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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

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LAWMAKERS WANT THE GOV'T TO ENACT ADDITIONAL AND MORE EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO PROMOTE LOCAL WORKERS' EMPLOYMENT

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WORKING GROUPS WILL NEED TO TAKE NATS EVERY OTHER DAY FROM SUNDAY, KEY GROUPS TO CONTINUE WITH DAILY TESTS

P2

AP PHOTO



Myanmar's military has laid landmines that have killed and injured people in and around villages in Kayah, a conflict-affected region near the border with Thailand, Amnesty International said yesterday. The human rights groups said its researchers who visited the region found that landmines laid around people's homes and churches have killed at least 20 people and maimed many other civilians. [More on p7](#)

AP PHOTO



European Union's head office yesterday proposed that member states cut their gas use by 15% over the coming months as the bloc braced for a possible full Russian cutoff of natural gas supplies that could add a big chill to the upcoming winter. While the initial cuts would be voluntary, the Commission also asked for the power to impose mandatory reductions across the bloc in the event of an EU-wide emergency caused by what Commission President Ursula von der Leyen saw as a deliberate attempt by President Vladimir Putin to weaponize gas exports.

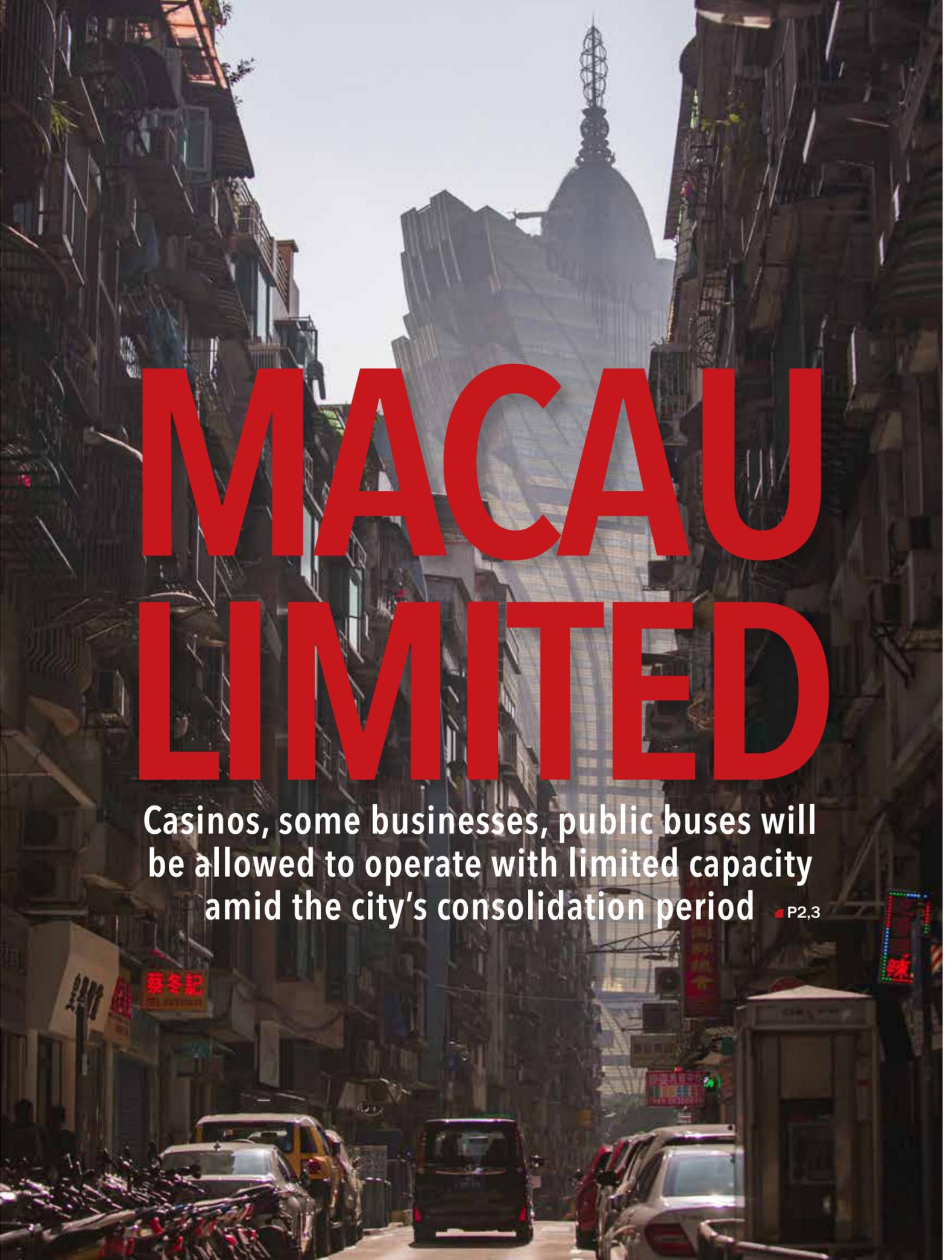
AP PHOTO



Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday it is the West's own fault that the flow of Russian natural gas to European customers has dwindled and warned that it could continue ebbing. Putin said the amount of gas pumped through the Nord Stream pipeline to Germany will fall further from 60 million to 30 million cubic meters a day, or about one fifth of its capacity, if a turbine isn't quickly replaced.

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FLORA TANG



Casinos, some businesses, public buses will be allowed to operate with limited capacity amid the city's consolidation period

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CONSOLIDATION PERIOD

CASINOS RESUME WITH RESTRICTIONS

ANTHONY LAM

ALL casinos in the city will be allowed to resume this Saturday, regardless of the location of their entrances.

In contrast to shops located in shopping malls without direct access to public road, casinos across the city will reopen as the clock strikes midnight on Saturday, no matter whether their entrances face outdoors, like the Lisboa Casino, or indoors, like many other newer establishments.

Health Bureau director Alvis Lo said that before their reopening, all casinos will need to conduct a thorough cleaning and sanitization, especially of surfaces that are easily or frequently accessible.

At any given time, a casino may only have 50% of its staff on the floor. The wearing of masks to the standard of KN95 or higher will be mandatory at all times in casinos. Drinking will be allowed at casinos but eating will be prohibited. Staff will only be allowed to eat individually in suitably segregated spaces.

Explaining the decision not to

AP PHOTO



allow shops in shopping malls to reopen, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong said that the main problem is with the air-conditioning and ventilation systems.

She said that the government has been assured and has itself

ascertained that ventilation in casinos is able to lower the risk of infection. "However, we could not guarantee so in all shopping malls," Ao Ieong said.

As such, the shops without direct access to the street that are located in shopping malls at resor-

ts will not be allowed to reopen. In contrast, the hotels and casinos at these resorts will resume partial operations. Dining establishments, meanwhile, will be allowed to offer takeaway services as they have been in the past 1.5 weeks.

52-YEAR-OLD WOMAN COMMITS SUICIDE IN DORMITORY

STAFF REPORTER

A woman was found dead in a staff dormitory yesterday morning, according to a statement from the Judiciary Police (PJ) yesterday.

The PJ notice stated that at 7:53 a.m., they received a report that the body of a woman was found hanged in a building on Rua de Francisco Xavier Pereira.

Firefighters arrived and opened the door to find the deceased hanging on the bed frame of the bunk bed.

The woman was sent to hospital but was confirmed dead upon arrival.

Upon examining the corpse, the deceased was found to have obvious strangulation marks on the neck which were consistent with the scarf having been wrapped around the woman's neck. The cause of death is to be officially determined by a forensic medical examination.

The unit where the incident took place was the staff dormitory of the restaurant, where the deceased lived with two other staff members. When the woman did not turn up for work as usual, the other staff went to look for her, but found the door of her room locked, and so called the police.

