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Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

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MACAU SEES LITTLE RISK IN NEW VIRUS CASES IN GUANGDONG P3

AP PHOTO



Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe went to a hospital yesterday for what Japanese media said was a regular health checkup, although the visit generated renewed concerns about his health. Videos of Abe being driven in a car to Keio University Hospital in Tokyo yesterday morning were widely shown on Japanese TV news reports.

AP PHOTO



South Korea A conservative South Korean pastor who has been a bitter critic of the country's president has tested positive for the coronavirus, health authorities said yesterday, two days after he participated in an anti-government protest in Seoul that drew thousands.

AP PHOTO



India Members of India's governing party yesterday rejected allegations that Facebook had chosen to turn a blind eye to partisan hate speech on its platform to protect its growing business interests in India. As usage has spread across India, Facebook and its subsidiary WhatsApp have become fierce battlegrounds for India's political parties.

Iran The cargo of four tankers seized by the United States, as part of its stepped-up campaign of maximum pressure on Iran and Venezuela, last week en route to Venezuela was no longer Iranian property, Iran's oil minister said yesterday, insisting that the U.S. had no right to confiscate the shipment in international waters.

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STATE AGENCY PLEDGES TO PROMOTE SAR-HENGQIN COLLABORATION

LYNZY VALLES

CHINA'S National Development and Reform Commission has pledged to press ahead with work relating to the joint development of Macau and Hengqin, in a bid to introduce new dynamics into the city's long-term development.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng met with the chairman of the commission, He Lifeng during his six-day visit to Beijing, which ended yesterday.

During the meeting, He commended Ho for Macau's ability to contain the spread of Covid-19, and the special measures offered by the government under his leadership, including offering financial support to local residents and helping businesses gradually resume operations.

In a separate meeting, Ho met with the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) of the State Council.

The Party Secretary of the CPC Committee of the SASAC,



Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng

Hao Peng, and the Macau Chief Executive exchanged views on how state-owned enterprises (SOEs) – in particular centrally administered SOEs – are supporting the SAR's economic development.

They also discussed the role such enterprises could play in contributing to Macau's effort to advance the establishment of the Intensive Cooperation Zone between Macau and Guangdong.

The Chief Executive men-

tioned that Macau has been "stepping up its effort to make progress on strategies" regarding the promotion of the city's adequate economic diversification, and the advancement of the Intensive Cooperation Zone. He added that Macau was looking forward to additional assistance from the SASAC regarding promotion of the city's traditional Chinese medicine sector, and the development of infrastructure projects.

Hao pledged SASAC's commitment to ensuring sufficient supply of healthcare and medical materials to the city.

The official added that SASAC could make internship opportunities available within its organization for young people from Macau.

Hao further pledged that the two sides could work more closely to strengthen cooperation between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries.

ENVIRONMENT

Macau bans several types of waste paper

THE Macau SAR government is banning the importation of several types of waste paper, according to a decree signed by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng.

Yesterday, the government published the decree in the official gazette. According to the order, starting from today, several types of waste paper will not be allowed to enter Macau.

Not only is importing these papers prohibited, but the use of Macau for the transit of these materials and the re-export of waste paper will not be permitted.

Mainland China previously announced that it would implement a full import ban of foreign waste, including all types of waste paper, starting from 2021. Other places in Asia, including Hong Kong, Indonesia and Malaysia, have also been progressively tightening their import controls on various types of waste paper.

According to a statement released by the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) yesterday, the local government has banned the import and re-import of waste paper in an attempt to refine Macau's solid waste import management regime, to reduce the risks of environmental damage caused by imported or re-imported waste paper. JZ

CRIME

SENIOR MAN SECRETLY RECORDED DOMESTIC HELPERS IN BATHROOM

JULIE ZHU

A 69-year-old Macau man has been accused of surreptitiously recording his domestic helper while she used the bathroom, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) said during the joint police press conference yesterday.

The senior local man employed a domestic helper, a Filipino woman in her 30s, for five years. The victim does not live with her employer, who is currently residing with his wife.

The victim reported the case to the police authority on August 14, the same day she claims she spotted the recording device. The camera was hidden inside a bag which covered the body of the device but left a hole allowing the camera to clearly record

everything that went on in the bathroom. Upon spotting the device, she immediately visited the building's property management company to report the situation.

Later, with the company of the property management staff, the victim reported the case to the police authority.

When PSP officers went to the man's house, he was alone. The officers searched the bathroom, where they found and seized the camera. Confronted at this moment, the suspect denied the accusations.

Police officers found no recorded footage on the camera. However, they found a memory card in the man's pocket. On the memory card were two recordings, one 36 seconds long and another 12 minutes and six seconds long. Both were timestam-

ped July 27. The recordings clearly showed the victim engaging in private bathroom-related activities.

Following police interrogation, the suspect continued to claim innocence. He admitted that he set up the camera, but not for any malicious reason. The man claimed that he had installed the camera in the house to ensure the quality of the domestic employee's work.

However, his reasoning did not convince the PSP investigators, as the officers did not find recording or surveillance devices anywhere else besides the bathroom.

Considering the evidence that the victim's privacy had been violated, the police forwarded the man to the prosecution authority on August 15.

CRIME

GAMBLING-ADDICT ABUSES WIFE AND TWO YOUNG CHILDREN

JULIE ZHU

A 57-year-old local man has been charged with domestic violence against his wife and children, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported yesterday.

This is the second time within a year that the suspect, surnamed Ieong, has been presented to the police authority and the public prosecution authority for assaulting his family.

In the evening of August 17, the man attacked his 5-year-old son after the young boy sought his father's help to turn on a computer. The man allegedly slapped and beat the boy. Shortly afterwards, it is reported that he attacked his daughter, who he accused of not caring for the younger bro-

ther. The man is accused of hitting the girl's head.

When the mother witnessed this second violent outburst, she attempted to protect the children from her husband. However, he allegedly attacked his wife by kicking and pulling her hair.

Outraged by the situation, the suspect took a 7-centimeter long knife from the kitchen, and threatened the mother and the children by saying he would kill them.

The woman took the children and hid in a bedroom, where she called the police authority. Knowing that his wife had called the police, the suspect fled. Police officers apprehended him in the parking lot of the residential building.

Upon police interrogation, Ieong denied all accusations. However, the PJ sent Ieong to the prosecution authority believing that there is sufficient evidence to prosecute him.

This marks the second time the police authority is handling a case of violence perpetrated by Ieong. Previously, the wife reported Ieong's domestic violence to the police authority. However, at that time, the police authority only charged Ieong with ordinary assault.

According to Ieong's wife, the man became addicted to gambling approximately one year ago. Since then, his temperament has become worse and he frequently assaults her and the children.

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Health Bureau needs more time to decide on blood tests

ANTHONY LAM

MORE time is required before Macau considers using blood tests to detect the Covid-19 infection, according to Dr Leong Iek Hou from the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, who highlighted concerns about the ability to test a large number of people quickly, among others.

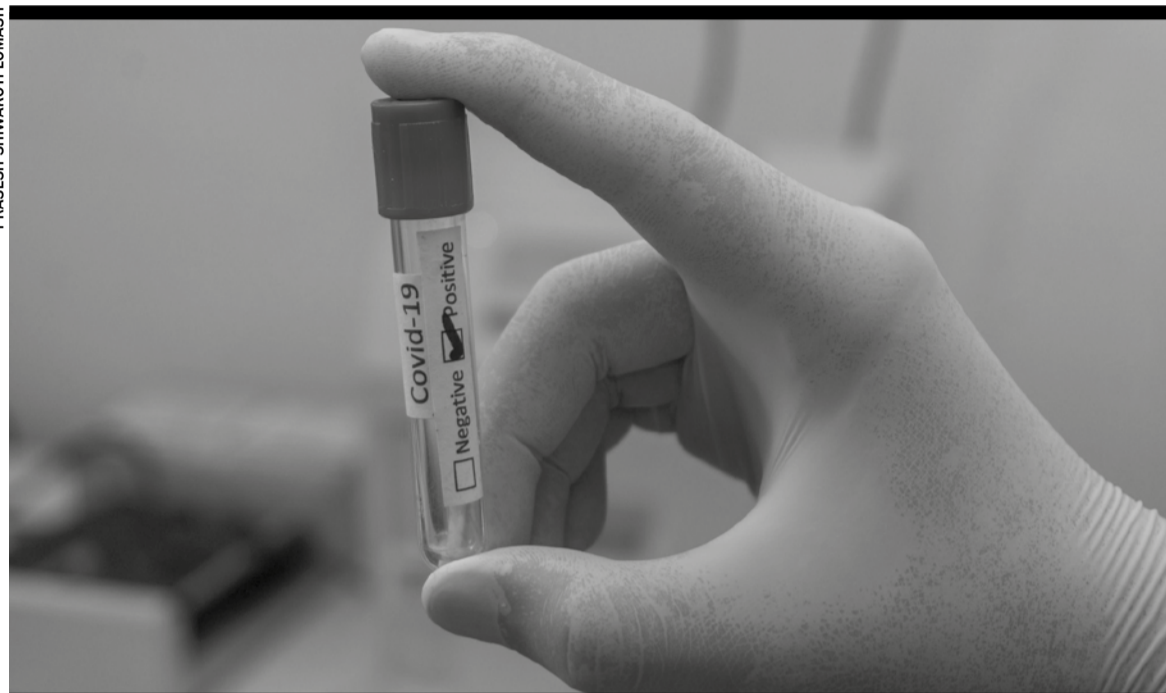
The Times reported yesterday that a medical doctor told a workshop that a blood test for Covid-19 was ready. Given its short turnaround time, it could replace swab tests, which are currently used widely in Macau, mainland China, and many other places across the world.

