

The Macao SAR Government urges:

Implement regular epidemic prevention measures;
Do our best to persist;
Wash hands frequently and wear a mask;
Keep a distance and avoid crowd gathering;
Perseverance leads to success.

Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

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AFTER A LENGTHY PUBLIC DEBATE, CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF THREE WILL BE ALLOWED BACK TO PRESCHOOL AS EARLY AS SEP 21 P5

TRAVEL BUBBLE: HEALTH CODE TO RESUME ONCE HK BRINGS COVID-19 UNDER CONTROL P5

CHINA LAUNCHED A NEW OPTICAL REMOTE-SENSING SATELLITE FROM THE TAIYUAN LAUNCH CENTER IN SHANXI PROVINCE P6

India's coronavirus cases surged to 4.2 million, the second-highest total in the world as urban metro trains partially resume service in the capital New Delhi and other states. The 90,802 cases added in the past 24 hours pushed India's total to 4,204,614, passing Brazil, which has more than 4.1 million, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. More than 6.2 million people in the United States have been infected. India's Health Ministry also reported 1,016 deaths from COVID-19 in the past 24 hours, taking fatalities to 71,642, the third-highest national death toll.

AP PHOTO



China Organizers reported strong turnout at an event in Beijing billed as the first hybrid online and in-person trade show during the coronavirus pandemic. A total of 95,000 visitors attended the 2020 China International Fair for Trade in Services on Saturday, the first full day of the exhibition. The fair is being held as China's economy has largely restarted, despite the devastating blow to many industries from a months-long shutdown and the loss of domestic demand and foreign orders. More on p7

AP PHOTO



South Korea added 119 more cases of the coronavirus, its lowest daily jump in more than three weeks amid a downward trend in new cases. The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said yesterday the additional figures took the country's total to 21,296 with 336 deaths. It's the fifth straight day the country's daily jump has stayed under 200. The rise in cases in August, many of them associated with churches, restaurants and schools and an anti-government street rally in the greater Seoul area.

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HELENA S. FERNANDES EXCLUSIVE
'MGTO ROLE REMAINS UNCHANGED' DESPITE MOVE TO ECONOMY SECRETARIAT P2-3



Q&A MARIA HELENA DE SENNA FERNANDES
MGTO DIRECTOR

'MGTO duties and roles to remain unchanged after Secretariat swap'

RENATO MARQUES

SINCE starting work at the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) in 1988, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes has served in leadership roles at the tourism board for the past 22 years.

Her work has led Senna Fernandes to participate in many local and overseas tourism exhibitions, conferences, seminars, events, marketing, and promotional activities as well as taking important roles in the decision-making of the present and future of Macau as a tourism destination.

Now that MGTO is preparing to be transferred from under the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture to the Secretariat for Economy and Finance, the Times interviewed Senna Fernandes to learn more about the past, present, and future of the tourism business, the main engine of the local economy.

Macau Daily Times (MDT) – The MGTO is moving from under the “umbrella” of the Secretariat of Social Affairs and Culture to the Secretariat of Economy and Finance. How do you perceive this change? Do you see any advantages of the move?

Helena de Senna Fernandes (HSF) – In terms of work, I don't think it will bring any big change. Even now, and for the many years under the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture we have always been working with the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute and we have always been working with the Economic Services so it's not something new.

I think this kind of work relationship will get even closer but, at the same time, we will still retain our relationship with all the other departments that are under the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture because you can't imagine promoting tourism without promoting culture; that is part and parcel of what Macau has to offer. Culture will always be part of tourism.

At the same time, the Chief Executive himself said that he wants

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one big sports event every month so this would also be a big tourism asset. We will continue to work with the Sports Bureau as we have been doing for so many years.

Internally, we will be merging the Tourism Crisis Management Office with the MGTO. Instead of having two separate entities, there will be only one entity. This means we have to streamline our work and re-organize some parts as well. This would be the only change in terms of the working procedures.

As for the advantages, I think it would help people to understand

better the role of tourism in driving the economy. I think [the move] will give people a much clearer picture to understand in a broader sense that tourism is a very important income earner for Macau.

MDT - You have headed the MGTO for the past eight years. Are there any tasks or goals still outstanding?

HSF - I think one of the things that we are always aiming to do is to attract a more diverse range of international tourists that come directly to Macau. This is always

something that we would like to achieve. Unfortunately, it's not just up to the tourism department because it has to do with aviation and with a lot of other things [such as] how, potentially, we can bring visitors from Macau to such a destination as well.

These are very big commercial decisions on the part of the airlines but it is something that I would say that, up to today, we want to achieve in terms of having more direct flights and more people flying directly into Macau. If you have more direct flights, it gi-

ves you more bargaining power or more possibilities to go directly to those markets and bring in not just general tourists, but also business visitors. Especially for these kinds of market segments, being able to travel directly is a plus.

Having a direct link [to these markets] would give them a very different perception [of traveling to Macau]. This is something that until now we were not able to achieve, but again, we don't work in the vacuum; we can't say we want it and it happens immediately the next day.

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MDT – Does the airport expansion help to achieve this goal?

HSF - Unfortunately, hardware alone does not bring direct flights. It's a very commercial decision and involves hard number crunching. They have to calculate exactly the feasibility, they have to look at all the costs involved and they have to look at whether there will be people flying not only to Macau but also back to their country. This is a particularly difficult combination especially when we have a population of just around 700,000 people. It is a population that can't profitably sustain a mid-range to long haul route. For the short-haul maybe there are still some possibilities, but for mid to long haul it's a very difficult calculation.

MDT – How do you evaluate the work of the MGTO to promote Macau as a tourism destination in the past two decades? What were the most memorable milestones?

HSF - There are many different moments altogether, and some of them have a more lasting memory than others. Some are not necessarily very happy memories because I had very difficult moments as well. But making a general evaluation I can say that the experience, so far, has been a very rewarding one, both as a person and a professional. It has been a great experience and I have learned a lot and I enjoyed it a lot, although I have also worked very hard.

I remember the time when I worked with engineer Costa Antunes, who is not an "easy person," let's put it that way, but he is a great mentor. I learned a lot from him both in terms of how

to organize events and work. As an engineer, he is very systematic and very methodical and I learned a lot of these things from him.

It was very enjoyable to work with him and it has been a very good experience for me. This was one of these important moments.

On the downside, I recall the years before the handover, from 1997 until 1999. These were probably the most frustrating years and the most difficult years to work on tourism. You plan something on promotions and then on TV appears the Ruins of Saint Paul's and a piece of news that there has been a shooting somewhere, or some crime, and then everything [you had planned] goes down the drain.

It was particularly bad as it was a time when we were keen to reach new markets due to the opening of the airport in 1995 which made 1996 a great year in tourist figures, but then in 1997, the figures dropped drastically.