No suicide note was found in the unit.

The deceased is a 52-year old mainland China resident, holding a non-resident employee identification card.

The case has been classified as a case of a discovered body and has been referred to the relevant department.

Last week, the city saw the alleged suicide of an 87-year-old woman in a residential district of Fai Chi Kei. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Investigations revealed that the deceased had lived by herself in an apartment. In recent years, the deceased had shown signs of unhappiness and depression.

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) encourages residents to be aware of their psychological and emotional state, as well as those of relatives and friends. For support, residents can call Caritas' Life Hope hotline (28525222) or IAS' counseling hotline (28261126).

COVID-19

Daily RATs, regular NATs to continue next week

ANTHONY LAM

ALL residents of Macau will be required to take SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen test (RAT) every day starting this Saturday.

After round 13, the city will see another citywide SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test (NAT) between July 30 and 31.

Daily NATs for key groups will remain. Key groups, including workers in cleaning, security, property management, dining, food delivery, public transport driver and stay-out domestic helpers, will need to take NATs every day from Sunday to the end of next week, as of press time.

Other working groups will need to take NATs every other day from Sunday to the end of next week, as of press time.

However, the head of Education and Youth Development

RENATO MARQUES



Bureau, Kong Chi Meng, emphasized that the regular NATs will not be mandatory for entering workplaces, but "employers or workplace management should verify whether their staff have taken the tests."

Kong encouraged employers

to allow their employees to conduct the NAT during work hours to avoid crowds accumulating.

July 24 and 25 will only see 58 test stations in operation. Test station availabilities and hours of operation from July 26 will be announced in due course, Kong added.

Those working from home will be considered to be at a similar risk to those staying home, so they will not be considered part of the working groups for the purposes of regular NAT requirements.

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CONSOLIDATION PERIOD

Some businesses to be allowed to reopen from Saturday

ANTHONY LAM

BETWEEN July 23 and 29, some businesses will be allowed to reopen "with limited capacity" while complying with Health Bureau (SSM) guidelines, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng announced in an Executive Order.

On Tuesday the government announced its plan to put the city under "consolidation period" from July 23.

For the time being, the consolidation period will last from July 23 to 29.

As during this week, businesses catering for basic needs, such as electricity and water supplies, telecommunications, public transport, wet markets, supermarkets, dining establishments, pharmacies and clinics will be in operation. Dining establishments will only be allowed to offer takeaway services.

Those not considered vital for subsistence will be allowed to resume partial operation, but compliance with SSM guidelines is essential.

Despite this, nurseries and renovation work in indoor properties will not be allowed to resume. As for shops within shopping malls that do not have direct access to public streets, unless their operations concern subsistence, their operations will be suspended in the coming week.

Businesses that will be allowed to resume limited operations, while offering services or receiving visitors, must limit their capacity, maintain social distancing and request visitors to record their footprints.

JASON LEUNG



Other people must remain at home, unless they need to commute to work, go shopping or leave home for emergency or necessary reasons.

While doing so, they should avoid gathering in crowds and should wear masks. Adults must wear masks to a standard of KN95 or higher.

Entertainment venues, such as karaoke venues, massage and beauty parlors and video game arcades will not be allowed to reopen. Barber shops and hair salons, in contrast, will be allowed to resume limited operations, and health guidelines must be followed.

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong explained at yesterday's regular health press

briefing about the decision to green light the reopening of barber shops and hair salons. "Considering that most people may need to get a haircut after about a month of lockdown, we have decided to allow them to reopen," Ao Ieong said, hinting that men may have strong feelings on the subject. "Women would still be able to tie up their long hair."

Despite the permission to reopen, barber shops and hair salons located in shopping malls and without direct access to the outdoors must remain closed.

On the other hand, the aforementioned SSM guidelines encourage businesses to ope-

rate online at full capacity next week. Those unable to meet this should offer bookings to reduce the likelihood of crowds forming.

People will be allowed to walk their dogs and go for recreational walks

Unless there are separate confinements, staff should not eat in the office, because the wearing of masks to the standard of KN95 or higher will be required at all times. Drinking will be allowed.

Each indoor workplace should see no more than 50% staff at any given time. The human density at a workplace should not exceed one person per two square meters.

This density restriction will only apply to visitors or customers, excluding the staff of the establishments.

Private extracurricular, continuing or leisure education institutions will only be allowed to conduct lectures online next week.

Public services and banks will be allowed to reopen with limited capacity, Ao Ieong revealed, adding that Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng will promulgate an Execu-

tive Order concerning the reopening of public services.

To support the partial reopening, the Transport Bureau has announced that this Saturday will see at least 83 of the city's 86 bus routes resuming normal operations.

No special pass will be needed but passengers' health codes will be checked. Each bus will only operate at 60% capacity.

Moreover, under the effect of the Executive Order on partial public resumption, banks located in shopping malls and without direct street access will remain closed.

As the city enters the consolidation period (the term the government is using to refer to the condition starting Saturday) people will be allowed to walk their dogs and go for recreational walks, meaning that they will not be prosecuted by the police.

However, Ao Ieong reiterated that the wearing of masks of KN95 standard or higher is mandatory.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau, despite not assigning a representative to yesterday's press conference, announced through SSM director Alvis Lo that three promenades located around the Main Reservoir, on Guia Hill and in Taipa Waterfront located in Avenida do Oceano will be reopened. Running and cycling will not be allowed.

Meanwhile, all 16 dog-walking areas will also be reopened to cater to the needs of dog keepers.

In justifying why running and cycling will not be allowed, Ao Ieong argued that doing sports while wearing KN95 masks "does not seem to be a

feasible option."

When questioned whether there will be a circuit breaker to the consolidation period, Lo said that no specific number of infections to trigger it had been set. Nonetheless his bureau will monitor whether any untraced chain of infections emerges during the period. Based on this and a combination of factors, SSM will decide whether the city will return to de-facto lockdowns.

Many fear that the city will fall into a dead loop of swinging between de-facto lockdowns and consolidation periods. The concern was raised yesterday. In response, Ao Ieong reiterated the need for unanimous conformity to government guidelines, rules and regulations, so as to minimize the risk of a recurrence of infections in the city.

LAWMAKER CALLS FOR CLEARER GUIDELINES FOR INDUSTRY DURING CONSOLIDATION PERIOD

LAWMAKER Leong Hong Sai has expressed support for the upcoming limited opening of industrial and commercial activities during the consolidation period.

"Although the partial lockdown may help control the speed of the spread of the pandemic, it will seriously affect the economy and the livelihood of residents, and inconvenience the public. Therefore, I agree with resuming industrial and commercial activities during the consolidation period," said the lawmaker.

However, Leong considered that the Macau government needs to release clear pandemic prevention guidelines as soon as possible so that the industry sectors and the public can be well prepared to cooperate with the government's pandemic

prevention work.

"The announcement published by the government has only mentioned that industrial and commercial establishments can resume work, but it does not clearly mention the resumption of banking and financial industries. Are these industries classified as industrial and commercial establishments?" Leong asked.

Acknowledging that the government has made only a general provision, Leong said that because the provision covers a wide range of industries, it is not possible to list each one in detail, therefore further information is expected from the government.

The government announced yesterday that some businesses will be allowed to reopen "with limited capacity" while complying with Health Bureau

569 COVID-19 PATIENTS DISCHARGED

HEALTH Bureau director Alvis Lo announced yesterday that 569 of the 1,783 positive cases recorded since June 18 had been discharged from confinement or hospitalization. Of all cases, 38.5%

were symptomatic. Only 10% of cases showed signs of pneumonia and only 1% were severe. The remaining 90% only showed light symptoms such as coughs and sore throat.



