

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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WITHOUT A STANDARD TYPE OF FACEMASKS AGREED, HEALTH AUTHORITIES SAY ENTITIES CAN DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES P2

FILIPINA WORKER UNLIKELY TO HAVE CONTRACTED VIRUS IN THE SAR P6

40 LOBBYISTS WITH TIES TO TRUMP HELPED CLIENTS SECURE MORE THAN \$10 BILLION IN FEDERAL CORONAVIRUS AID P8

AP PHOTO



India and China said yesterday that they had made progress disengaging frontline troops from a months-long standoff along a disputed part of their border where a brawl in June left 20 Indian soldiers dead. Special representatives on the border issue, India's national security advisor Ajit Doval and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, spoke by phone on Sunday about the issues along the frontier known as the Line of Actual Control.

India has overtaken Russia to become the third worst-affected nation by the coronavirus after the country reported 24,248 new cases yesterday. India has now confirmed 697,413 cases, including 19,693 deaths. Russia has 680,283 cases. Indian authorities withdrew a planned reopening of the famed Taj Mahal monument, after new cases were detected in the area.

AP PHOTO



China reported four new cases, three from outside the country and one transmitted locally in Beijing, the National Health Commission reported. Another 106 people were in isolation as suspected cases or for testing positive for the virus without showing symptoms. China has recorded 4,634 deaths among 83,557 cases since the virus was detected in Wuhan late last year.

South Korea reported 48 new infections yesterday, 24 of them each linked to local transmissions and international arrivals, continuing a weeklong spread that has inspired second-guessing on whether officials were too quickly to ease social restrictions entering May. The figures announced by the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention brought the national caseload to 13,137 infections and 284 deaths.

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KEVIN HO DORMANT SHAREHOLDER

Shell company at center of illegal residency scheme currently on trial is co-owned by the most recent Macau representative to the National People's Congress, Kevin Ho P3



AP PHOTO

'WORST QUARTER EVER' FOR GAMING SECTOR PREDICT ANALYSTS P4



**MACAU COUNTS
PORTUGUESE TRADITIONS
AS CULTURAL HERITAGE**

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) said it has added 55 more items to its list of the intangible cultural heritage of the city, including several Portuguese traditions. The institute said in a statement that the new items include Portuguese folk dance, the Arraial de São João, several Catholic processions, Macau's iconic egg tarts (pastéis de nata), and making and painting tiles in the Portuguese style. The announcement says some of the additions were proposed by Macau individuals or communities, and that some had been under consideration by the institute for some years. Specifying those aspects of the intangible cultural heritage of Macau that deserve preservation affords them protection, the announcement by the IC stated. The list of the intangible cultural heritage of Macau now contains 70 items.

**AIRPORT PASSENGERS
PLUMMET 99.7%
YEAR-ON-YEAR IN JUNE**

The number of passengers traveling through the Macau International Airport plummeted 99.7% year-on-year to 1,836 in June, the facility's operator CAM has announced. In June last year, the airport recorded 780,595 passengers. According to a CAM statement this week, passenger movement in the first half of the year dropped 80% to 936,968. In the first half of last year, the number of airport passengers stood at 4.72 million. Macau's tourism, gaming, retail and other sectors have been severely affected by the economic impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic. Meanwhile, according to a separate statement issued by the Statistics and Census Service, touchdowns and takeoffs at the single-runway airport dropped 96.2% year-on-year in May.

**MACAU'S BROAD MONEY
SUPPLY ROSE BY 0.7%
IN MAY**

The broad money supply continued to rebound in May with a stable share of patacas, according to statistics released yesterday by the Monetary Authority of Macao. According to the latest data, the currency in circulation and demand deposits rose by 0.5% and 10.6% respectively in May. On the other hand, quasi-monetary liabilities decreased by 0.3%. The sum of these two items, i.e. broad money supply, rose by 0.7% to 686.8 billion patacas. The shares denominated in pataca, Hong Kong dollar, renminbi and U.S. dollar were 32.3%, 45.6%, 5.9% and 14.2% respectively. Meanwhile, at the end of May, the loan-to-deposit ratio for the resident sector decreased from 58.9% at the end of April to 58%. The ratio for both the resident and non-resident sectors fell from 98% to 97.5%.

ALVIS LO SAYS NO STANDARD GUIDELINES FOR FACEMASKS

ANTHONY LAM

THE guidelines on wearing masks, issued by the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, do not stipulate which types of mask are mandatory for places that require their use, Dr Alvis Lo, medical director of the public Conde de São Januário Hospital said yesterday.

He was questioned by the Times as to the authority's communications with other government entities with regards to mask wearing.

At first, he declined to comment on the matter because he was "not familiar with the specific case and situation and did not have sufficient information to make comments."

Yesterday, the Court of First Instance's security post and reception office requested a Macau Daily Times journalist going

there to report on a court hearing to replace his reusable facemask with a disposable surgical one.

On the sidelines on the press conference, the medical doctor provided more information on the matter.

He first explained that the Health Bureau tries to be extremely cautious when making comments on other bureaus or entities. "For example, we were also very careful when we comment on the condition in other places," Lo stressed. "That's why, without having sufficient information on particular cases, we tend not to make comments."

Facemasks are mandatory in many places, such as on public buses and in government offices. The health authority has issued guidelines on the requirement, however Lo explained that "guidelines differ from laws" and that different entities will interpret them differently.



BLOOMBERG

The respiratory physician added that entities have the discretion to decide what types of mask are suitable for their venues. "Taking this case for example, the Court has the right to decide if it will accept reusable masks," Lo explained.

His colleague, Dr Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention, tried to determine if there was anything printed on the reusable mask that prompted the concerns of the judicial body.

However, this was not the case, for the facemask was dark blue in color without any graphics or writing printed on it.

Meanwhile, when questioned on whether there was any news on easing border restrictions between the two Special Administrative Regions, Lo stressed

that the local government has been in communication with its Hong Kong counterpart on the matter and would disclose any updates in a timely manner.

Not only is it in communications with Hong Kong, the local government is also discussing a further easing of restrictions with Guangdong, Macau's single biggest visitor source market.

"Every time we had good news in this aspect, we made immediate announcements to the public," Lo recalled. "The same applies to the negotiation with Hong Kong. Once we have specific details, we will make announcements accordingly."

He stressed that it is not necessary to wait until all parties relax their restrictions to make announcements, hinting that when good news occurs, announcements will be made.

DRIVERS ON THE BRIDGE BEWARE

THE Public Security Police Force (PSP) has confirmed that anyone driving their own cars to Macau via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge will be required to park at the paid public parking lot near the border checkpoint until they finish their 14-day quarantine at a designated hotel. The statement comes after Macau Daily Times published

an account yesterday of a resident who was horrified to discover a nearly 6,000 pataca parking bill after completing his mandatory quarantine. "There was nothing I could do besides pay," he told the Times. The resident also said he wanted his case to serve as a warning to others attempting to enter Macau by the same means.

LAWMAKER Sulu Sou has submitted a statement to the government urging it to "revive interaction with the press and take real actions to safeguard freedom of the press."

Recently, Chinese-language newspaper Cheng Pou published articles which criticized the government for no longer inviting the press to attend inauguration ceremonies of officials, such as the inauguration ceremony for Inês Chan, the new director of the Government Information Bureau (GCS).

