



GAMING RIGHTS ASSOCIATION URGED GOV'T TO LAUNCH AN APPEAL TO THE SIX CASINO OPERATORS, ENCOURAGING THEM TO DOLE OUT FINANCIAL AID

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SURVEY: YOUTH HOPING FOR A SWIFT PUBLIC HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

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THE 67TH EDITION OF THE MACAU GRAND PRIX WAS OFFICIALLY INAUGURATED WITH THE LAUNCHING OF A CAR SHOW AT TAP SEAC SQUARE

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Japan The IOC and Tokyo Olympic organizers have been shouting the message for months now, that despite the continuing pandemic, the Games will open on July 23, 2021. International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach will be in Tokyo making the rounds, making his point to supportive politicians, and to a skeptical public distracted by the pandemic and ambivalent about the Games.



Thailand Pro-democracy protesters rallied again during the weekend, promoting a diversity of causes and taking an opportunity to display their rejection of the country's power structure directly to the monarch. Some 20 groups called the rally at Bangkok's Democracy Monument under the name "Mob Fest" as the latest in a series of protests calling for significant reforms in government.

Cambodia's government has targeted about 50 people in its most concerted legal offensive against its political opponents since 2017, according to copies of court summonses seen last week. They all were charged with treason for taking part in nonviolent anti-government activities over the past three years. One of the best known of the group is Theary Seng, a Cambodian-American lawyer who has long been one of the most outspoken critics of Prime Minister Hun Sen and his government.

Azerbaijan The president is promising that Christian churches will be protected when the strongly Muslim country takes possession of areas formerly controlled by Armenians. President Ilham Aliyev's office said he made the promise in a telephone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is deploying peacekeeping forces in the areas under an agreement that ended six weeks of fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

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HOMAGE TO A LATE MASTER

Artist Mio Pang Fei nurtured many generations of artists for the city - where many of them have become prominent P3



COURTESY MACAU CLOSER

GOV'T FLIPS WITHIN HOURS OF PANDEMIC MEASURES DECISION

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ASSOCIATION CALLS FOR SALARY PROTECTION IN LETTER TO CE

STAFF REPORTER

THE New Macau Gaming Staff Rights Association, a local activist alliance, has implored the government to safeguard the wage entitlements of local casino workers, in a letter delivered on Friday to the city's Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng.

The association called on Ho to launch an appeal to Macau's six casino operators, encouraging them to dole out financial aid, including winter allowance, a bonus and a subsidy for daily expenses, to the staff who have endured the economic contraction associated with Covid-19.

In recent months, the fraternity of local casino workers have communicated concerns to the alliance, saying they are pinning their hopes on casino operators following the annual stipend custom in giving out bonuses to all staff ahead of this year's Lunar



New Year.

Before the pandemic, a casino worker used to receive a bonus twice yearly — namely the summer and winter bonuses — with each amounting to a month's salary. The bonuses were handed out in the July-August period and before the Chinese New Year, res-

pectively.

Cloe Chao, President of the New Macau Gaming Staff Rights Association, recalled that only SJM Holdings Ltd, one of the six operators in the local gaming industry, had allotted the bonus to its employees this July.

"Without these two [bonu-

ses], the annual stipend a casino worker can collect by the end of this year will drop drastically by 70%," Chao told the Times.

Over the past few years, until the pandemic, the city's gaming operators have raked in lucrative profits. The yearly gross gaming revenue (GGR) in 2018 and 2019 stood high at MOP302.8 billion and MOP292.5 billion, respectively, according to the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ).

More importantly, the gaming receipts in this month will exhibit a continual improvement — with a tally that Chao believes suffices for gaming operators to break even this month.

"Considering the financial hardship faced by local workers post-pandemic, I think it's time for operators to take up social responsibilities and give their employees the amount of payroll they used to, and are supposed to,

receive every year," she stressed.

In a survey polling around 1,200 casino workers conducted in November by the alliance, nearly 80% of respondents reported that they had suffered a great loss in their income. More than 99.5% of them claimed that they are looking forward to the issuance of the winter bonus before the Chinese New Year.

In the letter, the association affirmed that "the worst has passed," as approximately 80% of gaming tables have resumed business, mainly propelled by the week-long holiday 'Golden Week' which began on October 1.

The figures from DICJ also authenticated the rapid rebound in Macau's casino industry. In October, the GGR in Macau totaled MOP7.27 billion, up a significant 228.8%, month-to-month, from MOP 2.21 billion in September.

However, October's GGR figure represents a sharp plunge of 72.5%, in comparison to the MOP26.4 billion recorded in the same period last year, with the year-on-year decline evidently indicating the detrimental effects on the gaming receipts post-pandemic.

LOCAL YOUTH WANT EXPEDITED PUBLIC HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: SURVEY

LOCAL youth are confident in the current government, but are pinning their hopes on it to speed up the construction of public housing, according to a poll jointly conducted by the União Geral das Associações dos Moradores de Macau and the Neighborhood Youth Association of Macau.

The respondents of the survey believe that public housing should be placed at the top of the government's agenda in the coming year, with over 50% of them pleading for some 40,000 public housing units to be delivered at a faster pace.

In particular, most surveyed youngsters called on the government to formulate a comprehensive plan to address the shortage of affordable housing, so as to ensure a constant and stable supply of public housing in the medium and long run.

The shortage of affordable

housing has been a chronic problem for locals who have not been able to afford high housing prices and have had to queue for public housing for a remarkably long stretch.

To assuage public worries, Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo Arrais do Rosário advised in a meeting with Legislative Assembly (AL) legislators, that the construction of 80% of the planned 28,000 public housing units for New Area Zone A will be commenced in phases between 2021 and 2024.

Rosário also stated that the public housing works planned for the 138-hectare reclaimed area will create a constant supply of social housing in the next 10 years.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng will deliver his 2021 Policy Address today in the chamber of the Legislative Assembly (AL), where he will delineate plans to address a

slew of local concerns, including that relating to affordable housing.

In the survey, youngsters claimed that the government should also prioritize work on social security, welfare policies, the public healthcare system, economic development, local employment and transportation.

Particularly, they suggest extending social measures such as the Wealth Partaking Scheme, which is a cash disbursement that has been doled out to Macau residents since 2008. Other proposals are to use the talent database to advantage, implement talent training schemes, and to loosen pandemic-related restrictions by extending the validity period of the nucleic acid test.

The associations interviewed 1,084 local people, aged 18 to 45, in October this year, through random sampling on streets.

GROUP URGES CONTINUED INVESTMENT BY GOV'T IN CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND

A group of four representatives of the New Democratic Macau Association has urged the local government to maintain its investment in the city's non-mandatory Central Provident Fund in 2021.

Earlier this year, the Macau SAR government announced that, in 2021, the government will not invest in the Fund.

The city's non-mandatory provident fund distributes 7,000 patacas per year to senior residents. In the wake of the government's announcement, the city's seniors and people with disabilities are concerned that their actual income next year will be reduced.

On Friday, the association delivered a letter to the Chief Executive

urging the government authority to continue its investment.

"This decision is severely impacting seniors who have made magnificent contributions to Macau's economic development," the group wrote in the letter.

According to the association, the non-mandatory provident fund is an indispensable part of the seniors' pension, and, without the 7,000 patacas per year, local seniors' lives would suffer.