QUARANTINE

HEALTH AUTHORITIES CLARIFY ISOLATION CRITERIA

RENATO MARQUES

LOCAL health authorities have recently clarified the criteria that allow previously infected persons to leave isolation and return to the community, as well as the requirement for the re-isolation

of those who are considered relapsing cases.

During the daily press briefing of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, the coordinator at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Leong Iek Hou responded to

several media inquiries on the subject. She explained that when the level of Cycle Threshold (CT), obtained during the nucleic acid test (NAT) sampling analysis, is 35 or above in two consecutive tests done over 24 hours apart, the former positive cases are considered

recovered and can return to the community.

She also explained that when a person with a previous medical history of infection with Covid-19 is found in the community with a NAT with a CT of 32 or below, that person is considered a case of relapse from the previous infection. The patient is then required to undergo isolation in medical observation until the criteria of two consecutive NAT with CT over 35 is met.

The health official also explained that the same criteria apply to people tested locally as those arri-

ving from abroad. Thus, the criteria of the CT levels also apply in the same manner to those returning or arriving to Macau from medium and high-risk areas.

Nonetheless, those found in the community during mass testing with CT levels above 32 and who have no previous record of infection with the virus can still be ordered to quarantine in a hotel facility and undergo a period of observation. This is a precautionary measure to ensure that they are not at a very early stage of infection, which could develop into a more infectious level in the following days.

INFECTION RATE ALSO EXPLAINED

Responding to a media inquiry, Leong also said that Macau uses the same standards to classify the infectious potential of an outbreak as other countries, which use an Infection Rate (RT) coefficient.

According to the official, at the end of last week the RT of the local outbreak was between 0.5 and 0.6. She explained that all values below 1 represent, in terms of epidemic modeling, that the "situation is controllable," and that if the figure reduces, it means that the situation is being further controlled, and that the epidemic risk is reducing.

"If we have a new outbreak, for instance, this RT will grow immediately," Leong explained.

Logistics stores rent temporary warehouses due to surge of stranded items

STAFF REPORTER

THE logistics industry has seen several business owners rent additional temporary warehouses to temporarily store stranded goods during the partial lockdown. Therefore, additional costs will be incurred once shoppers pick up their items.

As the goods have been accumulating for the past 10 days, the parcels have far exceeded the capacity of warehouses.

"The goods still can be delivered from mainland China to Macau through customs as normal, but the local collection stores are prohibited from operating while Macau is on partial lockdown," Choi Lau Ngai, president of the Greater Bay Area Cross-border Logistics Association, told Chinese media Exmoo.

"There are indeed cases where the goods have accumulated in the collec-



tion stores because there are different standards of processing goods in different collection stores," said Choi, who is also the CEO of eBay International Ltd.

He emphasized that although the closure of the local stores has had a con-

siderable impact on the logistics industry, leaders of the sector are calling on these business owners to cooperate with the government policies.

The consolidation period is mainly to prevent the resurgence of the virus.

After entering the consolidation period, residents will "gradually resume working, and taking acid tests at different frequencies according to the risk [faced by] different groups in order to consolidate the results of pandemic pre-

vention and control," said Elsie Ao leong U, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, yesterday.

The government has approved the industry's reopening from July 23 during the city's consolidation period, according

to the report.

According to Choi, amid the partial lockdown, they have received many complaints from residents saying that most of the goods are urgently needed, and that daily necessities are difficult to find in supermarkets.

"During the [current] period of partial lockdown and control in mainland China, couriers can obtain special 'passes' to continue to work. Regions with medium or lower risk have been identified where residents can pick up their goods at different times, demonstrating the importance of online shopping for express delivery," said Choi.

He suggested that the Macau government communicate with the Zhuhai government and include the online shopping and collection industry as companies that guarantee the supply and transportation of daily necessities.

This is so that the industry can indirectly reduce the cost of customs clearance, creating room for price reductions, thereby benefiting the general public in Macau.

RENATO MARQUES

Lawmakers want gov't to do more for local workers

LAWMAKERS Wong Kit Cheng and Ella Lei want the government to enact additional and more effective measures to promote the employment and reemployment of local workers affected by the Covid-19 crisis.

The two lawmakers want the authorities to find ways to employ many of those who lost their jobs in roles such as the citywide mass testing and other pandemic prevention and control occupations that seem to be ongoing.

"The launching of job posts for conducting nucleic acid tests would not only relieve the pressure on the frontline medical staff but also help to fill the local unemployment gap," Wong was quoted saying to local Chinese language media.

On the same topic, and although agreeing with Wong that the Covid-19 prevention and control measures can open job posts that will help some workers in the short-term, Lei added that the government must find a long-term solution for this problem as, even after the outbreak is over, many of the local workers will no longer have a job to which to return.

"Authorities can introduce more significant, longer-term measures to support local employment in response to changes

RENATO MARQUES



in the employment environment during the epidemic," Lei said, adding that in the short-term and taking into account that the rounds of mass testing are not likely to end soon, local unem-

ployed people can be hired to fill positions such as data entry personnel, security guards, sampling assistants and many others which do not require special qualifications or professional skills.

Lei also wants the government to pay attention and not forget that the currently unemployed group will soon be swelled by new graduates who will be trying to enter the job market for the

first time.

For those Lei calls for more and better internship programs, so that these new graduates can start to establish a skill set that will gain them employment soon.

LEONG SUN IOK UNHAPPY WITH LRT COSTS

In a separate media report, the lawmaker Leong Sun Iok called on the government to stop what he calls "a waste of public money" in the operation of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT).

Leong says that considering the current crisis, such money "could have a better use in the support of residents and companies affected by the crisis caused by the pandemic."

In a report in Chinese language newspaper Macao Daily, Leong noted that last year alone, the expenses related to the LRT reached as much as 836 million patacas, of which 720 million (86%) were related to service fees. The lawmaker also highlighted that in the same period, the LRT company revenues were only 2 million patacas.

Aiming at the concession contract that expires in 2024, Leong wants the government to adopt a different strategy so that the LRT ceases to be a massive burden on the public purse each year while providing very little utility for both residents and tourists.

AD



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The Road to Macau Tourism Recovery

FMCC Webinar
Tuesday, 26 July 2022



Speaker - Mr. Andrew Klebanow
Co-founder & Senior Partner of C3 Gaming
President of Klebanow Consulting

Speaker - Ms. Celia Lao
General Manger of Greater China,
AirAsia Digital

Moderator - Ms. Mary Mendoza
Head of GBA Tourism & Leisure Committee - FMCC
Managing Director of The Platinum Ltd.

Introduction:

This might be the most challenging time for the Macau tourism industry after almost three years of pandemic disruptions. As Macau slowly emerges from this most recent period it is essential to learn from others jurisdictions and what they experienced as tourists returned. Join us and hear from Mr. Andrew Klebanow about Las Vegas' tourism recovery, and Ms. Celia Lao about her company's business transformation and perspectives on GBA and regional markets.

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Time: 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Venue: Online Zoom Webinar



GBA Tourism & Leisure Committee

HONG KONG BOOK FAIR KICKS OFF WITH FEWER POLITICAL BOOKS

KATIE TAM
& ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

HONG Kong's annual book fair kicked off yesterday, with several publishers of political books prevented from taking part in the fair and others saying they had to be cautious about what they exhibited.

The fair's main organizer, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, said it did not screen the books for sale at the fair.

But Hong Kong authorities have tightened controls on freedom of expression and arrested dozens of pro-democracy activists after a national security law took effect in 2020, and the council stressed that exhibitors must abide by the law.

Independent publisher Hillway Culture, which publishes books on Hong Kong and political events, was among those not allowed to participate. Another publisher, One of a Kind, which has published several books about 2019 protests in the city, was another.

Publishers are having a tough time given the impact of the pandemic on the city's economy and concerns over censorship and rejection of independent publishers, said Kaying Wong, a guest curator



at The House of Hong Kong Literature, the city's largest literary organization.

