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SCHOOL YEAR: TEACHERS AND STUDENTS REQUIRED TO PRESENT A NAT TEST RESULT TAKEN WITHIN 72 HOURS PRIOR TO FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL P4

COVID-19: AUTHORITIES ADMIT SOURCE OF POSITIVE CASE AT TREASURE HOTEL UNKNOWN P3

US TO HOLD TRADE TALKS WITH TAIWAN, ISLAND DRILLS MILITARY P6-7



Sri Lanka's central bank chief Nandalal Weerasinghe (pictured) said he is hopeful the crisis-ridden island nation can reach a preliminary agreement that could lead to a bailout package with the International Monetary Fund when officials from the financial institution visit Sri Lanka later this month. The country is facing its worst economic crisis while government leaders in Colombo have said Sri Lanka is effectively bankrupt.



Bangladesh's leader told a visiting U.N. official that hundreds of thousands of ethnic minority Rohingya refugees living in overcrowded camps in Bangladesh must return home to Myanmar, where they had fled waves of violent persecution. PM Sheikh Hasina made the comment to U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet (pictured) in Dhaka. Bachelet arrived on Sunday and visited Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar district near the border with Myanmar.



Israel raided the offices of several Palestinian advocacy groups it had previously designated as terrorist organizations, sealing entrance doors and leaving notices declaring them closed, the groups said. With the raids, Israel broadened its campaign against the civil society groups, which it has outlawed over claims that they have ties to militant groups, a charge they deny. Israel has provided little evidence to back up the accusations.

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FALLING TILES

LAWMAKERS DISCONTENTED WITH QUALITY OF PUBLIC HOUSING

RENATO MARQUES

SEVERAL lawmakers within the Legislative Assembly (AL) remain discontented with the construction quality of public housing and have submitted written inquiries to the government on the topic.

Continual flaws detected in the construction of the Lake Building in Taipa and the Ip Heng Building in Seac Pai Van have been the subject of ongoing discussion. Among these flaws are recurrent issues with falling tiles and more recently, falling exterior cladding in other buildings in Seac Pai Van.

Despite significant discussion at the AL, the issues with construction quality were revisited following the delivery of a comprehensive report issued by the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) at the end of May, accusing the public services of a lack of coordination and neglect regarding the matter.

An AL double-session on the matter commenced yesterday and will continue today, and is solely dedicated to hearing

responses from the various government departments to the written inquiries raised by lawmakers through the AL. During the session, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, heard many critiques from lawmakers who continued to highlight historical problems and also called on the Secretary to provide assurance that the same issues will not be repeated in the new public housing buildings that are undergoing construction in Zone A of the new landfills.

In response to inquiries from lawmakers Ella Lei and Leong Hong Sai, Rosário said that the government has been attempting to handle the cases in "the best possible way" and trying to find solutions.

He added that for new buildings undergoing construction at Zone A, a different solution has been found for the corridors and common area with the reduction of the use of wall tiles and ensuring the quality of those used for those purposes. The alternative to low quality ti-

les includes the replacement of tiles for areas of painted walls, namely from the middle to the upper sections of the walls.

The Secretary's explanation was complemented by the director of the Public Works Bureau (DSOP), Lam Wai Hou, who added that the new solution for Zone A public housing would be similar to that which has been used and presented at the Mong Ha public housing model apartment on public display.

To the many critiques, Rosário refuted the accusation that all the public works are going wrong and said that it is normal that, with so many construction projects taking place, some inspections will fail to detect some of the flaws due to a lack of personnel.

He also urged certain lawmakers to stop discussing problems that are already being addressed and to instead focus on the works being currently done, stating that was unfair to blame the staff under his secretariat for past mistakes.

On the same topic, lawmaker Leong Sun Iok recalled that ac-

cording to the statistics noted by the CCAC, 90% of the public works have encountered problems, and called on the government to enforce a new system that includes sanctions and penalties for the inspection entities.

"We can see that the existing mechanisms are not enough because [inspection] companies do not seem to care about the flaws and there is no way to hold them accountable," Leong Sun Iok said. He also called for the creation of a "blacklist" to list the entities that fail with their responsibilities.

Lawmaker Angela Leong reminded the Secretary that "The lack of quality of the public housing as well as other public works directly affects the trust of the public in the government," calling on Rosário to pay more attention to these matters.

Lam also said that the DSOP was already aware and was commencing works to repair the problems with the exterior cladding on some buildings at Seac Pai Van, where parts of it fell during a recent typhoon. He

stated that most of the works related to these repairs have already been concluded in several buildings.

BIGGER HOUSES TO SUPPORT FAMILIES' DEVELOPMENT

In a different but related inquiry, lawmaker Leong Sun Iok called on the government to consider building larger housing units of 2-bedroom apartments instead of 1-bedroom. In the lawmaker's opinion, there is an excessive quantity of small housing units on offer from the government for public housing that does not suit the majority of the candidates, who then need to accept them so they do not lose the opportunity to access a public house.

For the same lawmaker, this typology of housing is only suitable for older people living alone or couples, but does not suit the large majority of the applicants who are aged between 22 and 44 years old.

He said that attributing a 1-bedroom apartment to these candidates is "to restrict their family development" as they will not have space for a family and children.

In response, the Secretary said that housing type is not easy to solve, as the needs of the market are difficult to predict and unstable.

Noting the significant reduction in the number of applicants in the latest public housing tender from around 30,000 to less than 10,000, Rosário noted that many decisions made in the past forecasted a different scenario from the present circumstances.

It is also known that the delay in building public housing in the past has resulted in the need to build many units in a short timeframe and in a small area, which also contributed to the offer of smaller units with a reduced floor area to fit a higher number of units within the same building.

In response to the lawmaker's inquiry, a representative of the Housing Bureau (IH), explained that the government currently has around 5,000 housing units of 2 and 3-bedrooms to tender, adding that the IH has received around 6,300 applications from families in the last tender.

The same official noted that since not all these applications will conclude with the grant of a house, the government believes that there are enough of these larger units to cope with the demand.

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COVID-19

Authorities admit source of positive case at Treasure Hotel unknown

STAFF REPORTER

THE health authorities said they are investigating the source of a positive case at Treasure Hotel and suspect that the employee was infected due to the “working environment,” Wong Weng Man, acting chief of the Health Promotion Division of the Health Bureau, said yesterday in a press conference.

Since the positive case was found at a medical observation hotel on August 15, the authorities said they have immediately enacted pandemic prevention measures, which include strengthening the pandemic prevention measures in the hotel, isolating the contacts and notifying the Macao Government Tourism Office. The authority now also requires that the one NAT across two days rule be changed to one NAT a day.

So far, no more positive cases were found at the hotel.

Wong said that they are still investigating the source of the infected employee.

“The number of people entering and returning to Macau has

FLORA TANG



increased in the current month, so the positive cases have also increased. Moreover, those who isolate at Treasure Hotel are mainly people who are returning from Taiwan and foreign areas, so the rate of virus transmission is also

high,” said Wong.

“We speculated that the infected employee at Treasure Hotel may have been infected by his working environment,” Wong added.

For the other three positive ca-

ses at Inner Harbour, Wong said that all three individuals are safe and undergoing treatment at the hospital. They also conducted several NATs to test the residences and workplaces of the three individuals, and all results were

negative.

Thus, the authority said that the risk of community transmission caused by the three individuals can be ruled out.

KEY GROUPS NOT REQUIRED TO PAY FOR NAT

The health authority issued a guideline for key working groups and notified the relevant departments that NAT testing of these employees is not a necessary condition before they go to work.

The guideline classifies different types of key working groups, while the specific definition of the relevant key working groups is formulated by the companies.

