

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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LVS HAS MADE AN AGREEMENT WITH A CANADIAN BANK NOT TO DECLARE OR PAY DIVIDENDS UNTIL THE CASINO OPERATOR'S BOOKS RETURN TO \$1B IN LIQUIDITY

CRIME: PLAN TO ESTABLISH AN ILLEGAL HOSTEL TURNS INTO SCAM

TAIWAN SAID THAT CHINA SENT TWO MILITARY SURVEILLANCE PLANES TOWARD THE ISLAND FOR THREE STRAIGHT DAYS



China TikTok's owner said yesterday it has applied for a Chinese technology export license as it tries to complete a deal with Oracle and Walmart to keep the popular video app operating in the United States. President Donald Trump said this week he would approve a proposed deal in which Oracle Corp. and Walmart Inc. could initially own a combined 20% of a new U.S. entity, TikTok Global.



Japan's new Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga yesterday held his first telephone call with his South Korean counterpart since taking office, telling President Moon Jae-in that the neighbors should work to resolve their strained relations. The talks, proposed by South Korea, were the first contact in nine months between leaders of the two countries. Relations between Japan and South Korea deteriorated to their worst levels in years under Suga's predecessor, Shinzo Abe.



Thailand Lawmakers met yesterday to vote on six proposed amendments to the country's military-backed constitution, as protesters pushing for charter reform gathered outside the Parliament building. Changes to the constitution are one of three core demands that a coalition of protest groups has been seeking in recent months. The groups, which during the weekend held one of the biggest protest rallies in years, also want new elections and an end to intimidation of political activists, saying they are needed to strengthen democracy.

More on backpage

BLUES OF NO RETURN

Gov't gives no clues about return timeline for non-Chinese bluecard holders

P3



COVID TESTS REQUIRED FOR SCHOOL SPORTS COMPETITIONS THIS YEAR

The annual interschool sports championships is expected to resume this school year but with tests, education authorities say



P3

TWO PEOPLE CLAIM TO HAVE FALLEN VICTIM TO PHONE CALL FRAUD

Two local residents have identified themselves as victims of a phone-related fraud, according to the Judiciary Police (PJ). A man in his 30s was persuaded by an "instructor" from an app called "Shua Bao" to download another app called "Panda." The victim used "Panda" to gamble, depositing a total of 110,000 patacas to bet on the app. However, it eventuated that he was unable to withdraw his money. Another victim said that he had received a phone call from a fake "Beijing Police Department," which told him that he was involved in fraud. A person claiming to be a public prosecutor then instructed him to transfer 106,000 patacas to close the police investigation.

OVER 3,400 APPLIED FOR UNEMPLOYMENT SUBSIDY

In the first eight months of this year, over 3,400 Macau residents applied for an unemployment subsidy from the Social Security Fund. According to the Director of the Financial Services Bureau, long Kong Leong, this number is significantly higher than all of last year, when only 1,300 applicants were recorded. As of August, the fund has already approved 38.6 million patacas, whereas in 2019 the department only granted 14.4 million patacas. Currently, Macau has approximately 120,000 senior citizens receiving a retirement pension from the Social Security Fund. This year, in January, the department raised the retirement pension and disability pension to 3,700 patacas per month. In addition, 232 employers and over 21,700 employees participated in the non-mandatory central provident fund.

ALIPAY TRANSACTIONS IN MACAU GROW AFTER VISA RESUMPTION

Since August 12, transactions and spending performed through Alipay Macau, Alipay Mainland China and AlipayHK have increased significantly, according to statistics released by Alipay. According to the company, the number of transactions increased 90%, while the amount of expenditure grew 135%. Starting Tuesday, mainland China fully resumed issuing travel permits to its citizens so that they may visit Macau. Alipay is expecting that the resumption will attract a large number of mainland tourists to Macau. The company is forecasting that Alipay transactions will be even more abundant during the upcoming National Day Holiday.

CRIME

FSM STAFF MEMBER CAUGHT DRUNK DRIVING, PASSER-BY INTERVENES

RENATO MARQUES

A staff member from the Public Security Forces (FSM) has been caught drunk driving after being involved in a minor car accident at the Avenida da Harmonia in Seac Pai Van, a Public Security Police Force (PSP) spokesperson informed during the joint press conference of the police forces on Wednesday.

The incident occurred in the early hours of September 20, when two officers from the PSP were called to attend to the car accident.

Upon arrival, the officers found two people arguing. According to those involved, the car of the FSM staff member had reversed and hit the other car, which was parked to its rear.

Initially, the driver refused to take the blame for the accident and even said that he was not the person behind the wheel.

Due to a strong smell of alcohol, the officers required him to take a breathalyzer test, but he refused to comply.

While the officers were trying to convince the suspect to cooperate, alerting him that non-cooperation would constitute a disobedience offense, a passer-by started to interfere



in the case, ordering the suspect not to collaborate with the police and insulting the officers.

In another twist in the case, this second man eventually entered the vehicle of the suspect and locked himself inside, using his mobile phone to call the emergency hotline 999.

In the call, the man claimed to have been kidnapped by the police officers in a hotel

room in a different location, providing false information and emergency request to the authorities.

After some time, the first suspect eventually agreed to cooperate and a test revealed he had a blood alcohol level of 1.6g/L.

Presented to a judge the next day, he was sentenced to five months' imprisonment, suspended for two years depending on his behavior, and

an 18-month prohibition on driving.

As for the second suspect, he is awaiting trial for allegedly committing four crimes, including filing a false police report, failing to obey a police order, making a malicious report, and insulting the police.

The PSP also informed that an internal investigation is underway following the opening of a disciplinary procedure relating to the case.

CRIME

Plan to establish an illegal hostel turns into scam

RENATO MARQUES

A plan by two men to establish an illegal hostel in Macau has turned into a scam, with one of the partners accusing the other of unlawfully withholding his investment, the Judiciary Police (PJ) said during the police forces' joint press conference on Wednesday.

The case goes back to De-

cember 19, 2019, when the alleged victim presented the case to the PJ, saying that he and another man had agreed to establish a partnership business in Macau in the form of an illegal hostel.

He gave his partner RMB57,800, which would be used to establish the lodgings.

He said he then lost contact with his partner and, fearing he had been scammed, repor-

ted the matter to the police.

After a preliminary investigation, the PJ identified the suspect. They found that the man had already crossed the border from Macau into the mainland.

There was a new development in the case on Saturday, September 19, when the suspect attempted to re-enter Macau. He was intercepted by police at the Border Gate

checkpoint.

Upon questioning, the 43-year-old male and mainland resident confessed to having received the money. He initially said that he had taken steps to establish the business, paying a landlord HKD9,000 as a rental deposit fee to secure the apartment in which the hostel would operate.

After that, the suspect said that procedures were taking a long time and eventually, he used the remaining money to gamble in a casino, losing all of it, before returning to the mainland.

The man was referred to the Public Prosecutions Office on September 21, and has been charged with abuse of trust.

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A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

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NAT tests required for when school sports competitions resume this year

RENATO MARQUES

THE interschool sports championships, held every year for a wide range of sports activities, is expected to resume this school year, the chief of the Youth Department of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) Cheong Man Fai said yesterday during a media briefing following this year's third meeting of the Youth Council.

