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THE CONCESSION CONTRACT OF THE FLAGSHIP CARRIER AIR MACAU WAS OFFICIALLY EXTENDED FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS

GROWING NUMBER OF STUDENTS INTERESTED IN MAINLAND UNIVERSITIES, STATISTICS SHOW

IMF'S WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR MACAU ESTIMATES LOCAL ECONOMY IS LIKELY TO CONTRACT BY 52.3%

Hong Kong About 100 members of the Philharmonic Orchestra are being quarantined after one of its members tested positive for the coronavirus. A bass clarinet player was infected, according to a Facebook post by fellow orchestra member Andrew Simon. Simon, the orchestra's principal clarinetist, said he would be taken to a government quarantine camp for two weeks.

China says it has carried out more than 4.2 million tests in the northern port city of Qingdao, with no new cases of coronavirus found among the almost 2 million sets of results received. The city has reported a total of 12 cases, six with symptoms and six without, since the new outbreak was first spotted over the weekend at a hospital.



China, Russia and Cuba won seats on the U.N.'s premiere human rights body despite opposition from activist groups over their abysmal human rights records, but another target, Saudi Arabia, lost. Russia and Cuba were running unopposed, but China and Saudi Arabia were in a five-way race in the only contested race for seats on the Human Rights Council. More on p7



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited a typhoon-ravaged rural town and lambasted government agencies for "defeatism," state media reported yesterday. In his first public activity after massive weekend celebrations marking the ruling party's founding anniversary, Kim inspected recovery works at the northeastern Komdok area, continuing recent visits to regions hit by typhoons and flooding this summer.

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CHINA CLUB

President Xi Jinping wants young Macau and Hong Kong residents to move to China P2



JUDICIAL YEAR

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CASINOS MIGHT BE FERTILE GROUND FOR DIGITAL YUAN

COURTESY FORTUNE



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POLYTEC DROPS APPEAL TO AVOID FURTHER LITIGATION COSTS: ALVES

Lawyer Leonel Alves, when asked about property developer Polytec Group's withdrawal of appeal in the Pearl Horizon case, estimated that the enterprise made the decision on the grounds of saving a large amount of money that would otherwise have been used on legal actions. Within the case, the enterprise asked the government for compensation of MOP25 billion. He stressed that neither he nor his firm was representing the Polytec Group, so the reason was only his estimation. In September, the court received a request from the enterprise to withdraw its appeal. The case is now closed.

PERMIT SOUGHT FOR DOMESTIC HELPERS WITH EXPIRED VISA

Lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng has asked the Macau SAR government to give temporary permits to some domestic helpers whose bluecards have expired so they can continue doing their jobs. Wong pointed out a difficulty created by the government's pandemic policies and the amended non-local employment law. As the new law amendment came into effect on October 5, current domestic helpers must leave the city when their blue card expires and re-enter the city with a new valid employment permit. This situation poses the risk of a shortage of domestic helpers. Wong hopes the SAR government can give temporary staying permits to those who are already in Macau. She also urges the local government to open the domestic service market to more mainlanders.

LAWMAKER WANTS TO EASE MAINLANDERS' TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

Lawmaker Ho Ion Sang has urged the SAR government to negotiate with mainland China's government to ease travel restrictions for mainland residents. In his interpellation to the government, Ho asked to extend the validity of Covid-19 test results to 14 days compared to the current seven days. He also hopes that mainland China can resume issuing travel permits to Macau via online services instead of only manual means. Citing Macau's visitor statistics, Ho believes that the aforementioned conditions are among the major reasons dissuading mainland visitors from traveling to Macau. In addition, the lawmaker also wants the government to review its strategies in attracting visitors.

JUDICIAL YEAR OPENING

HO IAT SENG COMMITS TO IMPROVING RULE OF LAW

ANTHONY LAM

IN his speech to mark the opening of this judicial year yesterday, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng assured the public that the rule of law is a core value in Macau and that the government is committed to providing the city with better rule of law.

Representing the government, he added that the government would, as usual, resolutely maintain judicial independence, firmly defend judicial justice, actively cooperate with judicial organizations earnestly implement judicial organs' judgments, continue to optimize judicial training mechanisms and continuously improve the development of judicial software and hardware.

At present, the SAR government is planning the construction of offices for the courts and is helping to improve judicial efficiency. The government head also complimented the efforts of all walks of life on the containment of Covid-19 in Macau. He pledged that the government would focus on resuscitating the economy as conditions gradually stabilized.

Meanwhile, Sam Hou Fai, Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, gave a summary of the work of the courts in the past year. He recalled that the courts were affected by Covid-19 as it obstructed



stakeholders from entering Macau and attending hearings.

One of the important amendments to the Legal Framework for Judicial Organs is to appropriately expand the jurisdiction of the Court of Final Appeal, so that major cases can be appealed to the Court of Final Appeal. It is a reflection of, and conformation to, the nature and status of the Court of Final Appeal in exercising the power of final adjudication granted to the city under the Basic Law.

In addition, he also pointed out that the SAR has close interpersonal relationships, with various interests strongly intertwined. Therefore, he believes that under the social characteristics and social environment of Macau, to maintain fairness and justice, the law must be enforced more strictly.

On the other hand, Ip Son Sang, Prosecutor-General at the

Public Prosecutions Office, disclosed that 18% of cases were recorded at the office. The number of cases fell to 12,109 in the last judicial year, from 14,714 in the year prior to that.

NETO VALENTE: CPM MAY HAVE FELT PRESSURED TO CLOSE EXHIBITION

THE president of the Macau Lawyers Association, Jorge Neto Valente, believes that there was pressure on Casa de Portugal (CPM) to abruptly close the World Press Photo Exhibition. Speaking on the sidelines of the judicial year opening yesterday, Valente said, "If the president of CPM [Amélia António] does not want to explain, then there must be some reason that is not good to [be elaborated], right?" The exhibition has been closed since October 1, just a few

days after it was inaugurated at the Casa Garden venue. It was supposed to only end on October 18. CPM said that the exhibition was closed for "management reasons," but would not elaborate. Reports speculate that the abrupt closure was due to the photographs of the Hong Kong protests that are part of this year's exhibition. "I am against rewriting history. If [the protest] exists, it is not to hide, it is not to pretend that [it didn't happen]," he added, as cited in a report by TDM Radio.

Xi Jinping wants Macau, HK youngsters to move to China

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping called for new measures to encourage young people from Macau and Hong Kong to move to China, part of measures to integrate the semi-autonomous territory with the mainland following student-led protests last year.

The push is aimed at "deepening integration" between young people in Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong province to "increa-

se their sense of belonging to the motherland," the Chinese president said in a speech yesterday in Shenzhen marking the 40th anniversary of the technology hub becoming a special economic zone.

China should "fully utilize the important platform of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau cooperation to attract more young people from Hong Kong and Ma-

cau to study, work and live in the mainland," he said.

Business groups have expressed concern about Hong Kong's autonomy from the mainland in the wake of sweeping new national security legislation imposed by Xi in June. The law, meant to subdue protests that turned violent last year, came as the city looks to revive an economy battered by unrest and the pandemic.

Shenzhen is a cornerstone of Xi's Greater Bay Area, which aims to knit together mainland cities with Hong Kong and Macau to establish a regional powerhouse rivaling Silicon Valley. Xi's address encouraged further overall cooperation with China.

"We should also continue to encourage and guide our compatriots in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as well as overseas Chinese to play their important roles in investment, entrepreneurship and two-way openness so that they can make new contributions to the development of the special economic zones," he said. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

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Xi urges development of economic zones to better integrate mainland with the SARs

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping vowed to press ahead with plans to gain the global lead in technology and other strategic industries, despite expanding efforts from the U.S. and its allies to check China's rise.

The Chinese president reaffirmed his commitment to "opening up and reform" as a strategy for gaining economic advantage in a 50-minute speech yesterday to mark the 40th anniversary of Shenzhen's establishment as a special economic zone. With hundreds of local officials and executives present including Huawei Technologies Co. founder Ren Zhengfei, Xi called for the making of the southern metropolis into a "model city for a great, modern socialist country."

"We need to unwaveringly implement an innovation-driven development strategy to foster new engines and new trends, so as to build a technological and industrial innovation high-ground with global influence," Xi said, in remarks that didn't mention China's disputes with the U.S. and made only passing reference to "many unprecedented challenges" from abroad.

The speech represented a high-profile nod of support to the companies and leaders in the so-called Greater Bay Area, a designation that's meant to push China into higher-quality manu-



President Xi Jinping meets with participants of a grand gathering held to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone

facturing and better integrate the former colonies of Hong Kong and Macau into the mainland. That means bolder policies to knit together the region's different linguistic, legal and monetary traditions to create a regional powerhouse rivaling Tokyo Bay or Silicon Valley.

Such ambitions are at the center of growing bipartisan support in Washington to restrict Chinese

access to the strategic technologies it needs to overtake the U.S. as the world's leading innovation power. While President Donald Trump's administration has taken unprecedented action against Chinese companies, including a pressing allies to ban Huawei from communications networks, Democrat Joe Biden would face pressure to continue the strategy if he wins the presidency on Nov. 3.