In relation to the costs of testing, it was explained that some groups will be paid by the government, and others will be paid by companies. However, the authority said that employees will not need to pay for the cost of NATs.

According to the risk ranking, the test costs of key working groups identified as being at higher risk will be paid for by the government, while those groups at lower risk will be paid for by companies.

PLENARY

‘SANDWICH CLASS’ HOUSING LAW READY IN OCTOBER

RENATO MARQUES

ONE of the few novelties presented during yesterday’s Legislative Assembly (AL) session was the news that the law that will regulate the access and conditions for the intermediate class of public housing, also called the “sandwich class”, should be presented to the AL in October this year with the start of the new legislative year.

“Maybe in October [this year] we will present the ‘sandwich class’ public housing law to the AL. It is now in the final stage of production and I think it may be presented to [lawmakers] at the start of the new legislative year,” the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, said while refusing to advance further dates of when the tender application could start.



“I can’t say when the tender will take place. We need to have the law first and then prepare the application and tender. I can’t tell you at this moment when this will be possible,” the Secretary stated.

On a related topic, Rosário noted that as the Chief Executive had announced at the AL earlier this month, the Wai Long Avenue project would undergo

adjustments to be suitable for this new public housing type, with the growth in the floor area of the housing units and the consequent reduction in the total number of units to be built.

Rosário explained that the Wai Long Avenue project is now undergoing revision to include these changes with the updates soon to be presented to the public.

COVID-19

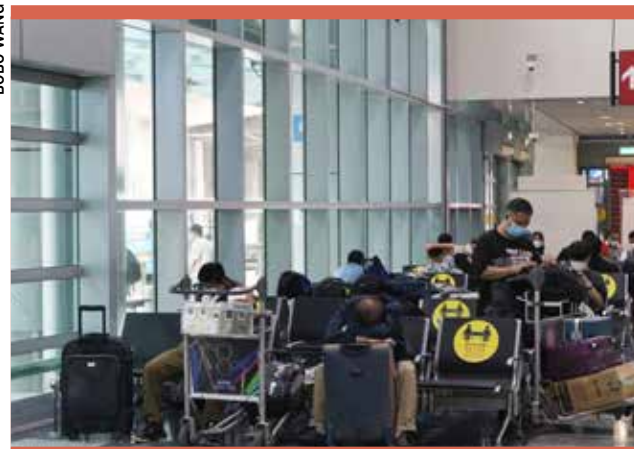
SCHEME TO SHORTEN WAITING PERIOD AT AIRPORT UNDERWAY

THE health authorities are still working on a new scheme that was recently announced regarding the reduced waiting time of arrivals to Macau, following several reports from residents about long waiting hours at the airport to receive nucleic acid test (NAT) reports.

Travelers entering Macau by plane are required to wait at the airplane for up to two hours while officials sanitize their luggage. They are only permitted to exit the plane once their baggage has been disinfected, after which they must wait for a NAT test upon arrival at Pac On.

“Under the newly implemented arrangements, the authority still needs time to coordinate with the relevant organizations. We are also discussing with organizations ways to improve these arrangements and shorten the

BOBO WANG



waiting time,” Wong Weng Man, acting chief of the Health Promotion Division of the Health Bureau, said yesterday in a press conference.

In a TDM Forum on Wednesday, Lam Chong, director of the Center for Disease Prevention and Control, said passengers arriving in Macau by plane from abroad will be required to take a NAT as soon as they land, while still on the runway.

In addition, authorities will allow passengers to be taken to medical observation hotels as their NAT results come out. Until now, passengers were only taken to quarantine hotels after the results of each passenger were known. The waiting period can be up to eight hours.

Meanwhile, travelers do not need to show proof of Covid-19 vaccination upon arrival to Macau starting from yesterday. LV

UM WELCOMES 3,900 NEW STUDENTS IN RECORD HIGH APPLICATIONS

The University of Macau (UM) welcomed over 3,900 new students yesterday in an online ceremony for the 2022/2023 academic year. This year has seen a record number of applications for undergraduate programs at UM, up by around 20% from the previous year. They include applications from 35 overseas countries, an increase of around 34% compared to the previous year. Over 1,900 new students have enrolled in undergraduate programs for the 2022/2023 academic year, and the number of applications for postgraduate programs has increased by 30% to over 2,000 students.

OXFAM TOWERRUN TO BE HELD OCT. 16

The Oxfam TowerRun fundraising event will be held at the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Center on October 16, a day before the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Participants are slated to climb 1,298 stairs at Macau Tower, which will take most participants approximately 20 minutes. According to a statement, the estimated completion time is "equivalent to the time and energy consumed by the herders in Qinghai to walk in search of limited safe water access under climate change." The deadline for registration is September 9.

SPORTS BUREAU TO RESUME FULL OPERATIONS

Following the earlier reopening of most sports facilities, the Sports Bureau will resume operations of additional sports facilities today, including Pavilion A and the Table Tennis Zone (Lobby Area) of the Tap Seac Multi-sports Pavilion, the Athletics Track, the indoor Pavilion, the table tennis room of the Olympic Sports Centre – Stadium, Zone B of the Macao East Asian Games Dome and Cheoc Van Swimming Pool. The online booking service and the online service for on-the-spot swimming tickets will also resume to allow the public to continue to participate in sports activities and exercises.

SCHOOL RESUMPTION

STUDENTS AND TEACHING STAFF REQUIRED TO PRESENT NAT CERTIFICATE ON FIRST DAY

Tertiary and non-tertiary education teaching staff and students are required to present a negative nucleic acid test (NAT) result taken within 72 hours prior to the first day of school.

If a school starts on September 1, students and teaching staff can take a free NAT in one of the three days prior, the Education and Youth Development Bureau stated. The test results cannot be used for border-crossing purposes.

In order to facilitate the relevant NAT arrangements, the DSEDJ is collecting the list of students and teaching staff from local schools, and the relevant department will set up a designated NAT booking link for them. The DSEDJ will also contact schools to arrange testing dates for teachers and students.

Last week, principals request

ed guidelines regarding cross-border students as it would be challenging for parents who take their children to school across borders.

In an attempt to limit overcrowding at the borders, particularly the Qingmao Port, local authorities have imposed a limit of one round trip per day to people crossing at the Qingmao and Border Gate checkpoints.

In a statement, the DSEDJ said it is collating the list of cross-border students for the new academic year, and this work will be completed in late August.

From August 29, cross-border students living in Zhuhai and Zhongshan can bring their valid student ID cards to six designated hospitals in Zhuhai to take free NATs. **LV**



July visitors drop 99% amid outbreak

Visitor arrivals in July drastically dropped by 98.8% year-on-year to 9,759 due to the city's partial lockdown in response to its largest outbreak since mid-June.

The figure also represented a plunge of 97.4% month-on-month as the outbreak, the origins of which are unknown, brought the entire tourism sector to a halt.

As people entering Zhuhai from Macau were subject to centralized medical observation in July, some visitors extended their stays in the city, causing the average length of stay of overnight visitors to surge by 22.0 days to 25.4 days.



The numbers of same-day visitors (7,189) and overnight visitors (2,570) both recorded year-on-year decreases of over 90%.

As regards the source

of visitors, the number of visitors from mainland China plunged by 99.0% year-on-year to 7,321, with only 124 visitors traveling under the Individual Visit Scheme.

Visitors from the nine cities in the Pearl River Delta in the Greater Bay Area totaled 4,169, 89.5% of whom came from Zhuhai. There were 497 visitors from Hong Kong and 1,877 from Taiwan.

