

The Macao SAR Government urges:

Implement regular epidemic prevention measures;
 Wash hands frequently and wear a mask;
 Keep a distance and avoid crowd gathering;
 Convert health code for boundary crossings;
 Stay within the Greater Bay Area if leaving Macao.

Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre



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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

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HONG KONG BANS ALL DINE-IN SERVICES AT RESTAURANTS AND PUBLIC GATHERINGS OF MORE THAN TWO PEOPLE STARTING TOMORROW P2

GUANGDONG ATTRACTING HK, MACAU CITIZENS WITH GOVERNMENT JOB OFFERS P4

WORKERS TESTIFY AT YESTERDAY'S COURT HEARING THEY KNEW NOTHING OF COLLEAGUES USED TO FILE IPIM APPLICATIONS P4



USA The world's biggest Covid-19 vaccine study got underway yesterday with the first of 30,000 planned volunteers helping to test shots created by the U.S. government - one of several candidates in the final stretch of the global vaccine race. There's still no guarantee that the experimental vaccine, developed by the National Institutes of Health and Moderna Inc., will really protect.



Vietnam About 80,000 people, mostly local tourists, are being evacuated from the popular Vietnamese beach city of Da Nang after four people there were confirmed to have Covid-19 over the weekend, the government said yesterday. Vietnam reimposed a social distancing order in Da Nang on Sunday following the confirmation of the cases, the first known to be locally transmitted in the country in over three months.

Vietnam has postponed its hosting of Asia's largest security forum, which includes North Korea, and an annual meeting of Southeast Asian foreign ministers by a month to September due to the pandemic. Two Southeast Asian diplomats said yesterday that Vietnam, which leads the ASEAN this year, hopes to hold face-to-face meetings in mid-September instead of over video if the annual gatherings were to be held as originally scheduled later this week.

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YELLOW CODE

MACAU ADDS XINJIANG, LIAONING PROVINCES TO MEDIUM-RISK LIST P2



NAM VAN PROJECT A WAY INTO MACAU FOR MALAYSIA'S GENTING P3

GOV'T RAISES JOB INJURY COMPENSATION CEILING

The government has raised the compensation given on the grounds of occupational injuries and diseases, the Chief Executive announced in an Executive Order. These are the legal stipulations for compensation paid to workers who face such injuries or diseases. The overall ceiling of compensation will be raised from MOP3 million to MOP3.15 million. Among the types of compensation, losing ability for work partially or completely has its floor and ceiling raised to MOP405,000 and MOP1.35 million respectively. A death will be compensated with at least MOP324,000 to at most MOP1.08 million. The premium for mandatory labor insurance has also been raised by 2%. The new stipulations will be in effect from August 31.

MIDDLE BRIDGE SEES FOUR TIMES MORE SPEEDING VIOLATIONS

In the first half of the year, authorities recorded 116 mild and two severe speeding cases on the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge. The former is a four-fold increase than the same period last year, while the latter is one more than the same period last year. The bridge is only open for public transport and authorized vehicles, such as ambulance and police vehicles. Data from the Public Security Police Force show that in the first half of this year, a total of 8,697 speeding violations were recorded in all speed-checking spots across the city. On the Sai Van Bridge there were 366 cases, all of which were mild speeding. On the Amizade Bridge, 50 speeding cases, including one severe, were recorded.

BUS COMPANY CONDUCTS DRILL WITH SECURITY BRANCH

Local public bus company Transmac recently conducted a drill with the Public Security Police Force (PSP) and the Fire Bureau (CB) at the Rotunda da Aeronáutica. A crash involving two buses with two injuries was simulated. In the simulation, a bus caught fire which prompted the involvement of the CB. The company believes that its employees will have a better emergency response in case of similar situations. It stresses that all buses are equipped with safety features. In the simulation, the company deployed a team of 80 members, while the government sent 25 members and 10 vehicles. The activity took 35 minutes.

COVID-19

XINJIANG, LIAONING ADDED TO MEDIUM-RISK LIST

ANTHONY LAM

MACAU'S Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center has added the two Chinese provinces of Xinjiang and Liaoning to its list of medium-risk locations, following a recent rise in new Covid-19 cases there.

Official information shows that Xinjiang recorded 41 new cases on July 26 and 14 in Liaoning. All of the infections in Liaoning were locally-transmitted. In addition, Xinjiang recorded 38 asymptomatic cases.

Xinjiang is located in the northwest of the country and is home to many ethnic minority groups. Liaoning is a northeastern province that borders North Korea.

Extra health measures will be applied to people who have visited the two provinces in the preceding 14 days before entering Macau. However, they will not be quarantined, unlike those entrants who have traveled to Hong Kong in the 14 days prior to entering the MSAR.

People who have been to the two provinces in the preceding 14 days will have their digital health code changed to yellow, meaning that they are required to conduct stricter health supervision on themselves.

Extra measures will be in place



Shenyang, provincial capital of Liaoning Province

at the border checkpoint to ensure their health. "When they arrive in Macau, our colleagues will conduct individual health assessment on them," Dr Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, stated, adding that the inspections will include "observation for possible Covid-19 symptoms and survey their contacts in the provinces."

The medical doctor added that if either people present symptoms or have had contact with people who have tested positive, they will be sent to the public Conde São Januário Hospital for a further check up.

They will also face stricter Covid-19 testing requirements.

They must be in possession of nucleic acid test results from within the preceding 72 hours. If they miss that deadline, they will be sent to the public hospital for a test. "Only with a negative result can they be allowed to leave the hospital," Leong explained.

Entrants who have been to either of the two provinces in the preceding 14 days will receive calls from the Coronavirus Center while in Macau to obtain updates on their health conditions.

"We will contact them every other day to inquire about their health condition," Leong explained. Guidelines will also be distributed to this group of people to instruct them on 14-day self-observation.

For the time being, the Coronavirus Center does not expect many people from the two provinces to travel to Macau, "because they will be quarantined when they return home," Leong explained. The authority said there are no tourists from the two provinces currently in Macau.

By contrast, entrants who have been to Hong Kong in the previous two weeks must not only present a negative test result upon arrival, they will also be quarantined for two weeks before they can move freely around the city.

Leong said that the measure is still in effect, but is subject to change should circumstances in the neighboring city improve.

HONG Kong will ban dine-in services at restaurants and public gatherings of more than two people not from the same family starting tomorrow, as the city's worst coronavirus outbreak shows no sign of abating.

In a third round of rule-tightening in as many weeks, Chief Secretary for Administration Matthew Cheung said yesterday that masks will also now be required in outdoors areas, with only medical exemptions.

Sports venues and swimming pools are also being shut, adding to a list of closed businesses

HK to ban dining-in, public gatherings of more than two

that included gyms, bars and beauty parlors. The new restrictions are for an initial period of one week before they'll be reviewed.

The Asian financial center has been taken off-guard by the sudden jump of infections after managing to contain the spread locally as it tore across the world. Officials are now scrambling to slow what they're calling a third wave, while boost-

ing health-care facilities that are reaching capacity.

On Sunday, Hong Kong detected 103 local cases, the fifth consecutive day that new infections were above a hundred. Before this month, the reported number of daily locally transmitted infections had never topped 28.

The share of infections of unknown origins remains high at about a third, reflecting that hid-

den chains of transmission continue to surface despite tightened social distancing rules.

Authorities had previously banned dining-in after 6 p.m. and expanded mask-wearing requirements, from public transportation to indoor public venues.

Although the government is trying to boost testing and expand quarantine and hospitalization facilities, the long

stretch that saw the city seemingly dodge the Covid-19 bullet has left its defenses low.

Isolation beds and wards in public hospitals have reached 80% capacity, while its total testing capacity is smaller than other places in the region that are also facing resurgences, like Australia's Victoria state.

