

The Macao SAR Government urges:

- Let's all persist;
- Wash hands frequently;
- Wear a mask properly;
- Avoid crowd gathering;
- Keep a social distance;
- Declare health conditions;
- Reduce leaving Macao.

Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

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Air Quality Good



"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

MOP 8.00 HKD 10.00



HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENTS TO RECEIVE HKD10,000 CASH HANDOUT FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT

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HEALTH BUREAU WORKER FACES PROSECUTION FOR RAPING HIS WIFE

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LOBBYISTS HAVE BEEN TOUTING THE ROLE PLASTIC PLAY DURING THE PANDEMIC IN KEEPING FOOD, HEALTHCARE WORKERS, FAMILIES SAFE

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AP PHOTO



Indonesia's capital partly reopened yesterday after two months of lockdown, as the world's fourth most populous nation gradually reopens its economy. Jakarta, home to 11 million people, had been under large-scale social restrictions since April 10. Offices, restaurants and grocery stores reopened with only 50% of their employees and customers. Public transportation also resumed services.

AP PHOTO



New Zealand has eradicated the coronavirus from its shores after the final person known to have been infected recovered. It has been 17 days since the last new case was reported in New Zealand, and yesterday also marked the first time since late February that there have been no active cases. Just over 1,500 people contracted the virus in New Zealand, including 22 who died. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said almost all remaining virus restrictions would be lifted at midnight.

AP PHOTO



China reported four new cases, all of them imported. China has recorded a total of 4,634 deaths out of 83,040 total cases since the virus was first detected in the city of Wuhan late last year. China has increasingly opened up with the sharp reduction of cases, and the capital Beijing yesterday said it was reopening the office where citizens can bring their complaints and petitions.

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A PARADE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

Police dubs June 5 pro-Beijing demonstration as 'festive parade', while residents petition for probe of the event

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NEPALESE WORKERS LAMENT 'MISERABLE CONDITIONS' AFTER DISMISSALS

RENATO MARQUES



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POLICE DUBS JUNE 5 EVENT AS 'FESTIVE PARADE'

ANTHONY LAM

THE Public Security Police Force (PSP) currently sees the June 5 parade that was attended by dozens of people on a semi-double decker bus as a "festive parade," Lei Tak Fai, head of PSP's Public Relations Division, told the Health Bureau's press conference yesterday.

The police officer defended his bureau's handling of the evening of June 4, when two daughters of lawmaker Au Kam San were arrested by the police for allegedly holding an illegal gathering.

In the past 30 years, an annual vigil in Macau commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen incident has been held on June 4. This year, the PSP has banned the vigil on the grounds of Covid-19 containment.

At the press conference, Lei reiterated that as the PSP had banned the vigil, any attempt to proceed with it was discouraged and contrary to law.

Coincidentally, two groups held separate parades on the following two days. On June 5, a group paraded from the Macao Science Center to the Macao Tower on a semi-double decker bus. The next day, a group of taxi drivers gathered near the Macau border of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge. The groups are believed to be un-



connected.

Both groups held banners to show their support for Beijing's national security legislation for Hong Kong.

At a previous press conference, the PSP admitted that it was not aware of the two subsequent events. It disclosed that both groups had not declared their

activities to the authority in advance, despite this being a legal requirement. The law-enforcement authority also pledged that it would look into the cases and commence prosecution procedures if necessary.

In response, the police officer said, "The goal of [the bus parade] was simply to show support

for [China's] legal decision. There was no topic of appeal or expression of a call for rights whatsoever."

However, the PSP officer left the matter open by adding that it is investigating both incidents to determine whether they should be covered by the Law 2/93/M, which governs civil protest and

assembly.

Lei repeatedly pointed out that "the PSP has been governing by the law."

Meanwhile, part of the Sheraton Macao Hotel was set aside for use as a quarantine hotel on Sunday night. Inês Chan from the Macao Government Tourism Office advised of the necessity to source additional rooms as the Pousada Marina Infante is currently full. She expects that more rooms will be needed if agreements are made with Hong Kong to transfer returnee students from the Hong Kong International Airport during Summer holidays.

DEMOCRAT LAWMAKER UNHAPPY WITH HANDLING OF GATHERINGS

Lawmaker Sulu Sou is not satisfied with the police handling on all three public assemblies. "In my opinion, all three events should not be obstructed in a civil society," the lawmaker wrote. "Punishment should not be used against the peaceful expression of suggestions."

"Why did the police arrest some people on June 4, while neglecting the undeclared [assembly] on June 5?" Sou questioned. "The police should clarify this or it will become problematic in the future."

Residents petition for investigation on pro-Beijing assembly

RENATO MARQUES

An online petition on Change.org calling for an investigation into an assembly held on June 5 has attracted over 2,500 supporters in two days. During the assembly, a large group of people gathered to express support for and celebrate the approval of the national security law by the Hong Kong Legislative Council.

Hosted by the Macao Youth Federation (MYF) – an organization headed by Mok Chi Wai – the event attracted attention due to local authorities' enforcement of the ban on the annual vigil held

要求澳門警方對6月5日的集會及相關事件作出調查及回應 Macau Police need to investigate the 5th June assembly and respo



2,509 have signed. Let's get to 5,000!

First name
Last name
Email
 Display my name and comment on this petition
Sign this petition

in commemoration of those who died in the Tiananmen massacre on

June 4, 1989.

The authorities had banned the vigil for the

first time, alleging that it would pose a threat to public safety due to the

Covid-19 outbreak. The vigil has run for over 30 years.

Nevertheless, no action was taken by the authorities regarding the gathering hosted by the MYF, leading many to accuse the police of having double standards in their law enforcement efforts.

The online petition was started by Wake Up My Cow, a pro-democracy organization that was created when a cow broke loose from the slaughterhouse in Ilha Verde and wandered the streets of that district in December last year. The petition is calling on the authorities to investigate the

MYF event, as, according to the police, the authorities were not notified of the activity.

The petition also calls for the disclosure of how many people were held for questioning by the police as a consequence of being in Senado Square on the evening of June 4.

The petitioners call for the police authorities' activities to be done according to the law and with impartiality.

According to the petition organizers, once signatures have been collected, the petition will be sent to the police authorities to demand an investigation be conducted.

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Nepalese workers lament 'miserable conditions' after dismissals

RENATO MARQUES

A representative for Nepalese workers who are currently stranded in Macau contacted the Times seeking help for his fellow compatriots, stating that they had been unable to receive help from their consulate or from their former employers in Macau.