In the first seven months of 2022, the number of visitor arrivals dropped by 26.3% year-on-year to 3,474,866, while same-day visitors (2,188,015) and overnight visitors (1,286,851) fell by 2.6% and 47.9% respectively. **LV**

As regards the source of visitors, the number of visitors from mainland China plunged by 99.0% year-on-year to 7,321, with only 124 visitors traveling under the Individual Visit Scheme.

VISITOR EXPENDITURES CUT BY NEARLY 50% IN Q2

The total spending of visitors (excluding gaming expenses) dropped by 46.3% year-on-year to MOP3.85 billion in the second quarter of 2022.

Total spending of overnight visitors (MOP2.83 billion) declined by 55.7% year-on-year while that of same-day visitors (MOP1.01 billion) rose by 30.5%, data from the Statistics and Census Service shows.

In the first half of 2022, the total spending of visitors amounted to MOP10.44 billion, down



by 21.8% year-on-year. Visitors spent an average of MOP2,421 in the

second quarter, down by 26.0% year-on-year. The city has recorded a

drop in tourist arrivals and gaming revenues during the second quarter due to the outbreak of Covid-19 cases in the neighboring region and in the mainland.

The drop was also driven by the outbreak in the city in June where strict restrictions were imposed by the neighboring regions for arrivals from Macau.

Meanwhile, visitors from mainland China spent MOP2,474 on average, down by 27.8% year-on-year; per-capita

spending of those travelling under the Individual Visit Scheme (MOP4,915) decreased by 26.3%.

As regards the type of expense, visitors spent primarily on shopping (65.3%) in the second quarter, followed by food & beverage (17.9%) and accommodation (10.6%).

Analyzed by main purpose of visit, per-capita spending of visitors coming to Macau for a vacation (MOP4,604), shopping (MOP1,840) and visiting relatives or friends (MOP1,420) fell by 27.8%, 45.0% and 26.6% year-on-year respectively. **LV**

GAMING

GEG confident in new concession, reports 40% revenue drop in Q2

LYNZY VALLES

GALAXY Entertainment Group (GEG) recorded a net revenue of HKD2.4 billion in the second quarter, down 56% year-on-year and down 41% quarter-on-quarter.

According to its second quarter financial report, the gaming operator posted a net revenue of HKD6.5 billion, down 39% year-on-year in the first half of the year.

The plunge in revenue is attributed to the city's reduced tourism activity during the second quarter of the year, where a number of cities across China experienced travel restrictions.

For GEG, these restrictions on inter-provincial travel impacted visitation to



Macau, and in turn adversely impacted both revenue and profitability.

Meanwhile, Group Adjusted EBITDA was -HKD0.4 billion, versus HKD1.1 billion in Q2 2021 and HKD0.6 billion in Q1 2022.

"Our balance sheet remains liquid and healthy. As of 30 June 2022, cash and liquid investments were

HKD29 billion and net cash was HKD20.3 billion," said Lui Che Woo in the financial report.

"Given the ongoing impact of Covid, today the Board of Directors has decided not to declare a dividend. We paid the previously announced special dividend of HKD0.30 per share on 29 April 2022," he added.

Meanwhile, the GEG

chairman is confident in its proposal bids regarding the tendering process for gaming concessions that was officially announced July 22 and due by September 14.

"We are well positioned to compete for one of the Macau's gaming concessions, given our track record of introducing innovative non-gaming elements into our resorts, our strong operational history, significant investment into Macau's economy and our substantial CSR efforts, including supporting SMEs," said Lui.

Figures from the Gaming Inspection, and Coordination Bureau show the city's gross gaming revenue for the second quarter has plunged to HKD8.2 billion, down 67% year-on-year and down 52% quarter-on-quarter.

JANET MCNAB

MULTI-PROPERTY VP RECEIVES ACCOLADE FROM MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL GREATER CHINA

JANET McNab, multi-property vice president of The St. Regis Macao and Sheraton Grand Macao, was recently awarded the Mustang Award from Marriott International. The annual award recognizes general managers or hotels that have overcome substantial obstacles in the market, as well as the outstanding efforts of leaders epitomizing success.

McNab oversees all hotel operations of the 4,001-room Sheraton Grand Macao – as well as the 400-room St. Regis Macao.

The hotelier received the Mustang Award for her work on mitigating and preventing the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace by implementing Marriott International's 'Commitment to Clean' protocols, "which included stringent hygiene and cleaning procedures," according to a



statement.

McNab has also received several hotel industry recognitions over the past several years, including General Manager of the Year, Hotelier Awards Greater China 2017, recognizing hoteliers who perform best in their field. She was also recognized by Marriott International 'Women in Leadership' Asia Pacific 2016 Award. LV

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HONG KONG

Political activists plead guilty amid crackdown

AUTHORITIES in Hong Kong say 29 out of 47 pro-democracy activists charged with "conspiracy to commit subversion" under a tough National Security Law entered guilty pleas yesterday, as the Beijing government seeks to further silence opposition voices in the regional financial hub.

Yesterday's court proceedings came amid a sweeping campaign against those speaking out against demands for absolute loyalty to China's ruling Communist Party.

The 47 democracy activists, aged 23 to 64, were charged with conspiracy to commit subversion under the Beijing-imposed National Security Law and detained last year over their involvement in an unofficial primary election in 2020 that authorities said was a plot to paralyze Hong Kong's government. The primary showed strong support for candidates willing to challenge the Beijing-backed local government.

Among those making guilty pleas were well-known political activists including Joshua Wong and Benny Tai, Hong Kong media said.

Media reporting restrictions were lifted for the cases, which will start next month at Hong Kong's high court.

Hong Kong was handed over from British to Chinese rule in 1997 with a pledge that it would

retain its own legal, economic and social systems for 50 years.

Despite the denounced "steady deterioration" of those special rights promised to the territory under a "one country, two systems" framework, it retains the system of British common law, independent from Communist Party dictates that determine legal outcomes on the mainland.

During yesterday's hearing, Wong, who remains in detention, said the primary election allowed Hong Kongers to express their political will.

"Our vote is our voice, being heard in the global community," Wong said.

About 2,000 Hong Kong residents have been detained and the main opposition Apple Daily newspaper shut down since 2019 pro-democracy protests. More have been arrested over ensuing actions, including 90-year-old Catholic Cardinal Joseph Zen, while political speech and public gatherings have been frozen by uncertainty about where the authorities' red lines are set.

China responded to the protests by imposing the sweeping National Security Law, rounding up opposition figures in the media and civil society, and reorganizing the local legislative council to ensure only pro-Beijing figures can hold office.

MDT/AP

STRAIT CRISIS

US TO HOLD TRADE TALKS TAIWAN, ISLAND DRILLS MI

JOHNSON LAI & JOE MCDONALD, HUALIEN

THE U.S. government will hold trade talks with Taiwan in a sign of support for the island democracy that China claims as its own territory, prompting Beijing to warn yesterday it will take action if necessary to "safeguard its sovereignty."

The announcement of trade talks comes after Beijing fired missiles into the sea to intimidate Taiwan after U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi this month became the highest-ranking American official to visit the island in 25 years.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's government criticized the planned talks as a violation of its stance that Taiwan has no right to foreign relations. It warned Washington not to encourage the island to try to make its de facto independence permanent, a step Beijing says would lead to war.

"China firmly opposes this," Ministry of Commerce spokesperson Shu Jueting said. She called on Washington to "fully respect China's core interests."

Also yesterday, Taiwan's military held a drill with missiles and cannons simulating a response to a Chinese missile attack.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war and have no official relations but are bound by billions of dollars of trade and investment. The island never has been part of the People's Republic of China, but the ruling Communist Party says it is obliged to unite with the mainland, by force if necessary.

President Joe Biden's coordinator for the Indo-Pacific region, Kurt Campbell, said last week that trade talks would "deepen our ties with Taiwan" but stressed policy wasn't changing. The United States has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan, its ninth-largest trading partner, but maintains extensive informal ties.