The news was first unveiled by local Chinese newspaper Macao Daily News. According to the original report in Chinese, Ng Chi Ho, director-general of the Macao Greater Bay Area Association of Healthcare Providers, said that there is a test capsule available for the current coronavirus.

When tests are conducted using this capsule, only a drop of blood from the patient is required. Another feature of the test is that results will be available in 10 minutes.

This is the first time this type of test has been revealed and discussed in the public arena.

The Covid-19 blood test is expected to help with triage and pre-



PRASESH SHIMAKOTI/LOMASH

liminary diagnosis. In addition, it can be performed at private clinics, Ng was reported as saying.

When the Times asked yesterday whether the Health Bureau would consider using the new test, Leong explained more data is required to make that decision. Nonetheless, she attempted to offer some explanations based on her medical background.

The medical doctor pointed out that normally blood tests check the antibody reaction of a person against viral infection, and it takes some time for that reaction to happen.

"Taking Dengue Fever as an example: it takes about three to

five days from contraction before the antibody becomes detectable," the medical doctor said. "Swab tests focus on the nucleic acid of the virus, which takes a shorter incubation period before it can become detectable."

The ability to test a lot of people at one time is also a crucial factor in deciding whether to introduce the test to the market. Leong stated that although the blood test claims to be quick, if it can only test one person at one time, it will not be advantageous.

"Given that we aim at testing a maximum of more than 20,000 people per day, it's an important concern," Leong explained.

Another factor, which is related to the test viability, is the supply of the product. Being a new product, it needs to prove sufficient supply to the market, Leong explained.

However, the medical doctor did not dismiss the possibility of introducing the blood test. Authorities simply need more data for their decision-making, she said.

Blood tests have long been a reliable test method for other viral infections, such as HIV. A single drop of blood can return a HIV result within 20 minutes. Self-test kits for HIV have also recently become available in Macau.

Macau sees little risk in new virus cases in Guangdong

ANTHONY LAM

THE new Covid-19 cases reported in Shenzhen and Shanwei, Guangdong Province, should not pose significant risks to Macau amid the resumption of travel endorsements for Macau approved across the border, Dr Leong Iek Hou of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center said yesterday.

The medical doctor stressed that the places with new cases recorded have initiated special measures to contain the spread.

"For example, Shenzhen has tested above



ANTHONY LAM

80,000 people in just one day," Leong revealed. "Among them, two asymptomatic cases were detected. They're co-workers with the patients."

Sanitization has also been conducted in places

related to the patients.

Similar measures were implemented in Shanwei as well, which discovered three asymptomatic family members of a patient.

On top of having close contact with national and

provincial health authorities, the medical doctor stated that the local Health Bureau is closely monitoring the situation, too.

Leong also said that there has not been any mass infection or spread found within the province, implying that even if mainland residents visit Macau, they should not present a risk to the city.

She was also asked what would happen if mainland residents were not willing to wear masks during their trip in Macau. Reports have shown that the habit of mask-wearing has relaxed in many mainland cities.

Leong reiterated that

there are existing guidelines for what people should do. For example, bus drivers are authorized to require passengers to wear their masks correctly.

She believes if Macau residents do their job well, they can influence mainland visitors to keep the good habit.

Yesterday, mainland China saw 22 new cases, all imported, with eight in Guangdong, four in Yunnan, three in Shanghai, three in Shaanxi, two in Sichuan, one in Fujian and one in Shandong. In Hong Kong, 44 new cases were recorded, bringing the total confirmed cases in Hong Kong to 4,524.

Meanwhile, the Center announced that from this week, the press conference will only be held twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays.

THREE NEW BUS STOPS READY FOR HENGQIN PORT

In order to facilitate the opening of the new Hengqin port, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) will open three new bus stops. These stops, are closely grouped along Estrada Flor de Lótus. One stop accommodates bus numbers 15, 21A, 25, 26, 26A, 50 and N3, which all head to Coloane. The second hosts bus lines 15, 21A, 25, 25B, 26, 26A, 50, MT4 and N3, all going towards Macau peninsula. The last one only receives line 701X which transports passengers to the Macau immigration facility of the new Hengqin port. All three stops have been named Lotus Flower Bridge. On the other side of Estrada Flor de Lótus, buses 25B, 50 and 701X will have another stop along the route towards the port. Bus route 701X runs 24 hours a day.

ADVISOR WANTS WALKING PATH LEADING TO HAC SA BEACH

The advisory body of the island district has suggested the local government build a walking path all the way to Hac Sa Beach. Three members of the council, including Ng Chi Lung, pointed out that drivers occupying private parking lots, pedestrians jaywalking, and small bus frequencies, are among the problems for walkers in the area. The advisors proposed that the government build skyways at the premise of the beach to divert pedestrians from jaywalking and from risks of traffic accidents, including a lift connecting Estrada de Hac Sa and Hac Sa Beach barbecue area, in order to improve road safety, and the creation a facility for the public to view the sight of the entire Hac Sa Beach coastal view.

PORTUGUESE-SPEAKERS TO BUILD ART HOTEL IN TAIPA

A group of Portuguese-speaking individuals have decided to jointly build an art hotel in Taipa, according to a report by Macao Daily News. The hotel will be titled the Center of the China, Macao, and Portuguese Speaking Countries' Artists. The President of the China, Macao and Portuguese Speaking Countries Artists' Association, Eduardo Ambrósio, and Macau local artist leong Tai Meng (who is also chairman of the association) said that they have already planned to build the hotel on a land plot in Taipa. The center will aim at providing more diverse services to China and Portuguese-speaking countries. An inauguration ceremony of the commencement of the construction of the art hotel will take place today at 3 p.m.

GAMING

Wynn's revenue suffers in difficult first half of 2020

LYNZY VALLES

WYNN Macau has recorded an operating revenue decrease of 79.2% to HKD3.97 billion in the first half of the year, attributing the drop to the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to a statement issued by the gaming operator to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, its casino revenues amounted to HKD2.98 billion, which accounted for 85.9% of the total operating revenue.

Visitation to Macau has fallen significantly since the outbreak of Covid-19, driven by the pandemic's deterrent effect on travel and social activities.

Due to travel restrictions, which hindered the city's main visitor source market

from entering the SAR, Wynn Macau's operating loss stood at HKD3.17 billion in the first half of the year.

"Covid-19 pandemic has had and will continue to have an adverse effect on the company's results of operations," parent company Wynn Resorts said in a statement.

"The company is currently unable to determine when protective measures in effect at our Macau Operations, Las Vegas Operations, and Encore Boston Harbor will be lifted."

Given the uncertainty around the extent and timing of the potential future spread or mitigation of Covid-19, as well as ongoing uncertainty around the imposition or relaxation of protective measures, Wynn's

management said that it cannot reasonably estimate the impact to the company's future operation, cash flow, or financial condition results.

However, it noted that it is still "able to support continuing operators and respond to the current Covid-19 pandemic challenges," underlining that as of June 30 it had total cash and cash equivalents, excluding restricted cash, of HKD18.86 billion.

Meanwhile, the parent company has recorded \$523 million losses in the three months ended June 30, against about \$219 million in operating income a year earlier. The gaming operator's quarterly revenue fell to \$85.7 million from \$1.66 billion a year earlier.

New law proposes limits

RENATO MARQUES

MACAO Government Tourism Office (MGTO) inspectors may face greater restrictions in accessing some hotel facilities under a new law being discussed at the Legislative Assembly (AL).

The change was revealed by lawmaker Chan Chak Mo, Chairman of the Second Standing Committee of the AL, after a meeting of the committee yesterday to discuss the "Legal regime of hotel industry and similar industry."

According to Chan, at yesterday's meeting the committee debated a new version of the law's text submitted last week by the government. In the new version there are several significant changes which include restricting MGTO inspectors' access to the hotel rooms.

"Article 87 has an important change. Before, MGTO [inspectors] could have access to all places in hotels, including the rooms," Chan said, noting that the committee decided to revoke this right for all groups, excepting police authorities if

they believe a crime is taking place in a hotel room.

"We need to respect the privacy of the people [hotel guests]. In cases of a crime, police can always enter [the rooms] but now [in the new version of the law text] the government has changed the article, stating that MGTO inspectors can enter all public facilities and services areas, but not the rooms," he explained.

This is one of the several changes in the text that, according to Chan, has been made by the government in response to opinions expressed by the committee. The committee "will contribute to perfecting this new law," the chairman added.

Another of the announced changes has to do with the first article of the law, which now "broadens the scope of application," including not just the hotel itself but also restaurants and similar establishments within the hotel premises.