Moving forward, the handover was, of course, a significant moment, although I was only particularly involved in the last month before it happened - as I had been working on the Grand Prix - but it is one of those moments which is once in a lifetime, you will never see that again, so it's quite touching.

After the handover, things were more stable for the tourism environment with the start of the influx of Chinese outbound tourism.

We had another difficult time during SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) but then in 2005 we got the listing of the Historic Center of Macau in UNESCO, and from then, we have had very good years in which we did not have to do hard selling of Macau, and still the results were coming in.

As the last key moment, I need to mention something that I would never expect to have to do, and that was the decision to close the former New Century Hotel (Beijing Imperial Palace) in 2016.

It is something really out of the ordinary and that I never imagined having to do as head of the tourism office, to close a five-star hotel. I think nobody can forget that moment.

We are always aiming to attract a more diverse range of international tourists to come directly to Macau. Unfortunately, it's not just up to the tourism department because it has to do with aviation and with a lot of other things

MDT – Do you have greater ambitions for your career within the government, for example, a Secretary position?

HSF - Let me put it this way. I am not an ambitious person. I like to work but I like to work as long as I enjoy my work. This to

say that if I don't think that I am [physically] fit [for a certain task] or if I feel that I am not enjoying my work I would for sure move on to something else.

We need to be responsible for ourselves. At the end of the day, our professional life is only part of our life. But at this point, I am still enjoying my work and so I will stay on for some time still.

MDT - The government has previously raised the idea of sports tourism. What is the current status of that work?

HSF - I think that in terms of events, we cannot expect to have international participation for a certain period until the pandemic subsides to a certain extent that the health authorities are comfortable to partly ease the restrictions.

So, we probably will have events right at the start of 2021 and I can imagine some of the large events [...] will be limited to participation from Macau and also from the mainland.

Eventually, I think there will be the possibility to slowly create the conditions for other participation but that would be quite a long road still.

There are still some possible events that will be brought to Macau and I know that the Sports Bureau is working very hard on it but, unfortunately, that participation would have to be limited at this point in time. We probably need to promote a lot of online participation and also organize some

"hybrid" events [with a mix between physical and virtual participation], such as the Film Festival [International Film Festival and Awards - Macao] this year, which will have to be a hybrid event as well because we don't foresee that we can even bring out the artistic director [Mike Goodridge] because he is in the U.K. It's just a matter of adapting to the new circumstances and then we learn something new, too.

MDT – Is it best to still run the events even in an adapted form or just cancel them?

HSF - Some events you can still run as "hybrid" events like the Film Festival. We have seen this all around the world lately, we are not re-inventing the wheel. We are just learning from experiences and we are adapting ourselves as well. But then, for some events it's just not possible, like the Fireworks [Macao International Fireworks Display Contest], as we can't have a virtual fireworks contest, it just does not make sense. Some events are just not possible to have as a hybrid, others it is, and we just need to adapt.

Besides, there are other events that we can still run but, probably at a smaller scale [than the originally planned] because of the non-participation of certain people.

In this sense, there are several options and this will ultimately depend on the type of event. There isn't one solution for everything. You have to have different solutions depending on the nature of the event and also depending on how important it is.

EDUCATION AUTHORITY ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO DO VOLUNTEER WORK

The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) is encouraging secondary school students to do more volunteer work. In a reply to lawmaker Lam Lon Wai's interpellation, the education authority said that the bureau has been assisting local schools in building a record system of students' volunteer experience. The education department hopes schools can note each student's volunteer hours on their examination grade sheets. This new index of non-school performance is hoped to become a key criterion to help students in their personal development. In recent years, the DSEJ launched a volunteer program for secondary school students. As of today, 39 schools are part of the program, with 16,000 registered students.

MORE POLICE OFFICERS TRANSFERRED TO THE UNITARY POLICE SERVICE

The security authority has relocated more police officers to the Unitary Police Service (SPU), according to a dispatch signed by the Secretary for Security. Yesterday's government official bulletin published the dispatch revealing that the SPU now has 116 people under its authority from its original 80 people. The extra 36 police officers come from other police departments. On September 15, the city's new civil protection regime will come into effect. The SPU is the department responsible for civil protection matters. In 2017, reorganization of SPU commenced, adding a civil protection and coordination center. The SPU remains with 45 core staff within the establishment.

NON-LOCAL WORKERS RESPONSIBLE FOR 30% OF PARALLEL TRADING

Non-local workers are responsible for a total of more than 900 cases of parallel trading recorded from January to August, according to the Macao Customs Service. During the same period, the customs authority organized more than 40 cross-department actions which cracked down on parallel trading. In total, over 3,000 cases were recorded. Parallel traders buy products from Macau and transport them to mainland China for resale. These goods are typically either restricted or otherwise difficult to acquire on the mainland. Seized products include cigarettes, alcohol, seafood, cosmetics and electronics. In August, the department raided six large-size parallel trading shops in Macau near the Border Gate, having confiscated goods worth over 13 million patacas. The authority reminded non-local workers to obey the city's trade law and to not engage in illicit parallel trading.

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CRIME

MAN SOLD DOMESTIC HELPER QUOTA TO PAY GAMBLING DEBT

JULIE ZHU

A local man is facing charges of falsifying documents after he sold his quota for hiring a domestic helper, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported during yesterday's joint police press conference.

The accused, surnamed Leong, is a Macau resident in his 40s who told the police he is self-employed as a driver.

This illicit employment case was discovered during another PJ operation to crack down on the illegal business of an unapproved medical cosmetics shop.

Earlier, on July 31, the PJ received an email reporting an illegal business operation. Following the tip-off, the police authority raided a facility near the Ruins of St. Paul, where two Vietnamese nationals, one man and one woman, were operating an illegal medical

cosmetics business. The Health Bureau (SSM) did not issue any approval for the medical cosmetics business.

On August 28, the PJ handed over the duo to the prosecution authority.

The investigation uncovered that the woman was in possession of a blue-card identifying her as a domestic helper. Her employer was Leong.

Following police interrogation, the woman confessed that her employment status was actually fake. She paid Leong to hire her as a helper, but she never worked in the city providing domestic services.

Leong normally stays in mainland China and does not have a permanent address in Macau. On September 3, he crossed the border to Macau from the Border Gate. The PJ intercepted him after

he crossed the checkpoint.

Leong confessed to the police officers that he was in debt as a result of previous gambling activities, which gave him the idea of profiting from his domestic helper quota.

According to Leong, he received 8,000 patacas from the Vietnamese woman as payment.

According to the police, Leong is not involved in the illegal cosmetic business.

At the end of last month, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) found four people suspected of a fake employment case involving a "domestic helper". In this case, a Filipino woman paid 36,000 patacas to a compatriot to find a local family to hire her as a domestic helper.

The four suspects involve a local couple (surnamed Si Tou and Mak), the man's sister (surnamed

Si Tou) and the Filipino woman (surnamed Castillo).