Nevertheless, and according to the pandemic prevention and control measures put in force by health authorities, it is likely that all participants, including students and teachers, will have to undergo nucleic acid tests (NAT) to participate in the competitions and training sessions, Cheong noted.

"We are resuming the [physical education] classes and we are also considering the resumption of [inter]school competitions. Maybe before the competitions, the teachers and the students would need



to have [NAT] test done as well as comply with other measures such as enough [social] distancing while not wearing masks," Cheong said in reply to a question from the media.

According to the official, NAT testing is needed due to the fact that "we do not recommend the use of masks during sports activities. The Health Bureau has

issued guidelines about sports activities saying that people engaging in intense sports activities should not wear masks, so there is the need for undergoing tests before training sessions and competitions," she further explained.

Currently, the site for NAT testing and the number of people that need to be tested have

not yet been disclosed, with DSEJ officials saying that they are currently preparing the location and number of tests, according to the quantity of students and teachers potentially involved.

Although she acknowledged the lack of an accurate number, Cheong forecasted that a group of between 11,000 and 12,000 people might need to undergo NAT tests.

AN INCONCLUSIVE YOUTH COUNCIL MEETING

The Youth Council's third meeting of the year seems to have been inconclusive regarding the topics on the agenda.

Briefing the media about the conclusions of the meeting, the DSEJ officials found it difficult to present any data on most of the topics, saying that the relevant departments will reply to the media questions at a later opportunity.

The focus of questioning was the presentation by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) regarding

the work done to support youth employment.

According to the DSEJ report, a senior official from the DSAL, Wong Sio Kuan, gave a presentation during the closed-door meeting on the program of opportunities and experiences available to youngsters in the workplace that the DSAL launched in mid-June. This program sought to have youngsters engage in subsidized three-month internships, starting from July.

Questioned by the media on how many youngsters have joined the program, the DSEJ officials said that they did not have any figures on hand.

Related to the same topic, the DSEJ also noted that the DSAL gave a presentation on the "Youth Career Expo 2020" held in the second half of August, which had over 3,000 job posts on offer.

According to the information available, the DSAL said that there was a total of 4,200 job seekers at the career fair.

Gov't gives no clues about return timeline for non-Chinese bluecard holders

ANTHONY LAM

FOR the time being, there is no date set for when foreign non-resident workers currently staying outside of Macau will be allowed to reenter the territory, according to the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center. However, the Center stressed that Covid-19 prevention measures will continue to be amended according to the situation.

When questioned about the topic, Dr. Lo Lek Long of the Coronavirus Center first expressed his understanding about public concern on the matter. He addressed the topic as not only being of concern to foreign non-resident workers, but also foreign non-residents who are relatives of Macau residents.

"We have previously explained that this lies within the scope of our considerations," Lo stressed.

He pointed out the conflict in the situation, where some residents want stricter counter-pandemic measures but others want less strict measures.

"We must strike a balance," Lo said. "All policies – especially pandemic response policies – must be rolled out phase-by-phase."

In saying this, he assured the press conference that entry relaxation for foreign non-resident workers and foreigners with family members in Macau is within the center's wide scope of work, but that he cannot give a specific timeline for these changes.

"It applies to all measures," Lo explained. "If a measure doesn't worsen the situation when it is in place, we will then consider making progress towards further [relaxation]."

The center was also questioned about progress on the reopening of barbe-

que sites. They are still closed by order of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) under previous pandemic response measures.

Dr. Leong Iek Hou from the center reassured citizens that the health authorities have given the green light for the reopening of the campsite in Hac Sa, although certain measures must be enacted. "Our recommendations have been passed to the IAM," Leong disclosed.

When questioned on the details of the recommendations, Leong reiterated that people entering local parks must present a valid Green Macau Health Code. They should also wear a mask throughout their entire park trip.

"We understand that during a barbeque session, facemask wearing is not possible," Leong said. "In that case, each individual must keep 1 meter apart. This is a basic requirement in all of our guidelines."

As to when barbeque sites will be allowed to reopen, the doctor explained that this is within the IAM's authority and indicated his belief that the bureau would offer further information in due course.

On the other hand, as mainland travel endorsements to Macau reope-

ned for applications nationwide on September 23, the tourism industry is rubbing its hands at the prospect of welcoming an influx of tourists from the mainland. Regarding this, government representatives assured the press briefing that the government has made sufficient prepara-

tations. The National Day Fireworks Display will also go ahead on October 1.

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), the Public Security Police Force and the Health Bureau pledged to work to ensure a safe environment for tourists.

The MGTO reminded the public that the Macao Ready Go! Local Tour campaign will conclude on September 30 and that registrations must be conducted on or before September 27.

New Rainstorm warning signal system
It comes into effect on the 1st of September 2020

Black rainstorm warning signal - level 3
This warning signal is issued when heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall over extensive areas, exceeding 80 millimetres in an hour, and is likely to continue.

Red rainstorm warning signal - level 2
This warning signal is issued when heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall over extensive areas, exceeding 50 millimetres in an hour, and is likely to continue.

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This warning signal is issued when heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall over extensive areas, exceeding 25 millimetres in an hour, and is likely to continue.

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AGNES LAM DISAPPROVES OF IAM SHIFTING RESPONSIBILITY OVER RESERVOIR INCIDENT

JULIE ZHU

LAWMAKER Agnes Lam has expressed her strong disapproval over what she sees as the government's lack of accountability for a recent accident in which a civilian was injured on account of the poor construction of a public facility.

Earlier this week, Macau resident Choi Chi Wai sustained a bone fracture when he was hit by a falling washbasin and construction debris at the Hac Sa Reservoir. Choi, a heavy-duty vehicle driver, has been told by his doctor to take a three-month-long break in order to recover from the injury.

After the accident, instead taking responsibility for the facilities under its management, the government denied any accountability. Despite being the manager of the facility, the IAM blamed the constructor who built the facility, even though the bureau had accepted the completed project.

Yesterday, Lam and Choi held a press conference to announce their intent to pursue accountability from the government.

"I am not satisfied by the IAM's response. The IAM only says it will investigate the constructor, but not its own responsibility. This is unacceptable," said Choi, who announced that he will pursue compensation from the government.

According to Lam, the stone used in the washstand had not



Lawmaker Agnes Lam (left) and Choi Chi Wai

been installed properly. "The contractor in question seemed to have low-quality skills, or even cut corners while installing the washstand," said Lam.

The lawmaker believes that the facility should be checked and fixed and an investigation report

submitted. If the cause of the incident was negligence or low-quality construction, the contractor should also be held accountable for the incident, according to Lam.

The lawmaker urged the government to specifically explain

measures of improvement after completing the investigation. She also demanded IAM release a detailed investigation report about inspection tests and maintenance of public works to the people.

In addition, Lam proposed that the government review its ten-

der method. According to Lam, information has shown that the contractor of this public toilet was awarded through selective tendering. Different from open tendering, selective tendering is done by the government, which invites several designated contractors to tender before final approval.

Government authorities normally include the qualifications of contractors and the quality of materials used in the public works as standards in open tendering. However, the standards of selective tendering are not released.

"It is clear that the authorities tend to consider the estimated costs, duration of the construction and the proportion of local construction workers involved, instead of the qualification of contractors or the quality of the material used. As a result, contractors providing the lowest bids are usually awarded the projects," said Lam.