The chairman of the committee explained that this is to account for older hotel units which have been operating for several years under different regulations. In some cases, the-


se older hotels have been operating in buildings and on land plots that were assigned different purposes from the hospitality industry, so there was a need to include them under the same legislation.

As Chan also noted, one of the novelties of this law is that it establishes after its enforcement that all new hotel units to be built "must be installed in urban buildings designated to be used for the hotel industry."

"[In the future] if the land plot is not meant to be used for a hotel, then we cannot build a hotel. Of course, in the cases that hotels already exist and have been operating for many years they can continue to do so," Chan explained in reply to media questions.

Chan also explained that the land purpose definition would be done according to the Land, Public Works, and Transport Bureau, adding, "it is also possible to change the land purpose but that is not new. [...] If you change the land purpose then you need to pay the land premium difference and, as we know, to do so, you need the agreement of 100% of the tenants and building owners."

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RENATO MARQUES



Lawmaker Chan Chak Mo, Chairman of the Second Standing Committee of the AL (right)

'ONE-STOP' LICENSING SERVICE

The chairman of the Second Standing Committee of the AL also revealed that another of the novelties of the new hotel business law is the inclusion of a "one-stop" service for licensing. This solution has already been in force for food and beverage establishments under licensing from the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM).

According to Chan Chak Mo, this idea seeks to align the hotel industry with other industries' laws currently in force which, according to

both committee members and the government, have been successfully applied.

With the implementation of the "one-stop" system also comes the issuing of temporary operation licenses. According to Chan, "while waiting for other inspections like fire [inspections] for instance, the facilities will be able to temporarily operate for a period of six months so they can start their business." He added that such a license could be renewed for another period of six months.

"We are still discussing the possibility of the issuing

of two temporary authorizations in different moments," Chan said, explaining that one of the times would be "before the inspection" from the authorities and the other would be after the inspection and before the final license is issued.

Since yesterday's meeting did not count the presence of government officials, the committee has another meeting today to continue to discuss such details.

Chan also clarified that the issuing of temporary licenses applies to restaurants, bars, and dance rooms

located in the hotel premises but not to the hotel unit in general.

UNTIL THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE SESSION

During yesterday's meeting, the chairman also noted that it is almost certain that the committee will not be able to issue a final opinion on the Hotel Business Law and send the bill for final approval in plenary session before September 15, when this legislative session comes to a closure.

"It seems difficult to have a final opinion during this legislative session. We have about one month now [until the end of the extension period approved by the AL] but I find it difficult to see it happening," Chan said, noting that there are still several details that need to be debated before an agreement is reached between the committee and the government.

"I think it can be this year but I doubt that the bill can be delivered to the AL for final approval in plenary during this session," Chan concluded.

FUTURE BRIGHT RECORDS HKD110 MILLION IN LOSSES

Future Bright Holdings Limited has reported that, for the first half of the year, the company recorded some HKD110 million in losses. The food and beverage firm of lawmaker Chan Chak Mo announced in a statement to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected its local retail business, which led to the temporary closure of most of its restaurants in the SARs and mainland China. In May, it also permanently closed down all of its Mad for Garlic restaurants, two Bari-Uma restaurants, one Fu-Un-Maruru restaurant in Hong Kong and two restaurants in Taiwan due to their poor performance. According to the filing, the firm recorded a turnover drop of some 64.5% to some HKD200 million.

PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS STOOD AT MOPI4.7 BILLION IN Q2

A total of 2,636 building units and parking spaces were purchased and sold in the second quarter of 2020 as per Stamp Duty record, with the total value of transactions at 14.7 billion patacas, up by 81.2% and 86.3% respectively quarter-to-quarter. According to data from the Statistics and Census Service, the purchase and sale of residential units increased by 990 quarter-to-quarter to 1,971 units, and the total value surged by 107% to 12.7 billion patacas. The number of existing residential units transacted rose by 838 over the previous quarter to 1,678, amounting to 10.5 billion patacas, up by 116.5%. Despite the economic downturn caused by Covid-19, the transaction volume of pre-sale residential units increased by 152 quarter-to-quarter to 293 units, and the transaction value grew by 70.2% to 2.1 billion patacas. The average prices of those in the Macau Peninsula (104,888 patacas) and Taipa (102,240 patacas) rose by 7.1% and 4.5% respectively, while the average price of those in Coloane (119,587 patacas) dropped by 2.9%.

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FAMILY CONTINUES DONATION DRIVE SUPPORTING MIGRANT WORKERS IN NEED

LYNZY VALLES

SEVEN months into the Covid-19 pandemic, one Macau-based family has continued to lead a donation drive to assist migrant workers who have lost their jobs or have been on a no-pay leave scheme since mid-February.

Many employers, including small and medium enterprises and gaming operators, laid off a significant number of workers during the first wave of the pandemic due to the economic downturn in the city.

Official data shows that some 10,700 migrant workers have left the city since the beginning of the year.

Some have chosen to stay in the city in the hopes of finding a new employer.

As for couple Matthew and Cynthia De Haas, it is high time for these workers to receive help from the city they choose to work in.

Speaking to the Times, they explained that their charity drive initially kicked off by preparing home-cooked meals once a day to assist a number of Filipino workers who were on a no-pay leave agreement. It then evolved to even offer loans to those who were in need of financial assistance to pay agency fees to acquire new jobs.

"We [initially] prepared meals for a week and a half and we figured out that wasn't the most efficient way. Also, we gathered more



and more requests for people that were in a similar situation," explained Cynthia De Haas.

"They were coming from all different kinds of companies: whether it's from Menzies or casino companies. The group was of about 30, and then we started to do [weekly deliveries of food and toiletries]. We really looked at what they needed in order to stay healthy and to keep them happy in these difficult times," she said.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, a number of private individuals and associations – including religious groups – have

been leading donation drives for unemployed migrants, especially during the first three months of the pandemic.

However, due to the number of repatriation flights that have already taken place, with many migrant workers having gone back to their home countries, these donation drives have slowly decreased.

The De Haas family are planning to continue their drive, with the help of friends, until October.

"We figured out that we are pretty fortunate to be living in a

very nice city and having a healthy family. [...] We have heard different stories and just knowing that we are in a very fortunate position, we want to help the community in some ways," Cynthia De Haas said.

Now in its 23rd week, the couple, along with their friends, have delivered about 650 packs of meals, food and toiletries.

"It really depends on what they need. Throughout the months, we got to know them, so we're helping them out in looking for new jobs and with giving them loans to pay agency fees," she said.

"If one goes back to the Philippines, how can we help them? If one wants to stay here how can we make sure that they have a new job. [The help] is personalized to make sure that everybody is helped as much as possible."

The groups that have been mostly helping these affected migrant workers are private individuals and religious groups. Government organizations are not obliged to cater to their needs, as they prioritize local residents who are below the poverty threshold.

For the couple, from a humanitarian and community perspective, these people have been "missed" by the government, as there is a lack of organization when it comes to the ones catering to the city's non-resident workers.

Not only did the pandemic shine a light on how Macau is heavily reliant on consumption from the outside, it also showed how there is a lack of interest in assisting these workers.

"There is still a great opportunity for more giving back. [...] Whether it's local people in poverty or migrant workers that are working for little [pay]," said Michael De Haas.

"There is so much more opportunity for the city, as wealthy as it is, to do so much better than it is [doing] today. The city is wealthy. These [local] charities get good funding from various organizations, yet we still have people who are struggling so there's a problem somewhere."

Philanthropy association organizes urgent help for Lebanon

RENATO MARQUES

THE Associação Internacional de Filantropia (Macau) is launching a fundraising campaign aiming to provide financial support to the people of Lebanon, namely those recently affected by the explosions in the port of Lebanon's capital city, Beirut.

The explosions that killed over 200 people and destroyed a significant part of the city also left an estimated 300,000 people homeless. This exacerbates the pre-existing difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the local association, founded and presided over by Lurdes de Sousa, reminded in conversation with the Times.

To help to tackle the existing problems in a country already suffering from



Firefighters carry the coffins of their comrades who were killed in the August 4 explosion

financial and economic strain, and the recent health crisis, the Association has started a campaign using the crowdfunding platform "GoFundMe," aiming to collect money that will be given to a Lebanese non-profit non-governmental association working

on the ground, by the name of Achrafieh2020.

"I have had a strong link to Lebanon for over 30 years and since I know the people on the ground [Achrafieh2020], I talked with them and we decided to do something to help," de Sousa said.

"It is the first time that such a campaign has been carried out in Macau. I expect that the response [from people in Macau] will be positive. Although Macau is not used to contributing to international or more unknown causes, if Macau wants to be an

international city it must also be one in international solidarity," de Sousa added, noting that Macau residents are "supportive and generous."

Explaining the campaign in more detail, the president of the local association said, "[using the GoFundMe platform] we will circulate the campaign internationally and there will be a great outreach even in the Lebanese diaspora that I know well. This campaign is to help [Achrafieh2020] [...] and all funds will be directly transferred to them without any intermediaries."

For the philanthropist, the aid must arrive as quickly as possible, as the current humanitarian situation in Lebanon is serious.