In 2019, Castillo resigned from her previous domestic helper job and stayed in Macau. Later, she met another Filipino national who offered to help her find another employer family in Macau.

Si Tou convinced her brother and sister-in-law to use their domestic helper quota to hire Castillo. The couple did not receive any money for hiring Castillo whereas the sister earned 15,000 patacas.

All four were charged for falsifying documents.

In June this year, the PSP found 10 Macau residents suspected in an organized fake employment business. This case also helped PSP identify more than five other individuals to the prosecution authority over the course of the last two years for related matters.

Risk expert predicts HK's national security law will expedite Greater Bay integration

DANIEL BEITLER

HONG Kong's economic integration into the Greater Bay Area will accelerate now that the Special Administrative Region has adopted its controversial national security legislation, according to the latest report issued by Steve Vickers and Associates (SVA), a specialist political and corporate risk consultancy.

The latest report is the 17th update released by

the company since the Hong Kong social unrest began last year. It highlighted that "stability is returning to Hong Kong" but "this stability comes at a price. Political shifts have accompanied the new law."

SVA's advice to businesses based in or operating out of Hong Kong is to "quickly adapt to this new situation."

"On the one hand, a return of stability in Hong Kong will benefit commerce, but, on the other,

businesses must be mindful that political differences remain intense, and that a studied neutrality will be increasingly hard to maintain, particularly for prominent global companies," noted SVA in the report.

"The situation is challenging, for sure, but does not represent the death of Hong Kong. After all, the expertise and skills of Hong Kong's people, developed over decades, have not vanished."

"Rather, a shift is un-

der way, from Hong Kong's longstanding role as a window into China, into a platform from which Chinese businesses [...] can tap the markets, or manage external interests."

SVA expects that the adoption of the national security legislation will expedite the pace of economic integration within the Greater Bay Area.

With very little understood about the future of the regional economy, "this transition may

challenge some businesses, particularly those advising western businesses on how to handle investments on the mainland," noted SVA. However, others stand to benefit "if they respond nimbly."

The national security legislation was approved by China's State Council on June 30 and adopted in Hong Kong. It has effectively quashed the social unrest, which last year included mass demonstrations and often violence.

ANTHONY LAM

Children under three again allowed to attend school

AFTER 10 days of confusion and public debate, children under the age of three will be allowed back to preschool as early as on September 21, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) announced yesterday. The decision marks a reversal from the DESJ's earlier decision not to allow these children to start the school year.

The about-turn announced yesterday came from meetings between the DSEJ and educational associations over the weekend, held to discuss the possible commencement of new school year for children under three years old.

It followed more than a week of confusion for many parents, who had criticized the regulator's August 27 announcement as hasty and last-minute.

The initial justification given by the authority was that all returning students needed to wear masks, but that these masks were not only ineffective for small children, but additionally presented other risks if worn for extensive periods.

Data from the authorities showed that about 1,000 such children were affected from the earlier DESJ decision.

Despite the approval announced yesterday, the education authority stressed that attendance should be based on conditions that do not violate the Health Bureau's epidemic control measures. Special measures and arrangements will be in



place for additional protection, the authority said.

The five measures are: social distancing, installing partition panels in certain areas of the classroom, adjusting teaching activities and curriculum to limit physical interaction, suspending inter-class teaching, and families psychologically

preparing their children for school resumption.

Schools should not allow children back into their facilities unless they have all the measures in place.

The education regulator also said that parents will have the freedom to decide whether or not they will send their chil-

dren to preschool, and have the right to wait until their children turn three before sending them.

In the first decision, both the education and social work authorities recommended small children stay at home until they reach the threshold age, meaning that school commen-

cement at the particular education level will be gradual. Once they turn three years old, they will be allowed immediately to go to school.

This proved unpopular with parents, many of whom had already purchased necessary materials to prepare for the new school year. Others were left insufficient time to look for daycare services.

On that same evening, lawmaker Sulu Sou disclosed that due to the overwhelming amount of complaints he received from parents, he sent an urgent letter to the education regulator to inquire about the basis of the decision.

With regard to nurseries, the Social Welfare Bureau did not send representatives to yesterday's press conference, so there is no update in this respect. It means that the school year will not commence for public and subsidized nurseries. Private nurseries have the discretion to reopen, however, as the bureau has no authority over them.

Also announced during yesterday's press conference, Macau residents will now be required to pay MOP5,600 by cash or credit card when they start their quarantine period upon entry to the SAR. Their eligibility for cost waiver will be checked and, if authenticated, the charge will be refunded to them in the relevant payment method.

Applications for any such waiver, however, must be initiated by the quarantined individuals.

Health code to resume once HK brings Covid-19 under control

HONG Kong authorities have announced that the health code system which will facilitate travel between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau will only be introduced once the Covid-19 situation has been brought fully under control.

In response to some district council members' motions to permanently shelve the ongoing Universal Community Testing Program (UCTP) and the health code system, the Chief Secretary for Administration Matthew Cheung Kin-chung said such efforts were clearly putting

politics over the public's health.

In early June, the Hong Kong authorities were reportedly preparing to adopt the Health Code system currently in use in Macau and the Guangdong province to reopen their borders to travelers from these two regions.

However, in July, both SARs paused negotiations over the health code system as Hong Kong faced a third wave of the virus.

Yesterday, the Hong Kong SAR recorded 11 new infections.

The outbreak emerged in an industrial building. According to

reports, five of the new cases were identified by the citywide mass testing program.

Over 1.1 million residents have registered for the mass testing scheme.

Some 600,000 residents have taken the test and some asymptomatic cases were identified, which reduced infection risks in communities and the likelihood of a resurgence once the economy restarts, Financial Secretary of the HKSAR government Paul Chan Mo-po said in a blog article published on the financial secretary's official website. **MDT/XINHUA**

RECONSTRUCTION WORKS FOR SÉ CATHEDRAL TO COST MOP9 MILLION

THE Sé Cathedral of Macau is set to undergo reconstruction works as the main roof needs to be "urgently repaired" for security reasons, the Diocese of Macau announced.

As cited in its statement, a new wood roof will be installed, repainting of the internal and external walls will be undertaken, and the church's lighting system will be replaced, in addition to other works. In total, the construction costs are expected to be 9 million patacas.

"Due to the antiquity of this church and after several inspections and studies with government departments, the church needs some remodeling works, and the roof structure, for security reasons, must be reinforced as soon as possible," the Diocese said in a statement.

These works will be carried out at the beginning of Oc-



tober this year, and will take a minimum of nine months.

During the construction period, all ceremonies will be transferred to the St. Dominic's Church. Mass times will be the same.

Due to the high cost of the remodeling works, the church will dispense a fund collection box, which will be displayed until July next year.

The Cathedral of the Na-

tivity of Our Lady was originally built in 1576 as a small wooden chapel. In 1623, it was redesigned as a Cathedral.

