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**FORMER PRINCIPALS OF A PRIVATE SCHOOL ARE ACCUSED OF CONSPIRING WITH A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY TO DEFRAUD THE GOVERNMENT OF MOP20 MILLION**

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**IAM 'HAS NEVER, AT ANY TIME, RULED OUT LIABILITY' REGARDING WASHSTAND INCIDENT**

P2

**THE DEPARTING US AMBASSADOR IN BEIJING DEFENDS A TOUGH APPROACH TO CHINA THAT HAS RILED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WORLD'S TWO LARGEST ECONOMIES**

P7

AP PHOTO



**China** yesterday called India's designation of the region along their disputed border as a federal territory an illegal move, and voiced new objections to infrastructure construction that seems to strengthen India's position in the area. Foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin also said reports of new Chinese military bases and other facilities being built on its side were "totally untrue and have ulterior motives."

**Japan** Newly elected Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga told Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday that he wants to settle their territorial dispute and sign a peace treaty formally ending their World War II hostilities. The two countries both claim a group of islands seized by the former Soviet Union in the final days of the war, preventing them from signing a peace treaty. The islands, called the Northern Territories in Japan and the Kurils in Russia, are off the northern coast of Japan's Hokkaido.

AP PHOTO



**Japanese** telecoms giant Nippon Telegraph & Telephone, or NTT, announced Tuesday it will spend 4.3 trillion yen (\$38 billion) to buy out and take private its mobile unit NTT DoCoMo in one of the largest ever deals of its kind. NTT and NTT DoCoMo executives released details of the plan yesterday. The move is intended to enhance the competitiveness of the NTT group as it consolidates its services, said NTT's CEO Jun Sawada.

More on backpage

BLOOMBERG



**GOLDEN WEEK**

# BEIJING ENDORSES MACAU, HAINAN

China's luxury shoppers should avoid travelling overseas and opt for national destinations such as Macau, Hainan on Golden Week P3

## HENGQIN TOP PROPERTY INVESTORS FROM MACAU

P6

## GRAND PRIX HEALTH MEASURES TO INFLATE HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATES

P4



## SIX INJURED IN GUIA HILL TUNNEL TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

Yesterday morning, six people were injured in a series of car accidents at the Guia Hill tunnel, according to the Public Security Police Force (PSP). The first accident was reported to the police authority at 8:43 a.m., when two motorbikes crashed, separately, inside the tunnel. The two accidents then triggered another three crashes involving four light vehicles, one taxi, and seven motorbikes. All of the injured parties were driving motorbikes. Five of them needed hospital treatment. Due to the multiple accidents, police officers and firefighters temporarily closed the affected lane for nearly two hours. According to a report by TDM, the PSP's preliminary investigation showed that the accidents were most likely caused by an oil leak from a public bus.

## PASSENGERS TO USE DESIGNATED ENTRANCES WHEN ENTERING AIRPORT

The Macau International Airport has designated several specific entrances and exits to give passengers access to the departure hall, according to a report by TDM. Starting from yesterday, individuals who intend to visit the Macau airport can only enter the departure hall level through gates 1, 2, and 14. Only the gates on the north and south ends of the arrival hall level are accessible. All other gates are closed. The airport has made these arrangements in order to facilitate compliance with health inspection measures. All passengers will enter through these gates to have their body temperature scanned and show their health codes.

## LAWMAKER URGES NO MORE COVID-19 TESTS FOR BORDER CROSSING

Lawmaker Mak Soi Kun has written to the local government asking for the return to complete normality in terms of immigration measures between Macau and Zhuhai. Mak said that both Macau and Zhuhai's Covid-19 situations are stable and that, as part of the Greater Bay Area, the SAR government can negotiate with Guangdong's relevant departments to change the current policies. Mak explicitly proposed that Zhuhai and Macau residents no longer be required to take Covid-19 tests to cross the borders between the two places. He wants Macau and Zhuhai to be pioneering cities in lifting the mandatory Covid-19 test requirement. Mak also said that, should Macau and Zhuhai show any signs of new Covid-19 cases, the local government can immediately revert back to mandatory testing.

# FORMER SCHOOL HEADS ACCUSED OF MOP20 MILLION FRAUD

RENATO MARQUES

A former principal and former vice-principal of a private school institution located on the Macau peninsula are being accused of allegedly conspiring with a construction company to defraud the government of MOP20.38 million, the Judiciary Police (PJ) informed in a statement.

According to the PJ, the case dates back to March 2018 when the new principal became suspicious of identified irregularities and reported them to the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ), who in turn informed the PJ.

During the investigation, the PJ investigators found that the school had applied for subsidies totaling MOP28 million,

involving 582 projects related to courses and construction works between 2014 and 2016. Of these, only 61 had been completed. This fact was in contradiction to reports submitted by the institution to the DSEJ, in which it stated that all 582 projects had been successfully completed.

The PJ also found that, after receiving the subsidies, the school transferred the funds into a bank account of the construction company. From there, the funds were transferred to the personal bank accounts of the owner of the construction company and other companies operated by the same person.

On September 28, the PJ detained three out of the four people suspected of involvement in the case for questioning. This inclu-

ded the former vice-principal (a 51-year-old female), the owner of the construction company (a 49-year-old male), and his sister (a 40-year-old female), all of whom are local residents.

The former vice principal claimed to the PJ that she had been directed by her superior to submit the allegedly false reports to the DSEJ and receive the subsidies.

The owner of the construction company informed the PJ that the money received had been used in the school's construction projects, justifying the transfer of money to different bank accounts as being for the purposes of tax avoidance.

His sister, the person involved in the transfer of money between bank accounts, told the police that she did not know about any

illegal operations by the construction company. She added that she had performed all administrative work for the company following normal procedures and under the direction of her brother.

After questioning, the trio was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office yesterday.

The former vice-principal is being accused of fraud involving a considerably high amount as well as document forgery, while the owner of the company and his sister are also being charged with fraud involving a considerably high amount and money laundering.

The case is still under investigation, as the PJ is not aware of the whereabouts of the former principal, who is still at large.

## ANOTHER 12 PEOPLE SUSPECTED OF SPREADING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) has apprehended 12 Nepali nationals who are suspected of distributing videos of child pornography, according to the police department.

Yesterday, the PJ held a press conference on the case. The 12 Nepalis are all security guards, including a 27-year-old working for the government police force.

The PJ received information from the International Criminal

Police Organization (Interpol) back in August this year notifying the Macau police authority that a number of individuals had been sharing videos of child pornography on Facebook between April and May.

An Interpol investigation revealed that the victim in the video was a foreign girl. The concerned video was around two minutes and 30 seconds in length.

The PJ was able to identify the location of the 12 people. On Monday morning, the police authority took action to apprehend these men.

Some were directly apprehended from two security company offices in the central and northern districts while the rest were apprehended at their apartments.

Upon police interrogation, ten of the suspects confessed to

sharing the video. Two refused to cooperate with the police officers.

The PJ pledged to continue investigating the source of the video, including identifying the film maker.

This is the second case involving the distribution of child pornography by a significant number of offenders in recent times.

Earlier, in August, a group of 11 Nepalese men were arrested for the same crime. The 11 suspects were aged between 21 and 36 years old. In this case, the police concluded that the video had been shot outside of Macau. JZ

## IAM 'HAS NEVER, AT ANY TIME, RULED OUT LIABILITY' REGARDING WASHSTAND INCIDENT

THE Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has not ruled out liability regarding a recent incident in which tiles fell from a washstand, injuring one local resident.

