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Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

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China's leaders vowed yesterday to create a self-reliant “technology power” as a feud with Washington cuts access to U.S. processor chips and other high-tech components, hampering Beijing’s industrial ambitions. Leaders of the ruling Communist Party made the announcement after a meeting to draft a development blueprint for the state-dominated economy over the next five years.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said that his government is working on the final details of a plan to release massive amounts of radioactive water being stored at the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant, a decision that has been delayed by protests. More than nine years after the disaster, the government still hasn’t made clear what it will do with the water at the plant, though a release into the ocean has been largely speculated on in recent years.

AP PHOTO



South Korea's top court upheld a 17-year prison sentence on former President Lee Myung-bak for a range of corruption crimes in a final ruling yesterday that will send him back to prison soon. Lee has been convicted of taking bribes worth millions of dollars from big companies including Samsung and embezzling corporate funds of a company that he owned.

AP PHOTO



Vietnam A typhoon that officials said was the most powerful to hit in 20 years blew away from the country yesterday. At least 35 people were killed and more than 50 were missing, state media said. The immediate focus for rescuers was on three villages in the country’s central region where landslides killed at least 19 people and are suspected of burying more than 40 others in thick mud and debris.

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EXCO

AT LEAST TWO YOUTH ACTIVITY CENTERS ELIMINATED UNDER EDUCATION BUREAU MERGER

ANTHONY LAM

THE Adult Education Center and the University Student Activity Center will be eliminated when the new Education and Youth Development Bureau is inaugurated on February 1, 2021. The Executive Council (ExCo) held a meeting yesterday to discuss the matter.

André Cheong, Secretary for Administration and Justice and ExCo spokesperson, announced the name of the new bureau, which will consist of the existing Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) merged with the Higher Education Bureau (DSES).

Cheong stressed that the merger is aimed to improve the utilization of resources. As a result, the two centers will be closed. The Moral Education Center, which is currently located in Toi-san, will be relocated to the current location of the Adult Education Center.

The university center will also have some of its facilities and services relocated to nearby venues. However, no details were given about which facilities and services would be relocated or where.

Another two activity centers – the Lake Side Integrated Activity Center in Taipa and the Areia Preta Activity Center – will be opera-



ted by non-government organizations or associations.

As for which organizations or associations will run the two centers, Lou Pak Sang, director of the DSEJ, said that no decision has been made in this respect.

Employees working at these centers will retain their jobs. During the transitional period, the employees will work in their original positions before returning to the new bureau's offices.

Furthermore, no employees will be made redundant due to the merger, both officials assured.

The new bureau will have one director, three deputy directors, seven departments and 14 divisions. It will also manage 10 public non-tertiary education institutions. In contrast, the two existing bureaus have two deputy directors and one director each.

As a result of the merger, departments and divisions of a similar nature will be merged to avoid redundancy. The two bureaus have a combined team of about 1,500 people.

After the merger, 31 people will leave the team, not because of dismissal, both officials emphasized,

but because of retirement, inter-bureau transfer or resignation.

The new bureau will use the DSEJ's and the DSES's current offices after the merger.

The merger will also trigger the merging of three education-related funds, namely the Higher Education Fund, the Education Development Fund and the Student Welfare Fund. The new fund will be education-related.

The ExCo also discussed the acquisition of the Tourism Crisis Management Office by the Macao Government Tourism Office

(MGTO). This means that from February 1, 2021, the MGTO will also have the authority to administer tourism crisis management and issue tourism warnings.

Although the offices are closely related, when the Macau government arranged transport for students returning from Europe in May, MGTO officials in that instance made announcements on behalf of the Tourism Crisis Management Office. With this official announcement, the two offices will now become one.

With this authority, the MGTO will be able to make tourism crisis contingency plans and take timely action when a tourism crisis occurs or is expected to occur. It will also be given the power to coordinate with other public or private entities.

Within their scope of work will be the collection, renewal, analysis and conclusion of information during and after a tourism crisis.

Considering the immediacy inherent in tourism crisis management, the MGTO will become an administratively autonomous entity, which will give it more financial flexibility.

The ExCo did not give any updates on the transfer of the MGTO from the scope of Social Affairs and Culture to that of Economy and Finance.

CCAC uncovers illegal acts involving two civil servants

THE Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) has revealed that a Judiciary Police officer was suspected of accessing the immigration records of two people a number of times in 2019 for personal interest and without authorization from his superior.

This comes after a local resident filed a report in person to the bureau, claiming that a Judiciary Police officer had illegally accessed his and his friend's immigration records, allegedly constituting an abuse of office.

After an investigation, the officer was suspected to

have committed abuse of office and the crime of undue access in Law no. 8/2005 in the Personal Data Protection Act. The case has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office.

The corruption watchdog also discovered a case where a worker of the Municipal Affairs Bureau allegedly made changes to the quotation document of a company that had won a contract.

Following the investigation of a report received by the corruption watchdog, it was found that when closing the account of procurement contracts, the bureau disco-

vered that the name of the company involved was different from what was shown on the company chop (or seal).

Subsequently, the document was returned to the worker responsible for the procurement for follow-up.

In order to evade possible disciplinary liability resulting from the mistake, the public servant made changes to the document without authorisation and then closed the account with the document. This act constituted the offence of forgery by a public servant.

Asked to comment on

this particular case yesterday, Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong said he had already ordered the bureau to commence internal disciplinary procedures against the violator. Cheong said he and his colleagues have zero tolerance against abuses of power.

Meanwhile, when commenting on the other case investigated by the CCAC, Cheong said he believed that the Secretary for Security was taking appropriate action. Cheong sees this as proof of the effectiveness of Macau laws. LV/AL



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Times

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR) Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
MANAGING EDITOR Daniel Beitler daniel@macaudailytimes.com
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Lynzy Valles, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, Bloomberg, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua
SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong

Mak Soi Kun suggests planned economy strategy to reboot Macau

JULIE ZHU

LAWMAKER Mak Soi Kun has suggested that adopting a planned economy model in the communist style may be a way out of Macau's current economic pain.

During yesterday's Legislative Assembly (AL) plenary meeting, various lawmakers raised concerns about Macau's economic recovery.

Mak, who is also a stakeholder in the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) sector, shared his opinion on the topic, indicating that a centralized planned economy may be the solution to Macau's recovery and its current economic difficulties.

"After the Second World War, communist planned economies recovered first, then capitalist ones. Because of the planned economy, [the government] redistributed the resources," said Mak. The lawmaker believes that the local government has contracted "all resources to the big companies," so Macau cannot execute on a planned economy.

Mak wants the government to protect local SMEs and to launch more government public projects for the SMEs to build or participate in.

Lawmaker Wang Sai Man hopes that the local government continues expanding

financial support for local SMEs, including launching a new round of e-vouchers and granting the companies bigger loans.

"It will not be a surprise to see another round of business closures if the economy does not recover after Christmas and next year's Spring Festival," said Wang.

Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong revealed that, as of last Tuesday, the local government had received more than 11,800 applications from SMEs asking for bank loan interest subsidies. The government approved 80% of these applications.