"Of course the U.S. tensions play in," said Fraser Howie, author of "Red Capitalism: The Fragile Financial Foundation of China's Extraordinary Rise." "This is a very difficult time for China. They have been hugely dependent on the U.S. for all sorts of things and now they simply can't rely on that at all. This is a very high-risk strategy for China and Xi."

Xi urged the faster develop-

ment of special economic zones in Shenzhen's Qianhai area and across the Pearl River Delta in Zhuhai to better integrate the mainland with Hong Kong and Macau. Shenzhen should also be given more autonomy for reform, while striving to solve the problems of breakneck growth, he said. Foreign investors' interests should be better looked after through measures such as refining the negative list and protecting intellectual rights.

Xi said the world had entered a turbulent period of transformation, with rising protectionism and unilateralism, in an allusion to the U.S. President Donald Trump's America First policies. "The new development pattern is not a closed domestic cycle," Xi said, making it clear he wants a "new open economic system."

"This is high-level confirmation of the further opening up of China and also partly supports the narrative that China's success is built on Shenzhen and Shenzhen is a hybrid of the East and West and borrowed Hong Kong's development model to a large extent," said Wang Huiyao, an adviser to China's cabinet and founder of the Center for China and Globalization in Beijing. "He wants to seize this opportunity to show China is still an attractive place for foreign investors."

MDT/BLOOMBERG

ANALYSIS

Macau casinos might be fertile ground for digital yuan

DANIEL BEITLER

MACAU might have an important role to play in the launch of China's digital yuan if the city's casinos adopt the currency instead of the Hong Kong dollar, according to analysts.

China is accelerating the launch of the digital yuan in the Greater Bay Area with a special pilot in Shenzhen.

Last week, Shenzhen issued 10 million yuan worth of digital currency to 50,000 randomly selected residents who applied from a pool of more than 1.91 million.

Issued and managed by the central bank, the digital currency is an electronic form of the renminbi. It's

meant to supplement third-party payment apps like WeChat Pay and Alipay in a country that has already accepted e-payments as the norm.

Beijing previously announced that it wanted to roll out the digital currency in the Greater Bay Area as a pilot program, with various municipalities taking part. Some analysts are suggesting Macau might get a highlighted role if the currency is rolled out in casinos.

The digital yuan "is a very elegant solution to a lot of grey areas in Macau," according to gaming analyst Ben Lee, managing partner of IGamiX Management & Consulting, who believes that recent developments in e-commerce

have been clearing the way for the digital currency.

"Macau is already prepared for the digital yuan. We have been socially-engineered to accept digital currency, but [only recently and] the speed of that conversion is really surprising."

"It doesn't make sense for Macau to be a clearing center for renminbi without the involvement of the gaming industry," rationalized Lee. "When you look at the volume [of transactions] in the gaming industry, you see that there is no gravity of transactions in Macau outside of the casinos."

Lee also believes it is inconvenient for patrons to need to convert their yuan into Hong Kong dollars just

to gamble in Macau, and then convert it back again when they cash in. "Historically, the Hong Kong dollar was the default gaming currency, but that hasn't been the case for the past two decades," he said.

Asked when the digital currency might be introduced, Lee said, "speculatively, I would say that it makes sense for it to [coincide] with the new concessions in 2022."

Economist Albano Martins also believes that casinos in the Macau SAR would readily accept the digital currency "as long as some entity guarantees it," in this case the Chinese central bank.

Swapping out Hong Kong dollars for Chinese

yuan shows just how dependent the Special Administrative Regions of China have grown on the mainland, he said. Although the city has historically relied on the Hong Kong dollar, many of the reasons for that dependence are already fading.

Another economist, José Sales Marques, agreed that this shift reflects the diminishing importance of Hong Kong to Macau's economy.

Today, "the Macau economy depends mostly on the gaming and tourism businesses [that cater to] visitors from Guangdong Province. Hong Kong is still important as a traditional market for Macau, but things depend more on

the wider area [of Guangdong]," said Sales Marques.

"Things have been developing in this way for a long time. Guangzhou may remain the political capital of the province, but the economic core is moving away from Hong Kong and toward Shenzhen," he added.

President Xi Jinping was in Shenzhen yesterday to mark the 40th anniversary of the city's designation as a special economic zone, China's first under the innovative model designed by Deng Xiaoping. There he envisioned a second era of technical reform, once again kicking off in the southern city known for financial services and high technology.

CRIME

POLICE BUST CASE OF DRUG TRAFFICKING BY POST

ANTHONY LAM

A case of drug trafficking in which express courier services were used has been busted by the Judiciary Police (PJ), with MOP1.64 million worth of cocaine seized.

Besides the seized substance, a man and a woman have been arrested on the charges of drug trafficking and drug use.

The male suspect is 33 years old and the female 34. Both are non-resident workers from the Philippines. The man works as a barber and the woman as a domestic helper.

The PJ initially received intelligence about an international cartel that was in the practice of trafficking illicit addictive substances to Macau by post for sale. According to the law-enforcement entity, the method came into existence amid tightened immigration policies around the world.

Following its communications with the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, the PJ obtained information about the identities of the suspects, as well as learning that a parcel containing the illicit



substances would arrive in Macau on October 12. The parcel was sent from South Africa to Macau via Hong Kong.

In the afternoon on the identified day, inspectors from the PJ intercepted the parcel at the barber shop where the male suspect works. Both suspects were in the shop. Although the investigators witnessed him signing for the parcel upon receiving it, the male suspect argued that he was only receiving

the parcel on another person's behalf.

Meanwhile, the woman said she was only friends with the man. Both denied any actual connection with the drugs.

The PJ checked the courier parcel and discovered it was refitted on the inside, with compartments on all sides holding a total of 499 grams of cocaine. The core of the parcel was filled with scarves and pieces of cloth to camouflage the

substances.

The PJ inspectors, however, could not find any illicit substances on the two suspects. PJ intelligence alleged that the man was a member of a drug cartel, who was responsible for receiving and keeping drug parcels in Macau, before transferring them to other individuals with MOP3,000 remuneration each time. Urine drug tests returned a positive result in the case of the woman.

CASINO-RELATED SCAMS ON THE RISE

Casino-related scams have been on the rise recently, with the PJ reporting a number yesterday. Among these, a local female "gambling-addict" has allegedly appropriated 12 million yuan from her friend for the purported purposes of currency exchange.

She lost most of the money at the gambling tables and was arrested upon arrival in Macau after almost a year on the run.

The 40-year-old woman became friends with the male victim in 2017. She helped the victim with money wires and chip exchanges several times, amounting to 15 million.

In December last year, the victim asked the suspect to help change 11.8 million yuan into Hong Kong dollars and deposit it into a junket fund. The suspect deferred the exchange before ceasing contact with the man.

She changed the amount to Hong Kong dollars and lost 11 million at a casino. She then fled with the remaining HKD2 million.

When arrested, she denied the accusations. She said the money was a repayment of an earlier debt the man owed her.

LAWMAKER REPORT

Sulu Sou still calling for more gov't transparency

LYNZY VALLES

PRO-DEMOCRAT lawmaker Sulu Sou is still dubbing the closed-door meetings of the committees of the Legislative Assembly (AL) as 'secretive,' stressing that there is a lack of transparency in the government in this regard.

In a press briefing held yesterday to discuss his work in the AL, Sou stressed that most of the members of the committee "still adopt a conservative, fearful and unfriendly attitude" towards demands for a more transparent governance.

He noted that there should be no exclusion of press and public from the conference room where many public interest issues are considered.

"The selective summary made by the chairman of the committee after the meeting is far from a complete representation of the



full content of the meeting, as well as the speeches by both members and officials. The committee's operation is still considered secretive," he told the press.

In addition, he remarked that members of parliament are still limited to one written question each week. Despite the fact that since June this year, the government

has formulated new work guidelines to increase the rate of on-time responses to inquiries, Sou said that the content of replies from various departments is flawed and that from time to time, there are situations in which the answers do not pertain to what was asked.

"Some officials even directly ignore the questions, which not only constitutes

blatant disrespect for the power of parliamentary supervision, but also undermines the effectiveness of responding to public opinion in a timely manner," he said.

Meanwhile, speaking about following up on issues related to the protection of civil rights and freedom during the AL's third session, Sou said that it is evident that civil society is facing "a lot of risks of political repression."

He was referring to the government's enforced legislation to establish a "secret police," its institution of anti-rumour crimes, its testing of CCTV facial recognition and monitoring technology, and its banning of many events related to June 4.

Meanwhile, due to the outbreak of the epidemic, the office of the New Macau Association has received 1,834 citizen cases during his third legislative year, which is nearly three times that of the second year, of which 1,558 (84.95%) cases have been completed. The top five types of cases are education (351), labour (204), security (200), medical treatment (185), and economy (130).