"It's surely not an easy job for us to set up a booth in the book fair and be selected (to exhibit)," Wong said.

In 2020, the city postponed the fair several times due to the pandemic. The event finally was held in person last June after a one-year

hiatus. This year's book fair runs until Tuesday, July 26.

Novelist Gabriel Tsang, who works with publisher Spicy Fish Cultural Production Limited, said writers have to consider whether they can get published in the current environment.

"I guess many writers have their own intentions [...] and they have to think a lot about whether they

can have work published. They may use some allegory or use many rhetoric skills, rather than directly expressing what they wanted to express originally," he said.

Last year, complaints were lodged against Hillway Culture, one of the publishers rejected this year, for exhibiting politically sensitive books that could be seen as violating the national security law.

"Last year, we had (exhibited) political books in the book fair and this was also the case for another publisher that was banned," said Raymond Yeung, Hillway Culture's founder. He was one of the few publishers allowed to exhibit political books about Hong Kong at last year's book fair.

Yeung attempted to set up an independent book fair as an alternative to the main fair earlier this month but had to cancel that after the landlord of the venue accused Hillway of violating its tenancy contract by subletting its space to other publishers.

The authorities ought to be clearer and more transparent about what kinds of activities are allowed, said Hui Ching, research director of the policy think tank Hong Kong Zhi Ming Institute.

"If there's no transparency, it's reasonable for citizen to suspect their rights being deprived," Hui said.

Visitors still value the fair as an opportunity to browse and purchase a wide range of books.

"I read as a habit and today I've come to look for some Chinese novels and short stories that I'm interested in," said Grace Ng, a 22-year-old university student who visited the fair with her boyfriend.

Ng usually attends the annual fair and said this year's appeared somewhat subdued. "It's not as crowded now as before the pandemic," she said. **MDT/AP**

European Parliament VP urges renewed China-Taiwan dialogue

EUROPEAN Parliament Vice President Nicola Beer met with Taiwan's leader Tsai Ing-wen yesterday and called for China to open a "mutual and respectful dialogue" with the self-governing island democracy it claims as its own territory.

Beer emphasized Taiwan's importance "on a global scale" and called for the island to be allowed to participate in the World Health Assembly and for the European Union to upgrade its representation in Taipei.

She reaffirmed support for Taiwan's right to determine its own future amid Chinese threats to annex the island by force, saying Beijing should "refrain from its threatening gestures" and not destroy the island's prosperity.

"Taiwan deserves to play this role as a global, strategic, responsible and reliable international partner to the



Taiwan's leader Tsai Ing-wen, right, meets with European Parliament Vice President Nicola Beer at the Presidential Office in Taipei, yesterday

full," Beer told Tsai.

"Only the Taiwanese people can decide on Taiwanese future," Beer said, adding that China should "take an active and constructive part in maintaining and securing the current status quo based on mutual and respectful dialogue."

In her comments, Tsai hailed growing economic relations between Taiwan and the EU and the passa-

ge of 20 resolutions in the European Parliament since the start of 2021 favorable to Taipei.

"On behalf of the people of Taiwan, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Vice President Beer," Tsai said.

Beer is one of 14 vice presidents of the European Parliament, whose members are elected from the EU's 27 member states and

which exercises legislative, budgetary and oversight powers over the bloc's executive, the European Commission. Its members are known for taking independent stances on foreign relations, human rights and the environment.

Beer's visit is the latest in a series of increasingly active moves by European and American politicians to counter China's assertions of its global clout, including

a drive to isolate Taiwan diplomatically.

Beijing cut off all contacts with Taipei following Tsai's initial 2016 election over her refusal to acknowledge that Taiwan is a part of China and her efforts to build an independent Taiwanese identity.

On Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian condemned Beer's Taiwan visit and the European Parliament's adoption of pro-Taiwan resolutions.

"This is a grave breach of the one-China principle and has poisoned the atmosphere for China-Europe relations," Zhao said, referring to China's insistence that Taiwan has no right to independent diplomatic recognition.

"We urge the EU to earnestly abide by the one-China principle and be prudent on Taiwan-related issues so as to avoid serious disruptions to China-EU bilateral relations," Zhao told reporters.

At the same daily briefing, Zhao warned that China would take "resolute and strong measures" should the Speaker of the

U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi proceed with reported plans to visit Taiwan.

Pelosi, who is second in line to the presidency, is due to visit Taiwan in August, according to a report in the Financial Times.

She would be the highest-ranking American lawmaker to visit the close U.S. ally in 25 years.

A visit by Pelosi would "severely undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, gravely impact the foundation of China-U.S. relations and send a seriously wrong signal to Taiwan independence forces," Zhao said, without offering details on what actions China might take.

The White House and State Department have issued no official statements on Pelosi's planned visit, which stands to further disrupt relations between Washington and Beijing that have deteriorated to their worst level in decades amid disputes over trade, China's human rights record, its support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine and U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. **MDT/AP**



Sri Lanka's new Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe

SRI LANKA

New president divisive choice for fixing crisis

SRI Lanka's prime minister was elected president yesterday by lawmakers who opted for a seasoned, veteran leader to lead the country out of economic collapse, despite widespread public opposition.

Ranil Wickremesinghe, an ally of ousted President Gotabaya Rajapaksa whose term he is finishing after he fled the country and re-

signed, urged fellow lawmakers to unite in saving the nation.

"People are not expecting the old politics from us, they expect us to work together," he told Parliament.

But he is a divisive figure, unpopular among a public fed up with shortages of food, fuel and medicine, and critics question whether he can muster the political heft

and public support to get the job done.

Wickremesinghe was appointed prime minister by Rajapaksa in May after angry protests forced Rajapaksa's brother, Mahinda Rajapaksa, to step down and seek refuge in a naval base. Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled Sri Lanka earlier this month, submitting his resignation by email, and Wickreme-

singhe became acting president ahead of yesterday's vote, as well as prime minister and finance minister.

He then quickly declared a state of emergency after protesters stormed the presidential palace and several other government buildings last week. That gave him broad powers to act in the interest of public security and order, enabling the authorities to carry out searches and detain people. Wickremesinghe was also empowered to change or suspend any law.

At 73, Wickremesinghe has had six terms as prime minister. Rajapaksa chose him as he tried to restore Sri Lanka's credibility after it stopped making payments on its \$51 billion in foreign debt.

As protests raged, he became the public face of the crisis, delivering weekly addresses in Parliament, raising taxes and pledging to overhaul a government that had increasingly concentrated power under the presidency, helping to tip the country into crisis. He has been leading negotiations on a bailout package with the International Monetary Fund.

Opponents have accused Wickremesinghe of protecting the Rajapaksa family, who are widely blamed for leading the nation into ruin, from allegations of corruption and other wrongdoing.

Just days before lawmakers elected him president, protesters took over Wickremesinghe's office compound demanding that he resign. His private residence was burned down.

Wickremesinghe's win yesterday was a vindication after a humiliating 2020 electoral defeat for his United National Party — one of the country's main and oldest

parties — that left him its sole lawmaker. With support from Rajapaksa's ruling party, he netted 134 votes, far more than runner-up Dullas Alahapperuma, a former government minister backed by the opposition. He won 82 votes.

Ahead of the vote, few lawmakers had publicly said they would vote for Wickremesinghe given the widespread public hostility against him — but dozens loyal to Rajapaksa had been expected to back him because he had assured them he would severely punish protesters who had attacked politicians' homes during the unrest.

Born into a wealthy, politically active family whose fortune was made in timber and the media, Wickremesinghe has served as a lawmaker for 45 years. His reputation suffered during a previous stint as prime minister in a difficult power-sharing arrangement with then-President Maithripala Sirisena. A communication breakdown between them was blamed for intelligence lapses that led to a terror attack in 2019 that devastated tourism even before the catastrophic blow from the pandemic.

