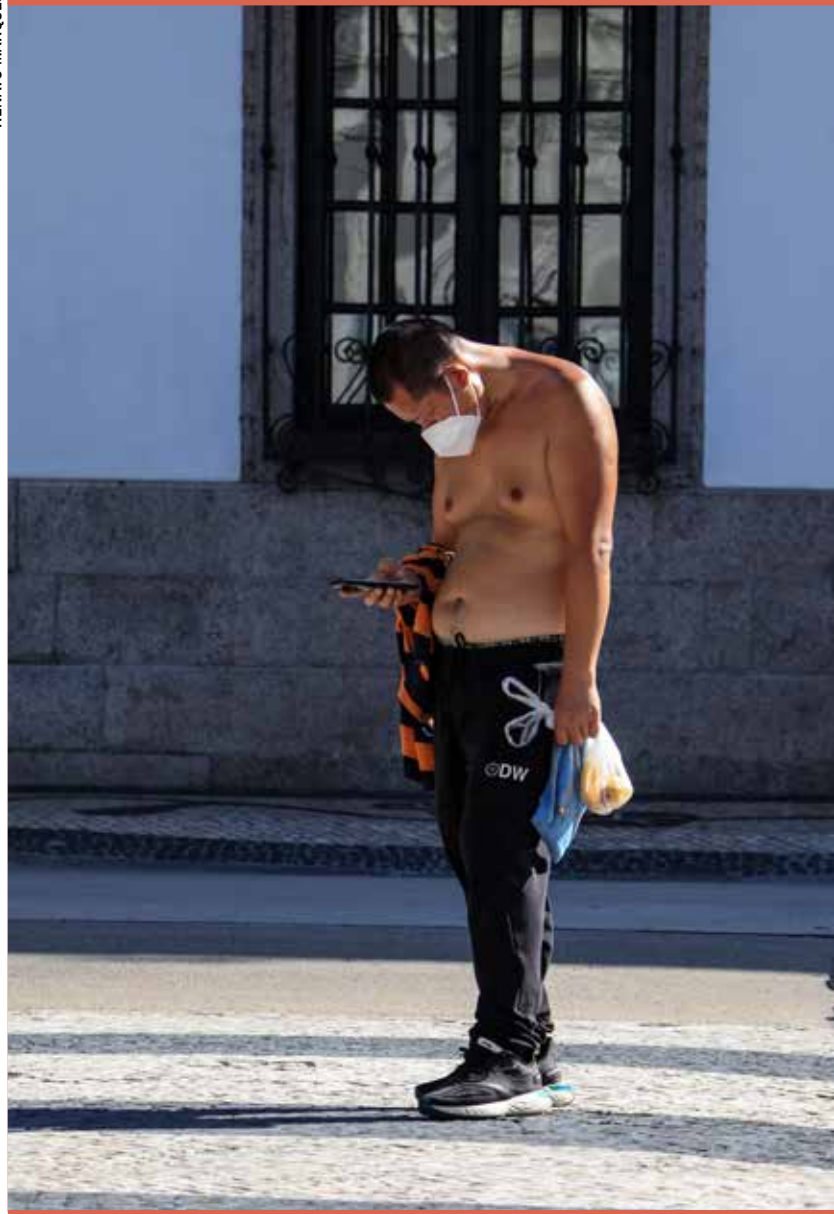
Many of these leaders have joined their voices to those people who fear the continuation of the confinement rules for at least another week could be harmful for local companies and for most of the workers who will be deprived of their wages.

Former lawmaker and chairman of the Macau Community Development Initiative, Au Kam San, told Lusa News Agency that the government might be preparing to extend the confinement measure independently of the success that could be attributed to the current week-long confinement measure.

"Whether it works or not, [the confinement] could last longer than just seven days," Au said, explaining, "If the number of positive cases does not decrease during the seven days, then the government will try to extend [the measure] for another seven days. But, if the number of positive cases is effectively reduced, and once it is deemed to be an effective measure, the government can also use that [as a justification] for it to continue."

Addressing the potential consequences of an extension of the period, Au said that since the government has allowed companies and employers to put their workers on "unpaid leave" during this period, this will result in "significant financial losses" that harm workers and

RENATO MARQUES



their way of life.

"This is a matter of survival. What measures has the government undertaken to protect the survival of these people? What is the government's plan?" he asked.

On the same topic, lawmaker and vice president of the Macao Fe-

deration of Trade Unions, Ella Lei, stressed that, independent of the government's next step, a timely response should be given to society.

"No one knows what will happen after these seven days. No one can calculate with 100% accuracy what will happen next. Companies are fa-



cing losses and operational pressures during this partial confinement. Workers are even more directly affected by the fact that they are forced by law to take unpaid leave," she said, adding, "This is why we want the government to distribute aid to fight the epidemic." She called on

the authorities to optimize the economic support measures as a matter of urgency.

"The longer it takes, the more inconvenience and more difficulties it will cause the population while their work is interrupted," Lei remarked.

Secretary-general of Caritas Ma-

## Migrants association: Over 200 Indonesian nationals on long-term unpaid leave amid outbreak

RENATO MARQUES

**A** total of 222 Indonesian nationals have requested, for the time being, help from the association because they are on long-term unpaid leave, according to information provided to the Times by the president of the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (IMWU), Yosa Wariyanti,

Wariyanti explained that such data refers to those that have already been without work for over two weeks. The association is prioritizing these workers for the time being as it can-

not pay food support to everyone at the same time.

The leader of the association only knows of those in extreme situations and that have called for food support, hinting that those who are in a difficult situation but still manage to survive on their own should be a larger number.

She also explained that most of these people are not performing domestic work because they "are mostly still working or receiving some support from employers." She said the requests are from non-re-

sident workers in other professions such as staff members in food and beverage establishments, working in logistics and other sectors that have been greatly affected by the Covid-19 outbreak.

As she explained, even before July 11, there were many reports of Indonesian workers saying that they were working on a "daily basis" and not on a "monthly basis," which meant that they would only get a wage on the equivalent of the number of days they had worked within a month and not a full monthly wage.