The Chinese paper also criticized the Legislative Assembly for no

Sulu Sou urges gov't to protect freedom of the press

longer allowing journalists to wait at the door of committee meetings, depriving them of the right to conduct stand-up interviews with sitting officials.

The lawmaker said on social media that he was not even aware of this "new" arrangement, despite being a deputy in the legislature.

In his written question, he cited the Basic Law stipulation that

protects freedom of the press but added that "how to execute it daily by utilizing laws and policies is the key." Sou also expressed his own doubt over the government's decision not to invite the press to attend the inaugurations of officials.

He questioned the government on the criteria it uses to determine if the press should be invited to events. He stressed that Covid-19

containment is no longer a legitimate reason not to invite the press, as the city held the annual Dragon Boat Races last month, which gathered a large number of people in a single space.

Although he praised the government for previously terminating the general spokesperson mechanism and appointing the GCS to undertake the relevant tasks, he expressed dou-

bt that the government conducted a review on the mechanism which gives each bureau a press officer. He also sought to know the government's roadmap for improving interactions with the press.

The lawmaker also asked about the progress to institutionalize TDM's position as a public broadcaster, so that the UNESCO indexes governing public broadcasters are followed. **AL**

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COURTS | IPIM

Prosecutors find shell company at center of allegedly illegal residency scheme

RENATO MARQUES

HUNAN (Macao) Engineering Equipment Installation Company Limited became the focus of yesterday's court session in the high-profile case against the former leaders of the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) and their alleged affiliates.

The Public Prosecutions Office (MP) suspects Hunan Engineering was only a shell company because it had no staff at the time it submitted residency applications for two employees and near-zero income. Yet its owners had attempted to hire two managers to oversee human resources and accounting.

It was also revealed yesterday that the company is co-owned by the most recent Macau representative to China's National People's Congress, Kevin Ho, in addition to two other partners currently standing trial.

This revelation was revealed yesterday morning when the Court of First Instance gathered to hear a witness, an investigator from the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) who was in charge of the investigation into the allegedly false applications, explain the details of the two positions Hunan Engineering was said to be hiring for.

In the session, the CCAC investigator explained the conclusions reached by the corruption watchdog about the applicants and the procedures. The CCAC determined that the majority of the issues were undertaken by one of the partners of Hunan Engineering, Ng Kuok Sao. Ng performed these actions with the assistance of Miguel Ian Iat Chun, a former chief of the IPIM's Residency Application and Legal Affairs Division and most recently a member of staff at the Pension Fund.

According to the investigator, Ian and Ng were in close communication over the case of the two applicants, with Ng often requesting help from Ian on the status of the requests, as well as providing insight on which documents they should provide to try and overcome IPIM's refusal to grant them residency.

In court, the investigator showed several documents and

RENATO MARQUES



records to prove that Ian helped to provide recommendation letters and a declaration from Hunan Engineering that was then submitted to IPIM in the name of the applicants.

Questioned by both the prosecution and the judges on what benefits had been granted to Ian in exchange for the job, the investigator said they believed Ng had offered him the possibility of acquiring apartment units at a development in Hengqin at a price about RMB4,000 lower per square meter than the market rate at that time.

Nevertheless, the investigator admitted that they failed to prove that Ian had acquired any of those housing units, having only evidence that he had shared with Ng the interest in acquiring them.

The CCAC investigation also revealed that several people, including the applicants and others working on their behalf, submitted to IPIM a declaration of work experience and jobs that the CCAC now considers to be forgeries. The proof for this was that, at the time of these declarations, the applicants, including a woman named Iu Mei Lei, had already stayed in Macau for long periods, as shown by their immigration records.

The CCAC said it concluded

that Hunan Engineering was acting as a shell company and that the documents submitted to IPIM were forged or contained false information.

It found that the records of the company in several governmental departments - including the Social Security Fund, the Financial Services Bureau and the Economic Bureau - showed clearly that the company did not have any employees. In fact, most of its former employees were recorded as having left the company around three years earlier.

Moreover, the company bank records demonstrated low to no entries or tax filings submitted to the government, showing that the company had generated no income for several years in a row. These records proved the company's inactivity and, consequently, the lack of necessity in recruiting the two applicants for the positions of General Manager for Accounting and General Manager for Human Resources, positions used in the IPIM applications.

To prove that the applicants were aware of the illegality of the scheme and also the participation of the company in the whole process, the CCAC investigator showed records of bank transfers made by or in the name of the applican-

ts to another company owned by Ng, the One Kin Construction Company, Ltd. The total value of the transfers was RMB600,000, which was refunded around three years later to the applicants after IPIM's successive refusal to grant the residence authorization to the applicants.

Questioned by the judge, the investigator mentioned that the amount paid by the applicants was too high and unjustified, showing that other companies in the market which provide services of consultancy and delivery of documents to IPIM for the same purpose, charge as little as MOP5,000 or did so free of charge.

Although the applicants

were not granted the residency in Macau, the investigator noted that the simple submission of documents to IPIM and the lengthy process would open the possibility for the applicants to apply for and renew their authorizations to stay in Macau for nine months in the case of one of the applicants and one year in the case of the other.

The trial will continue today hearing more accounts from witnesses in the case. In total, prosecutors have accused 26 people of several crimes of corruption, including document forgery. Among the defendants are several former high ranked IPIM officials, including its former president, Jackson Chang.

KEVIN HO DENIES INVOLVEMENT WITH HUNAN ENGINEERING

KEVIN HO, a partner and administrator of Hunan (Macao) Engineering Equipment Installation Company Limited, has denied any involvement in the activities of the firm. Two out of the three business owners, excluding Ho, are being accused of corruption and other unlawful activities in their treatment of residency applications reviewed by IPIM. "I was never involved in the business activities of this company. I think at the

beginning I was asked by Ng [Kuok Sao] to help to launch the company," Ho told TDM Radio, adding, "Ng and also Tang [Zhang Lu] lost contact with me a long time ago so there was no way to close the company." Both Ng and Tang are defendants on the IPIM residency scheme case and are being tried in absentia as they are both at large. Ng has been already given a five-year imprisonment sentence for fraud in an unrelated case.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

'WORST QUARTER EVER' FOR GAMING SECTOR, PREDICT ANALYSTS

LYNZY VALLES

AMERICAN banking firm Morgan Stanley has predicted that the casino operators' quarterly earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) for the second quarter of this year will be the "worst quarter ever," expecting the six concessionaires to have a combined quarterly loss of around \$1.04 billion (8.3 billion patacas).

Analysts at the firm said that the losses, which will be released in the coming weeks, are related to operational costs at casino properties.

According to the analysts, the results "could provide a glimpse into operating expenses (fixed costs), who amongst the casino operators managed to reduce costs the most, and what proportion of the cut is sustainable."



In a note issued yesterday, analysts Praveen Choudhary and Gareth Leung said they forecasted losses of \$286 million and \$205 million for the quarter for Sands China and Melco Resorts & Entertainment respectively.

Morgan Stanley also said in

the note that the daily operating expenses of the city's six gaming operators may have dropped by 21% year-on-year to a total of \$15 million.

Initially, Morgan Stanley estimated that Sands China Ltd had the highest daily operating ex-

penses during the second quarter, amounting to \$4.3 million, followed by Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd which recorded daily expenses of \$2.9 million in the reporting period.

Other gaming operators may report daily operating expenses

of less than \$3 million, including Wynn Macau, which is estimated to operate at \$2.6 million daily and Melco Resorts and Entertainment Ltd at \$2.2 million.