In a statement sent to the Times, the bureau said that it "values the quality of works under its supervision, and regards the recent incidents in all seriousness."

Recounting the earlier statements, the IAM said, "on September 24, the bureau issued a communiqué where it said it was

strengthening the supervision of municipal facilities and quality. On September 25, during a press conference, IAM president José Tavares stressed that the institute is concerned with the quality of municipal facilities, and that it will carry out a general investigation hoping that facilities meet safety standards."

"The IAM is aware of the seriousness of the incident and has never, at any time, ruled out liability for the incident," the bureau added.

"Following the speech, the same official appealed to the public to use the facilities correctly so as not to cause damage and to support IAM in its work to maintain their quality," continued the statement.

The IAM also said that "the IAM is a service whose mission is to serve the public and it will continue to pursue and carry out this task in the name of the well-being and quality of life of residents."

Earlier last week, Macau resident Choi Chi Wai sustained a

bone fracture when he was hit by tiles that fell from a washstand at the Hac Sa Reservoir. Choi, a heavy-duty vehicle driver, has been directed by his doctor to take a three-month-long break in order to recover from the injury.

The IAM issued the statement to Macau Daily Times in response to an article titled "IAM blames the public for wearing down facilities after washbasin accident" published in the newspaper on Monday, September 28, for the purpose of clarification. MDT

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# China's luxury shoppers may opt for Hainan, Macau over Europe destinations

LYNZY VALLES

**L**UXURY shoppers from the mainland are likely to fly to Hainan or Macau during the Golden Week holiday that starts tomorrow instead of flying abroad, according to a report by Vogue Business, as China's government has endorsed travel to national destinations and discouraged its citizens from traveling abroad.

Travel and consumption analysts have noted that as luxury shoppers decide on where to spend the seven-day national holiday, Hainan and Macau have emerged as favorites.

This upcoming holiday is one of the country's largest shopping occasions, during which time many often travel out of the country for the occasion, particularly to Europe, North America and East and Southeast Asia.

However, that is not the case this year as the public is cautious about long-haul travel due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This means that trips to popular destinations such as Thailand or Italy are less likely to take place and the consumers will be diverted to domestic markets instead.

Travel analytics company ForwardKeys had expected a full recovery to 2019 levels in terms of China travel volume by the end of September.

As Chinese travelers are currently banned from 123 coun-



tries, Olivier Ponti, vice president of insights at ForwardKeys, has stressed that there are very few choices for tourism destinations.

"Bookings to Sanya [in Hainan] are already 25.5% ahead of last year," Ponti said.

The southern end of Hainan has ranked fourth and first in the list of top destinations for group and independent travel respectively for Chinese travel agency Group.com.

Hainan has also announced a new offshore duty-free policy, extending the purchase quota from RMB30,000 to RMB100,000.

Meanwhile, since September 23, all mainland residents have been permitted to apply for Macau visas. Given the seven-day

processing period, those who applied immediately may receive the visas just in time for October 1.

According to Zhang Tianbing, consumer products and retail sector leader at Deloitte Asia Pacific, the SAR is included in a promotional campaign, whereby Alibaba's travel-service app Fliggy has offered buy one-get one free plane tickets to Macau ahead of the holidays.

This scheme is a part of its RMB10 billion worth of discounts and offers.

This implies that the city is also well positioned to attract a share of domestic luxury shoppers this year, similar to Hainan.

Earlier, brokerage Morgan

Stanley estimated an average hotel occupancy rate of 80% for the Golden Week period. These five-star hotels include Four Seasons, Morpheus, Ritz-Carlton, StarWorld, and Studio City, which were said to already be

fully booked. More recent estimates have put that figure between 10% and 20% city-wide.

However, it is still unclear whether a significant number of Golden Week tourists will be coming to Macau, as even the Macao Government Tourism Office has low expectations for the major holiday. The MGTO believes that reaching 50% occupancy for Golden Week would be a "good sign" of recovery.

Moreover, in a recent interview with the Times, Trip.com chairman James Liang Jianzhang shared that most Chinese travelers would not make it in time for Golden Week. However, a more meaningful recovery can be expected by November or December this year.

Trip.com's data shows that it may take several weeks for tourists' interest in Macau to pick up, given the lack of awareness that Macau's borders are open.

## RETURN-HOME PERMITS NOW RENEWABLE ON MAINLAND

**MACAU** and Hong Kong residents will be able to renew their return-home permits for the People's Republic of China while on the mainland, according to the People's Daily. This would save many people from having to apply for these permits back in their place

of residence. According to the state media source, the administrative change could save applicants 180 million yuan in traveling expenses. The permits allow residents of the two special administrative regions of China to travel freely between their home city and mainland China.

## TRAVEL AGENCY RECEIPTS, EXPENDITURE PLUNGE IN 2019

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE travel agency industry's receipts and expenditure amounted to MOP8.29 billion and MOP7.79 billion respectively in 2019, representing decreases of 9.5% and 11.0% year-on-year, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service.

With a decline in the numbers of package tour visitors and outbound residents using the services of travel agencies last year, receipts of travel agencies from room reservation services (MOP2.59 billion), package tours (MOP2.17 billion) and passenger transport ticketing (MOP1.51 billion) fell by 11.2%, 12.6% and 14.7% year-on-year respectively.

On the other hand, receipts from rentals of coaches with

drivers (MOP 1.34 billion) increased by 10.8% year-on-year.

Expenditure on purchases of goods and services and commissions dropped by 14.7% year-on-year to MOP6.04 billion, of which expenditure on room reservation services (MOP2.47 billion), package tours (MOP1.73 billion) and passenger transport ticketing (MOP1.46 billion) fell by 10.9%, 17.1% and 18.0% respectively. There were 218 travel agencies operating in 2019, down by 3 year-on-year.

Analyzed by size of travel agency, those with 50 or more persons engaged totaled 19, down by 1 year-on-year. Receipts of these travel agencies slid by 6.8% year-on-year to MOP 2.92 billion, which were mainly generated from rentals of coaches with drivers (MOP968

million), room reservation services (MOP661 million) and package tours (MOP607 million).

These figures were registered prior the Covid-19 outbreak, which led to a significant drop in the city's travel agency sector.

Although no data is yet available for the sector so far this year, it is expected that receipts and expenditure for 2020 will have plunged.

Data from the first half of the year shows that about 222 local travel agencies have suspended their services due to the absence of visitors.

As the city's main source market were unable to come due to entry and border restrictions, last month's tourism arrivals was down 93.7% compared with the same month in 2019.

## IC CANCELS INT'L PARADE DUE TO EPIDEMIC PREVENTION MEASURES

**T**HE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has decided to cancel the "2020 Macao International Parade" scheduled for December this year as the format of the event is not suitable for the current prevention and control measures of the epidemic.

According to the bureau, it decided to cancel the annual event after "careful evaluation and comprehensive consideration" as some foreign participating groups will not be able to visit Macau to participate in the parade.

With the number of local groups and international groups participating totaling about 1,800 participants every year, the event draws large numbers of people, and such high densities may present risks associa-

ted with crowded gatherings.

As part of the event, a series of outreach activities are usually extended to various districts, and various promotional activities such as a photography contest and interactive games were launched in the previous editions.

The annual parade is usually a part of the city's handover anniversary celebrated every December 20.