RENATO MARQUES





# confinement extension



cau, Paul Pun, pointed out that in these crisis times people should value solidarity more highly. He added that while employees are deprived of their wages, employers are also facing the same problem and so mutual understanding should prevail.

“People need to show solidarity with each other, and those who can afford to support others I believe will do so,” Pun said, while also expressing doubts that this week would be the last of the confinement period.

Former lawmaker and pro-democracy activist, Sulu Sou, said the

government should immediately drop the relative confinement measure as it “restricts the freedom of movement and has suddenly come to criminalize many people’s daily life activities. In just a few days, it has caused harm to the life and the mental health of many citizens, it is

not suitable to continue,” he told the Times.

“Also, the suspension of the activities of the industrial and commercial sectors will cost many employees their income and even their jobs, with a very negative impact on the local economic recovery,” Sou remarked. He added, “Over the past nearly three years, different governments around the world have gradually changed their anti-epidemic strategies due to changes in the virus. The Macau government should devote its very limited public resources to care for the most pressing aspects of the outbreak such as protecting the lives of the patients with severe symptoms to prevent other fatalities.”

ten rounds of mass testing that finish Sunday evening (July 17).

Nonetheless, Leong added, “Every measure has its advantages and disadvantages and when we take a measure, we need first to do a global analysis [of the situation]. [We need to determine] if [the measure] will create a burden for people and if it will hinder economic activity,” she said, adding, “When we decide to lift a measure, we may need to decide [to enforce] another measure. For instance, if there is no need to continue to implement a measure of confinement, we may need to impose a different measure [to protect] those returning to work.”

Leong further added that the authorities need to ensure that if people return to work, they cannot gather, that wearing of facemasks be mandated, and that employees cannot take their meals together. She explained that in many workplaces there are no facilities to allow people to eat their meals separately from others.

“So, when we can remove this measure of relative confinement,

we must have other measures that can replace it to reduce the risk of contagion,” she remarked, adding that at present authorities are still studying what is the best way to [meet the needs] of local citizens and, at the same time, not cause risk to the community.”

Leong also hinted that among the measures being planned to replace confinement is the continuation of citywide nucleic acid tests. Daily tests may be a requirement for those authorized to return to work.

**If the number of positive cases is effectively reduced, the government can also use that [as a justification] for it to continue.**

AU KAM SAN  
FORMER LAWMAKER

## HEALTH AUTHORITIES HINT AT POTENTIAL MEASURE SWAP

During yesterday’s press briefing on the Covid-19 outbreak in Macau, the coordinator at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr Leong Iek Hou, hinted at a potential alternative being considered to the current partial confinement measure.

To several media inquiries on the topic, Leong continued to repeat previous comments noting that the next steps would be only decided after evaluating the results from the

# Man in red zone attempts to jump from building

STAFF REPORTER

A man who lives in a Red code building attempted to jump from his apartment at Yue Xiu Gardens along Avenida do Ouvidor Arriaga.

He was transported to hospital after displaying signs of emotional distress yesterday, according to the Fire Services Bureau.

The Public Security Police (PSP) dispatched police with shields and firefighters to enter the unit. During the inspection, it was found that the man was irritated and was emotional because of being stuck at home for too long due to the lockdown of the building.

He had allegedly ex-

pressed his desire to jump off the building, which led the family to call authorities.

“This incident is directly related to the pandemic because of such issues as unemployment and pressure,” said a citizen on a social media post that shows police cordoning off the area.

“I feel that Macau has become a sad city, and I can no longer see the warmth of Macau in the past,” said another.

According to the report, the area where the building is located had been in lockdown from July 8 and the health code had been turned to a red code, which bans residents from leaving their apartments.





# PHILIPPINE GOV'T TO EXTEND SUPPORT TO OFWS AFFECTED BY PARTIAL LOCKDOWN

LYNZY VALLES

**S**EVERAL non-resident Filipino workers in Macau who are on unpaid leave have filed an application to request support from the Philippine government.

Last week, the Times was informed that the Philippine Consulate General in Macau has been collecting the application forms through Filipino migrant groups, who are submitting the forms to the office to minimize the number of people gathering.

Such support was also given during the peak of the pandemic in 2020 where hundreds of Filipinos received essential goods, as well as USD200 in financial support.

Meantime, 100 Filipino migrant workers were initially provided with food packs by the consulate.

The majority of the Filipinos are pleased that a support measure will be extended to them by the Philippine government as they do not qualify for any kind of financial support from Macau due to their residency status.

In response to the current situation, the Philippine authorities have pledged to provide support to those who have contracted Covid-19 and to those affected by the week-long suspension of all commercial and industrial business

activities from July 11 to 18.

"The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) is ready to aid Macau-based overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)," the department noted in a statement.

"We are closely monitoring the situation because of the 'No Pay Leave' policy that the Macau government has declared for the entire week. Our consul general will be using diplomatic channels to bring our concern over this labor policy to the relevant authorities in Macau," it added.

Meanwhile, all hands are on deck to bring as many Covid-care packages and food packs to OFWs who may have neither the means nor the mobility to buy food and medicines, DMW Secretary Susan "Toots" V. Ople said.

According to data provided by the department, the suspension order directly affects 5,295 OFWs in the hotel and gaming industries.

To date, 57 Filipinos have tested positive in red zones (buildings in lockdown) and yellow zones (control zones) and quarantine hotels. 26 OFWs are in hotel quarantine facilities, having either tested positive for Covid-19 or having been in close contact with those who are infected.

Although the majority of workers affected by the pandemic are employed by larger com-



panies, some domestic workers have also stopped working since June 20, following the discovery of cases on June 18.

"My boss has asked me to stop working since June 20 as they were afraid of the virus since their immune system is lower as one is an elderly, and another is a child," said one of the domestic workers

who refused to be identified.

Another one, however, continues to perform her duties despite having to care for a six-year-old boy and her employer, who is pregnant.

"My boss pays for my taxi in the morning, and at night, he drives me back home. For me, there's no problem with that because the

people I live with are only just staying at home. I believe we're safe," she said.

Meanwhile, several workers from the gaming operators have yet to receive an updated schedule after being informed late last month that they would have to undergo a 15-day unpaid leave period.