Unlike in some places where it's mostly young people who are recently becoming infected, Hong Kong's current surge is affecting an older group of people, raising the likelihood of more cases turning critical. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

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Nam Van foothold readies Malaysia's Genting for another shot at Macau license

DANIEL BEITLER &
RENATO MARQUES

AN under-construction hotel project by Nam Van Lake might serve as a foothold for Genting if the international casino operator decides to try its hand for a Macau gaming concession when the current six expire.

The project, provisionally titled "Resorts World @ Macau", sits on a premium land parcel by Praça de Ferreira do Amaral, bulging into Nam Van Lake in the southern part of the Macau Peninsula. It is being developed by Treasure Island Entertainment Company, a local enterprise indirectly owned by Star Cruises, part of Genting Hong Kong, which promised to develop the property with or without a casino.

"Nobody would construct a hotel in that premium location without gaming," said Ben Lee, managing partner of IGamiX Management & Consulting, when asked about the project.

"It's likely to be a four to five star hotel [...] but, as we all know, a hotel without gaming is not a worthwhile investment in Macau," said Lee.

The biggest question surrounding the new development is whether Genting Hong Kong will operate a future casino there with its own gaming license or through a partnership with one of the incumbent operators.

The property is tentatively set to open in 2022, the same year as Macau's casino concessionaire agreements expire.

Some analysts expect the Macau government will extend the concessions while the details of a new tender are being arranged. A renewal of up to five years



RENATO MARQUES

from the end of the 20-year term is allowed under Macau gaming law.

Before then, the project will only be able to operate a casino under a service agreement extended by one of the six concessionaires.

Lee declined to speculate on which Macau concessionaire would be interested in extending such a service agreement, but said historically, "SJM would be the most likely." SJM manages the largest number of so-called "satellite casinos", with most of their partner properties on the Macau Peninsula.

Earlier this month, Wynn Macau Vice Chairman Linda Chen was reported to have attended a topping-off ceremony for the project's construction,

prompting some to speculate about a possible link. However, the American-owned concessionaire told GGRAsia that it had no affiliation with the new hotel project and said that Chen had been only "invited as a guest."

Lee previously told the Times that he considers Malaysia's Genting as the only outsider contender with a real chance of grabbing a license.

"If they win a concession, they can convert this property into a casino while negotiating another parcel of land, possibly from one of the losing concessions," Lee told Macau Daily Times. Plus, "it would help to have a local management team here," he said, adding that there are experienced, non-local execu-

tives being made redundant by the existing concessionaires that could be recruited by Genting.

"I don't think that having this project [already operating] will enhance their position to win a concession, but it might enhance their profitability and help to generate cash flow [in the early period of the concession]," added Lee.

Repeated attempts to reach officials at Genting Hong Kong Ltd. went unanswered last week. A senior executive at Malaysian conglomerate Genting Group said she was unaware of a hotel project being developed in Macau at all.

Genting Chairman Lim Kok Thay has not wavered from pursuing a Macau gaming license since the operator lost its bid in

the 2002 tender.

In pursuit of that license, Genting had tried to establish a venture with the late gaming tycoon Stanley Ho. However, according to Bloomberg, the Macau government viewed the partnership unfavorably, considering that it would allow the consolidation of two major companies in the sector and lead to unfair competition.

Despite losing the 2002 tender, Genting has shown renewed interest in the Macau market on multiple occasions, most recently in March 2018 when the company attempted to enter the market through the acquisition of shares in Wynn Resorts.

The shares went to Galaxy Entertainment Group instead, leading the Macau casino operator to command a stake in its U.S.-based competitor of just under 5%.

In 2014, when the preparatory works for the project began, Treasure Island described the 21-storey property as a low-rise boutique hotel that would provide "hundreds of rooms."

According to information made available by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT), the bureau approved an extension to the building construction license granted in mid-July 2017 for a period of three years. The land development usage period expired earlier this month and it is not clear whether an extension was ever granted.

In response to a Times enquiry, the DSSOPT declined to make any specific comments on the construction works, confirming only that the land plot development was being managed according to the terms of its usage.

AS of 6 p.m. yesterday, 108,000 local residents have topped up their consumer vouchers at designated institutions.

Yesterday was the first day when residents with zero balance on their consumption smartcards can top up for the second phase of the government's subsidy scheme to boost locals' spending.

The government advised that cards with a remaining balance should be topped up on August 1.

The second round of the subsidy amounts to 5,000 patacas and will be given to approximately

Over 100,000 residents topped up e-vouchers

737,000 local residents.

Residents can top up their e-vouchers at 190 top-up points across the city, including 29 venues on government premises, 31 community association venues, 127 bank branches and three MacauPass service points.

Registration or presentation of ID at the top-up sites is not needed.

The 5,000 pataca e-vouchers could be used between August 1 and December 1, and have a ma-

ximum limit of 300 per day – similar to the first phase of the subsidy scheme.

All of the unused funds from the first round will be rendered void at midnight on August 1 and will revert to the government.

Figures from the government provided on July 17 shows that only a third of local residents have used the entire first amount of 3,000 patacas.

In the first round, a total of 624,000 cards were issued, representing an

injection of 1.87 billion patacas into the market. Residents who have not registered for, obtained, or lost their card in the first round can get a new card without any prior registration.

As of 6 p.m. yesterday, 3,085 new e-vouchers have been issued.

These residents can only obtain their new card at six government offices, such as the bureau's office at Largo do São Domingos and the government service center at Areia Preta. LV



IPIIM DIVISION CHIEF PLACED UNDER INVESTIGATION AFTER TESTIMONY

RENATO MARQUES

THE current chief of the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIIM) Residency Application and Legal Affairs Division, Tyler Ian, now faces investigation by the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) after his testimony in court late last week.

The investigation relates to the corruption charges against some 26 defendants in the high-profile IPIIM residency case.

The MP will investigate the current leader of the IPIIM division, who handles the evaluation of the applications under the residency scheme, after statements made during his testimony as a witness.

The acknowledgment of the investigation into Ian came during the trial hearing when the prosecutor said he wanted to obtain an extract from the statements made by Ian in court so he could start an investigation into the official for the crime of secrecy violation.

This came after Ian admitted in court that he informed Glória Batalha Ung, one of the defendants, of the criteria and relevant weighting by which applications for residency were granted, which were then passed on by the former director to an applicant.

Ian noted he was aware that such information should not be disclosed, adding that passing the information to Batalha was not a "normal" procedure.

His explanation was that Batalha was his immediate superior in the hierarchy of IPIIM and so



he had no way to deny such a request.

Saying that he was not fully aware of the consequences to his disclosure of "confidential" information, Ian added that Batalha's "tip-offs" to the applicant were decisive for the approval of her application that, otherwise, would have been rejected on the grounds of the "low relevance of the position as well as the salary."

Proof of phone communications between Ian and Batalha were presented to the court in which the IPIIM division chief states the intention of recommending to former IPIIM president, Irene Lau, that an application be approved.

Ian's testimony was suspended by the court on the grounds that it contained information that could be used as evidence against him in another case.

Pedro Leal, the defense lawyer of Batalha, opposed the interrup-

tion, claiming that Ian was at the court as a witness and not a defendant, and that all of his statements were made out of his own free will. Leal further noted that the court should continue to hear Ian's testimony or that it should be disregarded by the court as, in his opinion, it contained false statements that compromised the credibility of the witness.

Leal's suggestion was disregarded by Judge Leong Fong Meng who hit back, stating that ascertaining the credibility of witnesses is the role of the court.

The court now believes there may be other incumbent staff members of IPIIM involved in the alleged crimes now being presented in court. Due to this, the court will likely call additional IPIIM staff to ensure that they were not involved in the unlawful scheme that allowed several people to illegally obtain Macau residency permits.

Workers say they knew nothing of colleagues used to file IPIIM applications

RENATO MARQUES

SEVERAL of the witnesses heard yesterday in the ongoing corruption case involving the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIIM) supported the prosecution's claims that some of the applicants for Macau residency were people who had never worked for the companies listed on their applications.