Meanwhile, in celebration of the 21st anniversary of Macau's handover to China, the IC noted that the Macao Chinese Orchestra will present the concert "Listen to the Voice of the Chinese" at the Ruins of St. Paul in December and will host a series of cultural and artistic performances. LV

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# MACAU GP HEALTH MEASURES TO INFLATE HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATES

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE preventive measures enforced by local health authorities are creating more changes than were initially expected to the organization of Macau's largest annual event, the Macau Grand Prix.

According to a source familiar with the ongoing organizational procedures who requested to remain anonymous, the Grand Prix organizers are facing a high number of obstacles related to compliance with the guidelines of local health authorities.

The source disclosed to the Times that one such consequence is that the organizers will need to double the number of hotel rooms for race participants and their team members.

"In the past, we would normally book twin rooms [for the participants] but due to the Covid-19 measures, we need to book individual rooms this year. This will double the number of hotel rooms we need," the source told the Times, adding, "because of the quarantine, we are also arranging sets of dumbbells, weights and skipping ropes for exercise for



RAMIRO PIANAROSA

each racer in his room."

Although it was not disclosed how much those changes would cost and what influence they would have on the final budget, the same source said, "for sure all this will have an extra cost."

"At the end of the day, this means we will have to pay for individual rooms for each team member for about 24 or 25 days and this also includes the meals during quarantine, laundry, etc. This will cost much more than

we used to [spend] with a twin room for 11 nights only," the source remarked.

According to the same source, if the health authorities permitted the use of a "bubble system" similar to that used in

other major motorsports events worldwide, in which participants travelled and stayed together and were subjected to nucleic acid testing, "every 2 or 3 days, this would be much easier for all of us, and cheaper."

Questioned by the Times on the assertion that the quarantine accommodation would present an additional expense for the organizers – a fact that contradicts official information from the government stating that all foreign participants in the Grand Prix are required to settle their bills regarding the 14-days quarantine – the source refused to provide details on the matter, hinting that the organization would find a way to cover such an expense through the grant of a "subsidy" to those participants.

Seeking clarification on the topic from official sources, the Times contacted the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC).

In a reply to the Times, the MGPOC said, "the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee is currently still in communications with riders, drivers and their respective teams regarding different aspects of their participation in the Macau Grand Prix. All anti-epidemic measures imposed on the participants will be set according to the guidelines by the Health Bureau."

AD

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Avenida da Amizade e Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, Macau  
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Opening Ceremony:  
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Closed on Monday

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# Sands China ties up local SMEs during Covid-19

**D**EMAND for procurement of some local goods and services has declined during the epidemic, and suppliers – including local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – are adjusting their business strategies to seek out new opportunities.

On Kei Frozen Meat Food Limited is among the local SMEs that have adopted a flexible approach. Founded in 2016, On Kei sells frozen meats and frozen seafood, as well as grains and oil. After three years of operation, On Kei decided to set up its own food processing plant in 2019, supplying products to hotels and restaurants.

In 2019, On Kei also participated in Sands China's Local SME Supplier Open Day and the Sands Procurement Academy.

"After the training course, members from Sands China's procurement team took the initiative to approach us and inquire about our products, facilities and logistics service. That's how we built up cooperation with them. We deeply feel that Sands China attaches great importance to working with local small, medium and micro enterprises," said Mr. Ivan Ao Ieong, who oversees On Kei.

## SANDS CHINA'S HELPING HAND

Initiatives like the Open Day and the Procurement Academy are part of Sands China's Local Small, Medium and Micro Suppliers Support Programme and its F.I.T. initiative (Financial Support, Invitational Matching, and Training and Development) for local SME suppliers.

The Sands Procurement Academy helps suppliers gain experience and the capacity to work

with large-scale international corporations like Sands China. The academy specifically targets four categories of local SME suppliers: SMEs, micro-enterprises, Macau young entrepreneurs, and "Made-in-Macau" enterprises. The training program has received much positive feedback from its graduates.

Like most young entrepreneurs, Mr. Ao Ieong has relatively little business experience.

"There would be a breaking-in period at the beginning of our cooperation, for sure," admitted Mok Wai Keong, a senior officer at Sands China's procurement and supply chain department.

At the beginning of their engagement, On Kei could not yet meet Sands China's standards in terms of meat cutting. But the young entrepreneur actively communicated with Sands and improved quickly. "Now we are working

together smoothly," Mok said.

On Kei's advantages are also obvious, according to Sands China. Chan Yuk Ming, director of Procurement and Supply Chain for Sands China Ltd., pointed out that the head of On Kei is young and it is easy for him to master the e-process and on-line systems required by Sands. Their product price range is also reasonable. Besides, On Kei has its own processing plant, logistics team and retail store, which means its supply chain has been less affected by the pandemic, even while hotels and restaurants have reduced their orders.

## COVID-19 WAS MEMORABLE

Both Sands China and On Kei agreed that the spread of Covid-19 was the most unforgettable experience since their cooperation.

"As a result of the pandemic, some restaurants we had previously

worked with unfortunately closed down. Our company's profits have therefore declined. Thanks to orders from Sands China, we've luckily been supported and have maintained our business during this difficult time," Ivan said.

Mok from Sands shared Ivan's feelings, saying, "The epidemic broke out soon after we began cooperation with On Kei. They responded quickly and collaborated with us closely. We are pleased with their service."

On Kei's business has increased by 30% since it became one of Sands China's suppliers. The company has also scaled up its manpower in food processing, administration and logistics. The number of its employees has doubled from seven to 14.

On Kei was also invited to join the Sands Shopping Carnival held in August this year. The carnival provided a free business platform for local SMEs and Sands retailers amid the pandemic period, and gave On Kei the opportunity to demonstrate its products and communicate with more clients.

## ON KEI'S OUTLOOK

In the future, the local SME aims to provide more high-quality ingredients to resorts. Addi-

tionally, On Kei's second retail store, to be located in Seac Pai Van, is on schedule to open for business.

"We are planning to introduce products from Portuguese-speaking countries, such as Iberian ham. We also hope to introduce environmentally friendly seafood products from Tanzania to cater to the trend of healthy and green ingredients," Ivan explained.

As Sands China has always attached great importance to food hygiene and safety standards, they recommended that SMEs obtain corresponding international certifications to ensure quality, and thus enhance their competitiveness.

Sands China has been committed to supporting local enterprises, whom it views as its strategic partners. Both Mok and Chan advise local SMEs to seek cooperation and stay in touch with resorts and gaming operators. "Small and medium-sized enterprises can take the initiative to introduce their new products to Sands China's procurement team. Also, if they have qualified services or products, we welcome them to provide a quotation to us at any time," they said.



## ACTIVITIES MARKING 71ST NATIONAL DAY TO PROCEED TOMORROW

The Macau government will host a series of activities tomorrow for the October 1 holiday, including a flag raising ceremony and a reception, to celebrate the 71st anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. A flag raising ceremony held at Golden Lotus Square at 8 a.m. will be attended by senior officials from the local government, legislature and judiciary, as well as the Liaison Office, the Office of the Commissioner and the Macau Garrison of the People's Liberation Army. The Macau Chief Executive will then attend a National Day reception held at the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex at 9:30 a.m. Other celebrations to mark the anniversary of the People's Republic of China will include a fireworks show – themed "Full Moon National Day Fireworks Celebration by Macau and Hengqin" – which will take place on the waterfront near the Macau Tower at 9 p.m.