## GBA UNIVERSITIES RECEIVE GUANGDONG EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The University of Macau (UM) and other member universities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Universities Online Open Course Alliance recently received a first prize at the 2021 Guangdong Education Achievement Award for the implementation of an online open course (MOOC) based collective development model. The main participating universities from the alliance include UM, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Sun Yat-Sen University, the South China University of Technology, South China Normal University, and Southern Medical University. The model aims to promote the recognition of credits for online open courses within and between universities, to facilitate the integration of online and offline teaching.

## IAM URGES HAWKERS TO COOPERATE WITH PANDEMIC PREVENTION WORK

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) requires hawkers in all markets and hawker areas to properly wear masks during opening hours, and reminds them that if they need to drink water, they should do so only when there are no customers around. According to a statement, hawkers are not allowed to eat during the opening hours of their stalls. IAM has earlier distributed the special permission cards to hawkers for them to get to and back from work by bus, and go home for meals and rest during lunch break.



GBA

## Macau-Hengqin LRT extension begins construction

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE extension of the Hengqin Line, a cross-border light railway transport (LRT) route which connects Macau and the

neighboring Guangdong-Macao cooperation zone on Hengqin Island in South China's Guangdong Province, started its construction Wednesday at the Hengqin Island site.

Namkwong Real Estate Co, China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) and China Railway 16th Bureau Group Corporation are engaged in the project, and the Aoqin

No.1, the largest shield tunneling machine used in Macau with diameters of 7.98 meters and 87 meters in length, was used in the construction, CCECC told the Global Times on Wednesday.

The line has an overall length of 2.2 kilometers, starting from the elevated station HE1, located nearby the Lotus Bridge in Macau, which is connected to the Lotus Checkpoint Station, part of the Taipa Line. It runs along the Lotus Bridge and crosses the Shizimen Waterway before entering Zhuhai's Hengqin Island through an underwater tunnel, and then arrives at the underground HE2 station located in front of Hengqin Port.

The extension of Hengqin Line is a priority item of public infrastructure for the 25th anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland in 2024. It will enhance the regional cooperation among Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), helping Macau to be included in the "one-hour living circle" in the GBA.



ADVERTORIAL

## SANDS CHINA NEWS

### Sands China Redoubles Disaster and Pandemic Prevention Efforts

Sanitisation and emergency typhoon response kits, community seminar and new social media campaign

Supported by the Social Affairs Bureau, Sands China Ltd. has further bolstered its disaster and pandemic prevention programme in collaboration with Macau Red Cross.

The programme addresses the community's needs amid the fight against the pandemic, and aims to help enhance the city's precautionary measures before natural disasters like typhoons and during emergency situations.

The company initiative comprises the packing and distribution of sanitisation and emergency response kits, and a social media campaign and free community seminar on emergency preparedness and epidemic prevention.

Around 50 Sands Cares Ambassadors assembled 800 sanitisation and emergency response kits containing COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits and a variety of anti-pandemic, disaster preparation, and emergency items inside a multi-functional waterproof bag. It is Sands China's fourth year supporting the initiative, benefiting 2,900 households to date.

Sands China offered a Macau Red Cross pandemic and disaster prevention seminar June 9 and 14 for about 100 members of the General Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Macao and Caritas Macau to share useful knowledge including pandemic and disaster prevention, sheltering at home, and sources of accurate emergency information.

Sands China also ran a social media campaign June 10-16, titled Sands Cares Presents: What you need to know about epidemic and disaster prevention, which included an online quiz aimed at increasing knowledge among the general public.

Sands China's community initiatives and the company's Sands Cares Ambassador programme are part of Sands Cares, the global corporate citizenship programme of parent company Las Vegas Sands Corp.

The Sands Cares Ambassador programme was established in August 2009 to give Sands China team members an outlet for serving the local community by organising community activities and initiatives that work toward creating a better Macao. With membership of more than 3,300 volunteers from across all Sands China properties – Sands Macao, The Venetian Macao, The Plaza Macao, The Parisian Macao and The Londoner Macao – the Sands Cares Ambassadors have contributed more than 175,000 hours of voluntary community service since the programme's founding.

AP PHOTO



TELECOM

# India raids second Chinese mobile company this month

ASHOK SHARMA, NEW DELHI

INDIAN investigators have raided an Indian subsidiary of Chinese smartphone maker Oppo, accusing it of evading customs duties totaling 43.9 billion rupees (\$551 million), the government said Wednesday.

The Enforcement Directorate, India's financial crime investigation agency, said it sent a notice to the company seeking recovery of the money.

Oppo India, a subsidiary of China's Guangdong Oppo Mobile Telecommunications Corp. Ltd, is the second Chinese mobile company to be searched by the directorate this month.

The actions underscore the tough scrutiny of Chinese companies following a Himalayan border standoff between the armies of the two nuclear-armed neighbors that began in 2020. Twenty Indian and four Chinese soldiers have been killed in the standoff.

Citing security concerns, India has also banned more than 300 Chinese mobile apps and has tightened rules on Chinese investment in India.

Oppo India is engaged in manufacturing, assembling, wholesaling and distributing mobile handsets and accessories in India.

In a statement, the directorate accused Oppo India of using ineligible duty exemptions totaling 2.9

billion rupees (\$377 million) and improperly accounting for royalty and license fees. It said a large amount of money had been remitted to China to avoid payment of taxes in India.

A spokesperson for Oppo India could not immediately be reached for comment. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said in Beijing earlier this month that the Chinese government requires Chinese businesses doing business abroad to abide by local laws and regulations and supports the companies' efforts to safeguard their rights and interests.

"We hope India will conduct investigations and law enforcement in accordance with the law, and provide a fair, just and non-discriminatory business environment for Chinese enterprises' investment and operation in India," Zhao said.

Indian investigators said last Thursday they searched dozens of offices of Chinese-owned Vivo Mobile India Private Limited as part of an investigation focusing on allegations of money laundering by the smartphone maker.