Considering the fact that most optimization projects of public bathrooms in recent years were adopted by selective tendering methods, and given that a tender process that may not include quality of the work as a standard, "the IAM should take the main responsibility for checking the quality when inviting contractors."

"This incident further reflects that the company may not meet the standard in quality, even though it was awarded the contract," said Lam.

Lawmakers to leave gov't to draft trade union law

JULIE ZHU

FOUR lawmakers who have previously brought versions of the trade union law to the Legislative Assembly (AL) will now wait for government to draft one.

The current government is said to have promised to draft a trade union law, according to four lawmakers who represent the Macao Federation of Trade Union (FAOM). They are Leong Sun Iok, Ella Lei, Lei Chan U and Lam Lon Wai.

Yesterday, the lawmakers held a meeting to report their work during the past AL term. Representing the FAOM, the four lawmakers prioritized matters concerning local employment, workers' rights, transport, and urban planning on their agenda.

In the past, together with



Lawmaker Ella Lei

other lawmakers – most notably lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho – they have brought more than ten versions of the trade union law to the AL, hoping to gain approval. However, none of

these drafts were approved. The group indicated that they will no longer attempt to motion for a vote on their trade union law in the next AL session. Instead, they will wait for the SAR

government to prepare the relevant legislation.

"The trade union law is not a matter of choosing whether it is needed or not. It is needed," said Lei. "The current government has al-

ready promised that it will legislate."

The SAR government will likely hold a discussion among members of the Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs and Culture in order to reach a consensus between the employers and the employees, according to Lei. Only after that will there be a public consultation.

Lam Lon Wai said that a government-proposed trade union law would be the best solution.

During the most recent AL term, most of the requests for assistance received by the four lawmakers were from local residents complaining about employment related issues, such as unpaid leave and job losses.

Lam said that the matter of a trade union law is

urgent and it will ensure that Macau's employer-employee relationships remain harmonious.

Lawmakers Ella Lei and Leong Sun Iok made remarks on livelihood issues, particularly on the urban plan.

The Macau government's urban master plan for 2020-2040 has proposed to build San Ma Lou into a "green corridor".

Leong has doubts about the explicit definition of a "green corridor," asking "is it going to become a green corridor simply by hanging some flowers on the street?" Ella Lei then admitted that "it is very difficult to add more green areas" in Macau.

Nevertheless, both Leong and Ella Lei agree that the government should work to increase Macau's green spaces.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



WITH employees being Melco Resorts & Entertainment's most valued and important asset, the Company supports colleagues with various training and talent nurturing opportunities for professional and personal growth – which also contributes to the sustainable and diversified development of Macau.

Whole Person Development is a key pillar of the Company's Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, which enables opportunities to augment skills, experience, and knowledge to build career paths. This is supported by Melco's robust internal career opportunity framework boasting over 27,800 global internal promotions and transfers since the Company's inception.

Its unique Foundation Acceleration Program (FAP) was created with the belief that training and development for colleagues should extend beyond classroom training and that service excellence requires a broad spectrum of exposure.

FAP offers short and long-term cross-functional placements and assignments to fine-tune Melco colleagues' business acumen and provide opportunities to see the world from multiple perspectives. A variety of assignments offer exposure beyond one's specialty, both in terms of knowledge and experience, and plays a key role in enhancing employee confidence—broadening their skill set and enabling them to engage with people from all walks of life.

Longer FAP placements include

WHOLE PERSON DEVELOPMENT

MELCO: Foundation Acceleration Program develops local talent



Dealers working for six months in Hotel Operations, or Hotel Front Office Managers spending one year on rotation through various departmental and cross-functional roles from the Contact Center, Reservations, Revenue Management, F&B, to Marketing and Public Relations. Shorter placements may include Human Resources professionals each spending one day in the business units they support, or specific assignments to enhance proficiency in skills such as public speaking.

FAP graduate, Mr. Frankie Yuen Pak Long, Assistant HR Manager, explained that after 10 years of working in Human Resources, being transferred to Melco's Call Centre was both eye-opening and beneficial, allowing him to diversify and learn new skills. "My three

months spent working at the Call Centre really helped to broaden my knowledge of the scope of work taken care of by other departments. In a corporation as large as Melco, we wouldn't normally be exposed to the responsibilities and ins and outs of tasks of our inter-departmental peers. Through FAP, I came to realize that the efforts of many colleagues enable us to deliver memorable experiences to each guest. Aside from developing new technical skills, the experience also helped to enhance my strategic and analytical abilities, as well as the development of interpersonal skills. I would recommend the program to any colleague interested in pursuing personal growth and career development."

Objectives of the Labour Affairs

Bureau (DSAL)'s Special Internship scheme for local students with special needs are also closely aligned with Melco's commitment to local talent development, and the Company continues to support the scheme this year for the eighth consecutive year. Between 2013 to 2019, more than 50% of student interns recruited through work experience initiatives and referred by DSAL went on to become full-time employees after graduation, with almost half of these colleagues staying on at Melco for three years or longer. This year, Melco is supporting the scheme with the highest intern intake among participating companies.

The scheme is designed to enable students with special needs to gain career experience for increa-

sed vocation competitiveness and employment opportunities. Internship participant-turned-Melco employee Mr. Ken Kuok, said, "This is my first job after graduation, and I am really grateful for the work opportunity recommended by DSAL and offered to myself by Melco." Ken's supervisor, Ms. Candy Ip, Manager of Wardrobe & Valet Laundry of Studio City said, "Ken has been with us since 2014 as an athlete with good physical strength and an excellent fit for taking up the role of Linen Room Attendant. I would encourage more employers and businesses to give people with disabilities a chance to contribute to society as this equates not only to a work placement, but a life-changing opportunity for the employee candidates."



LVS, BANK AGREE ON HALT TO DIVIDENDS

U.S.-BASED casino operator Las Vegas Sands (LVS) has made an agreement with a Canadian bank not to declare or pay any dividends until the casino operator's books return to \$1 billion in liquidity, online gambling media GGRAsia has reported. In return, the bank will relax a lending covenant.

LVS is the parent company of Macau-based Sands China and Singapore-based Marina Bay Sands, which owns the iconic tri-tower resort structure with a sky-top pool connecting the three towers.

The Canadian bank is the Bank of Nova Scotia, which has made a "lending covenant" with the gambling enterprise. A financial conglomerate, in which the Canadian bank plays a role, provided a credit facility worth \$1.5 billion of senior unsecured revolving credit for the casino operator.

For the second quarter of 2020, LVS has recorded a net loss worth \$820 million, which was attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic. The online report pointed out that the casino has been required to maintain a maximum consolidated leverage ratio of 4:1 on the last day of any fiscal quarter during the period from October 31, 2020 up to and including December 31, 2021.

As the new arrangement kicks in, the gambling enterprise will need to maintain a minimum liquidity of \$350 million on the last day of each month during the said period. **AL**

SUNCITY DENIES ALLEGATIONS IT BLOCKED CLIENT WITHDRAWALS

LOCAL junket operator Suncity Group has denied allegations that the company has refused withdrawal requests from numerous clients because of depleting cash reserves. Reports of the withdrawals were first reported by Reuters.

