





18 **Nov** 2020



"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN"

P6

LAWMAKERS RAISED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE SECURITY FORCE AND SECURITY DEPARTMENT'S DISCIPLINARY **INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES**

FINANCIAL AUTHORITY PLANS TO AMEND THREE LAWS TO REGULATE THE SECTOR

MACAU HAS SEEN A WORSENING DRUG ABUSE ON NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES SUCH AS 'THIRD-GENERATION' OR 'LAB DRUGS'

South Korea says it will tighten social distancing rules in the greater Seoul area and some parts of eastern Gangwon province to try to suppress a coronavirus resurgence there. Yesterday's announcement came as South Korea's daily virus tally stayed above 200 for a fourth straight day. The country has been experiencing a steady increase in virus infections since it relaxed its social distancing guidelines last month.

Thailand's political battleground shifted yesterday from the streets to the country's Parliament, where lawmakers are considering proposals to amend the constitution. one of the core demands of the nation's student-led pro-democracy movement. Chances that sparring would be limited to words inside the legislative chamber diminished in the afternoon, however, as pro-democracy protesters at the site were pushed back by police water

Armenia's foreign minister resigned amid political turmoil that has engulfed the country following a cease-fire deal for the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh that calls for ceding territory to longtime adversary Azerbaijan. The Moscowbrokered truce halted fighting that killed hundreds, but it stipulated that Armenia turn over control of some areas its holds outside Nagorno-Karabakh's borders to Azerbaijan



Germany More than 1,500 police carried out a series of searches in Berlin and arrested two people in a massive operation connected to the spectacular theft of 18th-century jewels from a unique collection in Dresden last November, authorities said yesterday. The operation was coordinated by police and prosecutors in Dresden, investigating the Nov. 25, 2019, theft of a large diamond brooch, a diamond epaulette and other treasures from the Saxony city's Green Vault Museum.

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ONE BIG SPORTS EVENT PER MONTH, TWO PER GAMING OPERATOR



AMID PUSHING SPORTS TOURISM, **ESPORTS SHOULD BE INCLUDED: ATHLETE**

P5



DSPA PLANS TEMPORARY SEWAGE TREATMENT AT **OUTER HARBOR**

The Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) has planned to build a temporary sewage treatment at the Outer Harbor. The bureau hopes the temporary facility will help remove the stench in the coastal area before the permanent treatment plant is built. The permanent plant will connect NAPE and Areia Preta. The septic tank of the treatment plant at the Avenida da Amizade is full of sewage, which means some sewage is unable to enter the tank. Yesterday, DSPA received eight bids for the temporary project.

LOCAL BANKS' **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS** REBOUNDED IN Q3

The proportion of international business in the local banking sector rebounded in the third quarter of 2020, according to the Monetary Authority of Macao. At end-September 2020, the share of international assets in total banking assets increased to 85.8% from 85.5% at end-June 2020, while the share of international liabilities in total banking liabilities remained at 82.6%. At end-September 2020, total international assets increased by 1.2% from last quarter and by 13.1% to MOP1,897.5 billion compared to last year. Within this total, external assets went up by 11.3% year-on-year to MOP1.414.2 billion, while local assets in foreign currencies also increased by 18.9% to MOP483.2 billion

SECURITY FORCE

AL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

JULIE ZHU

AWMAKERS of the Third LStanding Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) have raised questions regarding the security force and security department's disciplinary investigation procedures.

Yesterday, the committee held a fourth meeting to discuss the general clause ordinance.

After the meeting, the chairman of the committee, Vong Hin Fai, reported details about the discussion to the media.

Article 125 of the ordinance suggests that the police department initiating a disciplinary procedure should select individuals from the same department as investigators in the investigation process.

The investigators should rank higher or have more years of work experience compared to the accused. However, under certain conditions, such as when the disciplinary case is complex, investigators can be from other departments within the security forces. This is also to ensure fairness and transparency, and to avoid conflicts of interest.

Currently, Macau's security force includes the Public Security Forces Affairs Bureau, the Public Security Police Force, the Fire Services Bureau and the Higher School of the Public Security Force of Macau and the Unitary Police Service. Once the ordinance comes into effect, the Macao Customs Service will also be a member of the security force.

In other situations, the Chief Executive can appoint investiga-



tors from departments that are not members of the general clause ordinance.

During the meeting, some opinions suggested that lawmakers could be appointed as investigators, as well as members of the police disciplinary committee.

In situations when a disciplinary procedure is triggered based on the notification of external disciplinary organizations, presumably the disciplinary committee, the amendment also proposes that the disciplinary committee must be informed before the investigators make a final decision.

Some members of the Third Standing Committee asked if the opinions of the disciplinary committee will be important during investigation procedures.

Others asked if the security department would restart an investigation if the disciplinary committee disagreed with the results.

According to the ordinance, both the accused and the accuser involved in a disciplinary procedure are entitled to make an administrative or judicial appeal.

Article 144 prescribed penalties for a disciplinary offender. The current law prescribes four types of penalties: verbal warning, written warning, fine and suspension. The new amendment only consists of three penalties: written warning, fine and suspension.

Within the Third Standing Committee, there were also opinions regarding whether or not verbal warnings would be ineffec-

Government representatives will be invited to attend the committee and respond to all the aforementioned opinions and ques-

During yesterday's meeting, lawmakers discussed articles 109 to 149.

The law has 227 articles in total. Local government proposed that the law should come into effect in 30 days after its publication.

The current law came into effect in 1995 and has been implemented for over 25 years.

Overall, the amendment proposes upgraded promotion mechanisms, and disciplinary and reward policies.

Financial authority plans to amend three laws

THE Macau SAR go-**⊥** vernment is aiming to amend three laws to regulate the financial sector, according to the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM).

In its reply to lawmaker Agnes Lam's interpellation regarding the city's financial system, AMCM disclosed

that the SAR government expects to amend the current laws in the next two years and establish new laws for Macau's financial sector.

As of today, the bureau has already completed drafting of the Macau Financial System Act and the Trust

Law as well as the amendment of the law regarding investment fund management companies.

At this stage, the SAR government is working on linking Macau to the world and mainland China's Central Securities Depository. To fulfil this goal, the finan-

cial authority has already initiated processes to establish laws related to bonds and stocks. The bureau is also amending the city's financial system law to simplify the approval process for bond issuing. With these measures, the SAR government hopes to lay the foundation for Macau's future stock market, connect with mainland China's stock market, and to contribute to the state's ambition for the globalization of the RMB. JZ

WE CORRECT

technical error, yesterday published we wrongfully a picture of Galaxy executives to illustrate a story concerning MGM China. On November 17, in an article titled "MGM donates MOP600,000 to Tung Sin Tong" that was published on page 18 under our Corporate Bits section, MDT incorrectly printed

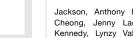
Due to an unfortunate a picture of Galaxy Entertainment Group executives during a donation ceremony for the same charity. Both stories are published today on page 10. The corrections were also made on our website yesterday. Our sincere apologies to MGM China, Galaxy Entertainment Group, Tung Sin Tong, and to our readers for this honest mistake. **PC**

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POLICY ADDRESS

CE's suggestion for locals to 'swallow their pride' stirs mixed sentiment

STAFF REPORTER

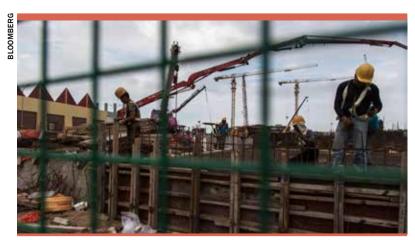
remark made by the Chief Executive (CE) asking locals to "swallow their pride" and take on jobs they used to shun has prompted a wide spectrum of reactions in the community.

