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**FOUR OF CHINA'S LARGEST BIG TECH COMPANIES WILL BE AT AN UPCOMING EMPLOYMENT EXPO HELD BY THE LABOR BUREAU**

P3

**EXCHANGE PROGRAM INSPIRES STUDENT TO PURSUE FURTHER STUDY**

P4

**CESL ASIA IS ORGANIZING A DRAWING CONTEST THIS SUMMER AS ITS COMMUNITY OUTREACH ADAPTS TO THE PANDEMIC**

P4



AP PHOTO

**South Korea** is closing schools and returning to remote learning in the capital region as the country counted its 12th straight day of triple-digit daily increases in coronavirus cases. Education Minister Yoo Eun-hae said yesterday that at least 193 students and teachers were found infected over the past two weeks in the Seoul metropolitan region, where a viral surge has threatened to erase the country's hard-won epidemiological gains. South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 280 new cases of COVID-19, pushing the 12-day total to 3,175.

**China** Beijing universities are preparing to administer virus tests to students returning to the city's campuses. The cost of testing all 600,000 students will be born by the universities themselves, according to the Beijing Municipal Education Commission. China's National Health Commission yesterday reported no new local infections for a ninth straight day and said 14 new cases were found in travelers arriving from abroad.



AP PHOTO

**India** has reported more than 60,000 new infections, taking its total to 3.17 million. The Health Ministry also reported 848 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking total fatalities past 58,000. The recovery rate has reached nearly 76% as the Health Ministry added its highest number of recovered patients in a day, more than 66,500. Testing has also increased dramatically. Nearly a third of the tests being used are a fast, cheap test that screens for antigens, or viral proteins, rather than the molecular tests that detect the genetic code of the virus.

More on backpage

# QUARANTINE TO STAY

**MGTO expects that quarantine upon arrival in Macau will be enforced for a relatively long time** P3



BLOOMBERG

**BEIJING STARTS EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC BLITZ TO COUNTER US INFLUENCE**

P7



AP PHOTO

**FIRE SERVICE, POLICE  
WELCOME NEW OFFICERS**

The Fire Services Bureau (CB) and the Public Security Police Force (PSP) have recently held graduation ceremonies for their new officers. The CB will have 47 graduates officially joining the bureau as firefighters this year. The graduates have trained for over eight months, learning fire-extinguishing techniques, how to handle hazardous and chemical materials, regulations on communications, first aid and fire safety, as well as other laws and regulations. Lei Cho leng, a female graduate, achieved the highest grades in training. Meanwhile, the PSP celebrated the graduation of 54 new officers, 10 of which are female. One of the female officers has an educational background in music. Forty new officers hold bachelor's degrees and 14 have secondary school diplomas.

**URBAN PLANNING  
SCHEME TO  
CONSOLIDATE  
GOV'T FACILITIES**

In response to lawmaker Sulu Sou's inquiry, the government has stressed that the Overall Urban Planning Scheme, which will be brought to public consultation at a later date, has remarks about grouping land designations for government offices and facilities. The government also disclosed that it would consider the arrangements and use of the New Urban Zone B and the Nam Van Lake Reclamation Zones C and D together. The government's intention is to preserve the city's panorama and construct a coastal green corridor for the city. The scheme should also improve developments in the existing areas of NAPE and ZAPE.

**ROOFTOP HOUSING  
STRUCTURE BURNS,  
NO INJURIES**

A housing structure on the rooftop of a residential building near the Border Gate caught fire early Monday morning. The fire was quickly put out by firefighters, who later discovered three liquified petroleum gas barrels at the site. Two of them were blackened by smoke. It is understood that there would have been much greater consequences if they had exploded. Preliminary investigations suggest that the fire was caused by a desk lamp short-circuiting. The structure, which is believed to be illegal, was emitting smoke when firefighters arrived at the scene. During the fire, 63 residents were evacuated including a pregnant woman.

# HONG KONG TO RELAX SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES AS VIRUS CASES DROP

**H**ong Kong will relax social distancing rules from Friday, allowing evening dining at restaurants and the removal of masks during outdoor exercise, as Covid-19 cases in the city dwindle.

Hong Kong will also reopen movie theaters, beauty parlors and some outdoor sports venues, officials said at a briefing yesterday. Current social distancing measures - the strictest in the financial hub to date - will be extended to Aug. 27.

The exemption on masks during exercise will last for seven days, Chan said, adding that many people had stopped exercising due to the requirement.

Despite the easing, restaurant seating will remain limited to two people per table. No food or drinks will be allowed in cinemas, which will provide socially distanced seating for moviegoers. Masks will be required at beauty parlors, with certain exceptions.

"Under this new normal, it is hard to expect there will be no confirmed cases in the long term," Food and Health Secretary Sophia Chan said. "We have to accept the possibility of having some specific cases and clusters."

"The government cannot wait until there are no cases in the community to relax social distancing rules," she said.

Chief Executive Carrie Lam's



approval rating rose five percentage points to 24% - the biggest increase since Dec. 2018, months before pro-democracy protests kicked off last year - according to the latest survey by the Hong Kong Public Opinion Program, released Tuesday.

Lam said at a morning briefing that there had been a "reassuring" downward trend in cases. But she added that it was still hard to avoid some small community outbreaks, and that the government would continue monitoring and regularly test workers at the city's port.

Hong Kong reported 16 new locally-transmitted virus cases yesterday, and three others that

were imported.

The city is among regional spots battling a fresh wave of cases after seeing initial success containing the virus, including Vietnam, South Korea and Australia. Hong Kong's government has urged citizens to take part in a voluntary free two-week drive to test the entire population for Covid-19 starting Sept. 1, aided by Chinese experts and labs.

Lam repeated that the testing campaign was fully supported by Beijing and urged participation.

"I would appeal to the public to actively participate in the universal testing scheme in order to find silent carriers as soon as possible," she said. "The reason

why Hong Kong at this moment has a capacity to undertake such a large scale universal community testing is because of the assistance rendered by the central people's government."

Lam's government has been under pressure from restaurants and other small businesses to relax distancing measures. Smaller businesses have been especially hard hit, with the demonstrations knocking Hong Kong into a recession even before the pandemic hit.

Hong Kong's Legislative Council will hold a special meeting to discuss the government's coronavirus efforts on Friday. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

**COVID-19**

# First confirmed re-infection said to be seen in HK

**A** man caught the coronavirus after recovering from an initial bout in April in what scientists said was the first case showing that reinfection may occur within a few months.

The 33-year-old's second SARS-CoV-2 infection was detected via airport screening on his return to Hong Kong from Europe this month. Researchers at the University of Hong Kong used genomic sequence analysis to prove that he was

infected by two different strains. The information technology worker didn't develop any symptoms from his second infection, which might indicate "subsequent infections may be milder," the researchers said.

"Our findings suggest that SARS-CoV-2 may persist in humans," Kwok-Yung Yuen and colleagues said Monday in a paper accepted for publication in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases. The findings

also suggest SARS-CoV-2 is reminiscent of the coronaviruses that cause the common cold, and may continue to circulate "even if patients have acquired immunity via natural infection or via vaccination," they said.

While some patients have tested positive for the virus over many weeks, even after their symptoms have resolved, scientists haven't fully understood whether these cases reflect lingering traces of the virus, a re-erup-

tion of an infection, or a new infection.