He earned a law degree from the University of Colombo and practiced as a lawyer before entering politics in 1977, becoming the youngest lawmaker at the time. He was first appointed prime minister in 1993 and also was an opposition leader for more than a decade.

Wickremesinghe has generally kept details of his private life under wraps. He is married to Maitree Wickremesinghe, a professor and expert on gender and women's studies. **MDT/AP**

Amnesty Int'l says Myanmar army has laid landmines in Kayah

MYANMAR'S military has laid landmines that have killed and injured people in and around villages in Kayah, a conflict-affected region near the border with Thailand, Amnesty International said yesterday.

The human rights groups said its researchers who visited the region found that landmines laid around people's homes and churches have killed at least 20 people and maimed many other civilians.

The researchers interviewed villagers in an area where the army has been fighting ethnic Karenni armed groups after the military seized power from Myanmar's elected government in February 2021.

Various international agreements including the 1997 Ottawa Convention



This photo taken in June/July 2022 and provided by Amnesty International shows the St. Matthew's Church at Daw Ngay Khu village in Kayah state, eastern Myanmar

ban the use of antipersonnel mines with the intention of eliminating weapons that have killed and maimed thousands of people around the world, often long after hostilities have ended.

"The Myanmar military's use of landmines is abhorrent and cruel. At a time when the world has

overwhelmingly banned these inherently indiscriminate weapons, the military has placed them in people's yards, homes, and even stairwells, as well as around a church," Matt Wells, Amnesty International's Crisis Response deputy director for thematic issues, said in a statement.

Amnesty's report said

landmines have been deployed in at least 20 villages in Kayah. The report backed earlier allegations made by ethnic groups.

The Karenni Human Rights Group earlier this month also accused army forces of planting landmines in villages and settlements in Kayah state.

Last month, the United

Nations Children's Fund reported that landmines and unexploded ordnance had maimed or killed children in many regions of the country, with the largest number of casualties in Shan state in northeastern Myanmar.

Apart from the immediate danger, planting landmines can prevent people who flee violence from returning to their homes and fields, Amnesty International noted.

It said that ethnic armed groups were warning residents to be aware of the risks.

"The military appears to be systematically laying landmines near where it is based as well as in areas from which it retreats," it said.

Myanmar has been mired in violence and civil

unrest since the military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, triggering widespread peaceful protests that were put down with lethal force by the army and police. The nonviolent opposition has since turned into armed resistance, and the country has slipped into what some U.N. experts characterize as a civil war.

Amnesty International has also accused Myanmar's military of carrying out widespread atrocities in the eastern part of the country that constitute war crimes and probably crimes against humanity, saying that civilians from the Karen and Karenni ethnic minorities have been the targets of unlawful killing, arbitrary detention and forcible displacement. **MDT/AP**

US 2020 CENSUS

Secret memo links citizenship question to apportionment

MIKE SCHNEIDER

TRUMP officials tried to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census in a move experts said would benefit Republicans despite initial doubts among some in the administration that it was legal, according to an investigative report released Wednesday by a congressional oversight committee.

The report offers a smoking gun of sorts — a secret memo the committee obtained after a two-year legal battle showing that a top Trump appointee in the Commerce Department explored apportionment as a reason to include the question.

“The Committee’s investigation has exposed how a group of political appointees sought to use the census to advance an ideological agenda and potentially exclude non-citizens from the apportionment count,” the report released by the House Committee on Oversight and Reform said.

It has long been speculated that the Trump administration wanted the citizenship question in order to exclude people in the country illegally from apportionment numbers.

The report includes several drafts showing how the memo evolved from recognizing that doing so would likely be unconstitutional to coming up with other justifications for adding the citizenship question.

The apportionment process uses state population counts gathered during the once-a-decade census to divide up the number of congressional seats each state gets.

Opponents feared a citizenship question would scare off Hispanics and immigrants from participating in the 2020 census, whether they were in the country legally or not. The citizenship question was blocked by the Supreme Court in 2019. In the high court’s decision, Chief Justice John Roberts said the reason the Commerce Department had given for the citizenship question — it was needed for the Justice Department’s enforcement of the Voting Rights Act — appeared to be contrived.

The Commerce Department oversees the Census



Bureau, which conducts the count used to determine political power and the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in federal funding each year. Then-Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross testified before the oversight committee that apportionment wasn’t the reason for the citizenship question, even though the Commerce Department memo suggests otherwise, the House report said.

“I have never intentionally misled Congress or intentionally said anything incorrect under oath,” Ross said during a 2019 hearing before the oversight committee.

According to the House committee report, during planning for the citizenship question, an adviser to the Commerce Department reached out to a Republican redistricting expert who had written that using citizen voting-age population instead of the total population for the purpose of redrawing of congressional and legislative districts could be advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites.

The August 2017 memo prepared by senior Commerce Department political appointee James Uthmeier went to the heart of of interactions by the Commerce Department and the Justice Department to come up with a contrived reason for the citizenship question, the House report said.

An initial draft of the memo raised doubts that a citizenship question would be legal since it can only be added to the once-a-decade census if the Commerce Secretary concludes that gathering that information in survey sampling is not feasible. But a later draft removed that concern and added that the Commerce Secretary had the discretion to add a citizenship question for reasons other than apportionment.

An even later draft removed apportionment as an exception to the Commerce Secretary’s discretion and added “there is nothing illegal or unconstitutional about adding a citizenship question.”

An early draft of the memo also noted that using a citizenship data for apportion-

ment was likely unconstitutional and went against 200 years of precedent, but that language also was removed in later drafts.

The House report says Uthmeier researched using Voting Rights Act enforcement as a reason for the citizenship question three months before the Justice Department requested it, and hand-

delivered his memo with that suggestion to the Justice Department in order to avoid a digital fingerprint. In an effort to prevent future attempts at politicizing the census, members of the oversight committee on Wednesday planned to debate a bill introduced by U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., that would require new questions for the head count to be vetted by Congress, and prohibit a Census Bureau director from being fired without cause.

The Trump administration named an unusually high number of political appointees without prior experience in the statistical agency to top positions in the Census Bureau. The legislation would limit the number of political appointees to three, with all other positions being filled by career civil service workers.

Even though many of the Trump administration’s political efforts ultimately failed, some advocates believe they did have an impact, resulting in significantly larger undercounts of most racial and ethnic minorities in the 2020 census compared to the 2010 census.

“It is clear that legislative reforms are needed to prevent any future illegal or unconstitutional efforts to interfere with the census and chip away at our democracy,” said Maloney, who chairs the oversight committee. **MDT/AP**

It has long been speculated that the Trump administration wanted the citizenship question in order to exclude people in the country illegally from apportionment numbers

this day in history

1969 MAN TAKES FIRST STEPS ON THE MOON



American Neil Armstrong has become the first man to walk on the Moon.

The astronaut stepped onto the Moon’s surface, in the Sea of Tranquility, at 0256 GMT, nearly 20 minutes after first opening the hatch on the Eagle landing craft.

Armstrong had earlier reported the lunar module’s safe landing at 2017 GMT with the words: “Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed.”

As he put his left foot down first Armstrong declared: “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

He described the surface as being like powdered charcoal and the landing craft left a crater about a foot deep.

The historic moments were captured on television cameras installed on the Eagle and turned on by Armstrong.

Armstrong spent his first few minutes on the Moon taking photographs and soil samples in case the mission had to be aborted suddenly.

He was joined by colleague Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin at 0315 GMT and the two collected data and performed various exercises - including jumping across the landscape - before planting the Stars and Stripes flag at 0341 GMT.