The association argued that the amount of Macau's retirement pension is low and far below the basic livelihood maintenance index. The organization hopes that retirement benefits for seniors will not be "unreasonably cut."

"Has the SAR govern-

ment made careful consideration when making this decision?" the group questioned.

"A government that owns 654 billion patacas is actually using the excuse of 'the financial budget does not allow' to reduce the pension amount, which seniors rely on. No matter what, [the decision] can't be justified," the letter wrote.

The association says that the SAR government should reconsider the relevant question and should at least allow seniors aged above 65 years to continue receiving the pension next year.

As of June, in 2020, a total of 377,747 local residents were eligible to receive 7,000 patacas from the non-mandatory provident fund. **JZ**

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Artistic circle describes late Master Mio as 'standard setter'

ANTHONY LAM

OVER the weekend, the passing of artistic master Mio Pang Fei stunned the creative circle of Macau. The master, who passed away at the age of 84 on November 13, was nearly unanimously described by the circle as unprecedented.

Leaving footprints in many areas, including painting and installation arts, Mio was – and still is – widely agreed as having set a standard for arts in Macau. He was so successful that he pioneered a new style, which is called neo-orientalism.

By doing that, he called for people to exit from existing Western perspectives of the orient and start viewing the arts of the East with a pair of real oriental eyes. "He reminded people that, when viewing oriental works, they should not be doing so under the influence of stereotypes," lawmaker Agnes Lam told the Times. Lam is not only an art enthusiast herself, but was also endorsed by several icons from Macau's artistic circle when she ran for election in 2017.

In Lam's opinion, perhaps Mio was not the first one to harmonize elements from both the



East and the West in an artwork, but by regaining authority on the perspective of viewing Eastern art, he was unprecedented. "He was the one constructing a discourse on the progress into neo-orientalism," Lam added.

Also mentioning the term was local artist-curator Alice Kok, who said that the master taught people to break away from Western modernism when viewing oriental arts.

Born in 1936 in Shanghai and arriving in Macau in 1982, the master graduated from the Faculty of Arts of the then Fujian Normal College, before nurturing his talents at the Macao Polytechnic Institute, the Nanjing University of the Arts and Shanghai University. The master artist has also judged works by graduate students for the University of Wolverhampton in the UK.

Considering his background, it may be more understandable why he founded neo-orientalism. As described by Kok, Macau is a perfect place for this "because the city has always been celebrating East-Meets-West." Meanwhile, Shanghai is also a Chinese city full filled with western influences in terms of architecture and history.

Actually, it was when Mio returned from a trip to Europe, that he inaugurated the thinking of neo-orientalism. But his influence did not stop there.

Kok identified the man as belonging among "the first generation of contemporary arts in Macau." Sharing the same view is local artist Ka Long Wong, who remarked, "Master Mio has laid the cornerstone of contemporary arts for Macau."

He further stressed that the master has nurtured many generations of artists for the city, where many of them have become prominent. What made Mio even more irreplaceable, according to Wong, is that the master worked in parallel with emerging western contemporary arts introduced by the then-Portuguese administration.

Another distinguishing quality of Mio's artworks is, as Lam put it, the incorporation of Chi-

nese calligraphy into Western paintings, or vice versa.

What made Mio so admired is not only his majestic artworks, but also how he showed love for the city and care for the people around him. Pedro Cardeira, the filmmaker who made a feature documentary on the master artist six years ago, spoke highly about Mio in a social media post mourning the master.

Cardeira recounted the moments his team and he spent with Mio on the production of the documentary. He recalled the man welcoming the crew warmly as if they were one family. Mio was also unreserved when sharing his experiences with the crew.

Local band singer and artist Fortes Pakeong Sequeira also praised the master artist for remembering him after seeing him just once. "He had all the qualifications to act with arrogance but no, he didn't," Pakeong recalled. "I remember when I first met him, I was introduced to him by his daughter. Next time I saw him, he remembered and called my name."

It may be extremely difficult to accept that the artistic master's octogenarian life has concluded. As former head of the Cultural Affairs Bureau and artist Ung Vai Meng put it in Cardeira's documentary on Mio, "[Mio] is like a bomb that exploded in the water and generated ripples that lingered so powerfully." Or, as expressed by a line that Kok used to describe the master's passing: "His demise is the end of an era."

Gov't calls off pandemic measures decision within hours

THIS past Friday night, the Times learned from a sports association that its training sessions over the weekend were forced to be called off due to a sudden restriction issued by the Health Bureau (SSM), following its "condemning" of a Central District shopping mall for running promotional events last week.

In a notice issued on the day by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, it was stated that athletes participating in interschool sports competitions would be required to be tested for Covid-19 every seven days. "Competitions will only resume in a short period of time after orderly arrangements have

been made," the notice wrote.

However, within six hours of the education bureau's notice and two hours after the Times obtained the information from the sports association, on the same night, the Sports Bureau (ID) issued a notice, saying that all local competitions and group training sessions would resume on the following day.

Forty-five minutes after the ID notice, the SSM's Covid-19 branch issued a notice to explain that due to the fact that "many global cases were pertinent to performances and competitions," it had changed Covid-19 measures on November 4, further explaining that the change

had then been called off as feedback was received regarding the impracticality of the new measures.

Although the notice did not say what the measures were, it was believed to be referring to the cancelation of local sports training and competition sessions. The new measures, on the other hand, have not been announced at the weekly Covid-19 briefing held by the government.

Meanwhile, the Health Bureau has kept its green light for this year's Grand Prix.

When asked to comment on the matter, Pun Weng Kun, director of the Sports Bureau, said on Saturday that he trusted the professional

decision made by the Health Bureau. "I have no knowledge in public health, so I don't think I have the authority to respond on that," Pun said.

Furthermore, when questioned about the difficulties in conducting nucleic acid tests every seven days, Pun did not reply directly, but reiterated that he trusted the Health Bureau's professionalism.

On Saturday, the sports association that first contacted the Times was also allowed to resume training sessions. In addition, the 67th Macau Grand Prix, dubbed that largest sports event in the city, will be held as planned this coming weekend. **AL**

77-YEAR-OLD DIES BY SUSPECTED SUICIDE IN NURSING HOME

RENATO MARQUES

A 77-year-old local resident has reportedly committed suicide by hanging in the bathroom of his room at a nursing home located in Taipa, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported on Friday afternoon.

According to the report, the PJ was called after a man was found by nursing home staff hanging on the bathroom's shower curtain rod with a cloth belt.

After questioning the staff at the nursing home, the police investigators found that the staff had found the body of the man upon looking for him in his bedroom, since he failed to show up for lunch at the nursing home canteen.

A preliminary examination of the body did not find any evidence of injuries that could lead the PJ to suspect foul play.

Although the police pointed out a scenario of potential suicide, the investigators did not find any suicide note or any explanation for the case.

The PJ classified the case temporarily as a case of body discovery, with the final cause of death to be determined by forensic examination.

Regarding the case, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) stated late evening on Friday that the Bureau is monitoring the case of the suspected suicide, having activated the 24-hour crisis management mechanism, and contacted the deceased's relatives to provide assistance.

The IAS also said that after learning about the case they immediately contacted the management of the nursing home to assess the situation and offered counselling services to other elderly residents potentially psychologically affected by the case.