India's Enforcement Directorate said it seized 119 bank accounts with 4.65 billion rupees (\$58.76 million), 2 kilograms of gold bars and 7.3 million rupees (\$92,405) in cash during the raids of the company owned by China's BBK Electronics. MDT/AP





PUTIN'S WAR

# Officials: Russian missiles kill at least 20 in Ukraine

MARIA GRAZIA MURRU  
KYIV, UKRAINE

**R**USSIAN missiles that struck a city in central Ukraine killed at least 20 people and wounded about 90 more yesterday, Ukrainian authorities said. The country's president called the attack "an open act of terrorism" against civilians in locations without military value.

Ukraine's national police said three missiles hit an office building and damaged nearby residential buildings in Vinnytsia, which is located 268 kilometers southwest of the capital, Kyiv.

A Russian submarine in the Black Sea fired Kalibr cruise missiles at the city, and three children were among the dead, the deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, wrote on the Telegram messaging app. The Russian military has not confirmed the strike.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy suggested the attack was deliberately aimed at civilians. The strike happened as government officials from about 40 countries met in The Hague to discuss coordinating investigations and prosecutions of potential war crimes committed in Ukraine.

"Every day Russia is destroying the civilian popula-



tion, killing Ukrainian children, directing missiles at civilian objects. Where there is no military (targets). What is it if not an open act of terrorism?" Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram.

Vinnytsia is one of Ukraine's largest cities, with a population of 370,000. Thousands of people from eastern Ukraine, where Russia has concentrated its offensive, have fled there since the start of the war.

The missiles ignited a fire that spread to engulf 50 cars in an adjacent parking lot, officials said. Ukrainian police said people were reported missing. The governor of the Vinnytsia region, Serhiy Borzov, said Ukrainian air defense systems shot down another four missiles over the area.

Before the missiles hit Vinnytsia, the president's office reported the deaths of five civilians and the woun-

ding of another eight in Russian attacks over the past day.

One person was wounded when a missile damaged several buildings in the southern city of Mykolaiv, Ukrainian authorities said. A missile attack on Wednesday killed at least five people in the city.

Russian forces also continued artillery and missile attacks in eastern Ukraine, primarily in Donetsk province after overtaking adjacent Luhansk. The city of Lysychansk, the last major stronghold of Ukrainian resistance in Luhansk, fell to Russian forces at the beginning of the month.

Luhansk and Donetsk together make up the Donbas, a mostly Russian-speaking region of steel factories, mines and other industries.

Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko urged residents to evacuate as "quickly as

possible."

"We are urging civilians to leave the region, where electricity, water and gas are in short supply after the Russian shelling," Kyrylenko said in televised remarks. "The fighting is intensifying, and people should stop risking their lives and leave the region."

The British Defense Ministry said yesterday that despite continued shelling in the Donbas region, Russian forces did not make major territorial gains in recent days.

"The aging vehicles, weapons and Soviet-era tactics used by Russian forces do not lend themselves to quickly regaining or building momentum unless used in overwhelming mass - which Russia is currently unable to bring to bear," the British ministry said.

Both the Russian forces and Ukrainian militaries are seeking to replenish their depleted stocks of unmanned aerial vehicles to pinpoint enemy positions and guide artillery strikes.

Both sides are looking to procure jamming-resistant, advanced drones that could offer a decisive edge in battle. Ukrainian officials say the demand for such technology is "immense" with crowd-funding efforts underway to raise the necessary cash for purchases. **MDT/AP**

and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II.

"We are aware of reports in the media concerning Sir Mo Farah. No reports have been made to the MPS at this time," the police department said in a statement. "Specialist officers have opened an investigation and are currently assessing the available information."

Farah previously said he moved to Britain with his parents as a refugee from Somalia. But in the documentary, he said his parents never came to the U.K.

His father was killed by gunfire during unrest in Somalia when Farah was 4, according to the film. His mother and two brothers live on the family farm in Somaliland, a breakaway region of Somalia that is not internationally recognized. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1966 EUSTON STAFF 'COLOUR BAR' ENDED



A West Indian refused a job at Euston Station will now be employed there after managers overturned a ban on black workers.

Two months ago Asquith Xavier, a train guard from Dominica, was refused a transfer from Marylebone Station to Euston because of his colour.

The new job would have meant a pay increase of around £10 a week for Mr Xavier who started work for British Railways (BR) as a porter 10 years ago.

He was informed about his rejection and the reason for it in a letter from Euston's local staff committee whose members belong to the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR).

BR does not have to abide by staff committees' recommendations on appointments but they are very influential.

However, at a news conference on Friday BR spokesman Leslie Leppington said the colour bar at Euston Station had now been ended and Mr Xavier would be given a job.

However, Mr Leppington insisted the ban - rumoured to have been in place for 12 years - had not been a "real" colour bar.

He said it had been instigated by the workers out of a desire to protect their jobs and had never been management policy.

"If we had wanted to impose a real colour bar we would not have done it this way.

"We would have found some excuse to show he was not suitable for the job, wouldn't we?" Mr Leppington said.

Mr Xavier, 44, is currently off work due to ill health and was not at the news conference.

But afterwards the secretary of the West Indian Standing Conference, Jeff Crawford, said they would be calling for the government to take action.

"We are going to urge the government to conduct a full and independent inquiry into discrimination throughout British Rail - to find out the extent of the problem, the cause and effect and the solution," Mr Crawford said.

Similar bans to that ended at Euston are reported to be in force at other London stations including Camden and Broad Street.

But under current law the government's options to curb them are limited.

The Race Relations Act was passed last year but contains only measures to combat racial discrimination in public places such as hotels and pubs.

Courtesy BBC News

UK

# Police open inquiry into Farah trafficking revelations

DANICA KIRKA, LONDON

**L**ONDON'S Metropolitan Police Service has opened an investigation into four-time Olympic champion Mo Farah's revealed that he was trafficked to the U.K. as a child.

The inquiry comes after Farah, 39, said in a documentary that a woman he didn't know brought him to the U.K. when he was about 8 years old and forced him to care for her children. He said he wasn't allowed to go to school until he was 12.