## UM TEAM WINS NATIONAL PRIZE FOR INTELLIGENT VENDING MACHINE

An intelligent milk tea vending machine developed by University of Macau (UM) students won first prize out of 1,210 shortlisted entries at the 16th 'Challenge Cup' National College Students' Science Project Competition. Under the guidance of Associate Professor Yang Zhixin, the smart vending machine was jointly developed by Hu Zhiyuan, Ouyang Mingcong, and Ding Ziqin, three UM students in the Department of Electromechanical Engineering and the State Key Laboratory of Internet of Things for Smart City.

## IC TO SCREEN FILM ABOUT XIAN XINGHAI'S LIFE NEXT MONTH

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the passing of Chinese composer Xian Xinghai, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) will host a series of activities at the Xian Xinghai Memorial Museum. These will include film screenings, ukulele workshops, special offers for relevant publications and additional guided tours, to deepen the public's understanding of the musician's life, artistic achievements and patriotic spirit. The Composer, a film about Xian Xinghai, is the first cinematic collaboration between China and Kazakhstan. The film is adapted from Xian's experience in Almaty during the final years of his life. Screenings will be held on October 26, 30 and 31 between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.



Sunset over neighboring Hengqin

# MACAU HOUSING MARKET SAID TO FACE COMPETITION FROM HENGQIN

JULIE ZHU

MACAU'S residential property sales are being overshadowed by the competition created in the nearby Hengqin Island, under the administration of Zhuhai, according to the Centaline Property (Macau) real estate company.

Yesterday, the company held a press conference where it released statistics on the Macau and Hengqin property markets in the third quarter.

According to a representative of Centaline, surnamed Lo, the number of residential property transactions in the third quarter in Macau are relatively low as Macau did not launch new real estate projects, whereas several housing projects opened for sale in Hengqin.

The new Hengqin Port and Hengqin train station also opened to the public.

"The market's attention was drawn to Hengqin, thus local residential property sales were rather quiet," said Lo.

In July and August, Macau recorded 654 and 532 residential property sales respectively. A similar figure is expected for September, pushing the total estimated number of sales in the third quarter to 1,600, according to Lo. During the same period, housing prices remained stable in Macau.

According to statistics registered by Centaline, in August, Hengqin experienced an all-time record high in the number of online housing sales, with Macau residents forming the largest group of buyers.

In the third quarter of 2020, about one-third (34%) of Hengqin's property sales were made to Macau residents, according to Centaline's statistics. The second largest group of buyers are from

Guangdong province, who contributed to 18% of the total sales.

At the end of last month, over 400 housing units developed by Shun Tak Holdings Ltd, right next to the Hengqin Port, were sold out within several minutes of going to market, with an average price of 50,000 yuan (58,000 patacas) per square meter.

Another building right in front of the Hengqin Port is currently waiting for its official launch. The project consists of the China-Portuguese speaking trade square.

Centaline predicted that this building will become the second hot project following the Shun Tak building.

As of August, Hengqin had registered 53,441 commercial entities. The number of Macau companies reached 3,023, representing 59% among all non-mainland investments.

Centaline believes that Hengqin will enact more beneficial

policies in relation to commerce and the property market. He hopes that Hengqin will become a "second Macau," in line with the Chief Executive's wishes for the city.

According to Centaline's statistics, in the third quarter of 2020, the average price of private retail properties in Taipa was about HKD31,000 per square foot, down approximately HKD4,000 compared to the same period of 2019.

For private retail properties in the northern district, the average rental price went up to HKD12,700 from HKD12,300 of the third quarter of 2019.

The average rent of offices in the Novos Aterros do Porto Exterior (NAPE) area dropped the most compared to other districts. According to Centaline, the average rent of offices in NAPE decreased by nearly 15% in year-on-year terms.

# Military Club inaugurates 5th edition of Lusophone Painters Exhibition

RENATO MARQUES

THE opening ceremony for the fifth "Meeting Bridges" series of exhibitions was held at the Macau Military Club (Clube Militar de Macau) yesterday.

Similar to previous events, the exhibition features the works of painters and other visual artists from Macau and

the eight Portuguese-speaking countries, namely Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and East Timor.

The exhibition will be on display at the Military Club's Ho Yin Gallery from today until November 2. It presents a series of works using different techniques and expres-

sions to represent the culture, inspirations, and livelihood in the different places that make up the whole Lusophone world.

This year, the exhibition is sponsored by several institutions and personalities with The Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries – Macau (Forum Macau) at the helm.

In his opening remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Forum Macau, Rodrigo Brum, highlighted that the Military Club has served as a "Center for Portuguese-speaking countries diaspora" for many years, noting that there are familial bonds that go far beyond a mere common language and are very complex to ex-

plain to those who do not possess deep knowledge about this community.

During his turn, the representative of the Military Club, Carolina Sam, noted the particularly difficult year that has been 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, thanking all the sponsors for the extra effort that allowed the exhibition to take place.

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, José Isaac Duarte, as representative for the curator and executive producer's team, guided guests through the artworks in the display.

INTERVIEW

# US ambassador Branstad defends tough approach to China

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

**T**HE departing U.S. ambassador yesterday defended a tough approach to China that has riled relations between the world's two largest economies, saying the Trump administration has made progress on trade and that he hopes that will extend to other areas.

Terry Branstad, the longtime Iowa governor chosen by President Donald Trump to be envoy to China, agreed however that China has generally reacted to pressure by responding in kind, from closing consulates to imposing import tariffs.

"The unfortunate thing is we're trying to rebalance the relationship so we have fairness and reciprocity, but every time we do something, they keep it unbalanced," he said in an interview at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing.

Branstad is returning to Iowa this weekend after three years and three months as ambassador in Beijing, the longest he and his wife have lived outside of his home state. No successor has been named.

After launching a trade war in 2018 and restricting Chinese telecom giant Huawei on national security grounds, the Trump administration has further ramped up pressure on China this year.

It imposed new restrictions on Chinese diplomats and journalis-

AP PHOTO



U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad speaks during an interview at the U.S. embassy in Beijing yesterday

ts; closed the Chinese consulate in Houston and repeatedly criticized China on multiple fronts.

China has rebuked the U.S. and taken parallel measures, including the closing of a U.S. consulate in the southwestern city of Chengdu. With almost daily heated exchanges, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said that ties face their gravest challenge since the normalization of relations in 1979.

Branstad downplayed such fears, noting the relationship has weathered ups and downs in the past. He conceded, though, the concern that pressure on China could lead to a downward spiral of

growing restrictions.

He cited the so-called phase one trade deal, reached in January, and China's agreement to list fentanyl as a controlled substance as positive developments. The U.S. has been trying to reduce the flow of the opioid from China.

On trade, China promised to strengthen protection of foreign technology rights and industry secrets. China has made similar promises in the past, and companies say they are waiting to see how the commitments are carried out.

"I think in the area of trade, we've got their attention and we're making progress," Branstad said. "I hope we can in the other

(areas), in terms of the treatment of our media, the treatment of our diplomats."

Branstad, who traveled widely in China during his stint, complained about needing to get government approval for every visit. He asked to go to Tibet three times before his visit last year. Once there, though, he said he had open exchanges with students and teachers. Elsewhere, his experience varied.

The former Iowa governor has longstanding ties to Chinese leader Xi Jinping and was initially seen as someone who could soothe relations. He came to China as governor in 1984 after signing

a sister-state agreement with Hebei province, and he met Xi the following year when the then-county level Communist Party official visited Iowa as head of an agricultural delegation.

While the U.S.-China relationship has become fraught, Branstad maintained that such long-term ties remain valuable. He said he has met Xi several times since arriving in China in 2017, including a private family dinner in early 2018 that included Branstad's daughter and grandchildren.