Lawmaker Ho Ion Sang is urging the local government to enhance the promotion of Macau tourism, negotiate with mainland authorities regarding travel permit issuing procedures, and to extend the validity period of Covid-19 tests from seven to 14 days.

Lawmaker Fong Ka Chio, who is also an expert in tourism management, pointed out that Macau should pay attention to its recent visitor arrival statistics.

Information from the Statistics and Census Service showed that the number of visitor arrivals surged by 97.7% month-to-month to 449,085 in September 2020.

In terms of the source of visitors, the number of mainland visitors fell by 78.6%

year-on-year to 412,451. Those travelling under the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) totaled 90,100, with 91.9% of them coming from Guangdong Province.

Responding to the lawmakers, Lei said that he hopes the economy recovers gradually.

According to Lei, Macau's economic recovery does not lie in the hands of the market, but is a matter of government policy. As of today, Macau has already recorded over 190,000 registrations of hotel coupons. Lei thinks that the hotel coupon program is worth continuing.

"In light of the current situation, we can't resume the free movement of tourists like before," said Lei. "If any [outbreak] situation occurs, it will be more difficult for Macau to reopen this time."

The secretary also revealed that the local government is preparing to contract public engineering projects worth 18.5 billion patacas to local companies in 2021.

In addition, the Macau government is negotiating with the mainland government on a Hengqin-Macau joint tourism campaign.

The secretary also hopes that Hong Kong will be able to overcome the pandemic, as Macau's visitors normally prefer travel to Macau and Hong Kong together.

Secretary pledges open policies for talented human resources

JULIE ZHU

SECRETARY for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong has pledged that Macau will continue to import human resources and that the city will continue to have an open policy when it comes to the acquisition of skilled professionals by immigration.

During yesterday's Legislative Assembly (AL), some lawmakers, including Mak Soi Kun, Si Ka Lon, Zheng Anting and Ma Chi Seng, raised questions regarding the city's immigration policies, particularly for skilled individuals and investors.

The lawmakers' questions related to the way in which the government handles immigration cases where people do not spend more than 183 days living in Macau, the ways in which the local government attracts talented people to Macau, the government's immigration examination and approval procedures, and the protection of skilled immigrants' residence protection.

Responding to the lawmakers, Lei first acknowledged that Covid-19 has abruptly affected Macau's usual development and that the government needs to be prudent so as not to create a conflict between the immi-

gration of non-local talented people and the training of local people.

"Very soon, we will make an improvement to the review procedure," said Lei, adding that "we need sometimes to make a prudent approval."

The secretary remarked that Macau must understand what types of talented human resources the city needs.

"Macau has never had a closed-door policy for talented human resources," said Lei.

Macau's law requires a residence applicant to stay in Macau for a minimum of 183 days during the application process.

The secretary also mentioned that Macau is still using a law enacted in 2003 arising from the talented human resources plan. He agrees that the plan needs an overall review.

Lei also raised questions about the type of talented people who are suitable for Macau, as well as transparency, a scoring method, and the necessity of formulating an annual quota.

Since 2018, the local government has reviewed more than 3,000 immigration applications, and transferred more than 90 cases to judicial authorities on suspicion of violations.

GOV'T CONSIDERS NEW LAWS TO SOLVE WATER SEEPAGE PROBLEMS

JULIE ZHU

THE local government is considering establishing new laws to solve water seepage problems, according to Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong.

During yesterday's Legislative Assembly (AL) plenary meeting, several lawmakers proposed that the government establish laws to grant the relevant authorities the power to enter private homes to handle water seepage problems.

Lawmakers, including Au Kam San and Zheng Anting, generally believe that water seepage problems will be solved more effectively if the government authority has the rights necessary to enter private homes and conduct inspections.

The lawmakers think that because this is currently not possible, homeowners will not open their doors for an inspection. This could result in problematic housing units avoiding punishment, thus perpetuating the water seepage problem.

Replying to the lawmakers, Cheong said that the Macau SAR government is already considering

establishing a specific law to manage water seepage issues.

According to Cheong, the local government is not inclined to consent to the lawmakers' proposal, however.

"It should not be the government doing the work; water seepage should be a market issue," said Cheong, indicating that the problem is better solved through non-government methods.

The secretary said that, in many cases, homeowners had refused to let third parties enter their houses to inspect the water seepage problems because these individuals had frequently violated the law by remodeling their houses, creating the problem in the first place. In this situation, these individuals would not wish to have their house inspected since they may have already broken the law.

Cheong explained that, at present, if the owners of the units do not cooperate or cannot be contacted, the owners of the units affected by the water seepage problems can initiate judicial or arbitration procedures and require the occupants to open their doors.

MGM SPONSORS MOBILE SPEECH THERAPY VEHICLE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

LYNZY VALLES

YESTERDAY, MGM launched the city's first mobile therapy vehicle, "Ü CARE Moving Care and Service Shuttle," which will travel to different parts of the Macau SAR to conduct speech therapy for local children.

The gaming operator has partnered with Sheng Kung Hui Macau Social Services Coordination Office (SKH) to acquire the shuttle bus, which will allow its speech therapy team to promote speech development in children, making it the first mobile therapy vehicle in the Greater Bay Area.

According to MGM, through the experience of speech therapists, service users and student counselors, SKH has recognized the need for highly accessible speech therapy services.

During the launch yesterday, the gaming operator announced that the "Ü CARE" bus will go to different schools and areas to give residents easy access to a range of services, including consulting, case referrals and educational groups on language development. It will also disseminate information about chil-



dhood and speech development to parents and the public.

In Macau, there is still a lack of professionals in this sector who cater to children with special education needs. As a result, current experts in the industry are looking forward to the first group of speech-language therapy graduates from the Macau Polytechnic Institute.

According to Carol Sam, service coordinator at SKH, the ratio of professionals to service users is tight.

"The truth is that Macau lacks professional speech therapists [...] so with the local expertise that [we are going to have by 2021], together with the current speech therapists, we are going to have a better service," she told

the press on the sidelines of the event.

"Compared to other [places] such as the USA, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the proportion of speech therapists and children who are in need are in a very tight ratio," Sam added.

For the service coordinator, speech therapy is also challenging, as training and therapy ses-

sions are conducted in Cantonese. The language is more complicated than English due to the different tones used.

SKH is currently serving more than 100 children and has serviced over 500 children since the launch of its service in 2015.

"Every year, the number is growing because of the growing number of people who are more aware and knowledgeable of [speech delay symptoms]."

SKH will post updates on where the "Ü CARE" bus will be located on its Facebook page. To maximize the use of the vehicle, the association has pledged to cooperate with different organizations and schools in a bid to cater and reach out to more parents and children with special education needs.

SKH has recognized the need for highly accessible speech therapy services with an emphasis on preventive care. With the support and sponsorship of MGM, SKH purchased a vehicle to offer the social service. The 7.2 by 3.5 meter vehicle serves in the "spirit of 'Offering Personalized Care and Professional Service; Standing with Service Users and Being Innovative and Breaking with Tradition.'"

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Philippine casino sees 'thrill' factor luring Asian gamblers

IAN SAYSON

PH Resorts Group Inc. expects its \$465 million Emerald Bay casino in central Philippines to break even within seven years from its opening late next year.