AIR MACAU'S CONCESSION CONTRACT EXTENDED FOR THREE YEARS

THE concession contract of Macau's flagship airline, Air Macau, has been officially extended for a period of three years. The extension was announced yesterday on the government's Official Gazette.

According to a statement from the Civil Aviation Authority (AACM), the extension of the concession contract, which was due to expire on November 8 this year, comes in response to the effects of "the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia worldwide."

The AACM noted that, facing such a situation, "the aviation sector is adversely affected and will take a considerable period of time to recover," adding that during such a recovery period, "it is necessary to maintain the stability of [...] industry operations."

Taking into account the aforementioned reasons, the government has decided to extend the concession until November 2023 in a bid to "ensure that Air Macau will continue to provide continual and stable services to the Macau residents as well as to the visitors," the AACM concluded.

According to data released by Air Macau's major stakeholder, Air China, during the first six months of 2020, the local airliner has accumulated net losses amounting to over 550 million patacas. The figure contrasts with last year's results for the same period, in which the Air Macau reported profits totaling 84 million patacas.

The airliner also reported a drop in passenger numbers by 79.3% in the first half of this year. **RM**



EDUCATION

DSES: Growing number of students interested in mainland universities

JULIE ZHU

SOME 33.3% of final year high school students were interested in choosing mainland universities last year, 2.4% more compared with the previous year, according to statistics revealed by the Higher Education Bureau (DSES).

Yesterday, the higher education authority held a press conference briefing on an upcoming expo of mainland China's universities.

During the press conference, DSES Acting Director Chan Iok Wai revealed that approximately 33.3% of final year high school students in Macau were interested in studying in the mainland.

The statistics came from a survey the bureau conducted for the academic year of 2019/2020. These students have already graduated from high school and are currently in their first year of university.

Only at the end of this month will the DSES know how many students eventually went to mainland Chinese universities. In 2020, 4,000 students

graduated from local high schools.

The government's statistics showed that roughly half of these students (48%) intended to study in Macau's universities.

"The parents saw that the country's pandemic prevention work was done better than other places and the parents are more confident [in mainland China], so, correspondingly, there are more [people] choosing mainland China," said Chan.

According to Chan, the statistics only reflect the student's interest in mainland universities, not their final decision.

From tomorrow until October 18, the students can visit the expo online to inform their preference for universities. Only in January of next year will these universities hold exams in Macau to test the applicants' knowledge about the specific majors they have selected.

As a result, the actual number of local students going to mainland universities will not be known until 2021.

Due to the pandemic, the expo

will be organized online via live broadcast to provide information to students and parents.

In total, 110 universities are participating in this year's exhibition, including 100 mainland universities and ten local universities. The mainland universities represent 20 provinces.

Aside from the expo, the DSES also announced mainland China's plan to enroll Macau's recommended students.

Each year, Macau local schools can recommend a certain number of high school graduates to go to mainland universities; these students do not need to take exams. This year, each secondary school can recommend no more than 40% of its high school graduates.

Also this year, 98 mainland universities (three more than last year) are providing a quota of 1,215 recommended students.

Only Macau students with a valid Macau ID and a mainland-issued home permit are eligible for the recommendation scheme.

SMG HOISTED SIGNAL NO.8 FOR NEARLY 12 HOURS

THE Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) hoisted Signal No.8 for nearly 12 hours on Tuesday as Typhoon Nangka moved westward through the South China Sea, eventually making landfall in Hainan.

At its closest point to Macau, the tropical storm was about 400 kilometers southwest of the territory. However, because of the combi-

ned effect of a nearby typhoon and simultaneous monsoon, the SMG decided to raise the high-level warning.

The SMG had hoisted Signal No.1 as early as Sunday night in anticipation of the storm. It raised Signal No.3 at 8 p.m. on Monday, noting the possibility of elevating the signal the following day. The bureau raised Signal No.8 at 7:30 a.m. on Tues-

day morning and lowered it only at 7 p.m.

According to the bureau, it detected wind speeds at times that warranted Signal No.8 under the new typhoon framework introduced in June 2018. However, aside from heavy rain, the weather was considerably calm for most of the day.

Also on Tuesday, Acting Chief Executive André Cheong described

Nangka as the first "real test" for the Civil Protection Structure.

The typhoon was the first Signal No. 8 since the promulgation of the Civil Protection Law on September 15. The new law stipulates that when the typhoon signal is issued in Macau, the city is placed under special status and the Civil Protection Structure should prepare and react accordingly. **DB**

IMF FORECASTS ECONOMY TO SHRINK BY 52.3%

RENATO MARQUES

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) has updated its forecast of the performance of Macau's economy this year.

According to the IMF's World Economic Outlook for Macau, the local economy is likely to contract by 52.3%.

The figure represents a dramatic update of the last predicted scenario which, in April this year, pointed to a contraction of only 29.6%.

In the previous report, the IMF also made a positive forecast for economic recovery post-Covid-19, announcing a forecast growth of 32% for 2021. This time, the fund has slimmed down such prospects, forecasting a less positive outlook. Still, the updated prediction notes that the local economy should grow 23.9% next year.

The IMF indicators for unemployment and inflation rates also underwent minor adjustments in the current report. The unemployment rate moved from the previously predicted 2%

for 2020 to 2.3% and from 1.8% for 2021 for 2%, forecasting in this way a slower recovery than initially expected before the first half of the year.

Following the trend of less money and less employability, the inflation rate was also corrected, and is now expected to stay at 1.7%, 0.5% lower than previously forecasted, growing only slightly to 1.8% by 2021.

The new forecasts follow the recent trend resulting from the continuous weak results from the gaming industry and take into account the poor performance during the "Golden Week" of the National Day, which usually contributes significantly to the results of the last quarter of the year.

According to the latest report on gaming revenues, which included only the first nine months of the year, such revenue has fallen by 82.5% year-on-year to only MOP38.6 billion, plunging the whole economy, which is highly reliant on spending from mainland visitors, into decline.

GOV'T COMPLETES IEC LONG FIRECRACKER FACTORY RETRIEVAL PROCESS

THE interdepartmental eviction group led by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) yesterday finalized the retrieval process of the land plots associated with the venue formerly known as Iec Long firecracker factory, in Taipa.

According to a statement from the DSSOPT, the group proceeded yesterday with the clearing and recovery of the remaining land plots, with an area of approximately 6,598 square meters.

In the first phase of the eviction process, which took place last year, the government authorities were able to recover parcels of land with a total area of approximately 17,973 square meters, raising the total recovered area to date to 24,571 square meters.

As in the first phase, the now-vacant land plots will be handed over to the Cultural Affairs Bureau, which is preparing to revamp the venue and reopen it to the public as a cultural and leisure area.

In the DSSOPT statement, the group noted that there were several constructions in the now-recovered land plots, as well as a large number of objects and plantations.

The group took the task to clear the plots after the notice period given to the occupants to clear the plot by their initiative expired.

The same group has now fenced off the recovered area and placed signs on the site indicating that the land plot is owned by the government and that any occupation will be prosecuted according to the law. **RM**

CHINA'S QUIET EXPERIMENT LET MILLIONS VIEW LONG-BANNED WEBSITES

IN a quiet experiment of just two weeks, China provided millions of people access to long-forbidden foreign websites like YouTube and Instagram. The trial appears to signal the Communist government is moving toward giving the country's citizens greater access to the global internet - while still attempting to control who sees what.

The Tuber browser-app, backed by government-linked 360 Security Technology Inc., appeared without fanfare late September and offered for the first time in years a way to view long-banned websites from Facebook Inc. to Google and the New York Times, albeit sanitized versions. Chinese users rejoiced in a newfound ability to directly peruse long-blocked content from a mobile browser without an illegal virtual private network or VPN.

The browser, carried on app stores run by Huawei Technologies Co. among others, suggests Beijing is testing ways to let its 904 million internet users into once-prohibited zones. While Tuber bore the hallmarks of state-style censorship and got pulled without explanation Saturday, it's Beijing's most significant experiment in years with greater internet freedoms.

State-sanctioned apps like Tuber offer a possible compromise - a controlled environment in which activity can be tracked and content screened, while allowing academics, corporations and citizens to exchange information. It addresses a complaint among corporations local and foreign that need to access everything from financial data to critical software tools from abroad.

"This latest development with Tuber is interesting because it could be seen as more openness," said Fergus Ryan, a researcher at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. "But the way that it would actually work would mean that people who use it would be highly surveilled and the information that they are able to access via this platform is filtered by the censorship apparatus."



Call it Censorship 2.0. Beijing is increasingly confident of support at home after successfully quashing Covid-19. That -- and the urgent need to increase the quality of its scientific and technological research -- could explain why it's growing more comfortable with the idea of giving broader access to the internet for at least some of its citizens.

Yet it also realizes it faces growing hostility overseas. Beijing, seeking to better police its citizens, still requires companies from Tencent Holdings Ltd. to TikTok-owner ByteDance Ltd. to censor and scrub content critical of the government or its policies. It tried for years with mixed success to abolish the hundreds of VPNs commonly employed to bypass the Great Firewall. Endorsing a state-sanctioned window to the internet could curtail their usefulness.