MGM China Ltd and SJM Holdings Ltd were estimated to operate at \$1.6 million and \$1.3 million respectively.

Morgan Stanley noted that the "market believes the worst is behind us and pent up demand and removal of overseas destinations as a choice could drive upside to estimates."

"While Q2 numbers may not provide [insight into] when the travel restrictions will be lifted or how big 2021 could be, it can answer two questions: (1) who controlled costs the most, and (2) who lost the least as a percentage of Enterprise Value," said the group.

Last month, Macau's gross gaming revenue dropped 97% year-on-year, falling to a yearly low of just MOP716 million.

It was the fifth consecutive month that gaming revenue plummeted, followed by the 93.2% and 96.8% drop in May and April respectively.

Macau rises up list of most expensive cities for expats

MACAU'S rank among the most expensive locations for expatriates in Asia has climbed to the 15th spot, 10 places up from a previous ranking, according to a study conducted by ECA International.

The rating agency's cost of living surveys were carried out between March and September using a hypothetical basket of day-to-day common goods and services purchased by assignees.

Amid the pandemic outbreak and its effect on the city's economy, the inflation rate in the SAR has dropped

slightly from 2.75% in January to 2.53% in May.

The group said that other Chinese cities have all dropped in the most recent cost of living rankings this year. This includes Beijing and Shanghai, which both fell nine places – coming in at 24th and 19th place respectively.

Hong Kong has also dropped slightly in the rankings after falling behind the Swiss cities of Basel and Bern, and now sitting outside of the top five most expensive locations globally.

"Despite experiencing political and social unrest over

the course of 2019, and more recently the impact of Covid-19 which has led to the reluctance of people moving to the city, Hong Kong has only seen a small drop in the global rankings amid the uncertainties," according to Lee Quane, Regional Director, Asia at ECA International.

"Although it has been overtaken by Bern and Basel, Hong Kong is still one of the most expensive places for overseas workers to live in and is still costlier than other Asian expatriate hubs such as Tokyo and Singapore," Quane explained. LV

2020 SPORTS DAY FOR DISABLED HELD WITH 'LIVELY ATMOSPHERE'

THE 2020 Macau Sports Day for the Disabled was held on Sunday "with a lively and harmonious atmosphere," according to its three organizers, the Macau-China Paralympic Committee & Macau-China Recreation and Sports Association for the Disabled, Macao Special Olympics and Macao Deaf Association.

According to a statement from the Macau Sports Bureau

(ID), the Macau Sports Day for the Disabled is primarily designed to encourage people with disabilities to practice more sports, keeping them physically and psychologically healthy.

However, the ID stressed that the Macau Sports Day for the Disabled also serves to highlight the problems experienced by handicapped people, helping to build knowledge within society and raise

public awareness. This serves to help the disabled better integrate into larger society, organizers said.

For this year's event, there were nine recreational sports games and three experiencing zones for physical fitness testing in this event. The Sports Day allows the physically challenged, their families and the public to enjoy sports together. DB

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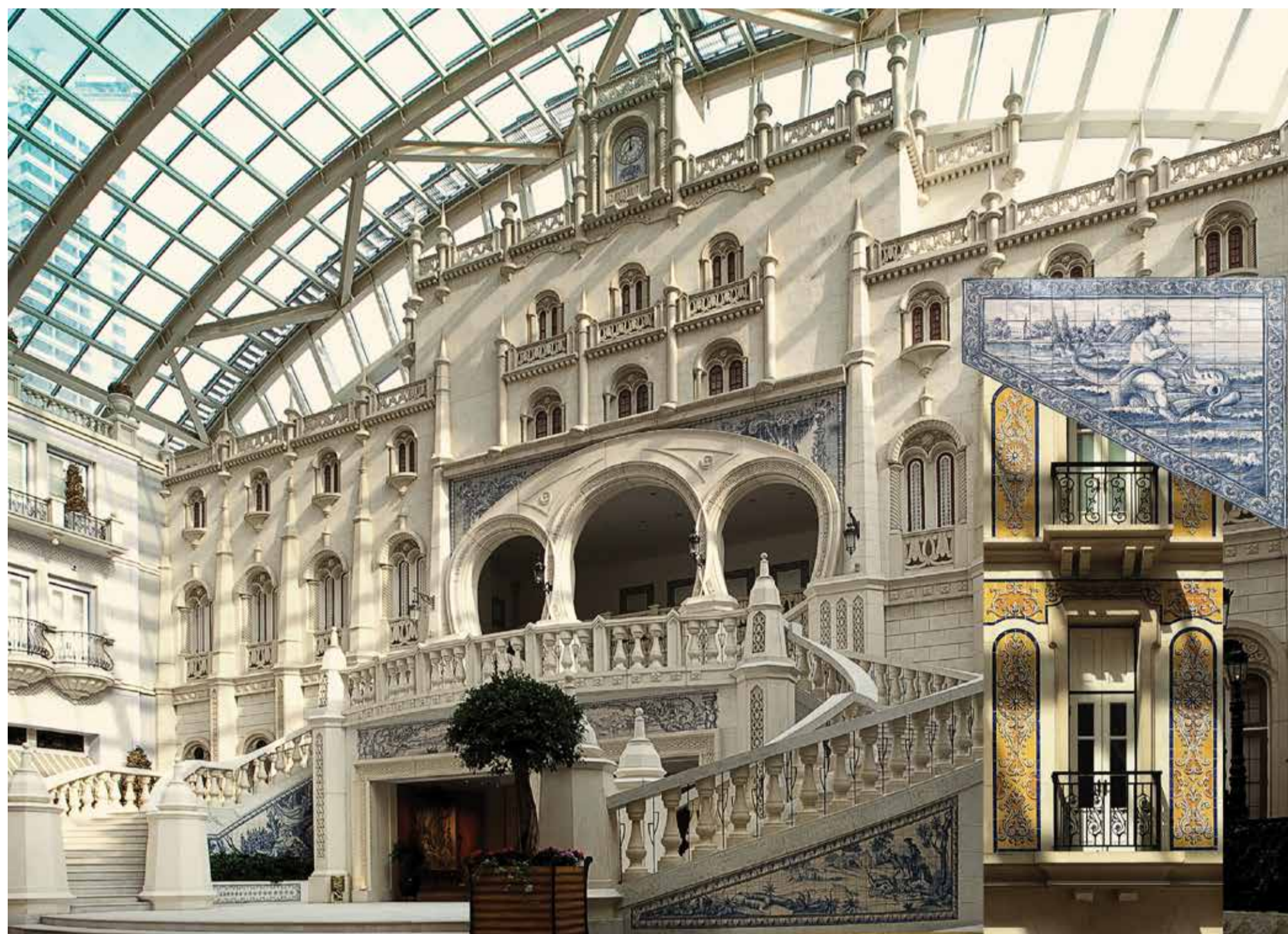
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MIGRANT WORKER UNLIKELY TO HAVE CONTRACTED VIRUS IN THE SAR

LYNZY VALLES & ANTHONY LAM

A migrant worker from the Philippines who tested positive for Covid-19 is unlikely to have contracted the virus in Macau given the safe conditions of the city, according to Dr Leong Iek Hou, coordinator of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

The migrant worker who returned to the Philippines on June 18 via the government's chartered flight recently tested positive for Covid-19, Philippine authorities determined. The 29-year-old, who is six months pregnant, was among the passengers of the second and most recent repatriation flight arranged by the Philippine Consulate General in Macau.