They also unveiled a plaque bearing President Nixon’s signature and an inscription reading: “Here men from the planet Earth first set foot upon the Moon July 1969 AD. We came in peace for all mankind.”

After filming their experience with a portable television camera the astronauts received a message from the US President.

President Nixon, in the White House, spoke of the pride of the American people and said: “This certainly has to be the most historic telephone call ever made.”

Many other nations - including the UK - sent messages of congratulation.

Moscow Radio announced the news solemnly in its 1030 GMT broadcast.

As Aldrin and Armstrong collected samples, Michael Collins told mission control in Houston he had successfully orbited the Moon in the mother ship Columbia, and take-off was on schedule for 1750 GMT this evening.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin spent a total of 21 hours on the Moon, two-and-a-half of them outside the landing module.

After re-joining the Columbia mothership the astronauts - including Collins - left the Moon’s orbit on 22 July and returned to Earth on 24 July.

The three men spent the next 21 days in quarantine at an American military base - a procedure dropped in subsequent missions since no alien organisms were found.

The Moon landing marked the pinnacle of the space race and American investment in the space programme declined accordingly.

A further 10 astronauts travelled to the Moon in another six missions with the final manned lunar landing, Apollo 17, completed in December 1972.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Get together with friends who like to participate in indoor sports. Don't be too quick to voice your opinion. Listen to others carefully. You will get upset over trivial matters.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Deception regarding your status in society is likely. You may be ill-treated if you have to deal with institutions. You should regain some of your self esteem if you get involved in organizational functions.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You need to concentrate on your business ventures more than on your relationship today. Children will be of major concern if you haven't kept the lines of communication open.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Consider making pleasure trips or participating in entertainment that will require energy. Trips should be your choice. Children will be of major concern if you haven't kept the lines of communication open.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You should put in some extra hours developing that creative idea you have. You will get bored quickly, so make sure that you have scheduled enough activity to hold your interest.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves. You will communicate easily and should be able to develop new friendships. Promotions will be yours if you have acted professionally in times of crisis.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Your partner may make you feel jealous and unloved. Your irritability may drive your loved ones crazy. Difficulties will result if you have to deal with controversial groups today.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Don't overspend on friends or children. Don't use emotional blackmail on someone you love. Time spent with family, children, or good friends will be regenerating and positive.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Put your time and energy into travel, philosophy, and soul-searching. A residential move may be in order. Discrimination will be in order. Control your temper when dealing with your emotional partner.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Don't give your heart too readily. Travel for pleasure will be enticing. You may have a hidden adversary who would love to prove you wrong.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You will back yourself into a corner if you are baited and your stubbornness will only make matters worse. You will drive your emotional partner crazy today. You will be uncertain of your feelings.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Partnerships with creative people could lead to financial gains. You will find your personal partner taxing today. Be careful that you aren't saddled with the responsibilities of others.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

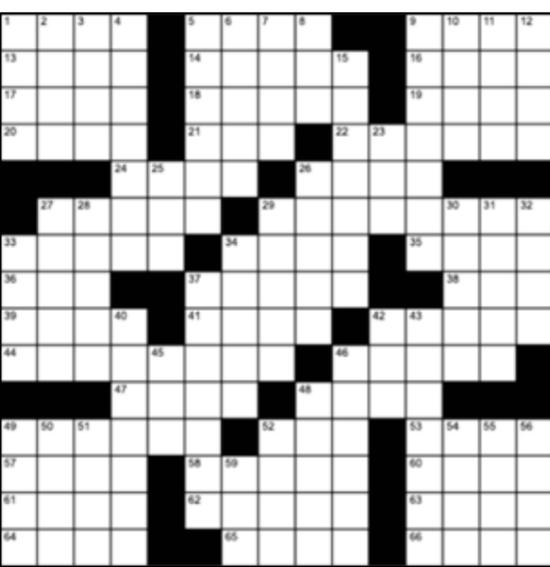
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	22	34	fine
Changchun	20	27	thunderstorms
Chengdu	22	30	cloudy
Chongqing	25	35	cloudy
Fuzhou	28	39	fine
Guangzhou	26	36	fine
Guiyang	19	28	cloudy
Haikou	27	32	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	28	35	thunderstorms
Harbin	20	30	cloudy
Hefei	24	29	rain
Nanjing	25	31	thunderstorms
Shanghai	28	33	rain
Taipei	26	32	cloudy
Wuhan	25	32	rain
Hong Kong	27	32	fine
WORLD			
Moscow	15	21	rain
Frankfurt	16	29	overcast
Paris	18	30	overcast
London	16	24	cloudy
New York	25	34	showers

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Wide-eyed; 5- Tennis great Arthur; 9- She played Carla on "Cheers"; 13- Repeated, an island of French Polynesia; 14- Lieu; 16- Clanton foe; 17- Woodstock singer Joan; 18- Saline; 19- Trigonometric function; 20- Succulent plant; 21- Spreading tree; 22- Arrested; 24- Assignment; 26- Contented sighs; 27- Can't stand; 29- Not ripe; 33- Ministers to; 34- ___ Brith; 35- Break, card game; 36- Helping hand; 37- Theme; 38- Bass, e.g.; 39- Hwys.; 41- Make ___ for it; 42- Blackbird; 44- Locate exactly; 46- Infected; 47- Car bar; 48- ___ Abby; 49- Playground retort; 52- Bit of wordplay; 53- PDQ; 57- Observe the Sabbath; 58- Sublease; 60- Skater Lipinski; 61- Start the pot; 62- Bulge; 63- Poker declaration; 64- Lewd look; 65- Like pie?; 66- Sign over;

DOWN 1- Benny, Björn, Anni-Frid, and Agnetha; 2- Score; 3- Hydrox rival; 4- Newspaper; 5- Evaluate; 6- Stem; 7- Steering wheel; 8- Use, consume; 9- Withstands; 10- Frozen rain; 11- Bald eagle's relative; 12- Mimicked; 15- Energetic; 23- There you are!; 25- DDE opponent; 26- At full speed; 27- Part of Hispaniola; 28- "As You Like It" forest; 29- Two cents, so to speak; 30- Render weaponless; 31- Inspire anew; 32- Piece of fencing?; 33- Bellyache; 34- Carried; 37- Suit makers; 40- Splash; 42- Give ___ break; 43- Unpredictable; 45- Tic-tac-toe loser; 46- Softly; 48- Affairs of honor; 49- Sea east of the Caspian; 50- Actress Russo; 51- Ferrara family; 52- This can be guilty or not guilty; 54- Matching; 55- Dry and waterless; 56- Sheet of stamps; 59- Farm female; Help



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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- ONE CENTRAL | 2 BEDS HKD16,500
- BUCKINGHAM | 2 BEDS HKD13,900
- HELLENE G. | 3 BEDS HKD12,500
- NAM LONG | 2 BEDS HKD11,500
- COLOANE V. | 1 BED HKD 9,300
- TAIPA STUDIO | 1 BED HKD 6,800
- COLOANE V. | 2 BEDS HKD10,500

FOR SALE

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- NOVA TAIPA | 4 BEDS HKD12,880,000
- BAI YUEN GRD. | 3 BEDS HKD12,800,000
- MANHATTAN | 3 BEDS HKD12,980,000
- HELLENE G. | 4 BEDS HKD 9,588,000
- NAM LONG | 1 BED HKD 3,780,000
- HELLENE G. | 2 BEDS HKD 9,900,000
- TAIPA STUDIO | 1 BED HKD 3,980,000
- NOVA PARK | 2 BEDS HKD10,800,000

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ENTERTAINMENT

NETFLIX Q2 SUBSCRIBER LOSS WIDENS, BUT NOT AS MUCH AS FEARED

MICHAEL LIEDTKE,
SAN FRANCISCO

NETFLIX shed almost 1 million subscribers during the spring amid tougher competition and soaring inflation that's squeezing household budgets, heightening the urgency behind the video streaming service's effort to launch a cheaper option with commercial interruptions.