SANDS CHINA TO HOLD SHOPPING EVENT

Casino operator Sands China Ltd. will hold a shopping event, coined the Sands Mega Brand Sale, from November 26 to 29 at its Cotai Expo Hall A. The event will feature the more than 200 brands that operate at the enterprise's various properties. Merchandise on sale at the event will be subject to discounts of up to 90% only during the four days, according to the resort operator. Together with the shopping event, the resort operator is also giving out prizes as part of a lucky draw. There will be 20 prizes in total.

IAM VIGILANT ON IMPORTED FROZEN FOOD

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) is stepping up its procedures related to imported frozen food, including expanding nucleic acid test samples from 100 to 120 each day. In addition to that, all imported frozen food, once it touches Macau's ground, will be required to undergo full sanitization by each respective importer before being labeled to signal its completion of the process. Meanwhile, pursuant to the law, all animal-based food products should be declared prior to importation, and quarantining of the cargo is mandatory.

INTERNAL SECURITY LAW

COMMITTEE DUBS SECURITY BILL PROVISION 'TOO ABSTRACT'

JULIE ZHU

MEMBERS of the Third Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) have requested that the local government further explain the dissuasion of security force personnel from participating in political or workers' organizations or relevant activities, dubbing the provision of law "too abstract."

On Friday, the committee held another meeting to discuss the city's internal security protocol.

The internal security bill proposes that personnel from the security force or security department should not be members of political organizations or trade unions, and nor should they participate in any activities organized by such associations.

According to Vong Hin Fai, chairman of the AL committee, the security force militarized personnel protocol already in effect contains the same prescription, meaning that the internal security law's provision is not imposing a new regulation upon the concerned individuals.

However, among members of the AL Third Standing Committee, there were questions regarding the proposal of dissuading security personnel from participating in political organizations or trade unions.

According to Vong, the opinions were that personnel from the security force are different from militarized personnel, and, due to this distinction, it is unnecessary for the standards for the two different categories of individuals to be the same.

In addition, the law listed criteria

for a person to join the city's security force. Members of the committee think that the relevant prescription gives the government broad flexibility to make its own judgement and that the provision is "too abstract." During the meeting, some of the committee members raised concerns regarding the prescription regarding mandatory measures and the use of weapons. The lawmakers asked the government whether the authority has a supervision mechanism to ensure that mandatory measures and the use of weapons will be appropriate, as well as to prevent the abuse of these policies.

In addition, some lawmakers also asked why the resignation of security forces personnel must be approved by the Chief Executive. The government explained that these are

also existing relevant regulations.

The most notable amendment removed the classification of the "militarized force and security department" and renamed it as the "public organizations forming internal security system."

The other amendments mostly consisted of technical changes made to names.

One amendment suggests that public organizations of the internal security system, under the supervision of the Secretary for Security, will be integrated as part of the security force.

In October, after the bill was passed, lawmaker Au Kam San remarked that "the internal security law has been abused by the police force to ban tourists and the law has damaged Macau's image."

Sulu Sou urges suspension of mainland teachers' exchange program

LAWMAKER Sulu Sou has urged the local government to suspend the "Outstanding Teachers from Mainland China to Macau for Exchange," noting that mainland teachers are not familiar with Macau's educational culture, institution and environment.

On Friday, and on the sidelines of a meeting of the Third Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly,

Sulu Sou made these calls upon the government.

Sou's declaration is a follow-up response to the government's recent decision to hire 27 mainland teachers under individual service contracts spanning from October 20 of this year to August 31 next year.

The scheme was rolled out in the 2008/09 academic year, with the support of the Ministry of Education of the People's Repu-

blic of China.

Despite having implemented this program for more than a decade, the government's recently announced recruitment of the 27 teachers immediately stirred controversy among the local community.

In response to this year's exchange program, the directly elected lawmaker made seven proposals to the government, including

temporarily suspending the exchange.

Sou argued that "not a few" local teachers have expressed that these mainland teachers do not understand Cantonese, nor Macau's educational culture, institution and environment.

"How can [those teachers] meet the students' needs when they don't know Cantonese?" Sou questioned.

Sou indicated that teachers' exchange program should not only include mainland teachers, and that there are excellent teachers from other regions and countries.

In addition, Sou accused the local government of hiring some of the exchanging mainland teachers to work for the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau. He stressed that this practice goes against the purpose of Macau's individual employment contract design. Moreover, some of the exchanging teachers were able to stay in Macau as blue-card teachers, thus taking away opportunities for local teachers. **JZ**

FOOD ENTHUSIASTS GATHER AT FESTIVAL AMID SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

STAFF REPORTER

THE 2020 Macau Food Festival is giving locals a chance to celebrate togetherness even whilst observing socially distancing measures.

On the first Sunday since its opening, a deluge of local gourmets and foodies, with their masks on, congregated at the annual food event held at the Largo da Torre de Macau, opposite the Macau Tower.

In these times of Covid-19, the festival's organizer called off the opening ceremony and implemented health protocols to minimize

the contagion risk.

The safety and health measures include stipulations that the number of diners at one table should be limited to four at a time, and that the tables should be placed one meter apart from each other.

Despite the guidelines, tables with more than four people were a common scene observed at the event.

Sharon Leung, 14, a Form-3 pupil, who attended the festival yesterday, told the Times that she has been a loyal supporter of the Food Festival. She added that she came to the event this year to show support to the local

food industry suffering due to Covid-19 containment measures.

However, she was concerned that the dining tables with more than four diners may increase transmission risk.

A vendor surnamed Keok, who has participated in the event for three consecutive years, said that this year's receipts would be expected to drop by around 50% compared to last year, mainly attributed to lowered visitation due to Covid-19.

"However, the earnings by far are already better than expected, thanks to a high attendance of locals," he said.

A total of 600 dining tables have been put in place in the venue, which can accommodate up to up to 2,400 attendees, Chan Chak Mo, President of the festival's organizing committee, told the press on the opening day.

In terms of capacity control, specially appointed staff have been deployed to observe the situation, and enact specific measures to avoid overcrowding, he added.

The 17-day festival, in its 20th edition this year, is hosted by the United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macao. It will run from November 13 to 29.



The Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR)

(TRANSLATED VERSION)

Review of the MSAR Government's Work in 2020

Interim achievements in anti-epidemic work

- Persisted in implementing the epidemic control policy of "strict infection prevention and control at all costs", and adopting an epidemic prevention strategy of "early detection, early reporting, early quarantine and early treatment".
- Expedited formulation of an infection prevention and control system, to effectively prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the local community.
- Achieved relatively good results in maintaining a record of **zero deaths, zero community and hospital transmissions**, low rates of severe cases and high cure rates.
- From 23 September, all provinces and autonomous regions of mainland China resumed accepting travel permit applications for visiting Macao.



Rapid and effective anti-epidemic measures

- Launched two rounds of financial assistance measures totalling **42.6 billion** patacas and **10 billion** patacas through the fiscal reserves and Macao Foundation, respectively.
- Launched a series of supportive measures, including a temporary SME special assistance programme and interest subsidies, two rounds of consumption subsidies, tax waivers and deductions, water and electricity fee subsidies, a one-off cash allowance, waiver on business licence fees and a three-month rent waiver on government-owned properties, electronic vouchers for tourism incentive schemes, and subsidised local tours.
- Launched two rounds of the **Consumption Subsidy Scheme**, issuing a total of 8,000 patacas to every eligible Macao resident through electronic consumption cards. In the first phase, **624,000** consumption smartcards were issued, with a total value of **1.87 billion** patacas. As of 30 September, a total of **640,000** residents have claimed their consumption cards in the second phase and a total of **2 billion** patacas were spent.
- Through the **Employee, Freelancer and Business Owner Subsidy Scheme**, 307,000 beneficiaries and businesses were issued cash subsidies totalling **6.38 billion** patacas.
- Urged and encouraged large enterprises to assume social responsibilities, to ensure prioritised, continued employment of local workers.
- Introduced **60,000** paid training quotas.
- Launched the "Macao Ready Go! Local Tours" project, to reboot the tourism industry. As of 30 September, **144,080** applications were received.