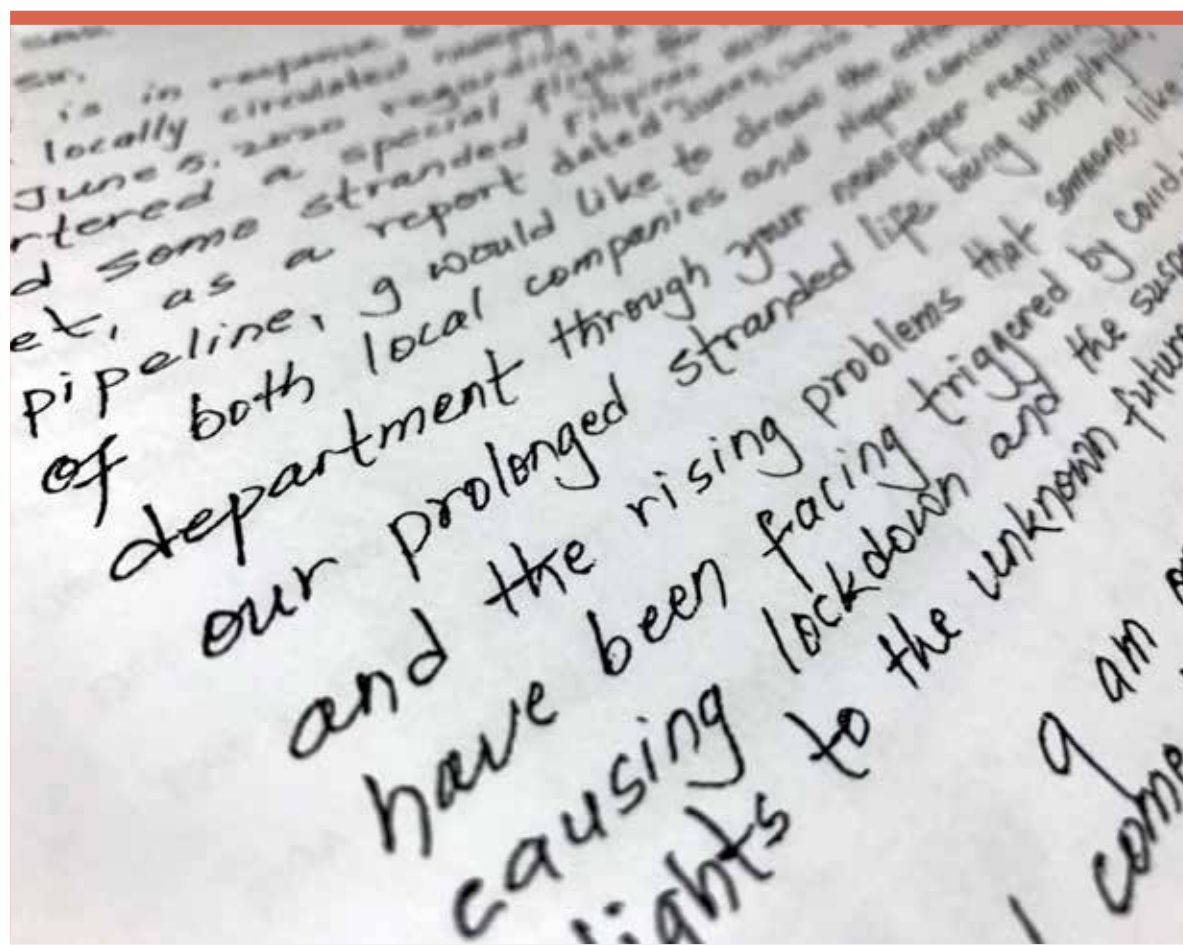
According to the representative, other Nepalese workers have been providing them with food and accommodation. However, after several months of living in such conditions, they are now in a critical situation.

The Consulate General of Nepal in Hong Kong have said in response to a Times inquiry that the consulate is aware of the group of about 60 Nepalese nationals who are currently stranded in Macau after having lost their jobs and without means to return to Nepal due to border restrictions.

The consulate also said it was aware that these Nepalese workers wished to return home, but refuted the idea that they were in a critical situation, saying, "the severe condition is not as you mentioned."

The same diplomatic mission added that their efforts include contacting a local association that is coordinating the provision of assistance and collecting information.

"The consulate has requested and coordinated with non-resident Nepali Association Macao which provides infrequent assistance to collect data, to provide assistance [of any kind] and cooperate with [workers] since the pandemic began and the Govern-



Letter sent by the concerned Nepalese citizen

ment of Macau restricted even us to enter Macau," the Consul, Kiran Kumar Gurung said.

"The Consulate has begun to collect all the information for the repatriation since the Government of Nepal decided to repatriate some of the Nepalis who are in utmost need," he added.

The consulate also called on all Nepalese nationals seeking repatriation to complete the designated form created by the consulate and accessible via the link: <http://cgnhongkong.hk.mikecrm.com/Q09FxA6>.

In a letter sent to the Times by fax, the workers' representative noted that from the group of about 60 people, some had been laid off, while "a few have resigned from their jobs" in agreement with the companies.

"Since we have lost our jobs, there has been no assistance or inquiry into our situation [regarding food and accommodation]," he told the Times. He further added, "What I personally feel is the respective companies have to work collectively to ensure the safety and respectful return of the

workers in the same way that they brought us here with so much enthusiasm and care."

According to the representative, under current circumstances, this is not occurring, with companies finding reasons amid the Covid-19 outbreak to dismiss workers while failing to ensure the health and safety for those left stranded.

"Unfortunately, the companies have failed to ensure healthy and safe conditions of stay, leaving the stranded Nepali in miserable conditions on their own."

He also told the Times that all the stranded people were working in the security sector, with most of them at two local gaming operators. At the moment, the vast majority of them are sharing a single apartment.

"The situation is really terrible right now," he said. He called on former employers to step up and find a solution similar to what was reported in mid-May, when Melco Resorts & Entertainment chartered a special flight from Macau to Manila to transport some of its workers back to their homeland.

Late last week, TDM Radio reported that another gaming operator, Sands China Ltd., was also arranging chartered flights for some 130 Filipino workers that had been stranded in the city due to the pandemic, although the report has not yet been confirmed by the company.

"We feel that we are being somewhat discriminated [against]. If companies can organize flights for the Filipino workers to go back, why can't they do the same for us, too?" the representative of the Nepalese workers' group told the Times in a phone conversation. "We just want to go home," he said, adding that the purpose of his letter was to request a safe stay and a smooth return home for Nepalese workers from all departments and agencies concerned.

The Times has also reached out for comments from the companies said to be former employers to seek further information. It was not possible to obtain a reply by press time from the companies contacted.

Workers' federation records 300 dismissals during pandemic

THREE hundred new cases of unemployment have been recorded by the Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) over the past several months of the Covid-19 pandemic, equating to a year-on-year increase, the federation disclosed.

In response to the situation, the federation is offering job matching and referral services to those who have been rendered unemployed during Covid-19.

Data from the government's Statistics and Census Service, however, shows only a 0.2% rise in unemployment from the



Ella Lei

same period last year. The latest unemployment rate is 3.1%.

Figures from the Labour

Affairs Bureau shows that in the first four months of 2020, the bureau has been notified of 409 such cases,

involving 817 employees. Compared with data from the same period last year, the number of cases dropped by 27% while the headcount dropped by 21%.

On the other hand, in the reply to lawmaker Ella Lei's written interpellation, the government insists that it has measures in place to ensure businesses will not collapse amid the pandemic. Lei is an official at the FAOM.

In her interpellation, the lawmaker pointed out that despite the government requiring businesses to maintain both their operations and their employees for at

least six months following receipt of the Covid-19 special subsidies, employers can easily lose contact with their employees once they have received the money.

The government will be giving each eligible business an amount between MOP15,000 and MOP200,000 in subsidies.

The lawmaker disclosed that she had already been notified of several dozen cases where employers could not be found. She expressed worry that the situation will create an additional burden for society.

In its reply, the Financial Services Bureau (DSF)

pointed out that its measures to prevent businesses closing down and dismissing employees are the same measures that the lawmaker set out in her interpellation.

Meanwhile, in another written interpellation, the lawmaker recommended that the DSF improve its employee taxation inquiry platform so that employees can have easier access to their taxation records.

Previously, the government's Covid-19 special subsidies revealed many companies that had not registered their employees for tax purposes. **AL**

SSM EMPLOYEE UNDER PROSECUTION FOR RAPE

JULIE ZHU

A civil servant from the Health Bureau (SSM) is in the process of being prosecuted after purportedly assaulting and raping his wife.

The Judiciary Police (PJ) reported the case during yesterday's joint police press conference.

The suspect, surnamed Tam, is aged 38 and a Macau local resident. The victim in this case is Tam's wife. The two wedded in 2009 and have two children. The family live under the same roof in an apartment in Taipa.

On the afternoon of June 4, the victim reported the case to PJ. According to the victim, her husband had been raping her since the end of May until the date that she reported the case to PJ.

On May 11, the victim asked Tam for a divorce. Tam requested his wife to hand over her mobile phone so that he could check her private messages. However, the victim declined. Believing that his wife was cheating on him, Tam assaulted her by beating her up, throwing her against the wall and dragging her by her hair.