The April-June contraction of 970,000 accounts, announced Tuesday as part of Netflix's second-quarter earnings report, is by far the largest quarterly subscriber loss in the company's 25-year history. It could have been far worse, though, considering Netflix management released an April forecast calling for a loss of 2 million subscribers during the second quarter.

Netflix was probably spared from deeper losses by the ongoing popularity of "Stranger Things," its science fiction/horror series that debuted in 2016. Following the release of the series' fourth season in late May, Netflix said, viewers watched a total of 1.3 billion hours of it over the next four weeks — more than any other English-language series in the service's history.

The less severe loss in subscribers, combined with an outlook calling for a return to growth in the July-September period, helped lift Netflix's battered stock by 7% in extended trading after the numbers came out.

Netflix co-CEO Reed Hastings didn't try to sugarcoat things during a Tuesday conference call about the results. "It's tough losing a million subscribers and calling it

AP PHOTO



a success," he said.

The company's April-June regression follows a loss of 200,000 subscribers during the first three months of the year, marking the first time Netflix's subscriber totals have shrunk in consecutive quarters since its transition from offering DVD-by-mail rentals to video streaming began 15 years ago.

The loss of nearly 1.2 million subscribers during first half of this year also provides a stark contrast to the pandemic-driven growth that Netflix enjoyed during the first half of 2020 when its streaming service picked up nearly 26

million subscribers.

Despite the downturn, Netflix still earned \$1.4 billion, or \$3.20 per share during the quarter, a 6% increase from the same time last year. Revenue rose 9% from the same time last year to nearly \$8 billion.

Netflix ended June with 220.7 million worldwide subscribers, far more than any of its new competitors such as Walt Disney Co. and Apple. And in a hopeful sign, Netflix management predicted its service will add about 1 million subscribers during the July-September period, signaling the worst of its slump may be over.

Although Netflix's springtime subscriber losses weren't as bad as investors and management feared, the downturn served as a grim reminder of the challenges now facing the Los Gatos, California, company after a decade of unbridled growth.

Netflix's stock price has plunged by nearly 70% so far this year, wiping out about \$180 billion in shareholder wealth. Since then, other video streaming services have made big strides in attracting viewers, with Apple winning accolades for its award-winning line-up of TV series and films while Disney's popular line-up of

family-friendly titles continues to gain traction.

At the same time, Netflix has been raising its prices to help pay for its own original programming, just as the highest inflation rates in 40 years have led consumers to curb spending on discretionary items such as entertainment.

"Netflix is still the leader in video streaming but unless it finds more franchises that resonate widely, it will eventually struggle to stay ahead of competitors that are after its crown," said Insider Intelligence analyst Ross Benes.

Sensing potential trouble brewing, Netflix began branching out last year by adding free video games to its streaming service.

But that obviously hasn't been enough to propel subscriber growth, prompting Netflix's April announcement that it will crack down on the rampant sharing of subscriber passwords and take another step it once scorned by offering a less expensive tier of its service that will include commercial interruptions. Without providing further specifics, Netflix said Tuesday that both the ad-supported plan and the crackdown on password sharing will begin early next year. The company didn't say how much the streaming option with commercials will cost.

Netflix took another step toward putting together the ad-supported option last week when it announced it will team up with Microsoft to deliver the commercials.

"We have some headwinds right now and we are navigating through them," Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos said at the end of Tuesday's conference call. "We've seen entertainment formats come and go, we've seen entertainment business models come and go, and we have managed to grow through all of them, though all kinds of economic conditions and through all levels of competition." MDT/AP

INFLATION in the United Kingdom has accelerated to a new 40-year high, driven by rising food and fuel prices that are contributing to a cost-of-living crisis.

Consumer prices rose 9.4% this year through June, up from 9.1% the previous month, the Office for National Statistics said yesterday. The new figure is the highest since 1982, when inflation peaked at 11%.

Russia's war in Ukraine has boosted food and energy prices around the world, with shipments of oil, natural gas, grain and cooking oil disrupted. That has added to rising prices that began last year as the

UK ECONOMY

Inflation surges to new 40-year high of 9.4%

global economy started to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey said Tuesday that the bank is likely to consider raising interest rates by half a percentage point at its next meeting to help control inflation. The bank has raised rates five times since December, with the last increase a quarter-point in June that sent its key rate to 1.25%.

"We have been clear that we see the balance

of risks to inflation as on the upside," Bailey said in a speech. "Here, I would pick out the risks from domestic price and wage setting, and this explains why at the ... last meeting we adopted language which made clear that if we see signs of greater persistence of inflation, and price and wage setting would be such signs, we will have to act forcefully."

The biggest contributor to inflation is the soaring cost of gasoline and diesel fuel, with motor fuel pri-

ces jumping 42.3% in the past year. Gasoline cost 184 pence a liter (\$8.37 a gallon) in June, the statistics office said.

Food prices rose 9.8% over the year, driven by the rising cost of eggs, dairy products, vegetables and meat.

Consumer prices are soaring worldwide, with U.S. inflation jumping to a new four-decade high in June, at 9.1%, while the 19 countries that use the euro saw it reach 8.6% last month. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

All-Stars showcase modern MLB: HRs, strikeouts, shifts

RONALD BLUM, LOS ANGELES

THE All-Star Game showcased what baseball has become — home runs, strikeouts and offense-killing shifts.

The National League didn't have a hit between the first and eighth innings of Tuesday night's 3-2 loss, its ninth in a row.

In a sport where R&D has become as important as BP, four of the five runs scored on long balls.

There were 22 strikeouts, including the final three batters on 10 pitches by Cleveland's Emmanuel Clase in a game that lasted 3 hours, 11 minutes despite just 13 hits, five walks, two hit batters and one runner reaching on an error.

Twenty All-Stars threw 299 pitches, 105 of them fastballs. The slowest fastball was 90.2 mph on the second pitch of the game from 34-year-old left-hander Clayton Kershaw.

Forty-eight were 98 mph or higher, and Ryan Helsley of the St. Louis Cardinals was velocity king.

AP PHOTO



National League's Paul Goldschmidt, of the St. Louis Cardinals

The 28-year-old topped 100 mph on eight of 15 tosses, the fastest a 103 mph blazer that Minnesota's Luis Arraez fouled off in the eighth.

"I went out there, showed what I had," Helsley said. "It was a cool environment being in this game."

Seattle's Ty France, greeted by Dodger Stadium organist Die-

ter Ruehle with "La Vie en Rose" when he pinch hit for his All-Star debut, fouled off a Helsley fastball, then struck out when he chased a low outside slider.

"The way game is now, everybody's throwing that hard. It's not fun to face, but it's just how the game is," France said. "To be

able to step in the box on this stage, it was pretty cool."

Clase, a 24-year-old Cleveland right-hander, threw 10 pitches ranging from 97.7 mph to 100.3 mph.

"Every time that bullpen door swings open, it's velocity," NL manager Brian Snitker said. "The

guys, they weren't like that. The closers weren't throwing like they are now. But it's kind of the way they are growing up and now they are trained — and amazing to me, the number of them, too. It's like they just keep coming."

Defensive positioning designed by Joe Espada, Dusty Baker's bench coach in Houston, led to outs on balls that used to be hits.

Juan Soto's third-inning grounder was gloved by second baseman Andrés Giménez 20 feet into right field. Kyle Schwarber's bouncer in the seventh was picked up in the center of the diamond by shortstop Corey Seager, who started to the right of second, and Jake Cronenworth's hopper went directly to second baseman Santiago Espinal 10 feet into right field.