That could have implications for the likes of Facebook and Microsoft Corp. to Alphabet Inc. and Apple Inc., who now either comply with censorship to reach China's users or remain on the

sidelines. Google explored -- but shelved under internal pressure -- a project to create a filtered version of its app for the country. Facebook flirted with the idea of a Chinese service but ultimately torpedoed that too.

"This latest development with Tuber is interesting because it could be seen as more openness."

FERGUS RYAN
AUSTRALIAN STRATEGIC POLICY INSTITUTE

Tuber - downloaded five million times from Huawei's app store since at least late September - attracted such an initial frenzy in part because of the pedigree of its largest backer. Its developer is controlled by billionaire and tech mogul Zhou Hongyi, who delisted his security company Qihoo 360 Technology Co. from New York in 2016 and aligned himself with national interests.

It's unlikely that Qihoo developed and distributed the app without Beijing's blessing. It has re-

portedly worked on projects for the Chinese military and advises Beijing on sensitive cybersecurity issues. The U.S. Department of Commerce in May sanctioned two of Zhou's companies among 24 entities it said posed national security concerns.

It's unclear whether any government agency ordered Tuber's removal. A public relations employee at 360 Security declined to comment. The Cyberspace Administration of China, which regulates the internet, hasn't responded to calls and emails from Bloomberg News since Saturday.

Tuber appeared to censor some content, including on YouTube. A search of President Xi Jinping's name in Chinese yielded only seven video clips uploaded by three accounts claiming to be television stations in Shanghai, Tianjin and Macau. Searching for Xi's name in English yielded no results at all.

It required mobile number registration, giving developers the ability to track activity because all smartphone numbers in the

country are linked to unique Chinese identification. And, like many commercial apps, it asked for permission to access users' contacts.

"China has to be really cautious to carefully balance opening a little bit more" with maintaining domestic social order, said Yik Chan Chin, who researches media and communications policy at the Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University in Suzhou. "It's very important to release the information flow and let the Chinese people have more interaction with the outside world and also to understand the world better."

Loosening controls over China's internet could play a vital role in advancing domestic innovations, said Wang Huiyao, president of the Beijing-based think-tank Center for China and Globalization. Its leaders will eventually open up cyberspace - to an extent, he said. Tuber, including its official website, remained blocked as of Monday.

"The fact that news about this particular app spread so quickly in China and generated so much excitement was testament to the pent-up appetite for access to the wider global internet in China," Ryan said. **BLOOMBERG**

Pompeo defends 12 Hong Kongers detained in Shenzhen

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo defended the 12 Hong Kong residents who were detained by China while allegedly trying to flee to Taiwan by boat in August, saying that they had "committed no crime."

"They simply believe that they are worthy of free-

dom and the unalienable rights due to every person," Pompeo said in virtual remarks delivered at the John S. McCain Freedom Award Ceremony yesterday. "They aren't alone in that belief. America stands with them."

The 12, some of whom are linked to anti-govern-

ment protests and were facing charges in Hong Kong prior to their arrest, are being held in the southern city of Shenzhen where they await prosecution.

Two of them are suspected of organizing an illegal border crossing, while the other 10 are suspected of

entering mainland waters illegally.

The group was believed to have been headed for self-governed Taiwan when they were arrested, following China's imposition of a sweeping national security law targeting political expression in semi-

-autonomous Hong Kong. Taiwan is a popular choice among Hong Kong residents looking to leave the city.

Relatives say that they are being held incommunicado and have not been granted access to family-appointed lawyers.

Hong Kong leader Carrie

Lam has repeatedly said that the 12 people detained must face the law in mainland China, as they were arrested for offences there. Though Hong Kong is part of China, it has a separate judicial and immigration system from the mainland, with separate border controls. **AP**

AP PHOTO

China and Russia win seats on UN rights council, Saudis lose



Member state flags fly outside the United Nations headquarters during the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly, yesterday

EDITH M. LEDERER,
UNITED NATIONS

CHINA, Russia and Cuba won seats on the U.N.'s premiere human rights body despite opposition from activist groups over their abysmal human rights records, but another target, Saudi Arabia, lost.

Russia and Cuba were running unopposed, but China and Saudi Arabia were in a five-way race in the only contested race for seats on the Human Rights Council.

In secret-ballot voting in the 193-member U.N. General Assembly on that race, Pakistan received 169 votes, Uzbekistan 164, Nepal 150, China 139 and Saudi Arabia just 90 votes. In 2016, the Saudis won a seat with 152 votes.

Despite announced reform plans by Saudi Arabia, Human Rights Watch and others strongly opposed its candidacy saying the Middle East nation continues to target human rights defenders, dissidents and women's rights activists and has demonstrated little accountability for past abuses, including the killing of Washington Post columnist and Saudi critic Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul two years ago.

Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of Democracy for the Arab World Now, the organization founded by Khashoggi, said despite hundreds of millions of dollars spent by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin on public

relations "to cover his grotesque abuses, the international community just isn't buying it."

"Unless Saudi Arabia undertakes dramatic reforms to release political prisoners, end its disastrous war in Yemen and allow its citizens meaningful political participation, it will remain a global pariah," Whitson said.

Under the Human Rights Council's rules, seats are allocated to regions to ensure geographical representation.

Except for the Asia-Pacific contest, the election of 15 members to the 47-member Human Rights Council was all but decided in advance because all the other regional groups had uncontested slates.

Four countries won four Africa seats: Ivory Coast, Malawi, Gabon and Senegal. Russia and Ukraine won the two East European seats. In the Latin American and Caribbean group, Mexico, Cuba and Bolivia won the three open seats. And Britain and France won the two seats for the Western European and others group.

"Saudi Arabia's failure to win a seat on the Human Rights Council is a welcome reminder of the need for more competition in U.N. elections," Human Rights Watch's U.N. director, Louis Charbonneau, said after the results were announced,

"Had there been additional candidates, China, Cuba and Russia might have lost too," he said. "But the addition of these undeserving countries won't pre-

vent the council from shining a light on abuses and speaking up for victims. In fact, by being on the council, these abusers will be directly in the spotlight."

Charbonneau earlier criticized U.N. member states, including Western nations, saying: "They don't want competition. ... Essentially these are backroom deals that are worked out among the regional groups."

Last week, a coalition of human rights groups from Europe, the United States and Canada called on U.N. member states to oppose the election of China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Pakistan and Uzbekistan, saying their human rights records make them "unqualified."

"Electing these dictatorships as U.N. judges on human rights is like making a gang of arsonists into the fire brigade," said Hillel Neuer, executive director of UN Watch.

The Geneva-based rights organization published a 30-page joint report with the Human Rights Foundation and the Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights evaluating candidates for council seats. The report lists Bolivia, Ivory Coast, Nepal, Malawi, Mexico, Senegal and Ukraine — all winners — as having "questionable" credentials due to problematic human rights and U.N. voting records that need improvement. It gave "qualified" ratings only to the United Kingdom and France.

Human Rights Watch pointed

to an unprecedented call by 50 U.N. experts on June 26 for "decisive measures to protect fundamental freedoms in China," warning about its mass rights violations in Hong Kong and Tibet and against ethnic Uighurs in the Chinese province of Xinjiang as well as attacks on rights defenders, journalists, lawyers and government critics. Their call was echoed by over 400 civil society groups from more than 60 countries.

Of the four winners of seats in the Asia-Pacific group, China got the lowest vote — 139 compared to 180 votes when it won a seat in 2016.

The rights group said Russia's military operations with the Syrian government "have deliberately or indiscriminately killed civilians and destroyed hospitals and other protected civilian infrastructure in violation of international humanitarian law," and noted Russia's veto of U.N. Security Council resolutions on Syria, including blocking Damascus' referral to the International Criminal Court.

The Geneva-based Human Rights Council can spotlight abuses and has special monitors watching certain countries and issues. It also periodically reviews human rights in every U.N. member country.

Created in 2006 to replace a commission discredited because of some members' poor rights records, the new council soon came to face similar criticism, inclu-

ding that rights abusers sought seats to protect themselves and their allies.

The United States announced its withdrawal from the council in June 2018 partly because it considered the body a forum for hypocrisy about human rights, though also because Washington says the council is anti-Israel.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Tuesday's election of China, Russia and Cuba and last year's election of Venezuela — "countries with abhorrent human rights records" — further validate the U.S. withdrawal from the council. He said the U.S. has taken its own actions to punish "human rights abusers in Xinjiang, Myanmar, Iran, and elsewhere."

Israel's U.N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan called on all democracies on the council "to immediately resign from this shameful and anti-Semitic body."

Human Rights Council spokesman Rolando Gomez said when the newly elected members start their three-year terms in January, 119 of the 193 UN member States will have served on the council, reflecting its diversity and giving the council "legitimacy when speaking out on human rights violations in all countries."

