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TWO-THIRDS OF LOCAL WORKERS SURVEYED BY THE MACAU FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS SAID THEY HAVE NOT FACED SALARY CUTS DURING COVID-19 P2

HK CRITICS SAY THIRD ROUND OF VIRUS RELIEF STIMULUS STILL NOT ENOUGH P6

BEIJING SENT 18 PLANES OVER THE TAIWAN STRAIT IN AN UNUSUALLY LARGE SHOW OF FORCE AS A US ENVOY VISITED THE ISLAND P7

Japan Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said he has visited a shrine viewed by China and both Korea as a symbol of wartime aggression. Abe's visit Saturday to Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, which he announced in a tweet, comes days after his resignation. It was his first visit in nearly seven years.



Hong Kong Cannabis may be illegal in Hong Kong, but a new cafe is offering a range of food and drinks that contain parts of the cannabis plant without breaking any local laws. The cafe, named Found, is the city's first to offer a range of coffees, biscuits, beer and fruit juices that contain cannabidiol, or CBD, a substance from the cannabis plant that is said to offer therapeutic effects without getting users intoxicated.

Thailand Anti-government demonstrators occupying a historic field in the Thai capital yesterday installed a plaque symbolizing the country's transition to democracy to replace the original one that was mysteriously ripped out and stolen three years ago, as they vowed to press on with calls for new elections and reform of the monarchy. The mass student-led rally was the largest in a series of protests this year.



Cambodia Seven people died in a lightning strike, which struck a wooden stilt house under which people were eating in the country's northwestern Battambang province last week. The dead included a family of four and three other relatives, said Keo Vy, the spokesperson for the National Committee for Disaster Management.

More on backpage



Chinese racer He Zijian who made a splash at the Chinese F4 season opener in Zhuhai

MACAU'S NEW GP SERIES KICKSTARTS IN ZHUHAI

INFLUENZA CLUSTERS

Some 33 children across five schools have got the flu, just weeks into the new school year



P3



GREEN SPACE TO SHRINK OVER NEXT 20 YEARS, ADMITS GOV'T ADVISORS

P3

SURVEY FINDS THAT 10% OF MACAU PEOPLE HAVE SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

A recent survey conducted by the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) found that 40% of respondents suffered from varying degrees of depression, while 10% of respondents had suicidal thoughts. USJ conducted an on-the-street questionnaire, interviewing 931 people and analyzing 466 of the responses. Professor Angus Kuok, head of USJ's Department of Psychology, described the findings in Macau as "not severe" when compared with global and regional conditions. However, Kuok noted that local people are not aware of psychological symptoms such as exhaustion, dietary disorders or body weight fluctuations present for two consecutive weeks. He pointed out that over 52% of the respondents did not know how to seek professional help when psychological conditions arose.

CIVIL SERVANTS GROUP AND BOC DISCUSS E-FINANCE DEVELOPMENT

The Professional Civil Servants Association of Macau and the Bank of China, Macau Branch recently held an exchange session to discuss topics such as the status quo, future trends in the local financial market and the future of e-governance. The association pointed out that both e-governance and e-finance are closely related to the public's experience of daily life. Following the popularization of smartphones, e-banking has developed swiftly, with ever-evolving functions that are indispensable to residents' lives. During the exchange session, the association sought to familiarize civil servants with electronic services as well as promote the use of e-finance.

USJ APPOINTS ZHANG SHUGUANG AS VICE-RECTOR

The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) has appointed Professor Zhang Shuguang as vice-rector for External Relations and Institutional Development, the university announced in a statement. Zhang was the rector of the City University of Macau until last month. In the statement, the USJ mentioned Zhang's two decades of experience in senior leadership positions at several universities in Macau, the U.S. and the mainland. USJ's rector Stephen Morgan noted that Zhang's "experience and energy" would bring added dimensions to the institution's pursuit to "offer a truly international education to students from Macau and the wider region."

CRIME

OUTRAGED AT BEING ASKED TO REPAY MONEY, DEBTOR IMPRISONED CREDITOR

JULIE ZHU

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) has apprehended a woman from the mainland who is suspected of imprisoning her creditor. The suspect is accused of detaining the creditor after the victim demanded the return of HKD40,000.

The Judiciary Police (PJ) reported the imprisonment case during the joint police press conference on Friday.

According to the police, both the victim and suspect are women from the mainland in their 40s.

The case was reported to the PJ in November 2019. The police authority were only able to apprehend the suspect, surnamed Ou, on September 16.

On November 15 last year, the victim met the suspect at a casino located in the Macau Peninsula. Several hours after the meeting, Ou asked the victim for an interest-free loan of HKD40,000.

The next day, the victim met Ou at the casino again and immediately asked her to pay her back.

Instead, Ou accused the victim of disrespectful behavior because of the way she had overtly pursued the debt in a public place, saying that she had made her "lose face."

Ou and several of her companions abducted the victim and

JULIE ZHU



took her to an apartment in the Macau Peninsula.

She contacted the victim's husband that evening, asking for a ransom of MOP50,000. The victim's husband contacted Ou saying that he had the money ready and demanded the trade occur face-to-face, in the presence of both Ou and the victim.

During the trade, the victim freed herself from Ou and went to the police to report the case.

After spending 10 months outside of Macau, Ou was apprehended on September 16 at the Border Gate when she was crossing

the immigration checkpoint in an attempt to enter Macau.

Upon police interrogation, Ou denied all the accusations.

Believing that there was sufficient evidence showing that Ou had committed the crime, the PJ officially charged her with depriving others' freedom of movement and handed her over to the prosecution authority.

The Public Security Police Force (PSP) also reported a case of indecent exposure at the press conference.

This time, the suspect is a male bluecard worker in his 20s

from the Philippines. On the night of September 15, the suspect boarded a bus near Pui Ching Middle school. The victim, a Macau woman in her 20s, was asleep on the bus.

Although there were several empty seats on the bus, the suspect chose to stand next to the woman. During the ride, the suspect made indecent contact with the woman's shoulder using his genitalia. The incidence of sexual harassment was witnessed by two passengers sitting behind the victim, who reported the case to the police authority.

Two-thirds of local workers report no salary cut during Covid-19

JULIE ZHU

A survey conducted by the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) has shown that nearly two-thirds of interviewed local workers have not experienced any salary cuts since the outbreak of Covid-19.

On September 17, the organization released the results of a survey based on the pandemic's effect

on the local employment issues. The FAOM began the survey in July and collected 2,173 responses, 1,533 (70.5%) of which were from currently-employed workers. These workers are mainly from the casino, hospitality, retail, wholesale and food industries.

Of the 1,533 employed workers, the survey found that 66.2% of them had the same salary before

and after the outbreak of Covid-19, and 1.3% were receiving a higher salary while working in the same role. About one-third of the 1,533 workers said that their salary was reduced or is currently suspended.

Despite the majority of respondents avoiding wage losses, many of them were still worried about salary cuts. According to the statistics,

62.7% of respondents were worried about salary reduction, with 17.1% of them "extremely worried."

Out of all the interviewees, 248 are unemployed and 93.5% are worried about their employment prospects.

The association says that the SAR government should improve the income distribution system, especially the initial dis-

tribution system.

According to employment statistics released by the Statistics and Census Service, the median earnings of employed residents remained unchanged from the previous quarter, at 20,000 patacas. The median monthly employment earnings of employed workers in the second quarter was 15,000 patacas, 1,000 patacas down quarter to quarter.

The median earnings of those in gaming and junket activities and the construction sector stood at MOP19,800 and MOP15,000, respectively.

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Five influenza clusters recorded as schools resume

OVER the past week, the Health Bureau has detected five influenza clusters at five schools, involving a total of 33 students.

The schools involved in the cluster are Santa Rosa de Lima English Secondary School in Nam Van, the Tai-pa Luso-Chinese School, the Fifth Campus of Saint Joseph Diocesan College, Kwong Tai Middle School in Patane and the Public

School of Seac Pai Van.

