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**Japanese** Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga arrived yesterday in Indonesia on the second leg of his first overseas trip as premier to underscore his government's aims of countering China in the region. Suga arrived from Vietnam in the middle of a four-day visit to the two Southeast Asia nations he said was key to pursuing the "free and open Indo-Pacific" vision of economic and security cooperation to counter China's growing power.

**Thailand's** Cabinet yesterday approved a request to recall Parliament for a special session to deal with the political pressures from ongoing anti-government protests. The Cabinet at its weekly meeting approved the request, which calls for a non-voting session on Oct. 26-27.



**Indonesia** Protests against the new jobs law were held in cities across the country yesterday, with demonstrators calling on the president to revoke the legislation they say will erode labor rights and weaken environmental protections. More than 1,000 students and workers gathered near the Presidential Palace in Jakarta to express their anger at the legislation.

**Sri Lanka's** highest court has ruled that four sections of a proposed amendment to the constitution will need approval in a public referendum to become law because they are against the people's sovereignty. The proposed sections relieve the president from being responsible to Parliament and give him immunity from lawsuits and the power to dissolve Parliament a year after parliamentary.

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## ARRIVALS MAY TUMBLE 90%

The city's tourism board is expecting a decline of over 90% in tourist arrival numbers for the whole of 2020 P2



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### MAN ARRESTED FOR SECRETLY PHOTOGRAPHING FEMALE STUDENTS

On October 15, the Judiciary Police arrested a 27-year-old man on allegations of secretly filming and photographing female students in school uniform. The police found about 3,000 videos and photos depicting female students in uniform. The suspect's home computer was also seized, but no relevant material was found on it. The first report was made at the end of September by a female student who suspected a man of following and photographing her in central Macau. The latest report was received by the police on October 13. An interschool mechanism revealed that three other female students have fallen victim to the man.

### TWO MEN FALL VICTIM TO NUDE CHAT SCAMS

The Judiciary Police have recently received two more reports of nude-chat scamming. In these two cases, the two male victims were framed by "internet friends" with whom they had only come into contact minutes before. They were both convinced to conduct nude video calls on another messaging app. The first victim was on the call for four minutes and the second victim for two. After their video calls, both victims were blackmailed for cash – the first for MOP30,000 and the second for an amount not disclosed by the police. The first victim was threatened with the publication of his video clip if he did not pay the money. For the time being, nobody has been arrested.

### RESTAURANT BUSINESS PERFORMANCE SLIGHTLY IMPROVED IN AUGUST

The business performance of restaurants in Macau showed a slight improvement in August 2020, according to the latest data released by Statistics and Census Service. The data indicated that 24 percent of the interviewed restaurants recorded a year-on-year rise in revenue or steady performance in August, an increase of 6 percentage points from July. On the other hand, the share of interviewed restaurants reporting a year-on-year decline in revenue in August dropped by 6 percentage points from July to 76 percent. Eighty percent of the interviewed restaurants and similar establishments expecting their revenue to decline year-on-year in September, up by 3 percentage points from August.

# TOURISM BOARD ACKNOWLEDGES 2020 ARRIVALS MAY TUMBLE OVER 90%

LYNZY VALLES

**T**he city's tourism board is expecting a decline of over 90% in tourist arrivals for the whole of 2020. The SAR government is not expected to relax its current entry restrictions anytime soon, meaning that it may be some time before the tourism industry recovers.

Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes told the press on the sidelines of an event, "we estimated that compared with last year, the decline for this year should be over 90%."

Official data shows that the region has only welcomed 3.57 million visitors between January and August this year. The majority of visitors arrived in January, before Macau tightened entry restrictions.

The figure represents a decline of 87% compared to the same period last year.

The city has seen a decline in tourist arrivals since the pandemic began. Even after the reinstatement of the Individual Visit Scheme, arrivals were still low compared to the expectations of local businesses.

The MGTO, however, was



careful over projections for visitor arrivals, even during Golden Week, which is typically one of the city's busiest periods of the year.

The average number of daily tourist arrivals was around 19,000 during the long national holiday.

According to Fernandes, this year's Golden Week tourists cannot be directly compared with the past as the city has strict restrictions in place, noting that residents from Hong Kong and Taiwan are not exempt from the 14-day quarantine period.

Applications for travel endorsements to the mainland are still

inconvenient for Chinese residents compared to the pre-Covid-19 situation.

The SAR received a total of 156,000 tourist arrivals during the national holiday, a plunge of 86% compared to last year's holiday.

Last year, about 794,000 mainland residents visited the city during the seven-day holiday, from a total of nearly 1 million visitors.

Despite the sluggish tourism restart, Fernandes believes Macau residents would not want to see the government relaxing the current entry restrictions as many are still concerned about

the pandemic.

She added that the government's current priority is to safeguard the health of the public.

Regarding existing entry policies, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng has previously said the government has maintained close communication with the National Health Commission regarding any scientific reasons that might allow for the relaxation of entry policies in Macau.

Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, Fernandes had said that Macau visitor arrivals would drop by 3% in 2020, adding that this could be due to the trade war or other external factors.

## Gaming analyst turns cautious on Macau recovery timeline

DANIEL BEITLER

**G**aming advisory firm Union Gaming has turned cautious on the Macau casino sector after failing to see signs of recovery.

"Currently, there's too much friction for a large-scale recovery in visitation," wrote Union Gaming analyst John DeCree, as cited in Seeking Alpha, a crowd-sourced content service for financial markets.

The analyst believes that cumbersome travel restrictions make it dif-

ficult for visitors to flock back to the city, which welcomed nearly 40 million people last year.

"Although visas are available, the online/automated process is not. Travelers need to apply in person and processing times can take up to two weeks. On top of that, travelers to Macau still need to present a current (7 days) negative nucleic acid test. This makes last minute, spontaneous, or frequent trips impractical," continued DeCree.

According to the analyst, one positive sign

is that "Macau authorities are considering extending the validity of a negative test to 14 days, which should be moderately helpful."

Other analysts had earlier bet that Macau gross gaming revenue would accelerate faster than in Las Vegas, which re-opened quicker than the SAR but is operating in a country still trying to bring the virus under control.

August arrivals in Las Vegas numbered 1.53 million, down about 55% compared to a year

earlier, according to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitor's Authority. During the same month, Macau visitor arrivals plummeted 93.7% to 227,000 people.

Many in Macau were left disappointed this month after the Golden Week period failed to re-suscitate the city's stagnant economy. Many small businesses had been hoping for a tourism bounce that would signal the worst of the pandemic was over.

The mainland declared victory over the co-

ronavirus pandemic in March. Since then the Chinese economy has shown strong signs of stabilization, with domestic spending nearing pre-Covid levels and factory output reportedly growing at the fastest pace in almost a decade.

Macau's economy has not emerged from the pandemic in the same way. Despite having not recorded a locally-transmitted case in over six months, gross gaming revenue and other visitor spending are still only a fraction of 2019 levels. The latest projections from the IMF's World Economic Outlook indicate Macau's gross domestic product will fall by 52.3%.

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# Latin American Festival adjusts to pandemic by suspending food festival

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE 8th Latin American Cultural Festival in Macau kicked off yesterday with a ceremony held at the Macau Tower.

This year, the festival was forced to adjust its format, suspending the Food Festival component, which has been the major headliner in the past, the president of the Executive Board of the Macao Association for the Promotion of Exchange between Asia-Pacific and Latin America (MAPEAL), Sonia Chan Prado, said to the media on the sidelines of the inauguration event.

"The big difference between previous editions and this year is that the Latin American chefs cannot come to Macau and so we will have to suspend our favorite activity, the Food Festival," Prado said.

However, the organizer affirmed that the festival will go ahead with a total of 10 other activities this year.