Preventing spread of the epidemic

- Established a **Macao-Zhuhai COVID-19 joint prevention and control working group**, to consolidate epidemic control effort by reporting daily the latest developments, case information, treatment solutions, prevention and control measures, and cross-border connectivity.
- Tracked the movements of confirmed cases in Macao on a timely basis, looked for close contacts or people who should be put in quarantine, and arranged for them to stay in designated locations.
- Reserved 12 hotels to serve as quarantine locations for people returning to and visiting Macao. As of 30 September, a total of **15,067** people had been quarantined in hotels.
- Strived to help Macao residents who were in other places to return to Macao. During March, the Government chartered coaches to bring a total of **2,117** Macao residents arriving at Hong Kong International Airport to Macao. From June to July, **1,767** Macao residents returned to Macao through special ferry services, and **57** Macao residents returned to Macao from Hubei via a chartered flight.



Building a strong line of medical defence in response to the pandemic



- A major public health prevention and control mechanism was activated timely to ensure public health safety in Macao.
- Launched several rounds of **guaranteed face mask supply scheme** for the Macao public.
- Established the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre, and introduced electronic systems for online health declarations, health declaration on arrival, health codes, nucleic acid tests and appointments, to enhance anti-epidemic capabilities.
- With the support of the National Health Commission, five members of the **China International Emergency Medical Team (Macao)** went to Algeria and Sudan, to provide medical emergency assistance and share their experience in coping with the epidemic.



Guaranteed face mask supply scheme

Comprehensive support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

- Promoted popularisation of electronic payments for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. From January to the end of August, the number of mobile payment devices and QR codes installed by local merchants increased by more than **24,400**; and the number of devices that can accept mobile payments in Macao exceeded **64,000**. The popularity of electronic payments has been growing rapidly. As of 30 September, the total volume of electronic transaction has surged by **six-fold** to **4 billion** patacas, compared with the same period of the previous year.
- Launched a programme for promoting **accredited shops with local characteristics**. The first phase of the programme was launched in the neighbourhood of Rua de Cinco de Outubro, while in the second phase the programme was expanded to the Islands District. A hundred outlets were accredited of which 71 were restaurants and 29 were retailers.



100 stores

Expediting reform of public administration and the legal system

- The first round of organisational restructuring will be finalised by the end of the year.
- Completed the review on the civil servant recruitment system, ranking system, and training system; and jointly held the **first civil servant leadership skills training programme with the University of Macau**.
- The **Electronic Governance Law** and the **By-law of Rules for the Implementation of the Electronic Governance Law** came in force.
- Enhanced the legislative coordination system; a total of seven bills were submitted to the Legislative Assembly and over 40 by-laws were promulgated in the year.
- Enhanced the system for recruiting, training and appointing judicial officers.



Strengthening anti-corruption and auditing

- Enhanced the organisation, operation and manpower of the Commission Against Corruption; strengthened the investigative capability and law enforcement capacity of the Commission.
- Fully commenced an upgrade to and enhancement of the Auditor Office, to continuously improve auditing quality and efficiency.



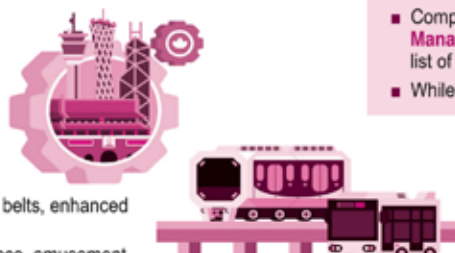
Working towards the policy vision of "five-rung housing ladder"

- The new **Legal System for Public Housing** and its supplementary regulations came into effect in August, to establish the mechanism for applying for public housing on a regular basis. As of 31 August, about 2,200 eligible families were allocated public housing units.
- The new round of applications for the Home-Ownership Scheme Housing has been completed. The amendment to the **Home-Ownership Scheme Housing Law** was passed by the Legislative Assembly, to enhance the application process and the mechanism for resale of Home-Ownership Scheme Housing.
- Commenced a public consultation on the **Housing Plan for the Sandwich Class**.
- Expedited preparations for supplying housing for senior citizens.



Launching multi-level urban development

- Completed the public consultation on the draft of **Macao Urban Development Master Plan (2020-2040)** and the proposed route of the LRT East line.
- Commenced construction of the fourth Macao-Taipa cross-harbour bridge.
- Completed the preliminary design of the LRT Hengqin Line connection with Taipa.
- Signed new bus concession contracts.
- Optimised pedestrian walkway facilities of various districts, constructed new green belts, enhanced accessible facilities, and improved driving and walking environments.
- Utilised idle land plots in various districts to create more quality outdoor activity space, amusement facilities and fitness venues.
- Commenced construction of the green promenade along the south shores of the Macao peninsula, which is proceeding in phases.
- Launched the Quality Public Toilet Project, to revamp and renovate 83 public toilets in Macao.
- As of 30 September, about 410 public infrastructure projects, which were worth 100,000 patacas or more each, had been launched, totalling **14.2 billion** patacas.
- As of 31 August, land grants involving a total land area of **698,600** square metres were annulled in accordance with the law. A total of **44** plots of land were successfully recovered, involving a total area of **319,300** square metres, which were 25,600 metres more than the previous year.



Continuously enhancing national security and urban safety

- Expedited legislation supporting national security, and established a national security law enforcement institution.
- Continued promoting national security education.
- Coordinated cybersecurity alert and emergency management.
- Progressively implemented the "Sky Eye" (CCTV system) project.
- Completed the legislative process for the **Civil Protection Law**, enhanced the functions of the **application platform enabling effective overall command during emergencies**, to gradually realise smart management of civil protection.



Gradually strengthening youth education, talent cultivation, and social work

- Integrated education departments to optimise allocation of educational resources.
- The youth patriotic education base will be inaugurated by the end of this year.
- Created a **platform for young people to contribute their opinions and suggestions**.
- Established a **task force on industrialisation based on research results**, to strengthen scientific innovation and development.
- Introduced the Carers Allowance Pilot Scheme.
- Set up two new elderly day-care centres.
- The Praia do Manduco Health Centre was inaugurated.
- Completed the drafting of by-laws for the **Plan for Protection and Management of the Historic Centre of Macao** and added 55 items to the list of intangible cultural heritage.
- While ensuring epidemic-prevention work, organised various large-scale sports events.



Advancing regional cooperation

- The MSAR Government and the Guangdong Provincial Government discussed and formulated the **proposal for development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin**, which has been submitted to the Central People's Government for approval.
- The MSAR Government led a delegation to visit Beijing and communicate with various national ministries on the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.
- The MSAR Government established a task force on establishing the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, to follow up regarding implementation of the plan.
- The new Hengqin Port became operational on 18 August. It employs an innovative clearance mechanism of **"Joint Inspection & One-Time Release"**, to facilitate passenger clearance.
- The Government joined the 2020 Pan-Pearl River Delta Regional Cooperation Chief Executive Joint Conference, to continue strengthening communication and cooperation with the Pan Pearl River Delta provinces and regions.