According to the Reuters report, out of fear that Chinese authorities might tighten their grip on money outflow during the Covid-19 period, which may also bring risks to national security, patrons have started to rush to casino junkets, including Suncity, to withdraw their cash placed there for gambling purposes.

The report said Suncity had refused withdrawal requests made by hundreds of clients. A social media group was also set up to publicize the situation.

The news agency even cited an anonymous person who disclosed that the relevant sum of cash amounted to several billion Hong Kong dollars. Analysts told the news agency that although



Suncity Group boss Alvin Chau

Macau casinos were resilient enough to get through the last few months with virtually no income, mass cash withdrawals imply a fading of confidence in the city's gambling industry.

In response to the allegations, the junket operator made assurances about the soundness of its financial condition. It also denied the allegations that it refused client withdrawal requests.

New policies pursuant to the latest requirements have also taken effect, which require withdrawals to be made only by account holders or legally authorized representatives.

Suncity has condemned the allegations – and not for the first time this year.

As early as 2019, the junket group has hinted at its intention to bid for a gambling concession in 2022, which is when the current conces-

sions expire. The entity participated in the bid in 2002, but lost to SJM, Galaxy and Wynn, the holders of the original concessions.

Suncity boss Alvin Chau condemned these rumors several times this year. The rumors connected the group with the subsidizing of Hong Kong rioters, disclosing information about VIP customers to mainland Chinese authorities, and failing to cover their clients' financial deposits.

Last year, the group was named by a Chinese national media outlet as a proxy bet or online gambling operator, prompting Chau to pledge that his group will follow mainland Chinese and Macau laws, even in the operation of overseas businesses.

In July, the group's boss stated that its assets are able to completely cover customer deposits, foreseeable losses and bad debts.

The junket group suspended its years-long title sponsorship for the annual Macau Grand Prix this year. **AL**

AD

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CROWN GETS LASHING AT SYDNEY PROBE OF CASINO-LICENSE WORTHINESS

ANGUS WHITLEY

The head of an inquiry assessing Crown Resorts Ltd.'s suitability to operate a casino in Sydney criticized the state of the Australian company's anti-money laundering systems and said a lack of transparency exposed by the probe was a "debacle."

The inquiry was set up last year after media reports that criminal gangs laundered money at Crown's casinos, and the company used junket operators with links to drug traffickers. Retired Supreme Court Judge Patricia Bergin, overseeing the probe, must consider whether Crown is worthy of keeping its license for a planned Sydney resort, due to open by the end of the year.

Crown Chief Executive Officer Kenneth Barton, who gave evidence for much of Wednesday, said the company hadn't yet fully reviewed the specific accounts that were allegedly used by mo-

ney launderers. Barton, Crown's chief financial officer before he became CEO this year, also said that for several years after 2014 he didn't know a major junket operator had a cash desk at Crown's flagship Melbourne casino. Barton said such an arrangement "certainly" posed a money-laundering risk.

"There has to be some more transparency because this, in effect, has really reached the debacle level," Bergin said Wednesday. "At the moment it is just extraordinarily troubling."

Ultimately, Bergin will determine if Crown should keep its license, or make governance changes, in order to run a AUD2.2 billion (\$1.5 billion) Sydney harborside gaming development. Crown's billionaire shareholder James Packer, who has championed the project for almost a decade, is due to give evidence next week.

On Wednesday, Bergin questioned how any re-

gulator could know what was happening at Crown when Barton himself was unaware of the details. "This is what is troubling me," she said.

The inquiry also heard that Barton, replying to a question from a shareholder at Crown's 2019 annual meeting, withheld details of his own almost daily communications about Crown's financial performance with Packer, which were permitted under a controlling shareholder protocol.

"So couldn't you just say to him, in truth, 'Yes, of course, I'm briefing Mr Packer on a daily basis,'" Bergin said to Barton at the hearing. Barton agreed that such a response would have been "a true answer."

Crown has called last year's media reports part of a "deceitful campaign" that sought to damage its reputation. Crown has said it will work with regulators on any recommendations. **BLOOMBERG**



HONG KONG

Activist Wong arrested over unauthorized assembly

HONG Kong pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong said he was arrested again yesterday for allegedly participating in an unauthorized assembly last October.

Wong tweeted that he was arrested when he reported to the semi-autonomous Chinese territory's Central Police Station as part of a bail requirement.

He said he was also accused of violating a pre-coronavirus law banning the wearing of masks in public places on the pretext they obscure identity.

Wong told reporters after leaving the police station that it is the third case against him. He vowed to continue to resist.

Wong rose to prominence as a student leader during the 2014 Umbrella Movement protests for universal suffrage, and is among a growing number of activists being charged for various relatively minor offenses since Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on the territory that has severely restricted political speech.

He played a low-key role in mostly leaderless and sometimes

violent anti-government protests last year that led to Beijing imposing the security law. However, with Beijing's encouragement, Hong Kong authorities have been pursuing charges against major opposition figures for illegal assembly and other minor infractions in what some call a campaign to harass and intimidate.

JOURNALISTS PROTEST NEW RULES

Also yesterday, Hong Kong's professional journalism association protested new rules res-

tricting who can provide press coverage during demonstrations, saying the government has no right to determine who is or isn't a reporter.

The rules outlined in a Tuesday letter from police have been criticized as a further erosion of the semi-autonomous Chinese territory's once robust press freedoms since Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law in June that has had a chilling effect on political speech.

Only journalists registered with the Government News and Media

Information Service or members of "internationally recognized and reputable" foreign media outlets will be recognized as journalists during protests, according to the police letter.

That appears to undercut the authority of the Hong Kong Journalists Association and Hong Kong Press Photographers Association to vet candidates for membership and issue press cards, placing that right solely in the hands of government officials, as is the case in mainland China.

"Police cannot be permitted to use administrative means to screen only officially recognized media, thus undermining the fundamental rights of the people of Hong Kong," the Hong Kong Journalists Association said in a statement.

In their letter, the police said their goal is to weed out troublemakers posing as journalists who they say disrupted police action against protesters over several months of sometimes violent anti-government demonstrations.

"Following the amendment, the definition of 'media representatives' will become clearer and unequivocal, allowing front-line officers to efficiently and swiftly verify the identity of media representatives so that facilitation can be provided without compromising police operational efficiency," the police letter said.

The regulations leave it to the police to determine what media outlets are "internationally recognized and reputable" and could discriminate against freelancers and independent and student journalists, who often work alone with minimal equipment and infrastructure.

Hong Kong has dropped steadily in Reporters Without Borders annual World Press Freedom Index, falling seven places this year to 80. **MDT/AP**

TAIWAN

China's military flew planes toward island on three days

TAIWAN said yesterday that China sent two military surveillance planes toward the island for three straight days and it dispatched patrols in response.

Tensions have risen in the Taiwan Strait as the U.S. has stepped up its official engagement with the self-ruled island that China considers part of its national territory.

Separately on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, the Chinese People's Liberation Army sent two planes, according to statements from Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense. In response, the Taiwanese side tracked the planes and dis-

patched air patrols, the ministry said.

Last week, China sent a total of 37 warplanes, including bombers and fighter jets, across the Taiwan Strait in a warning as a high-level U.S. State Department official visited the island.