The city's top leader Ho Iat Seng delivered the statement on November 16, the day he announced his wide-ranging Policy Address for the fiscal year 2021, when addressing a media query about the rising unemployment rate among locals and the possibility of enhancing the mechanism for the withdrawal of non-resident workers.

Ho's reply has stirred up mixed sentiment.

Some disgruntled citizens alleged that Ho has not put himself in a grassroots' position and his comment is just not quite justifiable.

The reason behind a growing unemployment rate for local people does not lie in whether or not



one is "humbling oneself," they argued, adding that it is more of a practical matter, as "who would like to accept an occupation with a paycheck that cannot afford household expenses?"

In the press briefing, Ho said that the SAR government is pleased to set the system for the withdrawal of non-resident workers in motion — on short notice — for whichever industry locals are inclined to engage with.

The CE cited construction as

an example. Despite the high salary, locals are indisposed to enter the construction industry as it is a physically taxing occupation, he learned.

The government had held meetings with the industry alliances to explore ways to lower the number of foreign employers, but having locals that were willing to take on jobs was an essential prerequisite, Ho stressed.

By the end of September, Macau was home to 181,697 non-resi-

dent workers, according to the latest statistics gauged by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL).

Among all foreign staff, 29,218 were involved in domestic work, or about 16% of the total share. Other industries that were represented by a large proportion of foreign workers were the construction industry which employed 27,451 foreign workers, 25,877 workers in the hotel industry, 21,620 in F&B, and 15,223 in real estate.

The number hired as white-collar office workers was not significant, Ho pointed out. The DSAL figures echo his statement. Merely 1,070 foreigners were working in the financial sector in Macau.

Following the fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic, the city's total number of foreign workers dropped 6.1% year-on-year from the 193,470 that were registered in September last year.

From July to September this year, the general unemployment rate reached 2.9%, with the

unemployment rate of residents standing at 4.1%, each up 0.1 percentage point from the previous period between June and August, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

In a radio program broadcast yesterday by TDM, a firm running broadcasting services in Macau, some local audiences recounted their observations that locals are reluctant to do certain types of jobs — especially for those with a less attractive package.

Lee Chong Cheng, the president of the Macao Federation of Trade Unions, who was on the radio show, suggested the government help citizens understand more about the various job types in the city by setting up more training schemes.

Ho pledged in the press conference that the government would listen to the public and make adjustments to uplift the employment situation in occupations that locals think are "suitable" for them.



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER







POLICY ADDRESS

When pushing sports tourism, ESPORTS SHOULD BE INCLUDED, SAYS ATHLETE

ANTHONY LAM

 $E_{\text{considered as a type of sport}}^{\text{sports}}$ as mainland China has done, according to Frederico A. Dos Santos Rosário, esports athlete and chairman of the board of Grow uP eSports Association.

On Monday, Chief Executive (CE) Ho lat Seng replied to a question from the Times, saying that an esports event featuring electronic car races will be held in the next few months. This was one of the first times the government had officially discussed the emerging sport.



Frederico A. Dos Santos Rosário

In his second Policy Address, the top official pointed out that the government has worked with the private sector, mainly resorts and hotels, during the year to host sporting events and attempt to promote sports tourism.

In an exclusive interview with the Times, Rosário was pleased

to hear the top official's reference to esports. "I strongly believe it is a good way to demonstrate the potential and positive aspects of esports," Rosário said.

diversification Economic has long been a heated topic in the city. This year has made the topic even more important, due to the lockdowns. Rosário pointed out that esports could be a powerful tool to diversify the economy.

"The ecosystem [of esports] can efficiently be extended in the technology, education and entertainment sectors, just to mention a few," Rosário said. "Macau can utilize its infrastructure and resources to further stimulate these areas."

When an esport event is held, it not only needs support from the event management sector, it also requires effort from the public relations, journalism, information technology and logistics sectors, and so on.

Elaborating on education specifically, Rosário said that it was an important component, adding that many universities around the world are offering degrees on esports. He recommends the city to positively exploit this opportunity and attract young people to study in Macau.

TOO LITTLE REFERENCE TO **URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

A lot of work has to be done in the next few years by the transport and public works branch of the government, including the Master Urban Plan and the Ur-



Lam lek Chit

ban Renewal, but they have been referred to too few times in this Policy Address, said urban planner Lam Iek Chit.

Lam remarked that the public consultation for the Master Urban Plan had just concluded. Based on this, he believed further changes may be possible, making the CE refrain from speaking extensively.

On Urban Renewal, Lam agreed with the CE on how a legal framework is needed in order to make any further moves. However, he expects setting it up will not be an easy task. Lam foresees heated debate in the parliament.

"There can be a tricky incompatibility with the Basic Law, which protects private property rights," Lam explained. "If the future law mandates a quorum for renewal, it may go against the Basic Law as it deprives the private property rights of those who do not agree with the renewal."

He speculated that this was

the reason why the CE declined discussing the topic during the press conference of the Policy Address with the media.

Sea transport is another topic in the Policy Address that Lam believes requires more explanations. Only development on intracity marine tour was included in the Policy Address.

Lam thinks the government should elaborate on this and not forget about intercity marine travel. "Sea travel within the Greater Bay Area can also be promoted," Lam said. "Besides, the existence of piers will also impact the city's urban plan."

GREENERY EFFORTS NOT WORKING

In his first Policy Address, the CE has said that the green promenade on the southern tip of the NAPE reclamation will help improve the human-greenery ratio. After about seven months, the work is in progress.

In this Policy Address, the CE promises to construct a circumnavigation promenade in Coloane, plant more trees on roadside and on the hills, as well as establish a database of local

Responding on these plans, environmental protection advocate Joe Chan described them as "superficial."

"Constructing promenades with concrete has jeopardized biodiversity," Chan explained.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has been accused of failing to safeguard biodiversity. Despite Macau and China being listed as participating entities in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Recently, the IAM planted Muhlenbergia capillaris, also known as Muhly grass, near the Hac-Sa Reservoir. The pink color of the plant has attracted crowds taking influencer-style pictures. However, the plant is a foreign species, Chan confirmed.



More importantly, this species is extraordinarily invasive and will disturb plants nearby.

Furthermore, Macau has its own species of similar and pretty plants, such as Miscanthus sinensis and Miscanthus floridulus.