- Macao and Zhuhai signed the **Contract for State-Owned Construction Land Use Right Assignment** for the development of **Macao New Neighbourhood** project, which occupies about 190,000 square metres and is now under construction.



Macao New Neighbourhood

190,000 square metres

GRAND PRIX KICKS OFF WITH CAR SHOW

RENATO MARQUES

THE 67th edition of the Macau Grand Prix was officially inaugurated on Saturday with the launching of a racing car show at Tap Seac Square.

As it has in the past nine years, the car show marks not only the officialization of the Grand Prix event but also creates a unique opportunity for the public to meet some of the drivers that will take part in the races set to be held this weekend. Additionally, it offers the opportunity for the racing fans to take a closer look at some of the racing machinery that will be racing in the streets of Macau.

On display this year were mostly cars that will be competing in the two events dedicated to Grand Tourer (GT) classes - the Macau GT Cup and the Greater Bay Area GT Cup.

In a racing series cut short by one day and without one of the main attractions - The Motorcycle Grand Prix - the restrictions imposed on the entry of foreign racers meant that the GT racers were alone in doing the honors of representing the Grand Prix in making contact with the local community.

The car exhibition also included a merchandizing sale and allowed

the younger racing fans to test their driving skills in the virtual world of racing simulators.

Some attendees told the Times the absence of the motorcycles rendered this year's event "weaker than in previous editions." Younger fans were less concerned with the lack of motorcycles and were more thrilled by the opportunity to stand side-by-side with the racing cars.

In the opening speech, Pun Weng Kun, President of the Sports Bureau and Coordinator of the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee, highlighted the support from everyone on the accomplishment of putting on the 67th edition of the GP despite the many challenges related with Covid-19, thanking in particular the Hong Kong drivers for their special efforts and availability for undergoing the mandatory 14-day quarantine period before participating in the races.

As previously announced, the event this year will be held over three days with the Practice sessions taking place on Friday (November 20), Qualifying on Saturday (November 21), and the final races on Sunday (November 22) when all of this year's winners will receive their deserved laurels.

RENATO MARQUES



AD

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Grand Prix Carnival at MGM COTAI

2020. 11 . 07 - 29



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ASEAN, China, other partners set world's biggest trade pact

ELAINE KURTENBACH

CHINA and 14 other countries agreed yesterday to set up the world's largest trading bloc, encompassing nearly a third of all economic activity, in a deal many in Asia are hoping will help hasten a recovery from the shocks of the pandemic.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP, was signed virtually on yesterday on the sidelines of the annual summit of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"I am delighted to say that after eight years of hard work, as of today, we have officially brought RCEP negotiations to a conclusion for signing," said host country Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

"The conclusion of RCEP negotiation, the largest free trade agreement in the world, will send a strong message that affirms ASEAN's leading role in supporting the multilateral trading system, creating a new trading structure



in the region, enabling sustainable trade facilitation, revitalizing the supply chains disrupted by COVID-19 and assisting the post pandemic recovery," Phuc said.

The accord will take already low tariffs on trade between member countries still lower, over time, and is less comprehensive than an 11-nation trans-Pacific trade deal that President Donald Trump pulled out of shortly after taking office.

Apart from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian

Nations, it includes China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, but not the United States. Officials said the accord leaves the door open for India, which dropped out due to fierce domestic opposition to its market-opening requirements, to rejoin the bloc.

It is not expected to go as far as the European Union in integrating member economies but does build on existing free trade arrangements.

The deal has powerful sym-

bolic ramifications, showing that nearly four years after Trump launched his "America First" policy of forging trade deals with individual countries, Asia remains committed to multi-nation efforts toward freer trade that are seen as a formula for future prosperity.

Ahead of the RCEP "special summit" meeting, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said he would firmly convey his government's support for "broadening a free and fair economic zone, including a possibility of India's future return to the deal, and hope to gain support from the other countries."

The accord is also a coup for China, by far the biggest market in the region with more than 1.3 billion people, allowing Beijing to cast itself as a "champion of globalization and multilateral cooperation" and giving it greater influence over rules governing regional trade, Gareth Leather, senior Asian economist for Capital Economics, said in a report.

China's official Xinhua News Agency quoted Premier Li Ke-

qiang hailing the agreement as a victory against protectionism, in remarks delivered via a video link.

"The signing of the RCEP is not only a landmark achievement of East Asian regional cooperation, but also a victory of multilateralism and free trade," Li said.

Now that Trump's opponent Joe Biden has been declared president-elect, the region is watching to see how U.S. policy on trade and other issues will evolve.

Analysts are skeptical Biden will push hard to rejoin the trans-Pacific trade pact or to roll back many of the U.S. trade sanctions imposed on China by the Trump administration given widespread frustration with Beijing's trade and human rights records and accusations of spying and technology theft.

Critics of free trade agreements say they tend to encourage companies to move manufacturing jobs overseas. So, having won over disaffected rust-belt voters in Michigan and western Pennsylvania in the Nov. 3 election, Biden is "not going to squander that by going back into TPP," Michael Jonathan Green of the Center for Strategic and International Studies said in a web seminar.

But given concerns over China's growing influence, Biden is likely to seek much more engagement with Southeast Asia to protect U.S. interests, he said. AP

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AP PHOTO



Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (left) walks to a motorcade vehicle after stepping off a plane at Paris Le Bourget Airport

US secretary of state begins 7-nation tour in France

ELAINE GANLEY, PARIS

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo discussed “global challenges” with a handful of members of a Paris think tank Saturday at the start of a seven-country tour of Europe and the Middle East, travels that were certain to be awkward since all the nations on his schedule have congratulated President-elect Joe Biden for winning the White House.

Pompeo was an all but invisible U.S. envoy on what may be his last official trip to France, tweeting out news of his arrival and from his private meeting with members of the Institut Montaigne, accompanied by photos.

The trip is aimed at shoring up the priorities of the outgoing administration of President Donald Trump. It will include visits to Israeli settlements in the West Bank that have been avoided by previous secretaries of state.

The United States’ top diplomat — as well as its president and much of his Republican Party — have not accepted the results of the American election, and the unusual circumstances will likely overshadow the issues.

In his latest tweet, Pompeo said he addressed “the global challenges we are facing today, from terrorism to the COVID-19 pandemic” with Institut Montaigne representatives. The independent think tank says it promotes “a balanced vision of society, in which open and competitive markets go hand in hand with equality of opportunity and social cohesion.”

Pompeo arrived to a France in lockdown to fight a second wave of the coronavirus. In contrast to the few people seated around him, he did not wear a mask.

Pompeo was scheduled to meet French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and President Emmanuel Macron yesterday. According to Macron’s office, the French president spoke with Biden by phone four days prior and conveyed his desire to work together in areas such as climate change, terrorism and health.

For the outgoing secretary of state and the French officials, the meetings will be a delicate demarche on tough issues.

Le Drian noted the “difficult subjects” on the table, from the situation in Iraq and Iran to the Middle East and China.

He said he plans to speak out on any accelerated withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, clearly concerned that Trump could end his presidency with such a move.