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen has remained defiant, visiting a military base Tuesday and encouraging the soldiers, in particular pilots and crew.

Taiwan's foreign minister Joseph Wu said in July that Chinese military exercises have stepped up in frequency, and have become "virtually a daily occurrence."

China has increased its diplomatic and military pressure on Tsai's government over her refusal to agree to China's insistence that the island be considered a part of Chinese territory. The vast majority of Taiwanese reject the prospect of political union with China under the "one country, two systems" framework used for Hong Kong.

Following Tsai's election in 2016, China cut off contact with the Taiwanese government and has sought to isolate her government, siphoning off the island's diplomatic allies while ratcheting up political, military and economic pressure. **AP**



Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen (center) poses for photos at the Penghu Magong military air base in outlying Penghu Island

Seoul says North Korea kills S. Korean official, burns his body

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea said yesterday that North Korean troops fatally shot a South Korean government official who may have attempted to defect and set his body on fire after finding him on a floating object near the countries' disputed sea boundary.

South Korean officials condemned what they called North Korea's "atrocious act" and urged it to apologize and punish those responsible. North Korea is unlikely to accept the South Korean demand, and ties between the rivals — already strained amid a deadlock in broader nuclear diplomacy — will probably suffer a further setback, observers say.

According to Seoul, the man disappeared from a government ship that was checking on possible unauthorized fishing in an area south of the boundary on Monday, a day before he was found in North Korean waters.

North Korea sent officials wearing gas masks aboard a boat near the man to learn why he was there on Tuesday afternoon. Later in the day, a North Korean navy boat came and opened fire at him, South Korea's Defense Ministry said.

Sailors from the boat clad in gas masks and protective suits poured gasoline on his body and set it aflame, the Defense Ministry said, citing intelligence gathered by surveillance equipment and other assets.

It's unclear how he ended up in North Korea. But a defense official said the man might have tried to defect to the North, citing acquired information. He refused to elaborate. The official, requesting anonymity citing department rules, said the South Korean official was wearing a life jacket and was on a small floating object when he was found in North Korean waters.

He said North Korea may have decided to kill him in line with its stringent anti-coronavirus rules that involve shooting anyone illegally crossing the border.

Gen. Robert Abrams, the commander of U.S. troops in South Korea, said last month that North Korea had put



Lt. Gen. Ahn Young Ho (left) gives a briefing on North Korea's shooting of a South Korean government official as Defense Minister Suh Wook listens at the National Assembly in Seoul, yesterday

special forces along its border with China to keep smugglers out and that they had "shoot-to-kill orders in place" aimed at preventing the virus from entering the country.

North Korea has steadfastly said there hasn't been a single virus case in its territory, a claim widely disputed by foreign experts. Observers say a pandemic could cause devastating consequences in North Korea because of its broken public health care system and a chronic shortage of medical supplies.

South Korea sent a message to North Korea on Wednesday to ask about the missing official, but hasn't received a response, according to the South Korean Defense Ministry.

Senior military officer Ahn Young Ho told reporters that South Korea strongly condemned North Korea's "atrocious act" and urged it to punish those responsible. Top presidential official Suh Choo-suk said in a separate news conference that North Korea must apologize for its "act against humanity," reveal the full details of the case and take steps to prevent similar incidents.

"For whatever reason, North Korea cannot justify its soldiers fatally shooting our citizen and damaging his body, though he was unarmed and had no intention of resistance," Suh said.

President Moon Jae-in called the incident "shocking," "intolerable" and "very regrettable." He ordered the military to strengthen its readiness.

Little is known about the late 49-year-old South Korean, except that he was among 18 officials aboard the govern-

ment boat belonging to the Oceans and Fisheries Ministry. When his colleagues searched for him after his disappearance, they only found his shoes left on the ship's stern. Days of searching involving aircraft and vessels were unsuccessful, according to the Defense Ministry.

The oceans ministry said yesterday it has no evidence indicating the late official tried to defect or accidentally fell from the ship. It said the official didn't tell his colleagues about any plan to defect and left most of his belongings like clothes and daily necessities on the ship.

Several bloody naval skirmishes and two deadly attacks blamed on North Korea have occurred in recent years at the countries' poorly marked western sea boundary. The government ship was near South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island, which was hit by North Korean artillery in 2010, killing four people.

The incident is expected to worsen already frosty ties between the Koreans, whose exchanges and cooperation programs have virtually been halted. In June, North Korea blew up an inter-Korean liaison office to protest South Korean civilians sending leaflets against the North across the border.

Some experts said the government explanation that the official might have attempted to defect lacked evidence. They said the government may want to prevent strong anti-North Korean sentiment to keep alive chances for talks between the nations.

"A public servant defec-

ting to North Korea? I think it sounds a bit strange as he has stable job security," said Choi Kang, vice president of Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies. "Why did North Korea shoot a man defecting to the North voluntarily? I can also say the burning of his body was an attempt to conceal evidence."

Moon's liberal government has faced criticism by conservatives that it sympathizes too much with North Korea and failed to respond strongly enough to the North's past provocations, such as the destruction of the liaison office and crude insults against the South.

In 2008, North Korean soldiers fatally shot a visiting South Korean tourist who wandered into a restricted area at the North's scenic Diamond Mountain resort. South Korea's then conservative government responded by suspending tours to the resort.

The opposition conservative People Power Party urged Moon's government to take stern action. "The reason for the government's existence is protecting its people and their property," it said in a statement.

Defections of South Koreans to North Korea are highly unusual. More than 30,000 North Koreans have fled to South Korea in the past 20 years for political and economic reasons.

In July, however, a North Korean defector slipped back into North Korea, prompting the North to impose a lockdown of a border city and declare a state of emergency over virus concerns. **AP**

this day in history

1950 SEOUL IN UN HANDS



United Nations forces have taken control of the South Korean capital Seoul, three months after it fell to North Korea, the US Army has announced.

The US 7th Infantry Division and South Korean 17th Regiment have crossed the Han river and captured the North Korean stronghold on South Mountain, the spokesman said.

US Marines have also reached Duk Soo palace in the centre of the city and are within 600m (1,969ft) of the main railway station.

North Koreans strongly resisted the UN advance near the station and American and South Korean units suffered many casualties, but opposition in other areas is reported to have been light.

US Air Force planes from the American aircraft carrier Sicily supported the ground attacks all day, targeting North Korean defences with jellied petrol bombs and rockets.

Major General Edward Almond, commander of the X Army Corps, told reporters the combined assault had been key to the UN's success.

The general said: "Co-ordination of air, tank and artillery, and infantry fire-power made possible the seizure of the enemy's defences with minimum losses."

He added that the UN advance from the west after the landings at Inchon on 15 September had cut off important North Korean supply routes and forced them to retreat.

North Korea's defences were crucially breached when tanks from the American 1st Cavalry Division, which had entered Seoul from the west, linked up with US infantry who had fought their way from the east.

The troops joined forces at the 274m (900ft) South Mountain after it was captured in a surprise attack.

The North Korean Peoples' Army have been in control of Seoul since 26 June, just 24 hours after they invaded South Korea.

The UN condemned the offensive and US troops arrived to bolster South Korean resistance just days later.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Korea was divided after the Japanese withdrawal at the end of World War II - which left the USSR occupying the north of the country and the US the south. The border was the 38th parallel.