According to the campaign organizer, Achra-

fieh2020 "is now supporting 1,100 families with food, logistics, medical help, drug prescriptions, and social care, and has committed to repairing 5,000 windows and doors damaged by the blast to allow displaced families to return to their homes."

International donations will be available through the website "gofundme.com/f/helplebanon2020" with local donations facilitated by a specially dedicated page at "artofgiving.org.mo/helplebanon2020."

The status of donations as well as the projects for which the funds are being used will be also published on the Association's website, de Sousa told the Times.

Macau Daily Times is the official media partner of the Associação Internacional de Filantropia.

Fraying US-China relations tested by Trump ahead of election

THE almost daily drumbeat of tensions between the U.S. and China shows little sign of letting up, while touching on everything from the coronavirus to trade to defense issues to monetary policy.

President Donald Trump has made his tough positions on China a key element in the lead-up to the U.S. presidential election, now less than three months away, and he seems intent on keeping the pressure on.

Tensions have been mounting since the Covid-19 pandemic spread across the globe early this year. Barely a day goes by without Trump slamming what he calls a "plague" unleashed on the world by China in press briefings, Twitter and elsewhere.

"We were unfairly treated by China because they could have stopped it," Trump told reporters over the weekend about the coronavirus.

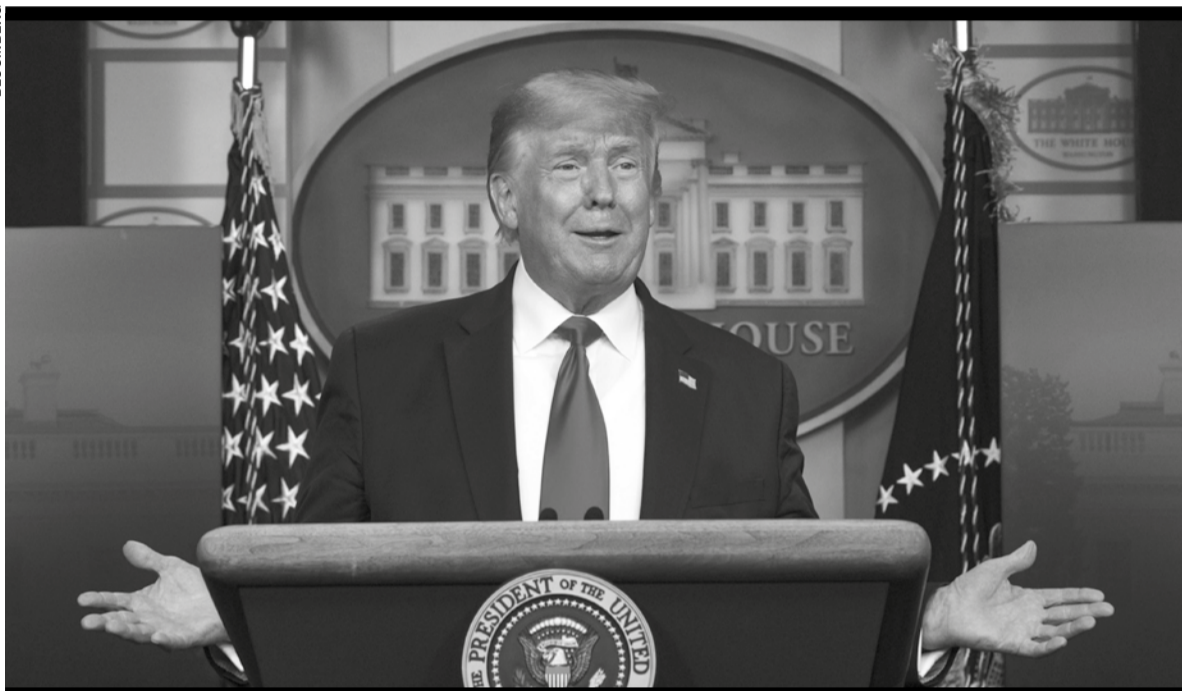
Some China hawks in the Trump administration, from Secretary of State Michael Pompeo to White House trade adviser Peter Navarro, see a historic opening to re-balance decades of U.S.-China relations. Senior officials from Washington and Beijing late last week postponed trade talks that had been set for this past weekend to discuss the status of the "phase one" trade deal signed early in the year.

Against that background, it's unclear how heated things may get between now and November, while the provocations mount:

The Trump administration on Friday approved the sale of F-16 military jets to Taiwan, and the president ordered the Chinese owner of the TikTok to sell its U.S. assets after a review of the national security dangers posed by the popular music video app.

The president earlier this month moved to ban WeChat, a popular social networking and mobile payment app developed by Chi-

BLOOMBERG



nese Internet giant Tencent Holdings Ltd.

Trump on Saturday boasted about the actions he's taken against Huawei Technologies, including jawboning other countries into avoiding the Chinese firm's products, and didn't rule out actions against other companies. While he didn't elaborate, those comments are sure to keep markets on edge.

The President's Working Group on Financial Markets this month said U.S. stock exchanges should set new rules that could trigger the delisting of Chinese companies.

The administration has also taken a markedly tough stance against

Beijing's crackdown on political and press freedoms in Hong Kong, including the recent sanctions on a range of officials, and China's treatment of ethnic minorities.

Although bilateral trade talks seem to be on hold for now, Trump said China is buying large amounts of U.S. corn, soybeans and cattle. "China has been buying a lot of - a lot of things, and they're doing

that to keep me happy," he said Saturday.

Even so, he said, China's government would prefer that he lose in November to Democrat Joe Biden. On Sunday he retweeted a Twitter post from a Republican aide noting that Biden and running mate Kamala Harris "didn't mention China a single time" in their joint announcement last week.

"It is fair to say TikTok has done almost everything the US side has asked for."

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY

FLASH POINTS

Beyond the Covid-19 pandemic and Beijing's tightening grip over Hong Kong, the relationship has a series of flash points including 5G technology and defense as Trump, formerly a fan of Chinese President Xi Jinping, sours on the relationship.

"I had a great relationship with President Xi," Trump said in

an interview last week with Fox Sports Radio. "I like him, but I don't feel the same way now."

Trump on Friday had ordered ByteDance Ltd., the Chinese owner of the popular music video app TikTok, to sell its U.S. assets on national security grounds. Asked whether there are other companies he's looking at banning or restricting in the U.S., Trump said: "We're looking at other things, yes." He didn't elaborate.

China pushed back yesterday, saying it had repeatedly told the truth about Tik Tok's operations.

"It is fair to say TikTok has done almost everything the U.S. side has asked for," Zhao, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, said. "However, it is still not spared from the clutches of certain U.S. politicians, who are acting like robbers. Out of their own selfish political gains, these politicians insist on fabricating various excuses to strangle Tik-Tok."

The Trump administration in July rejected China's expansive maritime claims in the South

China Sea, reversing a previous policy of not taking sides in such disputes. The U.S. Navy sent an aircraft carrier there on Friday to conduct maritime air defense operations.

Taiwan on Friday formally signed an agreement to buy 66 of the latest model F-16 jets built by Lockheed Martin Corp. The purchase marks the first sale of advanced fighter jets to the island since President George H.W. Bush announced approval for 150 F-16s in 1992.

China's Zhao said Beijing "consistently and firmly" opposed U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.

"It violates the one China principle and three joint communiqués," he said. "China is resolute in safeguarding its sovereignty and security interests. We urge the U.S. to have a clear grasp on the severity of this arms sale issue."

The U.S. is gathering its Asian allies to discuss deploying medium-range missiles in the region as an effort to counter China's nuclear buildup, the Nikkei Asian Review reported on Sunday, citing Marshall Billingslea, U.S. special presidential envoy for arms control.

MILITARY TESTS

On Sunday, the Chinese army released footage of its Hong Kong garrison firing cannons and torpedoes in a drill in the South China Sea. The People's Liberation Army recently tested the weaponry, including a torpedo launch from the vessel Huizhou that successfully hit its target, according to state media.

China has its own complaints with U.S. policy. On Sunday, the chairman of China's banking watchdog said that the Federal Reserve's unparalleled stimulus to shore up the economy from the coronavirus risks plunging the world into a financial crisis, given the dominance of the U.S. dollar in the international monetary system.

"The unprecedented, unlimited quantitative easing policy of the U.S. actually consumes the creditworthiness of the dollar and erodes the foundation of global financial stability," the China Banking Regulatory Commission's Guo Shuqing wrote in the Communist Party's Qushi magazine Sunday. **BLOOMBERG**

Guangzhou to halt frozen seafood, meat imports on virus worry

THE Cold Chain Association of Guangzhou ordered all member companies to suspend imports of frozen meat and seafood from coronavirus-hit areas, the city's Internet Information Office said on its official Weibo account, without specifying areas or countries.

The association also ordered all workers who come into contact with frozen meat and seafood to be tested for the coronavirus, and that they get tested once a week, it said over the weekend.

The order was issued after the local government in the nearby city of Shenzhen

found the virus on a surface sample of chicken wings imported from Brazil, and there were earlier cases in other Chinese cities where the pathogen was identified on packaging samples of imported seafood.