Of the 33 students who contracted the seasonal flu, 22 were kindergarteners and 11 were primary school students.

The first cluster was detected on September 14 at Seac Pai Van. Three students had been experiencing symptoms of fever, cough and runny nose since the day before.

The second was recorded

on September 17 at Patane, with 11 primary school children aged between 6 and 8 developing similar symptoms the previous day. One of the 11 students is a cross-border student.

The remaining three clusters were all recorded on September 18. All 19 of these students reside in Macau.

None of the students experienced severe symptoms, nor did they require

hospitalization.

With regard to prevention measures, the health authority is reminding the public to receive the flu vaccine and get enough sleep, physical exercise and maintain balanced diets. They should also observe hygiene measures, maintain ventilation, wear masks, cover their nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, and seek medical assistance when symptoms develop.

The Health Bureau did not explain how the flu infections had occurred when people are observing Covid-19 preventive measures. **AL**

SCHOOLS CAN START USING SMART CAMPUS PLATFORM THIS WEEK

STARTING from as early as this week, local schools may start using the Smart Campus platform, recently commissioned by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ).

The Smart Campus platform is designed to provide educational resources to both students and parents. The platform will provide study materials and information for parents from

the school.

According to Wong Kin Mou, head of the DSEJ Department of Education Research and Resources, a total of 120 local schools and more than 400 students have already participated in training to learn how to use the platform.

However, the DSEJ clarified that no school will be obligated to use the platform. **JZ**

GREEN SPACE PER CAPITA TO SHRINK BY 2040

MACAU'S green space is expected to shrink by more than one-quarter in the next 20 years, according to a recent forecast revealed at a consultation session on the Master Urban Plan, attended by several government advisory entities, such as the Municipal Affairs Advisory Committee.

The forecast showed that the city's green area would shrink from 16.7 square meters per capita in 2015 to 12 square meters per capita by 2040.

As recommended by the Master Urban Plan, in 2040 the city will use 26% of its land for greenery and plantations, excluding ecological reserves and countryside parks. By then, the government estimates the population will rise to 800,000 across a total area of 36.8 square kilometers. There will be 8% green or publicly open lands and 18% ecological reserves.

For the sake of comparison, the 2015 data, which was last updated in June, was

released by the Municipal Affairs Bureau and is available on one of its websites.

The consultation session attracted more than 80 people from about 20 advisory entities, with 18 registering for questions. Seventeen ended up raising questions about the Master Urban Plan.

Many of the attendees were concerned about future green space and urban ventilation. Walled buildings have become common in many large, developed cities.

However, this is not ideal for the city's ventilation, as it blocks the movement of air in and out of the city.

A member of the Cultural Affairs Advisory Committee recommended that the government turn scattered green areas on the New Urban Zone B into a mega park that resembles a country park. He also raised the concerns about the walled building phenomenon, saying that he hopes the New Urban Zones will not make the phenomenon more severe. **AL**



MACAU GOVERNMENT ORGANIZES TOURISM OUTREACH IN BEIJING

THE Macau government is rolling out a series of promotional activities to encourage tourists from Beijing to visit Macau in the months ahead.

With the pandemic stabilized in the mainland and Macau, as well as the reinstatement of travel permit issuance for mainland residents to the city, the Macau tourism board is organizing "Beijing Macao Week" in the capital.

As part of the activities, a mega roadshow will be staged along Wangfujing Street in Beijing from September 26 to 29 to showcase Macau's diverse travel experiences to Beijing residents.

To create lively vibes in advance, the organizer has already set up an Outdoor Café themed as "Gathering at Dusk in Senado Square - in Beijing" at Wangfujing, welcoming locals for a taste of Macau's authentic deli-

ciacies.

Meanwhile, to further enhance cooperation between Beijing and Macao, the Macau Government Tourism Office and the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute will ride on the visit to co-organize a "Beijing - Macao tourism and MICE presentation" in Beijing on September 27 to facilitate exchange among industry delegates from both cities and explore the development of tourism.

The MGTO stressed that, during the Beijing Macao Week, the units involved will rigorously follow the Covid-19 prevention and control guidelines issued by the health authorities of Beijing. Proper event arrangements will be carried out to support pandemic prevention while all participants must adhere to the arrangements for pandemic prevention. **DB**

ADVISOR WANTS LOCALS INVOLVED IN CENTRAL LIBRARY DESIGN

URBAN Planning Committee member Chan Choi I has urged the Macau government to allow locals to participate in the design of the new Central Library, according to a report by public broadcaster TDM.

Chan endorsed the government's decision

to build the future Central Library on the land plot of the Hotel Estoril. She believed the project would be cheaper, more feasible, functional and flexible.

However, Choi disagreed with the fact that the local government had invited four companies,

none of which were local companies, to participate in the design process.

Choi said that local teams should have been given the chance to participate in the project in order to learn from others' international experience and to ensure that the library would be suitable

for the use of locals.

Like Choi, the local architecture industry is also dissatisfied with the exclusion of Macau designers from the new Central Library project.

Last week, lawmaker Au Kam San urged the government not to force foreign design contractors to hire local architects, which he says could impact the quality of the new Central Library project. **JZ**

ANIMA JOINS INT'L ALLIANCE TO STOP DOG-RACING IN PORTUGAL

RENATO MARQUES

LOCAL animal welfare association Anima Macau has joined forces with the Portuguese League for Animal Rights (LPDA), Pet Levrieri and GREY2K to organize a worldwide campaign aimed at stopping dog-racing events in Portugal.

The animal welfare or-

ganizations have so far gathered the support of 80 organizations from all over the world, according to Anima. Around 35,000 supporters have signed a petition to protect greyhounds by stopping races.

The group also wrote letters to Portuguese officials, namely Prime Minister António Costa and Pre-

sident of the Portuguese Republic Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, calling on them to mediate with Portuguese Parliamentary Groups in order to pass legislation that prohibits dog racing in the country.

Despite Article 13 of the Treaty of Lisbon, which states that non-human animals are sentient beings, the alliance claims that

the dog-racing industry has been allowed to establish itself. Dog-racing is now "a systematic activity with economic interests at its core," the group says in a letter to Costa, to which the Times had access.

The alliance urges government authorities to take action against the practice of "using, abusing and discarding" greyhounds and Portuguese Galgos, which have been used for betting and are kept in "cruel" conditions, according to the activists.

**CONSUMER COUNCIL
REVIEWS BISCUIT LABELS**

The latest issue of Consumer Report features a comparison report on the nutrition facts of biscuits, with analysis into samples that contained high contents of fat, sugar and sodium. The current report compares a total of 84 samples of eight kinds of biscuits to check their contents. According to the Consumer Council, the "low sugar, low fat, low sodium and high fiber" is the most popular diet today in Macau. However, the current comparison shows that most of the biscuit samples do not meet the "3 Low 1 High" requirements. It advises consumers to refer to the recommended daily intake of nutrients as indicated by the World Health Organization.

**CONSUMER PRICES
MOSTLY UNCHANGED
IN AUGUST**

The Composite Consumer Price Index for August 2020 was mostly unchanged from a year earlier at 102.21, according to the latest data released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). Among the various sections of goods and services, the price indexes of education and health went up by 5.15% and 3.72% year-on-year respectively, whereas the index of recreation and culture fell markedly by 12.10% and the index of communication dropped 11.28%. For the 12 months ended August 2020, the average Composite CPI rose by 1.96% from the previous period (September 2018 to August 2019), with notable growth in education, health, and food and non-alcoholic beverages. The Composite CPI reflects the impact of price changes on the general households in Macau and is a key indicator of inflation.