The invasion of South Korea took the international community largely by surprise - despite years of increasingly bloody frontier incidents. The re-capture of Seoul from the North Koreans did not signal the end of the conflict and in November 1950 troops from Communist China entered a war which would eventually cost two million lives.

Fighting in Korea did not stop until the signing of an armistice on 27 July 1953.

But a peace deal has never been reached and American troops remain stationed in the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

There seems to be a trend going on around you. People are using their charm to get what they want while you are doing things the old-fashioned way. You are working for them!



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

You have the inside track on a new venture or new trend, and quite a few people want in on the secret. Divulge this information slowly, so you can keep yourself in a more powerful position.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

More than on any other day in your recent past, letting things go today will make you feel good. This is a great day to lighten your emotional load and say farewell to grudges, anger, and control issues.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

If you are having a hard time getting along with a sibling, roommate, or partner, tonight might be when everything comes to a head. The good news is that it won't be as awkward as you fear.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Public opinion is strongly on your side right now. Pretty much anything you suggest, no matter how outlandish or odd it might seem, will be adopted and accepted.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Boredom simply can't be tolerated right now. You need stimulation and you need it now! Deep and meaningful conversations are nice to have, but today you're itching for more of an interaction.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Heck, even the things (and the people) you don't think are particularly attractive will have a certain aesthetically pleasing effect. And if you have a partner, your attraction to them will be greater, too.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

As you acquire an increased awareness of the world around you, you will also be privy to an increased awareness of the problems that exist. This education is an awakening for you.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

They say that laughter is the best medicine, but sometimes medicine is the best medicine! Make sure you're up to date on your health. If it's been a while since you had a checkup, schedule one today.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

See that glass as half full. Today might not be the best day of your life, but it will offer many chances for you to test your mettle and impress yourself.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

New energy is coming your way in the form of a very charming person from a different culture. Their gestures of kindness and words of wisdom will make you feel valued respected.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

There are many different paths for you to follow, but don't waste your time trying to figure out which one to take. You can't pick a path today. It will pick you!

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

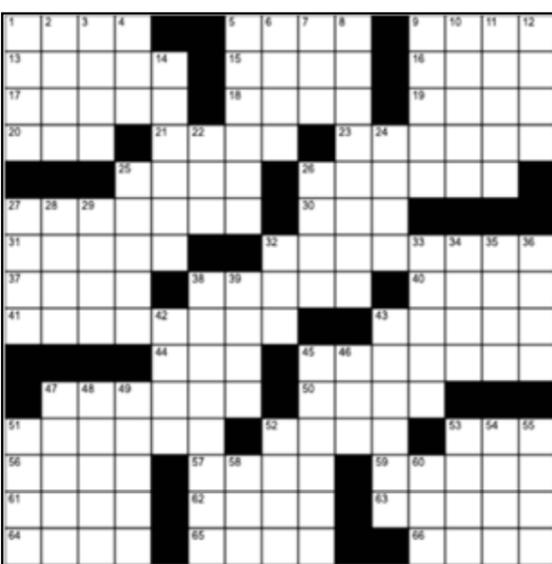
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	13	24	clear
Harbin	12	21	shower
Tianjin	17	24	cloudy
Urumqi	8	19	cloudy
Xi'an	15	24	overcast
Lhasa	10	23	cloudy
Chengdu	17	20	shower
Chongqing	20	23	moderate rain
Kunming	15	23	cloudy
Nanjing	18	27	cloudy
Shanghai	20	27	cloudy
Wuhan	17	25	cloudy
Hangzhou	18	27	overcast
Taipei	23	27	cloudy
Guangzhou	24	33	cloudy
Hong Kong	24	29	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	9	22	cloudy
Frankfurt	14	23	drizzle
Paris	10	18	drizzle
London	7	14	drizzle
New York	17	27	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Draft classification; 5- Durable wood; 9- Foot part; 13- Execute illegally; 15- ___ breve; 16- Whimper; 17- Compact; 18- Dairy product; 19- On ___ with; 20- Canonized Mle.; 21- Ostrichlike bird; 23- Exit; 25- Bad day for Caesar; 26- Strikes; 27- Present; 30- First name in horror films; 31- Lend ___; 32- Sound of constant pitch; 37- Keep it, to an editor; 38- Midway state; 40- Romance lang.; 41- Put up with; 43- Covering for the hand; 44- Chem., for one; 45- Expert marksman; 47- Declares; 50- Eyeball; 51- Mutter; 52- Langston Hughes poem; 53- ___-relief; 56- Inter ___; 57- Word that can precede bodied and seaman; 59- Loose coil of yarn; 61- Draft picks; 62- Follow; 63- Artist Rousseau; 64- Roman god of war; 65- Bibliography abbr.; 66- Treehouse used by birds;

DOWN: 1- Auto pioneer; 2- Russian no; 3- Feminine suffix; 4- Cooling units, for short; 5- Least feral; 6- Charles Lamb's pen name; 7- 100%; 8- Japanese scroll; 9- Separated; 10- Monetary unit of India; 11- Category; 12- "His and ___"; 14- Guy who tends sheep; 22- Female fowl; 24- Football Hall of Famer Marchetti; 25- Fuming; 26- Pig; 27- Support for a broken limb; 28- A law ___ itself; 29- Spool; 32- Marseilles Mrs.; 33- São Paulo feature; 34- Oklahoma Native; 35- Fleet; 36- Gen. Robert ___; 38- Tear roughly; 39- How sweet ___; 42- Queue after Q; 43- Waterproof overshoe; 45- I'm all ears!; 46- Sense of self; 47- Roman general; 48- Judge, e.g.; 49- Gather together; 51- Yes, ___; 52- Hip bones; 53- Nota ___; 54- Melodies; 55- Irritated state; 58- Baseball club; 60- Boy toy;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



FOR SALE

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
710 ft² \$16,500/mth (ref: 20021002)