The church underwent several modifications in the centuries that followed, being rebuilt between 1844 and 1850. The present-day configuration is the result of reconstruction works carried out in 1937. **LV**

CHINA LAUNCHES NEW OPTICAL REMOTE-SENSING SATELLITE

CHINA launched a new optical remote-sensing satellite from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in northern Shanxi Province yesterday.

The Gaofen-11 02 satellite was launched by a Long March-4B rocket at 1:57 p.m. (Beijing Time), according to the center. It was the 345th flight mission by a Long March carrier rocket.

Gaofen-11 02 has a resolution up to the sub-meter level. It will be mainly used for land surveys, city planning, land rights confirmation, road network design, crop yield estimation and disaster prevention and mitigation.

The newly launched satellite will also offer information support for the Belt and Road construction.

Together with the Gaofen-11 01 satellite, which was launched in 2018, Gaofen-11 02 will form an in-orbit network to improve the country's satellite observation efficiency.

The Long March-4B is a three-stage liquid-fueled rocket developed by the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology, affiliated to the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. It has the ability to launch single and multiple satellites with different orbital requirements.

Yesterday's launch is the third mission of the Long March-4 series of carrier rockets this year. According to the rocket developer, 2020 will see several launches of the rocket model. XINHUA



Journalists for US media face possible expulsion

CHINA is delaying the renewal of press cards for at least five journalists working at four U.S. media outlets, an organization of foreign correspondents said yesterday, making them vulnerable to expulsion in apparent retribution for Washington's targeting of Chinese reporters working in the United States.

China's foreign ministry responded by saying applications for renewal were being processed and those reporters involved would not have their lives in China "affected in any way."

However, ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian also accused the U.S. of being "arrogant and unreasonable" in talks about the matter and "not addressing China's normal and reasonable concerns and demands at all."

"If the U.S. government truly cares about American journalists, it should extend visas for all Chinese journalists as soon as possible, instead of taking journalists from the two countries as hostages for the certain politicians' political interests," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing.



Foreign journalists line up to attend a National People's Congress held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, in 2016

Atlanta-based CNN said its China correspondent was among those given a letter authorizing him to continue reporting for the next two months instead of the usual one-year press card.

He was told the move was unrelated to his reporting but was merely a reciprocal measure in response to the actions of the Trump administration toward Chinese media, making it the latest ma-

nifestation of the deteriorating state of U.S.-China relations that have fallen to their lowest level in decades.

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of China, or FCCC, said The Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg have also been targeted. It did not name the fourth outlet, but said more foreign journalists are expected to receive similar treatment. While the targeted outlets are all American,

the journalists involved are of various nationalities.

Zhao did not say what future actions China might take, but said "all the options are on the table, and the U.S. side knows that very well."

"If the U.S. insists on going down the wrong path and continuously making mistakes, China will have to make the necessary and legitimate responses to firmly safeguard its legitimate rights," he said.

China's move comes after the U.S. capped the number of Chinese citizens who could be employed by Chinese media outlets and placed them on 90-day visas. China first responded in March by expelling reporters from The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post. Those affected have been both U.S. and non-U.S. citizens.

Official press cards are used to obtain residency permits usually good for one year, while the letters issued by the Chinese foreign ministry "could be revoked at any time, thus putting (the journalists) at constant threat of expulsion," the FCCC said in a statement.

The U.S. moves were fed by complaints that Chinese journalists working for state media acted more as propagandists and agents for the Communist Party than as genuine reporters. The U.S. had already required those outlets to register as foreign entities with the U.S., similar to consulates and embassies.

They also come against the backdrop of worsening

U.S.-China relations on a range of issues, including human rights, trade, technology, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the South China Sea and Chinese treatment of its Muslim minority in the northwestern region of Xinjiang.

Relations hit a new low in July when the U.S. ordered China to close its consulate in Houston and China demanded the shuttering of the U.S. mission in the southwestern city of Chengdu.

Beijing's latest actions have "turned accredited foreign journalists in China into pawns in a wider diplomatic conflict," the FCCC statement said, calling on Beijing to "halt this cycle of tit-for-tat reprisals in what is quickly becoming the darkest year yet for media freedoms."

A record 17 foreign journalists were expelled from China in the first half of this year alone by having their press credentials withdrawn, while others have had their residency permits shortened to as little as one month, the club said.

The FCCC has also documented increasing harassment and surveillance of foreign journalists in China, including physical assault and cyberattacks. AP

JOE McDONALD, BEIJING

China's export growth quickens in August, imports edge lower

CHINA'S export growth accelerated in August while imports edged lower as the world's second-largest economy extended its recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Exports rose 9.5% over a year earlier to \$235.2 billion, up from July's 7.2% growth, customs data showed yesterday. Imports declined 2.1% to \$176.3 billion, compared with the previous month's 1.4% contraction.

China's exporters have benefited from its relatively early reopening from a shutdown to fight the virus while competitors in many other countries still face anti-disease controls that disrupt business.

Exports to the United States rose 20% to \$44.8 billion despite tariff hikes imposed by the Trump administration in a fight with Beijing over its technology ambitions and trade surplus. Imports of American goods gained 2% to \$10.5 billion.

The changes were due mostly to lower prices and comparison with last August's relative weak exports, according to Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics. Evans-Pritchard estimated the volume of goods exported rose 9.7% from a year earlier while import volumes rose 9.5%.



Other exporters have benefited from increased Chinese demand for their goods after growth in the world's second-largest economy rebounded to 3.2% over a year earlier in the three months ending in June. Activity the previous quarter fell 6.8%, the deepest slump since at least the mid-1960s.

Exports to the

27-nation European Union, China's biggest foreign market, fell 20.1% from a year earlier to \$35.7 billion. Imports of European

goods tumbled 29.7% to \$22.5 billion.

China's global trade surplus swelled by 72% over a year earlier to \$58.9 billion. That was down from July's \$62.3 billion gap.

Chinese importers have benefited from a slump in global prices for oil and many other goods due to weak demand

caused by virus-related shutdowns.

Fast-growing exports included integrated circuits, smartphones, auto-data processors and household appliances.

That suggests "China still has some trade partners that are willing to import Chinese technology" despite tension with Washington, Iris Pang of ING said in a report.

Still, Pang warned Chinese exporters of higher-tech goods might face trouble as Washington tightens curbs on access to U.S. components in a feud with Beijing over technology and security.

Washington has cut off supplies of American components for companies including China's most prominent tech brand, Huawei Technologies Ltd. The Trump administration is lobbying European and other allies to avoid Chinese technology as they upgrade to next-generation telecom networks.

"This could affect exports of technological products and services in the coming months," said

Chinese exporters have benefited from its relatively early reopening from a shutdown to fight the virus

AD



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The houses are set in the heart of the World Heritage Site of the Douro Valley and its famous winery landscape where the world's Ports are produced. Both restored relics overlooking the Rio Douro, these eight rooms houses have been blessed with gorgeous wooden floors, plush queen beds and marble baths; the best have dazzling river views. But it is the welcome that makes this place stand out from the crowd.