**MPI TRANSLATION
COURSE FOR 'PRACTICAL
INTERPRETATION'
CONCLUDES**

The International Portuguese Training Centre for Conference Interpreting of the Macao Polytechnic Institute (MPI) cooperated with the Directorate General for Interpretation of the European Commission (DG-SCIC) to organize an interpretation training course from August 25 to September 4. According to a statement from MPI, this training course focused on "practical interpretation," allowing students to make improvements by understanding the difficulties encountered in actual live interpretation. In each round of the Chinese-to-Portuguese and Portuguese-to-Chinese interpreting exercises, the instructors provided feedback on the students' performance. MPI described this as "a valuable and beneficial training opportunity for all participants." The MPI Training Centre officially opened on December 5, 2019. It aims to train Portuguese teachers for Macau, the Chinese mainland and the rest of Asia, and improve the level of interpretation education.

ENGINEER ASKS GOV'T FOR MORE DATA ON LRT EAST LINE

ANTHONY LAM

DESPITE agreeing with the proposed route of the East Line of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT), veteran engineer Lei Hay Ip has asked the government to release more data on the project, such as the pros and cons of its running above or below ground level.

As announced by the government, the LRT East Line will connect the Taipa Ferry Terminal, the New Urban Zone A and the Border Gate, covering a distance of 7.65 kilometers. However, when the project was first announced and the Macao Light Rapid Transit Corporation Limited was

questioned about the budget, no detailed information was given.

The government only cited the Hong Kong MTR's Sha Tin-Central Line and the Beijing Subway's Line 3 as reference points. The former cost HKD4 billion per kilometer and the latter about HKD1.5 billion.

Lei was not convinced by the government's examples, saying that the four-fold difference in the two non-local projects provides the general public with no base for comparison.

He also pointed out that global warming is expected to cause more severe tropical cyclones and rainstorms, making flooding a growing problem. The average

height above sea level of Zone A is about 4.8 meters, Lei said, compared to 5.8 meters at the border checkpoint land plot of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

This means that, as per the current plans for an underground LRT East Line, the risk of flooding at Zone A and LRT stations may be high.

Flooding in underground subway stations is not unprecedented. It has happened in many places including Beijing, Hong Kong, New York City and London. Macau's coastal land is generally low-lying.

At a recent consultation session, the LRT Corp. explained that a flyover route was not suitable

for the East Line due to the height clearance of the sea-crossing bridge and the height-climbing ability of railway cars.

Furthermore, the LRT owner explained that running underground would enable the East Rail to operate despite severe weather conditions, which is preferable for the populous northern district.

That said, the East Line will not run along the planned Fourth Macau-Taipa passage, which will be a bridge with four lanes going in both directions, with one reserved for motorbikes.

In addition, the new bridge lies along a flight path and waterway, so it cannot be too high or too low.

CCAC discovers red flags in Viva Macau case

DANIEL BEITLER

THE Commission Against Corruption has found that no members of Industrial and Commercial Development Fund (FDIC), which granted five loans to failed airline Viva Macau in 2008 and 2009, "intentionally violated the criminal law." However, the anti-graft authority flagged serious irregularities concerning the vetting and approval of the loan applications.

Between 2008 and 2009, the FDIC approved five loans to the now-defunct carrier worth a combined 212 million patacas. The airline declared bankruptcy in 2010.

Then, in 2018, the loans made by the FDIC were deemed irrecoverable, leading to an official investigation into possible malpractice at the Fund.

The CCAC investigation was based on information transferred by the FDIC in July 2018. The anti-graft authority conducted an inquiry to review the loan processes from the perspectives of criminal illegality, administrative illegality and disciplinary liability.

In its conclusion report, the CCAC said that the Fund "neither strictly required the completeness of the application documents nor carefully scrutinized the applicant's repayment capacity. Also, there was lack of prudence in the requirement for and supervision of the guarantee for repayment."

It holds the "public

servants responsible for the vetting and approval, the follow-up on and the supervision of the loan applications by Viva Macau" and finds that they "failed in their duties."

However, it stressed that nobody who was investigated from the fund "intentionally violated the criminal law." Rather, the case may provide the impetus for legislative improvement, the Commission said.

In reviewing the case documents, the CCAC found that the documents of Viva Macau were disorganized and the bank transaction and accounting information was fragmentary. There were only unaudited financial reports among the accounting records. The controlling shareholder, Eagle Airways Holdings Limited, used promissory notes as guarantees, but the competent authorities had never carefully scrutinized its repayment ability. Neither had the financial status of Viva Macau been checked or followed up.

While Viva Macau had never fulfilled any of the loan repayment agreements, it repeatedly requested to extend the repayment periods and used part of the financial aids to repay the loans earlier provided by its executive members in their own names instead of using them directly for the purpose of improving the operation as required by the agreement signed with the FDIC. The company even failed to sub-

mit the loan spending report in time as required by the agreement.

These violations of loan agreement may have constituted relevant civil contractual liabilities.

According to the CCAC conclusions, "it seems that such negligent attitude

of the members of the Administrative Council of the FDIC was of little avail to the uncooperativeness of Viva Macau, placing the Public Administration in a passive position in the entire incident."

The CCAC considers that, regarding the acts

carried out by the relevant authorities and personnel, there are some issues that deserve review and reflection in terms of administrative illegality, administrative irregularity and even concerning the need for legislative improvement.

AD

澳門國際機場專營股份有限公司
CAM - Soc. do Aeroporto Internacional de Macau S.A.R.L.
Macao International Airport Co. Ltd.

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3. Request for Tender Document:	i) Written request addressed to the details as follows. On company letterhead stating the company name and respective contact details. Deadline for request is <u>at 13:00 on 24 Sep 2020</u> . ii) In person at the location identified as follows. CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Macao International Airport Supply Service E&M Building 1 st Floor, Office 41044 Taipa, Macau Attention: Head of Supply Service For any enquiry regarding the Tender Procedure, please reach our Airport Operations Department – Supply Service at (853) 88982358.
4. Location for Submission of Proposals:	CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Av. De Wai Long CAM Office Building, 4 th Floor Reception Taipa, Macau Attention: Mr. Chu Tan Neng – Executive Director
5. Tender closing time and date:	<u>At 18:00 on 21 Oct 2020</u> (Macau Local Time)

CAM reserves the right to reject any Proposal in whole or in part without stating any reason.

Chinese F4 championship Zhuhai rounds start before Macau GP

RENATO MARQUES

THE first rounds of the formula car racing championship that is coming to Macau this year in lieu of the normal Formula 3 race were held last weekend in Zhuhai.

The 2020 Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) F4 Chinese Championship kicked off with the first of two quadruple-rounds taking place at Zhuhai International Circuit (ZIC).

The competition this year is an unexpected highlight, since the last two rounds of the championship will be held in the streets of Macau during the Macau Grand Prix in November.

The F4 races are replacing the "queen" of Macau races, the Formula 3 race, which has been held in Macau since 1983. That year, future Formula 1 legend Ayrton Senna da Silva won the first-ever F3 race that was held in Macau.

The eventful weekend had a field of just 15 racers, mostly composed of inexperienced dri-



Li Sicheng (left) and Bei Siling

vers who were attempting to gain practice driving small formula cars. This will be essential when the group races on the challenging Guia Circuit.

Amidst the challenging weather conditions, which ranged from dry track to heavy rainfall, the four races held on Saturday and Sunday crowned three different winners. The results confirmed Grid Motorsports racer Bei Siling and Leo

Gecke's Li Sicheng as favorites, as well as the experienced He Zijian (Smart Life) and Stephen Hong (FFA Racing).

The drivers' lack of experience significantly contributed to a number of incidents that occurred during the first weekend of the Chinese F4. Consequently, race organizers handed out many penalties.

Racer He was able to secure

his first win of the season in the first race of the weekend. The race was won at the flag by Black Arts Racing's Oscar Gao, but Gao was given a 30-second penalty after running Hong, who was in the lead at the time, into the pit wall. This move ended Hong's race, fortunately without any physical injuries.