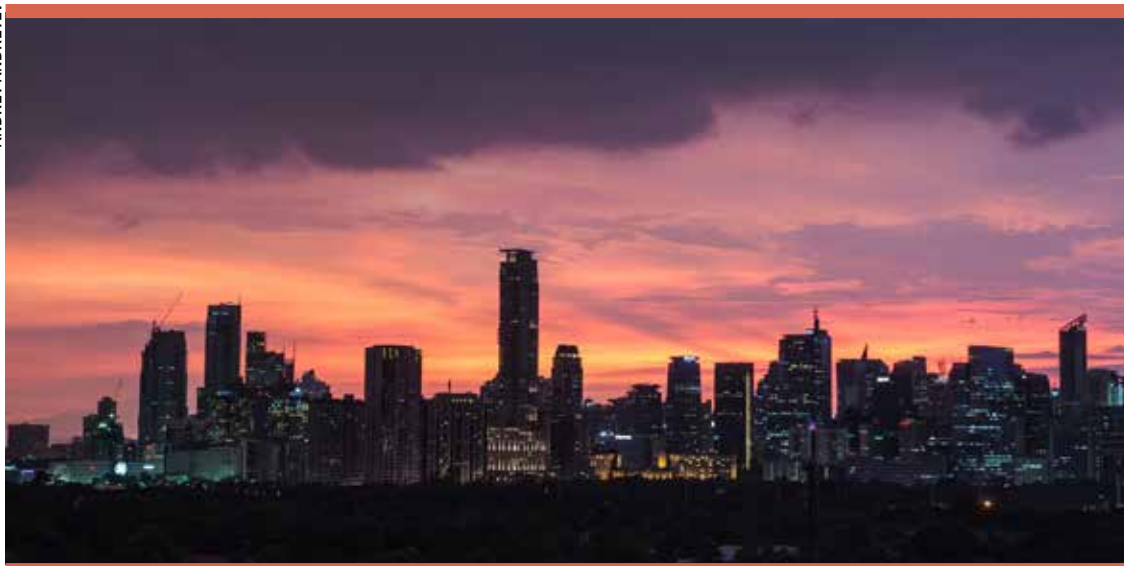
The casino that's being built on Mactan island in Cebu province is counting on a "strong recovery" in the local market and a gradual return of international high rollers a year from now, Chief Operating Officer Jose Angel Sueiro said. He expects the nation's gaming industry to surpass pre-pandemic levels in 2022, counting on a vaccine to aid recovery.

"Human emotions, they don't change," Sueiro said in an interview. "People who love the thrill of being in the casino, that particular feeling to be on the tables and the slot machines, will keep coming."

PH Resorts, owned by businessman Dennis Uy, is on a 10-day trading suspension until Nov. 4, after a share sale on Oct. 28 that raised 756 million pesos (\$15.6 million).

A "unique" location by the

ANDREY ANDREYEV



beach and facilities on par with casinos in Manila and Macau should entice players, Sueiro said, adding that 50 million people living in central and southern Philippines are an immediate potential market.

"A seven-year break even period is a bit long, but this takes into account its smaller gaming capacity and that it's opening in phases," Rachele Cruz, an analyst at AP Securities Inc., said. "International travel will also take

time to recover."

Access to local players is critical as the casino builds a rolodex of mass premium and VIP clients, who will provide half of Emerald Bay's income, Sueiro said. Talks are already underway with as many as 10 junket operators across Asia, with Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia among markets being eyed to diversify its international base away from China's gamblers.

The Cebu casino could track

the 20% annual growth in Manila's gaming revenue in the past decade, Sueiro said, which was driven by the opening of four integrated casino resorts. Casinos are "resilient" and it's not a gamble to say the market will bounce back from the pandemic.

"The market is there. It's a sure thing," Sueiro said. "The desire of people to come back to the casinos, to enjoy their baccarat, the roulette and slot machines, that hasn't changed." **BLOOMBERG**

ENVIRONMENT BUREAU COLLECTS OVER 17,000 MOONCAKE BOXES

During the first half of October, 17,500 mooncake boxes weighing about 6,340 kilograms were collected from nearly 850 mooncake box collection points, the Environmental Protection Bureau announced. The bureau has disclosed that they will be sent for recycling. In previous years, the bureau has taken the lead on mooncake box collection initiatives during and after the Mid-Autumn Festival period. Collection points were set up in residential, commercial and government buildings for people's convenience. Furthermore, this year, the bureau received applications from 67 supermarkets for the Eco-friendly Supermarket Accreditation. A total of 150 have signed up so far.

GOV'T TO REVIEW LOCAL AVIATION OVER NEXT THREE YEARS

The government will review the system for local aviation operations in the coming three years in the wake of Air Macau's concession extension, Chan Weng Hong, director of the Civil Aviation Authority of Macau said yesterday. However, the director could not yet reveal how many local operators there will be. He stressed that the market would not be fully open, adding that the infrastructural development of the Macau International Airport is still ongoing. The director also said that he is optimistic about the prospects of Macau's aviation industry, considering the privileges given by Beijing and the Macau government's efforts to revive the economy.

GOV'T LIFTS QUARANTINE MEASURES ON QINGDAO TOURISTS

The government has lifted measures requiring travellers who have been to Qingdao, Shandong Province in the 14 days prior to arriving in Macau to undergo two weeks of medical observation. The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre removed the requirement as of noon yesterday. Despite the change, people who have been to Qingdao in the 14 days before arriving in Macau will be issued with a yellow notification under the Health Code. This means that these travellers have to exercise caution in the management of their health. The relaxation of the medical observation requirement took into consideration the latest developments in Qingdao. The city has not had a new local case of Covid-19 in more than 14 days. The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre said that it is monitoring Covid-19 developments in Qingdao closely and will amend its countermeasures in a timely way if such a step is required. Health officials have also urged local residents not to travel to Qingdao, and for those who are currently there to avoid going to hospitals and crowded places.

Las Vegas vehicle traffic rises for first time since pandemic

THE Vegas road trip, a cherished pastime of Californians, is making a comeback.

The number of vehicles coming to Las Vegas along major highways rose 8.4% in September from the prior year, the first year-over-year increase since the coronavirus shut Nevada's casinos in March.

The figures suggest leisure travelers are increasingly willing to drive to the city. Cheap hotel rooms are a lure, and there are few entertainment options in Southern California - where museums, theme parks and movie theaters remain closed. Casinos in Nevada began reopening in

early June.

By most measures, the city remains in a slump. Air passengers to and from Las Vegas, at 1.71 million in September, were down 61% from the same month in 2019. Convention visitors were essentially zero, as the state has continued to curb large gatherings due to the vi-

rus risk. Gambling revenue on the Strip fell 39% to \$354.7 million for the month.

But Las Vegas, one of the world's top tourist destinations and the capital of the U.S. gambling industry, is showing signs of returning to normal. Caesars Entertainment Inc. began opening some of its showrooms, under strict virus protocols. Developer Derek Stevens this week opened Circa, the city's first new \$1 billion-plus resort since the financial crisis a decade ago. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

CRIME

31 PEOPLE ARRESTED FOR MASS CREDIT CARD FRAUD

THE Judiciary Police has busted a case of credit card abuse in a joint operation with the Hong Kong Police Force, with a total of 31 local people arrested.