Since Tam's attack, the couple's relationship has deteriorated. However, the woman did not report the physical abuse to the police immediately after the incident.

After the assault, Tam forced sexual intercourse upon his wife, without her consent.

The victim then revealed the assault to a social worker who encouraged her to make a report to the police.

On June 4 at 4 p.m., PJ found Tam at his workplace and took him to the police station for questioning.

Tam denied the rape accusation, claiming that his wife consented to sexual intercourse. He also denied ever having assaulted her.

However, upon investigating Tam's mobile phone, PJ learnt that Tam admitted to the assault in a message to his wife, whom he asked for forgiveness.



PJ believes that there is sufficient evidence to press charges. Tam was handed over to the prosecution authority on June 5.

ILLEGAL STAY

Meanwhile, a Vietnamese national was found to have overstayed his visa in Macau for approximately one year, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) reported yesterday.

Biep, a Vietnamese man in his 30s, was recently intercepted on the streets and consequently identified as an overstayer.

During a routine PSP street inspection, police officers discovered Biep and found that his passport had expired over a year ago. He was in possession of a blue card which belonged to a third party.

The man claimed that he

stayed in Macau, hoping to get a job. He also reported that he had been sleeping in parks and gardens over the course of the past year and had used the bathroom and shower at a friend's apartment.

ONLINE SCAM

A local Macau woman believed she was cheated into paying for a nonexistent gift. The victim transferred \$2,000 in order to pay the shipping fee for a "gift" that was purportedly sent by her male online friend.

The victim met a so-called engineer online in early May with whom she corresponded for more than a week.

"Since meeting with the victim, the engineer said that his business became more successful," PJ said.

In order to express his gratitude, the engineer prepared a "big gift" for the victim. The gift was mailed on May 9, according to the website that the engineer provided for the victim to check.

The parcel apparently arrived in Hong Kong on May 11, but it required the victim to pay \$2,000 for the shipping fee, which she duly transferred on May 13.

After making the transfer, the victim found that the website was no longer available, and she did not receive any parcel.

DRUNK DRIVING

The police authority reported a total of four criminal cases. In three out of the four cases, the suspect has been found, while no suspect has been found responsible for the fourth case.

The third case is one of driving

while intoxicated. PSP is accusing a local woman of drink driving and abandoning a precinct after she crashed into a taxi injuring the driver.

On June 5 at approximately 4:20 a.m., the suspect was driving on the wrong side of the flyover of the Avenida Dr. Rodrigo Rodrigues when she crashed into a taxi. The woman left the precinct, failing to attend to the injured driver.

The victim reported the case to PSP and took himself to hospital for treatment.

Approximately nine hours later, the police found the woman in her apartment. She tested positive with 0.63 grams of alcohol per liter of blood. The vehicle she was driving sustained damage on the right side including the rear mirror, confirming the accident. The woman admitted to her misconduct.

UM opens Centre for Regional Oceans

RENATO MARQUES

THE Faculty of Science and Technology at the University of Macau (UM) has unveiled a new center that aims to symbolize the university's dedication to promoting research in regional oceanography.

The Centre for Regional Oceans is a research unit, which also targets to

support economic diversification and contribute to the long-term development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, UM informed in a statement.

For the time being, Zhou Wanhuan will run the center as interim head.

During the plaque unveiling ceremony, UM rector Yonghua Song reaffir-

med that the purpose of the center was to assist the local government in tackling challenges in the use of the ocean, marine disaster prevention and control, as well as marine environmental protection. UM has also made regional oceanography a research field and one of the key research areas in the university's research blueprint.

The center is expected to promote exchange and collaboration between Macau and other countries in oceanography. According to UM, this "will help to realize economic diversification and contribute to the long-term development of the Greater Bay Area."

The Centre for Regional Oceans focuses on three aspects: marine multi-cir-

cle dynamics and environmental regulation mechanisms, natural disaster prevention and engineering in coastal cities, and coastal environmental governance and resource development.

According to Zhou, due to the number of severe typhoons that have hit Macau in recent years, "the first task of the center is to solve current scientific problems in with marine environment and ocean engineering, to enhance Macau's capacity for mari-

ne disaster prevention and control, ocean engineering construction and maintenance, marine ecological environment protection, and marine resource utilization."

Currently, over 10 laboratories are operating as part of the center. Similar facilities are currently under construction so as to expand capacity.

The center will also be one of the university's new platforms for technology and innovation.

Local rights group calls on UN for gov't to give equal protection for LGBT+

LYNZY VALLES

LGBT rights group Rainbow of Macau is calling on the United Nations Human Rights Committee to request Macau to clarify whether the city is willing to accord equal protection to victims of domestic violence without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

In a letter sent to the Committee at its 129th session for the Adoption of List Issues on Macau, the rights group said that legal protection against discrimination is inadequate on the grounds of sexual orientation and non-existent on the grounds of gender identity.

Rainbow of Macau mentioned that local officials and some community leaders have repeatedly invoked "a lack of social consensus" on responding to the call for equal rights for the LGBT+ people.

"Rainbow of Macau observes that a so-called 'lack of social consensus' is no more than an excuse for the state party to evade the responsibilities of rectifying discriminatory laws," it stated in the report.

In Macau, same-sex intimate partners are deprived of protection under the Domestic Violence Law (Law no. 2/2016), in contrast to heterosexual intimate partners. A marriage or de facto union is not a prerequisite to be eligible for



protection.

In 2015, the group wrote to the Committee against Torture (CAT) about the Macau government's plan to exclude same-sex partners from the proposed Domestic Violence Law when it was reviewing the implementation of the Convention against Torture in China, in which the Macau SAR is included.

In response, CAT urged Macau to enact a Domestic Violence Law without discrimination. However, the government declined to reinstate the reference to same-sex partners in the final text of the Do-

estic Violence Law.

The group previously lamented that the government is "knowingly enacting a discriminatory law that is [inconsistent with] international law."

In 2016, the advocacy group criticized the government for allegedly failing to include same-sex relationships in the scope of domestic violence legislation due to the "controversy" of same-sex partners being considered as "family members."

Local authorities have claimed that the Social Welfare Institute would also provide domestic

violence-related services to people involved in same-sex relationships regardless of their specific inclusion in the law.

The group's 2019 Macau LGBT+ Survey concluded that the community had experienced what they described as a "high level of discrimination."

On a scale of 1 to 10, the mean for the level of subjective discrimination against LGBT+ people is 7.17. In particular, gay people experience higher levels of discrimination (7.43) compared to groups of other types of sexual orientation.

FSS TO HANDLE MATERNITY LEAVE SUBSIDY

The Social Security Fund (FSS) is in charge of administering the maternity leave subsidy procedure, according to an administrative regulation published yesterday in the government official gazette. The labour law amendment has extended maternity leave from 56 days to 70 days and will come into effect today, with retroactive effect from May 26. Any individual who intends to request a subsidy for untaken maternity leave can apply to the bureau. According to the amendment, local women in an employment relationship with their current employer for over one year are eligible to apply to the fund within 120 days after birth. The fund is obliged to process the application within 60 days and pay the allowance to the mother the month following the approval date.

LAWMAKERS ENDORSE 2 YEARS OF WORK EXPERIENCE AS ENTRY BAR FOR JUDGES

The Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) has endorsed an amendment to the bill related to the entry requirements for judges. Earlier this year, AL passed the bill in general which prescribed a two-year minimum work experience requirement for individuals who intend to become judges. Yesterday, during the discussion of the bill, some from the committee considered two years to be insufficiently stringent and suggested that the required work experience be increased to five years. However, the committee eventually endorsed the government's proposal and accepted that a two-year period would be sufficient for the selection of new judges.