"We are going to have four photo exhibitions. The first one starts from today [yesterday] and that is related to the Latin American ancient civilization, to show to the public the culture of Latin American countries. After this exhibition, we will have another three that will aim to show



RENATO MARQUES

to the public the long-lasting relations between China and Cuba, Chile, and Ecuador," Prado said. The relationships are 60, 50, and 40 years old respectively.

At the end of this month, the festival will turn its efforts to a coffee appreciation event, called the Macao-Latin Coffee Festival. It will include the Latin American Specialty Coffee Manual Brewing Competition for the first time, in which 24 competitors will compete for the championship title. A free tasting of Latin American coffee will be held simultaneously at the venue, with Prado welcoming all coffee lovers in Macau to join the event on October 31.

On Saturday, November

7, there will be a series of events including a Latin music and dance party as well as several Latin dance (salsa) workshops. These will be complemented by a Wine and Spirits Festival which will feature not only wines but also Grappa-miel, a special liquor from Uruguay made with honey, which will be tasted in Macau for the first time.

Speaking to the media, Prado said that MAPEAL insisted on holding the festival this year, even if it was an adapted version, to boost morale during these difficult times and increase local knowledge about Latin America, especially among the youth of Macau.

"Amid this difficult time, we still want to bring some

fun and entertainment to the community, residents, and visitors and we also want to keep promoting the cultural links between Macau and the Latin American countries. This is our mission, we will try our best to continue doing this kind of cultural promotion event in Macau so more people get acquainted with the different Latin American cultures, especially the students that like to widen their horizons," Prado said.

The organizer said that the number of participants this year is unknown and difficult to predict due to Covid-19 and the low number of visitors coming to Macau. Still, Prado is expecting "a few thousand" people to participate in the range of events on offer.



## Upcoming joint exhibition to limit number of visitors per zone

LYNZY VALLES

**A**N upcoming joint exhibition will be held both online and offline with a limit on visitor numbers as part of the government's epidemic prevention measures.

The 25th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF), the Macao Franchise Expo 2020 and the 2020 Portuguese Speaking Countries Products and Services Exhibition (Macao) will be held concurrently at The Venetian Macao for three days from tomorrow.

Due to the pandemic, there is a limit of 250 people in each zone at a time, the director of the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), Lau Wai Meng, confirmed yesterday at a press conference.

This means that participants are not required to present a negative Covid-19 test, contrary to the requirements for events with over 400 people in a closed space.

With a budget of 50 million patacas, the three joint exhibitions will include cloud matching for the online expo, live streaming of the exhibitions, online contract signing, and online promotion seminars.

There are already more than 450 matching session registrations in the online business matching zone. The participating enterprises are from the fields of food and catering services, hotel supplies, technology products and products from Portuguese-speaking countries, among others. In order to facilitate business matching, IPIM announced

that it developed a mobile application, "Scan2Match," which allows traders to inquire about the matching schedule at any time.

As of October 19, the number of online exhibitors has exceeded 1,100, with a total of over 3,700 online exhibits, said IPIM. The exhibitors are from mainland China, Portugal, Brazil, Canada, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, and Macau.

Figures from IPIM show that during the three-day-long exhibitions, over 50 forums, meetings, exchanges and promotion sessions will take place.

This year, the three exhibitions cover an area of 25,000 square metres and offer over 1,200 booths, covering modern financial services, science and technology innovation projects, food and catering services, cultural and creative industries, Portuguese-speaking countries' specialty products, professional consulting services and franchise industries.

Meanwhile, the number of exhibitors at MIF's Macao SME Pavilion increased to some 160 this year. Forty percent of these exhibitors are participating for the first time.

As part of the MIF, the Macao Fashion Festival 2020 will also be held with the theme "Green Sustainability" to promote sustainable design and help reduce the fashion industry's negative impact on the environment.

All people entering and leaving the venue are required to undergo temperature checks, show health codes and wear face masks.

## HKD REAL-TIME SETTLEMENT SYSTEM PROVES POPULAR ON FIRST DAY

**T**HE Hong Kong Dollar Real-time General Settlement System, which was launched this Monday, recorded a total of HKD9.4 billion worth of transactions occurring in a single day, the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) has announced.

The system is currently being used by 28 local banks. Described by the AMCM as safe and convenient, the system was built to support immediate settlement services for

interbank fund transfers in the neighboring region's currency.

It can also help shorten the time needed for interbank HKD transfers and establish the essential conditions for same-day bank-in transactions.

Most large-sum transactions in Macau are settled in Hong Kong dollars. For example, transactions of real estate, motor vehicles, gold products, and often electrical and digital appliances. All casinos

house HKD-denominated tables as well.

Banks using the system will not be charged by the government for the service. According to the authority, signing up to use the system will allow banks to process standardized immediate interbank transfers in HKD.

Another advantage of the system, the authority explained, is that it will improve financial communications within the Greater Bay Area. A con-

nection point has been saved in the system for future binding with similar systems in Hong Kong. In addition, a Guangdong-Macao direct electronic payment gateway will be established at the end of the year.

In previous years, the government established two similar systems to facilitate comparable functions. The two older systems settled transactions in the Macau pataca and Chinese yuan. **AL**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