The police managed to retrieve data pertaining to 165 credit cards, 145 of which were issued in Macau, three in Hong Kong and 17 in the

U.S. However, as many as 500 people may have fallen victim to the scam in total, according to the police.

Of the 31 people arrested by police, 18 were students at university and secondary schools. Intelligence obtained by the local police uncovered links to the students. The police got in touch

with several students through the Campus Safety Network, three of whom were found to have played key roles in the scam.

The three key figures were aged between 19 and 21, surnamed Cheong, Ma and Ho, and studied at the same university. Following orders from the head of the

syndicate, Cheong and Ma recruited part-time workers on social media platforms to participate in the fraud.

Cheong and Ma distributed the stolen credit card data to the workers, who were required to input the card data into their own Apple ID. Afterwards, they were told to purchase game coins

on Apple's website costing either USD99.99 or USD49.99.

The remuneration Cheong and Ma received for the job was MOP50 per purchase. They took half for themselves and distributed the other half to the workers. Ma confessed that at least 240 sets of credit card data were in their hands. **AL**



A Taiwanese Air Force F-16 in foreground flies on the flank of a Chinese PLA Air Force H-6 bomber

TAIWAN

AIR FORCE JET CRASHES INTO OCEAN, KILLING PILOT

A Taiwanese F-5E fighter jet crashed during a training mission yesterday morning, killing the pilot, the Defense Ministry said.

The cause of the crash remains unknown, but it underscores potential problems with the island's aging air force fleet as it faces increased threats from China.

The ministry said the plane crashed into the Pacific Ocean off the eastern county of Taitung less than two minutes after taking off from Chihhang Air Force Base.

The pilot, Capt. Chu Kuan-meng, ejected into the ocean but was declared dead about one hour later after being transported to a hospital on shore.

The F-5E dates from the early 1970s but has undergone numerous upgrade. Taiwan had been operating 25 of the planes as a compliment to more modern aircraft such as the F-16.

Taiwan has 66 of the latest version of the F-16 on order and is upgrading those already purchased from the U.S. It is also upgrading its coastal defenses with the requested purchase of more than \$4 billion worth of missile systems and other military technology aimed at deterring China from attacking.

China threatens to use its much larger military to bring Taiwan under its control and the increased pace of recent Chinese missions into Taiwanese airspace is seen as taking a mechanical toll on Taiwan's air force.

CHINA MARKS ANOTHER STEP IN VIRUS REBOUND WITH SINGAPORE OPENING

SINGAPORE will lift border restrictions on visitors from mainland China from Nov. 6, a further reminder that the nation where the coronavirus outbreak first began is firmly on the road to recovery as the pandemic rages elsewhere.

Visitors will have to undergo a coronavirus polymerase chain reaction test upon arrival at Singapore's Changi Airport, the city-state's civil aviation authority said in a statement yesterday. If the result is negative, they will be allowed to enter Singapore without having to serve a stay-home notice.

As the outbreak's original epicenter, China was the first to be subject to travel curbs on its residents as countries from the U.S. to Australia barred them from entering. Since bringing the outbreak in Wuhan and beyond under control in March, barring a few minor flareups, China has pursued a strategy of eliminating the virus. Frontline workers are tested regularly and when cases - many of them asymptomatic - are found, mass testing is immediately rolled out.

Singapore and China agreed in May to create a fast lane for essential business and official travel, which initially applied to six Chinese provinces and municipalities. Earlier this month, Singapore



and Hong Kong said they planned to allow people to travel between the two financial hubs without the need for quarantine, which would be replaced by coronavirus testing. No final date has been set for that yet.

XINJIANG OUTBREAK CONTAINED

Officials in Xinjiang say they believe they have contained the country's latest coronavirus outbreak.

Xinjiang reported 23 new confirmed cases yesterday, all involving people who had initially tested positive but displayed no symptoms. It was the second consecutive day in which newly confirmed cases emerged entirely among such people.

Officials say that development appears to show new infections have been curbed in Kashgar prefecture, where the outbreak appeared Saturday. They say all the cases seem to be linked to a

garment factory that employs 252 people and has since being sealed off.

More than 4.7 million people in Kashgar have been tested for the virus.

New cases in China have remained below 100 a day since mid-August, with travelers into the country subject to a mandatory 14-day quarantine. Masks and temperature checks are generally still required in public places. **MDT/AGENCIES**

Taiwan marks 200 days without domestic Covid-19 infection

TAIWAN hit 200 days without any domestically transmitted cases of COVID-19 yesterday, highlighting the island's continued success at keeping the virus under control even as cases surge in other parts of the world.

Taiwan's Center for Disease Control last reported a domestic case on April 12. CDC officials noted the milestone and thanked the public for playing a role, while urging people to continue to wear masks and to wash their hands often.

Since the pandemic began, Taiwan has recorded 553 cases of COVID-19, and just seven deaths. While it has stopped domestic transmission, it continues to record new cases in people arriving from abroad.

Taiwan has been pointed to as a success story



in how to respond to the pandemic, especially considering its close business and tourism ties with China, where the virus first emerged late last year.

Questions remain, however, as to whether the island is truly free of the coronavirus. Local media has been paying close attention to reports

of people who tested positive for COVID-19 after leaving Taiwan.

Authorities said Wednesday that they received notice from Japanese and Thai health authorities that three people who had recently left the island tested positive.

Yet Taiwan is still undoubtable a success in light of the global scale

of the pandemic — more than 44 million reported cases and 1.1 million deaths.

Its success has in part been attributed to acting very early on.

Taiwanese officials were checking passengers on flights from Wuhan, the Chinese city where the pandemic began, as early as Dec. 31 for fever

and pneumonia symptoms, according to researchers writing in JAMA, a medical journal.

On Jan. 20, the government formally initiated the Central Epidemic Command Center to coordinate the government response between different departments and branches. The government also communicated effectively about the importance of wearing masks, while trying to prevent panic buying and price-gouging by rationing them.

The island was also quick to tighten its borders, suspending flights from Wuhan on Jan. 23, and banning the entry of Chinese nationals who reside in Wuhan.

Taiwan has a strict 14-day quarantine for all arrivals, whether Taiwanese or foreign.

Professionals with technical expertise led the response and messaging, such as Taiwan's former Vice President Chen Chien-jen, who is a trained-epidemiologist. **AP**

Beijing blasts US charges against agents seeking man's return

CHINA yesterday accused the U.S. of seeking to smear Beijing's efforts to pursue fugitives, a day after the Justice Department charged eight people with seeking to coerce a New Jersey man who was wanted by Beijing into returning to China to face charges.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said China was engaged in a "just cause to fight transnational crime and pursue fugitives and stolen goods internationally."

"The U.S., out of ulterior motives, ignored the basic facts and discredited China's efforts," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing. The U.S. should "bear international responsibilities and avoid being a haven for criminals," Wang said, adding that China's agents abroad followed local laws and protected the



Assistant Attorney General for National Security John Demers

"legitimate rights and interests of suspects."