Race 2 was severely hampered by the weather conditions. Following a rainstorm, the water

on the track caused many of the drivers to make mistakes or fall into traps. The race was transformed into a parade of cars, which were lined up behind the safety car for most of the race due to several accidents and the removal of the cars involved from the runoff areas.

The race eventually finished behind the safety car without much competition. Victory smiled upon Bei, followed by He and Li.

Yesterday, the sun returned to the skies of Zhuhai. Race 3 and 4 presented drivers and cars with a better opportunity to be put to the test and to put on a show.

Starting from pole position, He took the lead, followed by Li and Bei, positions that remained unchanged until the checkered flag.

In the last race of the weekend, the top four drivers continued to assert their dominance and disputed their positions heavily at times. Several clashes and dangerous maneuvers were performed to try to defend their positions, leading to Li being eventually disqualified from the race. It was won at the flag by Hong, followed by He and Gao.

The next quadruple-round and the last before Macau will be staged at ZIC again on October 7 and 8. The season finale rounds in Macau are being reduced to just two, but points will be worth double in each.

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HONG Kong's government is drawing fresh criticism from economists and business advocates who say a third round of virus relief stimulus doesn't go far enough.

While Chief Executive Carrie Lam's latest spending plan will draw from the city's fiscal reserve of HKD976.6 billion (\$126 billion) in July, that cash pile is still seen by economists as large enough to support still more stimulus.

The urgency for more fiscal support was underscored last week by data showing Hong Kong's unemployment rate sitting at 6.1% in August, with joblessness continuing to rise in the hard-hit consumption and tourism sectors. Underemployment also increased, to 3.8% from 3.5% in the earlier period. Yet the latest signals from Lam's administration, including the comparatively small round of virus relief announced this week, suggest a reluctance to further deplete Hong Kong's war chest.

"Stimulus has been smaller than expected so far," said Alicia Garcia Herrera, chief economist for Asia Pacific with Natixis SA. "More - and more clever stimulus - is needed."

Hong Kong faces a parti-

HONG KONG URGED TO BOOST STIMULUS USING FISCAL WAR CHEST

AP PHOTO



Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam

cularly difficult road to recovery after a year of political unrest and more than seven months of coping with the coronavirus outbreak. It's posted quarterly economic contractions of as deep as

9% so far this year, with restrictions to combat the virus, the U.S.-China trade fight and political tensions all weighing on its status as a global financial hub.

The HKD24 billion pa-

ckage Lam just announced, a fraction of the previous rounds, underscores the tricky balancing act governments are attempting as the pandemic drags on, as they try to provide badly needed relief for residents and businesses while trying not to significantly worsen public finances.

"The size of the latest package is relatively small, and only less than half of it goes to supporting employment and businesses," said Tommy Wu, senior economist with Oxford Economics in Hong Kong. "As many households and businesses are still under immense pressure, it is not the time for the government to worry about drawing down the fiscal reserves to support the economy."

The latest stimulus pushes relief spending to more than HKD310 billion this year. Lam in August described Hong Kong's public finances as "in a severe situation," adding she would be offering few measures in her Oct. 14 policy address that would draw on public coffers.

The Hong Kong economy, which contracted 1.2% last year, is expected to shrink by a record 6.9% this year, according to an economists' survey by Bloomberg conducted in the first week of September.

"This round of stimulus is much narrower than the last round. It's complete-

ly insufficient to cover our pains," said Yiu Si-wing, a Hong Kong lawmaker representing the tourism industry, which has been decimated by the virus.

The government can dip into the debt market to mitigate its budget deficit, as it did in the most recent fiscal year when it generated a net HKD7.8 billion by issuing green bonds. That helped lower the deficit to HKD10.6 billion, according to March 31 financial results.

While government revenue is also down so far this fiscal year, to about HKD106 billion from HKD135 billion a year ago, the government's assertion that Hong Kong will retain its competitive advantages as a financial hub suggests that weakness is temporary, Garcia Herrera said.

"This means that additional stimulus should be pursued to smoothen the cycle," she said. "Carrie Lam should stick to her beliefs of a strong Hong Kong and thus conduct a major stimulus. She should have more than enough room."

Aries Wong, a lecturer at Hong Kong Baptist University's School of Business, said the government's ability to spark a recovery through stimulus is limited and the measures are more to keep the economy afloat.

"Hong Kong is a small open economy, so don't expect any fiscal stimulus to have a great effect on our

economy," he said. "We do not know how many rounds of relief measures we still need and we have not put aside anything for the aging population."

The fiscal reserve is also key to supporting Hong Kong's credit rating, Wong said. Both Moody's Investors Service and Fitch Ratings have slashed the city's rating this year amid the pandemic and unrest. Hong Kong officials have faced criticism for their handling of the stimulus so far, amid long waits for checks and the fact that some wealthy residents also qualified for the money.

Meanwhile, the government's signature stimulus program, a HKD10,000 handout to residents announced in the February budget, has been criticized for delays - as the checks first went out in July.

"We understand the financial hardship that many people are going through" yet resources are finite, Financial Secretary Paul Chan said Tuesday when asked whether there would be further cash handouts for residents. "A more targeted approach is more appropriate in the current circumstances."

Chan forecasts the reserve will drop to about HKD800 billion by the end of the fiscal year, with the budget deficit ballooning to a record of more than HKD300 billion. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

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In this photo released by the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu poses for a selfie with U.S. Under Secretary of State Keith Krach

China flies 18 warplanes near Taiwan during US envoy's visit

HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

CHINA'S military sent 18 planes including fighter jets over the Taiwan Strait in an unusually large show of force Friday as a U.S. envoy held a day of closed-door meetings on the self-governing island claimed by China.

Under Secretary of State Keith Krach, who handles the economic growth, energy and the environment portfolio, held talks with Taiwan's minister of economic affairs and vice premier. He also met with business leaders over lunch and was to dine with President Tsai Ing-wen later Friday.

In response to Krach's visit, the Eastern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army held combat exercises near the Taiwan Strait, in at least the second round of war games this month aimed at intimidating supporters of the island's independent identity.

Taiwan's defense ministry said two bombers and 16 fighter jets from China crossed into Taiwan's air defense identification zone. It said it scrambled jets in response and monitored the movements of the Chinese planes.

Chinese defense ministry spokesperson Ren Guoqiang called the drills a "legitimate and necessary action taken in response to the current situation across the Taiwan Straits to safeguard national sovereignty

and territorial integrity."

"Recently, the U.S. and [Taiwan's ruling] Democratic Progressive Party authorities have stepped up their collusion and frequently stir up troubles," Ren told reporters Friday morning. "Whether it is using Taiwan to contain China or relying on foreign powers to threaten others, it is wishful thinking and is destined to be a dead end."

In a brief message on its microblog, the Eastern Theater Command said the exercises involved naval and air force units in the Taiwan Strait aimed at gauging their ability to carry out joint operations.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also defended the move. Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said China has the "firm will, full confidence and sufficient ability to thwart all external interference and separatist actions by Taiwan independence forces."

Beijing views Taiwan as part of its own territory and strongly opposes any type of formal interaction between other countries and the self-ruled island democracy.

Krach's trip follows a visit in August by U.S. Health Secretary Alex Azar, the highest-level U.S. Cabinet official to visit since the U.S. switched formal relations from Taiwan to China in 1979.

It is one of a series of moves by the Trump administration to strengthen relations with Taiwan, including stepped-up

arms sales and support for the island's participation in international forums.

Before Krach's arrival, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Kelly Craft, had lunch Wednesday with Taiwan's top official in New York, in a meeting she called historic.

On Saturday, the last day of his visit, Krach will also attend a memorial service for former President Lee Teng-hui, who led the island's transition to democracy and died at age 97 in July.