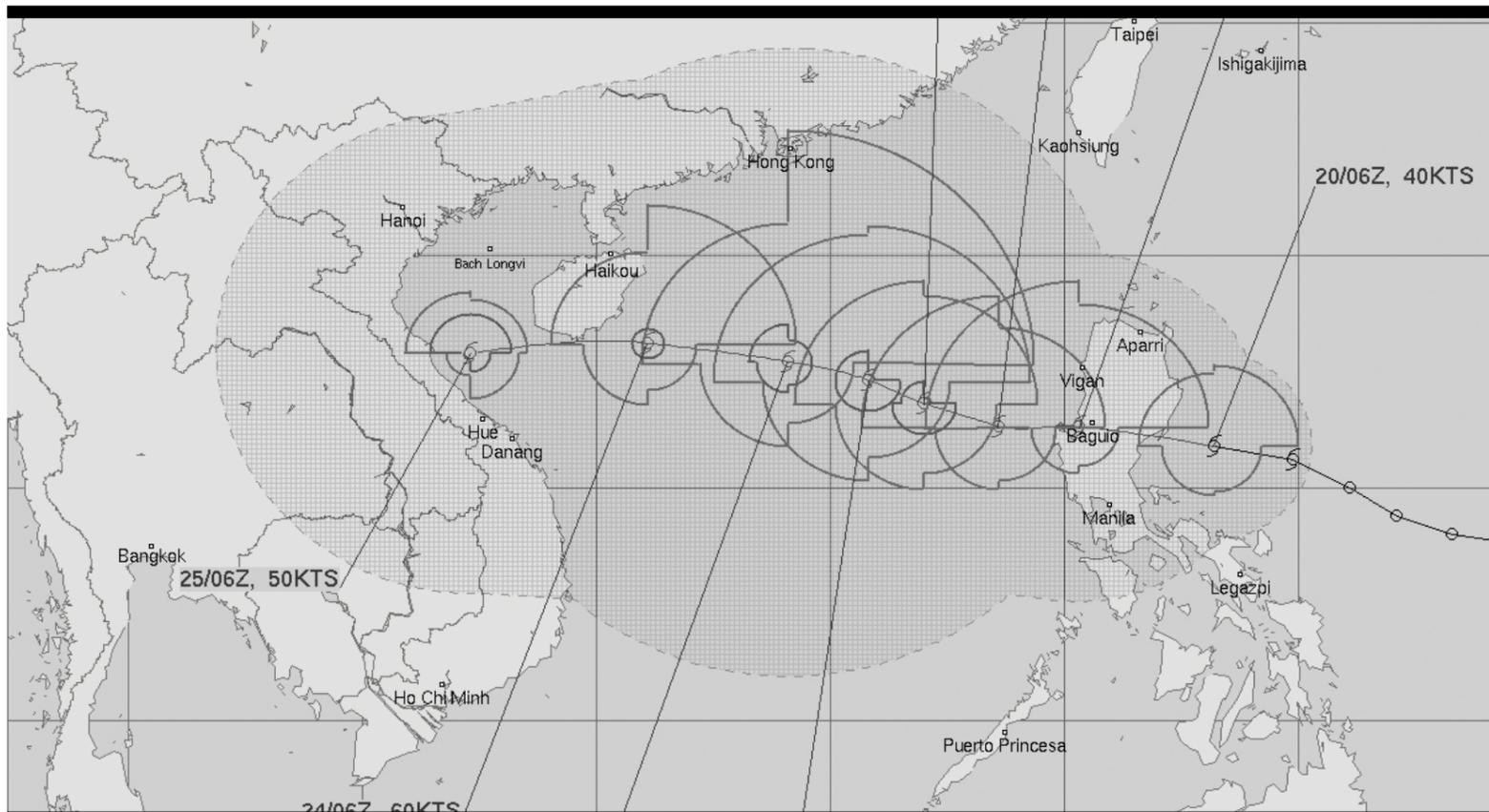
# TROPICAL STORM SAUDEL NOT EXPECTED TO DIRECTLY IMPACT MACAU

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE weather system that has recently strengthened and been named tropical storm Saudel is not likely hit the Pearl River Estuary directly, the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) forecasts, alongside several other global and regional weather services.

Yesterday afternoon, tropical storm Saudel was located over the sea to the east of the Philippines. It is expected to enter the South China Sea tomorrow and move westwards across the middle of the South China Sea, says the SMG.

The SMG reminds residents to prepare for the northeast monsoon, which will affect Macau later this week. The northern winds are expected to strengthen and it will be slightly dry and cool. The public is advised stay alert to the change in the weather.



A report yesterday by the Hong Kong Observatory stated that Saudel would move across the Luzon peninsula and enter

the central part of the South China Sea over the course of yesterday and today.

The weather service

forecasts that the system will then move westward in the general direction of the central part of Vietnam and area south of Hainan Island.

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) made similar predictions.

The local weather service is remaining vigilant and noted that the forecast path and intensity of the cyclone are still uncertain. The SMG pledged to continue monitoring

the system.

The JTWC estimates the maximum sustained wind of the system is expected to be about 111 km/h at its peak, as it moves towards the south coast of Hainan Province.

The Hong Kong weather service estimates that based on its current path, the cyclone will remain some distance from the Pearl River Estuary, "posing no direct threat to the territory [on] October 21," the observatory noted.

"Thereafter, depending

on the track of Saudel and the changes in local wind strength, the observatory will consider whether to issue the Standby Signal, No.1," the weather service added.

As for Saudel's impact on the region, both the Philippines and Vietnam are bracing for potentially damaging wind and rain. In Taiwan, the cyclone is expected to bring moisture to the northern part of the island, and will further cool the region to 16 degrees Celsius over the coming weekend.

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## DSEJ plans to establish licensing system for tuition centers, nurseries

**D**AYCARE facilities may soon require licenses issued by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) in order to operate, Hon Wai, director of the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS), disclosed while responding to an enquiry from lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng.

In Macau, the IAS supervises the operation of nurseries and day-care centers, despite them being education facilities.

That is why the enquiry was directed to the IAS.

Hon explained to the lawmaker that the DSEJ is working to amend laws governing the licensing and supervision practices applied to auxiliary education facilities. He explained that the DSEJ is currently gathering opinions from legal professionals and trying to present a bill for analysis.

There are 64 nurseries in Macau, of which 23 are

privately owned.

According to Hon, last year the bureau conducted a total of 179 spot checks on nurseries, 84 of which were on privately owned facilities.

The bureau has also established a contact mechanism regarding safety or hazardous events. Its first phase has been launched, while the second phase will kick off next year, with a focus on privately owned facilities. **AL**

# Greater China offshore loan volumes show signs of recovery

**O**FFSHORE loan volumes in the Greater China region rebounded in the third quarter from the previous three months amid a recovery in the nation's economy from the global pandemic.

Firms in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau borrowed \$25.4 billion of offshore club and syndicated loans in the three months ended September, a 25% increase from the second quarter, according to Bloomberg-compiled data. That remains low compared to the average quarterly volume of \$38.4 billion for 2019. Compared with a year ago, the third quarter performance was the worst since 2012, suffering a 46% plunge.

Despite the latest rebound, a full recovery may take longer, hampered by fewer overseas acquisitions.

"In the third quarter, the average offshore Chinese loan

BLOOMBERG



size was smaller compared to previous years. Volumes have dropped a lot as there were very few jumbo loans," said Aaron Chow, general manager, loan capital markets department, Asia Pacific at Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp. Loans for Chinese outbound M&As have also been "scarce" due to tighter restrictions and difficulty in getting regulatory approvals, he added.

Only \$67.6 billion of offshore loans were completed for Greater China firms in the first nine months of 2020, the data show, down 43% compared to a year earlier.

Borrowing costs were higher especially during the height of the pandemic in the first half versus last year. Average three-year U.S. dollar loan margins for Greater China deals in the first quarter hit

the highest since late 2018.

"The market conditions right now are relatively suitable for launching deals as funding costs and market pricing have stabilized," said Chow. Some investment-grade borrowers "had to pay a premium of about 15 to 20 basis points earlier this year but may now cut the premium by half or even to zero," he said.

BLOOMBERG

## CARRIE LAM CALLS FOR HK TO UP COMPETITIVENESS

**T**HE Chief Executive of Hong Kong said yesterday that both Hong Kong and Shenzhen have their own advantages, and the Hong Kong needs to enhance its competitiveness to seek win-win results with Shenzhen.

Hong Kong and Shenzhen have room for cooperation in fields such as innovation and technology, cultural and creative industries, higher education and medical care, Chief Executive Carrie Lam said at a media session before the Executive Council meeting, adding that she has asked relevant departments to conduct research and analysis on deepening Hong Kong-Shenzhen cooperation.

Hong Kong and Shenzhen can jointly build a "twin city economy" and become a dual engine for growth in the Greater Bay Area, and it is hoped that the two places can strengthen their cooperation for mutual benefit and win-win results, she said.

On the Covid-19 pandemic, Lam said that the situation had been stabilizing over the past week, but to be on the safe side, the prevention measures will not be relaxed for the time being.

She added that the HKSAR government will discuss whether restrictions can be relaxed on some gatherings or economic activities, such as weddings and local tours. **MDT/XINHUA**

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# 'Xi Thought' is touching everything from

**W**HAT sort of science fiction does Xi Jinping like? How can China's weathermen use the president's political philosophy to improve their forecasts? In what ways can "Xi Thought" help prepare the country for the next big earthquake?

These are the sorts of questions Communist Party cadres are now pondering as they prepare for the next big milestone in the president's effort to cement control: Elevating Xi Thought alongside Maoism. The esoteric concept is expected to be written into the five-year development blueprint that will be unveiled after party meetings later this month. Everyone from diplomats to executives to sci-fi writers are under pressure to incorporate the broad, often fuzzy tenets of Xi Thought into their policies.

The project is central to Xi's effort to quiet opposition and to stay on past 2022, when he's expected to seek a third five-year term as party chief. Once Xi has his own "-ism," the theory goes, he'll be elevated to a political standing on par with Mao Zedong, whose portrait hangs over Tiananmen Square and is printed on the currency. It will also make it all-the-more difficult to question his edicts.