She arrived in Manila at 4:15 p.m. on June 18 via Philippine Airlines Flight PR353. She stayed in the capital for four days in line with quarantine requirements and, on June 22, travelled to Davao de Oro, where she lives.

She underwent a reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test on June 28 and, when the results came out late last week, it was determined that she had

contracted Covid-19. Her case was considered asymptomatic.

"We are extremely concerned about the case. We have immediately contacted the Philippine health authority, which preliminarily replied to us that it needed more time to collect details on the case, as the patient tested positive in the Southern city of Davao de Oro," said Dr Leong yesterday at the press conference.

"Our preliminary evaluation on the case is that she left Macau on June 18 and had her infection confirmed in early July. Although we're not familiar with the specific details, judging from the timeline and the current condition in Macau, it's not likely she contracted the virus in Macau," the medical doctor said.

Given that she remained in her home between June 18 and July 2, as well as considering recent patients recorded in both the mainland and in Hong Kong who have arrived from the Philippines, the official said that the patient likely contracted the virus back home. The Philippines has recorded over 43,000 Covid-19 cases.

"We believe the condition in the Philippines is more severe than in Macau and so

the patient has likely contracted the virus back home. However, for safety reasons, we are in active communications with the Philippines in the hope to gather her contact history in Macau. We will follow up with the concerned people once we have the details," he added.

The patient has been transferred to Davao Regional Medical Center from her municipality's isolation unit to monitor her condition.

So far there are 32 active cases in Davao de Oro, many of whom have been stranded in Manila and Cebu.

The Macau SAR has recorded 46 cases of Covid-19, the majority of which are imported.

The first wave of the virus – which has significantly affected the city's economy – lasted from January 22 until February 4, while the second wave was recorded on March 15, when a new case was again found, until April 8.

It was only after 78 consecutive days with no new cases that the city recorded another imported case, following the one-month period given by authorities for local residents to fly back home through Hong Kong.

SUSPECTED FOOD POISONING AT JOCKEY CLUB RESTAURANT

A Chinese restaurant located at the Macau Jockey Club is being investigated for allegedly giving food poisoning to 26 people from nine family groups, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has announced.

The IAM has ordered the restaurant to conduct precautionary and control measures, while taking samples of food and the environment from the restaurant for tests.

The Health Bureau is the first authority to have information on the case. The nine family groups had lunch at the restaurant between July 2 and 4.

From July 3 onward, the patients developed symptoms such as

diarrhea, fever, abdominal pain and vomiting.

The 26 people had no record of dining together in the preceding 72 hours. Based on their dietary history, incubation period, and symptoms, this event is more likely to be caused by bacterial pathogens.

A social media user posted on a page, reporting that he was one of the 26 people. He posted a photo of a dessert made with eggs, which he alleged to be the likely cause of the contamination.

The IAM has ordered the restaurant to stop providing the concerned dish until the cause of the illness is confirmed. **AL**

LOCAL ASSOCIATION REQUESTS DOG-WALKING AREA IN SEAC PAI VAN

FOR hygiene reasons, a dog-walking area should be designated at the Seac Pai Van Park, the Macau United Citizens Association has argued.

According to the association, the number of dog keepers in Macau is on the rise. However, the association has received complaints from residents in some neighborhoods about dog droppings. This has led to bad smells and may provide a breeding ground for bacteria, according to the association.

The association reminds dog owners to be "civilized"

and clean after their dogs immediately, especially during these hot summer days.

The association also suggests that the government host events on pet health and appropriate pet-keeping practices.

Currently, the city has 11 dog-walking areas, apart from 20 dog toilet areas. The number cannot meet the growing number of pet dogs in the city. Accordingly, the association is requesting that the government stay cognizant of this trend and plan to create such facilities. **AL**

ASSOCIATION SLAMMED FOR ALLEGEDLY RETRACTING DONATION

THE owners of Sin Fong Garden, a residential building in Patane District that collapsed in 2012, has accused the Jiangmen Communal Society of retracting a promised donation of 100 million patacas.

Wong Man Sang, head of a federation of owners, disclosed that the explanation given for the retraction by the communal society was that they "did not have the money." Wong learned the news on June 8, when 11 owners met with the communal society.

According to a report by local broadcaster Radio Macau, the executive vice president of the communal society stressed that the sum is a loan or an advance payment only. Local Chinese media outlet All About Macau, however, determined that the society's founding president, Sio Tak Hong, was willing to write-off the loan if compensation

could not be obtained from the original constructor.

It was also reported that the communal society paid part of the promised donation but terminated the payment in April 2019.

In 2018, the communal society hosted a "donation ceremony" for the 100 million patacas. The word "donation" is seen on the event backdrop.

In addition to the communal society, Macau businessman António Ferreira has also donated 50 million patacas to the federation for reconstruction. The Bank of China agreed to provide loans with discounted interest rates to Sin Fong Garden's owners.

In October 2012, Sin Fong Garden reported that the building was in danger of collapsing due to structural problems – in particular, the poor-quality concrete. More than 200 residents were evacuated urgently. **AL**

INNER MONGOLIA REGION REPORTS BUBONIC PLAGUE CASE

WHILE China appears to have reduced coronavirus cases to near zero, other infectious threats remain, with local health authorities announcing a suspected bubonic plague case in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

Authorities in the Bayannur district raised the plague warning on Sunday, ordered residents not to hunt wild animals such as marmots and to send for treatment anyone with fever or showing other possible signs of infection.

Plague can be fatal in up to 90% of people infected if not treated, primarily with several types of antibiotics.

Pneumonic plague can develop from bubonic plague and results in a severe lung infection causing shortness of breath,

headache and coughing.

China has largely eradicated plague, but occasional cases are still reported, especially among hunters coming into contact with fleas carrying the bacterium. The last major known outbreak was in 2009, when several people died in the town of Ziketan in Qinghai province on the Tibetan Plateau.

Along with the coronavirus, first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year, China has dealt with African swine fever, which has devastated pig herds.

China has gone weeks without reporting a new death from the coronavirus, and yesterday reported just one new case of local infection in the capital, Beijing. AP

Bucking China pressure, Taiwan, Somaliland establish ties

TAIWAN has scored a rare diplomatic victory in establishing relations with the independent region of Somaliland.

Intense pressure from China has reduced self-governing, democratic Taiwan to having just 15 diplomatic allies and being excluded from the United Nations and most other international organizations where Beijing has leverage.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory to be brought under its control by military force if it deems necessary. In elections and public opinion surveys, Taiwanese have overwhelmingly rejected political union with China.

Somaliland broke away from Somalia in 1991 as the country collapsed



Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu (right) and his counterpart from Somaliland, Yasin Hagi Mohamoud in Taipei in February

into warlord-led conflict and has seen little of the violence and extremist attacks that plague its neighbor to the south. Despite lacking international recognition, the region has maintained its own independent government, currency and security system.

In a statement posted July 1 on the Taiwanese

foreign ministry's website, minister Joseph Wu said the governments had agreed to establish ties based on "friendship and a shared commitment to common values of freedom, democracy, justice and the rule of law."

"In the spirit of mutual assistance for mutual benefit, Taiwan and Somaliland will engage in coo-

peration in areas such as fisheries, agriculture, energy, mining, public health, education" and technology, Wu said.