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AP PHOTO



A coastal road is damaged in Ulsan, South Korea

KIM TONG-HYUNG &
MARI YAMAGUCHI, SEOUL

A powerful typhoon damaged buildings, flooded roads and knocked out power to thousands of homes in South Korea yesterday after battering islands in southern Japan, killing one person and injuring dozens of others.

The Korea Meteorological Administration said Typhoon Haishen was passing over waters off the eastern coastal city of Sokcho in the afternoon after barreling through South Korea's southern and eastern regions.

The typhoon was weakening, with its maximum winds measured at 108 kilometers per hour after blowing at 144 kilometers in the morning, and was forecast to be downgraded to a tropical storm within six hours.

Japanese disaster management officials in Kagoshima said a woman in her 70s died of a head injury after falling into a roadside ditch while evacuating from a coastal town as Haishen lashed southwestern Japan over the weekend with strong winds and rain. Japan's Fire and Disaster Management Agency said at least 38 other people were injured, five of them seriously. Schools and department stores were closed in Hiroshima and other cities in the country's southwest.

Damage caused by the typhoon was less than feared because it took a path farther from the coast and weakened more quickly than expected, officials said.

In South Korea, more than 100 homes were des-

Typhoon lashes South Korea after battering Japanese islands

troyed or flooded, while cars struggled to navigate flooded roads in Ulsan and other coastal cities such as Busan, Sokcho and Gangneung. Emergency workers scrambled to clean up toppled trees and damaged traffic signs, buildings, port facilities and other structures.

At least one person was missing after getting swept away by water that filled a drainage channel at a limestone mine in the eastern coastal town of Samcheok. Another person was found dead in Busan, but officials said it wasn't immediately clear whether the death was caused by the typhoon.

At least five people were hurt, including one in Busan who sustained light injuries after a car flipped over in strong winds, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety said.

The storm also destroyed or sank around 80 fishing boats, and caused generating turbines at two nuclear reactors in the southeastern city of Gyeongju to automatically stop. No leakage of radioactive materials was detected.

Hundreds of flights in and out of the southern island province of Jeju and across the mainland were canceled. Some bridges and railroad sections were shut down, thousands of fishing boats and other

vessels were moved to safety, and more than 2,600 residents in the southern mainland regions were evacuated due to the possibility of landslides and other concerns.

Workers as of yesterday afternoon had restored power to 49,643 of the 75,237 households that lost electricity in the southern mainland areas and Jeju.

Haishen, which means "sea god" in Chinese, plowed through Okinawa and other southern Japanese islands over the weekend. Traffic was still paralyzed in places, bullet train service was suspended and most domestic flights in and out of airports in southwestern Japan were canceled.

Regional officials in Miyazaki said rescue workers were looking for four people missing after a mudslide hit the mountainous village of Shiiba earlier in the day. A fifth person who was rescued at the site was seriously injured.

Electricity was restored to thousands of homes in Japan, but more than 340,000 others were still without power. Nearly 4 million people in Japan were still advised to evacuate.

The storm by last night was expected to reach North Korea's northeastern region, which was

battered by Typhoon Maysak last week, inflicting further pain on an economy ravaged by U.S.-led sanctions, border closures from the coronavirus pandemic and chronic food shortages.

North Korean TV aired video of widespread flooding in the eastern coastal city of Wonsan and nearby Tongchon, but the country's state media didn't immediately report any casualties caused by Haishen.

The North's state media earlier said leader Kim Jong Un visited typhoon-stricken areas, fired a top regional official for poor readiness, and promised to send 12,000 workers from Pyongyang to help with recovery efforts. The North said Maysak destroyed more than 1,000 houses and inundated public buildings and farmland.

Maysak damaged roads and buildings and left at least one person dead in South Korea. In addition, a livestock cargo ship sank off Japan's coast as Maysak passed. Two of its 43 crew members were rescued and one body was recovered before the search was halted because of Haishen. An aerial search resumed after Haishen passed the area. The ship was transporting 5,800 cows from New Zealand to China. AP

this day in history



1986 PINOCHET SURVIVES REBEL AMBUSH

The president of Chile has escaped an attempt on his life in a fierce attack which killed five of his bodyguards and wounded 11 more.

General Augusto Pinochet's motorcade was ambushed by at least 12 rebel fighters as he made his way back from his country home to the Chilean capital.

The Patriotic Front of Manuel Rodriguez - one of the country's Marxist guerrilla groups - are believed to be behind the attack. None of those involved have yet been captured.

The president has declared a 90-day "state of siege" - which gives him sweeping powers of detention and censorship.

The gunmen fired on the presidential convoy with machine guns, rifles, bazookas and hand grenades.

Despite the ferocity of the assault, the driver of the president's armour-plated Mercedes managed to speed back to the leader's residence at El Melocoton.

General Pinochet - who sustained only minor injuries to his hand during the assassination attempt - described the attack to reporters just hours after the attack.

"My first reaction was to get out of the car, but then I thought of my grandson at my side and I covered his body with mine," he said.

This attempt on the general's life comes at a time of increasing political and civil unrest in the South American country.

Amnesty International have said human rights violations in the country are now at the same level as they were before the bloody 1973 coup which brought General Pinochet to power.

This first attempt on the president's life marks an escalation in the scale of opposition to the 70-year old military leader who recently announced he wanted to remain in power for another 12 years.

But General Pinochet told reporters he did not fear his opponents.

"Try to kill me: I'm a soldier, I'm ready," he said.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Three years after the assassination attempt Augusto Pinochet lost a referendum on whether he should remain in power. Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin won a presidential election in 1989.

The general stepped down as president in 1990, but remained commander-in-chief of the army.

He retired in 1998 but was arrested in Britain on murder charges at the request of the Spanish Government.

In 2000, the UK Home Secretary ruled the former dictator was unfit to be extradited to Spain and he returned to Chile.

A Chilean court ruled in 2001 he should be tried for human rights abuses, but later suspended the charges, declaring him unfit for trial. However, in May 2004 the court ordered his immunity be lifted to enable a fresh investigation into human rights abuses.

General Pinochet died aged 91 in Santiago in December 2006.

Despite his human rights record, many Chileans loved him and said he saved the country from Marxism.

But even many loyal supporters abandoned him after it became clear in 2004 that he had stolen about \$27m in secret offshore bank accounts that were under investigation at the time of his death.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Dreams have given you some amazing insight on the questions you've been struggling with, but whether or not you utilize that insight is up to you.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 You can gain a lot from working with them to reach your goals because their goals are either closely aligned to yours or exactly the same as yours. Did you ever think to ask them about what they want?