"I think he still has very good feelings about me and about Iowa and the way we treated him," Branstad said. "And, you know, I found in this culture, personal relationships are important. And yet I represent the United States."

Branstad blamed the coronavirus for souring the relationship, saying Xi had assured Trump the outbreak was under control when in fact it wasn't. China has been criticized for covering up the crisis in the initial days, though praised for its strict measures to stem the spread later.

"Obviously, that's had a lot to do with, I think, the president's feelings towards China," Branstad said.

Trump has blamed China for the pandemic, which some analysts see as an attempt to deflect blame from his handling of the crisis ahead of a tough re-election battle in November.

Branstad expects to campaign in Iowa for Trump and other Republican candidates. He said he would focus in part on what the administration has done in China and the need to maintain a relationship but insist on fairness.

"I've never lost an election and it's still in my blood," the 73-year-old political veteran said. AP

HUAWEI

# Lawyer for Meng Wanzhou says US evidence misleading

**L**AWYERS for a senior executive for Chinese technology giant Huawei Technologies argued in a Canadian courtroom yesterday [Macau time] that U.S. authorities used a misleading summary that "cherry picks" evidence in requesting her extradition.

Canada arrested Meng Wanzhou, the daughter of Huawei's founder, at Vancouver's airport in late 2018. The U.S. wants her extradited to face fraud charges. Her arrest infuriated Beijing, which sees her case as a political move designed to prevent China's rise.

The U.S. accuses Huawei of using a Hong Kong shell company called Skycom to sell equipment to Iran in

AP PHOTO



Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou leaves B.C. Supreme Court in Vancouver, British Columbia

violation of U.S. sanctions. It says Meng, 48, committed fraud by misleading the HSBC bank about the company's business dealings in Iran.

Defense lawyer Scott

Fenton said the case against Meng hinges on an August 2013 PowerPoint presentation made to a HSBC executive during a lunch in Hong Kong.

In making its case the

U.S. accuses Meng of failing to inform HSBC during the presentation that Huawei controls Skycom.

Fenton argued that the U.S. tried to prove its point using selected slides. But if the full presentation is viewed, Meng said Huawei had a "normal and controllable" relationship with Skycom.

"It is seriously misleading by omission," he said.

Fenton said Meng supplied enough information for HSBC to make its own decisions.

"She told them everything they need to know to measure sanctions risks," he said.

Meng appeared in court for the first time since May.

She was wearing a tracking device as part of her bail agreement. She began the day wearing a mask but removed it as court continued.

The proceedings are part of Meng's arguments that the extradition proceedings should be halted because of an abuse of process.

Her lawyers claim Canada Border Services Agency officers detained and questioned Meng without a lawyer, seized her electronic devices and compelled her to give up the passcodes before her official arrest.

They argue the Royal Canadian Mounted Police acted at the behest of the FBI to gather and share technical information about

Meng's laptop, phones, and tablets, in violation of the Extradition Act.

In May, Meng failed in a bid to end the extradition process when a Canadian judge ruled the allegations against her could constitute a crime in Canada as well.

Meng's arrest has soured relations between Canada and China. In apparent retaliation, China detained former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and Canadian entrepreneur Michael Spavor. China has also placed restrictions on various Canadian exports to China, including canola oil seed.

Meng remains free on bail in Vancouver. The extradition case could take years AP

# Amnesty Int'l halts India operations, citing gov't reprisals

SHEIKH SAALIQA  
NEW DELHI

**H**UMAN rights watchdog Amnesty International said yesterday that it was halting its operation in India, citing reprisals from the government and the freezing of its bank accounts by Indian authorities.

Amnesty International India said in a statement that the organization had laid off its staff in India and paused its ongoing campaign and research work on human rights, alleging that Indian authorities froze its bank accounts on suspicions of violating rules on foreign funding.

The statement said that the authorities' actions were "the latest in the incessant witch-hunt of human rights organizations" by India's government "over unfounded and motivated allegations," and that the group's "lawful fundraising model" was being portrayed as money laundering because it has challenged the "government's grave inactions and excesses."

Indian authorities did not immediately confirm whether Amnesty India's bank accounts had been frozen.

Amnesty India's executive director, Avinash Kumar, said the accounts were frozen as a result of the group's "unequivocal calls for transparency in the government" and accountability of New Delhi police and the Indian government regarding "grave human rights violations in Delhi riots" and Indian-administered Kashmir.

"For a movement that has done nothing but raise its voices against injustice, this latest attack is akin to freezing dissent," Kumar said in a statement.

Amnesty International said the only other country where it ceased operations was Russia, in 2016.

It is not the first time that Amnesty India has said Indian authorities targeted its operations. In 2018, Indian authorities raided its office and froze its bank accounts on similar charges.



the Amnesty International India headquarters in Bangalore, India

In 2016, it faced sedition charges after Hindu nationalists objected to an event held in the southern city of Bangalore to discuss human rights violations in the disputed region of Kashmir. The charges were dropped three years later.

The rights group regularly accuses Indian authorities of committing human rights violations in Indian-administered Kashmir and has released multiple reports on the raging conflict in the region.

In 2019, the watchdog testified before the U.S. Foreign Affairs Committee during a hearing on human rights in South Asia and highlighted its findings on the use of excessive force and torture in Kashmir.

In August, it said Indian police violated human rights during deadly religious riots in New Delhi earlier this year and accused the police of beating protesters, torturing detainees and in some cases taking part in riots with

Hindu mobs.

Authorities say more than 50 people were killed when clashes broke out between Hindus and Muslims over a controversial citizenship law in February in the worst rioting in the Indian capital in decades.

Amnesty International's acting secretary general, Julie Verhaar, called the freezing of the bank accounts an "egregious and shameful act" by the Indian government.

**"For a movement that has done nothing but raise its voices against injustice, this latest attack is akin to freezing dissent."**

AVINASH KUMAR  
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

"It is a dismal day when a country of India's stature, a rising global power and a member of the UN Human Rights Council, with a constitution which commits to human rights and whose national human rights movements

have influenced the world, so brazenly seeks to silence those who pursue accountability and justice," Verhaar said in a statement.

Amnesty India has repeatedly condemned what it says is a crackdown on dissent and freedom of speech in India.

Its announcement to halt operations comes at a time when critics accuse Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist government of increasingly brandishing laws to silence human rights activists, intellectuals, filmmakers, students and journalists.

Under Modi, critics say, India is growing notoriously intolerant, with

its crackdown on dissent unprecedented in scale. Leaders of Modi's party have routinely labeled critics as "anti-nationals," and the authorities have dealt with many rights advocates and activists with an iron fist. AP

## this day in history

1955 JAMES DEAN KILLED  
IN CAR SMASH



The Hollywood film star James Dean has been killed in a road accident in California, USA.

The 24-year-old actor was behind the wheel of his German-made Porsche sports car when it was involved in a head-on collision with another car 30 miles (48 km) east of Paso Robles this evening.

Mr Dean's mechanic, Rolph Wutherich, who was a passenger in the car, was taken to hospital with serious injuries. The driver of the other car was also injured.

Medics said Mr Dean, who was dead on arrival at hospital, suffered a broken neck and numerous broken bones.

At the time of the accident the road racing enthusiast was on his way to a race meeting at Salinas, California.

James Dean completed his latest film "Giant", an adaptation of Edna Ferber's book about Texas, just yesterday.