Macron has had a tense relationship with Trump. Both leaders initially worked to woo each other with gestures of extravagance, such as Macron making Trump the guest of honor at a Bastille Day military parade. Trump later pulled out of the Paris global climate accord, a blow to Macron.

The United States also left the hard-won Iran nuclear accord, and Pompeo said in a tweet before departing on his trip that “Iran’s destabilizing behavior” would be among topics of discussion.

In an arrival tweet Saturday in France, Pompeo laid out the standard diplomatic groundwork for his Paris talks, noting that France is the “oldest friend and Ally” of the United States. “The strong relationship between our countries cannot be overestimated,” he tweeted.

Promoting religious freedom and countering terrorism were also among topics on the table during his trip, he tweeted. Both issues are keenly relevant to France.

There have been three terror attacks in recent weeks in France that have killed four people, linked to recently republished caricatures of the prophet of Islam. Anti-France protests rolled through some Muslim countries after Macron insisted on his nation’s respect for freedom of expression, including the right to draw caricatures.

After France, Pompeo’s tour takes him to Turkey, Georgia, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The leaders of all of those countries have offered public congratulations to Biden.

In keeping with Trump’s refusal to concede, and orders for Cabinet agencies not to cooperate with the Biden transition team, the State Department has not been involved with facilitating Biden’s calls to foreign leaders, according to officials familiar with the process.

At a news conference last week, Pompeo said he would carry on as if there was no change.

“I’m the secretary of state,” he said. “I’m getting calls from all across the world. These people are watching our election. They understand that we have a legal process. They understand that this takes time.” AP

this day in history

1983 ENGLAND FANS RAMPAGE IN LUXEMBOURG



More than 20 English football supporters have been arrested in Luxembourg after a night of violence.

The fans are being held for drunkenness, fighting and stealing after England was knocked out of the European Championship in spite of beating Luxembourg.

Denmark’s victory over Greece earlier on Wednesday meant England finished second in their group and do not qualify for the finals next year.

The fans were not placated by a 4-0 win over Luxembourg and trouble started inside the stadium during which two police officers were badly hurt.

Afterwards England supporters raced through the city centre overturning cars and smashing shop windows.

About 500 police officers and 150 soldiers were on duty in an attempt to head off trouble.

They were hoping to prevent a repeat of violent disturbances in 1977 when England fans also ran riot.

But the omens had not been good with trouble flaring before many of the 2,000 fans even reached their destination.

On Tuesday about 20 English men beat up a railway employee in Belgium and four police officers needed hospital treatment after fighting broke out among drunken fans who got off a ferry in Ostend.

At the height of Wednesday night’s violence riot police from neighbouring West Germany had to be drafted in to help the over-stretched Luxembourg forces.

Weapons seized included axes and aerosol cans filled with tear gas.

Many England supporters spent the night on the streets because local hotels refused to take them in.

Finally they were herded to the railway station by the security forces where a train, brought forward by five hours, was waiting to take them to the ferry port in Ostend, Belgium.

Those arrested are being kept in custody overnight and are expected to appear in court tomorrow.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

A total of 50 fans were arrested - 13 received prison sentences of up to four months and fines of up to £250.

Luxembourg’s minister of sport said the country would never again host a match involving England.

The trouble further sullied the reputation of England football supporters infamous for rioting across Europe. In England, courts imposed tougher sentences and football clubs also started to clamp down on violent supporters, sometimes banning them from their grounds.

But numerous attempts by clubs and successive governments have failed to totally eradicate the problem. However, the good behaviour of England’s fans during the World Cup in South Korea and Japan in 2002 went some way to repairing their reputation abroad.

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Jealous attitudes may lead you astray. Stand up and propose your ideas, and you'll be surprised how many people will follow you. Get involved in jobs that require creative input.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Try to put your money away for a rainy day. New partnerships will develop if you join investment groups. Your competitive nature will enable you to win any contest you enter.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Problems with colleagues are likely. Praise will be yours if you have been pursuing your goals. Be aware that you don't get anything for nothing.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You can get ahead if you present your ideas to superiors. Make sure all of your travel and driver's documents are in proper order. Make residential changes that will lift your spirits.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You may find travel to be most rewarding. New relationships will surface through work related events. You should put your efforts into creative projects.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Romantic encounters will develop through group activity. Social activities will be satisfying. Don't promise to deliver the goods if you aren't positive that you can meet the deadline.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

This is a great day to beautify your living quarters or to entertain at home. You may find it difficult to discuss personal matters with family members.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Go out with close friends who understand your situation and your needs. Take your time; do not make any decisions in haste. You should put your efforts into creative projects.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You're best to avoid disputes. Don't be too quick to let friends and relatives know what you're up to. Dig deep to find out how costly a new venture will be before you sign on the dotted line.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Your changing attitudes may be causing concern for your partner. Help with your aspirations is likely, and profits could follow. You must be extremely careful not to let relatives or friends interfere in your personal life.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

New projects may lead you into a dead end. Express your interest if you want the relationship to progress. It's time to consider putting money into long-term investments.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You can't lock your partner up and if you keep restricting their freedom you may be left out in the cold. You may have some difficulties with someone you live with.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	5	13	overcast
Harbin	-5	4	cloudy
Tianjin	10	15	overcast
Urumqi	-2	1	flurry
Xi'an	7	20	cloudy
Lhasa	-1	15	clear
Chengdu	15	21	cloudy
Chongqing	15	25	clear
Kunming	7	20	cloudy
Nanjing	13	22	cloudy
Shanghai	16	22	drizzle
Wuhan	10	22	cloudy
Hangzhou	14	23	cloudy
Taipei	21	25	drizzle
Guangzhou	19	28	cloudy
Hong Kong	22	26	cloudy

WORLD

Moscow	0	2	sleet
Frankfurt	8	14	drizzle
Paris	10	12	drizzle
London	9	11	cloudy
New York	9	18	drizzle

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Of the highest quality; 5- Stradivari's teacher; 10- Voice of America org.; 14- ___ Fox; 15- Type of pitch; 16- Puppeteer Tony; 17- Stead; 18- Malice; 19- Switch back?; 20- Writer; 22- Wearing; 24- Mayday!; 25- Employs; 26- True stomach of the cow; 30- Discombobulated; 35- Debussy's "La ___"; 36- Reproductive cells; 37- Hangs on to; 38- Branch of mathematics; 41- Sailors' song; 43- Roofing stone; 44- Wrath; 45- Driving aid; 46- Capital city of Yemen; 47- Ball-game target; 50- City in Western Nevada; 53- By way of; 54- Atheistic; 58- One engraving; 62- Dreg; 63- Crazy as ___; 66- Deck; 67- "Peter Pan" pooch; 68- Bottom line; 69- Goes astray; 70- Chichi; 71- Diary bit; 72- ___ yellow ribbon...;

DOWN: 1- OPEC units; 2- Actor Stoltz; 3- Clairvoyant; 4- Aphorism; 5- Estimator; 6- Atlas item; 7- The Greatest; 8- French beans?; 9- Grenoble's river; 10- Pre-owned; 11- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 12- Tiger's choice; 13- Excited; 21- Anaconda; 23- Honshu port; 25- Actress Thurman; 26- Collect; 27- Feminist Abzug; 28- Church instrument; 29- Charlottesville sch.; 31- 1980's movie starring Bo Derek and Dudley Moore; 32- Brief brawl; 33- Sporting blades; 34- Until now; 39- Greek vowel; 40- Facial hair; 41- ___-Magnon; 42- Blissful; 44- Can ___ now?; 48- Ignited; 49- Bundle; 51- Delight; 52- Thermoplastic yarn; 54- Radius neighbor; 55- At hand; 56- Lady's man; 57- Anthem opener; 59- Spy name; 60- Bronte heroine; 61- Parks on a bus; 64- Polo Grounds legend; 65- Dinghy thingy;