"Its importance lies in prominently raising Xi's personal profile," said Carl Minzner, a professor at Fordham Law School who spe-

cializes in Chinese law and governance. "Every time the command to study it is uttered on TV, and every time is written in a party document, it is a highly visible signal to both party officials and citizens at large as to who is on top, and whose orders actually matter."

While some key tenets of Mao's philosophy are included in the iconic "Little Red Book," Xi Thought is still being shaped and yet to be compiled in one place, although the three-volume "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" -- a collection of his speeches, writings, sayings and ideas -- contains clues. More than 20 applications of Xi Thought on everything from economic management and military reform to controlling the media and the arts that have appeared in state media since 2018, according to Qian Gang, director of University of Hong Kong's China Media Project.

The more tangible examples of Xi Thought include his views on the environment, encapsulated in the slogan: "Green hills and clear rivers are gold and silver mountains." Chinese foreign policy-related statements are typically sprinkled with another phrase that amplifies the goal of building a global "community with a shared future for mankind" -- referring to more countries, including China, having their say in world affairs. His ambition for the military: "Building a strong army."



BLOOMBERG

The effort to make Xi Thought a guiding principle for nearly every aspect of Chinese life will loom over a conclave of some 300 top party leaders slated to begin Oct. 26 in Beijing. For the first time they'll also draft a longer-term blueprint that runs until 2035, in the latest indication of how long Xi, 67, could lead.

He Lifeng, the chairman of the

National Development and Reform Commission, wrote in the party-run People's Daily newspaper last month that Xi's thinking on the economy was a "powerful weapon to withstand major risks and challenges, and solve major problems." The leader's ideas should be studied and adopted as guidance when drafting five-year plans, He said.

## COMPANIES GET IN LINE

That's forcing companies, agencies and schools to contemplate what Xi-ism means for them. Where Mao Zedong Thought was geared toward adapting Marxist-Leninism to a pre-industrial society, Xi Thought is concerned with maintaining party control more than four decades after China opened to the world and began to experi-

# Fortunes of internet tycoons soar amid pandemic

JOE McDONALD, BEIJING

**J**ACK Ma, founder of e-commerce giant Alibaba, held onto his status as China's richest tycoon this year as surging demand for online shopping and other services during the coronavirus pandemic swelled the fortunes of internet entrepreneurs, according to a survey released yesterday.

Ma's fortune rose 45% percent over 2019 to \$58.8 billion, according to Hurun Research Institute, which follows the country's wealthy.

Ma Huateng, founder of Tencent, which operates the popular WeChat messaging service, was No. 2 at \$57.4 billion, up 50%. Debuting at No. 3 was Zhong Shanshan, chairman of bottled water brand Nongfu Spring, with \$53.7 billion following his company's Hong Kong stock



Jack Ma

market debut in September.

Rising share prices created an average of five new Chinese entrepreneurs worth at least \$1 billion every week over the past year, according to Hurun's founder, Rupert Hoogewerf.

"The world has never seen this much wealth created in just one year," said

Hoogewerf in a statement. "China's entrepreneurs have done much better than expected. Despite Covid-19 they have risen to record levels."

The richest woman on the list was Yang Huiyan of real estate developer Country Garden. She was No. 6 at \$33 billion, up 29% from

last year.

Rankings of China's richest change abruptly from year to year as real estate, technology and other industries rise and fall in the fast-evolving economy.

This year, the coronavirus boosted the fortunes of Alibaba's Ma and other internet entrepreneurs as the

shutdown of the Chinese economy to fight the virus propelled demand for online shopping and business tools.

Eric Yuan of California-based video conference platform Zoom rose more than \$10 billion to \$16.2 billion. Li Yongxin of Ofcn, an online work training platform, more than doubled to \$20.6 billion. Chen Xiangdong of tutoring platform Genshuixue rose eightfold to \$11.8 billion.

Ma, 56, retired as Alibaba chairman last year and also is a shareholder in Ant Group, a payments service spun off from Alibaba. It is preparing for a public share offering after being valued at \$150 billion in a 2017 private financing round, which will add to Ma's fortune.

Entrepreneurs in electric cars, an industry the ruling Communist Party is promo-

ting, also saw their fortunes swell.

Zeng Yuqun of battery producer CATL tripled to \$17.6 billion. He Xiaopeng of electric car brand Xpeng, rose 80% to \$6.6 billion following a stock market debut in New York. Li Bin of NIO rose 300% to \$3.5 billion.

Business leaders who tumbled down the list included Ren Zhengfei, founder of Chinese tech giant Huawei. U.S. export controls imposed in a feud with Beijing over technology and security threaten to cripple its sales of smartphones and switching equipment. Ren's net worth declined 10% to \$2.8 billion, according to Hurun.

Lei Jun of rival smartphone brand Xiaomi saw his fortune more than double to \$25 billion as its share price surged, possibly boosted by expectations sales will benefit from Huawei's troubles. AP

# Chinese sci-fi to company filings



mic sphere is an increased role for party committees in companies, a resurgence of state companies in terms of getting access to capital, and tighter controls on especially tech companies to manage content in line with government thinking.”

Xi wants a stronger, more disciplined party to reassert influence it had ceded to the government and private sector after leader Deng Xiaoping began his “reform and opening up” movement in 1978. Xi Thought envisions a China that’s more self-reliant in key areas including technology and food security and is more assertive in securing its place in the world.

The process prioritizes conformity with the leader’s views over immediate results in any given field. Foreign Minister Wang Yi declared “Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy” a total success in the August issue of the party journal Seeking Truth, even as negative views of China surged after its handling of the coronavirus outbreak and crackdowns on dissent in places like Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

## SECOND TO MAO

No other leader besides Mao has had his ideology raised to the level of “thought,” which carries a special meaning in Communist Party propaganda. Deng’s reforms are described as “Deng Xiaoping Theory,” while concepts advanced by Xi’s immediate predecessors, Presidents Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, don’t even carry their names.

Rana Mitter, director of the Uni-

versity of Oxford’s China Center, said Xi was seeking “not just a set of ideas, but a way to think about them as a complete package” to shape his ideology. “Language matters: ‘Maoism’ is an idea, ‘Dengism’ is not, even though Deng was an influential leader,” Mitter said.

Criticism of Xi Thought is not an option, as the leader maintains his unprecedented wave of disciplinary investigations against party officials. The country’s top anti-graft body, the National Supervisory Commission, has so far warned 20 central government agencies that they were “not doing enough” to master and implement Xi’s thinking, according to statements posted on the agency’s website.

The China Meteorological Administration was found in August to have some gaps to bridge in applying Xi’s idea of domestic and international situations into their work while the China Earthquake Administration got rapped for not fully reflecting Xi’s Thought into their disaster prevention work. Writers and producers in the nation’s burgeoning science fiction scene were urged by an official industry association to take Xi Thought on board and transform China into a sci-fi powerhouse.

Ultimately, Xi Thought can be whatever Xi thinks he needs to ensure his own rule.

“It seems quite obvious from all signals, that he wants to serve beyond 10 years, perhaps for 20 years,” said Willy Lam, an adjunct professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong’s Centre for China Studies, who has authored numerous books on Chinese politics. “To remain in power for that long, he needs to consolidate his power base.” **BLOOMBERG**

ment with market forces. Almost 400 of some 3,900 listed companies in China paid homage to the Communist Party and its leader in their annual reports this year, the Economist reported.

The push began three years ago, when Xi got the unwieldy “Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism With Chinese Characteristics for a New Era” written into the party charter

and Chinese constitution. Around the same time, he pushed through an amendment scrapping constitutional provisions that would’ve forced him to hand over the presidency in 2023.

During a visit by Xi last week to the southern manufacturing hub of Guangdong, provincial party secretary Li Xi vowed to “raise high the great banner” of Xi’s thinking,

making him the latest Politburo member to pledge loyalty in similar terms.