Similar to its jeopardization of biodiversity, the tactics IAM has been using to expand the woods has been damaging the environment as well. "It has been conducting reclamation. I can't tell how long it will take for the woods to grow back," Chan remarked.



POLICY ADDRESS

Gov't not cutting any social support to the population

RENATO MARQUES

HE government has not reduced any of the social support measures to the citizens in the Policy Address for 2021 (LAG2021), the Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng said yesterday at the Legislative Assembly (AL) where he responded to the questions of the

lawmakers on the LAG2021.

Questioned by several lawmakers about the reduction of social benefits and subsidies from the government to citizens and about the absence of information regarding a potential third round of financial relief measures to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis induced by the Covid-19 pandemic, Ho said, "We are not re-

ducing any subsidies and support to the population. But we need to follow the legal regimes established for that purpose. [The laws into force] provide that only when we have a positive balance in our accounts, we can share such profit with the population. This is what is clearly stated."

"It is not just about wanting or not wanting to give more, we

need to follow the legal regimes. We can't just attribute money as we want," he said, first in reply to a question from lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho before repeating it to others later.

"If you think we need to change the [legal] regime, then we need to discuss [this]," Ho said, explaining that giving the annual cash handouts of 10,000 patacas for permanent residents and 6,000 for non--permanent residents is a procedure that can be done without the need to change the laws. However, for other special financial relief measures, the government needs to have laws that allow the official to act in such a manner.

Questioned by the same group of lawmakers which included Coutinho, Sulu Sou, and Ella Lei on the non-injection of funds in the Central Provident Fund, Ho explained once again, "We need to balance the [government] accounts [first] to be able to reinstall some of the other measures."

Questioned also about additional support measures for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Ho said that the government needs to invest more and further work on that topic.

"At this moment we don't have a very effective formula on how to transform them [Macau's SMEs] into a more technology-based sector. Promotingthe use of technology by the old sectors is possible and we are doing that, but to transform them [into a different sector] is very difficult," the CE said, adding that for the time being the direction being followed is to allow them to explore the online market rather than "force them to a conversion."

For Ho, the solution for a transformation of local SMEs into technology industries would come from a new generation that "can start new businesses that follow the new standard. This will be more suitable than to trying to change the old."

MEGA SPORTS EVENT ALLOWED TO BE HELD PER MONTH IN 2021, TWO PER GAMING OPERATOR

RENATO MARQUES

PORTS tourism is one of the major policies that has come from the Policy Address of 2021 (LAG2021) and is set for concrete implementation this year. In April, Chief Executive (CE) Ho lat Seng announced that the government was aiming to hold one major international sports event in Macau per month for the year.

Now, the CE says that the plan is one of his top priorities again and will be implemented in 2021.

In a reply yesterday to lawmaker Ma Chi Seng on the developments and opportunities on this new sector for Macau, Ho said he had the final proposal in his possession already. He also suggested that an agreement with the six gaming concessionaires has been reached, and each one of them will host or title sponsor two events per year.

"We have been talking to the gaming concessionaires to organize two of these events for each one. This means 12 events per year that will be held not concurrently, but tentatively one per month," Ho said, adding, "the gaming concessionaires provided a positive response and from the end of this year, we are already doing some events that are possible to host like the [Macau International] Marathon and the World Table Tennis Championships."

According to the CE, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong U, has already delivered the complete list of proposed events for 2021. It is the responsibility of the CE to give his final approval on the list

"This has been a very big headache for me. We don't know if people from abroad can join but we are doing this work in advance as this is not something we can do from one day to the next," the CE remarked, noting that the decision to host the Macau Grand Prix this year was already very complex.

"All these events are of a large scale and have many participants from abroad. I need to give a reply to Ao Ieong U but this is difficult. We need to decide now and this is a big problem I have to solve right now," Ho said, reaffirming, "Not to do anything is the easy response but I can't take such a decision. To cancel does not produce any positive effect. We can't restrict our tourism sector services to just 600,000 people [the population of Macau]."

Although not hosting the events would save some money, from the CE's perspective this could cause even bigger problems than just money.

"We really want to host one large scale event per month and we are not saying that we will exclude the hosting of other of smaller scale events," Ho said.

CE EXPLAINS HOW HE AIMS TO SAVE MOP1B IN EDUCATION NEXT YEAR

REPLYING to the questions of the lawmakers at the Legislative Assembly (AL), the Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng, hinted at how the government was planning to save 1 billion patacas from the education sector in the 2021 budget.

Ho hinted that a paradigm shift in the government's expenditure in the sector would be implemented, contributing to the savings. Universities in Macau would need to adjust student tuition fees to ease the burden of the subsidies injected into the tertiary education sector by the government.

"We need to adjust the tuition fees and we also need to adjust the percentage of students from the mainland [that are studying in local higher education institutions]," Ho said, adding, "In the mainland, the tuition fees even for kindergartens are more expensive than the ones charged by our universities."

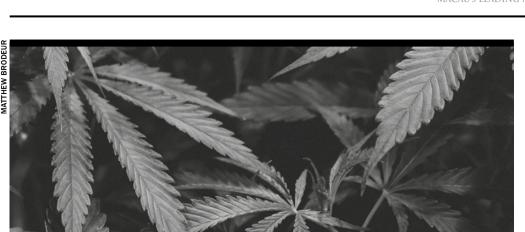
This idea builds on comments aired last April during the Policy Address for 2020, when Ho announced at the AL that local universities would need to turn into a new industry that contributes to the gross domestic product (GDP) of Macau.

Still, Ho clearly stated that the government will ensure that the interests of local students will not be affected while allowing more students from abroad.

The information that the government was aiming to save as much as 1 billion patacas on education was one of the topics recently addressed at the First Standing Committee of the AL while they analyzed the budget bill for the next year.

According to the committee chairman, lawmaker Ho Ion Sang, the government lacked explanations on the topic. This led the committee to make inquiries with them, seeking to clarify. **RM**

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ABUSE OF SYNTHETIC SUBSTANCES WORSENS

STAFF REPORTER

N recent years, abuse of **⊥**new psychoactive substances, commonly known as "third-generation" or "laboratory drugs," has been worsening in Macau, according to a notice published by the Office of the Secretary for Security on November 15.

Criminals have altered the chemical structure of

drugs and turned them into analogs which are not only more powerful, but also able to circumvent regulations. These newly compounds heighten the difficulties for authorities attempting to keep drugs of abuse in check, Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak said.

On top of that, the wide disparity in policies on thirdgeneration drugs between countries has further compounded the predicament.

Fentanyl, for instance, is a commonly-used psychoactive substance. Medically speaking, it is a synthetic opioid used for pain relief that is 50-100 times more potent than morphine.

Drug deaths have been on the rise in the United States, with many linked to illegally manufactured fentanyl which is sold unlawfully for its heroin-like effects.

In November this year, the SAR government added 10 new substances to the forbidden drugs list of the Anti-Drug Law, following the inclusion of 21 new drugs on the list in 2019.

During the first half of 2020, Macau had registered 117 drug abusers, down 43% from the 207 who were reported in the second half of 2019. The data was published by the Central Registration System for Macau Drug Addicts.