China has for years sought to induce white collar criminals who have fled abroad — particularly to the United States — to return under a program called "Fox Hunt." Because China has no extradition treaty with the U.S., the decision to return home must technically be voluntary, although

U.S. officials say in practice such operations often rely on threats, intimidation and bullying, often targeting dissidents and political opponents.

Five of the eight charged, including an American private investigator, were arrested yesterday [Macau time]. The other three are believed to be in China. All eight were charged with conspiring

to act as illegal agents for China in a case filed in federal court in Brooklyn.

"Without coordination with our government, China's repatriation squads enter the sovereign territory of the United States, surveil and locate the alleged fugitives and deploy intimidation and other tactics to force them back into China, where they would face certain imprisonment or worse following illegitimate trials," Assistant Attorney General John Demers, the Justice Department's top national security official, said at a news conference announcing the charges.

In the case announced yesterday, prosecutors said the defendants over a period of several years harassed the family of a man who had been a city government official in China before arriving in the U.S. 10 years ago. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Mike Pompeo and Retno Marsudi (right)

POMPEO, IN INDONESIA, RENEWS CHINA ATTACKS AS US VOTE LOOMS

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo renewed the Trump administration's rhetorical onslaught against China in Indonesia yesterday as the American presidential election looms.

With China a central theme in President Donald Trump's campaign to win a second term in just five days time, Pompeo took aim at Chinese aggressiveness in the South China Sea, where it has advanced maritime and territorial claims over the objections of its smaller neighbors, over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic and its repression of religious minorities.

Speaking in Jakarta, Pom-

peo praised Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN for pushing back on what he called China's "unlawful" claims and lauded Jakarta's protection of its own territory. He also attacked Beijing for its treatment of religious minorities, calling China "the gravest threat to the future of religious freedom."

Responding to Pompeo's remarks, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the secretary of state's true intention was to "let China fall back to an era of poverty and un-development, and let the world fall into the abyss of confrontation and division." **MDT/AP**

AD



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AP PHOTO



Biden, Trump

USA

Trump, Biden to appeal to last-minute voters in Florida

ZEKE MILLER, AAMER MADHANI AND TAMARA LUSH, TAMPA (FLA)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump and Democratic rival Joe Biden are set to chase votes in Florida, a state all but essential to the Republican's pathway to another term as both nominees turn their focus to encouraging voters to turn out on Election Day.

More than 73 million Americans have already voted, absentee or by mail, and Trump and Biden are trying to energize the millions more who will vote in person on Tuesday. While the Election Day vote traditionally favors Republicans and early votes tend toward Democrats, the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 227,000 people in the United States, has injected new uncertainty about the makeup of the electorate.

Trump and Biden will appear in Tampa hours apart today [Macau time], visiting the western end of the state's Interstate 4 corridor, the area known for its rapid residential growth, sprawling suburbs and status as an ever-changing, hard-fought battleground during presidential elections.

The visit comes as Biden has framed his closing argument to voters on responsible management of the COVID-19 pandemic and Trump promises that the nation is on course to

"vanquish the virus" even as it sets records for confirmed new infections.

"Even if I win, it's going to take a lot of hard work to end this pandemic," Biden said yesterday during a speech in Wilmington, Delaware. "I do promise this: We will start on day one doing the right things."

Trump spent a day in Arizona, where relaxed rules on social distancing made staging big rallies easier. Thousands gathered in close proximity without wearing masks — a trend that was expected to continue through more than a dozen events in the final sprint to Election Day.

Biden, meanwhile, heads later in the week to three more states Trump won in 2016: Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan, where he'll hold a joint Saturday rally with former President Barack Obama.

The pandemic's consequences were escalating, with deaths climbing in 39 states and an average of 805 people dying daily nationwide — up from 714 two weeks ago. The sharp rise sent shockwaves through financial markets, causing the Dow Jones Industrial Average to drop 900-plus points.

Trump, who frequently lauds rising markets, failed to mention the decline yesterday. But he promised that economic growth figures for the summer quarter, due Thursday, would be strong, de-

claring during a rally in Bullhead City, Arizona, "This election is a choice between a Trump super-recovery and a Biden depression."

Trump is betting on the GOP's vast field and data operations, and efforts known as "poll flushing" — monitoring precinct lists for who has and has not yet voted — to provide a late boost of votes on Election Day. The Republican National Committee, which has more than 3,000 field staff and claims more than 2.5 million volunteers, will use that information to reach out to Trump supporters who have not voted throughout Election Day to ensure they get to the polls.

"We will continue our historic voter outreach efforts by knocking on over 4.5 million doors and making 15 million more calls to ensure voters turn out to the polls and vote for President Trump and Republicans up and down the ballot," party spokesperson Mandi Merritt said.

Nowhere may those efforts be more important than in Florida. Without the battleground state's 29 electoral votes, Trump's path to victory is exceptionally difficult.

Trump is banking on local news coverage of his visit to overcome a substantial advertising deficit stemming from a late cash crunch. Biden and his allies are outspending Trump and his backers by

more than 3-to-1 in Florida — about \$23 million to about \$7 million — in the final push to Election Day, according to data from ad tracking firm Kantar/CMAG.

In both Hillsborough County, which includes Tampa, and the adjacent Pinellas County, Democrats are crushing vote by mail. As of yesterday, more than 53,000 Democrats had voted by mail in Hillsborough than Republicans. In Pinellas, the largest of the four counties in the state to switch from Obama to Trump in 2016, that number was just shy of 30,000 more Democrats voting by mail than Republicans.

Republicans in both counties have a slight edge in the state's in-person early voting, which began last Saturday as Trump himself voted in Palm Beach County downstate, and the GOP will likely need a strong showing on Tuesday to overcome Democratic leads.

Because of concerns about submission deadlines, Postal Service backlogs and the potential for drawn-out legal challenges, Democrats are pressing their backers who have yet to return a ballot to head to the polls in person. Trump, meanwhile, is banking on enthusiasm among his Election Day supporters to overcome indicated Democratic strength in some early returns. **AP**

this day in history



1957 LORDS TO ADMIT FIRST WOMEN PEERS

The Government has unveiled plans to reform the House of Lords which include admitting women for the first time.

Under the scheme, male and female life peerages will be created to ensure a balanced representation of the different political parties. Expenses are also to be paid to peers.

The idea behind the creation of life peers is to enable distinguished and experienced people, who may not feel able to accept hereditary titles, to enter the House. Appointments will be made at the discretion of the prime minister.

The Conservative Leader of the House, Lord Home, announced the proposals to the Lords this afternoon.

There were cheers when he said admitting women would simply be recognising the place they had commanded for themselves as a right in modern society.

He raised a laugh when he added: "Taking women into parliamentary embrace is, after all, only an extension of the normal privileges of a peer."

Labour's Lord Alexander of Hillsborough rose to complain that his party had not been given any warning of the content of today's debate and he therefore felt unwilling to participate.

However, he thought it likely his party would support the admission of women to the House.

The Government has ruled out - for the time being - any discussion on the alteration in the powers of the House and any discussion of abolition or reduction of the right of hereditary peers to legislate.

Lord Samuel for the Liberals welcomed any reform.