“Xi Thought is a way to cement a hold on power by signaling allegiance to his policy objectives in as many places as possible,” said Martin Chorzempa, research fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. “The hallmark of its impact in the business-econo-

# Chinese drugmaker setting up vaccine production lines

A state-owned Chinese drugmaker is setting up production lines to supply 1 billion doses of two possible coronavirus vaccines that are being tested on 50,000 people in 10 countries, the company chairman said yesterday.

Testing by SinoPharm Group is “in the last kilometer of a long march,” chairman Liu Jingzhen said at a news conference. He gave no indication when results are expected.

China’s fledgling drug industry is part of a global race to produce a vaccine and has four candidates in final stages of testing. Health experts say, however, that even if China succeeds, stringent certification rules in the United States, Europe and Japan might mean its vaccine can be distributed only in other developing countries.

SinoPharm is testing two vaccines in countries including Egypt, Argentina, Jordan and

Peru, Liu said. Both are inactivated, meaning they use a non-infectious version of the coronavirus.

According to Liu, production lines for vaccines are being set up in Beijing and Wuhan, the city in central China where the outbreak began in December.

“The production capacity will reach 1 billion doses next year, ensuring sufficient safety,” Liu said.

Chinese-developed vaccines have been tested on 60,000 people with “only slight adverse effects,” said Tian Baoguo, an official of the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Thousands of people in China including healthcare workers and others deemed to be at risk have been given the experimental vaccines. Three city governments have announced plans to inoculate members of the public who need it. **AP**



Liu Jingzhen, chairman of the SinoPharm Group, gestures as he is surrounded by reporters after a news conference of the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of the State Council at the National Health Commission in Beijing yesterday **AP**

AP PHOTO



RUNNING ANGRY

# Trump attacks Fauci, press and polls

**A**N angry President Donald Trump has come out swinging against Dr. Anthony Fauci, the press and polls that show him trailing Democrat Joe Biden in key battleground states in a disjointed closing message two weeks before Election Day.

On the third day of a western campaign swing, Trump was facing intense pressure to turn around his campaign, hoping for the type of last-minute surge that gave him a come-from-behind victory four years ago. But his inconsistent message, another rise in coronavirus cases and his attacks on experts like Fauci could undermine his final efforts to appeal to voters outside his most loyal base.

"I'm not running scared," Trump told reporters yesterday [Macau time] before taking off for Tucson, Arizona, for his fifth rally in three days. "I think I'm running angry. I'm running happy, and I'm running very content 'cause I've done a great job."

Trump's aggressive travel comes as he plays defense in states he won four years ago, though the Republican president insisted he was confident as he executed a packed schedu-

le despite the pandemic.

"We're going to win," he told campaign staff on a morning conference call from Las Vegas. He went on to acknowledge that he "wouldn't have told you that maybe two or three weeks ago," referring to the days when he was hospitalized with COVID-19. But he said he felt better now than at any point in 2016. "We're in the best shape we've ever been," he said.

Seeking to shore up the morale of his staff amid growing private concerns that he is running out of time to make up lost ground, Trump blasted his government's own scientific experts as too negative, even as his handling of the pandemic, which has killed more than 220,000 people in the United States, remains a central issue to voters.

"People are tired of hearing Fauci and all these idiots," Trump said of the government's top infectious disease expert. "Every time he goes on television, there's always a bomb. But there's a bigger bomb if you fire him. But Fauci's a disaster."

At a rally in Prescott, Arizona, Trump assailed Biden for pledging to heed the advice of scientific experts, saying dismissively that his rival "wants to lis-

ten to Dr. Fauci."

The doctor is both respected and popular, and Trump's rejection of scientific advice on the pandemic has already drawn bipartisan condemnation.

At his rally, Trump also ramped up his attacks on the news media, singling out NBC's Kristen Welker, the moderator of the next presidential debate, as well as CNN for aggressively covering a pandemic that is now infecting tens of thousands of Americans every day.

Fauci, in an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes" that aired Sunday, said he was not surprised that Trump contracted the virus after he held a series of large events with few face coverings.

"I was worried that he was going to get sick when I saw him in a completely precarious situation of crowded, no separation between people, and almost nobody wearing a mask," Fauci said of the president.

Biden was off the campaign trail, but his campaign praised Fauci and criticized Trump for "reckless and negligent leadership" that "threatens to put more lives at risk."

"Trump's closing message in the final days of the 2020 race is to publicly mock Joe Biden for trusting

science and to call Dr. Fauci, the leading public health official on COVID-19, a 'disaster' and other public health officials 'idiots,'" the campaign said.

The professed confidence in victory stood in contrast to some of Trump's other public comments in recent days reflecting on the prospect that he could lose.

"Could you imagine if I lose my whole life? What am I going to do?" he asked a rally crowd last week in Macon, Georgia. "I'm not going to feel so good. Maybe I'll have to leave the country. I don't know."

Biden, meanwhile, was in Delaware for several days of preparation ahead of Thursday's final presidential debate. His running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, returned to the campaign trail after several days in Washington after a close adviser tested positive for the coronavirus.

Yesterday, the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates announced that Trump and Biden will each have his microphone cut off in Thursday's debate while his rival delivers his opening two-minute answer to each of the six debate topics.

The rule changes come three weeks after a chaotic opening faceoff between the two presidential contenders that featured frequent interruptions — most often by Trump. The open discussion portion of the debate will not feature a mute button, but interruptions by either candidate will count toward their time. AP

## this day in history

### 2001 ANTHRAX CLAIMS THIRD VICTIM IN US



A third person has been diagnosed in the US with the most serious form of anthrax.

The unnamed Washington postal worker is being treated for inhalation anthrax but doctors expect him to make a full recovery.

This is the ninth confirmed case of anthrax in the United States since infected mail began turning up in Florida, Washington and New York following the 11 September attacks.

The only person to die from anthrax in this scare had the inhalation form of the disease but it was not caught as early.

The other victims have been infected through the skin, a less serious form of the disease.

The latest victim works at the Washington mail centre which processed an anthrax-tainted letter sent to Senate Majority leader Tom Daschle.

But it is not known whether he was exposed to the disease through this letter.

US Homeland Security Chief Tom Ridge said that the strain of anthrax used in the attacks on US media companies and the Senate appeared to be the same.

"We are obviously preparing for more," he said.

Nearly 40 people in the United States, including 28 who work at the US Senate, have been exposed to anthrax bacteria in the past month.

Teams of hazardous material experts have been checking the House of Representatives after an anthrax-tainted letter was found in the Ford House Office Building mailroom.

The US is offering \$1m for information on who is behind the anthrax attacks.

The US postal service is sending cards to every home and business - 147 million addresses - telling people how to deal with suspicious post.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

There were a total of 18 cases of anthrax in the United States in 2001, five people died.

The offices of prominent politicians and media figures were among the targets.

All mail addressed to the US Government is now irradiated to kill anthrax.

Investigations in 2002 concluded the spores used in the 2001 attacks were less than two years old. This proved that the spores had been grown and could therefore be grown again.

It is not yet known who was behind the attacks. Original suggestions pointed to the al-Qaeda network as the attacks began shortly after the 11 September attacks but experts now believe it was the work of a lone man with a highly scientific background.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS



### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Address the issues head-on and people will take you more seriously. Your charms are usually a valuable strength, but today they could give people the idea that you can't get things through your brains alone.



### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Growth is a good thing, but you should take a break from pushing yourself right now. Today isn't the best spent challenging yourself or starting any difficult (if revelatory) conversations.



### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Whatever it is that's impeding your progress isn't clear, and it isn't important. There is no point in getting rid of the obstacles right now. They aren't going anywhere. Just try to have fun as you try to fun faster.



### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You need more time to devote to this issue, so if you can, reschedule your day so you can pay attention to the people who really matter. You don't have to address a certain issue or accomplish a specific goal.



### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You and this other person could make a very good combination because you balance each other out and challenge each other not to think in the same old ways you're used to thinking.



### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Keep on keeping on. You are closer than ever to getting what you want, and if you just keep going you'll soon see a sign that things are about to change the way you want them to.



### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You're not interrogating them. There is no doubt that they will be flattered by your interest. And be prepared to answer your own detailed questions should they choose to turn the tables.



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

If you're the one who is usually the life of the party, pull back and watch things unfold from the sidelines. This new experience will be very educational.



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Being able to get things off your chest will make you feel much better! That's the secret about friends. It's not all about how they can make your life better. It's all about how they can make you feel better about yourself.



### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

People are giving you feedback that is genuine, although it might be hard for you to believe right now. These people aren't just praising you for their health, they really mean it!



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

And instead of having a gossip session with friends, start a political conversation. Your brain is hungry for stimulation and challenge, and it won't be satisfied until it gets it.

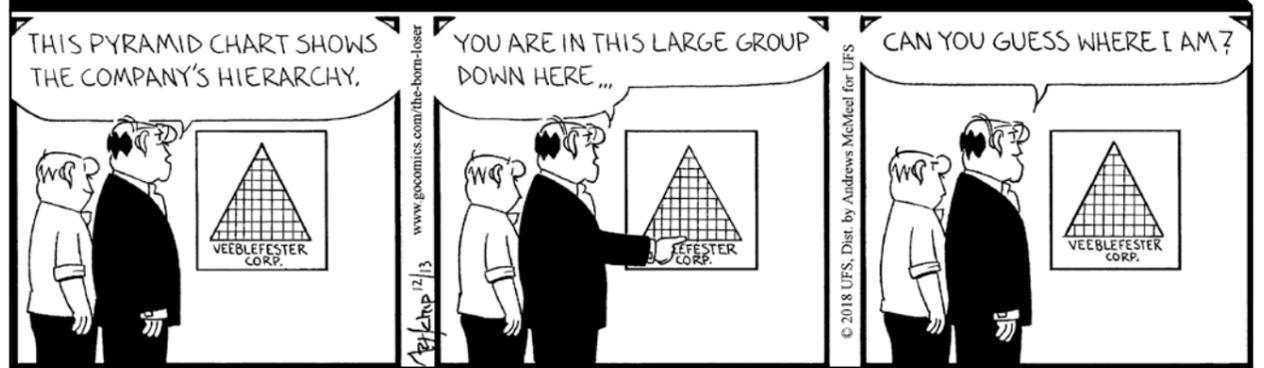


### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Positive results may be slow in coming right now, but other people are getting behind you more and more. Your personal cheerleading squad is growing, so your spirits will be shiny and bright.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

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

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

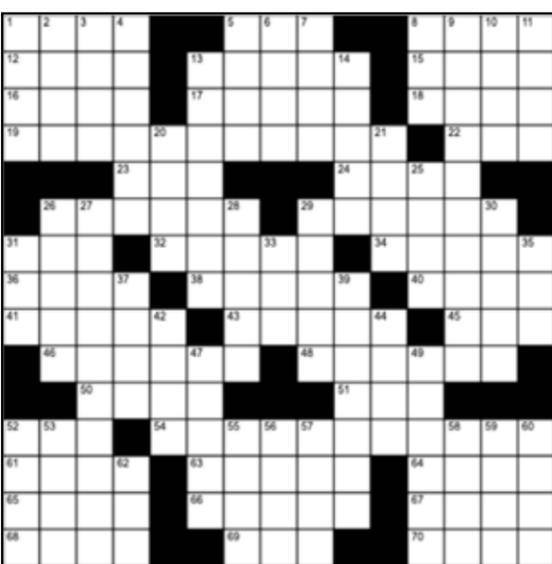
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	8	15	clear
Harbin	6	15	drizzle
Tianjin	12	16	clear
Urumqi	7	18	clear
Xi'an	9	21	cloudy
Lhasa	5	21	clear
Chengdu	13	22	clear
Chongqing	14	21	cloudy
Kunming	10	13	drizzle
Nanjing	15	21	overcast
Shanghai	18	21	drizzle
Wuhan	13	23	cloudy
Hangzhou	15	20	overcast
Taipei	24	26	heavy rain
Guangzhou	19	27	clear
Hong Kong	22	28	clear
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	0	3	cloudy
Frankfurt	9	14	overcast
Paris	14	17	drizzle
London	8	13	drizzle
New York	15	20	drizzle

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- \_\_\_ silly question...; 5- Many, many moons; 8- Barbershop request; 12- Depilatory brand; 13- Collection of maps; 15- Antiprohibitionists; 16- A wedding cake may have three of these; 17- Glove material; 18- Highly excited; 19- Examine in detail; 22- Decay, waste away; 23- Latin I verb; 24- Goad; 26- Burial cloth; 29- Narcotic; 31- Whiz; 32- Grind together; 34- Diary bit; 36- Dunce; 38- At the bottom of the barrel; 40- Actress Gershon; 41- Prufrock's creator; 43- French school; 45- Modern; 46- Givers; 48- Activities; 50- Animate existence; 51- Historic beginning; 52- Feather scarf; 54- Skeptical; 61- Commedia dell'\_\_\_; 63- Biblical brother; 64- Busy as \_\_\_; 65- Floe; 66- Dishonest; 67- Faculty head; 68- It's used to walk the dog; 69- Wind dir.; 70- Gillette brand;

DOWN: 1- Against; 2- Spahn teammate; 3- Capital of the Ukraine; 4- Debt that remains unpaid; 5- Sewing case; 6- Designer Cassini; 7- Zip; 8- Defunct airline; 9- Mourning; 10- Langston Hughes poem; 11- High-ranking NCO; 13- Shock with wonder; 14- Organization; 20- Kind of alert; 21- Buffalo's county; 25- Jets or Sharks; 26- Reprimand; 27- Worship of the sun; 28- Challenges; 29- 1977 George Burns film; 30- Sea eagles; 31- Summer drink; 33- Triple \_\_\_; 35- Course deviation; 37- Author Morrison; 39- Inclined; 42- Meat substitute; 44- Green land; 47- Of the kidneys; 49- Gambling state; 52- Coddle; 53- Nabisco cookie; 55- Inlets; 56- Greek goddess of strife; 57- Single; 58- Skeptic's scoff; 59- At hand; 60- Actress Rowlands; 62- Narcissist's problem;



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



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1,420 ft<sup>2</sup> \$10,900,000 (ref: 20016004)
- [Cotai] One Grantai 4 2 2  
2,556 ft<sup>2</sup> \$25,600,000 (ref: 19096001)
- [Taipa] Great View Apartment 4 2 2  
2,060 ft<sup>2</sup> \$28,000/mth (ref: 20031001)
- [Taipa] Private house 2 3 3  
4,266 ft<sup>2</sup> \$45,000/mth (ref: 19055006ST)

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# CATHAY TO CUT 6,000 JOBS AND CLOSE DRAGON BRAND, SAYS MEDIA REPORT

WILL DAVIES

**C**ATHAY Pacific Airways Ltd. will cut 6,000 jobs and close its Cathay Dragon brand, the South China Morning Post reported, as part of a strategic review to combat the deep damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Hong Kong-based airline is expected to officially announce the plan after the market close on Wednesday, the newspaper said. It initially planned about 8,000 layoffs globally, but after government intervention reduced that to 18% of its total workforce, including some 5,000 jobs in Hong Kong, according to the report.

The company, which posted a HKD9.9 billion (\$1.3 billion) loss in the first half, has for months been working on the review that management presented to the board on Monday. Cathay said in September it wouldn't survive unless it adapted its airlines for the "new travel market." A Cathay representative didn't immediately respond to requests for comment Tuesday.