The high-profile case involves some 26 defendants accused of corruption crimes, the forging documents and making false declarations on applications for residency.

In the Court of First Instance session yesterday, testimony was offered by people who used to work in several companies owned by defendant Ng Kuok Sao, who is accused of heading the unlawful scheme to unlawfully obtain residency permits.

Among the witnesses were several workers from different departments at the One Kin Construction Company, which is considered to be the headquarters from which the scheme operated. Others worked for smaller companies that were used to hire applicants attempting to obtain the

Macao residency through qualified technical or higher management staff programs.

All testimonies offered to the court consistently noted that they did not know and had not met the applicants, nor had they heard of the job positions listed in the IPIIM applications.

The highlight of the session was the testimony of a former staff member at the One Kin Company, Alin Cheang, who worked in the company for just over one year.

The name of this individual had been raised on several previous occasions. Documents and messages to Ng's wife, Wu Sok Wah, as well as to another assistant, showed her involvement in processing the cases of at least three of the applicants.

In her testimony, Cheang first said that she had not handled any of the cases related to residency. However, she was stopped by Judge Leong Fong Meng who accused her of lying to the court.

Leong urged the witness to change her statement and tell the truth, otherwise a criminal case would be filed against her for lying to the court.

UNEMPLOYMENT GROWING SLOWLY BY GLOBAL STANDARDS

THE general unemployment rate edged up 0.1 percentage points in the latest period surveyed by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), in what is a minor rise by world standards.

According to the bureau's data released yesterday, unemployment in Macau rose to 2.5% in the three-month period from April to June 2020, about 0.1 percentage points higher than in the previous period from March-May 2020.

At the same time, the unemployment rate of local residents also rose by 0.1 percentage points to 3.5% in the three-month period ending in June.

The general unemployment rate and the resident unemployment rate stood 0.4 and 0.6 percentage points higher at the end of June than at the end of the first quarter.

The number of the unemployed was 10,100 at the end of June, up 400 from the end of May.

Among the unemployed population searching for a new job, the number of those previously working in gaming and restaurants sectors "showed relatively large growth," according to DSEC.

Meanwhile, the proportion of new labor market entrants seeking their first

job increased by 0.4 percentage points to 5.5% of the total unemployed.

The number of the underemployed grew by 3,300 to 13,900, according to the data release, with the majority working in the gaming, transport, construction, retail and hotel sectors.

The minor rise in unemployment comes as many developed economies around the world are bracing for double-digit unemployment rates. The proportion of those unemployed in the U.S. was 11.1% in June, after retreating from 13.3% a month earlier. **DB**

GUANGDONG ATTRACTING HK, MACAU CITIZENS WITH GOV'T JOB OFFERS

RENATO MARQUES

PERMANENT residents of Hong Kong and Macau who hold Chinese passports will be allowed to apply for jobs at government institutions in nine cities in Guangdong province, a human resources authority in the province was cited as having said by China Daily.

According to the administrative measure promoting public recruitment of Hong Kong and Macau residents recently issued by the Guangdong authority, permanent residents of

the two SARs are now allowed to apply for jobs at government institutions in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Huizhou, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen and Zhaoqing.

The move is said to aim at promoting the exchange of talent between the three locations as well as providing more job opportunities for young people from the two SARs in the mainland. It is also intended to promote regional integration within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area.

Details on the measure note that the government institutions included in the program include all organizations established by the city or provincial level authorities as well as state-owned assets which provide public services in areas such as education, science, technology, culture, and healthcare.

Hong Kong and Macau residents will be treated on equal terms with their counterparts from the mainland in regard to salaries, pension, and healthcare plans, the conditions state.



Sands China 'leading force' for local firm's growth

A local SME that supplies vegetables to Sands China Ltd. has noted that the gaming operator has become the leading force for the company's growth, expressing that its cooperation has improved the company's scale and management ability.

Chong San (Macau) Vegetable & Fruit Ltd began partnering with Sands China as a supplier of vegetables soon after the opening of Sands Macao.

Founded in 2005, the local SME is now cooperating with Dong Sheng Farm in Panyu in mainland China, specializing in growing organic vegetables and fruits.

The farm has enabled the company to form a one-stop supply chain as it also caters to the different specific fruit and vegetable needs of different companies.

Company representative Lisa Liu said that the cooperation between the two parties has also increased the company's business confidence, and she expressed gratitude for the significant support given to them by the gaming operator.

For Liu, Sands China has also

extended its support to them by offering suggestions that could better enhance their service to reach a wider market.

"In order to meet the needs of customers, we adopted Sands China's suggestion to add two refrigerated trucks for vegetable delivery. Since then, the company gradually grew in size," said Liu.

"Now we have the opportunity in the Greater Bay Area to cooperate with Dong Sheng Farm to grow organic vegetables and fruits – mainly Chinese cabbage, tomatoes and green beans, among others," she added.

By scanning QR codes, the SME is able to obtain the planting information for the vegetables and fruits, including the condition of the organic planting, harvest, and water quality, among others, providing convenient real-time tracking.

Following the start of its cooperation with Sands China, Liu said that additional refrigerated trucks have been added, and the number of employees has grown from four at the beginning to 25 at present.

"The site has grown from a few hundred feet to thousands

of feet, with thousands of feet of cold storage as well. At present, there are more than 100 mu (6.7 hectares) of farmland and a more than 40-mu (2.7-hectare) processing plant in mainland China, with about 200 underprivileged people specially employed," Liu said.

"Everything is attributed to the leadership of Sands China," she noted.

Liu has also expressed her appreciation towards Sands China, as Chong San has benefitted from Sands China's goal of prioritizing local SMEs when acquiring products and services.

Sands China has been investing back into the community it serves to help it thrive and grow for over a decade, contributing to the development of local enterprises along the way.

For Sands China, it is important that it continues its long-standing effort to support local suppliers, whom it views as strategic partners.

"Sands China takes great care of SMEs," said one company representative.

For Liu, Sands China is specially equipped with a procurement software system that

shows the order quantity and provides simple and clear processing on the platform.

For many traditional SMEs, although they need to adapt to using digital systems at first, thanks to the detailed explanation from team members at Sands China, it becomes easier for them to operate and the digital platform has further facilitated transactions between the two parties.

Meanwhile, Sands China has attached great importance to food safety and quality.

With the ability to provide the relevant certificates of conformity for agricultural products, and to actively satisfy customer requirements, Chong San Vegetable & Fruit Ltd is considered by the gaming operator as a significant business partner.

"Sands China places great importance on health and environmental protection, and the vegetables supplied by Chong San have Green Label Certification, thus increasing the confidence in and guarantee of their vegetables," a procurement department representative said.

"We are happy about our partnership. Chong San actively

provides quotations to meet the requirements of customers. Whether it is different-sized or seasonal vegetables, or agricultural products that are difficult to find, Chong San tries its best to meet our needs," the department representative added.

Meanwhile, due to the current pandemic, the majority of local businesses have suffered from great losses.

Therefore, Sands China took the initiative to inquire about the situation of SMEs and continued to purchase from them without interruption.

During the pandemic, Chong San has continued to provide green vegetables and organic vegetables for Sands China.

"Although organic vegetables cost more than ordinary ones, Sands China is still happy to choose them. In the face of the outbreak, the company's demand for vegetables has decreased, but Sands China is still continuing its procurement," the company said.

"In addition to providing guests and employees with healthy meals, it also expects that with continuous support to local enterprises, Sands China, as a large company, will be able to support SMEs," it added.

Since Sands China puts importance on food quality and safety, the gaming operator advised that enterprises that can provide green certification for their supplies have a great advantage.