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

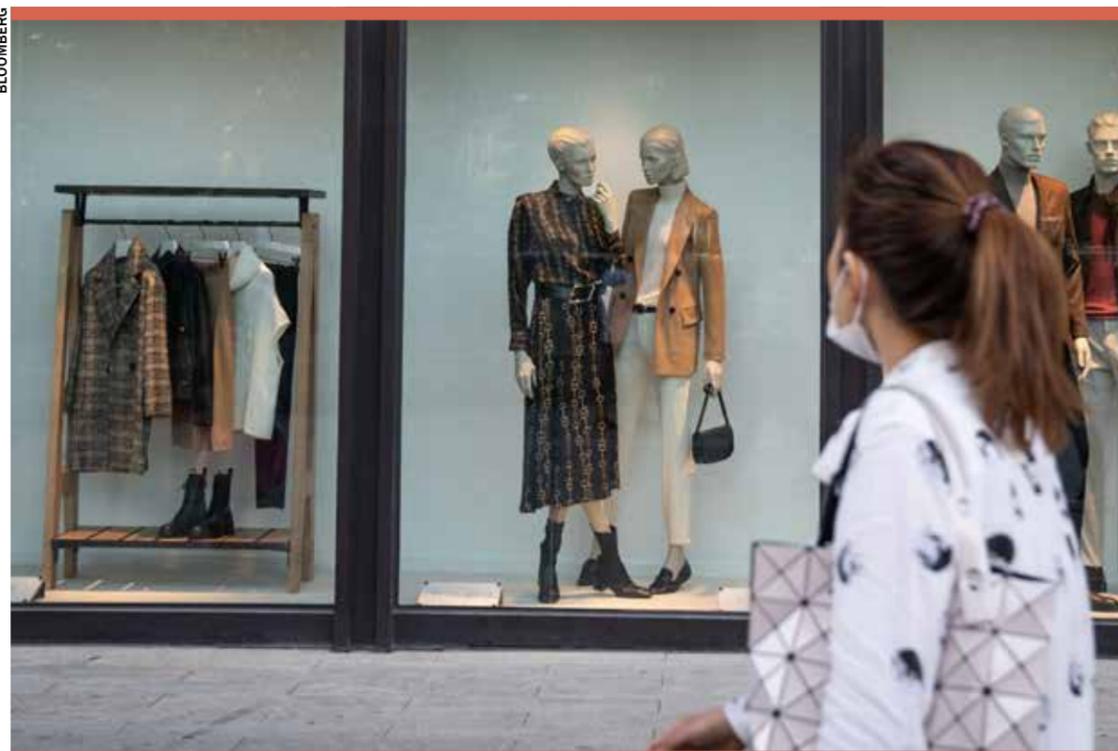
CHINA'S RETAIL RECOVERY STILL RESTS ON RICHER CONSUMERS

CHINESE consumers are finally starting to spend again after the pandemic-induced slump, but the recovery is unbalanced and overly reliant on luxury goods, with poorer Chinese still cautious.

Consumption has started to catch up to the much stronger rebound in industrial output, with retail sales growing in August for the first time this year. Spending on luxury goods, cars and electronics is leading the charge, rising faster than food, clothing and other essentials.

While the supply side of China's economy has shown resilience, a strong and broad rebound in spending is needed for a more meaningful economic recovery. Even though the virus is under control, income and job losses due to the pandemic have made poorer Chinese unwilling or unable to increase spending, keeping a lid on the rebound.

"Higher-income households have probably built up savings, because of the forced reduction in consumption during lockdown, and could now be ready for a spending spree. It is lower-income households that face a



longer slog of normalizing their finances," He Wei, an analyst at Gavekal Dragonomics, said in a recent report.

"Consumer confidence appears to be coming back even without a vaccine. This is reflected in strong pickups in sales of

non-essentials, such as cosmetics and jewelry, in recent months. Improved sentiment and spending at home in lieu of overseas trips should help support private consumption," wrote Bloomberg economists Chang Shu and David Qu in another report.

Luxury spending in China will grow 20%-30% this year, according to a report from Boston Consulting Group, but much of that growth is going to come from consumers in the 50 largest and richest cities. People in the other 2,206 cities bought only a quarter

of all luxury goods in April-July this year, and their spending was down 4% compared with 2019, according to the report.

The lopsided recovery can also be seen in the car market. Sales of luxury vehicles have recovered much quicker than regular cars, and are now almost a fifth of all cars sold.

One luxury where spending hasn't rebounded is gambling in Macau, which is forecast to see an 81% drop in revenue this year, according to Credit Suisse analysts led by Kenneth Fong. Gaming in the city is traditionally a good indicator of discretionary spending in China, but that came to a crashing halt in February.

Travel is another sector where there's still a long way to go to recover from the damage caused by the pandemic. Real-time data from China's 11-biggest cities shows that people are still somewhat wary about going out via public transport.

The week-long national holidays from Oct. 1 will give an indication of whether consumers are becoming more willing and able to spend on discretionary items such as tourism.

State television reported that bookings were rising, but they're unlikely to reach the levels seen in October 2018 or 2019, when more than 1.5 billion trips were made. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

AD

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WELLNESS

VIBRATIONAL SOUND THERAPY

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many individuals are now facing issues such as insomnia, stress and anxiety. The lack of opportunities for travel, financial burden and familial disagreement are creating negative emotions in our society. Determined to help people go through difficult times in life, Anne is the Director of the Macau Himalaya Singing Bowl Therapy Workshop and works tirelessly to provide personalized healing treatment using vibrational energy for distressed souls. "70% of the human body is made of water. The singing bowl penetrates the body with its sound and cleanses

the aura of an individual. Through relaxation methods, the mind enters into a meditative stage and negative energy will then be released. My clients include those with cancer, women and man who just ended an relationship, and others who are just overworked and overwhelmed with life, So far the feedback has been very positive," she says. A sanctuary for spiritual healing, Anne's workshop provides a private space for reflection and relaxation. Various yoga classes and spiritual study groups are also available for city dwellers to join and get a taste of blissful endeavors. IS



IRENE SAM, MDT

TASTE OF EDESIA

There are many high quality cafés around Macau but very few of them provide an all-day breakfast menu filled with nutritious and delicious offerings.

Comfort food with a flair

Located just steps away from the lush Lou Lim leoc garden, Café Toff is not only an establishment famous for its breakfast choices, but it also provides one-of-a-kind dishes prepared without MSG.

Bottled noodle is a highlight on the menu. Made with top-quality chilled chicken, American onions, vegetables and other ingredients simmered slowly

over the stove, the oil-filtered chicken broth for the bottled noodle is full of unami characteristics yet not greasy.

Nutritional retention is taken into full consideration during the boiling process.

The all-day breakfast is a main feature on the menu. Perfectly scrambled eggs can be paired with portobello mushroom, sa-

lad or other ingredients to make a sumptuous meal.

Whatever the choice of food is, guests will enjoy themselves in a space with high ceiling, comfortable and bright. Various types of distressed woods are used in the interior. In addition, oxidized metal, rough and casual cement walls complement artistic English calligraphy, forming a unique visual collage.



Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu



THE LIAONING (DIVISION 2) 1050 METRES SAND
2020-09-25 | Fri | 21:05

I am going to go for a tough early season race in my column. It is difficult because it is a sand sprint race, speed and tactics plus the low draw would have the edge in the running, but my pick in this race is not a usual front runner and his racing style is following the pace and comes from behind; just like his last race he covered himself after the two strong on pace runners and at the last 50 metres got to the front with his strong turn of foot and won. It shows that he has a good fighting heart and willing to fight. This horse that I am talking about is **Ventures Elite** (pictured) in race 5 in this Friday's night's meeting. **Ventures Elite** has good pedigree from **Battle Paint** out from the Ishiguru mare Four Roses. **Battle Paint**, sire of seven stakes performers headed by Group 2 winner **Battle Time** and star Singapore galloper **Affleck**, who was champion of Two & Three-Year-Old in Singapore. In the track work **Ventures Elite** looking good and full of himself, he gave me the impression that he is ready for a good run in the early season, with a good draw in barrier 3, he should find an ideal tactical spot and run on to get into the money.

Race 5 Horse no. 1 Ventures Elite Win & Place



OPINION

China Daily

Xinhua Editors

THE TIKTOK DEAL, A BRAZEN HEIST

What popular video-sharing app TikTok has undergone over recent months has provided the world with a textbook example of the United States' modern-day piracy and tech bullying.

Under the cliched pretext of protecting national security, Washington first threatened to shut down TikTok's operations in the United States, before forcing it to sell itself to American companies.