Analysts say the Chinese military response is a clear message to the U.S. to stop what it is doing, since the Chinese side took similar actions when the U.S. health secretary visited in August.

"I think the Chinese are using this tool to try and stop the kind-of diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan. It's very clear from them," said Alfred Wu, associate professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore.

Tensions between Washington and Beijing have already reached high levels as the governments spar over the coronavirus pandemic, trade, technology, Hong Kong and the South China Sea.

The frequency of Chinese exercises near Taiwan recalls the last major crisis between them in 1995-96, when China fired missiles near the island and held war games in a bid to intimidate voters in Taiwan's

first direct presidential election. Those actions were largely seen to have backfired.

Taiwan said Chinese warplanes entered its airspace over two days last week during large-scale war games that it called a "serious provocation to Taiwan and a grave threat to regional peace and stability."

Such actions by the Chinese military threaten the entire region, it said, calling on the international community to respond.

China has increasingly relied on military threats and diplomatic isolation to pressure Taiwan. That follows the apparent failure of its efforts to win over the island's 23 million people to the prospect of political unification under the "one country, two systems" framework used in Hong Kong, with a large majority of Taiwanese favoring maintaining the status quo of de facto independence.

Despite of the frequency of the exercises, analysts said it does not mean imminent war.

"The signal from Beijing is very, very clear, but does that mean a prelude to war? No, far from it," said Chong-Pin Lin, a former deputy defense minister in Taiwan.

China cut contacts with Taiwan's government following Tsai's 2016 election. She was reelected by a large margin this year and her Democratic Progressive Party maintained its majority in the legislature. AP

CHINA DENIES ITS UNRELIABLE ENTITY LIST TARGETS US COMPANIES

China dismissed accusations of targeting U.S. firms as it seeks to punish foreign companies that damage its national security by adding them to a "unreliable entity list," the Ministry of Commerce said in a press conference. China said it would continue to welcome foreign investors, open its economy by deepening market reforms, and that it has no intention to target any particular countries or entities. The list will comprise a small number of foreign entities that have put China's national sovereignty, security and development interests in danger, it said. Penalties will only be imposed if offenders fail to rectify their transgressions during a grace period, it added. China said it would reveal the list without specifying the timeline for the release. The new policies for punishing those on the list took effect on Saturday.

BEIJING BANS SEAFOOD FROM INDONESIAN EXPORTER AFTER VIRUS FOUND

An Indonesian seafood exporter has become the latest in a string of companies to be slapped with a ban by China after product packaging tested positive for the coronavirus. The country will halt imports of aquatic products from PT Putri Indah for a week after finding coronavirus particles on the packaging of frozen hairtail, the customs office said in statement. The company based in North Sumatra did not immediately respond to requests for comment by text and phone. Chinese authorities have been investigating imported meat, seafood, packaging and containers as a potential source of Covid-19 since June after repeatedly finding traces of the pathogen. Still, only six of more than 500,000 samples have tested positive for the coronavirus, customs said earlier this month. The country has previously banned imports of products including frozen meat, Ecuadorian shrimps and Brazilian chicken wings following positive tests.

CARMAKERS RISK FALLING BEHIND GLOBAL RIVALS, THINK TANK WARNS

China's carmakers risk falling behind global rivals because the country trails in the production of advanced components like chips and software that are crucial for modern vehicles, a prominent industry adviser warned. The government should form a comprehensive component strategy and build a platform that connects automakers with suppliers, helping local developers of advanced parts, Zhang Yongwei, vice president of China EV 100, a high-profile electric-vehicle industry think tank, said last week at a forum in Nanjing. "The supply-chain problem has to be solved," Zhang said at the industry gathering. An automobile powerhouse must have a strong supply chain of its own, he said. China has been the world's biggest vehicle market and producer for a decade, claiming about a third of the global total. But in semiconductors, China has only one company in the top 20, Zhang said. Less than 5% of automotive chips are made in the country and for some key components, carmakers rely 90% on imports, he said.

How Ginsburg's death could reshape the presidential campaign

A presidential campaign that was already tugging at the nation's most searing divides has been jolted by the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, potentially reshaping the election at a moment when some Americans were beginning to cast ballots.

For months, the contest has largely centered on President Donald Trump's handling of the coronavirus, the biggest public health crisis in a century that has badly damaged his prospects for reelection as the U.S. death toll nears 200,000 people.

But in a flash, Ginsburg's death on Friday added new weight to the election, with the potential that Trump or his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, could pick a successor who could decide abortion access, environmental regulations and the power of the presidency for a generation.

With early voting underway in five states and Election Day just over six weeks away, Democrats and Republicans were largely unified late Friday in praising Ginsburg as a leading legal thinker and advocate for women's rights. But strategists in both parties also seized on the moment to find an advantage.

Facing the prospect of losing both the White House and the Senate, some Republicans viewed the Supreme Court vacancy as one of the few avenues remaining for Trump to galvanize supporters beyond his most loyal core of supporters, particularly suburban women who have abandoned the GOP in recent years.

"It's hard to see how this doesn't help Trump politically," said veteran Republican strategist Alex Conant. "Biden wants this election to be a referendum on Trump. Now it's going to be a referendum on whoever he nominates to the Supreme Court."

Trump said Saturday he would "most likely" nominate a woman to re-



In this January 2011 file photo, then-President Barack Obama hugs Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in Washington

place Ginsburg. A female nominee could serve as a counterweight of sorts to Biden's choice of running mate, Sen. Kamala Harris, who would be the first woman to serve as vice president.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., pledged to quickly bring to a vote whomever Trump nominates. But he faces potential division within his own ranks. On Saturday, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she believes the winner of the Nov. 3 election should nominate Ginsburg's replacement. The possibility that others might take that view — Cory Gardner of Colorado as well as Collins faces a rough reelection effort — is fueling optimism among Democrats that the vacancy could drive home the significance of the election to their base.

"The implications for Senate races could be profound," said Democratic strategist Bill Burton.

"The presidential race will see some immediate churn as activists on both sides will be newly energized," he continued. "The persistent question will be whether huge protests around the Capitol and the country will inflame such vigorous energy that it leads to awful clashes."

McConnell, in a note to his GOP colleagues Friday night, urged them to "keep their powder dry" and not rush to declare a position on whether a Trump nominee should get a vote this year. He told them they should not lock themselves prematurely "into a position you may later regret."

Biden, who has already pledged to appoint the first Black woman to the Supreme Court, told reporters late Friday that "voters should pick the president and the president should pick the justice to consider."

Democrats are enraged by McConnell's pledge to move forward, especially after he blocked President Barack Obama from appointing a justice to replace Antonin Scalia nine months before the 2016 election. That decision cast a long political shadow, prompting Pete Buttigieg, the former South Bend, Indiana, mayor who mounted a spirited bid for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, to make expansion of the Supreme Court a centerpiece of his campaign. Biden rejected the idea.

Some Democrats privately concede that the Supreme Court vacancy could shift attention away from the virus, which has

been a central element of Biden's campaign.

Trump took the unprecedented step in 2016 of releasing a list of Supreme Court picks before he was elected, a move that was credited with unifying skeptical conservative voters to unite behind him. Republicans also believe that the high-profile debate over Trump's last Supreme Court pick, Brett Kavanaugh, helped the GOP retain the Senate during the 2018 midterms, when the party lost control of the House.

The president, seeking to build the same type of energy that surrounded his 2016 bid, released another list of potential Supreme Court nominees this month.

But some Democrats said the political environment is already overheated, with partisan divides over everything from wearing a mask to curbing the pandemic to addressing climate change. Ginsburg's death, they say, may not change that.

"It's already pretty ugly out there," said Megan Jones, a Democratic strategist who worked for former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. "I do not know how this does not become a fight of epic proportions." AP

this day in history

1998 CLINTON'S GRAND JURY TESTIMONY RELEASED



Bill Clinton's testimony about his relationship with a young female assistant has been released to the United States public.