This is "the world's first documentation of a patient who recovered from Covid-19, but got another episode of Covid-19 afterwards," the researchers said in an emailed statement.

It may be difficult to find Covid-19 survivors who have been reinfected with SARS-CoV-2 if they don't show symptoms, said Corey Smith, head of translational and human immunology at the

QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Brisbane.

"Because he showed no symptoms on the second infection, it is likely that, although the virus has managed to establish infection, his memory immune response has likely prevented any symptomatic disease," Smith said in an email. "This does suggest that natural infection may provide protection against disease, but not reinfection." **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

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# Chinese big tech companies present at upcoming Macau job fair

ANTHONY LAM

**F**OUR of China's largest technology enterprises will be at an upcoming employment expo held by the Labor Affairs Bureau, the Macao New Chinese Youth Association and the General Association of Chinese Students of Macao.

These include China's own online storage platform Alibaba Cloud, online retail portal Taobao, video app and TikTok's parent company ByteDance and Chinese Internet platform Tencent.

According to a statement from the organizing committee, there will be other companies from mainland China at the job fair as well.

The fair will be held this weekend at the Macau University of Science and Technology. It was postponed due to Covid-19 and registration will be required to avoid crowds at the fair.

In addition, as some graduating students or jobseekers are stranded outside of Macau due to travel restrictions, the fair will be broadcast live on social media. A full list of available vacancies will also be made public on the job fair's website.

Participation by mainland Chinese enterprises will provide jobseekers with deeper knowledge of job opportunities and work environments on the mainland, the organizers say. It will also widen their horizons and help them



seize opportunities in the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Last year, many GBA enterprises participated in the job fair. The organizing body explained that this year they would not be physically participating due to strict border restrictions. However, three booths will be reserved for the promotion of job opportunities in the GBA. The advantages of the area will also be highlighted.

The organizers disclosed that they have kept track of jobseekers hired by mainland Chinese enter-

prises at last year's job fair. More than half of them work in the GBA, with Guangzhou hosting most of them, and Zhuhai and Shenzhen following.

Most of them work in marketing, quality control and research positions.

Apart from mainland enterprises, the job fair will also collaborate with the six gambling concessionaires, government departments and bureaus, financial institutions, real estate agencies, caterers, as well as retailers.

In total, the job fair will present

over 3,000 vacancies offered by more than 60 companies, organizations and entities. The vacancies cover several areas, including finance, information technology, leisure and entertainment, facility management, engineering, sales and marketing, as well as hospitality and catering.

Previously announced data showed that this year, the city expects to add a total of 7,000 graduates to the labor force. The organizers disclosed that the average salary this year amounts to MOP14,600 per month.

As it has previously done, the job fair will provide series of seminars, workshops on CV writing and job interviews, as well as career planning consultation and a photography service for profile pictures.

The seminar series will be kicked off by Alibaba Cloud. Business development management from the company will familiarize local jobseekers with cloud computing and technology, and the company's structure and business model.

## SALARY SAID TO BE GREATEST CONCERN

Each year, the organizers conduct surveys at the job fair for further analysis. They managed to interview 1,054 jobseekers at last year's fair, 70% of which were aged below 25. The organizers see this as a representation of the job fair's attractiveness to young or graduating jobseekers.

Of the respondents, 29% prioritized salary in their list of criteria for an acceptable or considered job. Some 18% were concerned about whether their education or professional backgrounds would match with the jobs that were offered to them. Career path was third amongst all concerns, at just one percentage point lower.

As for salary, 35% of respondents hoped for a monthly salary between MOP12,000 and MOP16,000, while 16% hoped for a salary between MOP16,000 and MOP20,000.

# Tourism board chief says quarantine here to stay

RENATO MARQUES



MGTO director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE government expects that quarantine upon arriving in Macau will be enforced for a relatively long time, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes said yesterday on the sidelines of the meeting of the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly, which met to discuss the new Hotel Business Law.

This justifies the measures announced on Monday, which state that Macau residents going into quarantine a second time will be required to pay their own hotel quarantine bills.

"The people [being qua-

rantined] were those that returned to Macau in March and then in June and July," Senna Fernandes said.

"From September, we think that we might have people that left Macau [in June and July] to study or for other reasons, who will wish to return to Macau once again. Because quarantine requirements will continue for some time, the government has decided that people undergoing a second quarantine [at designated local hotels] must pay the bill," she said.

From September 1, Macau residents who have already undergone a 14-day quarantine at a designated quarantine venue in Macau and were exempt from payment will have to pay

for hotel quarantine if they arrive in Macau from countries or regions that are considered high-risk.

When asked about the MGTO's expectations for the number of visitors that could visit Macau in the coming days, Senna Fernandes said, "we are not making any forecasts at the moment since the conditions are very different when compared to before the pandemic. [...] We have a very conservative outlook since the ways of traveling within the mainland have changed."

The MGTO director noted that the lack of a requirement for a negative nucleic acid test result in order to travel between different provinces on the mainland

has not yet been extended to include Macau.

"Tour groups have already been authorized but this does not include Macau either, and for individual people, they might also be scared of the possibility of being infected during the trip, so they are avoiding these trips for the time being," she said.

For Senna Fernandes, the most important work being done at the moment is not on the promotion of tourism products but in "restoring confidence that people can travel to Macau without the risk of being infected with the virus."

According to figures cited by the local tourism director, since border restrictions with the neighboring city of Zhuhai were eased earlier this month, there was an influx of "just above 9,000 visitors" at its busiest point.

INTERVIEW

# Exchange program, financial aid inspires student to pursue study in UK

LYNZY VALLES

**L**OCAL universities in the Macau SAR are offering short-term exchange programs, allowing students to have the opportunity to learn about new cultures and enhance personal development.

Many students prefer to stay in the city during their college years, yet some take up the challenge of leaving their comfort zones and collecting different life experiences from beyond Macau's shores.

While some fund their own exchange programs, several public and private institutions in the city offer financial assistance to outstanding students.

Katrina Xian, a 23-year-old local resident, is one of the beneficiaries of a private institution in the city, and is pursuing biomedical studies.

Xian recently graduated from the University of Macau after studying biomedical studies.

Both a Moon Chun Memorial College and Honours College graduate, Xian was a recipient of the Britcham Summer Programme Scholarship tenable at the University of Oxford in 2019, as arranged by the British Chamber of Commerce in Macao.

After her internship, Xian had decided to continue her studies in the U.K.

She will now be reading a one-year Master of Science in human molecular genetics at Imperial College London.

Speaking to the Times, Xian explained how exchange programs and financial assistance from the city's institutions are



Katrina Xian, who has been accepted into Imperial College London

allowing local students to gain new experiences and education outside the city's normal education system.

Xian had received financial assistance from the British Chamber of Commerce of Macau through its corporate social responsibility (CSR) scheme.

The institution began fundraising by running its gala balls, where it commits a minimum of 50% of the profits to its CSR Fund.

"I think these programs are really helpful. I think it's always good to get a chance to see the outside world. We need to get out of our [comfort zone] because the world is big and there are

many opportunities for us [outside Macau] to work and live," said the recent graduate.

Xian applied to several schools in the U.K., including Imperial College London, The University of Manchester and The University of Edinburgh.