Apart from new substances, Wong also stressed that the legalization of cannabis in some countries has had a detrimental effect on reining cannabis use.

The amount of cannabis that has been seized in Macau has stayed more or less the same. However, the SAR government has set its sights on safeguarding youngsters from encounters with the drug by putting even greater effort into education and awareness.

Canada has legalized cannabis for recreational use in full since October 2018. Similarly, the Netherlands passed a bill in 2017 to partially decriminalize marijuana cultivation.

Value transaction OF BUILDING UNITS in Q3 amounted TO MOP15B

total of 2,542 building units and parking spaces $oldsymbol{\Lambda}$ were purchased and sold in the third quarter of 2020 as per the Stamp Duty record, a decrease of 3.6% quarter-to-quarter.

However, the total value of transactions rose by 1.6% to MOP14.94 billion, according to the Statistics and Census Service. The purchase and sale of residential units decreased by 70 quarter-to-quarter to 1,901 units, and the total value fell by 0.7% to MOP12.60 billion.

The number of existing residential units transacted decreased by 73 to 1,605, amounting to MOP10.05 billion, down by 4.7%. The transaction volume of pre-sale residential units went up by 3 quarter-to-quarter to 296 units, and the transaction value grew by 18.8% to MOP2.55 billion.

In a report issued earlier by real estate agency JLL, the primary market was quiet in the first quarter of 2020 with no new launches as developers waited until second quarter to launch their new projects.

To attract the interest of potential buyers, developers offered various kinds of incentives, such as discounted prices, stamp duty refunds, special offers of car parking spaces, five-year completion periods and "occupation before completion benefits."

Regarding construction in the private sector, there were 9,001 residential units in the design stage, 3,325 under construction and 1,121 under inspection at the end of the third quarter. LV

AD 🖿





Beijing requires 'patriotism' for Hong Kong lawmakers: report

KAREN LEIGH, KARI LINDBERG & ALFRED LIU

HINA passed a measure requiring Hong Kong lawmakers to be "patriots," the South China Morning Post reported, a move to curb debate in a democratic institution that has endured more than two decades after the former British colony's return.

China's top legislative body approved the provision to make patriotism a requirement for Hong Kong lawmakers behind closed doors Wednesday in Beijing, the newspaper reported, citing a person it didn't identify. Earlier reports about the proposal have alarmed the 20 opposition lawmakers on the city's 70-seat Legislative Council, with the bloc threatening Monday to resign if any of their own were disqualified.

The resolution passed by the National People's Congress Standing Committee gives the Hong Kong government power to disqualify lawmakers without going through the courts, SCMP said, citing two other unidentified people. The local government was expected to immediately move to oust four opposition politicians - Alvin Yeung, Dennis Kwok, Kwok Ka-ki and Ken-

neth Leung-- the Sing Tao Daily newspaper reported separately, without saying where it got the information.

"Those who do not get DQ'd will tender their resignations," Yeung said by text after the SCMP report was published.

Chinese authorities have so far said nothing about the measure. Hong Kong's No. 2 official, Chief Secretary Matthew Cheung, declined to respond to what he dismissed as "speculative" media reports. "We have nothing to offer, nothing to comment," Cheung told a briefing yesterday.

The resolution would be the latest sign of China's determination

to rein in dissent in the wake of anti-government protests that rocked Hong Kong last year. Beijing bypassed the Legislative Council to impose controversial national security legislation in June, causing the Group of Seven nations to accuse China of violating the terms of its handover agreement with the U.K. and prompting the Trump administration to sanction more than a dozen senior officials who oversee the city.

A mass resignation would highlight international concerns about China's human rights practices just as President-elect Joe Biden prepares to take office on a promise to defend democratic

values around the world. He has vowed to "fully enforce" the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act signed by Trump last year.

"There isn't a clear definition on patriotism for the Chinese Communist Party," Dongshu Liu, associate professor of Chinese politics at the City University of Hong Kong, said this week. "Whenever they need an excuse to disqualify or attack their opponents, they can use patriotism."

The ability to purge opposition lawmakers would make it easier to control the Legislative Council if they win an unprecedented majority in elections that the government has postponed - citing coronavirus concerns - over the protests of democracy advocates.

"It seems like those in power cannot tolerate opposition anymore," Dennis Kwok told a news conference Monday. He called it a "serious departure from the original spirit" of China's promise to retain Hong Kong's liberal institutions and capitalist economy under a "one country, two systems" framework.

The move will raise new questions about the future of the legislature, perhaps the most high-profile platform for open debate left under Beijing's rule. After several radical "localist" activists were among a record 29 opposition lawmakers elected in 2016, China handed down a ruling that led to the disqualification of a half dozen lawmakers.

Several remaining lawmakers are also facing criminal charges related to various protests against the government, including seven charged in recent months with participating in a May scuffle at the Legislative Council. Nick Or, an assistant professor of public policy at the CityU, warned that the Hong Kong government risked losing its legitimacy by limiting legislative debate.

"The Hong Kong government may be able to get a rubber stamp, but it is not necessarily a good thing if their proposals are unchallenged," Or said. "It does not do any good for building up good governance in Hong Kong." BLOOMBERG

CHONGQING

British diplomat praised for saving drowning woman

ABritish diplomat is being praised for saving a drowning woman in southwestern China.

Stephen Ellison jumped into a stream to rescue the woman after she fell into the water in a village on the outskirts of Chongqing. Ellison is the British consul general in the Chinese city.

"We are all immensely proud of our Chongqing Consul General, Stephen Ellison, who dived into a river on Saturday to rescue a drowning student and swim her to safety," the The British Embassy in Beijing said in a tweet.

Ellison was on a business trip yesterday and could not immediately be reached for comment.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian

joined the chorus of approval for Ellison expressed online and in state media. "His bravery is commendable, and I would like to give him a big compliment," Zhao said at a daily news briefing.

In footage shot by onlookers and posted online, the 61-year-old Ellison, who competes in triathlons, is seen tearing off his shoes and jumping in fully clothed before swimming to the woman, who appeared to be unconscious. A life preserver was thrown to the pair, but Ellison swam to the bank by himself as others pulled the woman from the water.

Ellison received overwhelming praise on the Chinese internet, with some contrasting his fast action during the Saturday morning incident with the relative passivity of onlookers. Footage posted online racked up millions of views, with commenters praising the selfless act.

"We welcome this type of foreigner. Saving lives really has no borders," read one comment on the Twitter-like Wechat microblogging forum.

China-Britain relations have been under strain in recent months over trade disputes, London's condemnation of China's crackdown on opposition figures in the former British colony of Hong Kong and Beijing's detention of more than 1 million members of Muslim minority groups in the northwestern territory of Xinjiang. **AP**

WORLD

MacauDaily »Реберен №



Scott Morrison (left) and Yoshihide Suga bump elbows to greet prior to the official welcome ceremony in Tokyo yesterday

Australia, Japan to bolster defense ties amid China's rise

MARI YAMAGUCHI, токуо

HE leaders of Australia and Japan held in-person talks yesterday to bolster defense ties between the two U.S. allies to counter China's growing assertiveness in the Asia--Pacific region amid the transition in American leadership.