DSEJ TO RESTART CONTINUING EDUCATION SOON

The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) has planned to restart its controversial continuing education program soon. In a reply to lawmaker Agnes Lam's interpellation, DSEJ director Lou Pak Sang said that the bureau had a recent meeting with the city's continuing education service organizations regarding how to improve DSEJ's monitoring of irregularities. To solve the problem of continuing education, DSEJ plans to introduce electronic systems to prevent fraud. Previously, many organizations were found to be improperly obtaining government money through deception and forging admissions.

Gaming taxes record 56.5% decline

THE city's gaming taxes between January and May plunged by 56.5% to 21.04 billion patacas, the Financial Services Bureau announced yesterday.

Last month, the city only collected around 500 million patacas in taxes.

Since the beginning of the year to May 31, the Macau casino gross gaming revenue stood at 33 billion patacas, a contraction of 73.7% year-on-year.

The government had previously revised its estimates for 2020 gaming taxes from 98.3 billion patacas to nearly 50 billion patacas.

The data from the bureau also showed that gaming revenues it collected



since January accounted for 83.4% of the 25.22 billion patacas that the government had collected from all sources.

Meanwhile, the government had still recorded

a surplus of 8.23 billion up to May 31, a downturn of 74.3% compared to last year.

The gross gaming revenue of Macau casinos are taxed at a total rate of 39%,

including other levies.

Macau gaming revenue plunged again in May, recording a drop of 93.2% from a year earlier, a figure that was slightly better than the median analyst

estimate of a 95% drop.

Official data shows that gross gaming revenue plunged to 1.76 billion patacas last month, representing the eighth month straight of declining revenue.

The figure shows that the SAR is still suffering from the impact of Covid-19, along with the continuous entry and travel restrictions.

Meanwhile, analysts previously noted that casinos are losing more than \$1 million a day.

The outbreak has been largely contained in Macau as well as in neighboring Hong Kong and mainland China, but restrictions on travel make it almost impossible for tourists and high rollers to show up to place their bets. LV

HAINAN FREE TRADE PORT WON'T WEAKEN HONG KONG'S STATUS: CHINESE OFFICIAL

A Chinese official yesterday dismissed concerns that the Hainan free trade port will undermine Hong Kong's status as a global financial, trading and shipping center.

With different orientations and priority industries, Hainan and Hong Kong are more complementary than competitive, Lin Nianxiu, deputy director of the National Development and Reform Commission, said at a press conference.

The construction of the Hainan free-trade port "will not bring shocks to Hong Kong," said Lin, adding that the island province will focus on developing tourism, modern services, and high-tech industries.

"We should give full play to Hainan's rich natural resources, unique geographical location, and its advantages of being backed by an ultra-large domestic market," he said.

The country will work to promote the joint development of Hainan and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area and ensure Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability, Lin noted.

Last week, Chinese authorities released a master plan for the Hai-



nan free trade port, aiming to build the southern island province into a globally-influential high-level free trade port by the middle of the century.

Recently, Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng has praised solid efforts in fully implementing the master plan for the Hainan free-trade port in a bid to secure a solid start in its construction.

Han, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Po-

litical Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during his research tour in south China's Hainan Province between May 30 and 31.

Han initially visited a construction site in Haikou Meilan International Airport to check the planning and construction, as well as the preparation work for the operation of the expansion project.

He emphasized efforts to step up the building of transport and other major projects. He also praised actively expanding effective investment developments while urging the local government of Hainan to accelerate the building of a modern and comprehensive transport system to provide a strong foundation for the construction of the free-trade port.

While visiting a new harbor under construction, Han stressed the importance of grasping the opportunity of building the so-called New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor and nurturing international sea routes in order to build an international container hub.

Efforts should also be made to enhance independent innovation capabilities, reinforce abilities to make key technology breakthroughs and safeguard the security of internet information and economic operation, he said, while visiting a software park.

At a duty-free store in Haikou, Han called for efforts to develop Hainan into an international tourism and consumption center.

Last week, The Global Times, the mouthpiece of China's Government, stated in an editorial that,

"Hainan will become a free trade port closely related to Hong Kong, yet will maintain some distance. With favorable housing conditions and natural environment, and sufficient talent resources, Hainan is capable of attracting financial institutions to extend long-term investment businesses from Hong Kong, and thereafter explore business in the Chinese mainland."

The Global Times continues: "Hong Kong's major advantages are free capital convertibility, entry and exit, as well as a sound shorting and hedging mechanism, which is more suitable for short-term capital hoping for high returns. By contrast, Hainan, with an increasingly open financial market, will be a better choice for foreign investors who intend to further expand in the Chinese mainland market in the long run."

"It would be a triple-win strategy for Hainan, Hong Kong and foreign capital, combining the advantages of the two financial markets and allowing investors to form better portfolios to make both short-term and long-term profits," the editorial concludes. **MDT/AGENCIES**

TAIWAN

Executive Yuan finalizing HK, Macau assistance action plan

THE Executive Yuan is to publish a humanitarian assistance action plan for Hong Kong and Macau people after it receives approval at the weekly Cabinet meeting Thursday, a source familiar with the matter said this week, the Taipei Times has reported.

The plan was drafted in accordance with Article 18 of the Act Governing Relations with Hong Kong and Macau, which authorizes the government to assist residents of those territories whose safety and freedoms are threatened for political reasons.

The newspaper added that the government would also amend article 25 of the Enforcement Rules of the Act Governing Relations with Hong Kong and Macau to offer basic care to those whose safety and

freedom are threatened before they are allowed to stay in the country, they said.

Although there should be a two-month public notice for such an amendment, it would be immediately implemented following its approval, the source said.

In evaluating Hong Kongers seeking political asylum, the government first requests legal opinions from human rights lawyers in Hong Kong and confirms their identities to access their level of risk, before the cases are then handed to lawyers in Taiwan.

Under the plan, National Security Bureau and Ministry of Justice officials would conduct a preliminary review to verify a persons identity to prevent Chinese nationals from exploiting

the system to infiltrate the nation, the source said.

Meanwhile, Hong Kongers seeking political asylum could find their own accommodations in Taiwan or choose to stay in government-provided facilities, they said.

Those who cannot afford an apartment or whose cases are under close public scrutiny would be placed in government-provided facilities, they added.

The National Immigration Agency has shelters for illegal immigrants, but asylum seekers would stay in a separate facility, where they would receive basic living needs, psychological counseling and medical insurance, they said, adding that counseling for schools and jobs would be provided after they are given permission to stay.

The Taiwan-Hong Kong Economic and Cultural Cooperation Council would lead the action plan, the source said.

As the funding for Hong Kongers seeking political asylum, which came from donations from Hong Kong, would soon be depleted, the government would budget funds to support them until they are given permission to remain in the nation, they said as quoted by Taipei Times.

The Mainland Affairs Council would be responsible for submitting the budget plan, they added.

The budget for assisting asylum seekers from Hong Kong this year would come from the councils emergency aid fund, as well as the secondary reserve fund in case of a shortfall, they said. **MDT**

HONG KONG

PERMANENT RESIDENTS TO RECEIVE HKD10,000 CASH HANDOUT FROM GOV'T

ELIGIBLE Hong Kong permanent residents can register for the government's cash handout of 10,000 HK dollars from June 21 and will receive the money as soon as July 8, Hong Kong's financial chief announced yesterday.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government earlier unveiled a string of measures to relieve the public's financial burden amid economic hardship, including handing out 10,000 HK dollars to each Hong Kong permanent resident aged 18 or above.

Financial Secretary of the

HKSAR government Paul Chan said at a press conference on Monday that the measure, involving about 71 billion HK dollars in expenditure, is expected to benefit about 7 million people.

On Feb. 26, Chan delivered the HKSAR government's annual budget, announcing a string of measures worth over 120 billion Hong Kong dollars in total, which included tax deduction, cash handout, introducing low-interest loan to small and medium enterprises, to tackle tough economic situation. **XINHUA**



AP PHOTO



Plastic is the hero of coronavirus, says the plastics industry

LESLIE KAUFMAN

ON March 18—a week after the World Health Organization declared Covid-19 a pandemic—Tony Radoszewski, head of the plastics industry's main U.S. lobbying group, sent Alex Azar, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, a strongly worded letter. Bans on single-use items had been proliferating across states and cities for years, but with the virus threatening American lives and livelihoods, he said, enough was enough.