His first film, "East of Eden", cast him firmly into the spotlight and many critics believe he had a glittering Hollywood future ahead of him.

James Byron Dean was born on 8 February 1931 in Marion, Indiana to Winton and Mildred Dean.

When he was five the family moved to Los Angeles where Winton Dean had secured a new job as a dental technician.

His mother died when he was eight after which Jimmy returned to the Midwest where he was brought up by his aunt and uncle on their Indiana farm.

After attending UCLA university in California he moved to New York to pursue his acting career.

He appeared in several television shows before gaining his first major role in "East of Eden." His second film "Rebel Without a Cause" has not yet been released.

Preparations are now being made for Mr Dean's funeral.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The legend of James Dean lives on to the present day. He was buried in Fairmount, Indiana and his grave is visited by thousands of people every year. Although he was fast becoming a Hollywood star when he was alive, he was elevated to cult status after his death. Within a year of the accident nearly four million people had joined his fan club and his studio was receiving up to 4,000 letters every day. His image of rebellious youth, compared at the time to Marlon Brando, continues to make £100 millions every year. A rumour began after his death that he was not actually killed in the car crash but was hideously deformed and is still alive in a Californian hospital.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS



### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Avoid any confrontations with colleagues. Try to keep any mood swings under control; they may result in alienation. Offer love and affection instead of conflict and rejection.



### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Emotional situations could bring out your stubborn nature. Try not to spend too much on children or entertainment. Opportunities to get involved in self-improvement projects will be rewarding.



### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

In sincere gestures of friendliness may be misleading. This is a good day to check out your investments. You will accomplish the most through orderly activities.



### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You will easily blow situations out of proportion. Don't overextend yourself in the process. Try to enlist the help of those you trust in order to fulfill the demands being made of you.



### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Be sure to take advantage of the opportunities that exist. Let your boss know your goals. You're eager to learn. Someone envious of your popularity may challenge you to a debate.



### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You can receive recognition for the work you've done. Clear up domestic chores that have remained undone for some time. Jealousy may be a contributing factor to your emotional ups and downs.



### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Don't overdo it. Take care of chores that have been hanging over your head. You can make financial gains through investments and dealing with other people's money.



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Don't overdo it. You will have a great deal of insight when dealing with others. Try to have patience and refrain from being judgmental. Don't be taken advantage of by any fast talking salesperson.



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Get out and experience the spice of life. Your ability to converse with charm will entice someone you may have had an interest in for some time now. Don't be afraid to say what's on your mind.



### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Try to keep ahead of the game. Don't let individuals with wild schemes talk you into a financial deal that is not likely to be successful. Look before you leap.



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You may find that depression is causing you to feel lonely and insecure. You can look into new jobs but don't count on getting help from someone who may have promised you assistance.



### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Try to deal with the problems of those less fortunate; however, don't allow them to make unreasonable demands. Be prepared to make compensations and adjustments.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



## SUDOKU

### EASY

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

### EASY+

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

### MEDIUM

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

### HARD

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

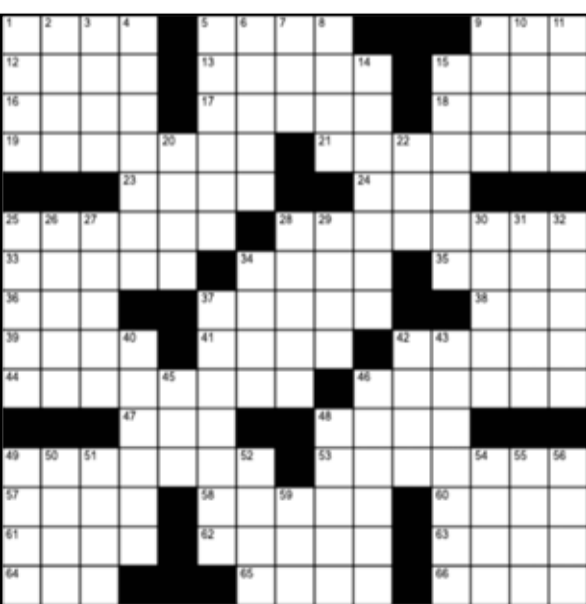
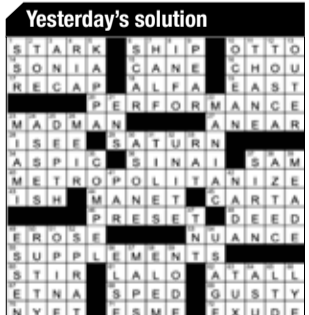
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	13	26	clear
Harbin	12	16	drizzle
Tianjin	16	27	clear
Urumqi	12	22	cloudy
Xi'an	15	29	clear
Lhasa	9	24	cloudy
Chengdu	15	24	cloudy
Chongqing	18	26	cloudy
Kunming	16	22	cloudy
Nanjing	18	26	cloudy
Shanghai	18	21	drizzle
Wuhan	16	26	cloudy
Hangzhou	19	20	drizzle to moderate rain
Taipei	26	31	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	31	moderate rain
Hong Kong	25	29	heavy rain
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	8	12	drizzle
Frankfurt	4	20	clear
Paris	14	29	cloudy
London	12	21	clear
New York	10	20	cloudy

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Not pro; 5- Dick Tracy's love; 9- Deface; 12- Just right; 13- Tumults; 15- Game played on horseback; 16- Gillette brand; 17- Ford flop; 18- Seth begat him; 19- Pluck; 21- Chilean natural resource; 23- Are you \_\_\_ out?; 24- Letter before omega; 25- Amorous relationship; 28- Depopulate; 33- Frank; 34- Swiss river; 35- Distribute cards; 36- Goddess of dawn in Greek mythology; 37- Made a mistake; 38- Involuntary muscular contraction; 39- Vicinity; 41- Falsehoods; 42- Muscat native; 44- Newspaper column displaying staff names; 46- Posted; 47- It's not PC; 48- Contented sighs; 49- Capital of Ontario; 53- Bravery; 57- "Topaz" author; 58- Movie critic Roger; 60- Hebrew month; 61- Strike forcefully; 62- Small change; 63- Look \_\_\_\_, I'm Sandra Dee; 64- Draft org.; 65- "\_\_\_ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 66- Round object, often used to store computer data;

DOWN: 1- Not much; 2- Short letter; 3- Waterproof canvas; 4- Some sausage; 5- Shudder; 6- Duck with soft down; 7- Mayday; 8- Type of gun; 9- \_\_\_ Lisa; 10- Very much; 11- Wine choice; 14- Slid; 15- Portion of time; 20- Curriculum section; 22- Half a fly; 25- At right angles to a ship's length; 26- Plant life; 27- Melts together; 28- Called one's bluff; 29- "\_\_\_ Tu"; 1974 hit; 30- Flower segment; 31- Singer Frankie; 32- 1961 Heston role; 34- Operatic solo; 37- Voted into a seat; 40- Maximally; 42- "Magnum, P.I." setting; 43- Engage in textual misprision; 45- Solo of "Star Wars"; 46- \_\_\_-tung; 48- Green \_\_\_ is the place to be; 49- Baths; 50- Minerals; 51- Narrow inlets; 52- Village Voice award; 54- Prefix with meter; 55- Wrigley varieties; 56- Util. bill; 59- Printer's measures;



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



AD

**FOR SALE**

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

**FOR RENT**

**Houston Court, Coloane Village**  
\$10,800/mth 980 ft<sup>2</sup> 1 1 1

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

**One Central 2 Bedroom Views Over Nam Van Lake**  
HK\$11,580,000 1,269 ft<sup>2</sup> 2 2 2

**FOR SALE/ RENT**

[Taipa] *Unique Studio* 1 1 1  
650 ft<sup>2</sup> \$3,780,000 (ref: 20076001)

[Taipa] *Duplex, amazing view* 2 2 2  
817 ft<sup>2</sup> \$4,200,000 (ref: 20086002)

[Coloane] *Grand Coloane Resort* 1 1 1  
710 ft<sup>2</sup> \$16,500/mth (ref: 20021002)

[Macau] *One Central* 2 2 2  
1,269 ft<sup>2</sup> \$25,000/mth (ref: n/a)

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# CHINA'S TOO-BIG-TO-FAIL REAL ESTATE GIANT PULLS BACK FROM BRINK

**C**HINA Evergrande Group took a major step toward avoiding a cash crunch that had threatened to roil the nation's \$50 trillion financial system and reverberate across global markets.