The U.S. Trade Representative's announcement of the talks made no mention of tension with Beijing but said "formal negotiations" would develop trade and regulatory ties, a step that would entail closer official interaction.

Being allowed to export more to the United States might help Taiwan blunt China's efforts to use its status as the island's biggest trading partner as political leverage. The mainland blocked imports of Taiwanese citrus and other food in retaliation for Pelosi's Aug. 2 visit.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry expressed "high welcome" for the trade talks, which it said will lead to a "new page" in relations with the United States.



Taiwanese soldiers operate a Oerlikon 35mm twin cannon anti-

"As the situation across the Taiwan Strait has recently escalated, the U.S. government will continue to take concrete actions to maintain security and stability across the Taiwan Strait," it said in a statement.

U.S.-Chinese relations are at their lowest level in decades amid disputes over trade, security, technology, and Beijing's treatment of Muslim minorities and Hong Kong.

The U.S. Trade Representative said negotiations would be conducted under the auspices of Washington's unofficial embassy, the Ameri-

can Institute in Taiwan.

"China always opposes any form of official exchanges between any country and the Taiwan region of China," said Shu, the Chinese spokesperson. "China will take all necessary measures to resolutely safeguard its sovereignty."

Washington says it takes no position on the status of China and Taiwan but wants their dispute settled peacefully. The U.S. government is obligated by federal law to see that the island has the means to defend itself.

CHINA, JAPAN OFFICIALS MEET AMID TAIWAN TENSIONS

CHINESE and Japanese officials have met in northern China amid renewed tensions over Beijing's military threats against Taiwan and after Tokyo protested China's firing of missiles into Japan's exclusive economic zone during recent military drills.

The meeting this week between senior foreign affairs advisor Yang Jiechi and the head of Japan's National Security Secretariat, Akiba Takeo, followed China's cancellation of a meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries after Japan signed on to a statement from the Group of Seven industrialized countries criticizing China's threatening war games surrounding Taiwan earlier this month.

Japan issued diplomatic protests over China's firing of missiles into its exclusive economic zone during the drills, which saw Chinese warplanes and navy

ships cross the middle zone of the Taiwan Strait that has long been a buffer between the sides.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory, to be annexed by force if necessary. The former Japanese colony has been under Chinese military threat since Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government fled to the island in 1949 as Mao Zedong's Communist Party seized control of the Chinese mainland.

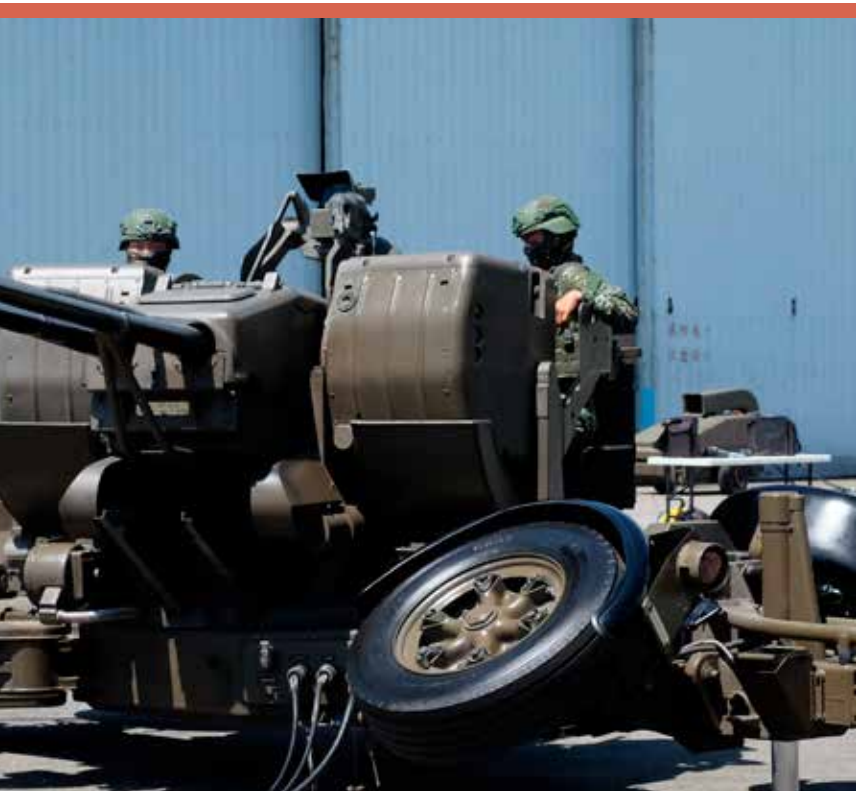
In his comments to Takeo, Yang said "the Taiwan question bears on the political foundation of China-Japan relations and the basic trust and good faith between the two countries," China's official Xinhua News Agency reported yesterday.

"Japan should ... shape up a right perception of China, pursue a positive, pragmatic and rational China policy, and uphold the right direction of peaceful development," Xinhua quoted Yang as



Law professor Benny Tai, a key figure in Hong Kong's 2014 Occupy Central protests

WITH LITARY



aircraft gun at a base in Taiwan's southeastern Hualien county

"We will continue to take calm and resolute steps to uphold peace and stability in the face of Beijing's ongoing efforts to undermine it, and to support Taiwan," Campbell said during a conference call last Friday.

China takes more than twice as much of Taiwan's exports as the United States, its No. 2 foreign market. Taiwan's government says its companies have invested almost \$200 billion in the mainland. Beijing says a 2020 census found some 158,000 Taiwanese entre-

preneurs, professionals and others live on the mainland.

China's ban on imports of citrus, fish and hundreds of other Taiwanese food products hurt rural areas seen as supporters of President Tsai Ing-wen, but those goods account for less than 0.5% of Taiwan's exports to the mainland.

Beijing did nothing that might affect the flow of processor chips from Taiwan that are needed by Chinese factories that assemble the world's smartphones and consumer electronics. The island is the

world's biggest chip supplier.

A second group of U.S. lawmakers led by Sen. Ed Markey, a Democrat from Massachusetts, arrived on Taiwan on Sunday and met with Tsai. Beijing announced a second round of military drills after their arrival.

Taiwan, with 23.6 million people, has launched its own military drills in response.

Yesterday, drills at Hualien Air Base on the east coast simulated a response to a Chinese missile attack. Military personnel practiced with Taiwanese-made Sky Bow 3 anti-aircraft missiles and 35mm anti-aircraft cannon but didn't fire them.

"We didn't panic" when China launched military drills, said air force Maj. Chen Teh-huan.

"Our usual training is to be on call 24 hours a day to prepare for missile launches," Chen said. "We were ready."

The U.S.-Taiwanese talks also will cover agriculture, labor, the environment, digital technology, the status of state-owned enterprises and "non-market policies," the U.S. Trade Representative said.

Washington and Beijing are locked in a 3-year-old tariff war over many of the same issues.

They include China's support for government companies that dominate many of its industries and complaints that Beijing steals foreign technology and limits access to an array of fields in violation of its market-opening commitments.

Then-President Donald Trump raised tariffs on Chinese goods in 2019 in response to complaints that its technology development tactics violate its free-trade commitments and threaten U.S. industrial leadership. Biden has left most of those tariff hikes in place. **MDT/AP**

Strait and reinforced their resolve to stand united against Russia's unjust and unprovoked war on Ukraine and united in support of the Ukrainian people," the State Department said in a news release.

China's threats against Taiwan have been likened to Russia's invasion of its neighbor. Shortly before Moscow dispatched troops in February, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping met in Beijing, where they declared their relationship had "no limits" and Russia supported China's claim to Taiwan.