In the documentary, pro-



Four-time Olympic champion Mo Farah

duced by the BBC and Red Bull Studios, Farah said his real name is Hussein Abdi Kahin. He said he was brought to Britain using fake tra-

vel documents that included his picture alongside the name Mohammed Farah, the name under which he won four Olympic gold medals

## IN CONTEXT

Racial discrimination in various forms was a feature of everyday life for many Commonwealth immigrants who had been invited to Britain in the early 1950s and 1960s to fill labour shortages. Discrimination in the workplace did not begin to be tackled until an amendment to the Race Relations Act in 1968. However, effective measures were not put in place until the 1976 Race Relations Act which set up the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). The CRE had the power to force companies and other bodies to comply with the Act. In spite of attempts by various governments to curb immigration the number of people from Commonwealth countries in Britain continued to climb over the years. The Census in 2001 showed 4.6 million people living in the UK were from an ethnic minority, or 7.9% of the population.



**YOUR STARS**

<p><b>ARIES</b> Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You will be tempted to shop till you drop. You should be raising your self esteem and confidence in order to promote your work. Keep an eye on your weight.</p>	<p><b>TAURUS</b> Apr. 20-May. 20 You can offer your mate a commitment or promise that will help stabilize your personal life. Pamper yourself; you deserve it. Get out and enjoy some entertainment.</p>
<p><b>GEMINI</b> May. 21-Jun. 21 You'll look guilty if you don't lay your cards on the table. Try not to spend too much on entertainment. Any intimate relationships with colleagues will lead to gossip that could easily affect your position.</p>	<p><b>CANCER</b> Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You will get out of shape easily if you don't keep on top of things. You need time to make things better. Spend some time with people who can shed some light on your personal situation.</p>
<p><b>LEO</b> Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You may not see your situation clearly. Beware of individuals who are not that reliable or well known to you. Empty promises will cause upset.</p>	<p><b>VIRGO</b> Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Do a little investigating if there is someone at work you don't trust. You may as well work on projects that will allow you to make progress. Be discreet about your personal life or whereabouts. Be mysterious.</p>
<p><b>LIBRA</b> Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Upgrading at this point is not a bad plan. Romantic opportunities are evident. Interaction with colleagues will only be upsetting.</p>	<p><b>SCORPIO</b> Oct. 23-Nov. 21 You will upset your partner if you have spent money on things that aren't necessary. Your changing philosophies may lead you into new circles and open doors that will give you a unique outlook on life.</p>
<p><b>SAGITTARIUS</b> Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Don't put your professional reputation on the line. You're likely to encounter new partners if you take short trips. Trips will be enjoyable, and communication with your lover will clear up any misconceptions.</p>	<p><b>CAPRICORN</b> Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Try a barbecue or a day at the beach. Go on business trips if at all possible. You need time to think things through.</p>
<p><b>AQUARIUS</b> Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Concentrate on work. Avoid getting involved with married individuals. Finish up any correspondence by early afternoon. Don't push your opinions or ideas on others.</p>	<p><b>PISCES</b> Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Your partner may not understand your mood swings but if you are willing to communicate, a lot of grief can be avoided. Comfort is a necessity. Check your motives. You could easily lose your temper at work.</p>

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

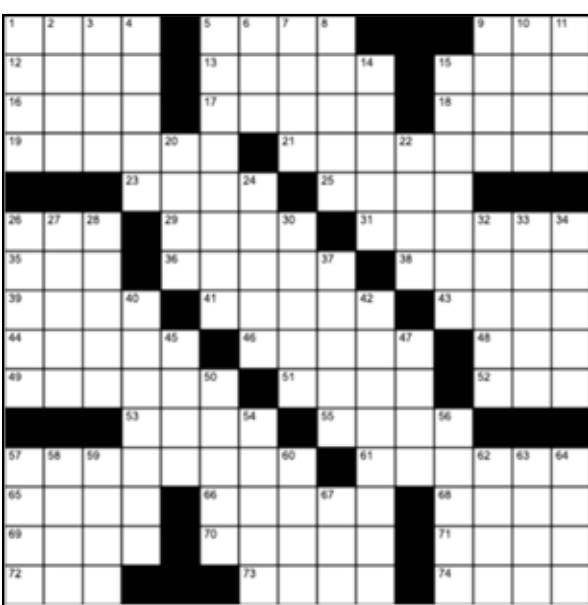
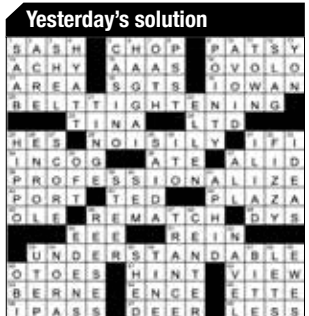
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	23	34	fine
Changchun	21	25	rain
Chengdu	24	33	cloudy
Chongqing	33	40	fine
Fuzhou	26	39	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	35	cloudy
Guiyang	22	31	cloudy
Haikou	26	32	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	29	40	cloudy
Harbin	20	24	rain
Hefei	27	39	cloudy
Nanjing	30	39	cloudy
Shanghai	31	40	overcast
Taipei	25	31	cloudy
Wuhan	29	36	fine
Hong Kong	29	33	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	14	23	thunderstorms
Frankfurt	13	29	overcast
Paris	16	32	overcast
London	13	26	overcast
New York	21	32	overcast

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Puppy Love singer; 5- Demonstrate; 9- Court fig.; 12- Put down; 13- Otic; 15- Duct for smoke; 16- Pulitzer-winning biographer Leon; 17- Reproach; 18- Bone; Prefix; 19- Roe of sturgeon; 21- Unselfish; 23- Russian pancake; 25- Make angry; 26- Bad-mouth; 29- PDQ; 31- Agile; 35- Singer Garfunkel; 36- Ridge; 38- Biblical brother; 39- Enlist again; 41- Gossipmonger; 43- High time?; 44- Bandleader Skinnay \_\_\_\_; 46- Stem; 48- Buckeyes' sch.; 49- Circuitous way; 51- Like some history; 52- Agnus \_\_\_\_; 53- Nair rival; 55- Angers; 57- Small pinners; 61- Threaten; 65- White House staffer; 66- Actress Palmer; 68- Sea east of the Caspian; 69- Growl; 70- Dutch painter Jan; 71- Female child; 72- Religious sch.; 73- Nest component; 74- Freelancer's encl.;