After a turbulent few days during which banks, bondholders and senior government officials became increasingly alarmed about Evergrande's financial health, the world's most indebted developer said it reached an agreement with a group of strategic investors to avoid repayments that would have placed a sizable strain on the junk-rated company's balance sheet.

The deal buys crucial time for Evergrande to rein in a complex web of liabilities that some analysts have said makes the property behemoth too big to fail. Evergrande owes \$88 billion to banks, shadow lenders and individual investors across China and has borrowed \$35 billion from bondholders around the world. More than 2 million homebuyers have given the company down payments on yet-to-be-completed properties.

Relief over Evergrande's announcement late yesterday in Hong Kong helped propel one of the company's dollar bonds to its biggest gain since March, though



The China Evergrande Centre in Hong Kong

at 80 cents on the dollar it was still trading slightly lower than before investor angst exploded to the fore on Thursday.

Last week's losses came after reports that Evergrande had warned provincial officials of a liquidity squeeze, citing its obligation to return money to some strategic investors if it failed to win approval for a backdoor listing of its main real estate assets in China by Jan. 31. While Evergrande dismissed

the reports as based on rumors and "fabricated" documents, the news contributed to a selloff in high-yield bonds across Asia and prompted several Chinese banks to hold emergency meetings to assess their exposure.

"The agreement solves the core issue of Evergrande, which is liquidity concern," said Raymond Cheng, a property analyst at CGS-CIMB Securities.

Evergrande said that investors

holding equity stakes worth about 86.3 billion yuan (\$12.7 billion) agreed to keep their shares and not require the company to buy them out. That group represents the majority of the 130 billion yuan in shares held by strategic investors in its Hengda Real Estate unit, who could demand repayment in January under certain conditions.

Evergrande is in talks with the remaining investors on similar

deals. The developer has finished negotiations with investors holding 15.5 billion yuan of equity interests, who are seeking further approvals. Talks with investors holding the remaining 28.2 billion yuan are ongoing.

It's unclear whether China's authorities played any role in the agreement.

China's cabinet and its financial stability committee, chaired by Vice Premier Liu He, have discussed risks posed by Evergrande without making any decisions on whether to intervene, people familiar with the matter said before Evergrande's announcement.

Some regulators were considering options to support the developer, such as directing state-owned companies to take stakes in Evergrande or giving the company a green light for its proposed listing of an electric-vehicle unit in China, one of the people said.

While Evergrande's massive debt pile has made it too risky for some investors, others had been betting Chinese leaders would deem the developer too big to fail.

China's government has a long history of bailing out systemically important companies to maintain financial stability. While policy makers have in recent years sought to instill more market discipline and reduce moral hazard, the economic shock caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has refocused their attention on stability.

MDT/BLOOMBERG

AD

**CASA DE PORTUGAL**  
EM MACAU 澳門葡人之家協會

Escola de Artes e Ofícios  
School of Arts and Crafts

**A Aplicação do Ouro na Porcelana**  
Applying Gold on Porcelain

≥16 anos/years old

Imari - Autor Desconhecido/Unknown Author

monitora/monitor: Arlinda Frota	Segundas e Quartas Mondays and Wednesdays 10h00 - 13h00 total: 63 horas/hour 21 sessões/sessions	início/starts: 05/10/2020 fim/finishes: 16/12/2020 propina/fee: MOP 2520 *
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língua/language: Português e Inglês/Portuguese and English \*\* patrocínio/sponsor: Fundação Macau

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

TENNIS

# Runaway train: Serena wins French Open opener; Nadal, too

**N**O matter how much success they've had over the years, and to this day, Serena Williams and Rafael Nadal both profess to deal with doubts.

Both began this French Open with straight-set victories against overmatched foes in Court Philippe Chatrier yesterday [Macau time].

And both have something significant at stake over the coming two weeks: a chance to equal a record for Grand Slam singles titles. Williams already has 23, the most by anyone in the professional era; one more will allow her to tie Margaret Court's all-era mark.

Nadal began his attempt to pull even with rival Roger Federer for the most by a man, 20, by beating Egor Gerasimov of Belarus 6-4, 6-4, 6-2.

His 2020 debut at a place he's won 12 trophies did not change Nadal's view of things at this pandemic-postponed event: It's colder than usual, the balls are heavier than usual, he's had less preparation than usual.

"The conditions are completely

AP PHOTO



Serena Williams of the U.S. screams in the first round match of the French Open

different," he said, "than any other Roland Garros that we played."

Still, Gerasimov would have been forgiven for choosing the same metaphor to describe Nadal that Williams' opponent came up with: "a runaway train."

After she played OK in the opening set, then was terrific in the second, of a 7-6 (2), 6-0 win over 102nd-ranked American Kristie Ahn, Williams — so used to being questioned about Court — was

asked on this day about Nadal and Federer.

"I don't get involved in the 'greatest' talk. You know, the greatest for me is, and will always be, Jesus, so I'm going to leave it at that," Williams began.

And then she didn't leave it at that.

"Rafa, I'm obviously a huge fan of his. I always have been. But it's like you can't compare two people that are equally great. Roger, I

mean, he's Roger Federer. I think that says enough," Williams continued. "So, you know, it's like I don't understand why people want to pit, 'Who's this? Who's that?' They both have spectacular careers that 99% of people can only dream of and ... every single credit and every single thing that they get, they absolutely deserve it. I'm a big fan of both, to be honest."

And rightly so. Novak Djokovic's name belongs in the conversation,

too, of course.

He'll be aiming for his 18th major championship at this French Open, which he finally gets underway Tuesday with his first Grand Slam match since being disqualified at the U.S. Open.

It was in New York less than a month ago that Ahn faced Williams in the first round — and lost.

So imagine this (bad) luck of the draw: Ahn is now the only player to face Williams in the first round at two consecutive Grand Slam tournaments. Of note: Williams is 75-1 in openers at majors.

"I mean, I laughed," Ahn said. "I mean, what are the odds?"

Yet she was up to the task for most of a 72-minute, 102-point initial set Monday, twice leading it by a break.

And then?

What changed for Williams?

"I just need to play with more confidence," she explained, "like I'm Serena."

Well, yes, she was more herself for the latter half of the contest, which by the end really wasn't much of a contest.

And this is how Ahn described the sensation of being across the net from that version of Williams, the one where she is at her very best.