"Single-use plastic products are the most sanitary choice when it comes to many applications, especially the consumption and transport of food, whether purchased at a restaurant or at a grocery store," he wrote. "We ask that the department speak out against bans on these products as a public safety risk and help stop the rush to ban these products."

Plastics lobbyists have been everywhere during the pandemic, touting the role their products play in keeping food, health-care workers, and families safe. Early figures indicate their efforts are being rewarded. In April both Germany's Ineos Styrolution Group GmbH and U.S.-based Trinseo SA reported seeing double-digit percentage

increases in sales at their food packaging and health-care divisions.

"These companies have seized the moment, particularly to roll back things like plastic bag bans," says Steven Feit, a staff attorney at the Center for International Environmental Law. "Some analysts are talking about wrapping everything in plastic, including bananas, and that is certainly what the industry is pushing for."

It's a sharp turnaround for a sector that, only a few months ago, looked like a pariah. Under pressure from both investors and consumers, companies were setting targets to reduce their reliance on plastic packaging—including Coca-Cola Co., dubbed the world's biggest polluter two years in a row by the advocacy group Break Free From Plastic. More than 125 countries have some kind of plastic ban, according to a 2018 report from the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Resources Institute.

That change in attitude came in part from the realization that plastic usage has gone well beyond what recycling can handle. Whereas paper breaks down easily, plastic requires expensive chemicals to degrade. Many for-

ms of plastic, including the thin film used in shopping bags, can't be recycled at all.

The difficulty posed by plastic recycling was once easy to ignore: China simply took it off our hands. From 1992 to 2017 the country received roughly 45% of the world's recyclable plastic. But after 25 years, China reached its limit. Much of what it received from other countries was too contaminated to use, officials said. And its own population was now generating more plastic waste than it could process.

The biggest factor in whether single-use plastic will maintain its momentum post-Covid-19 may be the price of oil

Recycling programs struggled to absorb the excess capacity and were already weakened by the time the coronavirus began to spread. Fayetteville, Ark., Dalton, Ga., and other smaller cities decided that recycling wasn't essential or that the potential for used cups and cutlery to transmit the virus to workers posed too big a risk. At the same time,

restaurant chains such as Starbucks and Dunkin' announced a temporary ban on customers bringing in reusable coffee mugs. New York state delayed a plastic bag ban that was supposed to go into effect on March 1 to May 15, then to June 15.

Anti-plastic crusaders watched, stunned. Judith Enck, a former administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, says that, of course, public health comes first. But as the founder of the grassroots Beyond Plastics project, she questions whether disposable cups make people safer. Currency, for instance, is a notorious germ-carrier. "Will Starbucks now stop accepting cash?" she asks.

Following the example set by Radoszewski's group, the Plastics Industry Association, manufacturers asserted that they were "essential businesses" and should be exempt from stoppages. Workers at a small plastics factory owned by Charter NEX US Inc. in Delaware, Ohio, for instance, say they were forced to continue to work 12-hour shifts plus overtime even after a colleague was sent home with symptoms of the virus. (Four others who might have been exposed were eventually sent home; all were given two weeks' leave at full pay.)

Company officials told them their jobs were critical. But the workers—who asked not to be named for fear of reprisal—say the factory was still fulfilling contracts to pool-chemical wholesalers as recently as April. Charter NEX says it currently makes a child-resistant film used to package a chlorine disinfectant.

It's true that plastic performs many essential functions in our society, particularly in health care. Single-use surgical gloves, syringes, insulin pens, IV tubes, and catheters, for example, have reduced the risk of infection and streamlined operations at hospitals by lifting the burden of sterilization. Yet tests of the virus's potency on various surfaces have consistently shown it remains infectious longer on plastic than on many other surfaces, especially easier-to-recycle cardboard.

The biggest factor in whether single-use plastic will maintain its momentum post-Covid-19 may be the price of oil, which has collapsed because of the twin pressures of the pandemic and the Russia-Saudi Arabia price war. Bloomberg NEF materials analyst Julia Attwood says that while she and her colleagues have adjusted their forecasts slightly downward in the near term, strong demand should keep plastic production high despite the lower margins on cheaper product. That's not ideal for manufacturers, but it's worse for recyclers. With businesses around the world hurting, they may not be able to justify the expense of using recycled plastic when the virgin material costs so much less. **BLOOMBERG**

AP PHOTO



Vietnam ratifies trade deal with EU in boost for economy

HAU DINH, HANOI

VIETNAM ratified a landmark trade deal yesterday with the European Union that is expected to energize the country's manufacturing sector and exports, as it recovers from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Lawmakers approved the agreement in their first National Assembly session since the pandemic began.

The deal was signed in Hanoi last June and was ratified by the European Parliament in February.

When it takes effect next month, the EU will lift 85% of its tariffs on Vietnamese goods, gradually cutting the rest over the next seven years. Vietnam will lift 49% of its import duties on EU exports and phase out the rest over 10 years.

The implementation of the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement "can't come at a better time for Vietnam when it's on the path of economic recovery after several months of closure due to COVID-19," said economist Pham Chi Lan, a former adviser to several of Vietnam's prime ministers.

Vietnam prioritized public health and safety when the coronavirus started to peak in China. It closed

the border with China in January and with the rest of the world in February while imposing a social shutdown that lasted until the end of April. The tough measures contained Vietnam's outbreak to just over 300 cases with no known deaths. No local infections have been reported for almost two months.

Still, the economy has been hit as the shutdowns at home and abroad restricted movements of goods and people.

The pandemic revealed shortcomings in Vietnam's manufacturing sector. After Vietnam's own factories reopened, output was constrained by a lack of supplies of materials from China. That was particularly true for textiles, footwear and electronics, the country's key exports.

"COVID-19 has given Vietnam a hard lesson about being dependent on China," Lan said. "It also showed other countries, including the EU, the negative impact of relying too much on China in their product value chain. The EVFTA (free trade agreement) comes in the right time as all parties realize they need to pivot and restructure to diversify the supply chain."

Vietnam is the EU's second-largest trading part-

ner in Southeast Asia, with two-way trade reaching \$56 billion last year, according to the national general statistics office.

The agreement with the EU is expected to improve Vietnam's competitiveness, enhancing its attractiveness for investors shifting factories out of China.

Tiny Singapore is the only other country in Southeast Asia that has a free-trade agreement with the EU.

"EVFTA will add to the positive momentum drawing manufacturing to Vietnam," said Michael Sieburg, a partner of YCP Solidiance, a corporate strategy consulting firm focusing on Asia.

"Manufacturers looking to locate in the region and seeking a more competitive access to EU markets will be more inclined to shift manufacturing to Vietnam as a result of EVFTA," he said.

Foreign direct investment in Vietnam hit a 10-year high of \$38 billion in 2019. About two-thirds of that went into manufacturing, and the agreement should help sustain that trend, Sieburg said.

Lawmakers also ratified a second pact that protects investors. Negotiated since 2012, it gives EU companies equal treatment

with domestic bidders in competing for public contracts in Vietnam. Vietnam, a communist-ruled country, also committed to standards for sustainable development, including improving its human rights record, protecting labor rights and upholding its pledges to deal with climate change under the Paris accord.

Vietnam has agreed to similar pledges in a Pacific Rim trade deal called the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

More than 30 years since carrying out economic reforms to integrate with the global economy, the country with a population of 95 million, is emerging as a manufacturing powerhouse.

But it has a long way to go, trailing far behind Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia, with a per capita GDP of about \$2,600, or less than half that of Thailand.

The aim is to build ties with countries that have advanced technologies and good corporate governance, said Lan.