"The shift giveth and the shift taketh away," Baker said. "But still, I think it giveth more than it takes away."

The batter's eye in center field offered a vivid display of what has overtaken baseball — an array of high-speed cameras and radar equipment that track every ball's spin, every player's sprint and stumble.

Behind the scenes, many teams consider their quants All-Stars, too. Houston's front office includes a quantitative developer, plus two senior architects. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

PELOSI'S PROPOSED VISIT TO TAIWAN WILL BANKRUPT US CREDIT WITH ITS HYPOCRISY

By airing the possibility of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visiting Taiwan next month, Washington is testing Beijing's reaction.

It was originally planned that she would visit the island in April, but her infection with the novel coronavirus put paid to that.

Unlike the stealthy visits of some US lawmakers and former government officials to the island, which were announced after their arrival, the proposed visit by Pelosi has been broadcast well in advance both times. Since the United States is well aware that the Taiwan question is the most sensitive of China's core interests, it knows the visit will be strongly opposed by Beijing as it will seriously break the US' pledge to respect the one-China principle, inflict serious damage on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and seriously shake the political foundation of Sino-US relations, as a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

If her visit does take place in August, Pelosi will be the second House speaker to visit Taiwan in 25 years. But China is no longer what it was when then House speaker Newt Gingrich visited the island in 1997.

Wrapping up his visit to Taiwan that year, when the Bill Clinton administration carefully tiptoed the line on the most sensitive part of bilateral relations, Gingrich proudly told the media, referring to his meeting with Chinese leaders afterwards: "I said firmly, 'We want you to understand, we will defend Taiwan. Period,'" which incurred a "calm" response from Beijing urging the US to treat the Taiwan question with care. But this time, the US should brace for Beijing's "resolute and forceful measures" as a Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Wednesday.

The US should know that by repeatedly playing the Taiwan card, its credit on the Chinese side is being bankrupted by its own hypocrisy.

Barely two weeks before Pelosi's planned visit to Taiwan was made public, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken assured State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi in their meeting in Bali, Indonesia, on the sidelines of the G20 foreign ministers' meeting that the US does not support "Taiwan independence", and it is committed to managing the risk factors in bilateral relations. White House Security Advisor Jake Sullivan also conveyed similar messages to Chinese top diplomat Yang Jiechi in their meeting in Luxembourg last month.

Saying one thing and doing another has become a habit of the Joe Biden administration, which is shaking the foundation for the "guardrails" it says it wants to build for relations. Releasing the information on Pelosi's planned trip to Taiwan, even if it falls through again for whatever reason, is enough to let the region and beyond see that the only commitment of the US is to safeguard its hegemony.

The secessionists on the island should also know that receiving more visits from US politicians only indicates that they are recklessly binding the island tighter to the US' dangerous agenda.

PAKISTAN POLICE ARREST TWO MEN ACCUSED OF GANG RAPING US WOMAN

THE BUZZ

Pakistan's police have arrested at least two people after a 21-year-old American woman reported she was gang raped at a hotel when she was visiting a tourist resort in the eastern Punjab province, officials said yesterday.

The detainees included the woman's host, who took her to a hotel in Dera Ghazi Khan, a district in the Punjab province where she says she was sexually assaulted this week, according to an initial police investigation.

The woman arrived in Pakistan three weeks ago, according to police. Police say they are still investigating to determine how the woman

was lured and taken to a hotel by the two men accused of raping her. The woman earlier stayed at the home of one of the alleged attackers for five days.

The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad told The Associated Press that its consulate in Pakistan's city of Lahore was ready to provide consular services to the victim.

"The protection of U.S. citizens overseas is the highest priority of the U.S. Department of State and our embassies and consulates abroad," it said. It said "out of respect for the privacy of the alleged victim, we cannot comment on the specifics of the allegation."

AP PHOTO



UK CONSERVATIVES PICKING FINAL TWO IN RACE TO REPLACE JOHNSON

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

BITAIN'S Conservative Party was choosing two finalists yesterday in the contest to replace Boris Johnson, as the divisive, unrepentant leader ended his final appearance in Parliament as prime minister with the words "Hasta la vista, baby."

Johnson, who quit July 7 after months of ethics scandals but remains caretaker leader until the party elects his successor, faced derisive opposition politicians and weary Conservatives at his last Prime Minister's Questions session in the House of Commons.

It was a downbeat departure, with supportive Conservative backbenchers lobbying praise and opposition politicians offering variations on "good riddance."

Johnson extolled what he called his accomplishments — leading Britain out of the European Union and through COVID-19, and supporting Ukraine against Russia's invasion — and declared: "Mission largely accomplished, for now," before departing with Arnold Schwarzenegger's "hasta la vista" catchphrase from "Terminator 2."

Labour Party leader Keir Starmer said: "I will miss

the delusion."

Parliament adjourns for the summer today, and Conservatives will spend the next six weeks electing a new leader, who will also become prime minister.

Conservative lawmakers will hold a final elimination vote to cut the field of three remaining candidates down to two.

Former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt are battling for the run-off spots. The two finalists will go to a vote by all 180,000 members of the Conservative Party, with a winner scheduled to be announced Sept. 5.

Sunak has led every round of voting so far and is highly likely to make the final two. Truss, who is favored by the party's right wing, and Mordaunt, who has scored highly in polls of party members, are wooing lawmakers in an attempt to clinch the other spot.

Even though Truss has come third in every vote so far, bookmakers say she is favorite to win the contest because she is gaining momentum.

The bitter campaign has exposed deep divisions in the Conservative Party at the end of Johnson's scandal-tarnished three-year

reign. Opponents have branded Sunak a "socialist" for raising taxes in response to the economic damage wrought by the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Sunak has hit back that his rivals are peddling economic "fairy tales."

Despite remaining prime minister, Boris has largely disappeared from the scene, even as Britain faces a summer cost-of-living crisis and labor discontent as inflation hits 9.4%.

Johnson did not attend any government emergency meetings about the heat wave that brought temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) to Britain this week. Last week he took a ride in a Royal Air Force Typhoon fighter jet, with "Top Gun"-style footage released by his office, then threw a weekend party at Chequers, the country house that comes with the prime minister's job.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who represents the opposition Labour Party, accused Johnson of wanting to "become Tom Cruise" and urged him to resign immediately.

"We need a full-time prime minister looking after our country rather than somebody who's checked out," Khan said. **MDT/AP**

Egypt and Serbia yesterday agreed to boost political, economic and other cooperation as the two countries look for ways to deal with the global impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi was in Serbia on a three-day visit this week — the first in more than three decades by an Egyptian president. His host, Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic, said the visit had a "historic character."

AP PHOTO



Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi's offer to resign has sent unsettling ripples through financial markets, bringing back bad memories of Europe's debt crisis a decade ago and complicating the European Central Bank's job as it raises interest rates for the first time in 11 years to combat record inflation. Draghi, a former ECB president, has pushed policies meant to keep Italy's high levels of debt manageable and boost growth in Europe's third-largest economy.

AP PHOTO



Greece Nearly 500 firefighters struggled to contain a large wildfire that threatened hillside suburbs outside Athens for a second day yesterday, after hundreds of residents were evacuated overnight. Fires continued to burn across southern Europe, but authorities in France, Spain and Portugal all reported improved conditions with a respite from severe heat wave conditions.

Brazil Environmental criminals in the Brazilian Amazon destroyed public forests equal the size of El Salvador over the past six years, yet the Federal Police — the Brazilian version of the FBI — carried out only seven operations aimed at this massive loss, according to a new study. The destruction took place in state and federal forests that are "unallocated," meaning they do not have a designated use the way national parks and Indigenous territories do. According to official data, the Brazilian Amazon has about 580,000 square kilometers of forests in this category, or an area almost the size of Ukraine.