"Luckily I got places at all of them, but I think Imperial College is one of the best, especially for its science background. I had a great time in the U.K. during my exchange program. People were openminded and were multicultural," explained Xian.

For Xian, leaving the city to study abroad takes courage, especially coming from a conservative and traditional family

where some parents would prefer to have their children stay in the city.

Even among those parents who prefer to send their children abroad to study, the recent graduate hinted that there is a culture in some families not to venture outside the greater China region for further study.

"It would be wonderful if there were more chances for students to get out of the city for a while. I'm a lucky one," Xian said.

Executive director of Britcham Macau, Maggie Chan, says the association aims to assist local students experience student life in the U.K. She noted that

their goal is to "take these students to the U.K. and they take Macau with them to promote the city."

Since 2009, the Chamber has distributed a total of 548,685 patacas through its CSR Fund.

"There is a need for Macau students to leave the city as they need to experience a different environment. It helps boost personal development. These kinds of programs really help individuals see how capable they are," said Chan.

"From the Chamber's standpoint, personal development for these students is good and we hope that one day, they will bring back their U.K. experiences to Macau and share them with others."

There is still no exact date for when Xian will fly back to the U.K. due to visa issues. Not to mention Covid-19 and the health risks she would undertake while traveling.

Xian is slightly worried about the risk of travel but believes that her flight will run smoothly with all the required safety measures.

Xian will focus on data analysis as she continues to work on and research human molecular genetics.

Commenting on whether Macau has a market for her field of study, Xian noted, "I think the Greater Bay Area is starting to focus on this area but I cannot see Macau doing so as it is a touristic city and they are more focused on [boosting] this sector."

Macau Daily Times is the official media partner of the British Chamber of Commerce in Macao.

## CESL Asia launches drawing contest to enrich children's stay-at-home summer

DANIEL BEITLER

**L**OCAL energy and environment firm CESL Asia is organizing a drawing contest for children this summer to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its CESL Asia Social Investment Program.

Themed "How to Grow a Beautiful City," the drawing contest is intended to encourage children to explore beauty, harmony and in-

clusion in the community using their imagination and drawing talent, according to a press release seen yesterday by Macau Daily Times.

Mindful of the current pandemic circumstances, the contest "also provides an opportunity to enrich children's at-home activities and to increase family interaction, love, positive energy and well-being," the release said.

The event is being held amid the Covid-19 pandemic as a replacement to the larger community events normally held in the summer, so as to avoid the congregation of crowds.

According to CESL Asia President and CEO António Trindade, the contest is just one of many community outreach projects arranged every year by the local firm.

"This is beyond corporate social responsibility,"

said Trindade, when asked about the impact of these projects. "Starting only last year, companies were beginning to talk about how essential it is to have a purpose - we have been [saying] that for decades. We are talking about business sustainability. We believe that this is why CESL Asia has flourished in the past decades - because of our outreach and giving back to the society. We have

become in tune with the community needs and pay attention to what it needs for development."

The contest is now open for enrolment until September 9 to Macau children aged from 8 to 12. To participate parents and kids should scan the QR Code on the poster or visit CESL Asia's Facebook page for detailed information.

The judging and selection will be based on the following criteria: adherence to the theme, design creativity as well as drawing skills and color combination. All drawings that include a reference related to CESL Asia Social Invest-

ment Program will be awarded a bonus.

The submissions will go through a three-stage review process. First, an internal team from CESL Asia will select between 30 and 40 highlighted entries from all of the competition submissions. Second, a panel of judges drawn from local artists and "those connected to the art world" will narrow down the selection. Finally, the remaining entries will be put to public vote online.

Macau Daily Times is the official media partner of the CESL Asia Social Investment 20th Anniversary Kid's Drawing and Coloring Contest.

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Kid's Drawing Contest

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Ages 8-12

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### OM, MGM TO HOST BEETHOVEN CONCERT THIS WEEKEND

To celebrate Beethoven's 250th birthday and the 50th World Earth Day, the Macao Orchestra and MGM are staging two concerts this weekend at the indoor plaza, The Spectacle, at MGM Cotai. The orchestra will perform Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op.68, "Pastoral." Admission is free. The orchestra plans to incorporate innovative technology and modern architecture to bring the audience a multimedia musical experience that highlights humanity's unity with nature. MGM Cotai will also arrange various activities on August 29 and 30, including the "Guided Tour for Earth Day X Nature's Art," the "Moss Ball Planting Workshop" and the "Symphony Afternoon Tea."

### 61% DECREASE IN RETAIL SALES RECORDED IN SECOND QUARTER

The Statistics and Census Service has recorded a 61% drop in retail revenue for the second quarter of 2020, bringing the amount down to about MOP6.9 billion. After removing the effect of price changes, the sales volume index also dropped by 61.5%. Comparing the data to the same period last year, the largest declines were recorded in watches, clocks and jewelry (-87.3%), leather goods (-72.8%), as well as department store goods (-71.7%). The value of retail sales in the second quarter of 2020 decreased by 38% as compared with the revised figure (MOP11.16 billion) in the first quarter. Meanwhile, 72.1% of the retailers anticipated a year-on-year decrease in sales volume in the third quarter of 2020, 20.2% expected the sales volume to remain stable and 7.7% forecasted an increase.

# LAWMAKERS UNHAPPY WITH LANDLORDS' RIGHT TO VETO TENANT BUSINESS

RENATO MARQUES

**LAWMAKERS** of the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) are unhappy with one of the provisions in the new Hotel Business Law. It states that to request a temporary license, tenants need a declaration from the landlord that authorizes the operation.

According to the chairman of the committee, Chan Chak Mo, committee members are calling on the government to reevaluate the need for the declaration, as it seems like the provision gives landlords the power to veto tenants' business operations.

Article 31 of the law says that license applicants can now request a temporary license to start operating restaurants, bars, coffee shops, and dancing rooms even before being inspected by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), as long as



the project and blueprints have been already approved and fire safety regulations are being fulfilled.

"In the opinion of the committee, the proof of a rental contract [between the tenant and landlord] should be enough [to grant the right to request a temporary operation license]," said Chan. "But we are questioning the government on why [the law states] that a declaration from the

owner authorizing the operation of the establishment is needed."

Chan added that in the cases where the venue is a hotel, the hotel owner also needs to authorize the shop to open without the inspection.

According to the chairman of the committee, this topic was accountable for most of the debate at yesterday's meeting.

As Chan said at a previous

briefing, the new system established by the new law aims to cut down on the amount of bureaucracy and procedures for business owners. This also includes the possibility of obtaining temporary licenses before and after inspections by the authorities. These temporary licenses would last for six months and be renewable for further six-month periods.

Questioned by the media on how much time applicants would be able to save using the new system, Chan said, "currently we are taking over two years to issue a final license. In the future and with this one-stop system, we will do this much faster. This new law would be a great improvement."

"For example, in the case of the food and beverage establishment located at a hotel that has already its license, I would say that [a final license could take] about six months to be issued," he added.

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Foreign Minister Wang Yi

**C**HINA is looking to turn on the charm in Europe to push back against a U.S. campaign for allies to shun cooperation with Beijing.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi kicked off a week-long Europe tour yesterday, with planned stops in Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, France and Germany. The trip comes on the heels of U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's two visits to Europe in as many months, in which he warned that China poses a greater threat than Russia.