DOWN 1- Novelist Waugh; 2- Zip; 3- Capital of the Ukraine; 4- Improvise; 5- Vestry; 6- Come again?; 7- Not a dup.; 8- Stork, e.g.; 9- "\_\_\_\_ sprach Zarathustra"; 10- Ballerina's skirt; 11- Driving aids; 14- Russian revolutionary leader; 15- Overseer; 20- Sigher's word; 22- "East of Eden" director Kazan; 24- Nostrils; 26- Called one's bluff; 27- Peace goddess; 28- Slow growth; 30- Old Ford; 32- Young; 33- Unfettered; 34- World-weariness; 37- Maker of Pong; 40- Explorer; 42- Frightening; 45- Egyptian canal; 47- "Twittering Machine" artist; 50- Staggers; 54- Country singer Travis; 56- Catches; 57- License plates; 58- Fermented grape juice; 59- Dutch cheese, wrapped in red wax; 60- Move sideways, killed; 62- La Scala solo; 63- Mercury and Saturn, e.g.; 64- Fashion mag; 67- Circle of flowers;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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- 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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BOOK IT

# 'Mermaid of Black Conch' melds history and magic

**D**AVID is a fisherman and Aycayia is a mermaid. It's pretty obvious where the story goes from here: David falls for Aycayia. But author Monique Roffey isn't giving us an endearing tale of love — this is a story of duality and curses.

"The Mermaid of the Black Conch" is a uniquely Caribbean novel with all the hallmarks of the genre presented in different manners. Roffey moves between a general narrator, David's thickly Caribbean journal entries and broken stanzas of Aycayia's free-form poetry.

Insidiously, David and Aycayia's first meeting in 1976 is in Murder Bay. David is smitten by her strange beauty and Aycayia by his music.

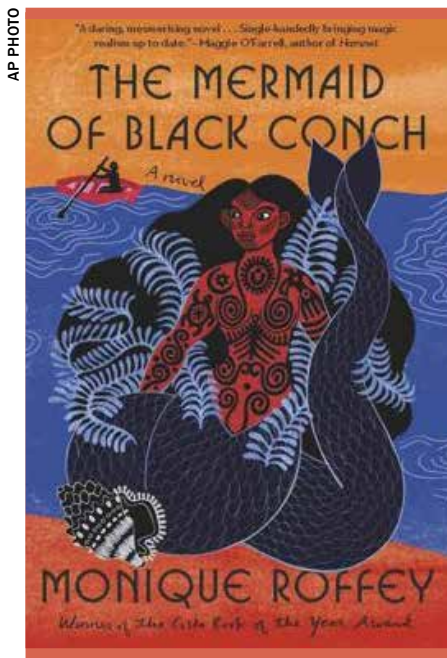
David ceases fishing for fear of her entanglement in his nets, but his efforts backfire when Aycayia follows the sound of his motor out to a fishing competition and is ensnared by two Yankee men, intent on a stunning victory, which, it turns out, is the

mermaid.

Upon learning of her capture, David plans to rescue Aycayia and return her to the sea. But his scheme falls apart when she begins to change back into a woman, the curse put on her by other jealous women from her Taino tribe apparently lifting after some 1,000 years.

When Aycayia is inadvertently introduced to Reggie, the only deaf person on the island, they form a deep, fast bond on the basis of their otherness in Black Conch society. The mermaid metaphor is applied to gender, disability and oppression throughout the book. They're filed under "curse," described as loneliness.

Vivid imagery, discussion-worthy themes, Creole verbiage and a melding of history and magic make "The Mermaid of the Black Conch" come to life.



"The Mermaid of Black Conch" by Monique Roffey (Knopf)

It's a confluence of lore in which subtle details change depending on who is telling the story. Each has their own idea of what it is to be a man, a woman, the oppressor, the oppressed, or something in between worlds. **DONNA EDWARDS, MDT/AP**

tTUNES

# METRIC ROCKS OUT EXISTENTIALLY IN 'FORMENTERA'

**M**ETRIC'S "Formentera" throws listeners into the deep end with "Doomscroller," which starts off feeling like a warehouse rave or fever dream or maybe both. What sounds like a siren blaring in the background accompanies lyrics that capture the spiraling, sinking feeling of getting sucked into a bad news scrolling frenzy. The techno synth rises and falls like a doom(sc)roller coaster, only to dissipate where you expect the beat drop to be.

There's a shift a little over halfway through the 10-minute song, and the dark, pulsing beats are replaced with hopeful, poignant piano chords. By the end of the song, you've forgotten all about the fever rave that was the beginning of the song — you're just swaying as frontwoman Emily Haines "ooh"s.

The accompanying music video features blue-hued shots of the band members juxtaposed with overlapping, peaceful outdoor scenes. The blue lighting is also used in the video for "All Comes Crashing," where a long-lashed Haines sings a love letter, but to whom?

In the album's namesake "For-



"Formentera" by Metric. (Metric Music International)

mentera," Haines contemplates fame and shame, imagining walking away from it all on a beach of the picturesque Spanish island.

And "I Will Never Settle" is a bold response: "Caught a glimpse of a normal life/Terrified by the sight." The lyrics flow confidently and doubtlessly as Haines repeats, "We will never settle, it would crush our souls."

Throughout the album, there's questioning and existentialism, and it's an undoubted product of the past couple of pandemic years, but in classic Metric fashion, listeners can't help but rock out anyway. **KIANA DOYLE, MDT/AP**

AD

**合夥人 PARTNERS:**  
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山度士 Álvaro Rodrigues  
馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata  
趙魯 Zhao Lu  
馬傑安 João Nogueira Marques

**大律師 ASSOCIATES:**  
高文軒 Adelino Correia  
羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues  
馬潔冰 Maria João Marques  
陶義德 António Isóo de Azeredo  
白穎怡 Iclia Berenguel  
冼玲鳳 Mariana Afonso Esteves  
馬秀文 Sofia Mendes Martins  
飛嘉華 Carlos dos Santos Ferreira  
杜力信 Nelson de Azevedo  
莫永誠 Rui Velez de Moura  
安東尼 António Manuel dos Santos  
巴慧雅 Vera Bastos  
歐文傑 Miguel Evaristo  
陳正喬 Joana Chan  
顏曉蓉 Teresa Xiaorong Yan  
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DRIVE IN

# Dakota Johnson brings a modern spark to 'Persuasion'

LINDSEY BAHR,  
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

**T**HE new adaptation of "Persuasion," coming to Netflix Friday, does not seem to have been made for Jane Austen fans.

Her book about the unmarried Anne Elliot, who at 27 is on the edge of spinsterhood and regretting having been persuaded to give up her true love years earlier because of his lowly status, was the author's last before her death. It is notable and beloved for how it's distinct from her more widely known and adapted books like "Pride and Prejudice" and "Emma," with its mature heroine, its more reserved wit and its distinctly melancholy undertones. "Persuasion" also boasts one of her most romantic monologues.