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Customs 28 559 944	
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FOR RENT

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PROPERTY LIST

[Taipa] Wa Bao	2 2
1,071 ft² \$7,995,000	(ref: 18115568)
[Taipa] Taipa Village (2 units)	4 2
1,404 ft² \$8,380,000	(ref: 19096006)
[Taipa] Villa da Taipa	3 2
1,450 ft² \$13,000/mth	(ref: 20101002)
[Taipa] Great View Apartment	4 2
2,060 ft² \$28,000/mth	(ref: 20031001)

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817 ft² 2 bed 2 bath

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Property Hotlist



Villa de Mer, Macau

\$9,400,000

841 ft²

2 bed 1 bath



SCAN ME



Buckingham, Taipa

\$11,770,000

1,439 ft²

2 bed 2 bath



SCAN ME



Retail Shop, Barra Area

\$48,000/mth

1,968 ft²

SCAN ME

More Listings

For Sale

[Taipa] Wa Bao	2 bed 2 bath	1,071 ft ²	\$7,995,000 (ref: 18115568)
[Taipa] Taipa Village (2 units)	4 bed 2 bath	1,404 ft ²	\$8,380,000 (ref: 19096006)
[Macau] Unique Loft unit	2 bed 2 bath	2,200 ft ²	\$9,990,000 (ref: 15115464)
[Macau] One Central Stylish	2 bed 2 bath	1,349 ft ²	\$14,839,000 (ref: 19096004)
[Macau] 2 Shops downtown		1,404 ft ²	\$20,800,000 (ref: 19015573)

For Rent

[Taipa] Taipa Village Apartment	2 bed 1 bath	600 ft ²	\$9,900/mth (ref: n/a)
[Taipa] Villa da Taipa	3 bed 2 bath	1,450 ft ²	\$13,000/mth (ref: 20101002)
[Taipa] Great View Apartment	4 bed 2 bath	2,060 ft ²	\$28,000/mth (ref: 20031001)
[Taipa] One Central balcony	3 bed 4 bath	2,332 ft ²	\$29,800/mth (ref: 20101001)
[Taipa] Private house	2 car 3 bed 3 bath	4,266 ft ²	\$45,000/mth (ref: 19055006ST)

Recent Movements

Rented

Va Fat, Taipa, 2 beds, 1 bath

Rented

Waterfront duet, new studio



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Diwali gold-buying frenzy missing on key day for Indian demand

SWANSY AFONSO

GOLD jewelry stores in India this year were less busy on the most auspicious day to buy the precious metal as higher prices and the impact of the coronavirus on incomes and fears of the pandemic kept consumers away.

India's gold shopping peak typically comes ahead of Diwali, or the Festival of Lights that's celebrated on Saturday by the country's more than 900 million Hindus. Referred to as Dhanteras, the day is considered a blessed time to buy gold, cars and major appliances or to start new ventures, and the festival is associated with wealth and prosperity.

Many stores remain open until midnight the day before Diwali, when jewelers offer huge discounts and freebies and some shoppers take time off from work to make their purchases.

Purchases during the Diwali period last year languished because of a weak economy and



high prices. It's looking much worse in 2020, with jewelers facing the poorest sales in a dozen years in the festival quarter of October to December, Metals Focus Ltd. estimated.

"We expected sales to be around 80% of last year's levels but we are seeing only about 65%-70%," said N. Anantha Padmanaban, chairman of the All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council.

"But even that's OK because the year has not been kind to us. We started off with barely any sales in the first two months. So this is far better."

Gold demand in India has been battered by the coronavirus outbreak after the Indian government announced the world's biggest lockdown in March, shuttering stores and bringing economic activity to a standstill.

Even after the easing of restrictions by the government, consumers were slow to come back to stores to buy jewelry because of the fear of stepping out of their homes due to the virus. While the pace of new virus infections has slowed in India from a mid-September peak, it is still registering the world's second-largest case load.

Some shoppers such as 34-year-old Divya Pal still visited their local jewelry stores on Dhanteras to make their traditional token purchases of gold.

"We were scared to step out because of the virus and crowds, but we had to make our Dhanteras purchases," she said, while browsing ornaments at Mumbai's U.T. Zaveri jewelry store.

Lower incomes also kept many away after millions lost jobs, while others saw a bigger need to save money in an uncertain period.

While demand from retail consumers has eased, the metal is still a haven for investors. Local gold prices reached a record high in August. That led to sales

of gold jewelry, bars and coins almost halving during the January to June period from a year earlier, according to data from the World Gold Council.

Demand on Dhanteras was slightly better in so-called Tier 2 and 3 Indian cities compared with more urban areas. Higher disposable incomes among farmers and a better performing agriculture-based economy in rural towns and cities are expected to boost demand from automobiles to cement to jewelry.

"The footfalls were up by 10%-12% from last year but the average ticket size in terms of weight has gone down because of the significant increase in price on a year-on-year basis," said Vaibhav Saraf, director at Aishhpra Gems and Jewels. A reduction in the number of virus cases at the jeweler's location in Gorakhpur city in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, and pre-booking of coins also aided sales during the day, he said.

Jewelers will see lower sales volumes this Diwali season "but we have to be happy that at least in value terms our sales will be higher," said Kumar Jain, the owner of U.T. Zaveri jewelry store in Mumbai. "The last few months we were simply sitting in our stores and we had to push our business and make people to come out and shop." **BLOOMBERG**

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Urology : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

Paediatrics : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

Obstetrics & Gynaecology : Dr. Fong Kuan Io

Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery : Dr. Lam U Lin

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

ENT : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

Cardiology : Dr. Wong Kwok Yiu Chris, Dr. Jin Chun, Dr. Leong Man Kin

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OPINION

World Views

Alex Webb, Bloomberg



WHAT'S THE CHEAPEST WAY TO SAVE ALL THOSE PHONE PHOTOS?

If you're used to storing your photos and videos for free in the Google cloud, then this week brought some bad news: The days of unlimited storage are numbered.

From June 2021, you'll still get 15 gigabytes of storage for free, but anything over that and you'll have to pony up. So with the heady days of free data storage nearing an end, what's the most cost-effective way of storing pictures or any file from your smartphone? Should you keep uploading your snaps to the cloud, or store them on a computer? Should you pay for a larger hard drive on your device, or perhaps think about an external hard drive?

Let's start with smartphones. Memory is where firms like Apple Inc. and Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. really make their money. It will cost you an extra \$100 for every 128 GB of memory you add to your iPhone or Galaxy, the most recent iterations of which are both available with up to 512 GB. That's a lot more than the cost for either manufacturer: A similarly sized NAND flash memory chip costs just \$1.66 at recent prices. It's a very healthy gross profit margin indeed.