For China the move is part of a broader push to stabilize key relationships around the world, particularly as the U.S. seeks to keep Huawei Technologies Co. out of 5G networks, rewire global supply chains and prevent Chinese apps like TikTok and WeChat from accessing American data. China has recently toned down its rhetoric against the U.S., and both sides this week reaffirmed their commitment to the phase-one trade deal.

## Beijing starts European diplomatic blitz to counter US influence

In addition to Wang Yi's trip to Europe, his boss also recently made trips to Singapore and South Korea. Yang Jiechi, a Politburo member who oversees China's foreign affairs, also pushed for a trilateral summit this year between China, South Korea and Japan, another U.S. ally.

"What China is doing is to keep relations with other countries normal and present itself in a more objective way," said Gao Zhikai, a former Chinese diplomat and translator for late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping. "To the extent there are distortions created by the U.S., China has the right to bring the situation back to normal."

Throughout Europe, Wang plans to "send a message of safeguarding multilateralism" while pushing for cooperation on the virus, global supply chains and the green economy, according to China's Foreign Ministry. On Tuesday in Rome, he was set to meet his counterpart Luigi Di Maio for talks on issues ranging from economic ties to cooperation in battling the coronavirus and regional issues including Libya.

Europe's strategic significance to Beijing has increased as relations with the U.S. deteriorate and Pompeo seeks to build an anti-China bloc of countries, according to a researcher at the government-affiliated Chinese Academy

of Social Sciences who asked not to be identified due to rules for speaking with the media. While the virtual China-EU summit in June didn't go well, Beijing sees ties warming as Europe looks to revive its economy in the wake of the pandemic, the researcher said.

Earlier this month, Pompeo gave a speech before the Czech senate in which he said the "tide has turned" against China in the U.S. and is starting to in Europe.

"China's world dominance is not inevitable," he said, adding that the U.S. ejected "Chinese intellectual property thieves" and sanctioned "human rights abusers in the Chinese government."

China has sought to blame

Pompeo for worsening ties with the U.S. while appealing to a broader set of policy makers. Gao, the former Chinese diplomat, likened him to a "hired gun."

On Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian hailed China's relations with France, the next stop on Wang's tour through Europe. He mentioned that President Xi Jinping has held four phone calls this year with his counterpart, Emmanuel Macron.

"China and France are both major countries in the Security Council and also with a tradition of independence," Zhao said. "We have to continue following the consensus of our two heads of states." **BLOOMBERG**

## China, US discuss economic coordination in trade meeting

JOE MCDONALD,  
BEIJING

**U**.S. and Chinese trade envoys discussed strengthening coordination of their countries' economic policies during a phone meeting yesterday, the Ministry of Commerce announced.

The announcement gave no details of the meeting held as part of the "Phase 1" truce aimed at ending a tariff war between the two biggest global economies that has disrupted worldwide trade.

President Xi Jinping's government has lobbied

Washington since at least 2016 to coordinate macroeconomic policies. Beijing has given no details, but such policies can include economic growth, employment, inflation and trade.

Yesterday's meeting included Vice Premier Liu He, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, the ministry said.

"The two sides had a constructive dialogue on strengthening the coordination of the macroeconomic policies of the two countries and the imple-

mentation of the 'Phase 1' agreement," a ministry statement said.

Under the "Phase 1" agreement signed in January, both governments agreed to suspend additional penalties on each other's goods in a fight launched by President Donald Trump in 2018 over Beijing's technology ambitions and trade surplus.

That deal has stayed in place despite a growing array of irritants in U.S.-Chinese relations including the status of Hong Kong, the handling of the coronavirus pandemic and accusations of human rights



AP PHOTO

violations in China's Muslim northwestern territory of Xinjiang.

Beijing promised as part of the "Phase 1" agreement to narrow its trade surplus

with the United States by purchasing more American farm goods. Trump's economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, told reporters last week the White House is

satisfied with Beijing's purchases so far.

The truce called for talks to be held after six months, but those were delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic. A meeting scheduled for last week was to be held online but was postponed.

The two governments have yet to announce plans for face-to-face talks in the next stage of negotiations.

The two governments have rolled back some penalties but most of the punitive tariffs imposed on hundreds of billions of dollars of each other's goods remain in place. **AP**

DARLENE SUPERVILLE,  
WASHINGTON

**W**HEN Melania Trump addresses the Republican convention from the White House, it will be the most that many Americans have seen of their first lady since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic that has come to define her husband's administration.

Out of the public view for much of the year, Mrs. Trump will step into the spotlight today [Macau time] to argue for a second term for President Donald Trump — while trying to avoid the missteps that marred her introduction to the nation when she spoke at the gathering in 2016.

The first lady's office hasn't provided any hints as to what she will say.

"I would suspect that the speech will be a combination of defending what the base likes about Donald Trump, playing up the fact that if you like what you saw, you'll like the next four years if he's reelected," said Ohio University professor Katherine Jellison, who studies first ladies.

Just like Trump has upended norms of the presidency, Melania Trump has altered what it means to be a modern first lady, from continuing to live in New York City in the administration's opening months to forcing the ouster of a deputy national security adviser. Not since Nancy Reagan has any first lady asserted herself so publicly in West Wing personnel matters.

Like the president, her tenure can also be defined by its ups and downs.

The first lady arranged a splashy launch for "Be Best," her signature initiative for children, but ended up on the defensive for making anti-cyberbullying one of its pillars when the president regularly uses Twitter to attack anyone he feels has betrayed him.

She rushed to the southern border to visit migrant children after the administration started separating them from the grown-ups who brought them to the U.S. from Mexico, a rare instance where she publicly opposed the president's policy.

But en route to McAllen, Texas, the former fashion model donned a green hooded jacket with "I Really Don't Care, Do U?" scrawled on the back. She didn't wear it around the

# Melania Trump taking Rose Garden turn to pitch her husband



children, but the baffling wardrobe choice quickly overshadowed the goodwill border visit.

"It distracted from what she was trying to do," said Myra Gutin, who studies first ladies at Rider University.

The first lady's spokesperson, Stephanie Grisham, said at the time that it was "just a jacket" with no hidden meaning. President Trump later contradicted that, tweeting that his wife had learned how dishonest the news media are "and she truly no longer cares!"

Melania Trump later said in a television interview that the jacket was "for the people and for the left-wing media who are criticizing me."

Her announcements during the pandemic of two costly though privately funded White House improvement projects — construction of a tennis pavilion and a Rose Garden renovation — opened her to charges of tone-deafness and a flurry of social media commentary likening her to France's Marie Antoinette. She tweeted that the naysayers should "contribute something good & productive in their own communities" instead of criticizing her.

She responded with silence to claims by porn star Stormy Daniels and former

Playboy model Karen McDougal that they'd had affairs with Trump, to the Russia investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller and to Trump's impeachment by the Democratic-controlled House for pushing Ukraine to investigate his political opponents. Trump denies the extramarital relationships and was acquitted by the Republican-led Senate.

Mrs. Trump said months ago that she's ready for another four years.

Only the second foreign-born first lady in U.S. history, Mrs. Trump is a native of Slovenia, a former communist country in eastern Europe. She gave up studying architecture to pursue a career as a fashion model, arrived in New York in 1996 and met Donald Trump two years later.

She became his third wife in 2005 and gave birth to their now 14-year-old son, Barron, in 2006 — the year she became a naturalized U.S. citizen.