"If a State thinks they can conceal the human rights violations they may have committed, or escape criticism by sitting on the Human Rights Council, they are greatly mistaken," Gomez said. AP

AP PHOTO



Skyline of Limassol, Cyprus

Cyprus cancels maligned 'golden passport' scheme

MENELAOS
HADJICOSTIS, NICOSIA

CYPRUS scrapped a lucrative program granting citizenship to wealthy investors amid new allegations that a top state official and a veteran lawmaker were implicated in attempts to bypass strict vetting rules and issue a passport to a fictitious investor with a supposed criminal record.

Cyprus government spokesman Kyriakos Koushos said the Cabinet accepted a recommendation by the ministers of the interior and finance to cancel altogether the "golden passport" program that has netted billions of euros over several years.

Koushos said the decision, which goes into effect Nov. 1, was based on the Cyprus Investment Program's "long-standing weaknesses, but also the abuse" of its provisions.

He said the government would in due course look at different ways of attracting foreign investment.

The allegations surfaced in an hour-long undercover report by Al Jazeera's investigative unit that used hidden cameras to show Parliamentary Speaker Demetris Syllouris and lawmaker Christakis Giovanis pledging "full support" to granting a passport to a fictitious

Chinese investor, despite a money laundering conviction against him.

The report also showed lawyer Andreas Pittadjis, real estate agents and others outlining to a man posing as a representative for the Chinese investor different ways to skirt background checks, including a name change or granting citizenship through his wife.

Both Pittadjis and Giovanis strongly denied the allegations, saying they were fully aware that the approach was bogus and that they only played along to extract more information from the "representative" in order to file a report with Cypriot law enforcement authorities.

Giovanis yesterday [Macau time] resigned his seat in the Cypriot parliament and quit his duties as a member of the communist-rooted AKEL party.

Cypriot Attorney-General George Savvides said that he instructed police to initiate an "in-depth police investigation" to determine if any criminal acts had been committed.

European Commission spokesman Christian Wigand said the bloc's executive body is looking into launching infringement proceedings against Cyprus.

"We watched in disbelief how high-level officials

were trading European citizenship for financial gains," Wigand told reporters in Brussels. European Commission "President (Ursula) von der Leyen was clear when saying European values are not for sale."

Wigand said the Commission had frequently raised concerns about such investor citizenship schemes and also directly with Cypriot authorities.

Outraged Cypriots took to social media to heap scorn on the officials, with many calling for Syllouris' resignation.

In a statement, Syllouris said that he would step back from his duties as of next week until an investigation is completed. He apologized for the "unfortunate picture" and upheaval that the "staged and fragmented" report gave and which allowed his reputation and that of the institution of House Speaker to be sullied.

Cypriot officials had earlier accused Al Jazeera of an orchestrated smear campaign against the ethnically split island nation.

The program has attracted many foreigner investors because a Cyprus passport automatically grants its holder citizenship access to the entire 27-member European Union. Around 4,000 Cypriot passports have

been issued to investors under the program, generating more than 7 billion euros (\$8.25 billion).

The Cyprus government has conceded that "mistakes" were made and has beefed up eligibility criteria in recent years. The most recent changes that lawmakers approved in August include new anti-money-laundering vetting rules and making it easier to revoke the citizenship of investors involved in or convicted of a serious crime.

Despite the stricter rules, the program continued to be hounded by allegations of corruption, kickbacks and favoritism.

Cyprus' Audit Office last month urged lawmakers to rethink legislation that empowered the government to grant citizenship to investors' family members.

Cyprus Security and Exchange Commission recommended last month that authorities revoke citizenship from seven individuals who submitted forged documents in their application.

An independent committee has been set up to probe thousands of applications that were made since 2007. The investment program had gathered pace after 2013, when a financial crisis nearly brought Cyprus to bankruptcy. AP

this day in history



1964 KHRUSHCHEV 'RETIRES' AS HEAD OF USSR



Nikita Khrushchev has unexpectedly stepped down as leader of the Soviet Union.

The official Soviet news agency, Tass, announced that a plenary meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee had accepted Mr Khrushchev's request to depart "in view of his advanced age and the deterioration of his health".

Mr Khrushchev, who is 70, took over as First Secretary of the Central Committee soon after Stalin's death.

He has held the role of both party leader and prime minister since 1958. These posts will now be divided with 57-year-old Leonid Brezhnev heading the Soviet Communist Party, while 60-year-old Alexei Kosygin, will take the post of prime minister.

The news has come as a shock to Soviet diplomats in London who were unaware that their leader might be unwell.

Governments of Western Europe have also been taken aback and fear the new leadership might shift away from Mr Khrushchev's policy of peaceful co-existence with the West.

A flamboyant character, Mr Khrushchev is described in the Times newspaper today as "the most colourful leader world communism has produced".

He took over from Joseph Stalin when he died in 1953.

In 1955 he began the first of several visits abroad to improve Soviet relations with the rest of Europe, America and Asia.

His first stop was Yugoslavia where he apologised in person to Marshal Josef Tito for Stalin's attack on Yugoslav Communism in 1948.

His denunciation of Stalin in 1956 in what's known as the "secret speech" to the 20th Party Congress gave Soviet satellite states such as Poland and Hungary new hope of more political freedom - which were soon crushed by Warsaw Pact troops.

During this speech, he also laid down the foundations of his foreign policy, moving away from the belligerent approach to capitalism and towards co-existence and competition.

For Western leaders, his brash and extrovert sense of humour was a refreshing change from the stern image of previous Soviet public figures.

He courted socialist parties abroad and encouraged cultural exchanges.

But his temper sometimes got the better of him - like the time he famously hit the table with his shoe during a United Nations debate in 1960 - and he was quick to warn of the USSR's nuclear weapons capability in his speeches in the international arena.

His leadership will also be remembered for bringing the world close to nuclear war by placing Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The following day the Soviet government reassured the West it would continue the policy of peaceful co-existence.

It also indicated Nikita Khrushchev's departure was certainly not voluntary and criticised his "hare-brained scheming, bragging and phrase-mongering", without actually naming him.

There had been a growing opposition to his failed agricultural and industrial policies, quarrels with China, and his humiliating climb-down over the Cuban missile crisis.

There was also a feeling he was trying to create a cult of personality - much like his predecessor Stalin - in taking on the two roles of prime minister and head of the Communist Party.

Mr Khrushchev lived the rest of his life away from the public eye in Moscow and at his country dacha as a special pensioner of the Soviet Government.

In 1970 his memoirs were published in the United States and Europe, but not in the Soviet Union.

He died on 11 September 1971 but was denied a state funeral and interment in the Kremlin wall, and is buried at Novodevichy Convent Cemetery in Moscow.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Playing games with someone can be fun sometimes, but it can also be frustrating. If you've been engaged in a tedious game of phone tag for far too long, today you need to try to put an end to it.

TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Naturally, your feelings matter more to you than they do to other people, but you could meet someone today who is incredibly interested in how you feel and in what makes you happy.

GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You don't have to run for miles or do a million sit-ups. Just go for a walk and make sure some of it is slightly uphill. You don't need to prove anything to anyone. Just get moving.

CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Don't be shy about calling people out on their baloney today! You have to come out of your shell and tell it like it is, or else nothing is going to change between you and a certain person.

LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You could find yourself in a group conversation in which everyone agrees with everyone else - except for you! Stick to your guns and freely share your unique point of view, no matter how unpopular it might be.

VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You're just not equipped with the right kind of patience and energy. But this is a temporary situation, have no fear. In a couple days you'll be back to your engaged self.

LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

The ideas in your head are just ideas until you find another person to share them with! See what people think about what you have planned. Are you planning your next vacation?

SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

If someone pushes your buttons, today, resist the urge to push theirs right back. The temptation to make them feel the way they make you feel is there, but you can (and should) rise above it.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

No matter how slowly things go today, you need to keep busy! If you must, use your creativity to cook up a job or task that you can do to make sure that your hands are not idle.

CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You definitely deserve justice if you were wronged, but the only way to get it is to demand it! Talk to the person in charge. You don't have to be rude, but you do need to stand up for yourself.

AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

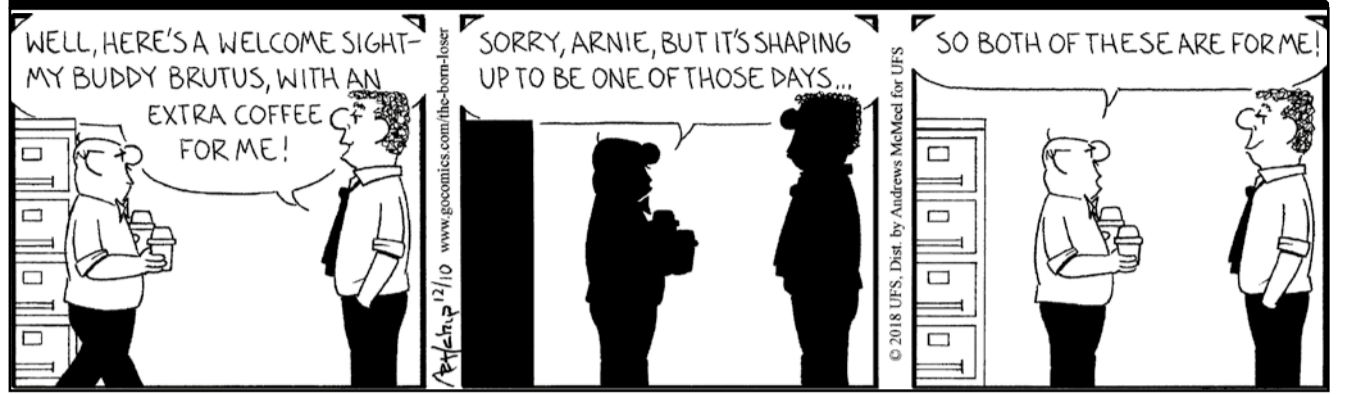
Your creativity is on fire today, and it's a good time to put it to use. Inspiration might not come to you until later today, but it will come. And when an idea does pop into your head, you'd better act quickly!

PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Let the situation unfold around you and just soak it up. Be observant and quiet until you have an idea of something helpful to say. Do not complain or whine. That's going to take you down the wrong path!

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

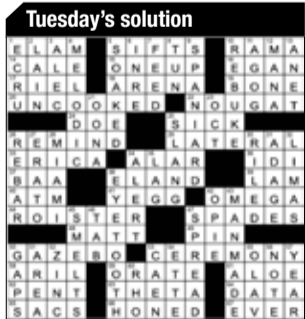
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	5	18	cloudy
Harbin	-1	10	clear
Tianjin	10	19	overcast
Urumqi	3	13	clear
Xi'an	10	12	moderate rain
Lhasa	7	24	clear
Chengdu	12	16	cloudy
Chongqing	15	17	drizzle
Kunming	13	21	shower
Nanjing	16	19	drizzle
Shanghai	19	22	drizzle
Wuhan	15	17	moderate rain
Hangzhou	18	23	drizzle
Taipei	23	27	cloudy
Guangzhou	23	29	overcast
Hong Kong	24	29	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	11	16	drizzle
Frankfurt	5	11	drizzle
Paris	7	14	drizzle
London	8	14	drizzle
New York	15	24	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- French novelist; 5- Part of Hispaniola; 10- Ancient Greek coin; 14- Coloured part of the eye; 15- Improvise; 16- Hindu hero; 17- Scottish loch, home to a monster; 18- Cruise stops; 19- Put ___ on it; 20- Transcriber; 22- Fact; 24- Bro, e.g.; 25- "___ She Lovely?"; 26- Military attack made at night; 30- Club alternative; 35- Room within a harem; 36- Baton Rouge sch.; 37- Having auricular protuberances; 38- Confer; 41- Astonishing; 43- Shrimplike crustaceans; 44- "Respect for Acting" author Hagen; 45- Nationality suffix; 46- Long; 47- Single eye-glasses; 50- In the Black?; 53- There you are!; 54- Rashly; 58- Poem of 14 lines; 62- Prompted; 63- Like non-oyster months; 66- Saab model; 67- Made do, with "out"; 68- So spooky as to be frightening; 69- Fender ding; 70- Cincinnati team; 71- Anger; 72- Mars' Greek counterpart;

DOWN 1- Brass component; 2- Nabisco cookie; 3- Speech issue; 4- Francis's home; 5- Cat's stomach accumulation; 6- Super Bowl highlights?; 7- Out of sorts; 8- Layers; 9- Norwegian dramatist; 10- Word that can precede hygiene, tradition and agreement.; 11- ___ Ha!; 12- Drop; 13- Gentlewoman; 21- Frozen Wasser; 23- Discombobulated; 25- Debtor's note; 26- Conceited; 27- Idolize; 28- Craze; 29- Summer hrs.; 31- La ___. Bolivia; 32- Disney mermaid; 33- Compact; 34- Borders; 39- Camera type, briefly; 40- Arm bones; 41- From ___ Z; 42- One of the 12 tribes of Israel; 44- Actress Thurman; 48- What have we here?!; 49- Alberta's home; 51- Scatter; 52- Conger catcher; 54- Bakery worker; 55- Dangerous weapon; 56- Attention; 57- Totals; 59- ___-do-well; 60- Bald eagle's relative; 61- Small children; 64- Time; 65- Join a poker game;



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

Manhattan Luxury Residence in Central Taipa
HK\$12,980,000 1,720 ft² 3 2 2

FOR RENT

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

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

Renovated Duplex, Macau with Amazing View
HK\$4,200,000 817 ft² 2 2 2

FOR SALE/ RENT

- [Taipa] Unique Studio 1 1 1
650 ft² \$3,780,000 (ref: 20076001)
- [Taipa] Wa Bao 2 2 2
1,071 ft² \$7,995,000 (ref: 18115568)
- [Taipa] Taipa Village Apartment 2 1 1
600 ft² \$9,900/mth (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Houston Court 1 1 1
980 ft² \$10,800/mth (ref: 20091001)

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IMF ENVISIONS A SHARP 4.4% DROP IN GLOBAL GROWTH FOR 2020

THE International Monetary Fund foresees a steep fall in international growth this year as the global economy struggles to recover from the pandemic-induced recession, its worst collapse in nearly a century.

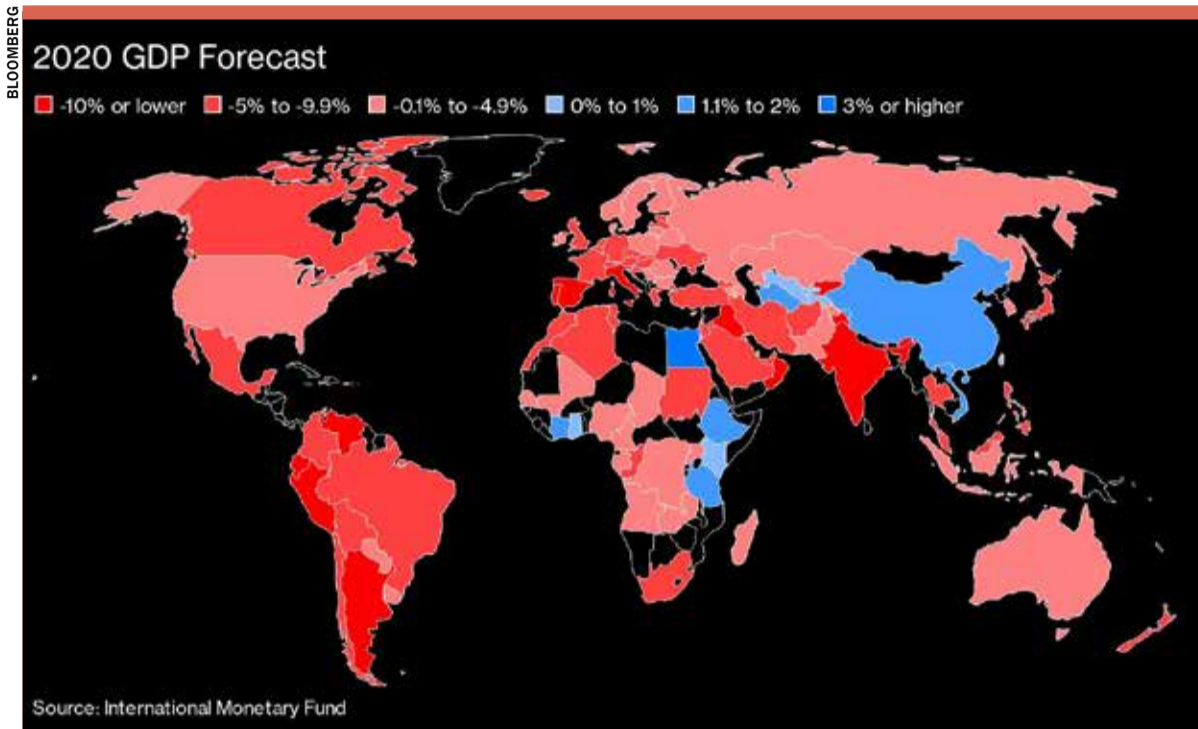
The IMF estimated this week that the global economy will shrink 4.4% for 2020. That would be the worst annual plunge since the Great Depression of the 1930s. By comparison, the international economy contracted by a far smaller 0.1% after the devastating 2008 financial crisis.

The monetary fund's forecast for 2020 in its latest World Economic Outlook does represent an upgrade of 0.8 percentage point from its previous forecast in June. The IMF attributed the slightly less dire forecast to faster-than-expected rebounds in some countries, notably China, and to government rescue aid that was enacted by the United States and other major industrial countries.

While forecasting a global contraction this year, after 2.8% growth in 2019, the IMF predicts a rebound to global growth of 5.2% next year, 0.2 percentage point lower than in its June forecast.