Google meanwhile only offers its Pixel handsets with 128GB of memory. That was all well and good when the company let you store unlimited data in the cloud for free. But now it's worth thinking about your options. How much will the cloud set you back? The main consumer cloud providers — the likes of Apple's iCloud, Google One, Microsoft OneDrive and Dropbox Inc. — are pretty much aligned on price these days. For 200 GB you can expect to pay \$2.99 a month, for 2 terabytes it will be \$9.99.

Americans replace their smartphones, on average, every 33 months, so buying an extra 200 GB of storage each month would cost \$98.97 for the lifespan of the device. That works out significantly cheaper than buying a smartphone with more memory at the outset, since opting for an iPhone with an additional 256 GB of memory would add \$200 to the price.

How about forgoing additional phone storage and just regularly backing your handset up to your computer? If you're an Apple fan, backing an iPhone up to a Macbook won't save you a penny — additional memory options for the firm's laptops cost the same per gigabyte as they do for the iPhone. In some instances, they're even more expensive.

But you can start saving money with external hard drives and thumb drives. A 256 GB thumb drive from SanDisk, a unit of Western Digital Corp., costs as little as \$32.49. On a cost-per-gigabyte basis, that knocks the others out of the park: The smartphones and laptops cost the equivalent of 78 cents for each extra gigabyte; the cloud providers charge 49 cents; and the external hard drive averages out at just 15 cents.

The problem is that external hard drives are a real pain to use.

There are, however, two options that are better. Some smartphone makers, not least Samsung, let you add extra memory in the form of a MicroSD card. At an average of 19 cents per gigabyte, they're only slightly more expensive than an external drive and a great deal easier to use.

The other option is the one hold-out on unlimited free storage of photos online: Amazon.com Inc. But there is a risk that the e-commerce behemoth might follow Google's lead. It's the sort of bait-and-switch tactic that antitrust authorities are starting to examine more closely, where tech giants seem to make a service free long enough to squeeze out smaller rivals and take their customers, only to then crank up their the prices up once the field has thinned. Sometimes cheaper isn't necessarily in the customer's long-term interest.

[Abridged]

EGYPT UNVEILS ANCIENT COFFINS, STATUES FOUND IN SAQQARA

Egyptian antiquities officials announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient coffins, some with mummies inside, and around 40 gilded statues in a vast Pharaonic necropolis south of Cairo.

Colorful, sealed sarcophagi and statues that were buried more than 2,500 years ago were displayed in a makeshift exhibit at the feet of the famed Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara.

Archaeologists opened a coffin with a well-preserved mummy wrapped in cloth inside. They also carried out Xraying visualizing the structures of the ancient mummy, showing how the

body had been preserved.

Tourism and Antiquities Minister Khaled el-Anany told a news conference that the discovered items date back to the Ptolemaic dynasty that ruled Egypt for some 300 years — from around 320 B.C. to about 30 B.C., and the Late Period (664-332 B.C.).

He said they would move the artifacts to at least three Cairo museums including the Grand Egyptian Museum that Egypt is building near the famed Giza Pyramids. He said they would announce another discovery at the Saqqara necropolis later this year.

THE BUZZ

VINTAGE CAR SHOW ENLIVENST. LAZARUS DISTRICT

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



RENATO MARQUES

A vintage car show presenting several generations of the famous Celica and Supra car models from Japanese manufacturer Toyota enlivened St. Lazarus District area on Saturday afternoon.

The event, organized by St. Lazarus Church District Creative Industries Promotion Association (CIPA) and co-organized by Macau Vintage Vehicle Culture Association (MVV) counted the presence of many fans of both automobiles and vintage culture, with many getting to know what their favorite car models looked like in their parents' or even grandparents' times.

The event is included in a range of events hosted as part of the Ferreira de Almeida Festival 2020 and is also part of the Tour Macao Carnival, a series of events promoted and sponsored by the Macau Government Tourism Office aiming to enhance tourism attractiveness and aid the recovery of local tourism.

The show included the display of the famous Toyota coupé car model – Celica – from their first generation (which was issued in 1976) to the seventh generation (which was issued in 1999).

To the Times, the president of the MVV, Eddie Lam explained that the Ce-

lica has been very popular among car lovers in Macau.

Especially in the 1970s, the first generation of the Celica has won numerous awards and prizes, including at the Guia Race as part of the Macau Grand Prix.

"It was very difficult to create this event and to exhibit the full-range of the Celica models from the First to the Seventh generation in Macau. This was only possible because there are still car owners who are keeping and maintaining them in pristine condition to continue driving them," Lam said.

Additionally, the event included three Supra model cars spanning three generations (1986, 1998, and 2020).

Lam spoke to the inclusion of the Supra by explaining that it is "another model created by Toyota based on Celica, which has more of a sports car flavor [increased performance]. The three generations exhibited this time are the same models that have been featured in TV dramas and movies," Lam said.

"Here we have the third generation, featured in Hong Kong's TV series 'OCTB' in 2017, the fourth generation, presented in the Hollywood production Movie 'The Fast and the Furious' in 2001, and the latest fifth-generation GR Supra, [just arrived in Macau]

which takes a role in the Hollywood movie 'F9' to be released in 2021."

He added that in this event, people can realize all the changes made to the interior and exterior design of this sports car model over the past 34 years.

For Lam the event was well-received by the community and saw the presence of many participants especially between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., he noted.

"Many [participants] were so surprised about the fact that there are this many Celicas in Macau still running and look[ing] just like new."

According to the representative of the organizers, the event could have been even larger, if the venue allowed for it.

"If we had more space, we [could have] call[ed] out more Celicas and Supras. We have contacts of more owners that would [have been] interested in joining," Lam reaffirmed, explaining that shows such as this often result in a "bait effect" with vintage car owners showing up to see it and showing interest in being part of an upcoming event with their cars.

On the topic, Lam said that the MVV is preparing an upcoming "Christmas-themed" event that will take place at the Macau Tower from December 19 to 26.

India More than a billion celebrated Diwali over the weekend amid twin concerns of a resurgence in coronavirus infections and rising air pollution that is enveloping the country's north in a cloud of thick toxic smog. Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, is typically celebrated by socializing and exchanging gifts with friends and family, and lighting oil lamps or candles to symbolize a victory of light over darkness. Fireworks are also a major part of the celebrations.

AP PHOTO



Pakistan said India was sponsoring "terrorism" aimed at destabilizing the country and targeting its economic partnership with China, accusations that top Pakistani officials delivered at a dramatic press conference. The two countries routinely accuse each other of targeting the other, but this was a rare time that Pakistani officials said they had prepared a mountain of evidence to back up the charges against their South Asian rival.

Istanbul A historic wooden mosque in Istanbul was on fire Sunday and Turkish firefighters were trying to put out the blaze from both land and sea. The Vanikoy Mosque, built in the 17th century during the reign of Ottoman Sultan IV Mehmed, is located on the Asian side of Istanbul along the Bosphorus Strait. The firefighters were trying to prevent the fire from reaching a forest behind the mosque and the neighboring houses.

Romania A fire at a hospital treating COVID-19 patients in northeastern Romania killed 10 people and injured 10 others, seven of them critically, officials said. Prosecutors quickly opened a criminal investigation. Most of the people who died or were injured in the blaze, were hospital patients.

Africa The leader of Ethiopia's rebellious Tigray region has confirmed firing missiles at neighboring Eritrea's capital and is threatening more, marking a huge escalation as the deadly fighting in northern Ethiopia between Tigray forces and the federal government spills across an international border.