Cathay's passenger traffic slumped as travel restrictions escalated and people refrained from flying, with numbers as low as 500 a day in April and May. On Oct. 19, the



company said it expected to operate at about 10% of pre-pandemic capacity for the rest of the year and well below a quarter in the first half of 2021. For September, passenger numbers were down 98.1% from a year earlier.

Cathay carried out a HKD39 billion recapitalization plan that was completed in August and left the Hong Kong government with a 6.08% stake in the company and two observer seats on its board. In another effort to cushion the blow from the loss of passengers, the airline has been renegotiating aircraft deliveries from Airbus SE and Boeing Co.

Cathay already introduced an unpaid leave program for staff earlier in the year as monthly losses

climbed to as much as HK\$3 billion, and trimmed salaries and closed crew bases overseas. Chairman Patrick Healy said in August that those cost control measures wouldn't be enough.

### 'MOST CHALLENGING' PERIOD

The company was struggling with losses before the pandemic as anti-government protests in Hong Kong led to a sharp reduction in traffic last year and a change in management. Then Covid-19 erupted, thrusting the airline into what Healy described as the most challenging period in its history.

Cathay Dragon flies Airbus SE A320, A321 and A330 aircraft to destinations across Asia and more than 20 mainland Chinese cities,

including the lucrative Beijing and Shanghai routes. The carrier had a fleet of 48 aircraft as of June 30 and firm orders for 16 Airbus A321neo jets, according to Cathay's website.

Combined, Cathay Pacific and Cathay Dragon employ about 21,000 people in Hong Kong. The group as a whole, which includes budget carrier HK Express - bought by Cathay last year - and cargo operator AHK Air Hong Kong, has more than 33,000 employees worldwide.

The latest development comes as Hong Kong said its jobless rate rose to a 15-year high of 6.4% in the July-September period as the economy remained stuck in recession. That reading was worse than the 6.2% median estimate from economists surveyed by Bloomberg.

### BIG EMPLOYER

Travel, hotels, retail and restaurants have been particularly hurt as the government keeps strict social-distancing measures in place, including limiting public gatherings to four people. Cathay Pacific is one of the city's biggest employers.

Job losses in the airline industry are mounting worldwide. Singapore Airlines Ltd., which like Cathay has no domestic market and raised billions of dollars to try to weather the crisis, said in September it was eliminating about 4,300 jobs, roughly 20% of its workforce. Airlines have flagged that as many as 400,000 people will either be let go or furloughed since January, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Cathay and Singapore Airlines got a boost on Oct. 15 with the announcement of plans for a travel bubble between Hong Kong and Singapore that will replace compulsory quarantine with coronavirus testing. Cathay's shares jumped on the news and airfares climbed for the route, which likely accounted for about 3% of its overall revenue before the pandemic, according to Bloomberg Intelligence. **BLOOMBERG**

AD

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**WEBINAR**  
**3.8 B** artfem

"2020 ARTFEM Women Artists International Biennial of Macau" will hold a sharing on October 23rd, 2020 (Friday) to invite renowned artist and Godmother of ARTFEM 2020, Xiang Jing to share. At the same time, exhibition curators and participating artist will also be present to exchange views. The event is held online at the same time, welcome to participate.

**Moderator**  
**Curator**  
**Carlos Marreiros**  
President of the Organizing Committee

**Participants**  
Curator Alice Kok  
Curator Angela Li  
Curator James Chu  
Curator Leonor Veiga  
Artist Kay Zhang  
Artist Gigi Lee  
Artist Vibha Galhotra  
Artist Arahmaiani

**Special Appearance**  
**Artist and Godmother**  
**Xiang Jing**

**Venue**  
**Wynn Palace - Lotus Room**

**Date**  
**23 / 10 / 2020 (Friday)**

**Time**  
**5:30pm - 7:30pm**

**Language**  
**English & Mandarin**  
(Simultaneous translation to English)

**On-site Seminar Registration QR Code**  
(First come, first served)

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**Registration Deadline**  
**October 21st 6:00pm**

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Akhmedov Odil of Tianjin Teda, right, and Zhang Yuan of Shenzhen Jiazaoye compete for the ball

FOOTBALL

# Back in the bubble, Chinese Super League into playoff stages

JOHN DUERDEN

**W**HEN Odil Ahmedov left Shanghai SIPG to join fellow Chinese Super League club Tianjin Teda in August, the midfielder didn't have to travel anywhere to meet his new coach and colleagues.

He merely moved to a different part of the hotel both teams had called home since July, and took a seat at a new breakfast table.

In a bid to complete the 2020 season in the midst of restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese Football Association

decided to split the 16 top-tier CSL teams into two groups based in the hub cities of Dalian and Suzhou.

So not only were the eight teams in each group based in those cities from July — five months late because of the coronavirus outbreak — but players, coaches, referees and federation officials were sharing the same hotel complexes, unable to leave, except to take the bus to the stadium on match days.

"Football is a sport with many surprises and in this special time and special environment, I don't need to fly anywhere," Ahmedov told news site Sohu.com of

the unusual circumstances of his move. "I just changed buildings and completed a transfer ... No problem."

The first phase of the competition was staged between July 22 and Sept. 28 before a brief recess ahead of the second phase, which started last Friday.

The top eight teams have gone into a playoff round based in Suzhou to continue pursuit of the title, and the bottom eight teams have gone into a relegation round based in Dalian.

Apart from some time earlier this month, most players and staff involved have been unable to see

family members as the federation aims to keep the league as safe as possible. So far it has worked, with no positive cases reported from the regular testing for coronavirus inside the bio-security hubs. But it has presented head coaches such as Afshin Ghotbi of Shijiazhuang Ever Bright with new challenges.

"Logistically, it has been amazing to see eight teams in one location, it is like three World Cups back to back," Ghotbi told the Associated Press. "All these people get fed three times a day every day. We see each other in the gym and at breakfast sometimes.

"Most teams have their own

areas and keep to that, though the coaches do chat to each other even if it is mostly small talk."

Ghotbi's team last Saturday beat Dalian Pro, a team guided by former Liverpool and Real Madrid coach Rafa Benitez, in the first leg of a relegation playoff series. Ghotbi said the seclusion does have some advantages for coaches.

"Staff can use the time to analyze opponents and plan tactics but with games almost every four days, the situation has been tough for players," the American-Iranian coach added.

The clubs have tried to provide entertainment by installing billiards and mahjong tables as well as karaoke machines in the hotel headquarters, but Shanghai Shenhua coach Choi Kang-hee knows that the season has been demanding for all involved.

"They are here all the time and many miss their families," Choi said. "It is a unique situation and we try to help them as much as possible. There are many games to be played which makes it difficult both physically and mentally."

For Ghotbi, as is often the case in soccer, when the situation is going well on the field, it helps off the field.

"Losing in this situation can be like poison," he said. "When you are winning people don't talk too much but there are more opinions expressed when you lose."

At least the players from Shijiazhuang, as well as 11 other Chinese clubs, know the season will finally finish on Nov. 12.

But for Choi's Shanghai Shenhua team — as well as Guangzhou Evergrande, Shanghai SIPG and Beijing Guoan — there is more of the same to come in Qatar.

As soon as China's domestic season finishes, the four clubs will be competing in the delayed eastern conference of Asian Champions League from Nov. 18 and will be confined to hotels and stadiums once again.

The Asian Champions League group stage will finish early next month but the two teams that reach the final on Dec. 18 will face a long time away from home and family. **AP**

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OPINION

World Views

Clara Ferreira Marques, Bloomberg



THAILAND'S LEADERS CAN'T AFFORD CONFRONTATION

Anti-government marchers have been gathering across Thailand in defiance of a state of emergency, and their list of demands now stretches to include reigning in the powerful monarchy. Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha has indicated he wants to talk. He could do with listening, too.