"I don't think there is any major problem if you clean the food thoroughly and

cook it well before eating," infectious disease expert Zhong Nanshan said in an interview with a TV news outlet Sunday. "There is maybe a chance the virus can be transmitted from food to humans, but that isn't the primary means." The interview was posted on Weibo by Guangzhou's

Internet Information Office.

Chen Wei, executive vice president of the China Meat Association, told the Beijing News that suspending meat imports nationwide is not recommended because current outbreaks are isolated. "If there is a complete ban, it will affect the avail-

ability of abundant supply and stable prices, and be a huge detriment to consumers," Chen said.

The World Health Organization has said there have been no examples proving that the virus could be transmitted as food borne, if it actually was in food. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

BELARUS

Workers hit the streets, as EU chief calls summit



Workers with handmade posters reading "Go away!" march toward the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant where Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko addresses employees in Minsk

YURAS KARMANAU,
MINSK

THOUSANDS of factory workers in Belarus took to the streets and hundreds of demonstrators besieged the state television headquarters yesterday, raising the pressure on authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko to step down after 26 years in office.

On the ninth straight day of protests against the official results of the Aug. 9 presidential vote handing him a sixth term, Lukashenko flew by helicopter to a factory in the capital in a bid to rally support but was heckled by workers chanting "Go away!"

Facing the angry crowd, the 65-year-old former state farm director dismissed the calls to step down.

As he spoke, over 5,000 striking workers from the Minsk Tractor Works plant marched down the streets of Minsk, demanding that Lukashenko cede his post to Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the leading opposition candidate.

The official results of the Aug. 9 vote gave Lukashenko 80% of the votes and Tsikhanouskaya only 10%, but the opposition claimed the vote was rigged.

"Lukashenko is a former president, he needs to go," Sergei Dylevsky, the leader of the protest at the Minsk Tractor Works plant, told The Associated Press. "Svetlana (Tsikhanouskaya) is our president, legitimate and elected by the people."

Tsikhanouskaya, a 37-year-old former English teacher, entered the race after her husband's jailing in Belarus. She managed to galvanize nationwide support, drawing tens of thousands to her campaign rallies.

Large-scale protests against the vote results continued even after she left the country for Lithuania last week, a move her campaign said was made under duress. The protests have posed the biggest challenge yet to Lukashenko's iron-fisted rule of the ex-Soviet nation of 9.5 million.

Belarusian authorities initially tried to suppress the rallies, detaining almost 7,000 people in the first days of the protests. Police moved aggressively, using stun grenades and rubber bullets to disperse the crowds, injuring scores of people.

However, as protests grew and the harsh crackdown drew criticism in the West, law enforcement refrained from interfering

with the crowds and appeared all but absent during a rally on Sunday that attracted some 200,000 people.

In Brussels, European Council President Charles Michel convened an emergency summit of EU leaders on Wednesday to discuss the handling of the election and the crackdown in the wake of the polls.

"The people of Belarus have the right to decide on their future and freely elect their leader," Michel said in a tweet. "Violence against protesters is unacceptable and cannot be allowed."

The video-conference summit will take place on Wednesday at 1000 GMT.

On Friday, the 27 EU foreign ministers underlined that the elections were neither free nor fair and that they refuse to accept the results of the polls, as announced by the Belarus electoral commission. They tasked officials with drawing up a list of people who could face sanctions over their role in the violence.

Tsikhanouskaya said in a video statement yesterday she was ready to facilitate a rerun of the disputed election.

"I'm ready to take on the responsibility and act as a national leader in order for the country to calm down,

return to its normal rhythm, in order for us to free all the political prisoners and prepare legislation and conditions for organizing new presidential elections," she said.

Lukashenko bristled at the idea of talks with the opposition, insisting his government was the only legitimate one, and rejected the idea of repeating the election at a rally in his support on Sunday. The embattled president told a crowd of 50,000 that the country would "perish as a state" otherwise, and denounced the protesters as stooges of foreign masterminds.

Lukashenko visited another tractor plant and dismissed the strikes as insignificant. "So, 150 (people) at some factory, even 200 don't make a difference," the president was quoted as saying by the state Belta news agency.

Thousands of workers from several other plants in the meantime gathered outside, shouting "We're not sheep, we're people," and "Strike!"

Maria Kolesnikova, Tsikhanouskaya's top associate, attended the gathering and said that "only the former president (Lukashenko) stepping down will calm the nation down." AP

this day in history

1969 WOODSTOCK MUSIC FESTIVAL ENDS



Thousands of young people are heading home after three days and nights of sex, drugs and rock and roll at the Woodstock music festival.

An estimated 400,000 youngsters turned up to hear big-name bands play in a field near the village of Bethel, New York state in what has become the largest rock concert of the decade.

About 186,000 tickets were sold so promoters anticipated that around 200,000 would turn up. But on Friday night, the flimsy fences and ticket barriers had come down and organisers announced the concert was free prompting thousands more to head for the concert.

Traffic jams eight miles long blocked off the area near White Lake, near Bethel, some 50 miles from the town of Woodstock.

Local police estimated a million people were on the road yesterday trying to get to Woodstock. They were overwhelmed by the numbers but were impressed by a good level of behaviour.

The festival's chief medical officer, Dr William Abruzzi told Rolling Stone magazine: "These people are really beautiful. There has been no violence whatsoever which is really remarkable for a crowd of this size."

Those who made it to the makeshift venue were treated to performances by Janis Joplin, The Who, Grateful Dead, Canned Heat, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Jimi Hendrix, Joan Baez and Ravi Shankar.

Rainstorms failed to dampen the spirits of the revellers, many high on marijuana, some dancing naked in the now muddy fields.

The main organiser, 49-year-old dairy farmer Max Yasgur, who provided \$50,000 and 600 acres of his land, addressed the crowds on the last day of the event.

"You have proven something to the world... that half a million kids can get together for fun and music and have nothing but fun and music."

There were however two deaths - a teenager was killed by a tractor as he lay in his sleeping bag and another died from a drugs overdose.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Woodstock, a holiday centre and artists' colony, had held an arts and music fair since 1906 but the 1969 Woodstock festival made the town world famous.

The final cost to the four sponsors - John Roberts, Joel Rosenman, Artie Kornfeld and Michael Lang - was \$2.4m. A film of the concert was released the following year and Woodstock became synonymous with flower power, the hippie culture and anti-Vietnam war protests that dominated the 1970s.

The "Woodstock generation" look back on the event with nostalgia and an anniversary Woodstock festival was held in 1994.

But the second - highly commercialised - anniversary concert in July 1999 ended in riots, fires and at least eight allegations of rape.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Sometimes, acting in a traditional way is not terribly rewarding. Luckily, you've got more than a few bright and fresh new ideas swimming around in your head, and today is a great time to try a few.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

There might be a bit of a power struggle going on early in the day, but it will be a playful one. Someone has an agenda, but you will have a good suggestion that can help folks come together.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You might not be the smartest person in the room today, but your intellectual prowess will distinguish you. Speak up when a bad idea is being offered up for a vote.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You already realize that just doing what feels right in life is not the best way to run your life—but today, you really need to focus on staying rooted in reality.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Has your pride recently suffered a bit of a blow? The best way to build your ego back up is to get right back up on the saddle. Go back to the scene of the crime and try, try again.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

If you keep doing the same things over and over again, you're not going to learn anything new. So today, you owe it to yourself to mix up your usual routine and delve into some foreign territory.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Get ready for a major surge of creativity today! Sharpen your pencils, free up some memory on your computer, and stretch those brainstorming muscles!



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Take a look around your home today and identify the rooms or areas that could use some improvement, either structurally or decoratively. Your creativity is bubbling over right now.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Having a healthy debate with a person you don't usually connect with very well should be a goal for you today. This type of discussion can challenge your intellect and offer you a great deal of satisfaction.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You should be prepared to take over for a floundering group today. The members of this group are not quite as mature as you are, and they need to be led along like children.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You will be perceived as being as attractive as you feel you are today! So take a good long look in the mirror this morning and remind yourself that while you might not be the hottest person on earth.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Right now things are getting a bit stale, and you need to make some room in your life for new ideas and people—so get cleaning! You know deep down inside that in your heart there are more than a few old exes.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

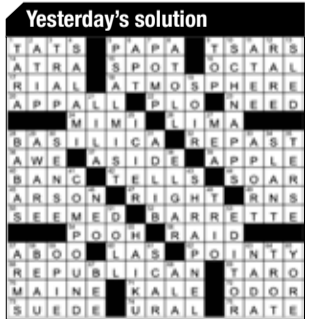
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	23	30	thundershower
Harbin	23	28	thundershower
Tianjin	25	28	heavy rain
Urumqi	21	34	cloudy
Xi'an	21	27	overcast
Lhasa	10	22	clear
Chengdu	19	24	shower
Chongqing	28	35	drizzle
Kunming	17	23	moderate rain
Nanjing	27	37	cloudy
Shanghai	28	35	clear
Wuhan	28	37	cloudy
Hangzhou	28	38	clear
Taipei	26	32	cloudy
Guangzhou	27	33	thundershower
Hong Kong	27	32	thundershower
WORLD			
Moscow	11	23	clear
Frankfurt	16	23	overcast
Paris	15	22	cloudy
London	15	20	cloudy
New York	22	26	drizzle