HONG KONG

CHINA QUERIES FUEL FEARS OF BAN ON DEMOCRAT CANDIDATES

HONG Kong's decision to query opposition candidates about ties with foreign governments suggests authorities could be preparing to use new national security legislation to disqualify pro-democracy advocates ahead of a key fall election.

At least seven potential pro-democracy candidates for Hong Kong's Legislative Council elections have received questionnaires from the government asking them to show they haven't violated the city's mini constitution, known as the Basic Law, or the recently imposed security measures.

The move fueled concerns within the pro-democracy movement that Hong Kong officials might use provisions of the security law - which bars subversion, secession, terrorism and foreign collusion - to question, undermine or disqualify opposition candidates who have previously criticized the local administration and the government in Beijing.

The election, set for early September, comes after unprecedented anti-government protests last year. It follows local District Council elections in November in which the opposition won 85% of the seats, momentum it hopes to ride to a majority in the legislature.

If Hong Kong were to use the controversial national security law to disqualify candidates, it would likely prompt fierce criticism from the U.S., which has already blasted Beijing for imposing the legislation - and moved to end the special trading privileges that help distinguish Hong Kong from the mainland - amid broader tensions with China.

"These letters are paving the way to disqualification, but sometimes there's still some room to maneuver," said Ivan Choy, a se-



Alvin Yeung is removed by security officers during scuffles at the Legislative Council last May

nior politics lecturer at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Still, he added, "The overall situation is much worse with the national security law, after the landslide victory of the democrats in the District Council elections, and because of the bad relationship between the U.S. and China."

FOREIGN COLLUSION

At least 12 opposition figures have received letters of inquiry from their respective electoral officers, according to the Hong Kong Economic Journal and Cable TV. They include prominent activist Joshua Wong, Alvin Yeung and Cheng Tat-hung of the Civic Party, and Kenneth Leung, who plans to represent the accountancy sector.

Yeung was asked to explain his recent visit to the U.S. - where he met American officials and called

for sanctions against certain Hong Kong officials - and if he will continue lobbying foreign governments, according to the letter seen by Bloomberg. It cited Yeung's social media posts and media interviews.

"Your requests to foreign countries to make legislation to sanction the Hong Kong government is in fact pressuring the government with the help of foreign powers and inviting foreign forces to interfere in Hong Kong's internal affairs," the letter to Yeung said. "How would such behavior concur with what you declared in your nomination statement to 'uphold the Basic Law and to pledge allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region?'"

In a written reply, Yeung said he found it "hard to accept the subjective interpretation and assumptions" behind some of the

questions, and denied anything he did contravened the Basic Law. He also said the activities referred to in the letter occurred before the promulgation of the national security law on June 30, that he was simply advocating for Hong Kong to abide by its constitutional obligations under the "one country, two systems" principle, and that the letter veered into questions of politics that were beyond the purview of an electoral returning officer.

"If you require further education on the basic principles of democracy and elections, I would be more than happy to assist," Yeung wrote. "However, I do not understand why these are relevant considerations for you in your capacity as Returning Officer."

In a statement on Sunday evening, the Hong Kong government said "the validity of a candidate's

nomination is solely determined by the Returning Officer according to the legal requirements and relevant procedures." A spokeswoman for the Hong Kong government did not immediately respond to a call and an email requesting comment yesterday morning.

LIFE SENTENCES

In a series of Twitter posts, Wong - the subject of a Netflix documentary - blasted the government for seeking to ban opposition candidates.

"Clearly, under the new #nationalecuritylaw, political screening covers candidates' social media accounts, media interviews and election flyers. Even an op-ed piece could be framed as 'colluding with foreign forces' and used as excuses for political purges," he wrote. "When #Beijing is paving ways for a large-scale election ban of pro-democracy runners, the forthcoming #LegCo poll in Sept will not be the election in ordinary sense. It carries grave implications, especially when legislature is the last crumbling pillar of the city's autonomy."

Despite the security law coming into effect, with punishments as harsh as life in prison, Hong Kong's pro-democracy parties this month held a two-day primary that drew more than 600,000 voters in an effort to narrow a surge of candidates ahead of the election.

Hong Kong's government and China's top agency in the city said the process could violate the new security measures, and pledged to investigate and possibly prosecute the primary's organizers.

The unofficial voting process was designed to overcome fractures in the opposition movement between traditional democrats and more radical so-called "localists," and present an organized slate of candidates that could benefit from the momentum generated by last year's protests to oust pro-establishment rivals. **BLOOMBERG**

Gold rips up record book as \$2,000 test looms in hunt for haven

GOLD'S unrelenting march higher shows no signs of slowing after a plunge in the dollar swept prices past the previous high set in 2011 and put the metal on track for even bigger gains.

Bullion's surge came as a gauge of the U.S. currency sank to the lowest in more than a year, the latest in a long line of bullish factors - including negative real rates in the U.S. and bets the Federal Reserve will keep policy accommodative when it meets this week - that are

pushing prices ever higher.

With the world facing an extended period of unprecedented economic and political turmoil, gold's now got \$2,000 in its sights. Some in the market suggest the haven could rise even beyond that.

Nascent signs of gold's record-breaking ascent began to show in mid-2019, when the Fed signaled a readiness to cut interest rates as uncertainty - primarily about the impact of the U.S.'s trade battles - clouded its outlook. The

rally gathered pace in early 2020 as geopolitical tensions rose and the coronavirus outbreak hurt growth worldwide, pushing governments and central banks to unleash vast amounts of stimulus, and sending real interest rates slumping further into negative territory.

"Strong gains are inevitable as we enter a period much like the post-GFC environment, where gold prices soared to record levels as a result of copious amounts of Fed money being pumped into the financial sys-

tem," said Gavin Wendt, senior resource analyst at MineLife Pty. A weak dollar and negative real rates are providing further impetus. Gold may consolidate before setting its sights on \$2,000 and above in coming weeks, he said.

Investment demand has been unrelenting. Holdings in gold-backed exchange-traded funds have beaten all-time highs nearly every month since late last year and inflows this year have topped the record annual total set in 2009. The addi-

tions make up roughly one-fifth of expected mine supply for the year, according to research group Metals Focus.

Gold's been drawing investors even as equities climbed - with the exception of a sharp selloff in March as traders liquidated bullion holdings to cover losses in other markets - and it's U.S. bonds that have been the key metric to watch. The metal is serving as an attractive hedge as yields on Treasuries that strip out the effects of in-

flation fall below zero.

Inflation also plays an important role in looking at prices in an historical context. Spot gold traded as high as \$1,945.26 yesterday, topping its previous record by more than \$20. Spot silver jumped as much as 8.1% to \$24.6031 an ounce, the highest since 2013.

When adjusted for inflation, bullion remains lower than its 2011 high and far below the historic peak in 1980, in the wake of the second oil price shock. **BLOOMBERG**

THEY have the largest economies in the world. They spend more than anyone else on their militaries. From high-tech chips to control of the high seas, their interests are closely intertwined.

The ongoing sharp deterioration in U.S.-China ties poses risks to both countries and the rest of the world. In the latest escalation, a U.S. consulate in Chengdu in southwestern China shuttered yesterday, ordered by China to close in retaliation for the U.S. shutting down its consulate in Houston last week.

With the U.S. presidential campaign heating up, all bets are that relations with China will only get worse. A look at what's at stake:

TRADE

Both countries already have suffered heavy losses in a tariff war that erupted in 2018 over Beijing's technology ambitions and trade surplus. If talks on ending the dispute fail, the world could face downward pressure on trade at a time when the global economy is already reeling from the coronavirus pandemic.

The United States is China's biggest single-country export market, even after President Donald Trump imposed punitive tariffs on Chinese goods. And China is the No. 3 market for American exporters, as well as a huge market for goods and services produced in China by U.S. companies ranging from General Motors Co. to Burger King.

Chinese purchases of American farm goods, semiconductors and other goods declined 11.4% last year but still exceeded \$100 billion. Exports to China support just under 1 million American jobs, according to the U.S.-China Business Council, though that was down 10% from 2017's peak.