This version, directed by British theater veteran Carrie Cracknell and starring Dakota Johnson as Anne, inserts mo-

dern phrases and "Fleabag" tropes into a Regency-era setting. It is like an Austen amuse bouche — an entry-level cover version that tries to rev up the humor and speak directly to Gen Z by using its lingo — or at least an advertising executive's idea of what Gen Z sounds like. But something feels off about the way it is executed.

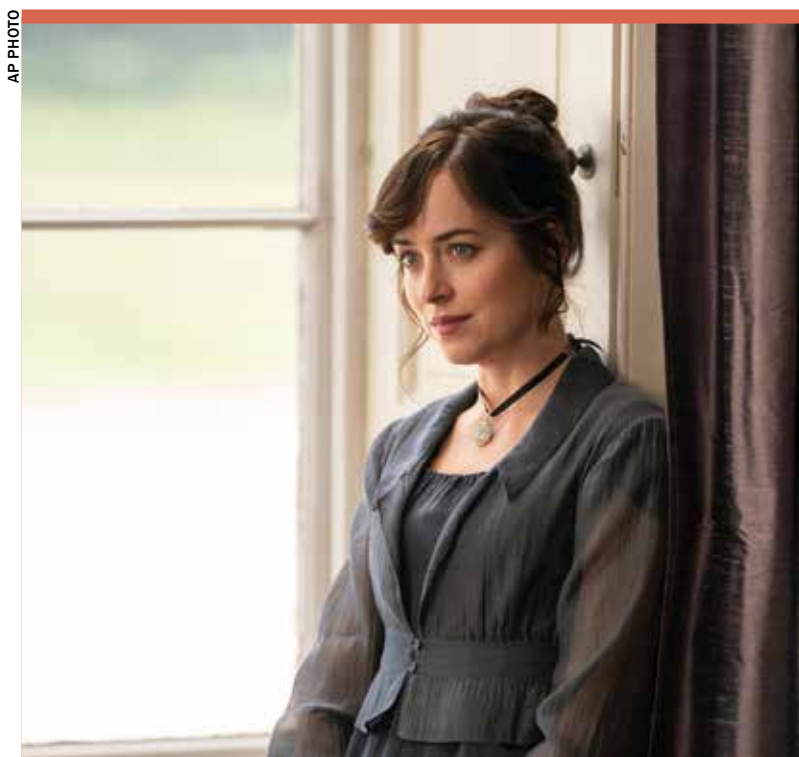
Austen's works are hardly impenetrable for modern audiences. Over 200 years later, they remain accessible and relevant. There's a reason why it seems like every year there's several Austen-inspired films or shows populating our screens (just this summer we've gotten "Fire Island" and "Mr. Malcolm's List"). Her stories have not only stood the test of time but have also bloomed in delightful ways in modern contexts. Just look at "Clueless" and "Bridget Jones's Diary."

This "Persuasion" has a whiff of condescension to it, as thou-

gh it doesn't trust its audience to empathize with Anne without seeing her crying in a bathtub and chugging wine from the bottle while she tells us in voiceover that she's "thriving." Maybe the crying in the bathtub/wine bit has just been done too many times. You can't help but feel that Johnson, a gifted comedienne, deserved something more creative and less cliché.

And yet Johnson does manage to sell much of it. She is subtle where many might choose something big and breaks the fourth wall like she's letting us in on a secret. It may be "Fleabag"-esque, but she's not imitating Phoebe Waller-Bridge. She's making it her own.

In fact, most of the cast is rather vibrant and full of newish discoveries — especially Cosmo Jarvis (who some will recognize from "Lady Macbeth") as Anne's old love Frederick Wentworth. She rejected him at 19 at the advice of a mentor (the



Dakota Johnson in a scene from "Persuasion."

lovely Nikki Amuka-Bird) and has come back into her life eight years later with wealth and good standing. He is now, as far as society is concerned, a man of consequence. Jarvis, with his mournful eyes, warm smile and inscrutable intentions, is a perfect Austen leading man. And he and Johnson, even when across the room from one another, have a spark.

The pint-sized Mia McKenna-Bruce is viciously funny as

Anne's younger sister Mary while Nia Towle is the picture of innocence as Louisa. Richard E. Grant, as Anne's vain father Walter Elliot, adds life as well but he's sparingly used. Henry Golding also has fun playing a cad, Mr. Elliot.

"Persuasion," a Netflix release streaming Friday, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for "some suggestive references." Running time: 107 minutes. ★★★★★

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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**JAPAN'S CONSTITUTION CHANGERS STILL HAVE TO DREAM**

Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution has defined the country's postwar international relations. The so-called no war clause ended the military's hold on the Japanese state, limiting its role to the defense of the nation, and famously states the Japanese people forever renounce the threat or use of force as the means of settling international disputes.

The Constitution was designed to alter the balance of power in the country away from the militaristic elite that had led the country to its disastrous flirtation with imperial conquest.

But there has long been discontent with the Constitution among those on the right who view it as being a demeaning humiliation imposed on Japan by the occupying forces and who want to remove the constraints on the military. Their growing calls for constitutional revision have been swelled by those seeking reform to give more autonomy to local governments.

There is thus a groundswell building for amendments to the Constitution. This has been further fueled by Sunday's House of Councilors election in which Japan's ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito scored a resounding victory.

The triennial election, held in the immediate aftermath of the assassination of former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe who was the leading advocate of lifting the Constitution's restraints on Japan's military, was widely perceived as a touchstone for Japan's pro-constitutional amendment forces to advance their political agenda.