He said: "House of Lords reform has been rather like a slow motion film of a prima ballerina, not marked by agility or grace, but by languid exhibition and elephantine deliberations."

He said the House of Lords was the only organisation which excluded women - directly contrary to the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act passed by the House nearly 40 years ago but which the House had ever since refused to obey.

Talks have been continuing on and off for years about possible reform of the House of Lords.

The last attempt was in 1953 when Conservative Lord Simon introduced a Life Peers Bill.

The Conservative Government invited the leaders of the Liberal and Labour parties to attend talks but Clement Attlee refused to take part on Labour's behalf and the discussions did not take place.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Life Peerages Act was passed in 1958. It empowered the Crown to create life peers, both men and for the first time, women, who would be entitled to sit and vote in the House of Lords and whose peerages would expire on their death.

The Peerage Act of 1963 allowed hereditary peeresses to sit in the House of Lords for the first time.

It also allowed peers to give up titles if they wished to be elected to sit in the Commons. This followed the Stansgate case in which Anthony Wedgwood Benn fought to have the right to drop his title in order to remain an MP.

In 1969 further plans to reform the House of Lords had to be abandoned after delaying tactics by MPs.

Following Labour's election victory in 1997, plans for Lords' reform were once again put forward. As a first stage, the number of hereditary peers was reduced to 92 or roughly 10% of the total.

Plans for the second stage of reform hit the buffers in 2003. After MPs failed to agree a plan on a way forward, the Government agreed to delay pending further consultation.



YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Spend some time with people you love to laugh with, and take plenty of time today to talk about lighthearted matters. Forget about things you have no control over



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

One of the many good things about having so many people in your life right now is that you always have tons of feedback available at your fingertips. So why aren't you taking advantage of this abundance of honesty?



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Either your flexibility skills are at an all-time high, or the changes you expected weren't so drastic. Either way, you can breathe a great big sigh of relief today.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Accept the whole person - the good and the bad. Ending a relationship because of one event or conversation is shortsighted. Embrace differing opinions and contrary viewpoints.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

There will always be obstacles in your life - that's just a fact. Your attitude will make all the difference, so put a shine on your outlook! Whenever you need a lift in life, just remember all the successes you've had.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Inspiration will flood over you today - enjoy having your curiosity tickled and excited. You are extremely open to new ideas right now, so why not try a few new things?



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You may think that you are judged by the company you keep, but that is not necessarily true. Today, don't worry about people basing assumptions about you on whom you are with.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

If you are in a mood to hide from the world, then today will offer you the perfect opportunity. The people in your life are a bit distracted with other things right now.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Your daily life is currently being polluted a bit by someone whose maturity level leaves a lot to be desired. Luckily, you will find the right words today to help this person grow up a bit.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You basically have all the time you want, especially right now - your schedule is under your exclusive control for a limited period of time, and you should make the most of it!



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You feel strong, and you are strong - but you're vulnerable to a lot of potential problems that could pop up today if you aren't careful. Focus your energy on fixing up something around your house.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

To help yourself today, help other people - the overwhelming gratitude you'll receive from the people you've aided will lift your spirits higher than any retail therapy or self-indulgence ever could.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	3	18	cloudy
Harbin	-4	9	clear
Tianjin	8	20	cloudy
Urumqi	0	6	clear
Xi'an	8	19	drizzle
Lhasa	2	19	clear
Chengdu	14	19	drizzle
Chongqing	16	21	overcast
Kunming	13	21	cloudy
Nanjing	11	20	cloudy
Shanghai	14	21	clear
Wuhan	12	22	cloudy
Hangzhou	13	21	cloudy
Taipei	20	23	overcast
Guangzhou	19	28	cloudy
Hong Kong	22	26	cloudy

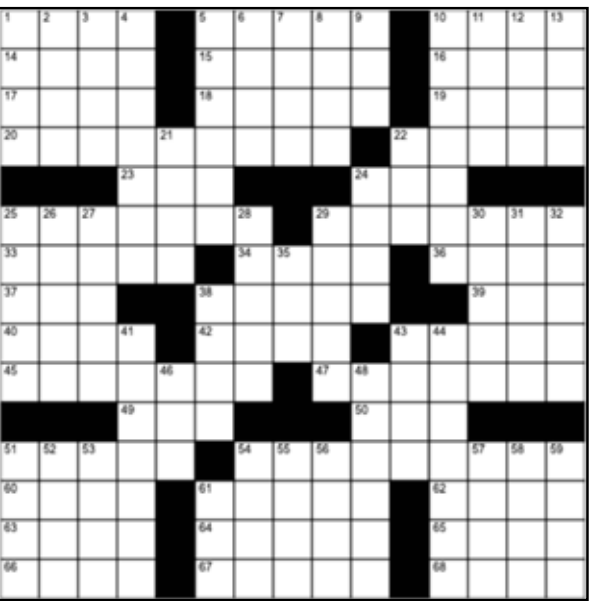
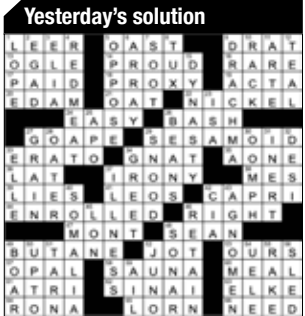
WORLD

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
Moscow	2	7	cloudy
Frankfurt	11	12	drizzle
Paris	12	14	overcast
London	14	15	drizzle
New York	7	11	moderate rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Footfall; 5- Large wading bird; 10- Equal a bet; 14- Fast-food option; 15- Macho guys; 16- Oklahoma Native; 17- "___ Brockovich"; 18- Battery terminal; 19- "Peter Pan" pooch; 20- Insuper; 22- Wound up; 23- Good ___ boy; 24- Dallas-to-Houston dir.; 25- Comeback; 29- Bread-like item made of Quaker product?; 33- Sports area; 34- Quick sharp bark; 36- Terrible time?; 37- Blue; 38- Tends; 39- Blubber; 40- School orgs.; 42- Word that can precede war, biotic and climax; 43- Sao ___; 45- Shouting; 47- Side covering on a hat; 49- One of the Gershwins; 50- TKO caller; 51- Swiftly; 54- Pleasurable; 60- Blink; 61- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 62- Ayatollah's land; 63- Actress Sommer; 64- Finds pleasing; 65- Royal Indian; 66- ___ Abby; 67- Caterpillar rival; 68- Great quantity;

DOWN: 1- Leave in, to an editor; 2- When said three times, a 1970 war movie; 3- Sponsorship; 4- Seaplane float; 5- Ski lodge; 6- Actress Russo; 7- Old Testament book; 8- Beatty and Rorem; 9- Hydrocarbon suffix; 10- Link; 11- Not much; 12- Single; 13- Be in front; 21- Socialite Maxwell; 22- Cornerstone abbr.; 24- Enervates; 25- Irritable; 26- Steamed; 27- Foot-operated lever; 28- Checking out; 29- Blast from the past; 30- Appalling; 31- Eucalyptus eater; 32- Bar, legally; 35- Med. specialty; 38- "Give that ___ cigar!"; 41- Raincoat; 43- One hunted; 44- Business matters; 46- Strong feeling of anger; 48- Stir up; 51- Overwhelmed; 52- Heap; 53- "Puppy Love" singer; 54- Singer Adams; 55- Greek goddess of victory; 56- Taunt; 57- Bric-a-brac; 58- Actress Turner; 59- The wife of Geraint in Arthurian lore; 61- City official; Abbr.;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone – Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity – Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
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IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
Airport 59 888 88	