China is the biggest export market for Iowa and other American farm states, which were slammed when Beijing suspended imports of soybeans and raised tariffs on pork and other goods.

That briefly boosted sales for soybean exporters in Brazil and Argentina, though China resumed buying lower-priced American beans under the "Phase 1" trade truce signed in January.

But if the two can't re-

AP PHOTO

Trade, technology and security at risk in US-China feud



Chinese SWAT officers salute each other at the former United States Consulate in Chengdu yesterday

solve broader differences on trade, it will be a blow not only to their exporters but also to other Asian economies that supply China's factories with raw materials and components.

TECHNOLOGY

U.S. and Chinese producers of telecom, computer, medical and other technology and their markets are tightly interwoven. Apple, Dell, Hewlett-Packard and others rely on Chinese factories to assemble most of their smartphones, computers and other consumer electronics. Those factories need processor chips and other components from the United States, Japan, Taiwan and Europe.

The disruption caused by moves including the Trump administration's curbs on Chinese tech giant Huawei's access to U.S. components and technology threatens to disrupt those flows and cost suppliers, including Silicon Valley companies, billions of dollars in lost revenue.

China is also a top market for Apple and other U.S. tech brands, and is increasingly becoming a technology competitor with its own brands in smartphones, medical equipment and other fields.

The United States often is the top market for China's highest-value-added goods. Beijing has been ur-

ging exporters to find other markets, but many say Asian and even European markets won't buy such high-value goods.

SECURITY

While the U.S. has long been the predominant military power in the Pacific, China now has two operational aircraft carriers and an arsenal of missiles seen as a threat to U.S. vessels and bases in the region.

Military tensions have largely focused on the South China Sea, a crucial waterway that is the subject of overlapping territorial claims by China and several smaller Asian nations.

In 2018, a Chinese destroyer came perilously close to colliding with a U.S. destroyer, the USS Decatur, while executing what the Navy called an "unsafe and unprofessional maneuver" in the South China Sea.

A Chinese fighter jet collided with a U.S. Navy surveillance plane in international airspace over the South China Sea in 2001, leading to major diplomatic incident after the U.S. plane made an emergency landing on a Chinese island.

Taiwan is another potential flashpoint. China claims the self-governing island as its territory, to be taken by force if necessary. The U.S. is bound by its own law to ensure the island has a credible defense and has

approved military sales to Taiwan under Trump.


Taiwan's foreign minister said last week that Chinese military flights near the island have been

taking place on a near-daily basis, more frequently than previously reported.

Washington upped the ante earlier this month by declaring that it did not

recognize most of China's maritime claims in the South China Sea, a break with its previous policy of not taking a stance on the sovereignty disputes. AP

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AP PHOTO



USA

AP-NORC poll: Anxiety props up Biden, Trump voters fervent

STEVE PEOPLES AND
HANNAH FINGERHUT,
WASHINGTON

MURTICE Sherek is not excited about Joe Biden.

The Minnesota Democrat, a 79-year-old retired nurse, preferred another candidate in the presidential primary. She also worries about Biden's age, 77. But anxious about another four years of President Donald Trump, she says she's willing to go to any length to ensure Biden wins this fall.

"I don't really give a damn what I have to do. If I have to carry signs on the streets, if I have to carry my old friends to the polls, I'll do it," Sherek said. "This just can't be. Trump is a sick man."

Roughly three months before Election Day, a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that Biden's supporters are less enthusiastic than Trump's — both about the campaign itself and about their candidate — although the Democrat's coalition may be equally motivated by anxiety.

Still, the poll reveals an American public at odds with Trump on wearing masks, on balancing restrictions to stop the virus with efforts to help the economy and on fully reopening schools. And voters give Biden higher marks on many positive traits that apply to leadership in the age of the coronavirus, including honesty, capability and caring for Americans.

Sherek's assessment of

the candidates highlights the nuanced motivations underlying the so-called enthusiasm gap, which has raised concerns among Biden's allies who worry the deficit could undermine his candidacy once voting begins.

While interest in the presidential campaign is high across the board, just 31% of Biden supporters say they're excited, compared with 42% of Trump supporters. Biden's coalition is fueled by more negative emotions: 72% of Biden supporters, but 52% of Trump supporters, say they feel anxious about the 2020 campaign. The same disparity exists for frustration with the election, 65% for Biden supporters and 45% for Trump's.

Anya Kumar, an 18-year-old recent high school graduate from Columbia, Missouri, vowed to vote for Biden this fall but conceded many of her young friends who oppose Trump don't feel much passion for the former vice president. Many aren't even registered, she said.

"For the most part, people I know really just don't want Trump," Kumar said, acknowledging that she is motivated more by anxiety about Trump's reelection than genuine excitement about his Democratic rival. "If Biden doesn't win, that would suck."

Biden's team largely dismisses the idea of an enthusiasm gap. It says that with Trump's level of support shrinking, a greater share of energized supporters is left behind in the diminished pool. Indeed, Trump's job approval in the new poll

sits at 38%, within the narrow range that has endured throughout his presidency but down from relative highs earlier this year.

Just 32% of voters approve of the way Trump is handling the pandemic, a low point that follows a steady decline from the outset of the crisis. While Trump's supporters almost unanimously approve of his performance overall, 2 in 10 disapprove of his response to the pandemic.

Stacey Rogus, 43, a Republican from Glendale, Arizona, who works in the medical industry, admitted some concerns about Trump. She says the president is narcissistic, doesn't act as "presidential" as she'd like and doesn't think before he speaks. But Rogus is determined to vote for him a second time because of his economic policies and support for the U.S.-Mexico border wall.

She also suspects that Trump's political opponents are exaggerating the threat of the coronavirus pandemic to hurt his reelection. She finds the timing of the outbreak "a little odd."

"He didn't make the virus," Rogus said. "If anything, maybe the Democrat party created it just to make him look bad." (The Office of the Director of National Intelligence has ruled out the virus being human-made and noted that is the scientific consensus as well.)

The poll also found that voters generally prefer Biden's character and values. About 6 in 10 registered voters say that values like "cares about people like you," "honest" and "strong leader"

do not describe Trump well. By comparison, roughly the same majority say those characteristics describe Biden at least somewhat well.

And in considering whether the two are "capable" — a question that likely reflects voters' views of each man's mental acuity and ability to govern — fewer say that describes Trump than Biden at least somewhat well, 43% vs. 56%. Trump, who's 74, and his allies have made attacks against Biden's age and cognitive ability a centerpiece of their message.

Trump has an advantage on standing up for what he believes. Seventy percent think this describes Trump at least somewhat well, including 54% who think it describes him very well. Sixty-three percent think standing up for his beliefs describes Biden at least somewhat well, but just 36% think it describes him very well.

Trump's supporters are much stronger in their positive descriptions of Trump than Biden backers are of their candidate. For example, wide majorities of Trump supporters think "stands up for what he believes" (87%), "strong leader" (75%) and "capable" (76%) describe the president very well. Fewer Biden supporters think "standing up for what he believes" (63%), "strong leader" (50%) and "capable" (56%) describe Biden very well.

For Biden, a significant age gap within his coalition drives the lukewarm ratings. Older Biden supporters are much more likely than those under 45 to say such traits describe Biden very well. AP

this day in history

1976 CHINESE EARTHQUAKE KILLS HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS

Hundreds of thousands of people are feared dead following an 8.3 magnitude earthquake in China.

The quake has virtually destroyed the city of Tangshan, north-east of Beijing, and Western sources believe the death toll may be much higher than the official figure of 240,000. Some believe the figure is more like 750,000.



The Hong Kong Royal Observatory reports the earthquake was intense although speculation of the magnitude of the quake ranges from 6.3 to 8.3.