The 189-nation lending agency cautioned that many developing countries, notably India, are faring worse than expected, in large part because of a resurgent virus. Many nations face the threat of economic reversals if government support is withdrawn too quickly, the IMF warned.

"While the global economy



is coming back, the ascent will be long, uneven and uncertain," Gita Gopinath, the IMF's chief economist, wrote in the new outlook. "Recovery is not assured while the pandemic continues to spread."

At a news conference, Gopinath said it was critical that government economic support not be withdrawn too quickly.

"This crisis will leave scars," she told reporters, stemming from damage to labor markets that will take time to regain lost jobs, lost business investment and diminished schooling that will reduce the development of human capital around the world.

For the United States, the IMF forecasts an economic contraction of 4.3% this year, 3.7 percentage points better than in its June forecast. The less-pessimistic outlook re-

flects a stronger-than-expected bounce from the \$3 trillion in relief aid that Congress enacted earlier this year.

For next year, the IMF envisions 3.1% growth in the United States, 1.4 percentage points less than in its June outlook and in line with the view of private forecasters. Last year, the U.S. economy grew 2.2%.

China, the world's second-largest economy, is expected to grow 1.9% this year, a sharp slowdown from the 6.1% gain in 2019, and then expand 8.2% in 2021.

The IMF said that while a swift recovery in China had surprised forecasters, the global rebound remains vulnerable to setbacks. It noted that "prospects have worsened significantly in some developing countries where

infections are rising rapidly" and that in India and in poorer nations in Africa and Asia, the pandemic has continued to spread and in some areas even accelerate.

"Preventing further policy setbacks," the IMF said, "will require that policy support is not prematurely withdrawn."

In the United States, a variety of economic aid programs, including small business loans to prevent layoffs and a \$600-a-week unemployment benefit, have expired. Congress has so far failed to reach a compromise agreement to provide further financial assistance to individuals and businesses.

The scale of disruptions in hard-hit economic sectors of the U.S. economy, notably restaurants, retail stores and airlines, suggests that without

an available vaccine and effective drugs to combat the virus, many areas of the economy "face a particularly difficult path back to any semblance of normalcy," the IMF said.

Even as China has rebounded much faster than many expected, India, another populous country in Asia, is enduring difficulties. India's economy is expected to contract 10.3% this year — 5.8 percentage points deeper than the decline the IMF had forecast in June.

The monetary fund predicted that the euro area, which covers the 19 European nations that use the euro currency, would contract 8.3% this year but rebound 5.2% next year.

The IMF produced the updated outlook for this week's virtual meetings of the 189-nation lending institution and its sister institution, the World Bank. Those meetings are expected to be dominated by discussions of how to provide more aid to the world's poorest countries in the form of medical aid and debt relief.

Finance ministers and central bank presidents from the Group of Seven wealthy industrial countries — the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Canada — held a videoconference led by U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin to discuss debt relief proposals for poor nations and their efforts to support the global economy, the Treasury said.

One idea being considered is to extend for six months a debt-payment freeze for the poorest nations that took effect May 1 but is due to expire at year's end. Many aid groups are pressing for rich nations to go further and forgive part of the debt rather than just halt repayments. **AP**

CORPORATE BITS

MGM holds F&B training to members of Fuhong



MGM recently joined hands with Fuhong Society of Macau to provide a series of food and beverage related vocational trainings to the mental health rehabilitants of the association, who are working at the restaurant Portuguese Corner, the latest vocational training project at its Po Choi Center.

MGM pastry chefs and restaurant service team members conducted related trainings for the group to equip them with solid skills, hence restoring their confidence to re-integrate into the society, the gaming operator said in a statement. In the past month, MGM

sent its team members to the restaurant and coached a series of trainings on-site, including core-service procedures and customer service manners. On top of those, a special culinary training session was also arranged for the restaurant's kitchen trainees at the commissary kitchen of MGM Cotai.

Wendy Yu, Executive Vice President of Human Resources of MGM, said, "We are dedicated to supporting and helping each of them to develop a career of their own, just like everyone else in the society," pledging to roll out more diverse programs to raise awareness of social inclusions in the local community.

CTM to offer new iPhone 12 lineup



CTM will offer the new iPhone 12 lineup, including iPhone 12 Pro, iPhone 12 Pro Max, iPhone 12, and

iPhone 12 min, the telecommunication firm said in a statement. With an all-new design,

iPhone 12 models feature unparalleled new camera systems, edge-to-edge Super Retina XDR displays for a more immersive viewing experience, the biggest jump in durability with the Ceramic Shield front cover, and Apple-designed A14 Bionic chip, the fastest chip in a smartphone.

Pre-registration for the iPhone 12 Pro and iPhone 12 have started yesterday at <https://iservice.ctm.net/CTMWebForm/cportal/base/public/newphone.xhtml>. The latest information on iPhone 12 Pro Max and iPhone 12 Pro mini will be posted in a later stage.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

DRIVE IN

A Filipina singer with heart in 'Yellow Rose'



Eva Noblezada in a scene from "Yellow Rose"

JAKE COYLE,
AP FILM WRITER

"I'M illegal," says Rosario "Rose" Garcia (Eva Noblezada), a Filipina living undocumented in Texas, in Diane Paragas' "Yellow Rose." The way she says it is meant, as it is, to sound ridiculous. Here is a bright, headstrong young woman, dressed in jeans and a cowboy hat. She's about the furthest thing possible from a criminal. She's a picture of Americana.

Unrequited love has taken many forms in the movies, but in "Yellow Rose," devotion is denied by a country. Rose, 17, lives with her widowed mother, Priscilla (Princess Punzalan), at the motel where she works as a cleaner. On the night when Rose and a guitar-shop friend Elliot (Liam Booth) sneak into Austin to see Dale Watson (playing himself) perform at the Broken Spoke dance hall, Priscilla is taken by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, imprisoned and soon deported to Manila. Rose narrowly escapes the ICE raid, and

is left distraught and alone. She improvises a life of her own in Texas, a plight coinciding with her awakening as a country musician.

The contrasts of "Yellow Rose" are stark. It's part a "Star Is Born"-styled coming-of-age tale, part immigrant nightmare. That makes for an often moving, sometimes clunky take on the modern American musical, where an aspiring, hugely talented singer making her way through boozy bars needs sanctuary as much as she does a big break. The script can be too heightened and prone to leaps of coincidence, and details are sometimes lacking. But the heart of "Yellow Rose" is true, a testament to Noblezada's strong presence and her ability to belt the film's original songs.

It's the first film for Noblezada, the Tony-nominated star of the recent Broadway revival of "Miss Saigon," and a cast member of "Hades-town." (In a poignant bit of casting, the originator of Kim in "Miss Saigon," Lea Salonga, co-stars as Rose's aunt.) She makes

the transition seamlessly; Noblezada's performance is intense and fiery. She's best when opposite Watson (who becomes her mentor) and the Broken Spoke owner Jolene (Libby Villari), who both bring a welcome naturalism to the film.

"Yellow Rose" occasionally touches on the daily terror of other undocumented immigrants — ICE is always just around the corner. (One agent, perhaps unrealistically, lets Rose go during a raid on the Broken Spoke.) But considering the film's proximity to the Mexican border, it could have enlarged its scope to incorporate Hispanic characters more than a brief encounter with a swiftly captured fellow kitchen worker. Still, "Yellow Rose" sings an affecting, sorrowful and defiant song where dreams collide with a cruel reality.

"Yellow Rose," a Sony Pictures release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for some strong language, and teen drinking. Running time: 94 minutes.★★★★

BOOK IT

Cuomo book on NY pandemic outbreak short on state missteps

Gov. Andrew Cuomo condemned the federal government's coronavirus response and lauded his own leadership efforts in a new book released yesterday that offers a few new details — but not many — about New York's battle against the pandemic.

The Democrat's book, "American Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic," delivers a retelling of his efforts to contain the virus as it ravaged his state in spring.

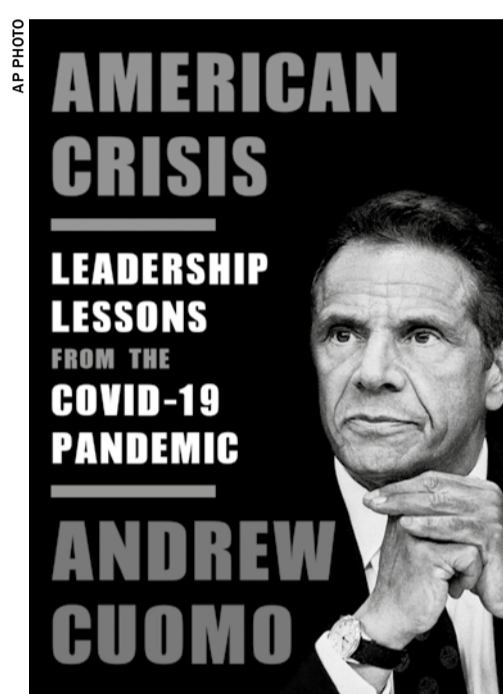
In it, Cuomo describes trying to placate President Donald Trump in order to get needed hospital beds, ventilators and other supplies for New York. He detailed the state's success at rapidly ramping up testing capacity and his worry that New Yorkers wouldn't heed calls to stay at home to help avoid a catastrophic surge in hospitalizations.