Many Chinese also resent Japan over its brutal invasion and occupation of parts of the country during the 1930s and 1940s, sentiments kept alive by Communist Party propaganda.

In an incident reported widely on social media, a Chinese woman wearing a traditional Japanese kimono dress was recently detained by police in the eastern city of Hangzhou for allegedly creating a disturbance. She was reportedly released without charge after writing an apology. **MDT/AP**

WEATHER

16 dead, 18 missing in flash flood in western China

A sudden rainstorm in western China triggered a landslide that diverted a river and caused flash flooding in populated areas, killing at least 16 people and leaving 18 others missing, Chinese state media said yesterday.

Rescuers, who earlier reported 36 people missing, had found 18 of them by early afternoon, state broadcaster CCTV said in an online update. The Wednesday night disaster affected more than 6,000 people in six villages in Qinghai province, CCTV said.

China is facing both heavy rains and flooding in some parts of the country this summer and extreme heat and drought in other regions. State media have described the prolonged heat and drought as the worst since record keeping started 60 years ago.

Emergency authorities described the flash flooding in Qinghai's Datong county as a "mountain torrent." Such torrents generally result from heavy squalls in mountainous areas. Water running down the mountain can turn gullies or streams into raging rivers, catching people by surprise.

Video posted by the Beijing News website showed muddy water rushing down a wide street at night and debris-

strewn areas with uprooted trees, partially washed-away roads and overturned cars after the waters had receded.

Seven people died last weekend from a mountain torrent in southwestern China's Sichuan province.

Elsewhere in Sichuan and other provinces, crops are wilting and factories have been shut down as a drought cut hydropower supplies and high temperatures raised demand for electricity to run air conditioners.

Tesla Ltd. and SAIC, one of China's biggest state-owned automakers, suspended production at factories in Shanghai due to a lack of components from 16 suppliers in Sichuan that shut down, the Shanghai Economic and Information Industry Committee said in a letter released yesterday.

The Shanghai committee appealed to its counterpart in Sichuan to make sure auto components factories have adequate power during daytime working hours to avoid supply disruptions.

Authorities in three provinces shot rockets into the sky in recent days to "seed" clouds with agents to try to induce them to produce more rain, according to Chinese media and government reports. **MDT/AP**



In this image taken from video footage run by China's CCTV, crops are covered by mud in the aftermath of flooding in Datong county in western China's Qinghai province

XINHUA



saying.

China's nearly two weeks of military exercises surrounding Taiwan followed U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the island in defiance of Beijing's threats.

China announced further drills in response to the visit by another Congressional delegation this week, but has not said when or where they will take place.

The exercises appear to have

had little impact among Taiwan's more than 23 million people, who overwhelmingly favor the status quo of de facto independence while maintaining robust economic ties with China.

Takeo met earlier this month with U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in Washington, during which they "reiterated the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan

HUMAN RIGHTS

UN investigator: Contemporary slavery extensive around globe

EDITH M. LEDERER,
UNITED NATIONS

A U.N. investigator says contemporary forms of slavery are widely practiced around the world, including forced labor for Uyghur minority, bonded labor for the lowest caste Dalits in South Asia, domestic servitude in Gulf countries, Brazil and Colombia.

Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur Tomoya Obokata adds that traditional enslavement, especially of minorities, is found in Mauritania, Mali and Niger in Africa's Sahel region.

He said in a report to the U.N. General Assembly circulated yesterday [Macau time] that child labor — another contemporary form of slavery — exists in all regions of the world, including its worst forms.

"In Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, the Americas and Europe, between 4 and 6 percent of children are said to be in child labor, and the percentage is much higher in Africa (21.6%), with the highest rate in sub-Saharan Africa (23.9%)," he said.

His conclusion about Uyghurs in China's northwestern province of Xinjiang follows a U.S. ban imposed last December on imports from the region unless businesses can prove items are made without forced labor. There have been many claims China engages in systemic and widespread abuse of ethnic and religious minorities in its western region.

China's Foreign Ministry sharply criticized that finding by Obokata, who is a Japanese scholar and professor of international law and human rights at Keele University in England.

In the report, Obokata said that based on an independent assessment of available information from many sources, including victims and government accounts, he "regards it as reasonable to conclude that forced labor among Uyghur, Kazakh and other ethnic minorities in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing has been occurring in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China."

He cited two systems used by China - the detention of



minorities for vocational skills education and training followed by work placement, and a poverty alleviation through labor program in which surplus rural laborers are transferred to other work. He said labor transfer is also practiced in Tibet where farmers, herders and other rural workers are transferred into low-skilled and low-paid employment.

While these programs may create jobs and income as the government claims, Obokata said in many cases the work is involuntary and workers are subject to excessive surveillance, abusive living and working conditions.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin accused Obokata of choosing "to believe in lies and disinformation about Xinjiang spread by the U.S. and some other Western countries and anti-China forces."

He also accused Obokata of abusing his authority as a special investigator to "smear and denigrate China and serve as a political tool for anti-China forces." He accused unnamed "forces" of fabricating disinformation on forced labor "to undermine Xinjiang's prosperity and stability and contain China's development and revitalization."

"China strongly condemns this," Wang said. "There has never been 'forced labor' in Xinjiang."

He said China protects the rights and interests of workers from all ethnic groups to seek employment, participate in economic and social life, "and to share the dividends of socioeconomic progress."

Obokata said minorities

are also subjected to forced labor in Latin America, pointing to rural areas of Brazil, including the Amazon, where "slavery is intricately linked with economic activities that are causing environmental devastation, including illegal logging and mining." The majority of victims are men of African descent with low levels of education, he said.

The report also cited two other forms of contemporary slavery — child or forced marriage and sexual slavery.

In Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, the Americas and Europe, 4-6% of children are said to be in child labor

Rates of child marriage spike in marginalized communities like the Roma minority in southeastern Europe, he said. In parts of the Balkans, half of all Roma women ages 20 to 24 are married before age 18, compared to around 10% nationally, he said.

He said official data in the United Kingdom suggest a large majority of forced marriage cases relate to Pakistan and to a lesser extent Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Somalia.

In other regions, Boko Haram has forced Christian women and girls to convert to Islam and to marry, Obokata said. Some ethnic minority groups in Nigeria practice forced or child marriage at high rates - 74.9% among the Kambari and 73.8% among the Fulfude, he said.

Forced marriage is also a

concern in the African nation of Congo, in Cambodia, India, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam in Asia, and in Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras and Panama in Latin America, he said.

As for sexual slavery, which has been particularly notable during conflicts and humanitarian crises, Obokata pointed to the more than 6,500 women from Iraq's Yazidi minority reportedly taken captive in 2014 by Islamic State fighters who used rape as a weapon of war against them. Nearly 2,800 Yazidi women and children remain missing or in captivity today, he said.

In Ethiopia, Obokata said, minority women in the northern Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions have been subjected to rape, sexual mutilation and other forms of sexual violence by parties to the conflict.

In northern Nigeria, Boko Haram has primarily targeted Christians and moderate Muslims for enslavement, including sexual slavery, he said.

In Myanmar, women from the Rohingya Muslim minority "have been subjected to systematic sexual violence by the country's security forces which may be regarded as war crimes or crimes against humanity," he said.

Despite the persistence of slavery among minorities, Obokata said governments, national human rights bodies, civil society organizations and regional and other groups "have been playing an important role in preventing the exploitation of minorities." MDT/AP

this day in history

2003 UN ENVOY DIES IN BAGHDAD BOMBING



A massive bomb has wrecked the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, killing at least 17 people including the UN's chief envoy to Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello.