Wu and Somaliland's foreign minister, Yasin Hagi Mohamoud, signed a bilateral agreement in Taipei on Feb. 26. Taiwan has been providing scholarships to students from the region of 3.9 million people.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said yesterday that China maintained ties with Somalia and accused Taiwan of "undermining Somali sovereignty and territorial integrity."

"China firmly opposes Taiwan and Somaliland establishing an official agency or having any form of official exchanges," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing. AP

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 Charter

BRIAN SLODYSKO,
WASHINGTON

FORTY lobbyists with ties to President Donald Trump helped clients secure more than \$10 billion in federal coronavirus aid, among them five former administration officials whose work potentially violates Trump's own ethics policy, according to a report.

The lobbyists identified yesterday by the watchdog group Public Citizen either worked in the Trump executive branch, served on his campaign, were part of the committee that raised money for inaugural festivities or were part of his presidential transition. Many are donors to Trump's campaigns, and some are prolific fundraisers for his reelection.

They include Brian Ballard, who served on the transition, is the finance chair for the Republican National Committee and has bundled more than \$1 million for Trump's fundraising committees. He was hired in March by Laundrylux, a supplier of commercial laundry machines, after the Department of Homeland Security issued guidance that didn't include laundromats as essential businesses that could stay open during the lockdown. A week later, the administration issued new guidance adding laundromats to the list.

Dave Urban, a Trump adviser and confidant, has collected more than \$2.3 million in lobbying fees this year. The firm he leads, American Continental Group, represents 15 companies, including Walgreens and the parent company of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, on coronavirus issues.

Trump pledged to clamp down on Washington's influence peddling with a "drain the swamp" campaign mantra. But during his administration, the lobbying industry has flourished, a trend that intensified once Congress passed more than \$3.6 trillion in coronavirus stimulus.

While the money is intended as a lifeline to a nation whose economy has been upended by the pandemic, it also jump-started a familiar lobbying bonanza.

"The swamp is alive and well in Washington, D.C.," said Mike Tanglis, one of the report's authors. "The-

AP PHOTO



Trump-connected lobbyists reap windfall in COVID-19 boom

se (lobbying) booms that these people are having, you can really attribute them to their connection to Trump."

The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

Shortly after Trump took office, he issued an executive order prohibiting former administration officials from lobbying the agency or office where they were formerly employed, for a period of five years. Another section of the order forbids lobbying the administration by former political appointees for the remainder of Trump's time in office.

Yet five lobbyists who are former administration officials have potentially done just that during the coronavirus lobbying boom:

— Courtney Lawrence was a former deputy assistant secretary for legislation in the Department of Health and Human Services in 2017 and 2018. She became a lobbyist for Cigna in 2018 and is listed as part of a team that has lobbied HHS, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and at least two other agencies. Cigna did not respond to a request for comment.

— Shannon McGahn, the wife of former White House counsel Don McGahn, worked in 2017 and 2018 as a counselor to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. She then

joined the National Association of Realtors as its top lobbyist and is listed on disclosures as part of a team that has lobbied both houses of Congress, plus six agencies, including the Treasury Department. The Realtors association did not respond to a request for comment.

— Jordan Stoick is the vice president of government relations at the National Association of Manufacturers. Stoick's biography on NAM's website indicates that he is "NAM's lead lobbyist in Washington," where he started working after serving as a senior adviser in the Treasury Department. Disclosures indicate that Stoick and his colleagues lobbied both houses of Congress plus at least five executive branch agencies, including Treasury.

"NAM carefully adheres to the legal and ethical rules regulating lobbying activity, including ensuring that its employees comply with all applicable prohibitions on contacting their former employers," Linda Kelly, the organization's general counsel, said in a statement.

— Geoffrey Burr joined the firm Brownstein Hyatt after serving as chief of staff to Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao. The firm's lobbying disclosure for the first quarter of 2020 includes Burr on a list of lo-

bbysts who contacted the White House and Congress on coronavirus-related matters on behalf of McDonald's.

— Emily Felder joined Brownstein Hyatt after leaving the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, where she worked in the legislative office. Felder is listed on a disclosure from the first quarter of 2020 that shows she was part of a team that lobbied Congress and the White House.

A spokeswoman for the firm said both Felder and Burr abide by the Trump administration's ethics rules, which limit their lobbying to the House and the Senate.

"We are confident that our lobbyists are in compliance with all lobbying rules and applicable prohibitions and did not violate their Trump Administration pledge," spokeswoman Lara Day said in a statement.

Public Citizen's Craig Holman, who himself is a registered lobbyist, said the group intends to file ethics complaints with the White House. But he's not optimistic that they will lead to anything. Last year, he filed more than 30 complaints, all of which were either ignored or rejected.

"There does not appear to be anyone who is enforcing the executive order," Holman said. AP

this day in history



2001 Two STABBED IN BRADFORD RACE RIOTS

Two people have been stabbed and many more injured in running battles between white and Asian gangs in Bradford.

Violence broke out in the city centre at 1630 BST after crowds at an Anti-Nazi League rally discovered that National Front sympathisers were gathering in a nearby pub.

When police reinforcements arrived, in full riot gear, anger turned towards them.

Broken bottles, bricks and petrol bombs thrown by the rioters have left a trail of damage and disorder in the city.

By the evening police had made 18 arrests - 11 whites and seven Asians.

The Campaign for Racial Equality's Commissioner for the North of England, Mohammed Amran, has been demanding to know how the police allowed a peaceful demonstration to get out of hand and why they failed to provide better information.

Police managed to move the rioters out of the city centre and have closed it down.

More than 1,000 people are still confronting police in the Manningham district of the city.

The crowds there are still not under control and disturbances are expected to continue into the night.

This predominantly Asian area was the scene of serious rioting six years ago.

Racial tension in Bradford has erupted into violence twice already this year. In disturbances in May, 80 police officers were injured.

There have also been recent riots in Oldham and Burnley in a summer characterised by racial unrest in Northern towns.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The following night saw some of the worst violence of the summer. Around 1,000 youths devastated the Manningham area with missiles and fire bombs. 120 police officers were left injured and there were 36 arrests - 13 whites and 23 Asians - only two from outside the area.

Six days after the riots ended, Lord Ouseley published the results of a six month investigation - commissioned before the riots - into race relations in Bradford called Community Pride not Prejudice. After the clashes a series of reports and cross-departmental groups examined the Northern towns' racial problems.

These gave the causes as a complex mix of social deprivation, segregation and failings in official policy and police behaviour.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Renewal is in the air right now, so if you can just hold on and stay motivated long enough, you will be able to enjoy a change of tides. This new tide will sweep in a much happier era in your life.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 Even if it looks hopeless, as long as you have hope in your heart, hope survives! You have a vision of what you want the next year of your life to be. Go out and make it happen.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 Today you will finally have the time you need to fully explore your feelings about someone. They've been sending you mixed signals, which has understandably frustrated and confused you.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Flipping a coin isn't the most sophisticated way of making a decision, but you've got to admit it gets the job done. If you are indecisive right now, grab a quarter and let it make the choice for you!

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 There are people who are planning something that you need to know about. It could be a party, it could be a caper, it could be a coup! Whatever it is, it is sure to go a lot better if you are involved.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Or when your boss or another authority figure sends you a particularly complimentary e-mail, believe your hunch that says big changes are coming for your career.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Stay focused on your own path. Keep your eyes straight ahead and your feet pointed forward. Just keep marching along. There's nothing to see here. Even if there is, you need to stay out of it.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 The insight you've been taking from your dreams hasn't been much use to you lately, so it might be time to start thinking about a better way to figure things out.