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Turkish bigwig; 6- Theme; 11- ___ Quentin; 14- Having auricular protuberances; 15- Muse of poetry in Greek mythology; 16- TV listings abbr.; 17- Congo, once; 18- Flavor; 19- Consume; 20- Without value; 22- Brazilian ballroom dance; 24- The tiniest bit; 28- Random; 30- Innovation of the late 20's; 31- Central nervous system; 32- Schlepped; 33- Abandonment; 37- Comedian Philips; 38- Pine sap; 39- Actress Charlotte; 40- European wood-pigeons; 43- Orange container; 45- Pardon; 46- Painted; 47- Amusing; 50- Hardens metal; 51- Make amends; 52- Hit the mall; 53- When doubled, a dance; 54- Transform; 57- Chum; 62- Asian holiday; 63- ___ evil...; 64- Kind of battery; 65- Apr. addressee; 66- Avoid; 67- Squallid;

DOWN: 1- Dispenser candy; 2- Battery size; 3- Hindu honorific; 4- Not him; 5- Tonsil's neighbor; 6- Unit of magnetic induction; 7- Word that can precede hygiene, tradition and agreement; 8- Soft food for infants; 9- Judge in 1995 news; 10- Pirate; 11- Stalks; 12- Addis ___; 13- Birth-related; 21- U of U athlete; 23- Em, e.g.; 24- Aquatic mammal; 25- Model Campbell; 26- John of England; 27- Tina's ex; 28- Upbeat, in music; 29- "The Longest Day" city; 31- Attack on all sides; 33- Satan; 34- Steamed; 35- Western; 36- Food and water; 38- Type of tomato; 41- Sheepish look; 42- Die; 43- Instrument for showing direction; 44- Blame; 46- Bus, bigwig; 47- Desert bloomers; 48- None of the above; 49- Castle water pits; 50- Spasm; 52- Mail out; 55- Monetary unit of Bulgaria; 56- Beverage commonly drunk in England; 58- Broadway's "Five Guys Named ___"; 59- ___ de France; 60- Wander; 61- Jazz trombonist Kid ___;



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



FOR SALE

Jade Garden- Spacious Family Home, Taipa
 HK\$18,000,000 3,180 ft² 4 3

FOR RENT

Ocean Garden, Taipa- Sakura Court
 \$35,000/mth 3,700 ft² 4 4

FOR SALE

[Macau] Apartment Historical Centre 2 1 1 1
 840 ft² \$4,580,000 (ref: 20016003)

[Macau] Seaview Garden 3 1 2 1
 1,420 ft² \$10,900,000 (ref: 20016004)

[Macau] One Central 2 1 2 1
 1,269 ft² \$11,800,000 (ref: 19070000)

[Coloane] Large 3/4 bedroom 2 3 1 2 1
 2,530 ft² \$12,980,000 (ref: 19096000)

FOR RENT

[Taipa] Studio apartment 1 1 1 1
 650 ft² \$9,000/mth (ref: 20061003)

[Taipa] Old Taipa Village Apartment 2 1 1 1
 600 ft² \$9,900/mth (ref: n/a)

[Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1 1 1
 710 ft² \$20,460/mth (ref: 20021002)

[Macau] One Central 2 1 2 1
 1,269 ft² \$25,000/mth (ref: n/a)

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CHINA TRADERS READY FOR STOCK LIMITS TO DOUBLE NEXT WEEK

Stocks on China's Nasdaq-like ChiNext board will be allowed to rise or fall 20% as of next week when the first batch of listings under revamped rules start trading. The Shenzhen Stock Exchange said Friday that the first batch of listings will start trading on Aug. 24, which means the 20% limit will be put into effect the same day, according to rules announced in June. The changes - which won't yet apply to main boards in Shanghai and Shenzhen - will bring more volatility to an index that often sees daily moves of 5% or more. In doing so the \$1.3 trillion ChiNext board will serve as a testing ground for whether Beijing can loosen its tight grip on trading. Having jumped 50% this year, the ChiNext Index has outperformed major global peers, powered by expectations that China will step up state support for homegrown technology.

FEWER CHINA-BUILT TESLAS REGISTERED AS COMPETITION BUILDS

Registrations of locally made Tesla Inc. vehicles in China fell in July from the previous month as competition intensified in the world's largest electric-car market. In July, 11,456 China-built Teslas were registered in the country, according to data from state-backed China Automotive Information Net. That's a 24% decrease from June. Tesla doesn't report monthly sales numbers for China. The world's most-valuable carmaker is ramping up output after starting deliveries from its multibillion-dollar Shanghai plant around the beginning of the year. China is a crucial part of Elon Musk's plan to expand beyond the U.S., and long-term success will require keeping local contenders such as NIO Inc. and global giants BMW AG and Volkswagen AG at bay.

VOLVO OWNER'S CHINA BUSINESS POSTS 43% PROFIT DROP

Geely Automobile Holdings Ltd., the Chinese automaker controlled by Volvo Cars owner Li Shufu, reported a 43% drop in first-half profit after the coronavirus outbreak shuttered factories and decimated demand. Net income in the six months through June was 2.3 billion yuan (\$331 million), the carmaker said in a statement yesterday. The pandemic kept consumers away from showrooms and forced carmakers to suspend production, exacerbating an industry slump that lasted for more than two years. With the outbreak receding in China, sales have started to revive in recent months and automakers are betting on the world's largest market to help them return to growth. Geely said headwinds are set to persist, making "2020 among the most difficult year in the group's history." It also warned "the intense market competition in China could worsen further."

CHINA'S BANK REGULATOR WARNS DOLLAR IS SEED OF CRISIS

CHINA'S top banking watchdog cautioned that U.S. dollar dominance combined with the massive stimulus unleashed by the Federal Reserve could push the world to the edge of another financial crisis.

In a rare act of public criticism, China Banking Regulatory Commission Chairman Guo Shuqing also lashed out at developed nations seeking to divert blame from their own failures to contain the virus outbreak and moves by the U.S. to blacklist Chinese companies and entities.

"In an international monetary system dominated by the U.S. dollar, the unprecedented, unlimited quantitative easing policy of the U.S. actually consumes the creditworthiness of the dollar and erodes the foundation of global financial stability," Guo wrote in an article published in the Communist Party's Qiushi magazine on Sunday. "The world may once again be pushed to the verge of a global financial crisis."

Relations between the world's two superpowers have quickly deteriorated over the past few weeks, touching on everything from the coronavirus, to trade and defense issues, as well as monetary policy. The two have levied competing sanctions against high level officials and politicians in a standoff over Beijing's crackdown on Hong Kong, prompting Chinese lenders to look over their accounts in order not to endanger their access to



Pedestrians wearing protective masks ride an escalator in the Lujiazui Financial District of Shanghai

crucial dollar funding.

As for China's financial system, Guo warned that "after the Black Swan of the pandemic, its asset quality will inevitably deteriorate" since current loan classifications haven't reflected their true quality and banks' profits on paper are inflated.

Combined earnings at China's more than 1,000 commercial banks slumped the most in at least a decade in the second quarter as bad loans climbed. The government has told lenders to sacrifice \$211 billion in profit this year to alleviate the worst

economic slump in 40 years. Bad loans hit the highest in more than a decade, growing to 2.7 trillion yuan (\$389 billion) at the end of June.

Authorities in Beijing have leaned hard on the \$41 trillion banking system, led by Industrial & Commercial Bank of China Ltd. Lenders have been told to forgo profits by providing cheap funding, deferring payments and increasing unsecured lending to small businesses struggling with the pandemic outbreak.

While the virus-relief mea-

sures are necessary, authorities can't ignore that some companies, residents and even governments are likely to add debt amid easy access to credit, Guo said. Expectations of lower rates could trigger leverage trades and speculations, leading to a new round of asset bubbles.

Guo also said that China would continue with the opening of its financial markets this year to Wall Street firms and other global lenders and asset managers, but reiterated it would not come at the expense of the nation's "financial sovereignty." **BLOOMBERG**

VRISHTI BENIWAL

INDIA'S latest set of incentives to entice businesses moving away from China seem to be working, with companies from Samsung Electronics Co. to Apple Inc.'s assembly partners showing interest in investing in the South Asian nation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in March announced incentives that make niche firms - electronics manufacturers - eligible for a payment of 4%-6% of their incremental sales over the next five years. The result: about two dozen companies pledged \$1.5 billion of investments to set up mobile-phone factories in the country.

Besides Samsung, those that have shown interest are Hon Hai Precision Industry Co.,

China's loss may be India's gain in shifting supply chains

known as Foxconn, Wistron Corp. and Pegatron Corp. India has also extended similar incentives to pharmaceutical businesses, and plans to cover more sectors, which may include automobiles, textiles, and food processing under the program.

While companies have been actively looking to diversify supply chains amid the U.S.-China trade tensions and the coronavirus outbreak, it hasn't yet translated into big gains for India despite the nation making it cheaper for businesses to open shop. Vietnam remains the most favored destination, followed by Cambodia, Myanmar,

Bangladesh and Thailand, according to a recent survey by Standard Chartered Plc.