Over the last week, while the world has been celebrating the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the most prominent epitome of multilateralism and cooperation, Washington pushed its luck to try and gobble up the Chinese social networking service. Otherwise, it says it will refuse to approve the agreement reached on Saturday by TikTok's Chinese parent company, ByteDance, with U.S. companies Oracle and Walmart.

By repeatedly using state power to suppress the private company without any proper justification, despite widespread protests from numerous TikTok users and concerns from industry observers, Washington has laid bare its true intention: to pull off a daylight heist.

Its so-called national security concerns are nothing but a fig leaf. According to Business Insider and other media outlets, U.S. politicians have repeatedly accused TikTok of stealing citizens' information and threatening national security, but never found any evidence. Experts who have scrutinized TikTok's code and privacy policies have also found them not so different from other social media platforms, including Facebook.

"TikTok's data collection practices aren't particularly unique for an advertising-based business," Wired magazine reporter Louise Matsakis concluded after a deep dive into the issue. A German government official told Bloomberg that the country has seen no signs that the app poses a national security risk. What's more, the European Union has refused to label TikTok a national security threat.

The clampdown on TikTok has undermined international trade rules and order. TikTok is a purely commercial company; the use of national power by the United States to encircle and suppress it has seriously shaken the cornerstone of the establishment of global economic and trade rules.

"I do believe anytime a nation-state renders judgment on which applications can or cannot run 'in country' ... then it provides 'air cover' for countries to impose what I would describe as 'nontariff' trade barriers," Aneesh Chopra, who served as the first chief technology officer of the United States under former President Barack Obama, said in an email to NBC News.

Without a fair and stable environment, all multinational enterprises, including U.S. ones, will be put at risk. Washington's indiscriminate crackdown on TikTok might benefit its American rivals such as Facebook in the short term, but such behavior in the long term is bound to undermine the global climate to the detriment of all investors.

From Huawei and ZTE to TikTok and WeChat, the United States' preying on China's leading technology companies in recent years has exposed Washington's attempt to curb the Asian country's development. The superpower has a tradition of suppressing any foreign enterprise that challenges its leading position, even those in allied countries, such as Japan's Toshiba and France's Alstom.

TikTok is a successful social media platform, but the United States does not want to see it thrive in the free market. Should the United States be allowed to get its way with its tricks and bullying, it would do the same over and over again, and more countries and enterprises would fall victim.

"If the U.S. is bent on having its own way, China will take necessary measures to resolutely protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies," China's ministry of commerce said Saturday in an online statement.

It is time that other countries saw through the outrageous farce of the TikTok drama, knew what is really at stake, and joined hands to oppose such blatant robberies and maintain a fair global business environment.

Foreigners holding certain types of visas and residence permits will be permitted to return to China starting next week as the threat of the coronavirus continues to recede.

The new regulation lifts a months long blanket suspension covering most foreigners apart from diplomats and those in special circumstances.

Beginning Monday, foreign nationals holding valid Chinese visas and residence permits for work, personal matters and family reunions will be permitted to enter China without needing to apply for new visas, according to the regulation.

Those whose permits have expired can reapply. Returnees must undergo two weeks of quarantine and follow other anti-epidemic measures, the regulation said.

Some exceptions may still be made, with the foreign ministry communicating to some journalists that the regulation may not apply to them. Journalist visas have recently opened up as a new front in the diplomatic confrontation between Washington and Beijing.

The announcement was made jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Immigration Administration on Wednesday. China announced seven new cases of coronavirus yesterday.

PANDEMIC

CHINESE COMPANY SAYS CORONAVIRUS VACCINE READY BY EARLY 2021

A Chinese pharmaceutical company said yesterday the coronavirus vaccine it is developing should be ready by early 2021 for distribution worldwide, including the United States.

Yin Weidong, the CEO of SinoVac, vowed to apply to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to sell CoronaVac in the United States if it passes its third and final round of testing in humans. Yin said he personally has been given the experimental vaccine.

"At the very beginning, our strategy was designed for China and for Wuhan. Soon after that in June and July we adjusted our strategy, that is to face the world," Yin said, referring to the Chinese city where the virus first emerged.

"Our goal is to provide the vaccine to the world including the U.S., EU and others," Yin said.

Stringent regulations in the U.S., European Union, Japan and Australia have historically blocked the sale of Chinese vaccines. But Yin said that could change.

SinoVac is developing one of China's top four vaccine candidates along with state-owned SinoPharm, which has two in development, and military-affiliated private



A worker inside a lab at the SinoVac vaccine factory in Beijing

firm CanSino.

More than 24,000 people are currently participating in clinical trials of CoronaVac in Brazil, Turkey, and Indonesia, with additional trials scheduled for Bangladesh and possibly Chile, Yin said. SinoVac chose those countries because they all had serious outbreaks, large populations and limited research and development capacity, he said.

He spoke to reporters during a tour of a SinoVac plant south of Beijing. Built in a few months from scratch, the plant is designed to enable SinoVac to produce half a million vaccine doses a year. The bio-secure facility was already busy on Thursday filling tiny bottles with the vaccine and boxing

them. The company projects it will be able to produce a few hundred million doses of the vaccine by February or March of next year.

SinoVac is also starting to test small doses of CoronaVac on children and the elderly in China after noticing rising numbers of cases globally among those two groups.

Yin said the company would prioritize distribution of the vaccine to countries hosting human trials of CoronaVac.

While the vaccine has not yet passed the phase 3 clinical trials, a globally accepted standard, SinoVac has already injected thousands of people in China under an emergency use provision. MDT/AP

Afghanistan The Taliban launched a wave of attacks on security checkpoints in southern Afghanistan overnight, killing a total of 28 Afghan policemen, officials said. The violence comes even as Taliban leaders and Afghan government-appointed negotiators are holding historic peace talks in Qatar, a Mideast country where the Taliban set up a political office after they were toppled from power in the 2001 U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan. The negotiations, which started earlier this month, are meant to end the fighting and establish a roadmap for a post-war society.

UN The commission on human rights in South Sudan says "a staggering \$36 million" has been misappropriated by government officials and senior politicians since 2016 as widespread corruption continues to drain the world's youngest nation. "It is worth noting this is just what we were able to trace and may not reflect the whole picture," the commission's chair, Yasmin Sooka, told the U.N. Human Rights Council. South Sudan's government could not immediately be reached for comment.



EU said yesterday that the swearing in of Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko to a sixth term during a secretive ceremony lacks democratic legitimacy, defies the will of the Belarusian people and will only deepen the country's political crisis. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell reiterated that the 27-nation bloc did not recognize the result of the Aug. 9 election that kept Lukashenko in power after 26 years.

Australia Westpac, the country's second-largest bank, agreed to pay a 1.3 billion Australian dollar (\$919 million) fine for breaches of anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing laws, the largest ever civil penalty in Australia, a financial crime regulator said yesterday. The regulator, AUSTRAC, said it had agreed with Westpac to the penalty after the bank admitted failing to report 19.5 million international money transfers worth more than \$7 billion between November 2013 and September 2018.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

MDT/Paulo Coutinho



Returning rabbits. After the copyrights controversy exposé surrounding the lanterns installation at the Pergola Garden, the IAM changed the previous rabbits' statuettes to... this.