Around 2,000 people are believed to have died when the quake devastated the city's biggest hospital, according to sources quoting Chinese officials.

It is feared that many miners are buried alive in coal works in the industrial city, which has a total population of 1.6m.

Diplomatic observers say that up to 80,000 people died in the first shock of the natural disaster.

Up to 164,000 people have been severely injured, according to initial reports from the city.

Tangshan was at the epicentre of the earthquake, although it badly damaged Tientsin. Tremors were also felt in Beijing, where residents were urged to live in the streets and keep to open spaces as it is not thought to be safe to return to their homes in the city.

The force of the quake has been so strong that people are reported to have been thrown into the air after roads, bridges, railway stations, homes and factories were completely destroyed.

The quake has also knocked out power throughout the city, making rescue efforts difficult.

When the earthquake struck Tangshan at 0342 local time, more than a million people lay sleeping. The entire earthquake reportedly lasted approximately 14 to 16 seconds. It was followed by a 7.1 magnitude aftershock.

Survivors have been digging through debris to answer the calls for help as well as find missing relatives.

There is a deep-seated peasant belief that the "Year of the Dragon" - which happens every 12 years - augurs ill.

The survivors of the Tangshan quake are living in tents and are expected to be moved to winter shelters, the New China news agency has reported. Aircraft and lorries have been taking large quantities of relief supplies to help the relief effort.

The authorities later hope to move people to simple houses, which can withstand tremors and are warm and rainproof before winter sets in.

Chinese officials have rejected any offers of help from the outside world, saying that survivors have enough to eat and wear and there are sufficient medical supplies and doctors in the city.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Officially, the Chinese government estimated between 240,000 and 250,000 people died in the Tangshan earthquake.

The rebuilding of Tangshan began almost immediately after the earthquake and eventually the entire city was rebuilt. It is now home to more than a million people - earning it the name "Brave City of China."

In the decades since the quake, the death toll is estimated closer to half a million although some believe it is higher still. This would make this the most deadly quake in the twentieth century, and the strongest since the Alaska quake in 1964 which was of magnitude 9.2.

More people died in earthquakes in the first 10 months of 1976 than in any year since 1970.

During 1976, there were a string of tremors, stretching from China to Greece, which Swedish expert Dr Marcus Baath believes may be a signal of new movement in the Earth's crust. In August 1976, a new earthquake measuring 6.9 was reported 250 miles north of Chungking, which is around 1,000 miles from Tangshan.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Things might not feel like they're moving along as quickly as you would like, which could cause a certain degree of fraying when it comes to your nerves right now.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 It will be a productive, active day—even if your energy is a bit slow this morning. Don't worry if you can't quite get out of bed, or if the idea of getting dressed seems insurmountable.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 Do you think someone is not being totally open with you right now? Your instincts are right on. But their tight-lipped status is not due to an inability to trust you.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 This morning's news will stimulate your already quick mind, allowing you to come up with many different plans for what you want to do with your day.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 If you feel your blood pressure mounting today, you should do more than take a deep breath. Take a different attitude towards the situation! There is a funny side to any stressful situation.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 For especially incisive insight on your latest problems, turn to one of your friends today. You need to consult someone who either is in the same situation as you are, or has been before.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 One of your friendships is starting to feel one-sided—and you are not on the right side. Do you feel like you are giving more than you get? Compromising more than they do?

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 If your routine is starting to get boring, resist the urge to create a problem just for the sake of having something to talk about! You need to avoid conflict now more than ever.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 If you are working on starting or strengthening or shoring up a romance today, you had better take it all the way! Have fun with it. Be over the top. Flirt to a ridiculous degree.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Do you want to try out a new sport or hobby, but you're afraid you'll fail at it? Worrying too much about what might happen is only going to prevent you from trying new things.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Today, you should let your heart push you to get involved more in helping your community become a more supportive, welcoming place. Whatever group of people you feel could be made better.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 People are going to respond a lot better to concrete examples than to ambiguous concepts today, so if you are trying to make a point or sell an idea, you'll have to do it with facts and figures.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

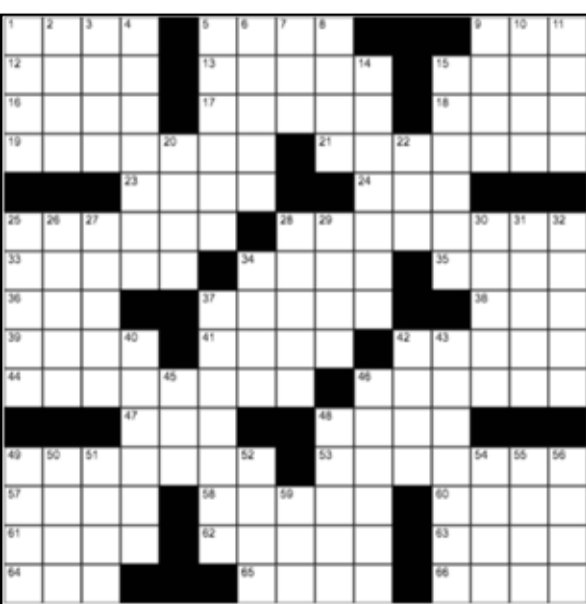
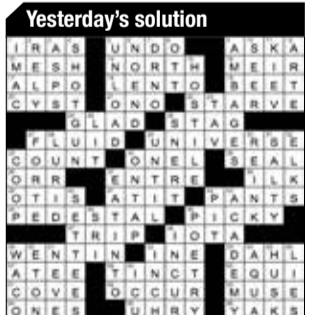
WEATHER

	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- Volition; 5- Piece of work; 9- Crazy ____; 12- That's ____ haven't heard; 13- Different; 15- Room in a casa; 16- In the blink ____ eye; 17- Holmes's creator; 18- Iridescent gemstone; 19- Overseer; 21- Mental; 23- Spouse; 24- Hawaiian food; 25- Journey; 28- Narcissism amok; 33- Teheran native; 34- Singer Campbell; 35- To a smaller extent; 36- Animal pouch; 37- Favored; 38- Like; 39- Will-____-wisp; 41- Anon's partner; 42- "Arabesque" actress; 44- Attorney's request; 46- Midday nap; 47- Hit sign; 48- Comic Foxx; 49- Condiment; 53- Flags; 57- Chip in; 58- Zones; 60- Size of type; 61- Celestial body; 62- Glove material; 63- Russian river; 64- Cry out loud; 65- Untidy condition; 66- Blind part;

DOWN: 1- Bark of a dog; 2- Poop; 3- Cordelia's father; 4- Person who repairs telephone wires; 5- So far; 6- Make amends; 7- Bashful; 8- Seaweed; 9- 11th letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 10- Jai ____; 11- Baby powder; 14- Answer in words; 15- Church party; 20- Biblical gift bearers; 22- ____ Kippur; 25- Shield; 26- Declaim; 27- Cruising vessel; 28- Senior; 29- Will of "The Waltons"; 30- Approaches; 31- Atoll unit; 32- Yoga posture; 34- Be generous; 37- Ladies of Spain; 40- Christian festival; 42- Covers; 43- Legendary king of Thebes; 45- Roth ____; 46- Faculties; 48- Peruses; 49- Aggregate; 50- Golden rule preposition; 51- Thrust with a knife; 52- Percussive instrument; 54- Female child; 55- Final Four org.; 56- Cure, in a way; 59- Shoebox letters;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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 HK\$17,980,000 2,305 ft² 4 1/2 2 1/2

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Houston Court, Coloane Village
 \$12,800/mth 780 ft² 2 1/2 2 1/2

FOR SALE

- [Taipa] Hoi Wan Garden 2 1/2 1 1/2
 900 ft² \$4,900,000 (ref: 19106003)
- [Taipa] Buckingham 2 1/2 2 1/2
 1,439 ft² \$11,770,000 (ref: 19045004)
- [Macau] Lakeview Tower 2 1/2 2 1/2
 1,497 ft² \$11,826,300 (ref: 19015572)
- [Macau] One Central 2 1/2 2 1/2
 1,269 ft² \$12,000,000 (ref: 19070000)

FOR RENT

- [Macau] Lakeview Mansion Car Park 1 1/2
 \$3,800/mth (ref: 20041001)
- [Taipa] Old Taipa Village Apartment 2 1/2 1 1/2
 600 ft² \$9,900/mth (ref: n/a)
- [Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1/2 1 1/2
 710 ft² \$17,050/mth (ref: 20021002)
- [Macau] One Central 2 1/2 2 1/2
 1,269 ft² \$25,000/mth (ref: n/a)

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

CHINA-BACKED CRYPTO GURU WANTS TO UNIFY WORLD'S BLOCKCHAINS

THE blockchain world today is thousands of disparate platforms that can't talk to each other. So a little-known startup hatched one of the most ambitious plans yet to bridge all the divides - and it's got the backing of the Chinese government.