"There is a reasonable chance for India to gain in terms of incremental investment of supply chains within the country over the medium term," said Kaushik Das, chief India economist at Deutsche Bank AG in Mumbai. "These programs are aimed at increasing India's manufacturing share in the gross domestic product."

Samsung plans to make \$40 billion worth of smartphones in India and may shift a major part of its production from Vietnam and other

countries, the Economic Times reported, citing people it didn't identify. Samsung didn't respond to queries from the newspaper.

The incentives would help bring an additional investment of \$55 billion over five years, adding 0.5% to India's economic output, according to analysts led by Neelkanth Mishra at Credit Suisse Group AG. This could shift an additional 10% of global smart-phone production to India in five years, most of it from China, they wrote in a report Aug. 10.

That complements Modi's goal to grow the share of manufacturing in the economy to 25%

from the current around 15% as part of his 'Make in India' program. His government has already lowered taxes on companies to among the lowest in Asia, seeking to attract new investments in an economy headed for its first contraction in more than four decades this year.

The latest output-linked incentive plan is a "big win for Make in India," Amish Shah, an analyst at BofA Securities, said in a report to clients. He sees gains for industrials, cement, pharmaceuticals, metals and logistics, with long-term indirect benefits across many sectors. **BLOOMBERG**



No worries: Hamilton wins Spanish GP for 88th victory in F1

JEROME PUGMIRE

LEWIS Hamilton was worried about Max Verstappen before Sunday's Spanish Grand Prix.

Worried, too, about how the Mercedes tires would cope under a searing summer sun after wilting last week in the lesser heat of Silverstone.

His concerns proved as unfounded as his 88th career victory was comprehensive. The six-time world champion is now within three of Michael Schumacher's Formula One record of 91 wins.

Hamilton beat Verstappen by 24 seconds to extend his championship lead over him to 37 points - 132 to 95 - after six races.

"I was just in a daze out there. I felt really good," Hamilton said. "I didn't even know it was the last lap I was so zoned in."

His teammate Valtteri Bottas is fading from the picture, and already languishes 43 points behind Hamilton despite winning the first race of the season.

Hamilton's fourth win of the coronavirus-shortened campaign was also timely, considering Verstappen's superb win last Sunday — when Mercedes anxiety levels rose.

"It was a surprise because we had that problem with the tires last weekend," Hamilton said. "But we seem to have understood it."

The pre-race thinking from Mercedes was that Verstappen — who has eight podiums in the last nine races — was favorite. But a thrilling contest never happened, and Verstappen's priority became keeping Bottas in third place.

"It was good to split the two Mercedes. I didn't have the pace like Lewis but I'm happy with second," he said. "The start was crucial to get ahead of Valtteri."

Although Bottas secured a bonus point for the fastest lap, he is six points behind Verstappen in the standings.

The winding 4.7-kilometer (2.9-mile) Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, with its combination of slow and fast corners, is one of the hardest for overtaking.

After narrowly securing a record-extending 92nd career pole position Hamilton made a strong start on the long straight to the first corner. But Bottas was overtaken by Verstappen and the Racing Point of Lance Stroll — who jumped from fifth to third with a fine move on Bottas' right flank.

"The start was the key point, I lost a position and then had to

push hard to make ground and suffered the tire condition," Bottas said. "I was behind Max and everyone knows how hard that is."

Track temperatures on the circuit were around 50 degrees C (122 F) and Bottas was concerned.

"These black overalls are hot," he said during the race, throwing in an expletive for emphasis.

It was another miserable day for struggling Ferrari, with Sebastian Vettel seventh and Charles Leclerc abandoning after his engine cut out on track.

"I don't know why the car switched off completely," Leclerc said.

He crawled into the pits but his race was over on lap 41.

Had he stayed out on track, he would likely have been lapped by Hamilton just as Vettel was.

Hamilton set the pace with a confident start.

While he and Verstappen swapped fastest lap times, Bottas labored behind Stroll for four laps.

It was Verstappen — and not Hamilton — who was complaining about his rear tires and by lap 20 of 66 he said there was "nothing left" in them.

The ice-cool Dutchman was getting flustered.

"Do you want me to repeat it again?" he shouted moments later on his radio. "I'm losing so much time."

Finally, his team brought him in for new tires on lap 22 but he was 10 seconds behind Hamilton.

Both Mercedes pitted for new tires on the next lap. But a blip attaching the rear left saw Hamilton emerging about four seconds clear of Verstappen. He was given a brief glimmer of hope as Hamilton's tire was showing signs of blistering only six laps after being fitted.

But Hamilton was soon pulling away again.

Racing Point's Sergio Perez, who missed the last two races as he recovered from the coronavirus, finished in fourth place ahead of Stroll with McLaren's Carlos Sainz Jr. in sixth.

Vettel is having his worst start since 2008 but drove very well with just the one tire stop.

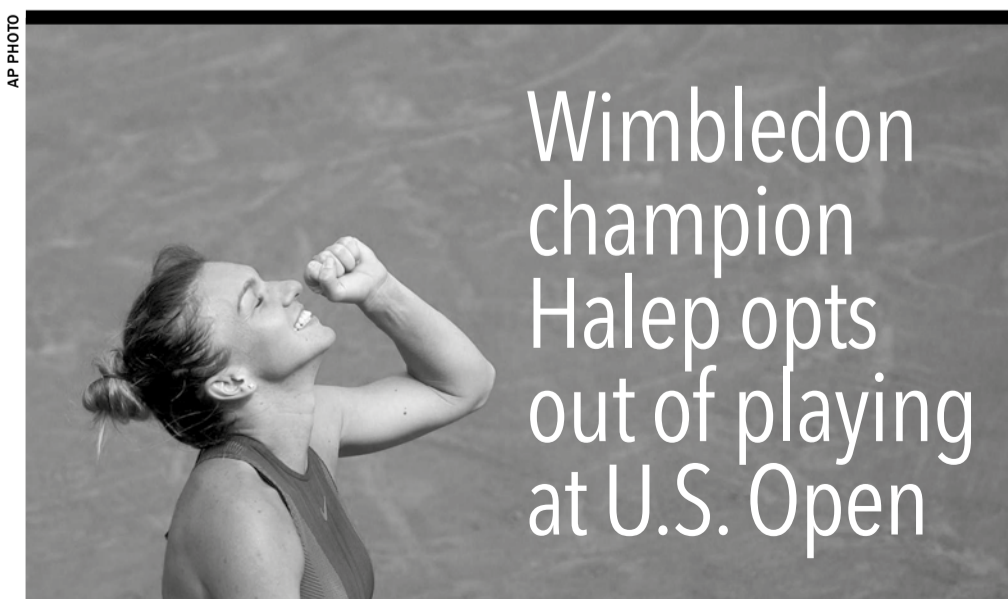
It proved the right choice but came after a tense exchange between Vettel and his race engineer.

"What do you think about going to the end on these tires?" his engineer asked.

After barking out an expletive, Vettel replied: "I asked you this before!"

Minutes earlier, Vettel had asked his team whether they thought he could go to the end on the same tires — and got no response.

His final season with Ferrari could prove to be long and arduous while Hamilton is odds-on to end it with a seventh title to equal Schumacher — Vettel's childhood hero. **AP**



Wimbledon champion Halep opts out of playing at U.S. Open

WIMBLEDON champion Simona Halep will skip the U.S. Open, saying Monday she is putting her health first and prefers to stay in Europe amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Halep, a former top-ranked player who is currently No. 2, won the title in Prague on Sunday.

"After weighing up all the factors involved and with the exceptional circumstances in which we are living, I have decided that I will not travel to New York to play the (at)usopen," Halep wrote on Twitter. "I always

said I would put my health at the heart of my decision and I therefore prefer to stay and train in Europe."

Six of the top eight women in the WTA rankings won't play in New York. No. 1 Ash Barty and defending champion Bianca Andreescu have also withdrawn from the tournament.

Other women who won't be playing include No. 5 Elina Svitolina, No. 7 Kiki Bertens and No. 8 Belinda Bencic.

The U.S. Open is scheduled to start at Flushing Meadows on Aug. 31.

"I know the (at)usta and (at)WTA have worked tirelessly to put on a safe event and I wish everyone there a successful tournament," Halep wrote.

Rafael Nadal, the men's defending champion, has also withdrawn from the tournament, but top-ranked Novak Djokovic has said he will play. Roger Federer is out for the rest of the season after two operations on his right knee.

Stan Wawrinka, the 2016 U.S. Open champion, is also out, along with Gael Monfils and Nick Kyrgios. **AP**

OPINION

Our Desk

Anthony Lam



**CHILL. CONGESTIONS
 MEAN WEALTH**

Over the past several weekends, the main residential areas of the Peninsula, spanning from the Reservoir and the Guia Hill – along the several major roads – to Fai Chi Kei, Inner Harbor and T'oi San, have been badly congested.

Notifications from the Transport Affairs Bureau (DSAT) keep popping up to “remind or inform” people that in the region – nearly one-third of the Peninsula’s area – roads, streets and alleyways are full of cars which can barely move.

Reasons for the traffic congestion are unclear. The DSAT did not offer any explanation. It’s understandable. I can’t imagine it deploys a team to conduct a survey of people who are already infuriated by the congestion about the reason they are there and unfortunately stuck in a deadlock.