The two countries are close to concluding a Reciprocal Access Agreement, a legal framework to allow their troops to visit each other's countries to conduct training and joint operations.

During the talks in Tokyo, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his Japanese counterpart, Yoshihide Suga, were expected to further discuss the deal, though it was not immediately clear whether it would be finalized. They were also expected to discuss the coronavirus and the economy, Japanese officials said.

If signed, the deal would be Japan's first such pact since the 1960 status

of forces agreement with the United States, which set bases for about 50,000 American troops to operate in and around Japan under the Japan-U.S. security

At the outset of expanded talks that followed a closed session between just the two leaders and their interpreters, Suga said he hoped to "discuss cooperation that will further strengthen the already firm relations between Japan and Australia in areas of national security, trade and economic relations, and to also achieve the free and open Indo-Pacific region."

Morrison said the two "like-minded" nations both liberal democracies with market-based economies — have a special responsibility to help maintain peace in the region.

Japan is committed to maintaining and deepening its 60-year-old alliance with the U.S. as the cornerstone of its diplomacy and security, but has in recent years sought to complement its regional defense by stepping up cooperation with others, especially Australia, amid China's growing maritime activity that has spread from the East and South China seas and beyond.

Japan still sticks to self-defense and bans first strikes under its postwar pacifist constitution, but bolstered its defense role and spending under former Prime Minister Shin-

Abe pushed Japan's military cooperation and weapons compatibility with the U.S. as its forces increasingly work alongside U.S. troops. He also bolstered purchases of costly American stealth fighters and other arsenals.

Suga, who took office in mid-September after Abe resigned due to ill health problems, is carrying on his predecessor's diplomatic and security policies.

Japan considers Australia as a semi-ally and the two countries signed a defense cooperation agreement in 2007, a first for Japan with a country other than the U.S. The two nations agreed on the sharing of military supplies in

2013, expanding the deal in 2017 to include munitions after Japan eased restrictions on arms equipment transfers.

Japan has initiated a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" vision of economic and security cooperation as a counter to China's influence, and recently hosted foreign ministerial talks among the countries known as the Quad that also include the U.S., Australia and India.

Those four nations are now seeking to bring in more countries, from Southeast Asia and beyond, that share concerns about China's increasing assertiveness in the region.

China defends its actions in the regional seas as peaceful and denies violating international rules. It has criticized the Quad as a NATO in Asia to counter China.

Despite its pacifist constitution, Japan's defense spending ranks among the world's top 10, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Australia ranks among the top 15. AP

this day in history @

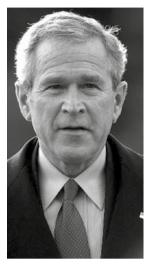


2003 HIGH SECURITY AS BUSH VISITS UK

The United States President, George Bush, has arrived in Britain for the first full state visit by an American president amid some of the tightest security London has ever seen.

He was met by Prince Charles at Heathrow Airport before travelling via helicopter to Buckingham Palace for a private reception with the Queen.

The visit is highly controversial, coming just six months after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein



Public opinion in both Britain and the United States is deeply divided over the war.

During the four-day visit President Bush will meet the families of British victims of the September 11 attacks in New York, and British soldiers who fought in Afghanistan

London is the focus of an unprecedented security operation during the visit involving thousands of extra police officers and costing an estimated £5m.

Officers at Scotland Yard say the security measures reflect the general terrorist threat as well as the need to police the mass protests expected in two days' time.

The Deputy Assistant Commissioner at Scotland Yard, Andy Trotter, said: "We are on a very high level of alert at the moment."

Mr Bush will also be protected by hundreds of armed guards from the US during his visit.

The guards will not be granted diplomatic immunity and will be subject to the British legal system if they shoot anybody, the Home Office has promised.

The Stop the War Coalition, CND and the Muslim Association of Britain say they expect hundreds of thousands of people to march in protest at President Bush's visit.

Police have now agreed to allow marchers to follow a route through Whitehall after the organisers assured them it would be peaceful.

UK Prime Minister Tony Blair urged supporters of Mr Bush to make their voices heard along with those of the protes-

He defended his decision to invite President Bush to the UK, saving, "This is the right moment for us to stand firm with the United States in defeating terrorism wherever it is and delivering us safely from what I genuinely believe to be the security threat of the 21st century."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

during his four-day visit to the UK

However, the violence that had been feared did not materialise and the massive security operation kept the president himself well away from protesters The organisers of the mass march claimed 200,000

joined the demonstration, although police put the numbers closer to 100,000.

It was described as good-natured and non-violent. The president's visit was also overshadowed by a bomb attack in Turkey on 20 November in which 27 people, including four Britons, lost their lives and at least 450 were

As had been widely predicted, there was no progress during the visit over the two main issues of contention. between the two countries - the treatment of British detainees at Guantanamo Bay, and the US tariffs on European steel imports.

However, after further developments the steel tariffs were lifted later in the year and all nine British prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay were transferred into British custody by January 2005

George W Bush was re-elected president on 2 November 2004 by a comfortable margin.





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YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You will have good ideas for home improvement projects. Your sensitivity toward those you love will capture their hearts. Take a step back and try to look at the big picture.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Limitations will set in if you haven't followed the rules. Be cautious when dealing with foreigners. If you join intellectual or cultural groups, you should meet individuals who stimulate you.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You could be misinterpreted if you're not careful. Don't be too critical. Today will be rather hectic on the domestic scene. And even worse at work.



LIBRA

Sep.23-Oct. 22

Try to stay calm, and whatever you do, don't nag. Don't let relatives make demands of you. You can make a difference if you offer your help at functions that involve children.



Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You can gain valuable cultural knowledge through dealing with foreigners. Extend an invitation to clients you enjoy spending time with. It's time to reconnect with some of the people you used to know.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Don't let friends or relatives make you feel guilty if you're not able to attend one of their affairs. Look into events that you might find interesting, and compromise by doing a few things that you both like to do.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Help elders with their concerns. You must not let others talk you into doing things that will probably limit you financially at a later date. You will find it easy finalizing personal papers if you make an effort.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Confusion at an emotional level will cause you to make wrong decisions concerning your personal life. Reevaluate your position and make decisions about your future goals.