"The free trade agreement with the EU will help Vietnam raise its skills and standards. It is a great opportunity for Vietnam to excel," Lan said. **AP**

this day in history



1983 THATCHER WINS LANDSLIDE VICTORY

Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party has won a landslide second term election victory, taking 397 seats to Labour's 209.

The SDP Liberal Alliance, fighting its first national contest, won just 23 seats under the "first-past-the-post" electoral system, despite receiving nearly as many votes as Labour.

Mrs Thatcher announced the forthcoming parliament would have a "heavy programme", featuring some of the bills which fell before the election.

She also pledged to re-organise local authorities and to introduce bills on trade unions and rates.

Parliament is to meet for the first time next week, when the speaker of the House will be sworn in.

The prime minister said her first priority for the new term would be to reshuffle her cabinet. She insisted it would reflect a range of political views, saying, "I haven't been extreme for the last four years and I'm not extreme now."

Defeated Labour Party leader Michael Foot described the result as a tragedy for the country.

He said: "I agree with those who said the fight to win the next election starts immediately and of course I accept, to the full, my responsibilities in this election."

Mr Foot strongly attacked the SDP for siphoning support away from Labour - giving more seats to the Conservatives.

The SDP Liberal Alliance blamed Britain's "winner takes all" electoral system on its failure to convert its significant electoral support into seats in parliament.

David Steel said: "I feel a real sense of outrage at the vast number of votes we picked up with so little to show for it in the way of seats."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Among the reasons behind the Conservative Party's success was Mrs Thatcher's popularity after Britain's victory in the Falklands war and the continuing troubles of a divided Labour Party.

Two of original "gang of four" who left Labour to set up the SDP, Shirley Williams and William Rodgers, lost their seats in the 1983 poll.

But the biggest upset was in Bristol East, where former minister Tony Benn was defeated after 33 years in the Commons.

Michael Foot resigned as Labour leader later in the year, and was succeeded by Neil Kinnock.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 If you're feeling stale, you need to create your own fresh air and sunshine in the form of good energy and good times. Contact the silliest folks you know and have a ball just complaining about the weather.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Someone in your social circle or on your team at work thinks that they deserve something you have, but they're failing to remember how much work and effort you put into earning it.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 However you feel is how you feel, so don't try to hide it. If other people are uncomfortable with your anger, happiness, or whatever emotion you're exhibiting, that's just too bad for them.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 They're interested, and they are not going anywhere unless you tell them to. Don't give them only green lights when yellow would be much more appropriate for now.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Ironically, a big ego has usually been inflated to that super-size volume because someone is hiding an insecurity or two. If you encounter a self-centered braggart today, keep that in mind.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 You can't analyze the unseen, so if you're wringing your hands over a mysterious situation, stop it! Trying to figure out what is motivating other people is a waste of your time.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Ask the penetrating questions that give people something to think about. You don't want pat answers that anyone can spout out. You want and deserve to hear where people really stand on issues.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Your vision for the future is sharper than ever, which might be causing you to feel antsy about how you're going to get to the next stop on your journey.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 One of your most recent dreams may have included some confusing visions that left you scratching your head the next day. Do you think that these visions hold instructions to finding happiness? Nope.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Pick their brain for ideas on how you can open yourself up a bit more. It's about time that you trusted others enough to show them who you really are.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Have you been feeling held back or restricted lately? If so, get ready to get moving! Your progress may have been slowed down by a certain person, but that person is no longer an issue anymore.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Don't get involved with stuff you're unsure of right now, even (or especially) if you think it will get you the cool kids' approval. Why try so hard to be validated by people who just don't get how great you are?

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

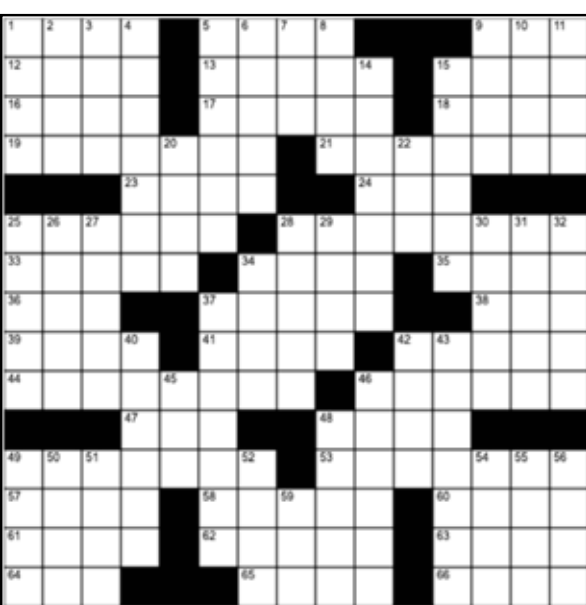
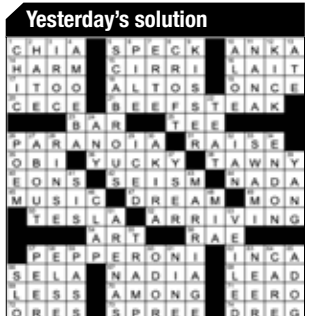
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	18	30	cloudy
Harbin	12	23	thundershower
Tianjin	20	28	cloudy
Urumqi	22	33	cloudy
Xi'an	22	37	clear
Lhasa	10	20	drizzle
Chengdu	19	34	cloudy
Chongqing	21	33	clear
Kunming	15	29	shower
Nanjing	22	28	moderate rain
Shanghai	22	26	heavy rain
Wuhan	23	31	drizzle
Hangzhou	22	25	heavy rain
Taipei	25	30	drizzle
Guangzhou	25	31	moderate rain
Hong Kong	28	32	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	13	18	drizzle
Frankfurt	9	18	drizzle
Paris	11	18	drizzle
London	9	19	drizzle
New York	21	31	moderate rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Dutch name of The Hague; 5- Starchy staple; 9- Old spy org.; 12- Female choir voice; 13- Love deeply; 15- Leave rolling in the aisles; 16- Knee; 17- Sad song; 18- Fishing reel; 19- Eighth sign of the zodiac; 21- Pertaining to compounds of carbon; 23- Pole; 24- Like some vbs.; 25- Language communication; 28- Distaste; 33- Hilton competitor; 34- Amazes; 35- Novel ending; 36- ___ longa, vita brevis; 37- Quality; 38- Bingo!; 39- Film spool; 41- Bridle part; 42- More robust; 44- Editorial writer; 46- Givers; 47- ___ capita; 48- Apply powder to oneself; 49- Lager; 53- The tiniest bit; 57- Uh-huh; 58- Frenzied; 60- Hydroxyl compound; 61- Long and Peebles; 62- "South Pacific" hero; 63- Square; 64- Sugar amt.; 65- In the sack; 66- Bandleader Puente;

DOWN: 1- Witches; 2- A Baldwin brother; 3- ___ extra cost; 4- Epicure; 5- Edible root; 6- Fool; 7- ___ anglais (English horn); 8- Therefore; 9- Actress Lena; 10- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 11- Match up; 14- Most strange; 15- Few and far between; 20- Agreement; 22- Boxer's warning; 25- Apportion; 26- Funeral fires; 27- Relaxes; 28- Expect; 29- Blood vessel; 30- Novelist Calvino; 31- None of the above; 32- Approaches; 34- NASA launch vehicle; 37- Ancient galley; 40- Passes by degrees; 42- Gap; 43- Aged; 45- Hunger; 46- Moved rhythmically; 48- Sheer fabric; 49- Liquid measure; 50- Wife of Osiris; 51- Jump; 52- Hindu hero; 54- That's ___ haven't heard; 55- Legal wrong; 56- Designer Gucci; 59- Pen point;