The first lady is set to speak from the renovated Rose Garden, despite questions about using the White House for a political convention. The coronavirus has forced her to scrap many of her plans for 2020, including headlining her first Trump fundraisers.

A low-profile presidential spouse, Mrs. Trump spent the first weeks of the pandemic out of public view before she began posting short videos filmed at the White House to social media underscoring federal government guidance about hand washing, social distancing and wearing face masks as ways to help slow transmission of the virus.

The pandemic marked another instance where the first lady parted with her husband by offering a more consistent message about masks than the president, who early on scoffed at the idea of wearing one himself even as he announced federal guidance for the public about doing so.

She posted a photo of herself wearing a mask and wore one in public before Trump did. Grisham said it was important for her to follow the guidelines and set a good example for children.

Former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich said people appreciate that Mrs. Trump is her own person.

"I think people like the idea that she is a successful, independent woman who protects her son, cares deeply about children and wants to assist her husband, but she does so on her terms," Gingrich said. AP

## this day in history

### 1994 MAN GETS 'BIONIC' HEART



A man has been given the world's first battery-operated heart in a pioneering operation in Britain.

The patient, an unnamed 62-year-old from the south of England, is now in a stable condition at the world-famous Papworth Hospital in Cambridgeshire.

He had only months to live when doctors offered him the chance of being a guinea-pig for the new titanium and plastic device, manufactured in America.

Known as the Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD) it is not a replacement for the human heart.

It is essentially an electrical pump which does most of the work of the pumping chamber of the heart, the left ventricle.

During the four-hour operation the LVAD was placed in the wall of the man's abdomen and connected to his heart.

The pump is powered by a battery pack which the patient will wear on his belt.

The operation was performed by an 11-man team led by top heart surgeons Sir Terence English and John Wallwork.

Sir Terence carried out Britain's first successful heart transplant on entertainer Keith Castle in 1979.

The pioneering procedure could provide a vital alternative to heart transplants.

The LVAD, which costs £40,000, has been used successfully in more than 200 patients to keep them alive until a donated heart became available.

However, a trial being carried out at Papworth will allow surgeons to see whether the device has a role in the long-term therapy of patients with cardiac failure.

Patients being considered suitable to take part in the trial are being randomly allocated to two groups.

One will have the device implanted and the remaining control group will continue with their usual drug treatment.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The recipient of the heart pump was later named as Arthur Cornhill.

He died from kidney failure nine months after the operation.

At the time of Mr Cornhill's death the LVAD had been implanted into two other British men, one of whom died shortly afterwards.

In 2000 progress in LVAD technology allowed doctors in Oxford, England, to fit the first pump designed to be a permanent fixture inside a patient's failing heart.

The patient, Peter Houghton, was on the brink of death before the operation that allowed him to lead a fit and active life.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

### YOUR STARS



#### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You finally have all the resources and energy you need to push things out of the planning stage and into the happening stage. So what are you waiting for?



#### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Today marks the beginning of an independent period for you. You can expect to start feeling a lot more interested in doing what you want to do and less interested in hanging out with friends.



#### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Whether that means completing a DIY home remodeling project or finally finishing an epic novel, you need to stick with something from the start to the bitter end.



#### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

The problems of family members or roommates are going to feel like your problems right about now, because the issues floating around at home are not getting resolved any time soon.



#### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You might need to work with someone else today, and this partnership will clearly show how well you two work together. You'll have fun while you brainstorm. It could be a very productive day in a lot of ways.



#### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

If you spend your money quickly, you'll be feeling the sting in your wallet for a lot longer than you expect. Take any transactions slowly, and don't use credit if you can avoid it.



#### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

In order to get better control over how you appear to others, get an honest opinion from a family member. They definitely won't mind telling you like it is!



#### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Withholding your true feelings about a person might seem like a wise strategy. You know, if you can't say something nice, it's better to say nothing at all.



#### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Turn your thoughts toward figuring out where you fit in your community and how you might want that role to change. Do you need to get involved with more groups?



#### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You've made a remarkable impression on a very powerful person, but you might not realize it until later. They may have a special task in mind for you, and when they reveal it, try to act enthusiastic.



#### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Tell them, and they can explain things to you in a way you'll appreciate and understand. This lesson will bring the two of you a lot closer together. You have more in common than either of you ever realized.

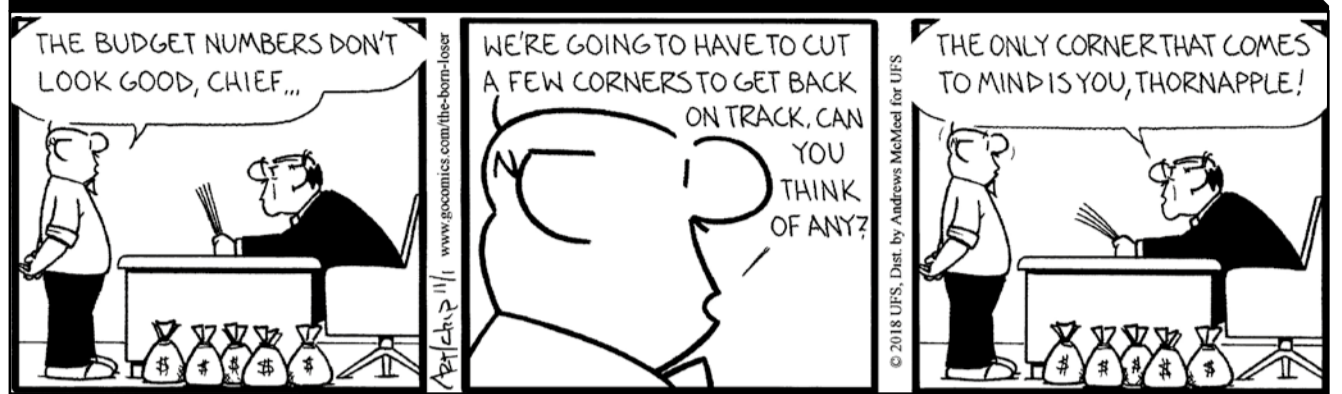


#### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You're organized and as emotionless as a machine today, coolly putting all the pieces exactly where they need to be when they need to be there. Timing is very important right now (perhaps more than ever).