The video of the American president's 17 August interview in front of the Grand Jury was taken to a television station at 0910 local time (1410 BST) and broadcast immediately by many US networks.

During the examination President Clinton was questioned by prosecutors about the exact nature of his affair with Monica Lewinsky - and whether he had previously lied under oath.

The president's defence against the accusations relied on elaborate definitions of certain words.

The interview was originally taped on the insistence of the investigating team for the benefit of a jury member who could not attend the hearing.

But members of the House of Representatives justified the release of the tape by saying the public had the right to see all the evidence of the Starr Report.

"It's not a pretty sight... But the key thing we've all got to focus on is what is the truth", said Charles Canady - a republican on the House Judicial Committee.

A visibly uncomfortable President Clinton was forced to defend previous statements about his affair with Miss Lewinsky by quibbling over the precise definition of his words.

In particular he said "sexual relations" did not to him mean "sexual intercourse" - which he denied having with the former White House intern.

Challenged later in the hearing, he argued the meaning of the smallest of words contained in one of his lawyers' statements.

"It depends upon what the meaning of the word 'is' is. If 'is' means 'is and never has been' that's one thing - if it means 'there is none', that was a completely true statement," he said.

After facing the Grand Jury, the president now awaits the verdict of the American people.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

On 9 December 1998 the House Judiciary Committee proposed four articles of impeachment against the president.

Ten days later - after a bitter debate between republicans and democrats - the House of Representatives voted to confirm the recommendation.

Bill Clinton became only the second president in American history to face such an indictment, but he refused to resign.

His trial began on 7 January 1999 and ended on 12 February when senators voted to acquit him of the impeachment charges of perjury and obstruction of justice.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Don't be afraid to confront situations concerning loved ones in order to solve any problems that may exist. Make sure that new mates live up to your high standards.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 You will have the stamina and the know how to raise your earning power. Overindulgence may cause conflicts. Jealousy may get in the way of a good relationship.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 Your dynamic, determined approach will win favors as well as a helping hand. This is a great day to spend with family. There might be a problem with a will or with an insurance policy.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Put your efforts into making changes to your domestic scene. Don't use emotional blackmail on someone you love. A lot has changed and so have you.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Do not jump to conclusions concerning your romantic partner. Don't overspend on items for your home. Don't count on getting any help from those you live with.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Spend a quiet day with the one you love. Plan some family outings. You can convince anyone of anything. You may be frustrated by the way situations are being handled in your personal life.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Don't hesitate to go ahead with any plans for entertainment. Organization will be the key to avoiding discord and family feuds. Don't let your partner start any arguments. Passion should be redirected positively.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Family outings will make you feel secure and happy. Changes could be overwhelming. Don't overextend your self in order to add luxury items to your entertainment center.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 This is a great day to beautify your living quarters or to entertain at home. You may be overreacting to a situation at hand. You've been a little down and you need a lift.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 You will attract new love interests. You will feel compelled to do some traveling. Look into projects that you feel would contribute something to your appearance.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Your home may be in an uproar and you are best to stay out of the line of fire if at all possible. Don't back down but don't ignite the situation. You can enjoy the company of others and come in contact with an ideal mate.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Refrain from overspending on entertainment or luxury items. Your domestic scene could continue to be in an uproar today. Don't hesitate to voice your ideas and opinions.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

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8				6	3			
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1		2						5
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	3			1				9

MEDIUM

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	2		8	9				
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	1	5			4		7	
5	4	6						

HARD

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				6	8	7		
1	5							
				7		5		
3						1		
4			8					

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	15	25	thundershower
Harbin	8	17	cloudy
Tianjin	19	28	cloudy
Urumqi	11	19	cloudy
Xi'an	14	18	heavy rain
Lhasa	11	23	cloudy
Chengdu	18	21	shower
Chongqing	23	27	overcast
Kunming	16	25	cloudy
Nanjing	21	24	cloudy
Shanghai	20	27	overcast
Wuhan	17	19	moderate rain
Hangzhou	20	26	overcast
Taipei	25	29	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	34	thundershower
Hong Kong	26	30	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	7	13	overcast
Frankfurt	7	23	clear
Paris	15	29	clear
London	11	25	clear
New York	10	19	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Parlor game; 6- Fast fliers; 10- Cure, in a way; 14- Redas ____; 15- Mayberry moppet; 16- Cabinet dept.; 17- Washer cycle; 18- ____ Crunch; 19- Covetousness; 20- Point in the desired direction; 21- A lawyer; 23- TKO caller; 25- Metal-bearing mineral; 26- Encourage in wrongdoing; 29- Olympic event; 32- "_____" by any other name...; 37- Compose; 38- Mower brand; 39- Hercule's creator; 40- One recording the past; 43- Arboreal lizard; 44- Fix hose; 45- Still, in poetry; 46- Judges; 47- Greek peak; 48- Samovars; 49- Dudgeon; 51- Strong desire; 53- Hand clapping; 58- Broadcaster; 62- Word that can precede bodied and seaman; 63- Above, finished; 64- Ohio, e.g.; 65- Feline line; 66- Bear up there; 67- Gossipmonger; 68- Mountain range in central Europe; 69- Discounted by; 70- Make sense;

DOWN: 1- Bugs, clunkers, and rides, e.g.; 2- Slightly; 3- Lacoste of tennis; 4- Barren place; 5- One cubic meter; 6- Caribbean dance music; 7- Petty quarrel; 8- Walk stealthily; 9- Spanish Mister; 10- Observed; 11- Actress Heche; 12- Tax; 13- Give it a shot; 22- President before Bush; 24- Plant life; 26- Sap sucker; 27- Light grayish brown; 28- Result; 30- Mentalist Geller; 31- Merchandise; 33- Knock vigorously; 34- Different; 35- Luster; 36- Merits; 38- Bodily organ; 39- Marshal; 41- Skye cap; 42- Fuel type; 47- Body of work; 48- Conjoint; 50- Fauvist painter Dufy; 52- Gut course; 53- Son of Adam and Eve; 54- Alka-Seltzer sound; 55- Sunday seats; 56- Cong. meeting; 57- Historical chapters; 59- Monetary unit of South Africa; 60- Famous last words; 61- Get as a result; 62- Drs.' group;



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- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
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- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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Buckingham, Taipa High floor & Large terrace
HK\$11,770,000 1,439 ft² 2 1/2 2 1/2

FOR RENT

Manhattan, Taipa Luxury Residence
\$19,800/mth 1,720 ft² 3 1/2 2 1/2

Rain Dance Property
 "We dance until it's SOLD!"

One Central 2 Bedroom Views Over Nam Van Lake
HK\$11,580,000 1,269 ft² 2 1/2 2 1/2

FOR SALE/ RENT

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

[Macau] One Oasis modern studio 2 1/2 1 1/2
 691 ft² **\$6,357,000** (ref: n/a)

[Taipa] Va Fat 2 1/2 1 1/2
 950 ft² **\$9,900/mth** (ref: 20081003)

[Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1/2 1 1/2
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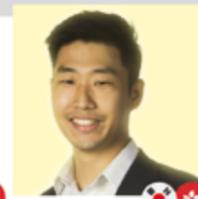
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Property of the Week



Buckingham, Taipa High floor & Large terrace
HK\$11,770,000 1,439 ft² 2 2

Fully furnished 2 Bedroom high floor apartment in The Buckingham, Taipa. Beautifully decorated with a large terrace and great views. 2 Bathrooms, 1 en-suite, and an open-plan kitchen. Convenient location in Taipa with quick access to restaurants, supermarkets and the Cotai Strip. Club Facility available, pool and gym, dining room, garden. High quality development and finish.

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Rain Dance Property "We dance until it's SOLD!"