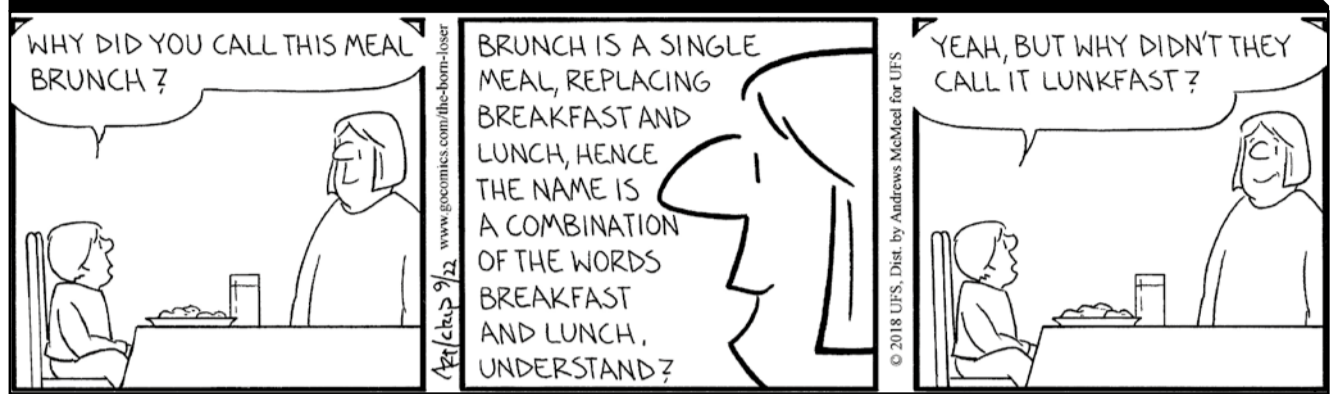
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 You're an open person most of the time. You have nothing to hide, so why should you waste time covering things up? This may be true, but you should guard your privacy at all costs.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Any extra time you have today should be spent doing some research. Are you thinking about making a big purchase soon? Get online and search for the pros and cons about what you're considering.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Any business deals you take part in today, whether it's buying groceries or signing papers for a home loan, deserves your focused attention. Check the receipt.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 When the conversation turns to the latest drama in someone's life, you should either change the subject or pretend that you suddenly have something else to do. Don't tempt yourself.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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EASY+

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MEDIUM

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HARD

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WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	22	33	cloudy
Harbin	18	25	thundershower
Tianjin	23	32	clear
Urumqi	17	25	cloudy
Xi'an	25	38	cloudy
Lhasa	14	26	cloudy
Chengdu	22	33	shower
Chongqing	24	28	drizzle
Kunming	19	27	shower
Nanjing	24	32	cloudy
Shanghai	25	31	drizzle
Wuhan	24	26	rainstorm
Hangzhou	25	28	heavy rain
Taipei	26	31	drizzle
Guangzhou	27	35	clear
Hong Kong	28	33	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	18	27	clear
Frankfurt	10	18	clear
Paris	11	120	clear
London	9	19	cloudy
New York	22	31	drizzle

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- "___ She Lovely?"; 5- Icon; 10- Legal wrong; 14- Scottish body; 15- Get to the point?; 16- ___-Tass (Russian news agency); 17- Hawaiian outdoor feast; 18- Ring; 19- Brief letter, paper money; 20- Diamond; 22- Short literary composition; 23- Simon ___; 24- Nothing more than; 26- Like a fleabag; 29- An amorous glance; 33- Chocolate source; 34- Onto; 35- Caliginous; 36- Unattractive; 37- Sheeplike; 38- Moore of "G.I. Jane"; 39- Monk's title; 40- Viewpoint; 41- Sublease; 42- Captivating; 44- Head lock; 45- Plant anchor; 46- That's ___ haven't heard; 48- Songwriters' org.; 51- Force per unit area; 55- Regretted; 56- You ___ mouthful; 58- Tiger's choice; 59- Female child; 60- ___ alia; 61- Look at lustfully; 62- Oklahoma Native; 63- Brings up; 64- ___-do-well;

DOWN: 1- Troubles; 2- Liquid food; 3- Final Four org.; 4- Fifth day of the week; 5- San Marino surrounder; 6- Female horses; 7- Impersonator; 8- ___-X; 9- Mound stat; 10- Showy pretense; 11- Western Native Americans; 12- Pro follower; 13- Low card; 21- Deck; 22- Della's creator; 24- Had in mind; 25- Green land; 26- Scrape with one's foot; 27- Tidal bore; 28- Dazzling display; 29- Unpaid; 30- Designer Simpson; 31- Small change; 32- Gives off; 34- ___-garde; 37- Mixed bag; 38- Ridicule; 40- Hit the mall; 41- Hwys.; 43- Tiny bed; 46- Cry from the bench; 47- Approaches; 48- Jason's craft; 49- Clubs, e.g.; 50- King mackerel; 51- Pocket bread; 52- The munchies, e.g.; 53- Acting part; 54- Cabinet dept.; 56- Title of a knight; 57- Hydrocarbon suffix;

Yesterday's solution

R	O	T	H	O	H	O	S	D	A	Y	O
E	R	S	E	C	A	N	O	E	O	N	E
S	C	A	N	E	D	E	N	S	E	T	A
T	A	R	P	L	E	A	C	A	S	I	N
U	N	C	U	T	L	O	P	S	I	D	E
S	N	A	K	E	H	O	M	E	W	I	N
I	T	I	M	O	P	E	M	O	B		
D	I	V	E	T	A	M	S	E	R	E	C
E	L	E	M	E	N	T	S	A	W	A	S
A	C	C	E	P	T	B	A	G	L	A	T
R	E	A	R	E	L	A	T	E	W	R	E
E	R	G	O	R	A	R	E	R	A	E	R
S	E	E	R		C	A	N	S	Y	A	M

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
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BLACKROCK FAVORS ASIA MARKETS CLOSELY TIED TO CHINA'S RECOVERY

ABHISHEK VISHNOI

THE world's biggest asset manager is betting that some of the Asian markets that are closely tied to China's recovery and have policy headroom will outperform peers over the next year.

BlackRock Inc., which oversees \$6.47 trillion in global assets, expects stocks and bonds in China, and its trading partners such as South Korea, Japan and Taiwan, will do better than global emerging markets over the next six to 12 months, according to Ben Powell, chief investment strategist for Asia Pacific at BlackRock Investment Institute, a unit of the firm.

These countries have policy capability to do more if necessary and have a more direct exposure to the Chinese economy, which looks to be recovering quite well, Powell said in an interview. "Economies that are geared into that combination of po-



policy, China's recovery" and strong tech will do relatively better, he added.

A variety of economic data out of the mainland have shown momentum of an economic rebound from coronavirus shutdowns. Profits of Chinese industrial enterprises rose in May for the first time since November while vehicle sales grew for a third straight month in June. That bodes well for China's top trading partners in the region including Japan and Korea.

While China's central bank has started slowing down the pace of monetary easing, BlackRock said that the nation, alongside some of its trading partners, has more policy ammunition still to be deployed compared with some global counterparts. The CSI 300 Index jumped 5.7% on Monday, the most since February 2019.