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



<p>FOR SALE</p> <p>Large 3/4 Bedroom Apartment, Coloane HK\$12,980,000 2,530 ft² 3 1/2 2 1/2</p>	<p>FOR RENT</p> <p>Manhattan Apartment, Taipa \$19,800/mth 1,626 ft² 3 1/2 2 1/2</p>	<p>FOR SALE</p> <p>[Macau] Apartment Historical Centre 2 1/2 1 1/2 840 ft² \$4,580,000 (ref: 20016003)</p> <p>[Coloane] Hellene Gardens 1 1/2 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,663 ft² \$8,200,000 (ref: 19025577)</p> <p>[Taipa] Taipa Village (2 units) 4 1/2 2 1/2 1,404 ft² \$8,380,000 (ref: 19096006)</p> <p>[Macau] Seaview Garden 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,420 ft² \$10,900,000 (ref: 20016004)</p>	<p>FOR RENT</p> <p>[Macau] Lakeview Mansion Car Park 1 1/2 \$3,800/mth (ref: 20041001)</p> <p>[Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1/2 1 1/2 710 ft² \$10,000/mth (ref: 20021002)</p> <p>[Macau] Vai Fung Triplex, Macau 2 1/2 2 1/2 1,065 ft² \$14,000/mth (ref: 19121001)</p> <p>[Taipa] Great View Apartment 4 1/2 2 1/2 2,060 ft² \$28,000/mth (ref: 20031001)</p>
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

SINGAPORE MULLS TIGHTER ANTI-LAUNDERING RULES FOR CASINOS

SINGAPORE is considering tighter regulations at its casinos in an effort to prevent money laundering and financing for terrorism, according to the Casino Regulatory Authority.

The regulator has already asked casino operators to lower the threshold for cash transactions that are subject to due diligence to S\$5,000 (\$3,588), half the current legislated level, a spokesperson said in an emailed response to Bloomberg.

Singapore's formal threshold is much higher than the global standard of \$3,000 set by the anti-money-laundering watchdog Financial Action Task Force, according to the CRA.

"The Ministry of Home Affairs and CRA are reviewing the legislative thresholds in the Casino Control Act with a view to lowering these thresholds further to fully comply with the FATF Standards," the CRA said.

Singapore's casino industry is under the spotlight after Bloomberg reported last week that the U.S. Department of Justice is investigating Marina Bay Sands Pte., the unit of billionaire Sheldon



Adelson's Las Vegas Sands Corp., over whether anti-money laundering controls were breached in the way it handled the accounts of gamblers.

Marina Bay Sands also faces a probe in Singapore by the CRA into its money transfer policies.

Claims about these transfers surfaced in a lawsuit filed last year by Wang Xi, who sued Marina Bay Sands seeking to recover S\$9.1 million that he said was sent to other casino patrons in 2015 without his approval. The Singapore Police Force is also investigating

Wang's complaint, Bloomberg News reported last month.

The review of the legislative thresholds wasn't prompted by any investigation, the CRA said.

In its emailed response to Bloomberg about the probes, the Singapore casino said it takes any

such allegations seriously. The regulator said it's "committed to ensuring that the casinos in Singapore, including Marina Bay Sands, remain free from criminal influence or exploitation, and takes a serious view of any allegations of unauthorized money transfers."

The CRA outlined the changes in due diligence thresholds in response to Bloomberg's request for comment on the Financial Action Task Force report, which said last year the city-state had inadequate customer due diligence requirements for entities such as casinos and real estate agents. It said "moderate shortcomings are still affecting" the two sectors, without citing any companies.

The FATF report published in November is the third follow-up to the 2016 mutual evaluation report on Singapore.

Last year, the Singapore government agreed to extend licenses to operate casinos held by Genting Singapore Ltd. and Las Vegas Sands Corp. to 2030, in exchange for pledges to invest a combined S\$9 billion in tourism projects. The casinos remain closed amid the pandemic. **BLOOMBERG**

AD

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趙魯 Zhao Lu^{**}
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實習律師 TRAINEE LAWYERS:
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康靜雅 Viviana Hong
梁淑蕙 Ana Leon
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JOHN LEICESTER,
PARIS

Massive sports corruption case finally heard at Paris trial

A sports corruption trial involving allegations of doping cover-ups and illicit payoffs at the top of track and field opened yesterday in Paris.

In six days of hearings, the Paris court will weigh evidence that Russian athletes paid millions of dollars to hide their suspected doping so they could compete at the Olympics in 2012 and other competitions. Seized documents suggested that athletes paid to have doping charges buried or delayed, an illicit mechanism dubbed "full protection," the court president said, outlining the case with tentacles stretching from Europe to Asia and Africa.

Lamine Diack, who served as president of the sport's governing body for nearly 16 years, is one of the alleged recipients of the payments. Diack, 87, was present in court, wearing a white face mask.

The court briefly considered but then rejected a request from a lawyer for Papa Massata Diack, one of Lamine Diack's sons who is also a defendant in the case, that the trial be delayed because two of his other lawyers weren't able to attend the trial because of coronavirus travel restrictions.

The trial had already been delayed from January to allow the inclusion of new evidence.

Papa Massata Diack lives in Senegal, shielded from an international arrest warrant issued by France, and did not attend yesterday's hearing.

As IAAF president, Diack was one of the most influential men in Olympic sports, presiding over an era when Usain Bolt made track and field wildly popular. But Diack's legacy, and the IAAF's credibility, took a beating after he stepped down in 2015. He was arrested in France and investigators revealed accusations of athletes being squeezed for payments to cover up their doping cases. A Russian marathon runner told investigators that she alone paid 450,000 euros, a large



Former president of the IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federations) Lamine Diack arrives with his lawyer William Bourdon (right) at the Paris courthouse yesterday

chunk of which was subsequently refunded to her when she was later banned from competing despite the alleged pay-off.

Diack is being tried for corruption, money laundering and breach of trust. Prosecutors say he directly or indirectly solicited 3.45 million euros (\$3.9 million) from athletes suspected by the IAAF of doping who paid to have their names cleared so they could continue competing. About two dozen Russian athletes were reportedly involved. A Russian marathon runner told investigators that she alone paid 450,000 euros, a large chunk of which was subsequently refunded to her when she was later suspended from competing for doping despite the alleged pay-off, the court president detailed.

Prosecutors have also charged Diack for involvement in a \$1.5 million payment from Russia for use in electoral politics in his native Senegal. Prosecutors say the money was creamed off sponsorship and TV rights deals, negotiated

with Russian officials. Prosecutors say the money was to finance presidential and legislative election campaigns in Senegal in 2012, in exchange for slowing down doping cases targeting Russian athletes.

Diack is also accused of having enabled his son to embezzle IAAF sponsorship revenue from Russia's VTB Bank, Chinese oil firm Sinopec and broadcaster CCTV, South Korean tech giant Samsung and others.

Papa Massata Diack also faces corruption, money laundering and breach of trust charges. Senegal has refused France's extradition requests for the former IAAF marketing consultant.

Lamine Diack was detained on a trip to France in 2015 and has been forbidden from leaving the country since.

Also being tried for corruption are a lawyer who advised Diack, Habib Cisse, and a doctor, Gabriel Dolle, who oversaw drug-testing at the IAAF and is accused of taking payments to delay doping cases. Both men were in court.

Two Russians are also on trial but were not present: Valentin

Balakhnichev, a former IAAF treasurer, and Alexei Melnikov, a coach

who led Russia's long-distance running program. AP

AD

JUNHO MÊS DE PORTUGAL NA RAEM

O Sono 睡眠 Sleep

de . by Madalena Fonseca 作品

exposição 展覽 exhibition

inauguração | 開幕 | opening 10.06.2020 18h

horário | 時間表 | schedule 11.06 - 28.06.2020 11h - 19h

local | 場地 | venue Casa de Vidro, Praça do Tap Seac 塔石玻璃屋 Glass House, Tap Seac Square

Entrada livre com o cumprimento das medidas sanitárias recomendadas. Sujeito a limitação do espaço. 免費入場, 受空間限制, 煩請入場者遵循相關衛生規範。 Free entry subject to compliance with the recommended sanitary measures and space limitations.

organização 主辦單位 organization apoio institucional 機構支持 institutional support patrocínio 贊助 sponsor

CASA DE PORTUGAL NA MACAU 塔石玻璃屋 FUNDACÃO ORIENTE IPOR! 澳門基金會 FUNDACÃO MACAU

OPINION

Our Desk

Renato Marques



**THE WHEAT
 AND THE TARES**

In Matthew 13 of the Holy Bible, it is said that Jesus taught the now-famous parable of the wheat and the tares.