One Central, Macau
View over Nam Van Lake
\$11,580,000
1,269 ft² 2 2



SCAN ME

Property Hotlist



Hellene Garden Carpark, Coloane
\$750,000
1



SCAN ME



Manhattan, Taipa
Luxury Residence
\$19,800/mth
1,720 ft²
3 2



SCAN ME



Traditional Apartment
Old Taipa Village
\$9,900/mth
600 ft²
2 1



SCAN ME

More Listings

For Sale

- [Macau] Apartment w/ balcony 2 1 840 ft² **\$4,580,000** (ref: 20016003)
- [Coloane] One Oasis modern studio 1 691 ft² **\$6,357,000** (ref: n/a)
- [Macau] Seaview Garden 3 2 1,420 ft² **\$10,900,000** (ref: 20016004)
- [Coloane] Large 3/4 bedroom 2 3 2,530 ft² **\$12,980,000** (ref: 19096000)
- [Cotai] One Grantai 4 2 2,556 ft² **\$25,600,000** (ref: 19096001)

For Rent

- [Taipa] Studio apartment 1 1 650 ft² **\$9,000/mth** (ref: 20061003)
- [Taipa] Va Fat 2 1 950 ft² **\$9,900/mth** (ref: 20081003)
- [Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1 710 ft² **\$16,500/mth** (ref: 20021002)
- [Macau] One Central 2 2 1,269 ft² **\$25,000/mth** (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Great View Apartment 4 2 2,060 ft² **\$28,000/mth** (ref: 20031001)

Recent Movements

Sold

Va Fat, Taipa,
2 bed 1 bath

Rented

One Oasis, Coloane,
2 bed, 1 bath



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Cradle of Hope



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NFL

Raiders ready for big opening act on Las Vegas Strip

THE Death Star comes alive for the first time Monday night in a prime-time debut that just a few years ago would have been unimaginable.

The NFL in Sin City. Even the bookies in this gambling city would never have bet on this happening.

It took a seismic shift in philosophy from a league that once feared sports betting more than anything. It also took a leap of faith by the Raiders — along with \$750 million in taxpayer money — to embrace a city that seems to fit perfectly with the culture of the Silver and Black fan base.

The gamble pays off Monday night when the Raiders meet the New Orleans Saints in the opening game of the glittering \$2 billion stadium that Raiders owner Mark Davis dubbed the Death Star. They'll do it in a spectacular new home that looms over the Las Vegas Strip, a far cry from the dilapidated stadium in Oakland where players often churned through a dirt infield.

The moment is bittersweet. No fans will be allowed because of the pandemic, and Davis himself will stay away in solidarity with them. But a national TV audience will tune in for some football and spectacular vistas, and with typical Las Vegas glitz the Killers will rock the nation during halftime from the rooftop of nearby Caesars Palace.

It's a new era for the NFL, which once forbid players to even go into casinos. It's also confir-

mation of Las Vegas as one of the great sporting cities in the world, as well as a needed psychological boost to a town suffering badly from a drop in tourism caused by COVID-19.

"I feel bad that [fans] won't be able to be at the game, but I do know that with us being here and playing a home game there is still a feel around town: 'Oh, the Raiders are playing in town,'" quarterback Derek Carr said. "So, it's still exciting and I got people driving up next to my car and waving and going nuts and stuff."

If the Raiders have embraced Las Vegas, the city has embraced them back. Season tickets were quickly sold out even with hefty prices for seat licenses — and before it became clear that no fans would attend the Raiders were the hottest team in the NFL in the secondary ticket market.

Around the city there are fans wearing silver and black, and you don't have to drive far to see Raiders flags flying. There will be no Black Hole filled with crazed fans as in Oakland, largely because ticket prices are so expensive, but the team is eager to create new traditions in a home it has committed to spend the next 30 years playing in.

And when the lanai doors open on the north end of the stadium Monday night to reveal a panoramic view of the Las Vegas Strip just past the massive torch honoring the late Al Davis, the moment will

finally be at hand.

"This is our field of dreams," Mark Davis told the team last month when it gathered at the stadium for the first time. "This is our house."

And quite a house it is. The black glassed stadium — which some say resembles a giant Roomba — sits just off I-15 next to the Las Vegas Strip, looming over the main road that brings tourists in from Southern California. It has a translucent roof, natural grass and seats 65,000, bringing the city a state-of-the-art stadium venue it never had that will be used for concerts, fights, UFC events and likely a Super Bowl.

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The view through the huge lanai doors and the Al Davis torch will be the iconic features, but everything about the stadium seems to scream Raiders in Las Vegas, including the location at Dean Martin Dr. and Al Davis Way.

"It's imposing and intimidating, and it's perfect for the Raiders," team president Marc Badain said.

"We love the way it looks."

A lot of moving parts had to come together — and quickly — to get to this point. The Raiders at first were going to partner with the Chargers on a stadium in Los Angeles, but NFL owners instead decided to approve the new \$5 billion stadium built by the Rams that opened last week.

A few weeks after that vote in January 2016, the Raiders were still trying to decide what to do when the phone rang, with former Raiders running back Napoleon McCallum on the line. McCallum, who works for Sheldon Adelson, said the casino owner was interested in getting both a stadium built and an NFL team to put in it.

"Vegas wasn't really a thought at the time," Badain said. "They were instrumental in making it happen and guiding us through the process."

Adelson would later drop out of the project, but the Raiders moved forward. They got state legislators to guarantee \$750 million in hotel room taxes, took out loans from the NFL and Bank of America, and then sold a whopping \$549.2 million in PSIs to make up the difference.

The stadium, which will also host UNLV football games, came in on budget and on time. It's vastly different from the open air complex in Los Angeles that opened to rave reviews last week, but unique in its own way.

"The bright lights, the natural

grass in a domed stadium, the spectacular locker room, it's a state-of-the-art facility," coach Jon Gruden said. "It's got everything you can imagine, and I can't wait to share it with our fans. It's a lot different than Alameda. No disrespect to the old stadium, but it's a lot different."

The Raiders are trying not to disrespect anyone, counting on fans from around the West — and the world — to fill the stadium on game days once the pandemic has subsided. The team has a regional brand and fans who travel, and Badain said 40% of season tickets were sold to people who don't live in Las Vegas.

"To have a venue this size adjacent to the resort corridor is overdue," Badain said. "It's going to be a catalyst and economic driver for this market coming out of the pandemic. I think this town will rally quickly and we'll be a big driver of that."

That will have to wait, at least until health conditions improve. For now, the seats will be empty, just as they are at most NFL stadiums around the country.

Still, there's a buzz around town. The Raiders won their opener on the road and are undefeated as a Las Vegas team as they return to a city that loves winners more than anything. Pandemic or not, people will gather to watch them on TV in their home debut, and it wouldn't be surprising to see a lot of fans in black and silver gathered outside the stadium on opening night.

A city built on fun and games got its first major professional sports team just three years ago in the NHL's Golden Knights. Now it has a marquee team in the biggest league in the country — along with a stadium to match.

"This is now both the sports and entertainment capital of the world," Badain said. "Who's going to top this? There's no competition." AP

OPINION

World Views

Tim Culpan, Bloomberg

TRUMP'S WECHAT BAN IS
JUST A MAGA WALL IN
CYBERSPACE

Having failed to complete a huge wall along the U.S. southern border, President Donald Trump's administration now seems desperate to build one in cyberspace for similar spurious reasons.

Whereas the bogeyman four years ago was a supposed influx of drugs and criminals from Mexico, the U.S. announced early Friday that Tencent Holdings Ltd.'s instant-messaging app WeChat will essentially be shut down in America from Sept. 20 because of some vague notion that it poses an immediate threat.

In announcing the move, which also includes a ban on ByteDance Ltd.'s TikTok to go in effect Nov. 12 unless it resolves its pending issues, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross made it sound as if there was incontrovertible evidence of their nefarious nature.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has demonstrated the means and motives to use these apps to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and the economy of the U.S.