Three floors of the concrete building collapsed in the explosion. Hundreds of people were still at work, and it was an especially busy period since a news conference had just begun.

Rescue efforts to dig out those trapped in the rubble are continuing into the night.

Alice Yacoub, a UN employee, was sitting in the cafeteria when the blast happened.

"Everything came down on our heads," she said. "I can't find my colleagues and I'm worried about them."

The UN's spokesman at the scene, Salim Lone, was working in his office when the bomb went off.

"There was a huge, shattering explosion. I was working on the computer, the glass in the window blew - the woodwork, everything came out of the roof.

"I ran in to the corridor. Everybody was very severely wounded, very badly hurt, bleeding, people with blood on their face."

A US military spokeswoman said the blast was caused by a truck bomb, possibly in a suicide bombing.

Eyewitnesses said a concrete mixing lorry believed to have been carrying the bomb was parked just outside Mr de Mello's office when it went off at about 1640 local time (1240 GMT).

The highly-respected 55-year-old Brazilian diplomat died after being trapped under rubble for several hours.

He was one of the UN's most experienced envoys, and had been on many of the most sensitive and dangerous peace missions of recent years.

The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, said in a statement that everyone at the UN was "shocked and dismayed" at the attack.

"Nothing can excuse this act of unprovoked and murderous violence against men and women who went to Iraq... to help the Iraqi people," the statement said.

The bombing is the latest in a steady stream of attacks by groups opposed to the US occupation of Iraq.

The United Nations has just increased security measures around the Baghdad building in the wake of several recent attacks, including the bombing of the Jordanian embassy 12 days ago in which at least 14 people died.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The death toll later rose to 23. Following the attack, all but about 50 foreign UN workers were pulled out of Baghdad. The remainder were withdrawn in October 2003 following an attack on the Red Cross headquarters in which 12 people died. Many other aid organisations have since left Baghdad as the security situation continues to deteriorate. In December 2003, Kofi Annan named New Zealand official Ross Mountain as an interim envoy to Iraq to replace Mr de Mello. In February 2004, a UN team returned to Baghdad for the first time since the attack, on a fact-finding mission to discuss the handover of political power. Iraq was run by the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), headed by American diplomat Paul Bremer until 28 June 2004 when power was officially handed back. Elections to choose a full, sovereign Iraqi government were held in 2005.

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You would be wise to socialize with as many people as possible. You might not be as reserved on an emotional level as you'd like. Your tendency to overreact could get you into trouble.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Resist the temptation to gamble. Risks will not be profitable. Compromising could be on the agenda today. A friendship might suffer if money becomes an issue.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Take a close look at documents before signing on the dotted line. Passion will be your only answer. You will earn recognition for the work you are doing.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You may want to sign up for courses that will encourage you to have more confidence in yourself. Any intimate relationships with colleagues will lead to gossip that could easily affect your position.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
You need to distance yourself from the situation for a little while first. Your emotional life may be up in the air if your mate has been going through a change of heart.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
You can find out interesting information if you get a chance to talk to people you respect. Your determination and sheer desire to do your own thing will be successful. Unexpected visitors are likely.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Tempers may flare if you haven't been completely honest about your intentions or your whereabouts. Contracts will not be as lucrative as you think. Get involved in volunteer work that will bring you satisfaction.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Situations in your personal life are moving a little fast lately. Real estate investments will payoff. Good friends will give you honest answers.

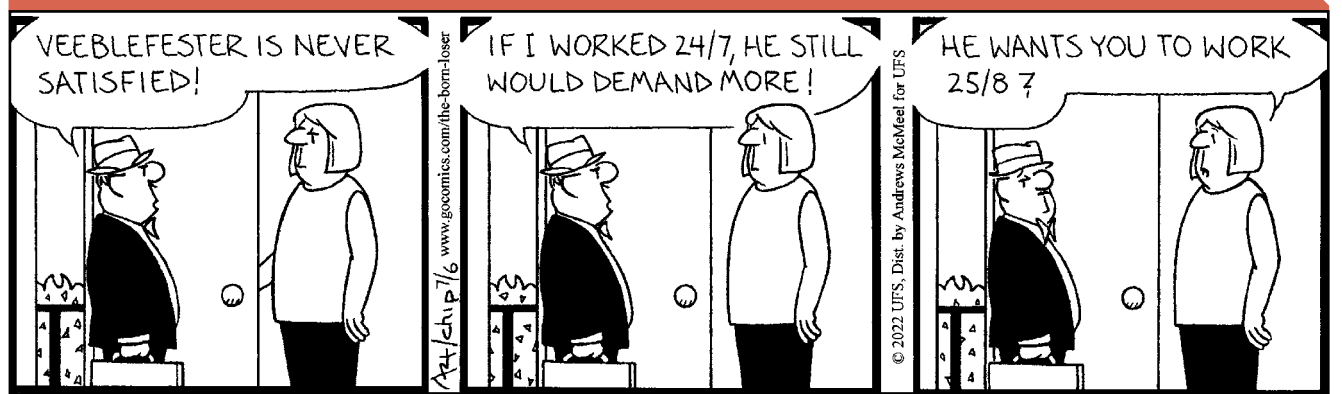
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Do not invest in joint ventures. Don't be too quick to judge. Don't let individuals with wild schemes talk you into a financial deal that is not likely to be successful.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Get involved in fitness programs that will bring you in contact with new friends. Be sure to take care of the needs of your immediate loved ones first. Spend time with friends and relatives. Travel for pleasure.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Use your charm to get your own way. Opportunities to get ahead are evident. You need an outlet that will not only stimulate you but also challenge your intelligence as well.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You may need a physical outlet that will help you relieve your tension. Take a second look; another person's philosophy may be extremely different from yours.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

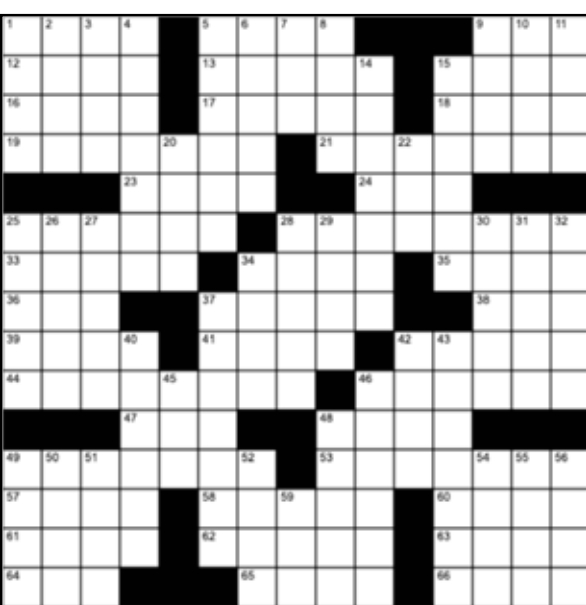
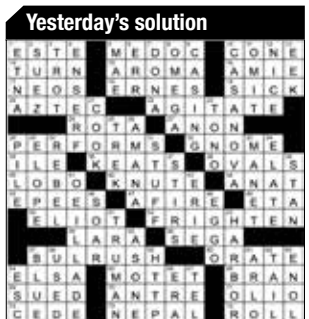
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	27	rain
Changchun	18	29	cloudy
Chengdu	27	37	overcast
Chongqing	33	43	fine
Fuzhou	28	37	fine
Guangzhou	26	33	thunderstorms
Guiyang	22	32	cloudy
Haikou	24	30	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	27	38	fine
Harbin	18	29	thunderstorms
Hefei	26	38	cloudy
Nanjing	27	37	cloudy
Shanghai	28	37	rain
Taipei	26	31	overcast
Wuhan	29	39	cloudy
Hong Kong	28	31	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	17	27	cloudy
Frankfurt	18	29	overcast
Paris	16	27	rain
London	13	24	overcast
New York	23	32	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Two-wheeled carriage, golf bunker; 5- Away from the wind; 9- Honorarium; 12- Travel on; 13- Vends; 15- Fly; 16- Petri dish gelatin; 17- Subway turner; 18- Curse; 19- Reindeer of North America; 21- Bright red color; 23- "Star Trek" speed; 24- French pronoun; 25- Consecrate; 28- Scooter or sandbagger; 33- Rope used to guide a horse; 34- Floor model; 35- Author ___ Stanley Gardner; 36- Second sequel tag; 37- Fiend; 38- Immerse; 39- Starting on; 41- Wife of Osiris; 42- View; 44- Brief summary; 46- Evening party; 47- Incredibly powerful mythical bird; 48- Constituent; 49- Pretentious nonsense; 53- Like sea life; 57- Burt's ex; 58- Flight segment; 60- Russian parliament before 1917; 61- Cornerstone abbr.; 62- Psychics claim to have a sixth one; 63- Prepare a book or film for release; 64- That, in Tijuana; 65- Call for; 66- Part of an eye or camera;