### The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



### SUDOKU

#### EASY

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

#### EASY+

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

#### MEDIUM

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

#### HARD

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

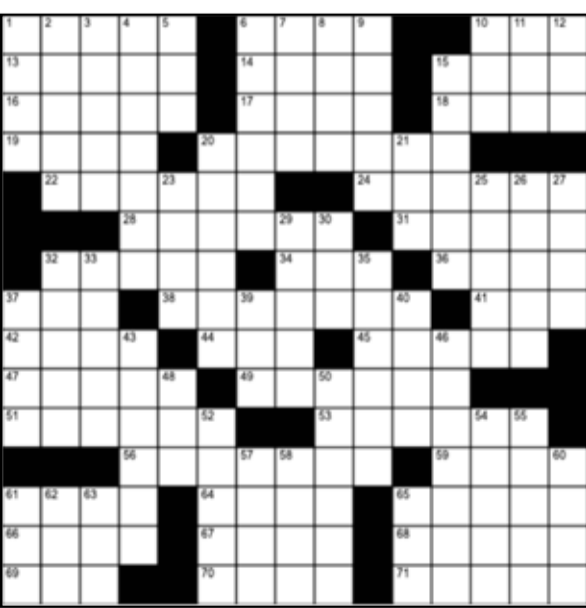
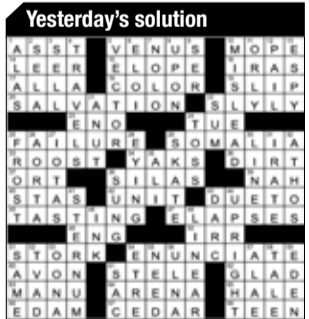
### WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	22	29	cloudy
Harbin	19	28	cloudy
Tianjin	24	29	cloudy
Urumqi	16	30	drizzle
Xi'an	19	31	clear
Lhasa	12	22	cloudy
Chengdu	21	33	clear
Chongqing	25	36	clear
Kunming	18	26	cloudy
Nanjing	26	31	drizzle
Shanghai	27	35	drizzle
Wuhan	22	33	clear
Hangzhou	27	34	drizzle
Taipei	26	32	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	32	heavy rain
Hong Kong	26	31	thundershower
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	16	23	drizzle
Frankfurt	18	22	cloudy
Paris	17	24	cloudy
London	15	20	drizzle
New York	22	32	clear

### CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Caper; 6- Airline to Tel Aviv; 10- Canal zone?; 13- Analyze a sentence; 14- Full of energy; 15- Bridle part; 16- Steep slope; 17- \_\_\_ avis; 18- Actress Raines; 19- Killer whale; 20- Christens anew; 22- Barely make; 24- Pilfer; 28- Setbacks; 31- Luau greeting; 32- Spoil; 34- Knock vigorously; 36- Actor Estrada; 37- Paris possessive; 38- Supposed; 41- Spot; 42- Cried; 44- PC key; 45- Validation; 47- The end of \_\_\_; 49- System of social perfection; 51- One way to sort a list; 53- Infected; 56- Pirate; 59- Whispers sweet nothings; 61- Up to the job; 64- The world's longest river; 65- Division of a long poem; 66- Driving aids; 67- Bakery worker; 68- Japanese dog; 69- Nabokov novel; 70- Squeezes (out); 71- Summarize;

DOWN: 1- Lhasa \_\_\_; 2- Mother-of-pearl; 3- Trail; 4- Begin, e.g.; 5- Large, brown-capped mushroom; 6- Wading birds; 7- It may be floated; 8- Mogul capital until 1658; 9- Fertile soils; 10- It's a moray; 11- Afflict; 12- Genetic material; 15- Recoil; 20- Steal livestock; 21- Bambi's aunt; 23- The last Mrs. Chaplin; 25- Trunk; 26- Tribe ruler; 27- Codlike fish; 29- Establish; 30- Hang loosely; 32- Itty-bitty; 33- Colorado resort; 35- Pungent condiment; 37- Do the deck; 39- Baton Rouge sch.; 40- Faucet problem; 43- Vestiges; 46- Bread-like item made of Quaker product?; 48- Latin I verb; 50- Willows; 52- Journalist Pyle; 54- Grecian architectural style; 55- Terra \_\_\_; 57- Green around the gills; 58- "Hard \_\_\_!" (sailor's yell); 60- Work up lather; 61- \_\_\_ glance; 62- Night spot; 63- Pasture used for grazing; 65- Sedan, compact, or convertible, e.g.;



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



**FOR SALE**

**Hoi Wan Garden, Taipa**  
HK\$4,900,000 900ft<sup>2</sup> 2 1 1

**FOR RENT**

**Waterfront Duet Studio, Macau**  
\$9,000/mth 469ft<sup>2</sup> 1 1

**FOR SALE**

- [Macau] One Oasis modern studio 2 1 1 1  
691 ft<sup>2</sup> \$6,357,000 (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Taipa Village (2 units) 4 2 2 1  
1,404 ft<sup>2</sup> \$8,380,000 (ref: 19096006)
- [Taipa] Manhattan D unit 4 2 2 1  
2,305 ft<sup>2</sup> \$17,980,000 (ref: n/a)
- [Macau] 2 Shops downtown  
1,404 ft<sup>2</sup> \$20,800,000 (ref: 19015573)

**FOR RENT**

- [Taipa] Old Taipa Village Apartment 2 1 1 1  
600 ft<sup>2</sup> \$9,900/mth (ref: n/a)
- [Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1 1 1  
710 ft<sup>2</sup> \$20,460/mth (ref: 20021002)
- [Macau] One Central 2 2 2 1  
1,269 ft<sup>2</sup> \$25,000/mth (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Great View Apartment 4 2 2 1  
2,060 ft<sup>2</sup> \$28,000/mth (ref: 20031001)

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# BUTCHER-TURNED-GAMBLING BILLIONAIRE FIGHTS FOR HIS CASINO EMPIRE

**BILLIONAIRE** Johann Graf has never had to fight on so many fronts at the same time.

The ordinary-man's gambling company, Novomatic, the 73-year-old Austrian butcher-turned-tycoon created four decades ago, is raking in smaller profits as the pandemic drives people away from slot machines in casinos from Las Vegas to Macau. His company is also battling allegations of corruption, its chief executive has left and it needs to refinance about 1 billion euros (9.4 billion patacas) in debt.

"Not only is it in a delicate sector, but it's also facing several challenges at once," said Alois Woegerbauer, the head of 3 Banken-Generali Investment, a Linz, Austria-based firm managing 10 billion euros in holdings, including Novomatic bonds. "Given the weaker sales outlook and the legal issues, the coming months will be decisive to see which direction Johann Graf and the company take."

This article is based on court documents and interviews with more than 25 business partners, bond investors, lawyers, bankers and former employees who asked not to be identified discussing their relationship with Graf and the company. It seeks to capture the secretive billionaire's rise and the challenges he now faces.

Graf, whose ascent is the stuff of Austrian folklore, started out as a butcher in post-World War II Vienna, living with his parents in a small apartment with a communal toilet down the hallway. Fifty years on, bankers working on a stock-market listing of Novomatic told Graf his net worth was close to 5 billion euros. The incredulous entrepreneur, po-



A customer plays on a gambling machine inside a casino, operated by Novomatic AG, in Wiener Neudorf, Austria

lishing off a Viennese Schnitzel at his art-deco city-center guest house, jotted the number down on a napkin and put in his jacket pocket, according to an adviser who was present.

While the listing never happened, the cigar-smoking mogul's fortune has expanded. It is estimated by the Bloomberg Billionaires Index at \$6.6 billion - after a \$260 million drop this year - making him the second-richest man in Austria behind Dietrich Mateschitz, the co-founder of energy drink Red Bull.

Graf's wealth stems mostly from his full ownership of Novomatic, which runs gambling bars, counts Book of Ra, American Poker II and Sizzling Hot among its best-selling games and whose slot machines are installed in the world's biggest casinos. The company has more than 2,000 gaming facilities across 50 countries.

Business has been hit hard as disposable incomes have shrunk.

On a recent afternoon, staff outnumbered clients at the company's flagship outlet in Vienna's Prater amusement park. In a hall decorated with gold-colored Egyptian goddesses and mystic signs, four customers sat before screens watching horse races from Paris - a far cry from its heyday when hundreds thronged to Europe's biggest sports-betting and gambling bar each day.