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[Taipa] **Hoi Wan Garden** 2 1 1
900 ft² \$4,900,000 (ref: 19106003)

[Taipa] **Houston Court** 1 1 1
980 ft² \$10,800/mth (ref: 20091001)

[Coloane] **Grand Coloane Resort** 1 1 1
710 ft² \$16,500/mth (ref: 20021002)

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 國際女藝術家澳門雙年展
 MULHERES ARTISTAS BIENAL INTERNACIONAL DE MACAU



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Xiang Jing

China

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Duration of the Exhibition:
 September 30th until December 13th, 2020
 Opening Hours:
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 Except Monday, from 03:00pm to 08:00pm

Free Admission

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 國際女藝術家澳門雙年展
 MULHERES ARTISTAS BIENAL INTERNACIONAL DE MACAU



Liao Wen

China

A Slice of Human Flesh
 Good Morning Sadness

Galeria Lisboa
 Avenida da Amizade e Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, Macau
 Macau Fisherman's Wharf Rossio Square, Lisbon II

Duration of the Exhibition:
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 Opening Hours:
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 Closed on Sunday and Monday

Free Admission

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DRIVE IN

Borat is back, and this time he fits right in

JAKE COYLE,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

SINCE Sacha Baron Cohen first appeared as his Kazakh journalist on “Da Ali G Show,” Borat Sagdiyev has been remarkably consistent. The accent is the same. The gray suit is still rumpled. “Nahce” and “Mah Wahfe” regularly exude from him with a mangled melody. Borat hasn’t changed in the last 20 years. But America has.

When Baron Cohen last traipsed across the country as Borat, in 2006’s “Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan,” his character’s unapologetic anti-Semitism, misogyny and racism teased prejudices out from all kinds of dark and not-so-dark corners. His comedy revealed a more disturbing, hidden America that was often happy to go along with Baron Cohen’s gonzo act. Fourteen years later, those prejudices aren’t so hard to find. Borat fits right in.

In “Borat Subsequent Moviefilm: Delivery of Prodigious Bribe to American Regime for Make Benefit Once Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan” — Baron Cohen’s October surprise, shot secretly earlier this year and debuting Friday on Amazon Prime Video — Borat returns to the U.S., like a deranged Alexis de Tocqueville, for another look.

It takes a little while to get going. Borat doesn’t have the free rein he once did, and not just because of the restrictions of the pandemic. He’s hounded on the streets by cell phone-waving fans asking for a picture, and has to resort to a coterie of disguises. His trail of fiascos this time is a little more limited but no less damning. The “Borat”



Sacha Baron Cohen in a scene from “Borat Subsequent Moviefilm”

sequel will make you laugh and squirm as much as it will send shudders down your spine.

Jason Woliner, a TV veteran and frequent collaborator with Aziz Ansari taking over as director for Larry Charles, begins by catching us up on Borat. Locked away in the gulag for bringing shame on Kazakhstan with the first movie, Borat is temporarily freed for a mission to deliver a gift to Trump (Borat refers to him, admiringly, as “McDonald Trump”). Given his past encounters with the president (Baron Cohen’s Ali G interviewed him; Borat previously defecated in front of a Trump building), it’s judged best to instead

seek out who Borat calls “America’s most famous ladies man,” Vice President Mike Pence.

Borat arrives via shipping container in Galveston, Texas, only to find that the monkey meant for Pence is dead and his daughter Tutor (played by Bulgarian actress Maria Bakalova), last seen chained alongside farm animals, has stowed away. They’ll remain paired throughout the film in a journey through America and Borat’s own over-the-top sexism. This “Borat” is, in its own absurd way, a #MeToo movie.

There are stopovers with an Instagram influencer for a lesson on sugar-baby submissiveness, a

debutant coach, a plastic surgeon and an anti-abortion clinic where a pastor maintains his stance despite being given the impression Tutor has been impregnated by her father. “God doesn’t make accidents,” he says.

Borat, however, does, and in the film’s second half, he launches his most audacious stunts. They include a trip, with Borat dressed as Trump, to the Conservative Political Action Conference, where he shouts at Pence from the crowd before being rapidly removed; and a “March for Our Rights Rally” in which he leads a crowd of Trump supporters in a sing-along not unlike Borat’s famed “Throw the

Jew Down the Well” ditty. This time, mentions of Barack Obama and Anthony Fauci are followed by choruses of “Inject him with the Wuhan flu” and “Gas him up like the Germans.” The film’s piece-de-resistance is an exceedingly awkward sit-down interview with Rudy Giuliani and Tutor that ends with Borat (disguised as the boom-mic holder) rushing in on the two of them in a charged moment alongside a hotel bed.

Borat’s adventures are often followed by a raft of lawsuits, and that could well be the case again. Some have already been filed. But I suspect there won’t be a lot of apologies or public contrition this time around. There isn’t anything that Borat uncovers that can’t be found on the airwaves, in social-media posts and across newspaper front pages. In the movie’s most compelling section, Borat appeals to a pair of guys for a place to stay, and despite it being a pandemic, they warmly welcome him in. How long Borat stays there isn’t clear but it seems like several days. They’re friendly hosts who happily discuss political views they’ve gleaned partly from the internet, like that Hillary Clinton drinks the blood of children. When Borat shares some of his wild ideas about Jews, they correct him. That’s not true, they say. “That’s a conspiracy theory.”

“Borat Subsequent Moviefilm: Delivery of Prodigious Bribe to American Regime for Make Benefit Once Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan,” an Amazon Studios release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for pervasive strong crude and sexual content, graphic nudity, and language. Running time: 94 minutes.★★★★

Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu



THE BEVERLEY 1050 METRES SAND

2020-10-30|Fri|20:05

Grexit is racing well on sand with two impressive wins in September and again in October under his belt. This indicates that he love the sand track and has no problem to carried the top weight to score. On Friday he drew an awkward gate in 10, which is not ideal but instead he’s only carry 118 lbs and with a strong jockey in K.H Yu on. His track work looks very good and he has loads of energy in taking this out. Looking at this field he would have a good chance to oblige again, but to make a sensible investment, it is best to slot him in as the banker for your PQ with **Verscer** and **The Macallen**, which could be the main threats to **Grexit** on paper. The race would unfold as how K.H Yu in navigating **Grexit** in the straight? I believe Yu can do it well, but still gate 10 is a concern especially in sprint races, but his race fitness and race condition is so good as compared to the other runners in the field. No venture no gain, let’s hope **Grexit** would buy us a good round of drinks this Friday night in Taipa. Cheers!

Race 3 bank Horse no. 7 Grexit in with Horse no.6 Vescer and Horse no. 11 The Macallen in your PQ bet.