It seems conditions have never been so ripe for the pro-constitutional revision forces to push ahead with their long-held political ambition.

This has triggered concerns among Japan's neighbors which are alarmed at the prospect of Japan once again giving the control of state power to those in the sway of the country's militaristic ethos.

Yet despite the overwhelming support in Japan's parliament for rewriting the Constitution, it is still too early to say that the conservative forces in Japan will succeed in their bid to remove Article 9 as the majority of the public are still cautious about such a move, wary of where it might lead.

A recent survey shows that 59 percent of those polled believed that Article 9 should not be amended. A survey conducted by Japan's public broadcaster NHK on May 3 also showed that only 35 percent of the respondents were in favor of changing the Constitution.

If the coalition puts political calculations above fulfilling their election promises on addressing domestic woes, it will only aggravate the dissatisfaction and mistrust of the Japanese people and further solidify public opinion against the constitutional amendment.

Hence, although Sunday's election result may have buoyed the hopes of Japan's right-wing politicians, their constitutional amendment hopes still look like a distant dream. That is something the world should be thankful for.

**VAN GOGH SELF-PORTRAIT FOUND HIDDEN BEHIND ANOTHER PAINTING**

**THE BUZZ**

A previously unknown self-portrait of Vincent Van Gogh has been discovered behind another of the artist's paintings, the National Galleries of Scotland said yesterday.

The self-portrait was found on the back of Van Gogh's "Head of a Peasant Woman" when experts at the Edinburgh gallery took an X-Ray of the canvas ahead of an upcoming exhibition.

The work is believed to have been hidden for over a century, covered by layers of glue and cardboard when it was framed in the early 20th century.

Van Gogh was known for turning canvases around and painting on the other side to save money.

The portrait shows a bearded sitter in a brimmed hat. Experts said the subject was instantly recognizable as the artist himself, and is thought to be from his early work. The left ear is clearly visible, and Van Gogh famously cut his off in 1888.

The gallery said experts are evaluating how to remove the glue and cardboard without harming "Head of a Peasant Woman."



**LGBTQ HARASSMENT, SLURS ABOUND ON SOCIAL MEDIA, REPORT SAYS**

**AMANDA SEITZ, WASHINGTON**

**S**ocial media platforms including Facebook and TikTok are failing to stop hate and threats against LGBTQ users, a report issued Wednesday from advocacy group GLAAD found.

Those are some of the internet's most vulnerable users, with a majority of LGBTQ people saying they've faced menacing posts or comments when they're scrolling through social media. But it's unclear how social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube are handling those threats.

Instead of protecting their users, GLAAD says in the report, the tech companies are safeguarding information about how they respond to those attacks, revealing few details about how often they take down posts or accounts that push hate speech or harass LGBTQ users.

"The reality is, there's very little transparency and very little accountability," said Jenni Olson, GLAAD's director for social media safety and author of the report. "And people feel helpless."

Los Angeles resident Peter Sapinsky, a gay musician who said he has faced

harassment in the online gaming community, shared screenshots with The Associated Press of dozens of messages he's sent to YouTube about users and videos that use racist and homophobic slurs. YouTube has responded to only some of the messages, he said.

Sapinsky, 29, said some use YouTube to livestream themselves harassing people at Pride parades. They quickly delete those live videos once they've wrapped to evade being detected by YouTube for violating its policies against hate speech, he said. He listed a series of homophobic slurs he's heard in videos posted by users who are still operating on the site.

"YouTube doesn't do anything about it," Sapinsky said. "For someone who says they don't allow hate on the website, they sure do."

Hateful or violent speech directed at members of the LGBTQ community is prohibited on the platform, YouTube spokesperson Jack Malon said.

"Over the last few years, we've made significant progress in our ability to quickly remove hateful and harassing content," Malon said. "This work is ongoing, and we appreciate the thoughtful feedback from GLAAD."

A Twitter spokesperson said in a statement that the

company was discussing the report's findings with GLAAD. A statement from TikTok did not directly address the report but said the company is working to create an "inclusive environment."

GLAAD recommended that the platforms start releasing the training methods for content moderators as well as the number of accounts and posts the companies remove for violating rules designed to protect LGBTQ users.

GLAAD's report examines the policies and actions Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and Twitter have implemented around LGBTQ issues.

All of the social media platforms have outlined policies that are designed to prevent LGBTQ users from being harassed, threatened or discriminated against by other users because of their identity.

Twitter and TikTok also have specific policies against intentionally misgendering, using the wrong pronoun to describe someone, for example, or deadnaming, which involves reviving a transgender person's name from before the person transitioned to a new identity. Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, said it removes similar posts upon request. **MDT/AP**

**Germany** Local officials with Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party met yesterday to consider calls to expel former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. Schroeder's longstanding ties to the Russian energy sector and refusal to distance himself fully from President Vladimir Putin after Russia invaded Ukraine have left his political standing in tatters. An arbitration committee of the center-left Social Democrats' branch in Hannover, where Schroeder lives, was considering 17 applications from party members to have him kicked out.



**Serbia** Authorities in Serbia yesterday detained 85 migrants near the border with Hungary where a clash earlier this month apparently involving people smugglers left one person dead and several injured. A police task force found automatic weapons, guns, knives and other weapons and ammunition during the sweep in the northern town of Subotica, police said in a statement.



**UK** Oscar-winning actor Kevin Spacey pleaded not guilty yesterday to charges of sexually assaulting three men a decade or more ago, and was told he would face trial next year. Spacey, 62, stood in the dock and spoke clearly as he replied "not guilty" to each of the five charges during a hearing at London's Central Criminal Court, commonly known as the Old Bailey.

**Portugal** More than 3,000 firefighters battled alongside ordinary Portuguese citizens desperate to save their homes from several wildfires that raged across the European country yesterday, fanned by extreme temperatures and drought conditions linked to climate change. The central part of the country has been particularly hard hit by a spate of blazes this week. In the village of Bemposta, residents used garden hoses to spray down their lawns and the roofs of their houses in hope that they could save them from the raging wall of red flames that approached through the wooden hills late on Wednesday.