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 Taking things slowly is the wisest strategy for everything in your life today, from taking a shower to taking the freeway. Do not rush anything, especially when you are behind the wheel!

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 You're entering a phase where your intuition seems to be overpowering your logic. What seems like the best path to take on paper just won't feel right to you, so what should you do?

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Unexpected issues could force you to get a little more creative, but you're up for it. Maybe a co-worker can help. This could be the excuse you've been waiting for to get to know them better anyway.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Have you had a lot of confusing dreams lately? Don't fret. They aren't warnings about what's going to happen next in your life. They're just silly visions cooked up by your subconscious.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 The many different options for your day are all laid out in front of you this morning, and the choice is yours. Do you want a big, bold day or a safe, mild one? Follow your mood and go from there.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 You're smart enough to know where to apply your energy, so don't fall for the drama. Make sure you stick to your priorities, and don't change your day to suit someone else's needs or desires.

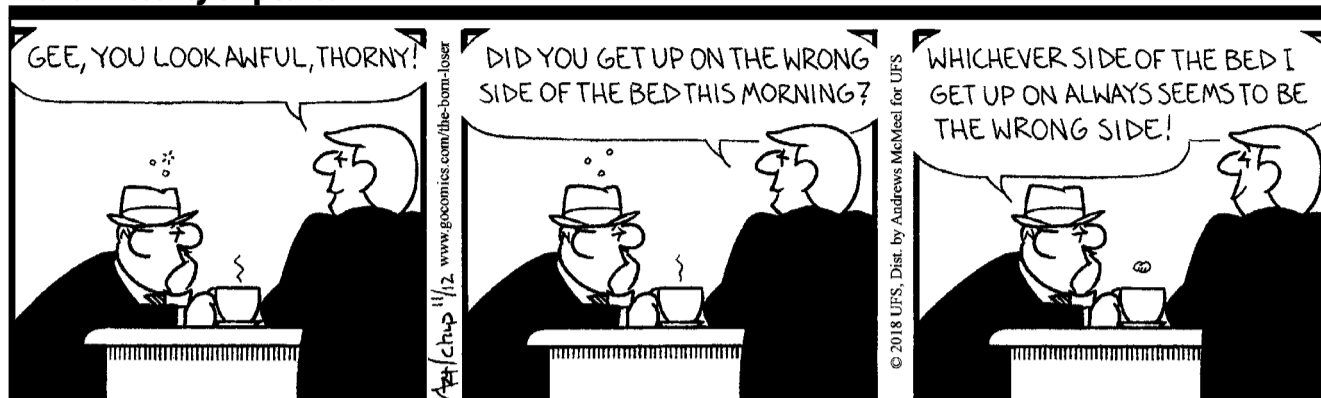
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Find a quiet place and put that remarkable brain to work. Set logic aside for the time being and just see what comes up. You might surprise even yourself!

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 You can turn heads with your words today, so use your impressive writing skills whenever possible. Have you been trying to work up the nerve to ask someone out? Write them a note.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 After all, how are you going to clear the air if you won't even talk to them? Step up and have the conversation you need to have. Decide to be compassionate and honest. It's going to lead to a resolution.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Learning a lesson from the inappropriate behavior of others is one of the safest and most effective educations you can get, and today you could have plenty of lessons to learn.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	26	32	thundershower
Harbin	20	26	thundershower
Tianjin	27	31	shower
Urumqi	21	30	clear
Xi'an	25	35	overcast
Lhasa	12	26	cloudy
Chengdu	25	33	shower
Chongqing	29	39	clear
Kunming	18	26	shower
Nanjing	26	34	thundershower
Shanghai	27	33	drizzle
Wuhan	28	36	cloudy
Hangzhou	26	34	overcast
Taipei	26	31	drizzle
Guangzhou	25	28	rainstorm
Hong Kong	26	28	rainstorm
WORLD			
Moscow	13	25	clear
Frankfurt	13	24	clear
Paris	15	27	clear
London	15	21	clear
New York	25	30	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Glove material; 6- Gather together; 11- 1970 Jackson 5 hit; 14- Born before, senior churchman; 15- Cut partner; 16- Neighbor of Leb.; 17- Puzzled; 18- Rainbow maker; 19- Defunct airline; 20- Cut-price retail event; 22- Girder; 24- Employ too often; 28- Destitution; 30- Passenger ships; 31- Every sixty minutes; 32- Angry; 33- Scooter; 37- Large container; 38- Observes Ramadan; 39- N.Y. neighbor; 40- Pachyderms; 43- Principle; 45- Viscouints' superiors; 46- Capital of the Philippines; 47- County in SE England; 49- Discloses; 50- Shred; 51- Ballot choice; 52- Big bang producer; 53- Atoll unit; 56- Royal; 61- Sense of self; 62- Tend; 63- ___ Ark; 64- DC bigwig; 65- Domingo, for one; 66- Assail;

DOWN: 1- Multitude; 2- Nth; Abbr.; 3- Begley and Wynn; 4- Actress Ruby; 5- Wipeout?; 6- Pomme or manzana; 7- Female horse; 8- Faulkner's "___ Lay Dying"; 9- Ave. crosses; 10- School session; 11- Late bloomer; 12- Obscure road; 13- Pull an all-nighter; 21- Pack animal; 23- Incandescent lamp; 24- Martini garnish; 25- Like some infections; 26- Related on the mother's side; 27- Not emp.; 28- Annie of "Designing Women"; 29- Love deity; 31- Emcees; 33- Virile; 34- Ancient region of Asia Minor; 35- Mournful sound; 36- Kett and James; 38- Payment for travel; 41- Andean country; 42- Angelic musician?; 43- Inns; 44- Chemical ending; 46- Fulfilled; 47- Scorch; 48- Writer Sinclair; 49- Copter part; 50- Hwys.; 51- Rejection power; 54- Call on; 55- Sportscaster Berman; 57- Fair-hiring abbr.; 58- Gangster's gun; 59- Just as I thought; 60- D-Day craft;

Yesterday's solution

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

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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AIRPLANE CABINS COULD LOOK DIFFERENT THE NEXT TIME YOU FLY

ANGUS WHITLEY

HEADREST canopies and fabric barriers between seats could start appearing in airplane cabins as the embattled industry tries to ward off the coronavirus.

Airlines desperate for governments to lift travel restrictions and passengers to return are looking at ways to reassure the public that their health won't be compromised on a flight. New-look seats and fresh cabins could be a start.

One of the biggest companies in that business, Recaro Aircraft Seating GmbH, has designed a range of modifications to keep passengers apart and protect them from infection.

Airlines are considering installing Recaro's equipment as temporary cabin makeovers, according to Chief Executive Officer Mark Hiller. They need fittings that are easy to maneuver, lightweight and available at short notice, he said.



"There is definitely large interest from across the different regions," Hiller said in an interview.