Virgo

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Leave your checkbook and credit cards at home. You should be able to make major career gains if you plan your intentions carefully. Your partner may be reluctant to tell you how they feel.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You need to spend less time daydreaming and more time accomplishing. You can make money if you put your savings into conservative investments. Hide your cards and learn to say no.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Having your own business is a good idea. You are best not to confront situations that deal with in-laws or relatives. Your stability will aid you in getting support from your fellow

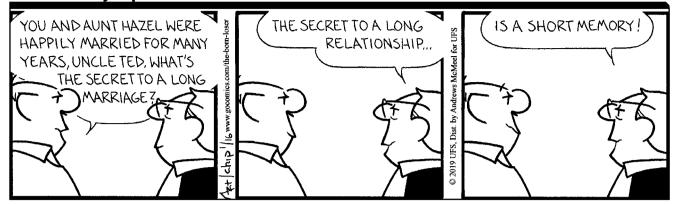


PISCES

Feb.19-Mar. 20

If you can get away for a vacation, do so. Chances are you split up the last time because you didn't really want to make a commitment. False information is likely if you listen to idle chatter or gossip.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

EASY+

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HARD

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4	3		7			5	1	
	_		0			5	_	2
3	6			1	4	8		
				2				

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA -			
Beijing	8	10	moderate rain
Harbin	-3	1	cloudy
Tianjin	8	11	moderate rain
Urumqi	-7	-3	cloudy
Xi'an	9	16	cloudy
Lhasa	-2	14	clear
Chengdu	14	20	cloudy
Chongqing	16	22	overcast
Kunming	11	21	clear
Nanjing	19	29	clear
Shanghai	20	26	cloudy
Wuhan	19	27	moderate rain
Hangzhou	18	29	clear
Taipei	22	26	clear
Guangzhou	22	27	cloudy
Hong Kong	23	26	cloudy
WORLD -			
Moscow	-6	-5	cloudy
Frankfurt	6	11	cloudy
Paris	7	12	clear
London	11	13	cloudy
New York	2	7	clear

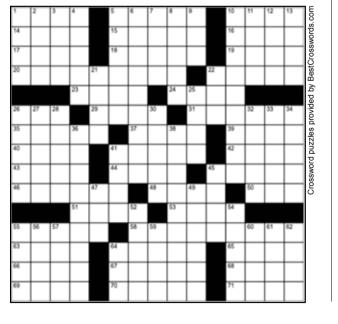
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Waterproof canvas; 5- Pithy; 10- Impulsive; 14- Assortment; 15-Sheeplike; 16- Gen. Robert ___; 17- Factory; 18- Weighted down; 19- Like some dorms; 20- Apian caretaker; 22- Guarded; 23- Designer Gucci; 24- 24 hour periods; 26- Cries of surprise; 29- Kind; 31- Blues great Smith; 35- Argentine plain; 37- Genesis shepherd; 39- Get ____ the ground floor; 40- Stadium section; 41- Make amends; 42-Sell; 43- London greeting; 44- Repair; 45- Eagle's home; 46- Oracle site; 48- Escudo replacement; 50- Tiny amount; 51- Cincinnati club; 53- Actor Auberjonois; 55-Change a song; 58- Pseudo-intellectual speech; 63- Oklahoma Native; 64- Endure; 65- It's blown among the reeds; 66- Damon of "Good Will Hunting"; 67- Therefore; 68- Damage done; 69- Pale; 70- Ruhr city; 71- Slaughter of baseball

DOWN 1- Grave; 2- That's ___!; 3- Anger; 4- Lively Bohemian dance; 5- Holy city?; 6- Dissipate; 7- Travel on; 8- Bergen dummy; 9- Bard's nightfall; 10- Receding; 11-

Tropical plant; 12- Prophet; 13- Delilah portrayer; 21- Socialite Maxwell; 22- Soapmaking ingredient; 25- Up to the job; 26- Chose; 27- Selassie; 28- Sniff; 30- Steak order; 32- Hagar the Horrible's dog; 33- Ancient region of Asia Minor; 34-Wound up; 36- Suitability; 38- Stamina; 41- Among; 45- Top-notch; 47- Magic spell; 49- Blush; 52- Satisfies; 54- Chew the scenery; 55- Actress Downey; 56-JFK postings; 57- Lepidopterous insect; 59- Metal containers; 60- Black, in poetry; _ was a "Star Wars" character; 62- Electric fish; 64- "____ loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah";





USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999

Fire department 28 572 222

PJ (Open line) 993

PJ (Picket) 28 557 775 PSP 28 573 333

Customs 28 559 944

S. J. Hospital 28 313 731

Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333

Commission Against

Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300

IAM 28 387 333

Tourism 28 333 000

Airport 59 888 88

Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283

Water Supply – Report 2822 0088

Telephone - Report 1000

Electricity - Report 28 339 922 Macau Daily Times 28 716 081

FOR SALE



2 bedroom Villa de Mer, Macau HK\$9,400,000 841 ft2 2 1 1 1







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

PROPERTY LIST

[Taipa] Wa Bao 2 to 2 to ,071 ft² **\$7,995,000** (ref: 18115568) ,404 ft² \$8,380,000 (ref: 19096006) [Taipa] Villa da Taipa

[Taipa] Great View Apartment 4 🛏 2 🖢 2,060 ft² \$28,000/mth (ref: 20031001)



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HUAWEI SELLING HONOR PHONE BRAND IN FACE OF US SANCTIONS

CHINESE tech giant Huawei is selling its budget-price Honor smartphone brand in an effort to rescue the struggling business from damaging U.S. sanctions imposed on its parent company.

The sale announced yesterday is aimed at reviving Honor by separating it from Huawei's network equipment business, which Washington says is a security threat, an accusation Huawei denies. It is under sanctions that block access to most U.S. processor chips and other technology.

Huawei Technologies Ltd.'s announcement gave no financial details but said the company will have no ownership stake once the sale is completed. Huawei will retain its flagship Huawei smartphone brand.

The buyer is a state-owned company in Shenzhen, the southern city where Huawei is headquartered, and a group of Honor retailers. Earlier news reports on rumors of a possible sale put the price as high as 100 billion yuan (\$15 billion).

"The move has been made by Honor's industry chain to ensure its own survival," said the Huawei statement. The buyers said in a separate statement the split was "the best solution" to protect customers and employees.

Huawei, China's first global tech brand and the biggest maker of switching equipment used by phone and internet companies, is at the center of U.S.-Chinese tension over technology, security and spying. The feud has spread to include the popular Chinese-owned video app TikTok and messaging service WeChat.

Economists and political analysts expect little change in U.S. policy toward China under President-elect Joe Biden due to widespread frustration with Beijing over trade and technology.

Huawei appears to be preparing for hard times by focusing its resources on its high-end smar-

tphones, said Nicole Peng of Ca-

The sale is "definitely a sign of weakness," said Nicole Peng of Canalys.

"It shows Huawei knows that the situation will not change immediately between China and the U.S.," Peng said.

Yesterday's announcements gave no indication how Honor planned to regain access to U.S. chips and other technology including Google's popular music, maps and other services. Other Chinese smartphone brands such as Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo operate without such restrictions.

"In theory, Honor would be like any other Chinese OEM (manufacturer)," said Kiranjeet Kaur of IDC in an email. However, he said Honor needs time to restore access to suppliers and set up its own research and development.

"The challenge remains how quickly it detaches itself from its dependence on Huawei and gets access to all the relevant tech," said Kaur.

U.S. security complaints focus on Huawei's network gear and leading role in next-generation telecom technology.

American officials say Huawei might facilitate Chinese spying, which the company denies. They also see Chinese government-supported technology development as a threat to U.S. industrial dominance. The Trump administration is lobbying European and other allies to exclude Huawei and other Chinese suppliers as they upgrade networks.