OPINION

World Views

The Editors, Bloomberg

THE US WOULD HELP ITSELF
BY HELPING THE WORLD
BEAT COVID-19

Restoring America's respected position in the international community is a powerful reason for voters to replace the current president. A return to partnership with other countries on trade, climate protection and so many more issues would be a boon to health and prosperity for the U.S. and the world. At the moment, a surpassing concern is to create and distribute a vaccine against Covid-19. The U.S. needs to finally join the international push — already well underway — to see that vulnerable people in every country can be inoculated as quickly as possible.

At this point, more than 180 countries have joined the global vaccine purchasing pool known as Covax (Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility) — including, recently, China. Of the dozen or so countries still on the sidelines, the U.S. stands alone in publicly rejecting the project. The Trump administration refuses to work with the World Health Organization, which is one of the three international agencies that have organized Covax.

This is a foolish position, and not only because it subverts America's proud tradition of world leadership and compassion in public health. It also makes it harder to defeat Covid-19, which will persist until it is brought under control everywhere. This is the reality of pandemics — and why, for example, the world has worked so hard, via the WHO, to eradicate infectious diseases from smallpox to polio. Furthermore, until Covid-19 is brought under control worldwide, global supply chains and economic activity cannot rebound.

Perhaps the most self-damaging aspect of this unwillingness to join Covax is that it limits America's access to potential Covid-19 vaccines. Covax is a way to help supply poorer countries with vaccines as soon as they become available, but it's also an insurance policy for wealthy countries, giving them access to the earliest effective shots, even if they've put their money on other candidates.

Covax is supporting the development of at least nine vaccines now, and may eventually help fund as many as 18. It hopes to buy 2 billion doses by the end of 2021, prioritizing frontline health-care workers and highly vulnerable people worldwide. Its more affluent partner countries have contributed about three-quarters of the \$2 billion that Covax aims to raise by the end of this year to help pay for shots in poorer countries.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is investing some \$18 billion through Operation Warp Speed to secure supplies of at least six potential vaccines now in development. If one of these turns out to be the first to work safely, Americans will be in luck. But if one of the many others reaches the finish line sooner, the U.S. will want to procure it — and it could if it joined Covax. Even if an American-backed vaccine is an early success, the U.S. could buy additional doses, beyond the number it has contracted for. Countries can access enough doses for 20% of their populations through Covax, provided there are enough to go around.

Collaboration can also improve all countries' efforts to address vaccine distribution challenges and popular resistance to vaccination, which appears to be increasing in the U.S.

Earlier this month, an expert panel from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine urged the White House to reconsider joining Covax — in the interest of ending the pandemic and improving global health security, and because it is America's "moral duty" to "maintain its historical position as a leader in global health." Beyond helping to fund Covax, the U.S. should also contribute 10% of its vaccine supply, the scientists said.

Both recommendations make sense. On a purely selfish calculation, vaccine nationalism is counterproductive, because it risks prolonging the pandemic. Governments should put the health of their own people first — but that means helping the rest of the world conquer Covid-19.

CONCERNS ABOUT VIRUS ON FOOD
IMPORTS ARE REAL, EXPERT SAYS

There is a real risk of cross-border coronavirus transmission through the \$1.5 trillion global agri-food market, according to a scientist who has studied the phenomenon.

It is possible that contaminated food imports can transfer the virus to workers as well as the environment, said Dale Fisher, an infectious diseases physician at Singapore's National University Hospital. Frozen-food markets are thought to be one harbor in the first part of a chain of transmission, he added.

"It's hitching a ride on the food, infecting the first person that opens the box," Fisher, who also chairs the Global Outbreak

Alert and Response Network, said in an interview. "It's not to be confused with supermarket shelves getting infected. It's really at the marketplace, before there's been a lot of dilution."

In recent months China has been vocal about finding traces of the SARS-CoV-2 pathogen on packaging and food, raising fears that imported items are linked to recent virus resurgences. Beijing has ordered a range of precautionary steps, creating major disruptions with its trading partners.

While such transmission remains a "freakish" event, the scale of the global food trade is such that it will occur a few times out of millions of imports and exports, said Fisher.

THREE DEAD IN KNIFE
ATTACK IN FRENCH CHURCH;
TERRORISM SUSPECTED



French policemen and firemen stand next to Notre Dame church after a knife attack, in Nice, yesterday

AN attacker armed with a knife killed three people at a church yesterday in the Mediterranean city of Nice, authorities said. It was the third attack in two months in France.

The assailant was wounded by police and hospitalized after the killings at the Notre Dame Church, less than a kilometer from the site in 2016 where another attacker plowed a truck into a Bastille Day crowd, killing dozens.

Yesterday's attacker was believed to be acting alone and police are not searching for other assailants, said two police officials, who were not authorized to be publicly named.

France's anti-terrorism prosecutor's office opened an investigation into the killings, which marked the third attack

since the opening in September of a terrorism trial in the January 2015 killings at the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo and a kosher supermarket.

"He cried 'Allah Akbar' over and over, even after he was injured," said Nice Mayor Christian Estrosi, who told BFM television that three people had died, two inside the church and a third who fled but was mortally wounded. "The meaning of his gesture left no doubt."

In Nice, images on French media showed the neighborhood locked down and surrounded by police and emergency vehicles. Sounds of explosions could be heard as sappers exploded suspicious objects.

The lower house of parliament suspended a debate on France's new virus res-

trictions and held a moment of silence Thursday for the victims. The prime minister rushed from the hall to a crisis center overseeing the aftermath of the Nice attack. French President Emmanuel Macron was headed to Nice later in the day.

Less than two weeks ago, an assailant decapitated a French middle school teacher who showed caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad for a class on free speech. Those caricatures were published by Charlie Hebdo and cited by the men who gunned down the newspaper's editorial meeting in 2015.

In September, a man who had sought asylum in France attacked bystanders outside Charlie Hebdo's former offices with a butcher knife. **AP**



India's premier investigating agency said it raided 10 locations in Indian-controlled Kashmir, including the offices and residences of a journalist and two prominent activists, triggering concerns of a crackdown on information and a free press in the disputed region. The agency said it was investigating "non-profit groups and charitable trusts" that were collecting funds and using them for "carrying out secessionist and separatist activities" in the disputed region.

Pakistan's state-run council of clerics, which advises the government on religious issues, gave its approval to the construction of a new temple for minority Hindus, ruling Islamic law allows them a place of worship. Lal Malhi, a prominent Hindu leader who is also a member of parliament, applauded the ruling but noted the council also recommended the government not spend public funds directly on the construction of private places of worship.



Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel told the people to expect a "difficult winter" as the number of newly reported coronavirus cases in the country hit a new high. Merkel spoke yesterday in Parliament a day after she and the governors of Germany's 16 states agreed upon far-reaching restrictions to curb the spread of the virus, including the closure of bars and restaurants, limits on social contacts and bans on concerts and other public events.

Belarus The interior minister warned that authorities wouldn't hesitate to approve the use of live ammunition on protesters if it's necessary to quash more than 2 1/2 months of demonstrations against the reelection of the country's authoritarian president. In a YouTube interview, Interior Minister Yuri Karayev said he thinks that police have been too tolerant of protesters and that they will take a tougher line.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Oded Balilty



Neighbors. Israeli border police officers body search a Palestinian woman just outside Jerusalem's Old City, yesterday.