For those who are not so familiar with country life, tares are a kind of weed that resemble wheat but unlike wheat, do not produce anything that we can profitably use.

In the story, something causes the seeds of the weeds to be sown mixed in with the wheat, deliberately polluting the landlord's wheat field.

Since the plants are very similar, especially in their early stages, the problem of the tares mixed with the wheat became clear only after the plants were fully grown.

The inability to distinguish the good plants from the bad ones made it too complex for the landlord's servants to separate them until the plants became fully mature and were ready to be harvested.

This parable has provoked several different interpretations; while some say that it refers to the separation of good and evil, others have gone deeper blame it on the circumstances (the quality of the soil).

I am certainly not here to discuss the Holy Bible, but like many other great books which are more or less holy, rich metaphoric speech allows us to apply some of the conclusions to aspects of our lives, timelessly.

In a similar way, Covid-19, especially the aftermath, has highlighted many situations and even parables that we can easily compare to ancient writings.

Let us do a simple exercise: if Macau was that wheat field, what in this region would represent the wheat and what would be the tares? Who represents the weeds that pollute our productive field?

Keeping this story in mind, who are the landowners? How about the servants? Who, due to their incompetence and lack of knowledge, might have been mixing the wheat and the tares in the barn, crop after crop?

But wait. What if the servants are not just keeping the tares in the barn together with the wheat, but they are also burning away the wheat thinking that it is tares? Isn't this even more damaging?

At this moment, you are probably thinking of a million ways to put faces in all these characters. And guess what, they always fit, don't they?

Aside from the large number of parables we could write using this point, that is not the most important part of this story to me.

To me, what is important is that in times of crisis (any type of crisis) we can see things and details, that were previously concealed and blurred by the bigger picture.

Maybe Covid-19 can also give brand-new meaning to a similar quote by Oscar Wilde: "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth."

Who would have thought that this could apply to a surgical mask?

Maybe if we are "forced" to wear these protective masks due to Covid-19 for long enough, we will be able to see some more of people's real faces. Some have already started creeping out from the shadows and are using several means, including the Internet, to do what they call "spreading hope." Unfortunately, if that "hope" is hopeless, maybe they are not only sowing tares, but also harvesting them and storing them in the barn of their neighbor.

When hope is hopeless, I say spreading it is nothing more than polluting minds and fostering deceptions.

Oil and gas company BP announced Monday that it will slash its global workforce by 10,000 jobs as the COVID-19 pandemic slams the energy industry.

Chief Executive Bernard Looney said that the cuts will affect office-based roles in BP's global workforce of 70,000 people and come mostly this year. The changes are expected to significantly affect senior levels, cutting the number of group leaders by a third.

"We are spending much, much more than we make - I am talking millions of dollars, every day," Looney said in an email

to staff that revealed that net debt rose by \$6 billion in the first quarter. "We have to spend less money."

He pledged to bring down capital expenditure by 25% this year, a reduction of around \$3 billion. He also said that it costs \$22 billion a year to run the company, including \$8 billion in people costs.

The job cuts come at a time of tremendous change for London-based BP. It had already embarked on a restructuring plan to ensure its long-term viability as the world decreases its reliance on fossil fuels in an effort to fight climate change.

ONE GOOD THING

**SRI LANKAN CAFE OWNER
 FEEDS AND SHELTERS
 STRANDED TOURISTS**



Stranded tourists rest at the Cafe Chill in Ella, a tourist hot spot about 200 km east of Colombo, Sri Lanka

**BHARATHA
 MALLAWARACHI,
 COLOMBO**

The tourists came to see the magical waterfalls and mountain views of the lowland jungle and rainforest. But then the pandemic hit, and they were stranded in Sri Lanka.

When flights were canceled and the airports shut down, Darshana Ratnayake came to the rescue.

Ratnayake, a cafe owner in Ella, a former colonial hill station in Sri Lankan tea country, organized free food and shelter for dozens of stranded tourists.

"We were totally blown away," said Alex Degmetich, a 31-year-old American cruise line entertainment director.

"It's pretty remarkable," he said. "Coming from Western society, where nothing is really given to us and we have to pay for everything which is fine. But here, locals providing us — tourists — free food and accommodation, is really humbling."

The Sri Lankan government imposed a nationwide curfew on March 20 to curb the spread of the virus, sealing off entire regions of the Indian Ocean island nation. Degmetich was among 40 tourists from 11 countries stranded in Ella, 200 kilometers east of the

capital, Colombo.

Ella's famous treks tend to draw a young backpacker crowd, and Darshana knew they'd soon be out of money, and the small bed-and-breakfast lodges out of food.

He was right: Many of the tourists had just enough money to pay for the trip, and broken supply chains meant the lodges were running low on provisions.

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Darshana established his Chill Cafe as a juice bar with two tables 13 years ago. The business has grown to a full restaurant and boutique hotel with 72 employees.

Just after the curfew was imposed, Darshana prepared a list of those staying in lodges and began boxed dinner deliveries. And he convinced lodge owners to let their guests stay on for free.

"Our livelihood depends on tourism. We must help tourists when they are in trouble. Money isn't every-

thing. We must help and share at difficult times like this," he said.

He said he also donated 5 million Sri Lankan rupees (\$27,000) to tour guides who lost their income when tourism came to a standstill.

Darshana said Sri Lanka's bloody, decades-long civil war had a huge impact on tourism in Ella. Any time a bomb went off in the country, he said, tourist arrivals

fell sharply. For 25 years, separatists from the minority Tamil community fought for a separate state. By the time government forces crushed the rebellion in 2009, U.N. estimates say some 100,000 people had been killed.

With the war's end, Ella's visitor numbers rose sharply, averaging a thousand people a day, he said.

Darshana has expanded his support to both lunch and dinner each day — without, he insists, sacrificing on quality or customer service.

Rebecca Curwood-Moss, a tourist from England, felt hopeless when Sri Lanka's curfew was imposed. She said Darshana's meals have done more than fill empty stomachs.

"In the box, we didn't just find the delicious homemade rice and curry, but we found hope," she said. **AP**

China yesterday sent a 10-member team of physicians to Bangladesh to help fight the coronavirus, as the number of infections in the South Asian nation approaches 70,000. The team consists of 10 respiratory physicians selected by the Hainan Provincial Health Commission in China, according to the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka. Bangladesh confirmed 2,735 new cases of the virus yesterday.



India is reopening its restaurants, shopping malls and religious places in most states even as its cases grow. The health ministry added 9,983 cases, raising India's count past 256,000 to fifth most in the world. The 206 fatalities reported yesterday is the highest single-day rise and takes the country's death toll to 7,135. New Delhi also reopened its state borders, allowing interstate movement of persons and goods.



South Korea reported 38 new cases, most of them in the Seoul region, where authorities are trying to stem transmissions among e-commerce workers, door-to-door sellers and people who went out amid loosened social distancing. The Health Ministry called for officials to examine supplies of testing equipment in case infections continue to increase. Schools were fully back in session yesterday with the last grades returning to classes in the final phase of the reopening.

Sri Lankan authorities resumed normal bus and train services yesterday. The island nation had previously operated limited services due to a coronavirus lockdown. It imposed a 24-hour curfew in March. Since April, the authorities have been easing the lockdown in phases. Authorities say Sri Lanka has prevented a community spread of the virus. The country has confirmed 1,835 cases, including 11 deaths.