Meanwhile, Huawei's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, the daughter of company founder Ren Zhengfei, is under arrest in Canada and fighting extradition to the United States to face charges related to possible violations of trade sanctions on Iran.

Sanctions imposed last year block Huawei's access to most U.S. processor chips and other technology. Those were tightened in May when the White House barred manufacturers worldwide from using U.S. technology to produce chips for Huawei, including those designed by its own engineers.

The buyer is Shenzhen Zhixin New Information Technology Co. It was founded by Shenzhen Smart City Technology Development Group Co., which was formed by the city government to develop information technology infrastructure.

The Smart City company owns 98.6% of Zhixin, according to Aiqicha, a financial information service of search engine Baidu, Inc. The buyers' statement said the rest of the 40-member investment group includes Honor retailers.

Honor, founded in 2013, is one of the world's biggest-selling smartphone brands. Huawei says it ships 70 million handsets a year.

Total shipments of Huawei and Honor handsets fell 5% from a year earlier in the quarter ending in June to 55.8 million, according to Canalys. Sales in China rose 8% but shipments abroad fell 27%.

Huawei reported earlier total revenue for the first nine months of 2020 rose 9.9% to 671.3 billion yuan (\$100.4 billion). That was down from 13.1% growth in the first half, but the company said it still was profitable.

Huawei's smartphone sales outside China have suffered because the company is barred from preinstalling Google services, which many customers expect. Huawei is allowed to use Google's Android operating system because it is open source and involves no commercial transaction with the American company.

Huawei says it has removed U.S. components from its core products, but the president of its consumer unit, Richard Yu, warned in August the company was running out of chips for smartphones. AP

CORPORATE BITS

Galaxy donates MOP600,000 to Tung Sin Tong for the 17th consecutive year



Living up to its philosophy of "What is taken from the community is to be used for the good of the community," Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) is "always committed to contributing to society through joining and sponsoring local fundraising and charity

events," a statement from the gaming operator says. In response to the annual fundraising campaign of Tung Sin Tong Charitable Society, GEG continues to support Tung Sin Tong this year with a donation of MOP600,000.

Delegates of Tung Sin Tong, in-

cluding President Jose Chui Sai Peng and Directors Charles Choy. Terry Sio, and Carlos Lam visited the corporate office of GEG and were received by Francis Lui, Vice Chairman of GEG; Eileen Lui, Group Director – Human Resources & Administration; Buddy Lam, Senior Vice President of Public Relations; and Andrew Lui, Assistant Vice President of StarWorld Hotel. After a cheque presentation, both sides explored the narratives and landscape related to charity work, corporate social responsibility, and the future development of the charitable society, GEG said.

As a way of giving back to the community, "GEG has always been supportive to different charitable organizations and social service institutions." GEG has established close ties with Tung Sin Tong since 2004 and backed its annual fundraising campaign, and also worked with Tung Sin Tong to organize several community activities in the past.

MGM donates MOP600,000 to Tung Sin Tong



MGM presented another year of support by donating MOP600,000 to the Macau Tung Sin Tong Charitable Society's annual fundraising campaign, the gaming operator announced in a statement.

To date, MGM has donated an accumulated total of MOP6 million for 13 consecutive years to the society in contribution towards its provision of local social welfare services at large.

On top of taking part in the society's

annual fundraising campaign, MGM also provides support to their other charity works. Earlier this year when the pandemic situation was severe, MGM donated temperature guns, hand sanitizers and other anti-epidemic supplies to the society. The donation aimed to strengthen the anti-epidemic measures for their daycare centers, primary and secondary schools as well as elderly activity centers before they could resume services.



TENNIS

Medvedev wins with underarm serve at ATP Finals

led off an underarm serve as he outlasted **ANIIL** Medvedev pul-Alexander Zverev and joined Novak Djokovic as a winner at the ATP Finals on day two of the tournament.

Medvedev prevailed 6-3, 6-4, while Djokovic cruised past Finals debutant Diego Schwartzman 6-3, 6-2 in an empty O2 Arena.

Djokovic and Medvedev meet today to secure the group lead.

Medvedev led 4-3, 30-30 in the second set when he surprised Zverev with a quick underarm serve. It brought the German to the net and he lost the point when his backhand block volley flew

"My wide serve was not working as well as I would like and he was returning good," Medvedev said. "I see that he was five meters behind the baseline and I have the ball close to my racket, so I thought, 'Go for it.'

"It actually worked. It's also smart.'

Two games later, he served a love game to earn his first win at



the ATP Finals in his fourth match going back to last year.

Medvedev went 0-3 in his first Finals, including a loss to Zverev which he avenged after an attritional opening set.

Zverev, the 2018 champion, earned a break in the first game but gave it straight back with three double faults. Another double fault by Zverev in the sixth game gave Medvedev a 4-2 lead, and the

Russian finished the set with his first ace.

A weak forehand into the net cost Zverev the decisive break at 3-3 in the second. Medvedev held with the underarm serve, and he beat Zverev again eight days after winning their Paris Masters final.

"This was one of the most (intense matches) I had in my career," Medvedev said.

The top-ranked Djokovic smo-

thered Schwartzman after conceding an early break and, despite no fans inside the 20,000-capacity O2 Arena, he gestured to each section as if to say thanks.

"Why I celebrated? Because that's my celebration and that's also my gratitude to the court and to this opportunity to be able to compete," the Serb said. "Even though there was no crowd in the stands, I know that there was a lot of people watching it on TV, so that was me sharing that emotion with them."

Djokovic hasn't lost an opening ATP Finals match since 2007 against David Ferrer. He also has never lost to Schwartzman in six matches.

"It felt like a practice session in a way," Djokovic said of playing in the empty stadium. "This has been one of the most exciting arenas to play for a tennis player. The atmosphere was always electric and the crowd was always loud and really into matches."

He has won the elite, season--ending event five times — one short of Roger Federer's record.

Schwartzman qualified for his first ATP Finals by reaching the French Open semifinals and two finals, including at the Italian Open, where he lost to Djokovic.

"That start of the match he was not playing his best," Schwartzman said. "I took the chance at the beginning, but then that break back from him [...] I did too many mistakes."

Schwartzman is the first South American to play singles at the ATP Finals since 2013 and another Argentine, Juan Martin del Potro.

The ATP Finals move to Turin, Italy, next year, after 12 years in London.

The players' hotel is a short walk away, but health protocols require they are driven to and from the venue. AP

AD





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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

General Medicine: Dr. Ng Kam Hong, Dr. Lam Weng Chio Dietitian : Chan Lai U Joey

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OPINION World Views



Max Nisen, Bloomberg

WHY MODERNA'S VACCINE **WIN IS A GIANT LEAP** AGAINST PANDEMICS

The world now seems likely to have at least two effective vaccines against Covid-19 with Monday's announcement of positive early data from Moderna Inc.'s 30,000-person clinical trial. The result comes a week after Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE revealed a protection rate of more than 90% protection against disease. Moderna slightly one-upped its rivals, estimating that its shot is 94.5% effective at preventing Covid-19. Both results are highly impressive for inoculations developed at historic speed.