Even before the pandemic roiled business, Novomatic had been caught up in a political scandal that rocked Austria last year. Then-Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache was covertly filmed on the Spanish island of Ibiza saying "Novomatic pays them all," as he spoke of political funding to a woman posing as a Russian donor.

The wide-ranging video that brought down the Austrian government also prompted police searches at the homes of Graf, other Novomatic executives and government officials - including

Former Finance Minister Hartwig Loeger - allegedly touched by the scandal.

Prosecutors paint a picture of influence peddling on a large scale, alleging that the company promised politicians up to 500,000 euros for favorable legislation and "to help Novomatic gain a casino license in Vienna and a nationwide online license." Monthly fees were part of a sham consulting contract, they claimed in documents seen by Bloomberg News.

Novomatic denies the allegations, saying the company, its executives and Graf haven't been involved in any bribery attempts and that the case will be dropped once the facts are established. Heinz-Christian Strache has since retracted his Ibiza comments about the company.

Still, the case marks a turning point for Graf and the gambling empire he built. If charges are brought, banks and customers may reduce or cut ties with the

company. S&P says its negative outlook on the company reflects the risk of prosecution, other legal action or "findings of unethical behavior." Even if no charges are brought, the company may be forced to significantly cut back its Austrian presence.

In either case, it may mean a sea change for Novomatic and its founder, diminishing the role of the country where the enterprise started.

Graf, an avid vintage-car collector, has made sure Novomatic is among Austria's most sought-after employers with higher-than-average salaries, food courts, private pension contributions and company cars. Local politicians were keen to support Novomatic after the company's global expansion led to the creation of 3,000 well-paid jobs in the region.

While other company founders in their 70s step back, Graf - only one of whose three sons is active in the business - is still very hands on, people who have worked with him say. Christopher Schrank, a lawyer for Graf, said the entrepreneur isn't involved in day-to-day decisions at the company.

For now, though, as the cloud of bribery allegations hangs over the company, luring top business talent, renewing licenses, getting bank loans and drawing investors remains a major challenge. Novomatic may have to retreat from some markets or cut staff to boost profits. Selling its iconic building in Vienna is an option it is considering.

Novomatic executives have said they may shrink the Austrian business to take some heat off, noting that it's no longer a "core" market. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

## CORPORATE BITS

### 25 employees graduate from MGM diploma program



A total of 25 MGM employees graduated from the MGM High School Diploma Program, making it the largest group of graduates ever since the school started collaborating with local gaming

operators.

Five of the graduates will pursue bachelor's degrees at universities in Macau and mainland China, according to a statement issued by the gaming operator.

To encourage local employees, who did not have the opportunity to complete their high school education to return to school, MGM has been partnering with Escola Secundária Luso-Chinesa de Luís Gonzaga Gomes under the Macau Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) to offer the tailor-made program since 2016.

The 25 graduates are from casino operations and the

Over two-thirds of the graduates graduated with distinctions, and three achieved extraordinary academic results with special accolades from the DSEJ and the Macao Foundation.

### Galaxy participates in sports event for the disabled



The Macau Special Olympics (MSO) recently invited Galaxy Entertainment Group's Volunteer Team to join their students at the 2020 Macau Sports Day for the Disabled hosted by the Sports Bureau.

The GEG Volunteer Team took part in a number of in-

clusive activities, including boules and basketball events organized by MSO.

To enhance interaction between GEG volunteers and MSO students, the participants were paired up for the exercises, which included ball passing, dribbling and mini

contests.

Furthermore, GEG volunteers also assisted the MSO students in completing the different sports and games at the 2020 Macau Sports Day for the Disabled to help students better integrate into the community.

Hetzer Siu, Chief Executive Officer of Macau Special Olympics said, "The pandemic has affected many social welfare services, but by working with the GEG Volunteer Team on arranging these inclusive activities, we were able to ease some of the tensions that parents and caregivers felt when coming up with ways to help keep their disabled members both physically and emotionally healthy."

BASKETBALL

# Sweet! Parker has cupcakes made to raise voter awareness

DOUG FEINBERG

**C**ANDACE Parker was a freshman at Tennessee the first time she voted in a U.S. election.

It left a lasting impression on her, and now 16 years later she's hoping to get others to understand the importance of voting too.

"I really do feel that as a society that I hope we really explain to our youth and people that are at that age that are about to vote how important it is," Parker said in a Zoom call Monday night. "Make it as exciting as when you turn 21 you get a drink, at 18 you get to vote. it's a huge responsibility and privilege."

Parker admits that she has missed some of the local elections because of travel to play overseas in Russia in the winter, but has voted in every presidential election. She says she doesn't plan on missing the chance to vote in any election going forward.

The 13-year WNBA veteran is



Los Angeles Sparks forward Candace Parker (left)

also trying to get others to vote as well, teaming up with Sprinkles Cupcakes to celebrate Women's Equality Day and commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment that was ratified on Aug. 18, 1920.

It's also the 55th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, which gave all women, including black women, the right to vote.

"It's a huge statement and huge for everybody to recognize it wasn't always that everyone could

vote," said Parker, who admits she's a huge consumer of the cupcakes. "Obviously recognizing the past so that we can change the future a little bit and how important it is for us to exercise our right to vote."

Parker recalled in amazement how nearly two decades before she was born black women still couldn't vote.

"It blows my mind looking at history, thinking it was so long ago but it's not. Reading up on it and hearing it, has made me read a lot more," she said. "We still have a long way to go."

The Candace Parker cupcakes will be available for a few days and come in two designs — one with rainbow sprinkles, the other with a basketball in the center. Each has "Exercise your right to vote" as well as a bicycle on them. Parker, a student of history, explained how the bikes were important in the women's suffrage movement. Sprinkles is donating 100 cents to vote.org for everyone of Parker's cupcakes that are sold in honor of the 100th anniversary.

Parker is proud of the work the Los Angeles Sparks have been doing for social justice. The organization announced a "Change has No Offseason" program last month that's focused on combating systemic racism and sexism through initiatives focused on voter registration and education and immigration reform.

"I think it's really important for us, being part of the WNBA, which the longest-running women's sports leagues that's ever been in America to really promote change and to let people know that we hear them and we're with them." AP

AD

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OPINION

Our Desk

Renato Marques



THE DEAD ARTISTS SOCIETY - PART 2

For those unfamiliar with the first part of my opinion piece, I talked about an emerging artist-led movement which has the motto: "Support living artists, the dead ones don't need it." The movement tries to present new ways of seeing, appreciating and acquiring art pieces from several sources as a daily activity and cost.

The movement also sees art as something ephemeral and a regular consumable item, opposing the notion that has prevailed for many decades that art is a very durable collectible item.

Today I want to address a related topic, another movement that calls for the "support of local artists."

Although this movement also follows on with the general idea of supporting living artists, it goes a few steps further and calls for the support of artists in your city, country or region.

This idea arises from the Covid-19 crisis and the fact that art, in all its forms, has become an easily expendable item while faced with tough times, less income and other issues that people and companies have been struggling with.

Although I do agree with the idea that you should support artists who are local and you would know better, especially when discussing charity for instance, I also fear that this idea of supporting locals just because they are locals might become an easy trap to fall into.

If we look at local art exhibitions for the past few years it becomes clear that something strange is going on with some "local artists," as they monopolize exhibition venues with the same works week after week, month after month, and year after year.