"China of course still has got a meaningfully positive interest rate both real and nominal, which is relatively rare globally," Powell said.

"China, if necessary, has got the ability to do more on both monetary and fiscal" measures.

BlackRock said differentiation will prevail in the region's risk assets amid varying levels of economic reopening and policy headroom. It has turned tactically neutral from overweight on Asian equities and fixed income, citing renewed tensions between the U.S. and China. It has gone underweight on emerging markets and has upgraded Japan stocks to neutral from underweight in global allocation.

"We believe that Japan is well positioned from a broad policy perspective to recover relatively quickly from the virus downdraft," Powell said. "The combination of domestic policy support, a relatively benign virus experience, and gearing into the global economic recovery can translate into Japan equities performance." **BLOOMBERG**

UK SET TO START HUAWEI 5G PHASE-OUT

PRIME Minister Boris Johnson is preparing to begin phasing out the use of Huawei Technologies Co. equipment in the U.K.'s 5G telecoms network as soon as this year, a person familiar with the matter said.

A report from the National Cybersecurity Centre concluded that new U.S. sanctions mean Huawei will have to use untrusted technology, making security risks impossible to control, according to the person, who confirmed a story in the Sunday Telegraph newspaper.

Officials are drawing plans to speed up the removal of existing Huawei kit, although an exact timetable is yet to be set, said the person, who asked not to be named discussing unpublished proposals. No date has yet been set for a cross-government discussion at the National Security Council.

"If the U.S. imposes sanctions, which they have done, we believe that could have a significant impact on the reliability of Huawei equipment and when we can use it safely," Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden told Sky News when asked about the prospect of phasing out Huawei.

If taken, the decision would mark a U-turn by Johnson's administration, which in January cleared Huawei to participate in the U.K.'s 5G build-out subject to strict conditions, including a 35% cap on its involvement and a bar on its gear being used in parts of the network deemed sensitive. Ministers argued the U.K. needed diversity in its suppliers, and that any risks involved in using Chinese equipment could be mitigated. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

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TALES AZZONI, MADRID

THE closer Real Madrid gets to the Spanish league title, the stronger the accusations it is benefiting from the referees.

Its opponents are not holding back, and Madrid has heard enough.

"I'm tired of always talking about the same thing," Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said after the 1-0 win at Athletic Bilbao yesterday [Macau time]. "It seems like we only win thanks to the referees, and that's not true. Real Madrid and its players deserve respect."

The victory kept Madrid as the only team with a perfect record since the restart. It was the team's seventh straight win since the league resumed, leaving it four points ahead of second-place Barcelona with four matches left.

When asked if Madrid was in the lead only thanks to VAR, Barcelona president Josep Bartomeu didn't do much to dismiss the insinuation.

"Our results haven't been good, obviously, but it's true that in many games VAR hasn't been fair and has always favored one team," Bartomeu said after the team's 4-1 win at Villarreal. "Many teams are being hurt by this."

Madrid's win over Athletic came with a controversial 73rd-minute penalty awarded by video review after left back Marcelo was stepped on by a defender inside the area.

It was the latest in a series of VAR decisions that have gone Madrid's way following the break caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Madrid had another one moment after it scored on Sunday, as Sergio Ramos stepped on an Athletic player away from the ball inside the area but the referee let



FOOTBALL

Refereeing criticism increases as Madrid nears Spanish title

the game continue despite loud complaints by the hosts.

"We've already noticed which way these decisions are going in these last few rounds," Athletic captain Iker Muniain said. "Everyone can reach their own conclusions."

Barcelona's players and coach Quique Setién had already been sending messages of criticism against some of the decisions going Madrid's way, but it was the

first time Bartomeu spoke more bluntly about it.

"This is the best league in the world but VAR is not working as it should be working," Bartomeu said. "In the last few weeks everyone has seen that VAR has not really been fair."

Barcelona had the lead when the league was interrupted, but relinquished it after drawing three of its last seven matches.

"If someone has made a mistake

and has not achieved his goals, he has to have some self-criticism and look at his own players and at his own squad," Ramos said before Bartomeu's comments. "You can't give credit to the referees for what Madrid has been achieving."

Atlético Madrid coach Diego Simeone was not among those thinking Madrid has been getting the benefit of the doubt on VAR decisions.

"Mistakes can be made, but

VAR is fair with everyone," Simeone said. "A team like Madrid will have more penalties go its way because it attacks more than other teams do."

Atlético is 15 points behind Madrid, which resumes its quest for its first league title in three years when it hosts relegation-threatened Alavés on Friday. Barcelona hosts last-place Espanyol on Wednesday in a Barcelona city derby. AP

OLYMPICS

Tokyo games seek Covid-19 defenses, but what exactly?

AS the president of the Tokyo Olympics, Yoshiro Mori knows that experts will have to come up with defenses against COVID-19 for the the postponed games to open a year from now.

These might include quarantines for athletes, few fans at the venues, and many other ideas being floated by the organizing committee, the city of Tokyo, and the International Olympic Committee.

The Olympics are scheduled to open on July 23, 2021. So far local organizers and the IOC have talked only vaguely in public about how the games can be held. They've proposed cutting out frills and

simplifying, but have said the sports will be unchanged with 11,000 athletes competing from 206 national Olympic committees.

Add to this 4,400 Paralympic athletes and thousands of staff members, technical officials, and Olympic officials.

"What we are most worried about now is if we are told to limit people," Mori said yesterday, speaking with Yuriko Koike a day after she was elected to a second term as Tokyo's governor.

"How do you separate tickets of those who already bought them?" Mori asked, throwing out an example of the challenges.

"We have these kind of problems."

In addition to talks with Mori — a former prime minister — Koike also met with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Koike, who is viewed as future prime minister, said Abe explained progress on vaccines being developed for COVID-19.

Some scientists believe the Olympics can't be held safely unless a vaccine is available.

"Regarding the Olympics and Paralympics, there are various issues regarding what kind of form they will take, what will be done about costs and, above all, what will be done for coronavirus countermeasures," Koike said.



Tokyo's newly reelected Gov. Yuriko Koike (right) meets Tokyo 2020 President Yoshiro Mori

In an interview last month, Olympic Games operations director Pierre Ducrey was optimistic the games would be held. But he was light on details.

"The future is not clear exactly as to what envi-

ronment we will have next summer," he said. "Right now we cannot go with one plan and say this is our plan to the end. We need to develop different options."

IOC President Thomas Bach has floated the pos-

sibility of limited fans, though he said it's not his preference.

Ducrey said the same thing in the interview with the International Academy of Sport Science and Technology.

"We all work in this environment to create circumstances where you can have spectators," he said. "But when this comes in the way of delivering the event safely, I guess there is not a lot to think about."

Neither Japanese nor IOC officials have said what the postponement will cost. Estimates in Japan have ranged from \$2 billion to \$6 billion, with Japanese taxpayers getting most of the bills. AP

OPINION

Our Desk

Renato Marques



THE HUMAN PETS

At times when slavery is once again put to discussion and several movements, some more or less anarchic, others more or less organized, try to highlight it in the easiest way possible by doing the wrong thing, I woke up thinking how ignorance can be bliss.

It is pretty clear to me that the social paradigm has changed and those old-fashioned ideas of “educating citizens to think, to analyze and solve problems” have already given way to a new trend that would translate to something like “educating citizens to act as a herd without questioning the orders of the herd leader.”