That's not quite true.

There's no doubt that Beijing, its governing Communist Party and the nation's military and intelligence services have waged sustained cyberoffensives against the U.S. and dozens of other countries. This year alone, two Chinese hackers were accused of attempting to pilfer coronavirus research across 11 countries, while more than 100 targets are thought to be among victims in a sophisticated infiltration scheme outlined by the U.S. this week.

But the evidence against WeChat is lacking. The app offers services that are roughly akin to an amalgam of Facebook, Venmo, Instagram, Twitter and Postmates. Its core feature is messaging, similar to Whatsapp. And yes, it collects data. Reams of it. As does Facebook Inc., Alphabet Inc.'s Google, Microsoft Corp. and even Oracle Corp.

In the U.S., WeChat is largely used by the Chinese diaspora. And it's quite probable that a small segment of those users oppose the U.S., its democratic system of government and maybe even communicate their plans over chat. In truth, an even bigger risk to the freedoms for which the U.S. stands is that Chinese dissidents in America might use the app and Beijing most likely tracks them. A third concern is that the Communist Party's increasingly heightened censorship regime is being deployed on WeChat at the expense of American citizens (largely of Chinese ethnicity) entirely within U.S. borders.

And yet, any such manipulation or data infiltration pales in significance to that already perpetrated against entirely American institutions like Facebook and Twitter.

Instead of stamping out any threats posed by the Chinese government, which do exist, the U.S. administration has simply handed Beijing another item to add to its folio of propaganda that paints the U.S. as a belligerent and hypocritical regime.

Just as Chinese officials can use examples of U.S. police officers killing unarmed black men as a counter to Washington's allegations of human rights abuses in Hong Kong and against Uighurs, they now have this unnecessary WeChat ban as proof that the U.S. isn't an open freedom-loving nation after all.

The predictable reaction from Beijing will also be hypocritical. It's true that thousands of Chinese in the U.S. will struggle to communicate directly with friends and family back home once WeChat access is shut off. But that's only because more ubiquitous options in the U.S. — Whatsapp, Facebook Messenger and Twitter — have already been banned by China.

A U.S. move to shut WeChat, and possibly TikTok, still pales in comparison to the Great Firewall that Beijing has had in place for more than a decade.

And that's why this move will prove to be so desperate and ineffective. It won't stop teams of state-sponsored hackers from infiltrating corporate and government networks, nor prevent manipulation of America's open internet and independent media. But it will provide fodder for the growing belief that the U.S. truly is no better than any authoritarian state seeking to clamp down on the free flow of information in the name of national security.

Like that barrier along the Mexican border, this virtual wall against China will have untold costs and little benefit.

Oktoberfest celebrations got underway yesterday in Munich with the traditional tapping of a keg and the cry of "O'zapft is!" — "It's tapped!" — but this year's festival is very non-traditional and highly regulated due to coronavirus concerns.

The official Oktoberfest has been cancelled, so there's no huge tents full of people or hundreds of stands selling food. Instead, 50 of the southern German city's beer halls and other establishments are hosting their own, smaller parties that follow guidelines on mask wearing, social distancing and other restrictions.

Former Mayor Christian Ude got the party started, hammering a

tap into a 20 liter keg — a tenth of the size of the Oktoberfest norm — at the Schillerbraeu beer hall while dressed in Bavarian lederhosen leather pants and wearing a protective mask.

Meantime, police patrolled the regular festival grounds to make sure no spontaneous parties broke out.

The loss of Oktoberfest is a huge hit for the Bavarian city, which saw 6.3 million guests flood in last year for the festival's 186th year. They were served 7.3 million liters (about 15.5 million pints) of beer over 16 days and consumed 124 oxen, among other traditional foods.

This year's toned-down celebrations run through Oct. 4.

FRANCE

CARPENTERS WOW PUBLIC
WITH MEDIEVAL TECHNIQUES
AT NOTRE DAME



AP PHOTO

ELAINE GANLEY, PARIS

WITH precision and boundless energy, a team of carpenters used medieval techniques to raise up — by hand — a three-ton oak truss yesterday in front of Notre Dame Cathedral, a replica of the wooden structures that were consumed in the landmark's devastating April 2019 fire that also toppled its spire.

The demonstration to mark European Heritage Days gave the hundreds of people a first-hand look at the rustic methods used 800 years ago to build the triangular frames in the nave of Notre Dame de Paris.

It also showed that the decision to replicate the cathedral in its original form was the right one, said Gen. Jean-Louis Georgelin, who heads the cathedral's reconstruction.

"It shows [...] firstly that we made the right choice in choosing to rebuild the carpentry identically, in oak from France," Georgelin said in an interview. "Secondly, it shows us the [...] method by which we will rebuild the framework, truss after truss."

A debate over whether the new spire should have a futuristic design or whether the trusses should be made of fireproof cement

like in the Cathedral of Nantes, which was destroyed in a 1972 fire, ended with the decision in July to respect Notre Dame's original design and materials.

A total of 25 trusses are to be installed at an unknown date in the cathedral nave. Philippe Gourmain, a forestry expert working on the cathedral project, said the carpentry phase will not come before 2022.

"The problem of Notre Dame is not a carpentry problem. We have the wood. We know how to do it," Gourmain said. "The big issue is regarding the stone."

Some stones — which support the carpentry — were damaged by the fire and "it's not so easy now" to find similar stone, he said.

French President Emmanuel Macron wants the cathedral reopened in 2024 in time for the Paris Olympic Games, a deadline that many experts have called unrealistic.

For the moment, the delicate task of dismantling melted scaffolding, which was originally erected to refurbish the now-topped spire, continues. That job, started in early June, will be completed in October.

The soaring cathedral vaults are also being cleared of debris by 35 specialists on ropes. The organ

with its 8,000 pipes was removed for repair in early August.

It is not yet known what technique will be used to create and install the wooden trusses.

The truss mounted for the weekend display is a replica of truss No. 7, more advanced than the first six trusses, which were "more primitive," said Florian Carpentier, site manager for the team from Carpenters Without Borders team that felled the trees and used axes to cut the logs for the wooden frame. With rope cables and a rustic pulley system, the carpenters slowly pulled the truss they built in July from the ground where it was laid out.

"It's a moment to see, ancestral techniques that last. There is the present and the past and it links us to our roots," said Romain Greif, an architect who came with his family to watch the display. "It's an event."

In a final touch, once the No. 7 truss replica was raised on high, a carpenter shinned up the wooden beams — to cheers — to tie an oak branch to the top of the triangular structure, a symbol of prosperity and a salute to the workers, a tradition still honored in numerous European countries. AP



AP PHOTO

India Amid an uproar in Parliament, Indian lawmakers yesterday approved a pair of controversial agriculture bills that the government says will boost growth in the farming sector through private investments. The two bills were approved even though most opposition parties and some allies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi called them anti-farmer. The legislation is aimed at reforming India's deeply stressed farming sector and will give farmers freedom to market their produce.

Afghanistan Government airstrikes in the north of Afghanistan killed 24 civilians, including children, and wounded six others, witnesses told The Associated Press. The Afghan Defense Ministry, however, said the airstrikes killed 30 Taliban fighters, but added an investigation was being held into claims that civilians were among those killed.



AP PHOTO

US Democrat Joe Biden leaves little doubt that if elected he would try to scale back President Donald Trump's buildup in nuclear weapons spending. And although the former vice president has not fully detailed his nuclear priorities, he says he would make the U.S. less reliant on the world's deadliest weapons.



AP PHOTO

Spain Spaniards are protesting in Madrid against the handling of the coronavirus pandemic by the city's regional head, who has placed new restrictions on neighborhoods with the highest contagion rates. Wearing face masks and trying to maintain social distancing, protestors clapped in unison while shouting for regional President Isabel Díaz Ayuso to step down.