"It feels like you're trying to push a runaway train in the opposite direction," Ahn said. "It's very difficult to try and stop, to stop her momentum when she's going, when she's feeling it." AP

AD




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**WORLD PRESS PHOTO**

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**OPINION**

**World Views**

Chris Hughes, Bloomberg

**HOT-DESKING IS  
 A GOOD WAY TO LOSE  
 YOUR BEST STAFF**

Corporate bean counters must be tempted to slash office space as work-from-home advice resumes where Covid cases are surging. But succumbing will mean consequences for recruitment. It's easy to forget that offices are a retention tool, and will remain so.

Everyone knows employers have incentives to pull people back to their desks. Offices facilitate free-flowing ideas and business leads, cultural cohesion and the seamless transfer of savoir-faire from senior employees to their juniors. And many employees want to return. Anecdotally, recent brief spells in semi-empty buildings have given a boost to some financial workers for any number of reasons: The clearer separation of professional obligations from personal life, the easing of pressure on relationships unaccustomed to one or both partners homeworking 24/7.

Just as before the pandemic, employees' demands for flexibility are likely to include access to a pleasant office. Imagine a firm that decides to maintain its existing floor space despite partial homeworking, and allows every employee to have their own desk. With the office, say, two-thirds full, the square-foot-per-person-ratio shoots up to levels that would have been deemed profligate pre-Covid. But the staff like having their cake and eating it, and staff turnover falls.

Meanwhile, a rival firm shaves the rent bill by signing a lease for one-third less space and making everyone "hot desk" — employees with early morning duties like childcare always end up with the rubbish seat. Which of the two companies finds it easier to recruit?

Analysts at UBS Group AG point out that hot-desking risks being a false economy. Citing research by property group Great Portland Estates Plc, they estimate rental costs are equivalent to 5-10% of a typical London business's revenue. Assuming salary costs account for around half, they ask: "Will management risk '100' in revenue, and force the '50' (i.e. employees) to desk share in order to save a percentage of the '5-10'?"

For commercial property investors, the impact of increased homeworking will probably be mitigated by the need for less densely packed offices as long as the novel coronavirus remains a public-health threat. The most significant driver of demand is likely to remain employment, not working habits.

If the analysis is right, it's supportive of the London office market. The city already packs people in more tightly than most other financial centers, with only 9.5 square meters per desk versus 10.4 in New York, says UBS citing Cushman & Wakefield data. That may need to reverse. London's vacancy rate is also low versus the U.S. financial capital, implying less slack.

KKR & Co. sees value in the city — it recently took a 5% stake in Great Portland Estates. The low valuation of U.K.-listed office operator Derwent London Plc makes sense only if you believe its average rents will fall to less than one-third of what prevails at the top end of the U.K. capital's prime West End district, UBS reckons. That's a huge margin for error.

The stock market is behaving as if Zoom and Microsoft Teams have destroyed the competitive advantage of an airy office. That doesn't compute.

A majority of Hong Kong's pro-democracy lawmakers plan to remain in office after China's decision to extend their terms without a planned election.

Sixteen of 23 sitting opposition lawmakers will keep their seats on Hong Kong's 70-member Legislative Council, pan-democrat politicians said at a news conference yesterday.

Neither side secured a majority in the poll conducted by the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute, though there was slightly greater support for opposition members keeping their seats. The sur-

vey found that 47.1% of supporters said lawmakers should serve out the term, versus 45.8% who favored their resignation.

Opposition lawmakers had commissioned the survey to help resolve a debate over whether they should resign en masse over the government's decision to delay an election planned for Sept. 6, due to coronavirus concerns.

The split results of the poll leave neither side with a clear mandate before the next session of the Legislative Council that starts Oct. 14. (More on macaodailytimes.com)

**FRANCE TO BAN USE  
 OF WILD ANIMALS IN  
 CIRCUSES, MARINE PARKS**

AP PHOTO



Killer whale "Wikie", jumps with its baby, a female born one month ago at the Marineland aquatic park in Antibes, southeastern France

FRANCE'S environment minister has announced a gradual ban on using wild animals in traveling circuses, on keeping dolphins and killer whales in captivity in marine parks and on raising mink on fur farms.

Barbara Pompili, France's minister of ecological transition, said in a news conference yesterday that bears, tigers, lions, elephants and other wild animals won't be allowed any more in travelling circuses "in the coming years."

In addition, starting immediately, France's three

marine parks won't be able to bring in nor breed dolphins and killer whales any more, she said.

"It is time to open a new era in our relationship with these (wild) animals," she said, arguing that animal welfare is a priority.

Pompili said the measures will also bring an end to mink farming, where animals are raised for their fur, within the next five years.

The ban does not apply to wild animals in other permanent shows and in zoos.

Pompili did not set any

precise date for the ban in travelling circuses, saying the process should start "as soon as possible." She promised solutions will be found for each animal "on a case-by-case basis."

The French government will implement an 8 million-euro (\$9.2 million) package to help people working in circuses and marine parks find other jobs.

"That transition will be spread over several years, because it will change the lives of many people," she said. AP

AP PHOTO



**Philippines** One southern province and its war-battered capital will be placed under a mild lockdown starting tomorrow and the rest of the country will be under more relaxed restrictions to boost the battered economy of the country counting the most coronavirus infections in Southeast Asia. Lanao del Sur province and its capital, Marawi city, will fall under a lockdown starting tomorrow due to infection spikes in recent weeks.

**Pakistan** Indian troops opened fire across the border in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, killing a soldier and a 15-year-old boy and wounding four others, Pakistan's military and other officials said yesterday, amid tensions between the two South Asian nuclear rivals. In a statement, the military said Pakistani troops responded by targeting the Indian positions where the fire originated, causing "substantial damage to Indian posts" on the Indian side but gave no evidence to back up the claim.

AP PHOTO



**United Arab Emirates** plans to send an unmanned spacecraft to the moon in 2024, a top Emirati official said Tuesday, the latest gamble in the stars by the oil-rich nation that could see it become only the fourth nation on Earth to accomplish that goal. The announcement by Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who also serves as the vice president and prime minister of the hereditarily ruled UAE, shows the rapid expansion of the space program that bears his name.

**Greece** U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo expressed support yesterday for talks between Greece and Turkey, NATO allies whose relations deteriorated to the point where both had warships facing off in the Mediterranean Sea. Speaking from the Souda Bay military base on the Greek island of Crete, Pompeo said relations between the United States and Greece are "at an all time high and getting stronger."

**REMNANTS OF EAST GERMANY,  
 30 YEARS AFTER ITS END**

THIRTY years after Germany was reunited, many once-decrepit city centers in the formerly communist east have been painstakingly restored and new factories have sprung up.

But many companies and facilities didn't survive the abrupt transition to capitalism. The mighty West German mark was introduced to East Germany on July 1, 1990 — a little over three months before reunification on Oct. 3 — and inefficient companies found themselves struggling to compete in a market economy, while demand for eastern products slumped and outdated facilities were shut down.

Casualties of the transition included East Germany's clunky cars, the Trabant and the more

AP PHOTO



The abandoned and wrecked "Fuerstenhof" hotel is seen in Eisenach, eastern Germany

upmarket — though still spartan by Western standards — Wartburg.

The Wartburg factory in Eisenach closed in 1991. Much of it was torn down, though a couple of abandoned production buildings remain. Cars are still produced in Eisenach, but at a new plant built by Western automaker Opel.

Manufacturing plants

weren't the only casualties of the end of communism. In Eckardt, a village a few miles from Eisenach, a giant cowshed stands abandoned — a relic of one of the collective farms that dominated agriculture in East Germany. Many people left the former East for the West in the years after reunification, seeking better economic opportunities. AP