With a coronavirus vaccine possibly years away, airlines need to persuade the public it is safe to fly when an infected passenger might be next to them. Sporadic flareups around the world are putting people off: Global traffic in July was down almost 80% from a year earlier, a steeper-than-expected slump, the

International Air Transport Association said last week.

Of the planes that are flying, many are half empty. Aircraft typically must be 70% to 80% full to turn a profit, so that increases the appeal of devices that let passengers sit side by side without touching heads, brushing shoulders or nudging elbows.

Airlines are also figuring out how to apply a disinfectant coating developed by Recaro onto their seats, Hiller

said. The German company says it has revamped the substance to repel viruses including Covid-19.

While the industry has for months said there's little chance of catching the virus on a plane because there are hospital-grade air filters on board, that argument has been undermined by breakouts on some flights.

All 187 passengers and six crew on a TUI AG flight from the Greek resort of Zante to Cardiff last month were asked to self-isolate after at least 16 confirmed cases were identified on the Aug. 25 service.

Recaro, which sold about 150,000 aircraft seats last year, isn't immune to the crisis gripping the aviation industry, despite potential demand for its designs. Hiller said revenue is expected to drop almost 60% this year.

"Even if airlines aren't going to buy new planes, they might go for new cabins that are more comfortable or adapted to Covid," he said. **BLOOMBERG**

CHINA EVERGRANDE OFFERS 30% DISCOUNT TO BOOST PROPERTY SALES

CHINA Evergrande Group kicked off a nationwide sales promotion with a 30% discount on all real estate properties as the developer tries to boost sales and meet its target of cutting debt by half.

The promotion on residential real estate began Monday and will last until Oct. 8, which marks the end of China's week-long national holiday, according to a statement from the property developer. While Evergrande routinely offers discounts during holidays when Chinese tend to shop for apartments, the promotion has come earlier this year and with a deeper price cut.

Last week, Evergrande vowed to increase sales as part of its efforts to meet an aggressive deleveraging target - cutting borrowings by about 150 billion yuan (\$22 billion) each year from 2020 to 2022, or about half its current debt load.

So far it's fallen short of the pledge. Total debt rose 4% to 835 billion yuan as of June 30, compared with 800 billion yuan at the end of 2019, according to an Aug. 31 earnings report from the Shenzhen-based company. **BLOOMBERG**

AD

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 山度士 Álvaro Rodrigues^o
 馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata^o
 趙魯 Zhao Lu^o
 馬傑安 João Nogueira Marques

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Slovenia's Primoz Roglic climbs the Marie Blanche pass during the ninth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 153 kilometers Sunday

CYCLING

It's a stressful rest day as Tour riders face COVID-19 tests

IT'S a rest day like no other for the Tour de France bunch.

After nine nervous and exhausting stages that took the peloton from the Riviera to the Pyrenees via a short journey in the Alps, riders would normally take some time off yesterday with their friends and families.

But this year is different. In addition to their recovery routine, the 166 remaining riders will stay in their own "bubble," with a Damocles sword hanging over their head as they will undergo coronavirus tests that will decide whether they can keep on racing.

Tour de France organizers said about 650 tests will be performed. Some took place on Sunday, with the majority of riders being tested yesterday.

Under threat of cancellation at some point — more than 30,000 people in France

have died after contracting the coronavirus, making the country one of the hardest-hit in Europe—the Tour has been salvaged by pushing it back from its traditional July date to end of the summer. The price paid for the race to be run is a heavy sanitary protocol which includes mandatory COVID-19 testing for riders and teams staff members on rest days.

All were tested before the Tour started in Nice and have since lived in the race quarantine, making sure they stayed away from fans and sponsors usually omnipresent during the three weeks of the popular event.

After four staff members of the Belgian team Lotto-Soudal were sent home following abnormal coronavirus tests on the eve of the Tour, the race has been run without any further COVID-19-related incidents.

But keeping the social distancing with the roadside crowds in place has not been an easy task. During Saturday's first stage in the Pyrenees mountains, many spectators without masks did not respect the two-meter distance required by organizers as they cheered their favorite riders.

Although test results are not expected to be unveiled before today, teams will soon find out whether the virus has contaminated the race bubble.

"It would really be a shame to see a rider excluded from the Tour de France because he has been cheered on by not attentive enough fans," Cofidis team manager Cedric Vasseur said.

The next round of testing could indeed throw the race into turmoil. Anyone who tests positive will have to leave the race and any team with more than two

positive tests — either rider or staff — within seven days will be thrown out.

To avoid false positive results that could rule healthy riders out of contention, Tour organizers have said they will try to perform a retest and a blood analysis as quickly as possible. They have set up a mobile coronavirus lab that can produce results in two hours.

Following Sunday's final stage in the Pyrenees, where Primoz Roglic of Slovenia seized the race leader's yellow jersey, the 22 Tour teams have traveled by bus to the western Charente region. The race resumes today with a flat stage linking two islands, the Ile d'Ole-ron and the Ile de Re.

Roglic leads defending champion Egan Bernal by 21 seconds with Frenchman Guillaume Martin in third place, 28 seconds off the pace. **AP**

FOOTBALL

Fati becomes youngest Spain scorer in win over Ukraine

SPAIN 4, UKRAINE 0

TEEENAGER Ansu Fati became the youngest player to score for Spain in a 4-0 win against Ukraine in the Nations League yesterday [Macau time].

Fati scored Spain's third goal from outside the area in the 32nd minute to become the country's youngest scorer at the age of 17 years, 311 days. The previous record was held by Juan Errazquin, who scored for Spain in 1925 at 18 years, 344 days.

Fati started his strong performance by dribbling past Oleksandr Tymchyk before he was tripped by Serhiy Kryvtsov in the area. That set up Sergio Ramos to go to the penalty spot in the third minute and score his first of two goals.

Spain coach Luis Enrique said he had rarely seen the level of confidence that Barcelona forward

Fati has displayed with the national team since his debut on Thursday against Germany.

"It is not normal," Luis Enrique said. "At his age it is very easy for the hype to get to you, but Ansu is mature enough to stay on the path that he is following. He is level-headed and with his feet on the ground."

Ramos got his second with a header in the 29th, netting his 23rd international goal to move level with Alfredo Di Stéfano as Spain's eighth all-time leading scorer.

New Manchester City signing Ferran Torres capped the win with a goal in the 84th after coming on as a substitute.

Spain leads its Nations League group with four points after Germany drew 1-1 with Switzerland. Ukraine has three points, Germany two and Switzerland one in Group 4 of League A. **AP**



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OPINION

Our Desk

Lynzy Valles



ON THE CONTINUOUS DISMAY OF THE VULNERABLE GROUPS

Groups of migrant workers' associations have expressed dismay over the newly approved employment agency bill, as the Times reported yesterday.

These groups are the associations – representing a significant number of the community – that have long been submitting petition letters to government agencies including the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL).