Beijing-based Red Date Technology is at the heart of China's first state-backed blockchain initiative, envisioned as a one-stop hub for developers to build decentralized applications (dapps) for everything from money transactions to drug-delivery tracing. Think of it as the crypto-world equivalent of a cloud service like Amazon Web Services or Microsoft Azure that hooks up and supports a multitude of software and platforms. Since its April roll-out, the Blockchain-based Service Network (or BSN) has attracted more than 6,000 enterprise, government and individual users primarily from China.

Red Date, backed by the nation's top economic planner, is the mastermind of the undertaking. The startup's goal is to push out BSN globally, allowing anyone to create blockchain-based apps without having to then publish



offerings on siloed platforms one by one, Chief Executive Officer He Yifan said.

"The internet took off only after it became cheap for everyone to build websites," He said in a video interview. "Our mission is to put everything blockchain-related onto BSN's platform."

Connecting fragmented blockchains is key to moving the technology underpinning cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin beyond just trades and speculation. Projects like Cosmos and Polkadot are

competing to establish industry standards, much like the http protocol for the web. BSN, however, simply aspires to be the glue that joins various networks and protocols.

It's all about doing it fast and cheap, He says. BSN will support its first batch of six public blockchains including Ethereum, EOS and NEO in August, and it's looking to integrate more than 100 public chains within a year, He said. By leveraging BSN's tools and data storage services, develop-

pers will be able to slash 90% off the cost of creating and running a dapp, he estimates.

"It's physically bringing the cloud resources needed online to power global blockchains," said Matthew Graham, CEO of Beijing-based crypto consultancy Sino Global Capital. "BSN is the first and only project to bring this to blockchain in an agnostic way."

A former private-equity investor, the 44-year-old He founded Red Date in 2014 with his own money as a tech supplier to Chi-

nese smart-city projects. The initial idea - which the likes of Baidu Inc. and crypto exchange Huobi support - was to provide tools to develop software on tokenless, permissioned blockchains, without worrying about the complicated infrastructure.

Beijing is in a love-hate relationship with blockchain: It wants to use the technology to serve the real economy, but has banned exchange trading and crowdfunding facilitated by crypto tokens like Bitcoin and Ether. Within the country's borders, developers won't be able to use BSN to access public networks like Ethereum and NEO, which incentivize users via their digital tokens.

This, along with distrust of Chinese-made technology amid escalating geopolitical tensions, is a major obstacle to BSN's global ambitions. But BSN will set up an offshore branch to integrate with public chains, He said. Red Date, through its Hong Kong offices, will choose at least seven partners without Chinese affiliations to co-manage a new foundation dubbed BSN International, he said, adding details have yet to be finalized. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

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FOOTBALL

Premier League's longest season ends, pandemic issues linger for clubs

ROB HARRIS

ONCE the final whistle blew on the Premier League's longest season, 352 days after it began, there was a sense of relief and grief for Dean Smith.

Joy at Aston Villa ensuring it avoided relegation on the final day of the pandemic-interrupted season was tinged with sadness for the manager who could not share the achievement his father.

Ron Smith was one of the 45,752 recorded coronavirus victims in Britain, dying at the age of 79 in May during the league's shutdown.

"It's been emotional," Dean Smith said after the 1-1 draw at West Ham. "I'm sure he'll be looking down on us."



The point earned in east London kept Villa just above the relegation zone. Bournemouth and Watford joined Norwich in dropping into the se-

cond flight of competition.

When the league was suddenly halted in the second week of March, after coronavirus infec-

tions were reported at Arsenal and Chelsea, Villa was two points from safety and used the hiatus to regroup.

"I thought we used it really well," Smith said, "We had to, because we couldn't keep doing what we were doing."

Throughout the unprecedented 100-day pause in play, uncertainty persisted over whether the season would resume at all. Safety concerns collided with self-interest and fears about the billion-pound bill for not completing the 380 games.

It was a test of resolve for new Premier League chief executive Richard Masters, but Project Restart was accomplished.

Rules restricted the number of people allowed in stadiums to 300 meant when Liverpool fulfilled its 30-year mission to be champions of England again, players lifted the Premier League trophy in an empty Anfield.

But there was no asterisk on the title triumph. The full program of games was completed, unlike in France, where Paris Saint-Germain was declared champion of a curtailed season.

Leicester would have preferred the league positions in March to be the final standings. No team suffered more after the restart in June than the 2016 champions, blowing

an eight-point cushion in the Champions League places.

The capitulation was completed by the weekend's 2-0 loss to Manchester United, which took the last Champions League place off Brendan Rodgers' lineup.

The game-changer was Manchester City's big off-field success in a season when the eventual runners-up were dethroned by Liverpool. City's lawyers convinced the Court of Arbitration for Sport to overturn a two-year ban from European competitions which meant fifth place -- where Leicester finished -- no longer provided entry to the Champions League.

Frank Lampard steering Chelsea to fourth place was an unexpected feat for the club's all-time leading scorer in his first season in topflight management while hampered by the club's transfer ban.

Chelsea reaped the benefits of Lampard having to delve into the club's pool of academy graduates rather than making expensive signings. Fittingly, 21-year-old midfielder Mason Mount, who only made his competitive debut in August, scored the first goal in yesterday's 2-0 victory over Wolverhampton.

"I've learnt a million things," Lampard said.

The season could still end for Chelsea in a Champions League final if a 3-0 deficit to Bayern Munich can be overcome next month in the round of 16.

Lampard's first chance of a trophy as Chelsea manager comes in Saturday's FA Cup final against Arsenal. Like Chelsea, Arsenal turned to a former midfielder this season to take charge. Arriving halfway through the campaign as Unai Emery's replacement, Mikel Arteta lacked the time to impose his vision on the north London club.

Arsenal will be absent from the Champions League for a fourth successive season and the

only route into the Europa League is by winning the FA Cup after finishing eighth. Arsenal was even overhauled by Tottenham, which was adrift in 14th place when Mauricio Pochettino was fired in November and replaced by Jose Mourinho.

But there won't be a fifth consecutive season in the Champions League for the 2019 beaten finalists. Although Mourinho dragged Tottenham back up the standings, a sixth-place finish means a return to the Europa League. Mourinho will now need to strengthen the squad while not losing top-scorer Harry Kane to another lengthy injury layoff or a rival club.

"When all the players are available we showed in this last period where we belong," Mourinho said.

After moving into a new stadium last year, Tottenham has been particularly hard hit by the lack of matchday revenue. But financial uncertainty is prevalent now throughout the world's richest league amid recession fears. The government is planning on allowing fans to return to stadiums from October, but attendances could be capped at 25% with social distancing maintained.

How to bring fans back into games safely — while the COVID-19 threat lingers — is one of the big challenges facing the league as clubs head into an off-season that will last less than 50 days.

There is also a decision to be taken by clubs over whether to retain the use of five substitutes next season. FIFA allowed the temporary use of two additional substitutes because of the extra workload on players after the lockdown.