Cuomo also addresses a frequent criticism of his leadership style: that he is overly controlling.

"You show me a person who is not controlling, and I'll show you a person who is probably not highly successful," he wrote.

As for his mistakes, Cuomo concedes only a few. Among them, he said, he waited too long to mandate that New Yorkers wear masks.


Other problems with New York's virus response get less ink, including the state's stru-



ggles to help nursing homes acquire enough protective gear or staff. Cuomo said Republicans have unfairly politicized the thousands of patient deaths at New York nursing homes.


"We have seen how the virus is confronted and defeated," he said. "New York didn't do everything right. But there are lessons we can learn that will lead to victory." AP

AD



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OPINION

World Views

Ferdinando Giugliano, Bloomberg



SHOULD I REPORT MY PARTYING NEIGHBORS TO THE PANDEMIC POLICE?

The pandemic has prompted European citizens to accept changes in social behavior that would have seemed impossible only a year ago. People have stopped shaking hands, started wearing masks and learned to talk at some distance. They have adhered to government rules keeping them at home and closing down their businesses. They have stopped attending funerals and weddings.

We've let the state take ever more intrusive measures in limiting our lives, all in the hope of limiting contagion. But the next apparent move in this direction — encouraging individuals to police each other — goes too far. Politicians in Italy and the U.K. should avoid making citizens suspicious of one another. It will do little to fight the virus while inflicting damage on communities.

As the number of Covid cases and deaths surges again in Europe, governments are seeking to cut down on gatherings, including those at private homes. Health officials believe that dinners and parties can be a dangerous source of transmission, as people let their guard down, take off masks and spend time close together. The U.K. government has passed a "rule of six" that limits the number of individuals from different households that can mix together. Breaking it will lead to a fine. On Monday night, Italy introduced a similar restriction for indoor meetings, though it is only a recommendation.

But politicians know that setting such rules is easier than enforcing them. One cannot expect the police to knock randomly at people's flats in an attempt to sniff out illegal parties. Hence the idea to get citizens involved in reporting on their neighbors.

In the U.K., police minister Kit Malthouse said he expected people to ring the existing hotline to report violations. Priti Patel, home secretary, went a step further, saying she would call the police if she saw her neighbors breaking the "rule of six." Health secretary Matt Hancock said that everybody should do the same.

In Italy, the government has been more restrained, but some ministers have also hinted they're relying on the help of individuals. "Italians have shown they do not need a policeman to check on them personally. But it is clear that we will increase checks, and there will be reporting," Roberto Speranza, Italy's health minister, said on Sunday.

These suggestions are unacceptable. They echo darker times, for example in East Germany under the Communist regime, in which neighbors spied on each other and abused this monitoring power for personal vendettas. Such systematic reporting could also turn into a massive waste of time, as officials would run from one report to the next, at a time when resources are already stretched. Meanwhile, this attitude would make people distrust each other when they've already had to live through months of isolation.

Putting the burden of enforcing rules on citizens feels like a weak attempt to deflect the failures of the state onto the general public. Ministers are right to demand our cooperation when it comes to wearing face masks and social distancing. But the government must also fulfill its side of the bargain, by, for example, providing a well-functioning test-and-trace system that can rapidly identify and isolate infected individuals.

The British health-care system is struggling badly to meet the public's demand for tests. In Italy, after a very promising start to holding back a second wave, there are signs that the situation is now coming under strain, as people complain about long lines at testing facilities.

Asking citizens to turn into policemen to make up for the state not doing its part is no way to bring society out of a pandemic and economic turmoil. Until the development and widespread distribution of a vaccine, our lives will continue to be restricted. But democratic governments must beware of pushing limits too far. A further breakdown of trust is the last thing any country needs.

China went on a record-buying spree of Japanese bonds over the summer months, snapping up \$20.9 billion of the low-yielding debt to spur talk that it's diversifying reserves.

The 2.2 trillion yen of purchases, made in June to August, are a record in local currency terms for a three-month period based on data from Japan's Ministry of Finance going back to 2005. The last time Chinese buyers had gone on a similar splurge was back in 2016.

The eye-catching investments into low-yielding Japanese debt

may be driven by a few factors, according to JPMorgan Chase & Co. strategists.

As global bond yields collapsed, Japanese debt may be seen as more attractive on a real-yield basis. Some of the Chinese inflows was probably due to "dollar asset swap purchases," strategists including Sosuke Nakamura and Tohru Sasaki wrote in a note. That's when investors lend dollars for yen, collecting a premium for the greenback which is then used to enhance returns.

However, geopolitics may also be in play, JPMorgan indicated.

WORLD BANK APPROVES \$12B TO FINANCE VIRUS VACCINES, CARE

THE World Bank has approved \$12 billion in financing to help developing countries buy and distribute coronavirus vaccines, tests, and treatments, aiming to support the vaccination of up to 1 billion people.

The \$12 billion "envelope" is part of a wider World Bank Group package of up to \$160 billion to help developing countries fight the COVID-19 pandemic, the bank said in a statement yesterday [Macau time].

The World Bank said its COVID-19 emergency response programs are already reaching 111 countries.

Citizens in developing countries also need access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, it said.

"We are extending and expanding our fast-track approach to address the COVID emergency so that developing countries have fair and equal access to vaccines," said the bank's president, David Malpass, said in the statement.

"Access to safe and effective vaccines and strengthened delivery systems is key to alter the course of the pandemic and help countries experiencing catastrophic economic and fiscal impacts move



toward a resilient recovery," he said.

The International Finance Corporation, the private sector lending arm of the World Bank is investing in vaccine manufacturers through a \$4 billion Global Health Platform, the World Bank said.

Researchers are working on developing more than 170 potential COVID-19 vaccines.

Development and deployment of such preventive vaccines is crucial to helping stem outbreaks of the coronavirus that has killed more than 1 million people and sickened more than 38 million, while devastating economies and leaving many millions jobless.

The world's richest countries have locked up most of the world's potential vaccine

supply through 2021, raising worries that poor and vulnerable communities will not be able to get the shots. Meanwhile, an ambitious international project to deliver coronavirus vaccines to the world's poorest people, called Covax, is facing potential shortages of money, cargo planes, refrigeration and vaccines themselves.

The World Bank said it will draw on expertise and experience from its involvement in many large-scale immunization programs and other public health efforts.

The funding also is meant to help countries access tests and treatments and to support management of supply chains and other logistics for vaccinations in developing countries, the bank said. AP

KOREAN BOY BAND BTS FACES UPROAR IN CHINA OVER WAR COMMENTS

CHINESE nationalists erupted in anger at South Korean boy band BTS after its leader thanked Korean War veterans for their sacrifices.

The singer, who goes by RM, made the remark in a recorded acceptance speech for an award from the Korea Society for promoting U.S.-Korean relations.

"We will always remember the history of pain that our two nations shared together and the sacrifices of countless men and women," RM said in the speech, which included no mention of China.

"After 70 years, the world we are living in is much closer than before. Boundaries



South Korean K-pop group BTS members salute to their national flag

in many aspects are getting more blurred," RM said.

Chinese internet users and state media took RM's comments as a slap at China, whose soldiers fought alongside North Korean forces during their failed attempt to annex South Korea in the

1950-53 war.

They accused RM of ignoring the role played by China in the war, which Chinese Communist Party propaganda blames on the United States, instead of North Korean leader Kim Il Sung's attack on South Korea. AP

Thailand Activists hoping to keep up the momentum in their campaign for democratic change launched a third major rally in Bangkok yesterday, amid concerns about a possible confrontation with police or rival groups supporting the government. Despite a massive security presence and harassment from counter-demonstrators, thousands of protesters proceeded with a planned march from Bangkok's Democracy Monument toward Government House, the offices of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha. "Prime minister, get out!" they chanted.



India Record rains and heavy flooding in the southern state of Telangana collapsed houses and killed at least 15 people, police said yesterday. Four other people were injured in Hyderabad, the state's capital, when a house's boundary wall fell on a neighboring house, which collapsed with the impact, police officer Gaja Bhopal Rao said.

Kyrgyzstan's parliament yesterday voted again to nominate a prime minister after the country's president vetoed the previous decision because of questions over its legitimacy. The parliament nominated politician Sadyr Zhaparov as the new prime minister after a vote on Saturday, which was challenged by some lawmakers. They said the legislators didn't have a quorum to make the decision.



Russia A trio of space travelers launched successfully to the International Space Station, for the first time using a fast-track maneuver to reach the orbiting outpost in just three hours. NASA's Kate Rubins along with Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov of the Russian space agency Roscosmos lifted off as scheduled yesterday morning from the Russia-leased Baikonur space launch facility in Kazakhstan for a six-month stint on the station.