Speaking to one of the presidents of one such association, I could sense her dismay towards the decision of the Legislative Assembly. She heavily emphasized that their most important concerns were not heard.

The United Nations' International Labour Organization stipulates that no agency fee should be collected from workers, as cited in its Convention 181 on Private Employment Agencies, the Convention 189 Decent Work for Domestic Workers, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of Their Families (1990).

Yet, since the Macau SAR is not a part of the organization, these conventions do not apply to Macau.

The newly amended bill which comes into effect in March next year was revised, I believe, in a bid to protect both employees and employers.

However, it seemed that the disappointment really came about not just because workers will still have to pay no more than 50% of the monthly income (as stipulated in the new law), but by how officials have refused to really listen and acknowledge their petitions.

I reckon the reason for them submitting a petition letter stating their seven key suggestions for the amendment of the agency bill was because current non-resident workers will also be affected by the bill but were not included in the public consultation.

Several groups of migrant workers gathered last year at DSAL, calling for a review of policies on domestic workers, including an outdated housing allowance, and requesting a review of the minimum wage proposal.

The gathering was the first time that Filipino and Indonesian migrant groups organized a meeting with an official government department – which took the some four months to finalize. With the preparations taking place over a period of 12 months, the group was still dissatisfied with the meeting.

Why? Probably because they never received concrete answers regarding significant concerns that largely matter and affect them – particularly domestic workers and non-skilled workers (Although in the city, getting official concrete answers – especially regarding these matters – would really take a while.)

One of the concerns in this meeting was setting a minimum wage for domestic helpers – an issue that up to now, is unsolved.

DSAL has only informed them that they could not set a minimum wage yet as they follow a certain market level for each industry and employer, given the wide range of salaries.

I would not even want to comment further on the salary issues of many domestic helpers in the city as it is still considered normal in the society for one to receive as little as 3,500 patacas monthly.

Anyway, this piece is mainly about how it has become so normal to overlook these members of society. It has become so normal that hearing stories of agencies requiring 18,000 patacas for placement fees is nothing new.

The vulnerable groups, particularly domestic helpers and those in low-paying jobs, have zero to little voice in the city. Therefore, many of them have joined associations to be seen and be part of the community.

However, the migrant associations that are supposed to be representing them and raising the concerns of the community to the government, are also being overlooked - judging from the outcome of the number of petitions they have submitted.

HOSPITAL: RUSSIA'S ALEXEI NAVALNY OUT OF COMA, IS RESPONSIVE

THE BUZZ

Poisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's condition has improved, allowing doctors to take him out of an induced coma, the German hospital treating him said yesterday.

Navalny, a fierce, high-profile critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin, was flown to Germany last month after falling ill on Aug. 20 on a domestic flight in Russia. German chemical weapons experts say tests show the 44-year-old was poisoned with a Soviet-era nerve agent, prompting the German government last week to demand that Russia investigate the case.

"The patient has been removed from his medically induced coma and is being weaned off mechanical ventilation," Berlin's Charite hospital said in a statement. "He is responding to verbal stimuli. It remains too early to gauge the potential long-term effects of his severe poisoning."

It added that the decision to publicly release details of his condition was made in consultation with Navalny's wife.

Navalny had been in an induced coma in the Berlin hospital since he was flown to Germany on Aug. 22 for treatment.

FORUM MACAO

SECRETARY-GENERAL XU YINGZHEN LEAVES POST



STAFF REPORTER

The Secretary-General of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Forum Macao), Xu Yingzhen, is leaving her position this week, the Times has learned from diplomatic sources who were part of the internal farewell party yesterday.

During the event, which lasted for over two hours, delegates and high-ranking colleagues from the eight Portuguese-speaking countries and China addressed Xu with mostly impromptu farewell speeches "which consisted basically of personal messages reflecting the working relationship of each delegate or colleague with Ms Xu," the source said.

Upon her departure following four years at the helm of the institution which promotes the economic and cultural exchanges between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries, Deputy-Secretary-General Ding Tian will provisionally take over the position. In January 2017, he was the first deputy secretary-general ever appointed by China.

Rodrigo Brum, chosen by the Lusophone countries, and Casimiro Pinto (Macau) are the other deputies.

The term of each secretary-general is not officially stipulated. According to the secretariat of the secretary-general, the term is determined at the discretion of the Central People's Government in Beijing.

The rotation of the representatives and members from the eight countries, due this summer, was postponed sine die because of the pandemic situation that prevents foreigners from entering Macau.

Xu assumed her position at Forum Macao on August 12, 2016.

The rotation of the representatives due this summer was postponed because of the pandemic that prevents foreigners from entering Macau

Before taking over the post in the Special Administrative Region, Xu served as Commercial Counselor of the Department of American and Oceanian Affairs of the Ministry of Commerce of China (equivalent to Director-General level) for several years.

Possessing a strong background in international trading and commercial activities and practices, the outgoing Secretary-General also has extensive experience in foreign affairs and a good knowledge of the markets of Portuguese-speaking countries.

Even before taking up her position at the Chinese-Lusophone countries platform, she provided support to the Forum by working with the organization of the Ministerial Conferences of Forum Macao.

Xu had also paid several courtesy visits to the former Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, the then-consular representatives of Portuguese-speaking Countries in Macau, and various services and entities of the Macau Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government.

In an earlier interview, Xu pointed out that the Permanent

Secretariat sought to work hand in hand with Portuguese-speaking countries, uphold the concept of "uniting efforts towards cooperation, jointly building the platform, sharing the benefits of development", and actively participating in China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Australia has struck supply and production agreements with pharmaceutical companies worth \$1.2 billion over two potential COVID-19 vaccines. Britain's University of Oxford in collaboration with AstraZeneca and Australia's University of Queensland working with CSL will provide more than 84.8 million vaccine doses for Australia's 26 million people, almost entirely manufactured in Melbourne, a government statement said. Australians would have access to 3.8 million doses of the vaccine in January and February, PM Scott Morrison said.

USA Rescuers in military helicopters airlifted 207 people to safety over the weekend after an explosive wildfire trapped them in a popular camping area in California's Sierra National Forest, one of dozens of fires burning amid record-breaking temperatures that strained the state's electrical grid and for a time threatened power outages for millions.



UK WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange appeared in a London court yesterday to fight a U.S. extradition request, at a high-stakes hearing that was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic. Assange, who has spent almost a year and a half in a British prison, sat in the dock at the Old Bailey criminal court and formally refused the U.S. demand he be extradited to face trial on espionage charges. More on macaudailytimes.com



Belarus A leading opposition activist and two other members of an opposition council went missing yesterday, raising fears they were detained as authorities seek to squelch nearly a month of protests. Maria Kolesnikova (pictured), a member of the Coordination Council created by the opposition to facilitate talks with President Lukashenko on a transition of power, was reportedly put on a minibus in Minsk, and driven away by unidentified people.