DOWN 1- ___ II (razor brand); 2- Latvian capital; 3- Jewish month; 4- Peruke; 5- Classify; 6- Cessation; 7- Cantab's rival; 8- Old cloth measures; 9- Disgusting; 10- Smooth sailing; 11- Formerly, formerly; 14- Subdivision; 15- Writer; 20- Ruination; 22- "You've got mail" co.; 25- Rap sheet info; 26- Clamorous; 27- Pungent bulb; 28- Big rigs; 29- Old Testament book; 30- Cry from the bench; 31- Dress style; 32- Home on the range; 34- He played Ricky; 37- Argue; 40- Prohibit; 42- Annoyed; 43- Stronghold; 45- Pea holder; 46- Consecrated; 48- Composure; 49- Make tracks; 50- A pitcher may take one; 51- Golden rule preposition; 52- Bingo call; 54- Unclothed; 55- Poker declaration; 56- Members of the Felidae family; 59- Hydrocarbon suffix;



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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MANHATTAN 3 BEDS	HKD 17,500
CHUN LEONG 1 BEDS	HKD 8,200
BUCKINGHAM 2 BEDS	HKD 13,900
HELLENE G. 3 BEDS	HKD 12,500
NAM LONG 1 BED	HKD 8,500
COLOANE V. 1 BED	HKD 9,300
COLOANE V. 2 BEDS	HKD 10,500
COLOANE V. 2 BEDS	HKD 10,000

FOR SALE

JADE GARDEN 4 BEDS	HKD 15,380,000
NOVA TAIPA 4 BEDS	HKD 12,880,000
BAI YUEN GRD. 3 BEDS	HKD 12,800,000
MANHATTAN 3 BEDS	HKD 12,980,000
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	HKD 10,800,000

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

JAKE COYLE,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

DRIVE IN

JAMIE FOXX HUNTS VAMPIRES IN COMEDY 'DAY SHIFT'

THIS year marks the centennial anniversary of F. W. Murnau's "Nosferatu," a long time for us humans but only a blip for vampires.

If you were looking to celebrate the birthday of that silent classic, which still casts a long and ominous shadow over all vampires films that have followed, you could do it with what's perhaps its exact opposite: the new Netflix action-comedy "Day Shift," with Jamie Foxx as a San Fernando Valley vampire hunter.

"Day Shift," which begins streaming Friday, has aims much closer to something like "Zombieland" than Murnau. Foxx plays Bud Jablonski, a working-class Los Angeles man and divorced father who cleans pools as a cover for his real job of hunting vampires. They seem to be especially populous in the San Fernando Valley, which may not be surprising to Californians but is about as far a departure you can get from the aristocratic, European origins of the genre. Plus, "What We Do in the Shadows" already has Staten Island covered.

"Day Shift" isn't much interested in vampires, anyway. They're mostly videogame-like cannon fodder for Bud, a veteran hunter who's quite good at killing them but significantly worse at hiding his real occupation. He's living

AP PHOTO



Jamie Foxx, left, and Snoop Dogg in a scene from "Day Shift"

on his own after his wife (Meagan Good), suspicious of his excuses, kicked him out. Now, she's ready to move, with their 10-year-old daughter (Zion Broadnax), far away from Los Angeles unless Bud can come up with \$10,000 in a week for school tuition and braces.

But Bud is living fang to fang. He gets his money selling vampire teeth to what's effectively a pawn shop. He drives a turquoise pick-up and lives, with locks up and down the door, in a seedy apartment complex that appalls his ex. She hears a porn star has just moved in. "They live amongst us,"

Bud explains.

"Day Shift," the directorial debut of former stuntman J.J. Perry and written by Tyler Tice and "Army of the Dead" scribe Shay Hatten, has placed a familiar tale — a down-and-out single father trying to prove his worth — into a vampire movie. There's also a

labor commentary somewhere in here with Bud, kicked out of the vampire hunter union, trying to get back in to secure higher rates for his kills.

But the union subplot is less to drive home a free-market point than to supply Bud a buddy-comedy partner. After another hunter, Big John (Snoop Dogg), helps Bud get back into the union, a union rep (Dave Franco) is assigned to monitor and ride along with Bud. As a suit-wearing, regulations sidekick terrified of vampires but thoroughly knowledgeable about them, Franco is a fine foil to Foxx.

The slapdash vibe of "Day Shift" has its charms. It's built almost perfectly to be the kind of thing you might, after some scrolling, absentmindedly click to watch on Netflix and end of watching for its sheer watchability. That's due largely to Foxx, whose comic timing remains sharp, and supporting players like Snoop and Peter Stormare who breeze in, as if purely for fun. Thinly sketched as it is, "Day Shift" has a retro vibe. Not, like, "Nosferatu"-retro, but more 1980s. Want to see Jamie Foxx shoot some vampires? Well, you're in luck.

"Day Shift" a Focus Features release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for strong violence and gore, and language. Running time: 114 minutes. ★★★

AD



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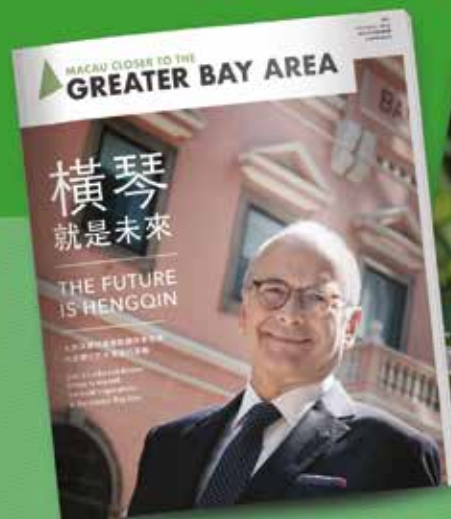
生活藝術雜誌 LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE

MACAUCLOSER

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MEET MACAU LOCALS MAKING AN EFFORT TO GREEN UP THE CITY



現在發售
NOW ON SALE



OUR GREATER BAY AREA SUPPLEMENT INSIDE
本期雜誌加入了大灣區特刊，不容錯過



TASTE OF EDESIA

Wonders in nuances

IRENE SAM, MDT

CANTONESE cuisine is known for its elegance in flavours. Original taste of ingredients is slightly enhanced with sophisticated cooking methods that require patience and skills that are developed through years of trial and error and intense culinary training. A master in creating exquisite Cantonese flair, Executive Charles Cheung, who helms **Zi Yat Heen**, showcases his expertise in

presenting traditional dishes with just the right amount of innovation this season. To start, Sliced jelly fish with sesame oil tantalises the palate with refreshing texture and a hint of influence from Shanghai cuisine. Barbecued pork with honey is an epitome of perfection that reflects a savoir-faire in preparing traditional dishes that stir up nostalgia towards comfort food that we have known since childhood. Double-boiled fresh abal-

one soup with bitter squash exudes elegance in pairing umami elements of abalone with a unique vegetal taste. Sautéed star garoupa fillet with fresh lily and black fungus is subtle, yet exuberance in its colours and mix of sweetness and precision in featuring superb cooking methods through utmost simplicity. A gastronomic journey at **Zi Yat Heen** is indeed in a class of its own where wonders are hidden in nuances and devils are all in the details.



Chef Charles Cheung

Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu



THE HAMMER HILL 1350M SAND 2022-08-19|Fri|20:15

Trainer K.H Leong has doing so well in these past few meetings; Leong a veteran MJC trainer knows well to push his horses into form and to let them race in suitable races, as you have witnessed last Sunday with his Double to reward punters. This Friday Mr. Leong have **Still Be Friends** to obliged his connection. You can draw a line to cross out his last race 27 May which **Still Be Friends** ran a creditable third, I seen in his work that much has been done to get him fit and ready to run a good sand race coming up this Friday night. He draws a good barrier gate and with C.L Cheung carry only 121 lbs, **Still Be Friends** should get a good win before season ends.



Race 3 Horse no. 8 Still Be Friends Win & Place play

OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**INFLATION ACT
 SHOWS POLITICAL
 DIVIDE ENTRENCHED**

US President Joe Biden signed a sweeping \$750 billion healthcare, tax and climate bill into law, called the Inflation Reduction Act, at the White House on Tuesday.

Notably, not a single Republican voted for the bill in either the House or the Senate, and not a single Democrat voted against it. The votes were a stark reflection of the political divide in the United States. The results are only the most direct and starkest reflection of the current congressional representation of both parties, if not the division of US politics.

Such is the reality that neither the president nor the Democrats even bothered to seek to win over at least some congressional Republicans before the voting, as they normally do.

Biden tried to portray the Act as a victory for the US people, saying that "with this law, the American people won and the special interests lost", but whether that is the case or not remains to be seen.

It has certainly been a winner to some extent for the Democrats. By passing the Act, the administration seems to have checked its plummeting approval rating — Biden's approval rating before the midterm elections was the lowest for any US president in history — which may help it avoid the landslide defeat in the midterm elections that it seemed to be on course for.

But that might only be a flash-in-the-pan boost, if the Act proves to be a booster to inflation rather than a cooler of it, as some predict. Opponents of the Act claim that it will only mean higher taxes, more inflated energy bills and more aggressive Internal Revenue Service audits. And the Congressional Budget Office said in an analysis that the Act would do nothing to address the inflation in the US.

The political polarization in the US has obviously evolved into an institutional tumor of the US system. Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans are willing to really put the interests of the US people first. US democracy has become nothing more than an unabashed scramble for special interests under the name of upholding people's interests.

The elected representatives in the US are not bringing people together, instead, they are fueling the deep divisions that serve special interests. But since at least a veneer of unity is required to stop US society from breaking completely apart, external threats are fabricated and hyped up to rally Americans to the flag. This has already led to war in Europe and there is growing concern that the US is willing to spark another in the Asia-Pacific.

For the good of itself, and for global peace and stability, the US needs to get its own house in order.

The basement construction of the Macau New Neighbourhood (MNN) project in Hengqin has been completed in the middle of this year, the government announced yesterday.

According to the gov't, the "superstructure works of the buildings have begun, as pre-fabricated components are being installed. The residential and school buildings' structures are expected to reach topping-out before the end of the year, creating a new space for Macau residents to live and work."

The construction of the typical floors of more than 20 buildings is currently taking place at the site. Three components of the residential units are eco-friendly built using the pre-fabrication prac-

tice, which are prefabricated façade panels, prefabricated staircases and prefabricated autoclaved lightweight concrete panels.

The gov't says that "the project is progressing according to plan, where 27 residential towers and school buildings are expected to reach topping-out in December, and works on the fitting-out, roads and greening facilities would gradually begin. The MNN project is expected to be completed in the second half of 2023."

Meanwhile, relevant entities are studying to formulate the eligibility criteria for MNN and the sales procedures. It is expected that the roughly 4,000 residential units would be launched for sale next year, the gov't said.

**HONG KONG SEEKS
 CITIZENS CAUGHT IN
 SOUTHEAST ASIA SCAMS**

HONG Kong officials said yesterday they are seeking the return of citizens who traveled to Southeast Asia for jobs that entrapped them in scams and virtual slavery.

The victims, who also came from Taiwan and mainland China, took jobs in call centers that sought to cheat Chinese speakers into making payments on fabricated bills and government fees.

Michael Cheuk, undersecretary of Hong Kong's Security Bureau, said the police and immigration department had received requests for help in bringing back 20 people since January, with 12 of them now safe, although two remain in Myanmar.

Cheuk said officials have not been able to identify the exact location of the eight remaining Hong Kong citizens.

"Our immigration officers are trying their utmost and reach out to the Chinese Embassy and the local consulate generals and explore all the means and avenues and try to secure their safe return," he said.

The scam networks, which often have links to trans-



Michael Cheuk, Undersecretary for Hong Kong's Security Bureau speaks during a press conference held at the Immigration Department in Hong Kong, yesterday

national organized crime, are set up overseas to avoid detection, luring educated young workers with promises of high earnings. The workers are then subject to isolation and the threat of violence unless they succeed in cheating victims in mainland China reached by phone into transferring payments into overseas bank accounts.

Taiwanese media have also reported on people being taken to Cambodia after being told they could earn tens of thousands of dollars a month working

for financial companies. Myanmar, which remains in crisis after a military takeover, is another location favored by the scammers, with many victims passing through the regional transport hub of Thailand.

The scammers have operated for years, working out of locations as far as away Nepal and East Africa. China has sought to quash the practice, but the schemes appear to remain successful, playing on a strong deference to authority and fear of reprisals among the victims. MDT/AP

Saudi Arabia A court has sentenced a doctoral student to 34 years in prison for spreading "rumors" on Twitter and retweeting dissidents, according to court documents obtained yesterday, drawing growing global condemnation. Activists and lawyers consider the sentence against Salma al-Shehab, a mother of two and a researcher at Leeds University in Britain, shocking even by Saudi standards of justice.



Ethiopia's government is criticizing as "unethical" the statement by the WHO's director-general that the crisis in the country's Tigray region is "the worst disaster on Earth" and his assertion that the lack of attention from global leaders may be due to Tigrayans' skin color. The spokeswoman for Ethiopia's prime minister yesterday told journalists that the comments by Tedros A. Ghebreyesus were "unbecoming of such a high-profile position."

Mali's foreign minister is accusing France of having colluded with the same Islamic extremists that it spent nearly a decade fighting until its troops departed earlier this week, an allegation sharply denied by the French government. The inflammatory letter sent to the president of the U.N. Security Council is the latest effort to undermine support for France at a time when some fear the French military departure could pave the way for militants to intensify their attacks.



USA The chief financial officer of Donald Trump's company, Allen Weisselberg (pictured, right), is expected to plead guilty to tax violations today in a deal that would require him to testify about illicit business practices at the Trump Organization, two people familiar with the matter told AP. Weisselberg is charged with accepting more than \$1.7 million in off-the-books compensation from the former president's company over several years.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Andy Wong



Will power. Children wearing face masks try out Chinese-made remote wheelchairs during the World Robot Conference at the Yichuang International Conference and Exhibition Centre in Beijing, yesterday.