I, an admitted skeptic of artificial intelligence (AI), find myself realizing that AI is already a huge reality in most sectors of our society, it is just dressed in different clothes.

My misconception about AI came from old science fiction movies where robotic machines had gained the capacity to act and to think (to some extent) as humans. None of this reflects the reality in which, unlike what I expected, humans are the ones turning into robots and acting, if not brainlessly, at least like programmed machines.

To this new trend and stubbornly refusing to call this change AI, I give them the new name of “human pets.”

Although they are not slaves (by definition) as they are “paid” or get something in exchange, these human pets have little of what makes us human beings. They have lost the capacity to think on their own, and the small parts of rationality left seek to fulfill two simple necessities: satisfaction of basic needs and following orders (blindly).

Although many times mistreated, pets have developed an extreme dependency on their “owners.”

I can only find a similar form of dependency and affection in “Stockholm syndrome,” a syndrome characterized by feelings of trust or affection felt in cases of kidnapping or hostage-taking by a victim toward a captor.

In exchange, the leaders provide them with means of livelihood and “belly rubs” that can come in the form of “special benefits” or rule relaxing when compared to the other members of the herd, or so they think.

Another of the characteristics of the human pets is their life goal, which is to be not the leader of the pack, but to be the best of all the followers. For that, they are willing to step on and climb on top of any of their “mates” to praise their leader.

This happens everywhere (look around you) and, to me at least, it is becoming extremely concerning as we are quickly heading towards not an expansion of some forms of democracy and added freedom, but different and new forms of dictatorship, some of the size of a country, others of the size of a family.

Like pets, sometimes we think this temporary comfort is better than “a whole life of struggle” but what are the consequences? We should know that by now. It has been written in the history books. That is why the books exist, to show to future generations how we managed to evolve as humans and above all, as a society and not to perpetuate old systems and ideas of the past.

My question is, are we still evolving as a society? Are we still developing to become better as people and as groups of people? Or without realizing, we reached that peak some time ago and, we are now headed in the opposite direction?

I guess to teach machines to think as humans (as in AI) finally proved to be (as I thought) a much harder task than to teach humans to stop thinking and acting like machines.

CHINESE DIPLOMAT DERIDES UK'S MOVE TO OFFER HK CITIZENSHIP

THE BUZZ

China's ambassador to the UK derided Prime Minister Boris Johnson's offer to provide up to 3 million Hong Kong people with a path to citizenship, describing the move yesterday as gross interference in his country's affairs.

Ambassador Liu Xiaoming defended his country's new national security law, and depicted Johnson's actions as meddling in China's domestic affairs. The UK handed control of Hong Kong, its colony for more than a century, back to Beijing in 1997, but Liu insisted that the UK continues to make irresponsible remarks on Hong Kong affairs.

“This move constitutes a gross interference in China's internal affairs and openly tramples on the basic norms governing international relations,” he said adding that the Chinese side has expressed “its great concern and strong opposition.”

The law imposed last week makes secessionist, subversive, or terrorist activities illegal, as well as foreign intervention in the city's internal affairs. Activities such as shouting slogans or holding up banners and flags calling for the city's independence is violating the law regardless of whether violence is used.

PANDEMIC

AUSTRALIA TO SHUT STATE BORDER AS MELBOURNE INFECTIONS SURGE

AUSTRALIAN authorities were preparing to close the border between the country's two largest states, as the country's second-largest city, Melbourne, recorded two deaths and its highest-ever daily increase in infections yesterday.

The border between the states of New South Wales — home to Sydney — and Victoria — home to Melbourne — is due to be shut late today.

New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian was a critic of states that closed their borders to her state when Sydney had Australia's largest number of coronavirus cases. But she said she changed her stance because the situation in Melbourne was unprecedented and indicated the pandemic was in a new phase.

The overwhelming majority of new infections detected in Melbourne in recent weeks were from community transmission. Everywhere else in Australia, the vast majority of people who tested positive for the virus were infected overseas or had been infected by a returned traveler, Berejiklian said.

“What is occurring in Victoria has not yet occurred anywhere else in Australia,” she said yesterday. “It's a new part of the pandemic and, as such, it requires a new type of response.”

The Victorian government locked down 36 of the most virus-prone Melbourne suburbs last week and at the weekend added another four suburbs because of the disease spread.

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews said of the 127 new cases recorded overnight, 53 were among 3,000 people who have been confined by police



Women hold signs outside housing commission apartments under lockdown in Melbourne

to their apartments in nine public housing blocks since Saturday.

Australia's Acting Chief Medical Officer Paulk Kelly has described the high-rises as “vertical cruise ships” because of the high risk of virus spread.

Police allege a 32-year-old man bit a police officer as he attempted to leave a high-rise in the suburb of Flemington. He would be charged with assault, resisting police

The Victorian government locked down 36 of the most virus-prone Melbourne suburbs

and attempting to breach a pandemic order, Police Chief Commissioner Shane Patton said.

The infections announced yesterday surpassed the first surge of infections in Melbourne that peaked on March 28 at 111 cases recorded in a day.

Daniels said he agreed with Berejiklian and Prime Minister Scott Morrison, a Sydney resident, that the border needed to close. Three in five Australian residents live in

Sydney or Melbourne and the air services between the two cities before the pandemic were among the busiest in the world.

“I think it is the smart call, the right call at this time, given the significant challenges we face in containing this virus,” Andrews said.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Michael Kidd confirmed that federal authorities agreed with the closure. The federal government had previously opposed any internal border closures aimed mostly at stopping spread from Victoria and New South Wales. Morrison had urged state leaders to open their borders for the good

of the economy. Kidd said that only 16% of new cases detected in Australia in the past week had been infected overseas. Two weeks ago, 50% of new cases were people infected overseas and detected in hotel quarantine, he said.

“The situation in Melbourne has come as a jolt, not just of the people of Melbourne but people right across Australia who may have thought that this was all behind us. It is not,” Kidd said. AP



The Philippines has seen a big recent spike in infections, raising the possibility its overcrowded capital may be placed back under a strict lockdown. The Department of Health reported 2,434 cases in recent days, the majority in metropolitan Manila, raising cases nationwide to more than 44,250, including 1,297 deaths.

Sri Lanka partially reopened schools yesterday as part of the Indian Ocean island nation's efforts to emerge from its coronavirus lockdown. Authorities are reopening schools in phases after keeping them closed for more than three months due to the lockdown. Students in grades 5, 11 and 13 returned yesterday. Other students will return later this month. Sri Lanka has reported 2,076 virus cases, including 11 deaths.



Egyptian security agencies have tried to stifle criticism about the handling of the coronavirus health crisis by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's government. Rights groups say at least 10 doctors and six journalists have been arrested since the virus first hit Egypt. Other health workers say they have been warned by administrators to keep quiet or face punishment.

France The Mona Lisa is back in business. Paris' Louvre Museum, which houses the world's most famous portrait, has reopened after a four-month coronavirus lockdown. Just 7,000 visitors were expected on the reopening day, down from up to 50,000 a day before the pandemic, in the busiest summer months. Reservations and face masks are now required for visitors.

Serbia Troops set up an emergency 500-bed field hospital yesterday, a day after neighboring Kosovo imposed a nighttime curfew in four cities, as the Balkans battled to contain a surge in coronavirus infections that underscored the risks of swiftly easing lockdowns. The makeshift hospital in a sports hall in Belgrade is a “precautionary measure.”