I myself think that it’s because they need to go back to the traditional resident regions to visit their families, take their older family members for outing, or taking their children to those regions for extracurricular lessons, be those piano, fencing, swimming, English, Mathematics or Portuguese classes.

Apart from disseminating mobile notifications, the DSAT hasn’t been seen to do anything effective to ease the situation. The congestion has been even worse than normal times when Macau received 40 million visitors per year and nearly topped the World GDP Per Capita List.

There’s something effective the DSAT has done, though. It has called off the “bus-only” lane on Avenida do Coronel Mesquita. Its original plan was to designate the left lane – in certain areas – as a bus-only lane, similar to the previous designation on Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro, more famously known as the Sun Ma Lou, which has also been “suspended to facilitate recovery mission after Typhoon Hato.” The suspension has not been lifted.

Back to Avenida do Coronel Mesquita: the DSAT has never addressed the fact the buses running on certain routes must cross three full lanes from the bus stop on the leftmost lane near the Dom Bosco Football Field to the rightmost lane in order to make a right turn at the traffic light as part of its service.

When placed at an angle, a 10-meter or so bus can easily block the flow of the entire avenue – just imagine that taking place during rush hour in the morning.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau has just published the computer graphics for a “provisional” leisure area two blocks from the Taipa Central Park. That’s a wonderful proposal indeed, for Taipa has become more residential over the past couple of decades, making leisure areas more important for the health and livelihood of not only people living there, but also those in other regions of the city.

However, the word “provisional” concerns me as much as the bureau not explaining how the architecturally and aesthetically meaningful structure of a former factory would be saved. The tilted roofs of the factory structures could now be used to inform how architectural designs can help let sunlight in and save energy.

Oops, back on track. The bureau said the “park” would be built with minimal drilling and work. The implication I got is that it wouldn’t be building a car park there. I think the government should plan ahead as it’s very likely the car park at the Central Park will easily be filled in the future, as the new shopping mall – housing a cineplex and some of the most popular brands – gradually swings into full operation.

Cruise ship passengers had their temperatures checked and took COVID-19 tests yesterday (Macau time) so they could set sail on what is being billed as the first Mediterranean cruise after Italy’s pandemic lockdown.

The cruise ship company MSC has made the procedures, for crew as well as passengers, part of its new health and safety protocols. The MSC Grandiosa, which was christened last year, set sail from the northern Italian port of Genoa for a seven-night cruise in the

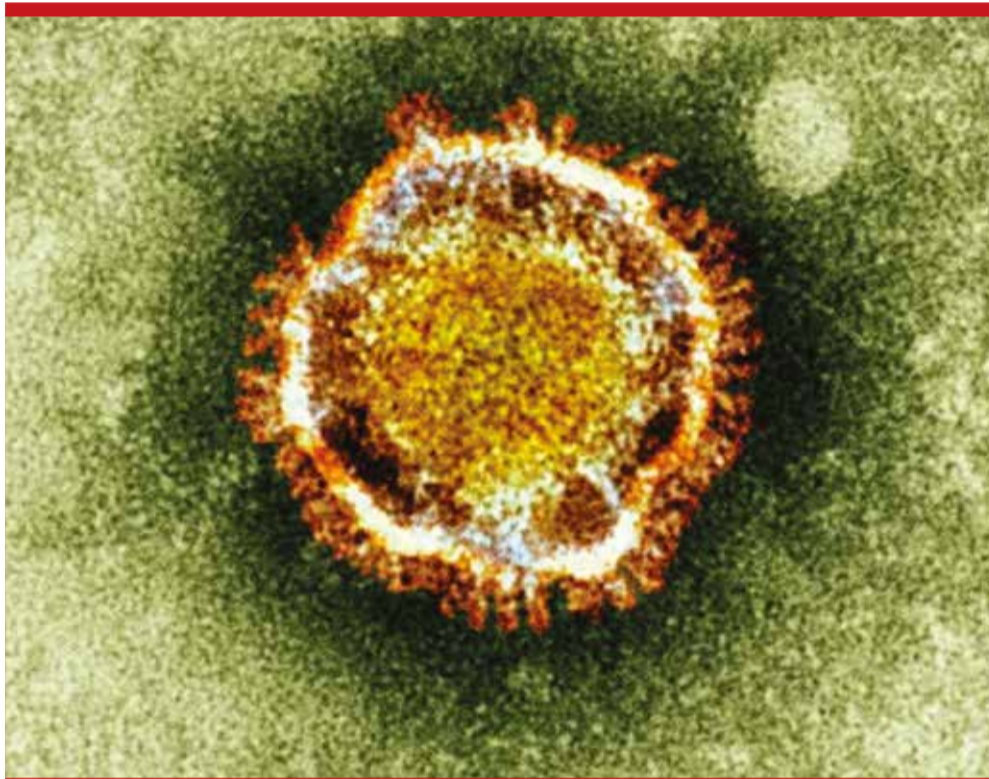
western Mediterranean.

Any one testing positive, or with a fever, or having other COVID-19 symptoms was denied boarding, the company said. Guest must wear face masks in elevators and other areas where social distancing is not possible. The crew spent time in quarantine before the start of the cruise.

Earlier this month, the Italian government gave its approval for cruise ships to once again depart from Italy’s ports but limited cruise ships to sailing with 70% capacity.

**SOUTHEAST ASIA DETECTS
 MUTATED VIRUS STRAIN
 SWEEPING THE WORLD**

AP PHOTO



**YUDITH HO
 & CLAIRE JIAO**

SOUTHEAST Asia is facing a strain of the new coronavirus that the Philippines, which faces the region’s largest outbreak, is studying to see whether the mutation makes it more infectious.

The strain, earlier seen in other parts of the world and called D614G, was found in a Malaysian cluster of 45 cases that started from someone who returned from India and breached his 14-day home quarantine. The Philippines detected the strain among random Covid-19 samples in the largest city of its capital region.

The mutation “is said to have a higher possibility of transmission or infectiousness, but we still don’t have enough solid evidence to say that that will happen,” Philippines’ Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said in a virtual briefing yesterday.

The strain has been found in many other countries and has become the predominant variant in Europe and the U.S., with the World Health Organization saying there’s no evidence the strain leads to a more severe disease. The mutation has also been detected

in recent outbreaks in China.

There’s no evidence from the epidemiology that the mutation is considerably more infectious than other strains, said Benjamin Cowling, head of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of Hong Kong. “It’s more commonly identified now than it was in the past, which suggests that it might have some kind of competitive advantage over other strains of Covid-19,” he said.

As Southeast Asian countries take various steps to prevent a resurgence while reopening limited travel, they struggle with people breaching quarantine rules after returning from overseas as well as false negative test results at borders.

The man who returned from India had tested negative when he arrived in Malaysia. He has since been sentenced to five months in prison and fined for breaching quarantine.

“People need to be wary and take greater precautions because this strain has now been found in Malaysia,” the country’s Director-General of Health Noor Hisham Abdullah wrote in a Facebook post, saying the strain can make it 10 times more infectious without

ting a study. “The people’s cooperation is very needed so that we can together break the chain of infection from any mutation.”

The strain “might be a little bit more contagious. We haven’t yet got enough evidence to evaluate that, but there’s no evidence that it’s a lot more contagious,” University of Hong Kong’s Cowling said.

Noor Hisham warned that the strain could mean existing studies on vaccines may be incomplete or ineffective against the mutation. That’s even as a paper published in Cell Press said the mutation is unlikely to have a major impact on the efficacy of vaccines currently being developed.

While Malaysia has largely managed to prevent a resurgence of the virus seen elsewhere in the world, the number of new cases found in the country has been picking up. The country reported 26 new cases on Saturday, the most since July 28.

Confirmed cases in the Philippines have surged 76% from the end of July to a total of 164,474 as of Monday. It overtook Indonesia more than a week ago to become the country with the largest outbreak in Southeast Asia. **BLOOMBERG**



Thailand’s economy contracted at a 12.2% annual rate in the April-June quarter, its sharpest downturn since the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. The data reflect a deterioration of business activity, with the country virtually closed to international travel due to the coronavirus pandemic.



Israel The Palestinian-led boycott movement against Israel said yesterday that a campaign organizer has been released without charge by Israel after more than two weeks in detention. The BDS campaign said Mahmoud Nawajaa was on his way back to the occupied West Bank.

Egyptian mediators were in the Gaza Strip yesterday in an effort to reduce tensions and prevent a new cross-border conflict between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas. The militant group, which seized control of Gaza from rival Palestinian forces in 2007, said the three Egyptian general intelligence envoys headed straight for meetings with Hamas officials after entering the territory.

Australia Google warned yesterday that the Australian government’s plan to make digital giants pay for news content threatens users’ free services in Australia and could result in their data being given to media organizations.



Tunisia Top Italian and European Union officials held talks in Tunisia yesterday to try to stem sharply growing numbers of migrants crossing from the North African country to Europe. Tunisia’s president, whose young democracy is struggling economically, said he wants to focus not only on security measures to curb migration but also on broader European aid to fight the poverty and joblessness that fuels it.