What will remain for a second season is VAR — the video review system that caused frustrating delays in matches before the lockdown stopped games being played at all for more than two months in this longest of English seasons. AP

AD

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**Resetting for Recovery:
Macao's Tourism and Casino COVID-19 Exit Strategy**

Glenn McCartney PhD, MBE
British Honorary Consul, Macao
Associate Dean (T&L), Associate Professor,
Faculty of Business Administration, University of Macau

This talk will look at outcomes and future realistic scenarios for Macao's tourism and casino recovery from the city's prolonged lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

OPINION

Our Desk

Renato Marques



THE DEAD ARTISTS SOCIETY - PART 1

Recently, a new artist-led movement has emerged, taking (mostly) social media platforms by storm.

Under the motto 'Support living artists, the dead ones don't need it,' the movement tries to present new forms of seeing, appreciating and acquiring art pieces from several sources as a daily economic activity, that should not only be accessible to everybody, but should ultimately be an everyday procedure for all buyers.

Such an approach not only steers away from the conventional idea that art pieces must be old and from long-deceased artists to be valuable, and somehow seems to have found inspiration from more recent sources such as the anonymous England-based artist known as Banksy, a self-proclaimed street artist, vandal, political activist, and film director.

The movement is not only calling for the sustainability of artistic forms and their creators, they are also aiming beyond this, trying to break the boundaries of the mentality that an art piece must be something "eternal" or a "long-lasting" item worth keeping above all else.

Instead, they propose a completely different approach, a more dynamic one (if I can say so), in which art pieces can, and should be, more ephemeral and subject to be changed, replaced and renewed.

This perspective is particularly interesting for me, as in addition to noticing those items as beautifully "decorative," I get easily bored looking at a certain painting, photograph, statue, or even listening to music for long periods.

What I perceive is that this new art movement is trying to find a more "music-like" approach, applicable to all other art forms in which the purpose of art is to be enjoyable, changeable.

According to world-famous Portuguese street artist Alexandre Farto, aka Vhils, the idea of volatility and ephemerality is the exact basis for all his street works regardless of the medium, be it graffiti, a carved mural work or, most recently, the wall carving-method which makes use of explosives.

Questioned during an interview on the topic of the possibility of his street art being subjected to a fast abrasion and even partial or total destruction, Vhils said, "That's exactly the purpose. Art is (or should be) ephemeral, like life itself," noting that art appreciation is something done in "the moment" and to produce effects and transmit sensations within a certain period.

I guess artists are ready to assume this new role of creating ephemeral works, such as sculpting from ice instead of a stone or copper, but are we ready for that? Are we ready to effect that change? How often do we replace the pictures hanging in our houses, office places, or commercial establishments? How often do we buy a new item to replace an old one?

How will this new mindset affect our workplaces? Does this new trend have a way to replace the old mindset of collecting (useless) little treasures? Or it is just an appeal to consumerism?

Maybe it is a little bit of both, but the fact is there are people out there trying to change the way we see art, and one such group in particular has been growing and gathering support.

I like changing, although this does not mean throwing away old things to replace them with new ones. To me, change often comes by rearranging, recombining, or changing the same old things, giving the places they inhabit a new and refreshed look.

Maybe this idea of "refreshing" spaces can be used for other purposes, and instead of breaking everything down and building new things from scratch, we can revamp, revitalize and give new purpose to those old things, too.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST TO PUT UP PAYWALL AMID KONG KONG SLUMP

THE BUZZ

South China Morning Post is dropping its free online model after months of political unrest and the coronavirus pandemic hit advertising revenue at the Hong Kong newspaper backed by Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.

Starting next month, the financial hub's largest English-language newspaper will ask its readers to pay for content online, limiting free articles to a few per month, Editor-in-Chief Tammy Tam said yesterday on the newspaper's website.

Hong Kong's media industry has been reeling from the Covid-19

pandemic and months of political protests against Beijing's tightening grip over the city. In April, with much of the city's retail and tourism industries grinding to a halt, the South China Morning Post cut executive salaries and asked some workers to take unpaid leave.

"Comprehensive reporting is costly and the century-old advertising model is no longer enough to sustain high-quality news," Tam said.

The newspaper had 50 million active users on its online platforms as of March and about 347,000 print readers as of the fourth quarter last year.



A recipient of a bicycle from the Benjamin Canlas Courage to be Kind Foundation pushes her bicycle in Manila

ONE GOOD THING

DONATED BIKES HELP EASE DIFFICULTIES THROUGH PANDEMIC

IYA FORBES, MANILA

A year after he passed away at age 17, Benjamin Canlas is still making the world a better place — one bike at a time.

The teenager is the inspiration for an unusual giveaway of mountain bikes, presented to Filipinos who are struggling to hold on to jobs in a country hard hit by the coronavirus. A foundation established by Benjamin's parents is making it happen.

"There is so much need out there," said Dr. Glenna Canlas, co-founder with her husband Dr. George Canlas of the private Benjamin Canlas Courage to be Kind Foundation. "But people are willing to help, you just have to put them together."

In the wake of business closures and job losses in the Philippines, thousands of Filipinos have found themselves struggling to make ends meet. With a severely restricted public transportation system in metropolitan Manila, many were left with no choice but to take on odd jobs, completing them by foot, walking hours in the sun and rain.

The boy's parents recalled how once, when Benjamin saw a food peddler riding a beat-up bicycle with its pedals missing, he used his own savings to replace them. And they saw a way to connect their private donors with the needy in a way that echoed their son's good deed.

The idea was to give away bikes to deserving individuals nominated by their peers or loved ones. Unsure of the demand, the foundation at first announced on social media that it would

the lockdown. He ended up borrowing a bicycle to sell rice cakes in the morning and smoked fish in the afternoon, to support his wife and almost 2-month old baby. He traveled tens of kilometers each day. Often, precious time and income would be lost when his borrowed bike needed repairs.

"I nominated him because he's so hard working that his (bicycle) wheels always end up breaking down," said Mharygrace Ortega, del Rosario's partner.

At first, del Rosario couldn't believe that he was getting a new bike.

"A bike isn't just a simple thing," he said. "A bike, for me, is what supports my life. A bike is my partner in my work every day. Especially now that we lost regular schedu-

les at my previous job." Another new bike owner is homemaker-turned-online seller Liezel Camilla. Mother of a 2-year-old child, the 24-year-old Camilla started selling and delivering food on her own when her husband's work was put on hold.

"I am so happy that I won't have to walk so far anymore," expressed a teary-eyed Camilla. AP



China yesterday reported 61 new cases of coronavirus, spread between its northeastern and northwestern regions. The Xinjiang region in the northwest reported 41 new cases, while Liaoning and Jilin provinces in the northeast saw a combined 16. Another four cases were brought by Chinese travelers from outside the country. China has reported 4,634 deaths among 83,891 cases of Covid-19.



North Korea Kim Jong Un has visited a national cemetery and handed out commemorative pistols to army officers, state media reported yesterday, as he pushes to muster public support for efforts to contain a potential coronavirus outbreak. On Sunday, North Korea said that Kim had put a city near the border with South Korea under lockdown and declared a state of emergency after a person with suspected Covid-19 symptoms was recently found there.

India recorded nearly 50,000 new cases of the coronavirus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi prepared to ramp up testing capacity in three major cities. The 49,931 cases reported yesterday brought India's nationwide tally to beyond 1.4 million. India has the world's third-highest confirmed caseload after the United States and Brazil.



Australia's hard-hit Victoria state posted a new daily record of 532 new Covid-19 cases, and the government leader warned that a lockdown in the city of Melbourne would continue while infected people continued to go to work. Melbourne is almost half way through a six-week lockdown aimed at curbing community spread of coronavirus. Mask-wearing in Australia's second-largest city became compulsory last week.