Is it because there are no other artists to fill the void? I doubt it. To me, this is a case of a lack of vision and courage from curators and the people responsible for hosting these events that arises from the standardized behavior that a name is good because it is "famous."

Fame seems to be very important, more important than quality, creativity or new ideas. This seems odd in a city that is allegedly using "creative industries" as a way to diversify from casino activities and the idea that are they are the only engine for economic activity.

Some people will say this happens due to nepotism, however I think that it is not that simple. In a way, it is simpler to propose a certain (known) name than to research for others, for new blood, for people that have not yet proved their value to society.

But to be honest, the disappointment is often huge. Especially when you go to an exhibition to find a series of blank canvases that is said to represent emptiness.

I know I am not a person with much training or experience in art, but a series of white canvases does not represent the emptiness. They are the emptiness, and there is not much you can add that can justify that.

It seems that most of the creativity in many art exhibitions comes from the justifications of those proposing or hosting the exhibition.

In the end, it seems that all art is being limited to a literary exercise by some brave people attempting to justify the unjustifiable, defending with pretty words something that would otherwise just be considered pretentious at one exhibition after another. The art of rhetoric seems to be the one that pays off.

I remember a quote from one of my teachers in university. Her name was Isabel Kowalski and one day she said: "If you need to explain art, it means it's not real art."

Kowalski's opinion matches perfectly with my idea of art as a simple appreciator. If it needs too much justification and explanation, that means it can't transmit its message, it can't make you think, it can't prompt any reactions, emotions or feelings.

This to say that I am daring to change the slogan from "support local artists" to "support good work from good local artists."

Australia's government announced yesterday it proposed to block Kirin Holdings Co.'s 45.6 billion yen (\$430 million) sale of its Australian beverage unit to a Chinese company in a development likely to increase strain on Chinese-Australian relations.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said he had advised the buyer China Mengniu Dairy Co. that the sale of the Japanese company's Australian subsidiary Lion Dairy and Drinks "would be contrary to the national interest."

Frydenberg's statement did not elaborate.

Kirin and China Mengniu Dairy Co. said they had decided not to continue with the sale, agreed to in November, after Frydenberg expressed his preliminary view to block the deal.

In practice, such preliminary decisions are final.

Kirin said the sale required approval of the Australia's Foreign Investment Review Board.

"Given this approval has not been secured to date and is unlikely to be forthcoming at this time, regrettably, the parties have agreed to terminate the agreement, a Kirin statement said.

MILITARY'S TOP CYBER OFFICIAL DEFENDS MORE AGGRESSIVE STANCE

ERIC TUCKER, WASHINGTON

THE U.S. military's top cyber official is defending the government's shift toward a more aggressive strategy in cyberspace, saying the mission has evolved over the last decade from "a reactive and defensive posture" to keep pace with sophisticated threats.

Gen. Paul Nakasone, the commander of U.S. Cyber Command and the director of the National Security Agency, says in a piece being published yesterday by the magazine Foreign Affairs that the military's cyber fighters are increasingly prepared to engage in combat with online adversaries rather than wait to repair networks after they've been penetrated.

"We learned that we cannot afford to wait for cyber attacks to affect our military networks. We learned that defending our military networks requires executing operations outside our military networks. The threat evolved, and we evolved to meet it," wrote Nakasone in a piece co-authored with Michael Sulmeyer, his senior adviser.

As an example, Nakasone cited a mission from last October in which Cyber Command dispatched an elite team of experts to Montenegro to join forces with the



U.S. National Security Agency Director Gen. Paul Nakasone

tiny Balkan state targeted by Russia-linked hackers. The "hunt forward" mission helped protect an ally but was also an opportunity for the U.S. to improve its own cyber defenses before the 2020 election, Nakasone wrote.

The proactive strategy is a change from a decade ago when Cyber Command was first established in the wake of a punishing cyber attack on the Defense Department's classified and unclassified networks. Cyber Command, created in 2010 to protect U.S. military networks, was initially more focused on "securing network perimeters."

In recent years, though, Cyber Command has gone on the offensive, as 68 cyber protection teams "proactively hunt for adversary malware on our own networks rather than simply waiting for an intrusion to be identified," Nakasone said. It's also doing more to combat adversaries on an ongoing basis and to

broadly share information about malicious software it uncovers to make it a less effective threat.

"Some have speculated that competing with adversaries in cyberspace will increase the risk of escalation — from hacking to all-out war. The thinking goes that by competing more proactively in cyberspace, the risk of miscalculation, error, or accident increases and could escalate to a crisis," Nakasone wrote.

He said that while Cyber Command takes those concerns seriously, "We are confident that this more proactive approach enables Cyber Command to conduct operations that impose costs while responsibly managing escalation. In addition, inaction poses its own risks: that Chinese espionage, Russian intimidation, Iranian coercion, North Korean burglary, and terrorist propaganda will continue unabated." AP

KREMLIN: NAVALNY POISONING ACCUSATIONS 'EMPTY NOISE'

THE Kremlin yesterday rejected accusations of involvement in an alleged attack on Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny who is in a coma in a German hospital, a day after doctors said tests indicated that he was poisoned.

The politician's allies say the Kremlin is behind the illness of its most prominent critic, with some demanding an investigation into whether Russian President Vladimir Putin was involved.

"These accusations ab-

solutely cannot be true and are rather an empty noise," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday. "We do not intend to take it seriously."

Peskov saw no grounds for launching a criminal investigation into Navalny's condition, saying that it could have been triggered by a variety of causes, and determining one should come first.

"If a substance (that caused the condition) is found, and if it is determined that it is poisoning,

then there will be a reason for an investigation," Peskov said.

Over the weekend he was transferred to the Charité hospital in Berlin, where doctors on Monday said they have found indications of "cholinesterase inhibitors" in his system.

Cholinesterase inhibitors act by blocking the breakdown of a key chemical in the body, acetylcholine, that transmits signals between nerve cells. Navalny is being treated with the antidote atropine. AP

**Australian** hot spot State of Victoria yesterday recorded an increase in new coronavirus cases, although health authorities are confident infections are continuing to trend lower. Victoria's Health Department reported 148 new infections in the latest 24-hour period and eight deaths. State capital Melbourne is around half way through a six-week lockdown.

**USA** Can mosquitoes spread the coronavirus? No. While mosquitoes can spread some diseases, most notably malaria, experts say COVID-19 is not among them. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says it has no data to suggest the coronavirus is spread by either mosquitoes or ticks. COVID-19 is mainly spread from person to person through droplets people spray when they talk, cough or sneeze. And the World Health Organization says a mosquito bite won't give you the virus.



**Business** Ant Group, the financial technology arm of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group, yesterday filed for a dual listing in Hong Kong and Shanghai, in what may be the largest share offering since the coronavirus pandemic began. The initial public offering will be the first dual listing on the Hong Kong exchange and Shanghai's STAR Market. The company's filing did not disclose the timetable for its public offering or how much money it hopes to raise.



**Sports** Formula One added four more races to this year's calendar yesterday and said "a limited number of fans" will be able to attend some of the remaining events in the pandemic-disrupted season. Races in Turkey, Abu Dhabi and two in Bahrain will take place in November and December, completing the heavily reshaped calendar. It takes the number of races in the season to 17.