Discontent has simmered since a March 2019 election, but gathered steam late in the year with the disqualification of opposition leader Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit and the subsequent dissolution of his party. With few concessions and despite multiple arrests, restlessness has intensified and student-led protests have broadened. Former junta leader Prayuth has few useful options in his normal toolkit. A glance at the ailing \$500 billion-plus economy provides one good reason for officials to show flexibility.

Thailand was worryingly sluggish even before the pain inflicted by 2020, thanks to unimpressive productivity growth, the Sino-U.S. trade war, severe drought and its stubbornly strong currency. The coronavirus has hit tourism especially hard. The country has since done better than most neighbors in containing the pandemic, with the exception of Vietnam, but the aftermath has been painful. Now, the prospect of prolonged unrest risks spooking businesses and consumers, whose confidence has only just begun to recover. Tourists, who contribute roughly 20% of gross domestic product, may stay away even if restrictions slowly begin to ease.

In the latest escalation, the government ordered emergency measures last week that ban gatherings of five or more people and news considered detrimental to national security, and used water cannon to disperse the crowd. Nonetheless, tens of thousands of people came together again at the weekend. Now, authorities are threatening to censor troublesome media, too.

Protest is hardly new. The Southeast Asian country has seen about a dozen coups and many unsuccessful attempts since the transition to constitutional monarchy in 1932. The economy does recover, but the bounce has grown less pronounced as underlying, untended structural woes from labor to education and infrastructure linger. Analysts at Capital Economics point out that private investment, excluding housing, has yet to reach levels seen before the 2014 coup that first put Prayuth at the helm.

Equity investors are certainly not sticking around. The benchmark SET index has declined by almost a quarter this year, making it one of the worst performers in the region, with consumer stocks particularly dented. Foreigners have already pulled, net, more than \$9 billion from domestic equities in 2020 — exceeding 2018's record annual outflow. Though admittedly easing some concerns about Thai competitiveness, the baht currency has gone from outperformer to one of Asia's weakest in 2020.

The trouble is that it's difficult to envision how the government's next steps can help either the economy or future stability. During his time in office, Prayuth has shown no hint of pliability or instinct for radical reform, even when he had untrammled power as junta leader. Equally, his government appears unsure how to deal with a leaderless popular movement that will be hard to silence in the age of social media. One credible option is returning to charter reform, given one of the protesters' demands is rewriting a constitution drafted by a military-appointed panel after 2014. So far, that effort has stalled.

Even harder to see is how the monarchy would make concessions to those protesters who want to see a more democratic version of the institution, with the king, who spends most of his time in Germany, separating his wealth from the crown's assets and relinquishing control over some army units. They also want to see laws that punish insulting the monarch scrapped. Yet the issue is divisive, even among demonstrators.

Without efforts to foster a truce, let alone tackle deep divisions within Thai society, instability will continue. That's a worryingly open-ended distraction for a government expecting to see the economy post its worst drop on record this year.

Growth — and investors — won't return in earnest until that changes.

[Abridged]

NOKIA TO BUILD MOON'S FIRST 4G CELL NETWORK FOR NASA PROGRAM

THE BUZZ

Nokia says it has been tapped by NASA to build the first cellular communications network on the moon.

The Finnish telecommunications equipment maker said yesterday [Macau time] its Nokia Bell Labs division will build a 4G communications system to be deployed on a lunar lander to the moon's surface in late 2022.

NASA is awarding \$370 million to 14 companies to provide technology for the Artemis moon-landing program. The program's aim is to establish a long-term human presence on the moon as a warm-up for missions to Mars.

Nokia released more details of its involvement after an announcement last week by NASA, which said it was giving the company's U.S. unit \$14.1 million for the network. The U.S. space agency is also funding other innovations in cryogenic fluid management, lunar surface innovation, and descent and landing capability.

Nokia's network will provide critical communications capabilities for tasks astronauts will need to carry out, like remote control of lunar rovers, real-time navigation and high-definition video streaming, the company said.

DUTERTE: HOLD ME RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLINGS IN DRUG CRACKDOWN



JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

THE Philippine president has said he accepts responsibility for the thousands of killings committed during police operations in his crackdown on drugs, adding that he was even ready to go to jail.

President Rodrigo Duterte's televised remarks were typical of his bluster — and tempered by the fact that he has pulled his country out of the International Criminal Court, where a prosecutor is considering complaints related to the leader's bloody campaign.

The remarks were also a clear acknowledgement that Duterte could face a deluge of criminal charges. Nearly 6,000 killings of drug suspects have been reported by police since he took office in mid-2016, but rights watchdogs suspect the death toll is far larger.

"If there's killing there, I'm saying I'm the one ... you can hold me responsible for anything, any death that has occurred in the execution of the drug war," Duterte said.

"If you get killed, it's because I'm enraged by drugs," said the president known for his coarse and boastful rhetoric. "If I serve my country by going to jail, gladly."

He said, however, that drug killings that did not ha-

ppen during police operations should not be blamed on him, alleging that those may have been committed by gangs.

Duterte has made a crackdown on drugs a centerpiece of his presidency. At the height of the campaign — which has often targeted petty dealers and users along with a handful of the biggest druglords — images of suspects sprawled dead and bloodied in the streets were frequently broadcast in TV news reports and splashed on the front pages of newspapers. Tens of thousands of arrests in the initial years of the crackdown worsened congestion in what were already among the world's most overcrowded jails.

"If you get killed, it's because I'm enraged by drugs."

DUTERTE

U.N. human rights experts and Western governments led by the United States have raised alarm over the killings, enraging Duterte, who once told former U.S. President Barack Obama to "go to hell."

There have been widespread suspicions that police engage in extrajudicial killings in the crackdown, allega-

tions that they and Duterte deny. In 2018, a court convicted three police officers of murdering a 17-year-old student after witnesses and a security video disproved their claim that the suspect was shot after violently resisting, a common reason cited by police officers after drug suspects are killed.

At least two complaints for crimes against humanity and mass murder in connection with Duterte's campaign are being examined by an ICC prosecutor, who will determine whether there is enough evidence to open a full-scale investigation.

When the complaints were made, Duterte withdrew the Philippines from the world tribunal two years ago in a move that human rights groups said was a major setback in the country's battle against impunity. The ICC prosecutor has said the examination would continue despite the Philippine withdrawal.

Duterte reiterated his defiance of the court's probe Monday by asking, when did "drugs become humanity?"

Instead, he framed the drug menace as a national security threat, as he has in the past, comparing it to the communist insurgency that the government has tried to quell for more than a half-century. AP

Pakistan's media regulatory agency said it lifted a temporary ban on the Chinese social media app TikTok "with some conditions." However, it gave no further details. The development comes about 10 days after the video-sharing platform was blocked by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, saying it took the step after receiving complaints of "immoral and indecent" content on TikTok.



US The Justice Department announced charges against 6 Russian intelligence officers, all said to be current and former officers in the Russian military intelligence agency known as the GRU, in cyberattacks that targeted a French presidential election, the Winter Olympics in South Korea and American businesses. The case implicates the same Kremlin unit that interfered in the 2016 U.S. elections, but is not related to the November vote.

UK researchers are preparing to begin a controversial experiment that will infect healthy volunteers with coronavirus to study the disease in hopes of speeding up the development of a vaccine. The approach, called a challenge study, is risky but proponents say it may produce results faster than standard research.



Nigeria's protests against police brutality turned violent this week when a crowd stormed a prison and freed inmates in Benin City in southern Nigeria. Some prisoners jumped from a high fence of the institution while others were seen running away on the street, according to videos from the scene. Local media reports say as many as 200 prisoners may have escaped.