The second success is crucial. Manufacturing constraints mean the world needs multiple vaccines if it hopes to contain the virus. However, as promising as the vaccine news is for the fight against Covid-19, it also offers hope for our ability to respond more quickly to future pandemics. Both leading vaccines use the same promising messenger RNA technology, and their combined excellent early results suggest the world has a crucial new tool to respond quickly to diseases.

Messenger RNA, or mRNA, instructs cells to produce many substances that allow the body to function. These vaccines use carefully designed mRNA strands to teach cells to create a modified version of a key coronavirus protein, prompting an immune response that can fend off the real virus. They essentially turn cells into tiny drug factories. That's a key advantage. Traditional vaccines use chunks of viruses or entire viruses that are killed or weakened, a tried-and-true process that's often highly effective but fundamentally time-consuming.

In addition to being speedier to manufacture and develop — a feature which helped Pfizer and Moderna quickly start clinical trials - mRNA is well-suited to rapid adaptation. Instead of growing big batches of a protein or virus, drugmakers can change the instructions provided by the mRNA. That means that researchers could respond nimbly both to concerning mutations in the virus that causes Covid-19, should they arise, and that it's an excellent platform to respond to new threats. Moderna's result Monday was based on 95 confirmed cases, boosting confidence in the technology, and it also provided a bit of extra data Pfizer and BioNTech haven't offered.

As for the broader promise of the technology, the successes can't solely be attributed to mRNA magic. Years of previous work on closely related diseases such as SARS and MERS gave scientists a head start.

But with all that said, it's hard to argue that these successes aren't a boost to global pandemic readiness. There's now proof that it's possible to create a highly effective vaccine at speed, and there's also about to be dramatically more mRNA manufacturing capacity. That means that the next time around, there's likely to be less scrambling over limited doses. The success will prompt investment in figuring out storage problems and improving on these impressive early results.

Vaccines using mRNA are the front-runners in the race, but many other inoculations are in development. AstraZeneca PLC and Johnson & Johnson both use modified viruses to carry genetic material that prompts an immune response. It's another approach that's quick and adaptable, if not quite to the same extent as mRNA. They are likely to be the next to reveal data from continuing trials. The older approaches used by Novavax Inc. and Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline PLC may be slower and have yet to enter the final stage of testing in the U.S., but they can build up supplies quickly once up and running. Vaccinating the whole world will likely require all of the above approaches.

While the double dose of success from Pfizer and Moderna is great news at a time we all could use it, it's important to remember that it will still be months before either are widely distributed. If anything, it underscores the need for effective public health measures to stop the spread. The ability to rapidly produce vaccines means many more lives can be saved, but only if countries successfully manage the difficult waiting period.

[Abridged]

HONG KONG ORDERS BUILDING **INSPECTIONS AFTER DEADLY FIRE**

Hong Kong authorities will inspect 2,500 older residential buildings after a deadly fire killed seven people in what an elected official said may have been an unlicensed restaurant operating in an apartment.

The fire and building departments will aim to complete the review by year-end, a government news release said. The inspection will cover buildings at least 60 years old and include those that are part-residential, part-commercial.

"In light of the risks exposed by this fire accident, I have asked the (fire services and building departments) to further step up inspections to eliminate serious fire safety threats to safeguard people's lives and property," Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said.

The Sunday night fire killed seven people and injured 11 others. Ten people remain hospitalized, seven in critical condition, the news release said. The dead and injured range in age from 8 to 48 years old.

The apartment where the fire started may have been operating as an unlicensed restaurant, according to the area's district council member, Leslie Chan. He said the victims were from the city's Nepalese community.

CHINA POSITIONS ROCKET AHEAD OF AMBITIOUS LUNAR MISSION

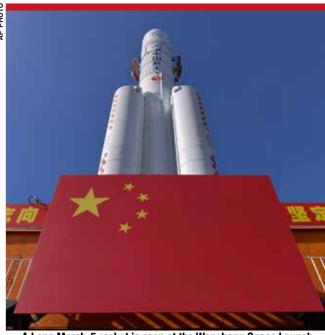
THINA yesterday moved a massive rocket into place in preparation for launching a mission to bring back materials from the moon for the first time in four decades.

The Long March-5 was transported by tractor from its hangar to the nearby launch site at the space base in Wenchang along the coast of the southern island province of Hainan.

The Chang'e 5 mission it will carry is scheduled to launch early next week, placing a lander on the moon that will drill 2 meters (almost 7 feet) beneath the surface and scoop up rocks and other debris to be brought to earth. That would allow scientists to study newly obtained lunar materials for the fist time since the American and Russian missions of the 1960s and 1970s.

The mission, named for the Chinese moon goddess, is among China's most ambitious as its space program continues to build steam since it first put a man in space in 2003, becoming only the third nation to do so after the U.S. and Russia.

China currently has a mission on the way to Mars, along with a rover on the moon's far side that is pro-



A Long March-5 rocket is seen at the Wenchang Space Launch **Center in Hainan Province**

viding the first full measurements of radiation exposure from the lunar surface, information vital for any country that plans to send astronauts to the moon.

China has increasingly engaged with foreign countries on missions, although U.S. law still prevents collaboration with NASA, excluding China from partnering with the International Space Station. That has prompted China to work on its own space station and launch its own programs that have put

it in a steady competition with Japan and India among Asian nations seeking to notch new achievements in space.

The space program has progressed cautiously, with relatively few setbacks in recent years. The Long March-5, nicknamed "Fat 5" because of its bulky shape, failed on a previous launch attempt, but China's enormous pool of technical and engineering talent appears to have allowed it to overcome most obstacles. AP

US Close to 90,000 sexual abuse claims have been filed against the Boy Scouts of America as the deadline arrived for submitting claims in the organization's bankruptcy case. The number far exceeds the initial projections of lawvers across the United States who have been signing up clients since the Boy Scouts filed for bankruptcy protection in February in the face of hundreds of lawsuits alleging decadesold sex abuse by Scout



Peru's political crisis appeared on the verge of resolution as Congress cleared the way for an elder statesman and consensus candidate to become the country's third president in a week. Francisco Sagasti of the centrist Purple Party was selected the legislature's new president. The 76-year-old engineer has not yet been sworn into office, but as head of Congress becomes the nation's chief of state by default. Peru currently has no president or vice president, making him next in line.

Mexico A double-tanker truck carrying liquified cooking gas lost control and flipped on a highway in western Mexico, caught fire and exploded, killing at least a dozen people in nearby vehicles, authorities said. The 12 victims apparently did not have time to attempt to escape and were found sitting in their vehicles, burned beyond recognition.



Ethiopia's prime minister says "the final and crucial" military operation will launch in the coming days against the government of the country's rebellious northern Tigray region. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in a social media post on yesterday said a three-day deadline given to the Tigray region's leaders and special forces "has expired today." Abiy, last year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, continues to reject international pleas for dialogue and deescalation

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty

