



THE JUDICIARY POLICE UNEARTHED A HOUSE ARSENAL WHILE THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY WAS INVESTIGATING A RAPE CASE P2

CITY RECORDS 36 HIV CASES THIS YEAR: GOVERNMENT P4

THE 11TH MACAU INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL FEATURING A TOTAL OF 132 FILMS OFFICIALLY OPENED AT THE DOM PEDRO V THEATER P2

AP PHOTO



Indonesian authorities are closely monitoring several volcanoes after sensors picked up increased activity in recent weeks, prompting the evacuation of thousands of people. Hot ash tumbled as far as 3,000 meters down the slopes of Mount Semeru early yesterday, triggering panic among villagers.

Vietnamese authorities are conducting intensive contact tracing after discovering the country's first confirmed local transmission of the coronavirus in 89 days. State media said yesterday that a 32-year-old man in Ho Chi Minh City tested positive for the coronavirus after visiting a flight attendant who was undergoing self-quarantine at his home following his return from Japan two weeks ago.

AP PHOTO



Cambodia Senior executives of the disbanded opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party yesterday announced their plan to return from self-imposed exile to fight criminal charges against them in court. The party leaders are among about 130 opposition supporters and other dissidents who are due to be tried early next year on charges including treason and incitement to commit felony.

Cambodia Seven people died and more than 130 others were hospitalized in Cambodia after drinking rice wine that health authorities believe was adulterated with a toxic substance. Most of the people who were sickened are recovering, with some already released from the hospital, it said in a statement.

More on backpage

GAMING LOSES TRACTION

November had not delivered the 'much-anticipated sequential recovery in GGR versus October,' analysts say P3



AP PHOTO

LAW AMENDMENTS PREVENT DISMISSED TEACHERS FROM RETURNING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

P3



FORMER LEPROSARIUM TO HOUSE NEW ARTM PROJECT

P5

CRIME

POLICE BUST 'HOUSE ARSENAL' DURING RAPE CASE INVESTIGATION

ANTHONY LAM

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) unearthed a "house arsenal" while the law enforcement authority was investigating several other allegations, the PJ announced yesterday.

This June, the PJ solved a case of abduction, duress, rape and possession of prohibited weapons. During the investigation of the case, the police discovered transactions of such weapons were taking place in Macau, conducted over social media platforms in the name of a one-person company.

The suspect who allegedly owned the company is a local man who claims to be working in the financial industry. It is suspected that he imported large numbers of weapons from the mainland using logistics services. The weapons, according to the police, were resold online at a profit.

On November 30, the PJ searched the suspect's apartment in Taipa, where "a large number of weapons" were found. The weapons included five crossbows,

ANTHONY LAM



nine bows, two sabers, a sharpened sword, stun guns, telescopic batons and more than 200 arrows of different lengths. They were seized by the PJ.

The suspect later confessed to the police that he was the owner of the weapons. The law-enforcement authority believes that he began making the illicit transactions in 2016, when he started the company and the social media page in order to make the

transactions.

Investigations are still underway, the police stressed, mainly with regards to the extent of the suspect's profits from this enterprise, and the conditions of the weapons flowing into the market.

SUSPECTS ARRESTED FOR DRUG DEALING

In another case also announced by the PJ yesterday, a mainland Chinese man, surnamed

Pan, was arrested and charged by the police with dealing and consuming illicit addictive substances.

Another three suspects were arrested by authorities as the investigation developed.

The police received intelligence that there were mainland people dealing drugs in Macau, mainly selling the substances to young people. The information drove the police's focus to the arrested

who had been dealing drugs in Macau for three months.

On Monday, the PJ surveilled the primary suspect. In the afternoon on the same day, the suspect was seen meeting two people in the Dynasty Area of the NAPE District. The police believed that they were in the midst of a transaction of illicit addictive substances.

Intercepting the suspects during the alleged transactions, the PJ investigators confirmed that the primary suspect was selling methamphetamine, which is also known colloquially as "ice."

Once the transaction had been interrupted, Pan attempted to flee and discarded a small pack of the narcotics, weighing 0.9 grams.

After apprehending the man nearby, the investigators searched the alleged dealer's apartment, which was located in the same area, and found 27 packs of methamphetamine in the suspect's spare shoes.

The total amount of narcotics weighed 24.9 grams, worth about MOP82,000. Another HKD34,000 in cash was found on the suspect and in his apartment.

The police also discovered a woman in the apartment who was acting suspiciously. Urine tests were run on all four people and revealed signs of narcotics consumption.

11th Macau Int'l Short Film Festival opens, showcasing 132 works

ANTHONY LAM

THE 11th Macau International Short Film Festival, featuring a total of 132 films, officially opened yesterday at the Dom Pedro V Theater.

The theater will be the center stage of this year's event.

Having received more than 4,200 film submissions, the festival will be held until December 8, with a closing ceremony on the last day, featuring a percussion performance by local musician Hoi Lei Lei, followed by the Gala Awards Ceremony.

On the sidelines of the opening press conference

ANTHONY LAM



yesterday, José Luís de Sales Marques, the president of the festival, disclosed that among the 4,200-plus submissions, quite a number were about the Covid-19 pandemic. "Not all, but quite a lot were set against

Covid-19," the festival president pointed out.

Lúcia Lemos, the director of the festival, stressed that the festival was created in an attempt to support and showcase small independent short films on low

budgets, usually with a less famous cast.

"Up to this time, it mobilizes a great significant number of audience [members] and that encourages [stakeholders] to keep the industry alive,"

Lemos remarked.

All of the winning films will be screened after the Awards Ceremony. The evening will start at 5:30 p.m. on December 8.

The films screened during the festival will include local and international short film productions. It aims to highlight those made with limited resources that nevertheless achieve an impressive quality.

The event will also include two masterclasses for film directors, students, young professionals and enthusiasts.

The first masterclass will be held at 5 p.m. on December 5 and will be conducted in English. It will be presented by Professor João Nuno Brochado, who is a movie director originally from Portugal but now based in Macau. He will talk about ways to make quality

movies with a tight budget, which many in Macau are doing.

The second masterclass will be held at 5 p.m., December 6, and will be presented by local movie director Oliver Fa and moviemaker Dr Fernando Lourenço.

The title for this session is "From 'Zero' budget to 'Some' budget: The difference, the similarity and the growth." It will be conducted in both English and Cantonese.

Both masterclass sessions will be 60 minutes in duration.

The festival was kicked off with a concert featuring local metal band Blade-mark, followed by a presentation of the festival's program and the screening of two comedy films: Amore, Non È como Pensi from Italy and Summertime from France.

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Times

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A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

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

Lawmakers propose preventing dismissed teachers from returning to public schools

JULIE ZHU

LAWMAKERS have raised questions regarding the proposal to prevent dismissed teachers from reentering public schools, according to the Third Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL).

Yesterday, the committee held another reading of law No.67/99/M, which specifically concerns teachers at non-tertiary public schools.

The meeting primarily focused on four articles: teachers' assessment systems, teachers' sick leave, teachers' reasonable absences, and dismissed teachers' reentry to schools.

One of the amended articles proposes that teachers at public schools, once dismissed, will no longer be able to take up or apply



for teaching positions in public schools. Under Macau's civil servant protocol, a dismissed civil servant is entitled to reenter public service.

Regarding this article, some of the committee members asked if dismissed teachers are allowed to

teach in private schools.

Vong Hin Fai, the chairman of the Third Standing Committee and the lawmaker who asked the question, voiced concern that when a dismissed teacher's misconduct was severe, allowing this teacher to work in a private school

will show that the mistake may "not be that serious."

COMMITTEE SUGGESTS EVALUATION SYSTEM AMENDMENT

In addition to this, the law proposes regarding more types of leave as reasonable, except for being absent for blood donation, academic and language training, sponsored training, and participation in trade union activities.

The amendment also proposes a teacher's evaluation system. "Regarding the method of evaluating the teachers' work, the law proposes to establish administrative regulation," said Vong, who also remarked that members of the committee worry about the punctuality of administrative regulation.

"The committee is concerned about the timetable regarding

the administrative regulation. It seems that it will not sync with this law amendment. Since 2004, when law No.8/2004 was amended proposing auxiliary regulations for the establishment of an evaluation system, until now, there is still not an evaluation system," Vong remarked.

The final proposal of the law amendment was a work compensation method for teachers to make up for missed working hours due to sick leave taken in and outside of Macau.

Lawmakers want the government to explain how teachers can compensate the missed working hours.

Regarding all abovementioned topics, government representatives will be invited to join another AL Third Standing Committee meeting to reply to the questions.

GAMING

NOV GGR DROPS 7.2% MONTH-ON-MONTH

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU'S gross gaming revenue (GGR) declined by 7.2% in November on a month-on-month basis, according to the latest figures released by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ).

In November, the city registered a GGR of MOP6.75 billion, approximately MOP522 million down from the MOP7.27 billion recorded in the previous month.

From a year-over-year perspective, the GGR last month represented a plunge of 70.5% from the same period last year.

November's figure represented the first month-on-month dip in GGR since August this year, when the city had begun to see signs of recovery in the gaming sector.

In August, the city registered a GGR of MOP1.33 billion, down by 94.5% compared to the same month last year. The sharp fall was attributed to the economic and tourism repercussions of Covid-19.

Across September and October, the monthly GGR

was on a growth trajectory which peaked in October, before the dip in November.

Despite the fall, JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) Ltd regarded the GGR figure in November as "not terrible but not good either." The statement was cited in a recent article published by GGRAsia yesterday.

November had not delivered the "much-anticipated sequential recovery in GGR versus October," JP Morgan analysts stated.

In addition, Sanford C. Bernstein Ltd also noted in a written statement that

the November GGR had retreated as inbound tourism from Mainland China to the city reached "bottlenecks" — which were associated with visa processing, Covid-19 test requirements, and weakness in VIP volumes.

The up-to-date GGR, the accumulated tally from January to November, amounted to MOP52.6 billion. It represents a sharp fall of 80.5%, year-on-year.

As of now, mainland China is the only source market that has come to a quarantine-free travel arrangement with Macau.

Ever since the reinstatement of the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) for all tourists from China on September 23, tourist arrivals to Macau have begun to pick up.

ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 4TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A STEP TOWARDS UNESCO LISTING

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macau Guia Circuit Promotion and Development Association (APDCGM) is holding an art exhibition as part of its promotional activities to highlight the Guia circuit, and its special and unique features.

The association, which aims to have Macau's Guia circuit listed as one of UNESCO's heritage sites in Macau, is celebrating its fourth anniversary.

One of the novelties revealed by the president of the APDCGM, José Estorninho, has to do with a new direction for the work of the association.

According to Estorninho, following a meeting held on Monday with José Tavares, the president of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), it was decided that the association would pursue a new chapter in the field of research into historical documentation on the Guia circuit.

As Estorninho explained, this idea came from Tavares and was accepted by the association, and seeks to strengthen the goal of being able to nominate the Guia circuit listing as a World He-



ritage Site with UNESCO.

As is well known, the decision to propose the circuit listing does not depend on the local government but China's Central government, since it must be China proposing and justifying to UNESCO the addition of the Guia circuit to the classification.

As for the celebration of the 4th anniversary of the association, the opening ceremony of the fourth edition of the art exhibition themed "Macau Guia Circuit to the World Heritage of UNESCO" was held yesterday evening at the IAM's Exhibition Gallery.

Artworks in the mediums of photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, engraving, calligraphy and installation with image projection, from a total of 28 local artists that collaborated

with the association, will be on display until December 13.

This year, the exhibition also includes the display of some motoring and racing world items, with a motorcycle and a car being among the attractions.

As in the previous years, concurrently with the exhibition, a talk themed "Guia circuit and its future" will be held to promote debate and the exchange of knowledge between experts and other interested parties. This year, due to the current Covid-19 pandemic situation, the talk will be held in a virtual format, Estorninho informed.

The exhibition is supported by the Casa de Portugal Association and will be on display at the IAM Exhibition Gallery, daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m..

MONTHLY GROSS REVENUE

	2020	2019	Variance
Jan	22,126	24,942	-11.3%
Feb	3,104	25,370	-87.8%
Mar	5,257	25,840	-79.7%
Apr	754	23,588	-96.8%
May	1,764	25,952	-93.2%
Jun	716	23,812	-97.0%
Jul	1,344	24,453	-94.5%
Aug	1,330	24,262	-94.5%
Sept	2,211	22,079	-90.0%
Oct	7,270	26,443	-72.5%
Nov	6,748	22,877	-70.5%

AL COMMITTEE SUGGESTS CANCELLATION OF 10 CIVIL SERVANTS' POSITIONS

JULIE ZHU

THE Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) proposes cancelling a total of ten civil servants' positions.

This includes six "ordinary career" and four "special career" positions, such as technicians who serve as clerical assistants for photographic design, mail clerks, public relations officials and several other types of work which are deemed to be involved in specific tasks.

Yesterday, the committee carried out the first detailed reading on the recently generally passed civil servants career regime law No. 14/2009.

"The committee wants to ask the government about the necessity of adding so many definitions to the special career, including the definition of the requirement for capability," Chan Chak Mo, chairman of the committee reported to the media after the meeting.

In total, five positions involved,

are commonly known as the "195 careers" because the relevant salary equates to 195 points on the workers' remuneration index.

However, considering that these jobs are no longer unique, the amendment proposed removing these occupations from the "195 career" framework.

Qualifying individuals with a secondary education degree, if they meet other conditions, can apply to join other civil service structures within eight years. Once these individuals pass the exam, they can join the "260 career" path.

"The government hopes to merge the position of technician and the position of senior technician. In the long term, if these two positions are merged, should the relevant individuals take the exams in accordance with this law?" Chan questioned, adding "Currently, technicians are required to have an associate degree, while a bachelor's degree is required for senior technicians."

The law proposes granting eli-

gible personnel eight years to get a secondary school degree. The lawmakers want to know how the government calculated and decided to set the standard at eight years.

Aside from the above-mentioned matters, the members of the committee also raised questions about the high costs of each civil service exam held by the government.

"Right now, it does not cost much for individuals to apply to participate in a civil servant exam. Many people, after applying for it, don't show up at the exam. We want to know how the government will handle such situations," said Chan. He asked "could there be any consequences for not showing up at the exam? Such as charging for a registration fee, taking a deposit or banning them from taking another exam within a certain period."

According to Chan, in some cases, the local government rents a school hall with a capacity for approximately 200 people, but



sometimes only a handful of people show up to take the exam.

"The administrative costs are too high," said Chan.

COMMITTEE PROPOSES TO PAY EXAM INVIGILATORS EQUALLY

The committee has proposed to pay every exam invigilator the same amount of money for the effort and time contributed to watching a public exam.

Under the government's current practice, the invigilators of civil service exams, who are themselves civil servants, are paid at different rates.

Invigilators with a higher remuneration point in their general salary are paid more than those with a lower remuneration point. The payment is calculated on an hourly basis.

"Now, in order to show fairness and transparency, every invigilator will be paid with an amount equivalent to 4.5% of 100 points of the civil servant remuneration index [per hour]," Chan explained. The proposal will only come into practice once the law comes into effect.

Each point is equivalent to 91 patacas.

LABOUR COURT

Judge dismisses claims of political persecution in Sautede's case

STAFF REPORTER

YESTERDAY, a judge at the Labour Court announced their verdict that the reason Eric Sautede, a former senior lecturer of the University of Saint Joseph (USJ), was unable to secure a job after being dismissed from the institution was not necessarily due to being labelled a "trouble maker."

The judge said that the dubbing of Sautede as a "political activist" and "trouble maker" by the establishment represented purely subjective opinions and was not proven by "objective evidence."

He added that Sautede failed to find a job "possibly because of a lack of vacancies for similar jobs at the time in Macau."

Sautede claimed that, after leaving the USJ, he applied successfully for jobs at two local universities, but was ultimately rejected by both institutions.

The French political scien-



Eric Sautede

tist was responsible for the Asian Politics programme at the Catholic university. His dismissal occurred in June 2014.

The decision was delivered by the judge at the Labour Court yesterday and was based on a hearing held on November 18.

The judge also stated that the fact that Sautede was one of the "contributing editors" at the Macau Daily Times did

not necessarily lead to his dismissal being widely circulated on media platforms as the job nature of a "contributing editor" is mostly about "writing articles or monitoring projects," but not about "editing."

It is alleged that Sautede's dismissal from the USJ occurred due to his expression of his political values, which was against the university's self-claimed principles of not becoming involved in deba-

tes regarding politics.

Through judicial procedures, Sautede hopes to claim MOP1.3 million in compensation from the USJ for unfairly dismissing him — MOP800,000 of which will be for material damages, and the remainder for damage to his reputation.

The university said that the decision not to renew Sautede's contract was an internal decision, and that there were several other reasons for his firing.

In an earlier court hearing, Peter Stilwell, the former rector of the USJ, noted that Sautede was dismissed not due to his "professional performance," but due to his political remarks not aligning with USJ's principles.

Sautede's dismissal has ignited many discussions in Macau as some claimed that Sautede's firing contravenes the freedom of speech granted to Macau citizens, as stipulated in the Macau Basic Law.

CITY RECORDS 36 HIV CASES TO DATE

STAFF REPORTER

A total of 36 HIV cases were recorded in Macau from January to October this year, according to the latest figures provided by the Health Bureau (SSM).

Among all the confirmed cases, 20 were local male residents aged from 20 to 39.

The majority, 15 local residents, contracted the virus as a result of same-sex sexual encounters, three residents contracted it as the result of heterosexual sexual encounters, and the method of transmission for two cases has yet to be confirmed.

18 local residents have undergone medical follow-up appointments at Hospital Centre S. Januario, while another two have passed away.

Since 2015, the number of local residents who have contracted HIV as a result of same-sex relations has been growing.

Given this increase, in a bid to raise public awareness and lower the infection rate in the community, the SSM has increased advertising which encourages individuals to get regularly tested for the sexually transmitted infection on dating websites and apps.

Other measures to protect the community include online outreach to high-risk groups and supporting the hosting of promotional events at nightclubs which are centered around preventive measures which should be taken.

The government revealed the data on November 30, a day before the World AIDS Day - which was established in 1988 by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and has been observed globally on December 1.

POLICY ADDRESS

Angela Leong wants to lower criminal responsibility age to 12 years

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER Angela Leong has proposed that the age of criminal responsibility in Macau be lowered to 12 years old. The proposal was made during the plenary session at the Legislative Assembly on Monday, in which the Policy Address for 2021 for the sectorial area of Security was debated.

According to the lawmaker, "There is a generalization of juvenile criminality in Macau" that must be stopped through heavy penalties for the crimes perpetrated by youngsters, and reducing the age of accountability.

A new draft amendment to mainland's Criminal Law, which is based on the same proposal, stipulates that any person aged above 12 and below 14 who commits the crime of intentional homicide or intentional injury causing someone's death shall be subject to criminal responsibility upon approval by the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

In practical terms, the amendment lowers the current criminal liability age of 14 to 12 in special situations involving violent crimes.

At the plenary, Leong proposed to the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, an adoption of a similar method to lower the criminal responsibility age to 12 years old as a way to help families to control youngsters' behavior. She asked, "Will



RENATO MARQUES

the government reduce the age [of criminal responsibility] in Macau also? Our Penal Code is very outdated on this matter and the penalties for the crimes committed by the youngsters are very light and are usually just to visit some rehabilitation center, which does not produce enough of a deterrent effect."

Replying to the proposal, Secretary Wong refuted the Leong's claims, saying, "The reduction of the criminal responsibility age to 12 years old is a policy from the

Central Government that is applied in the mainland. This is a policy not under our scope. Besides, we don't think there is such a problem here [in Macau]." He went on to note that there is no record of such crimes committed in Macau by young teenagers.

"We don't think we need to reduce our criminal responsibility age. Education is far more important. Our goal is to heal the people [that have committed a crime] for society," Wong reaffirmed, adding

that taking care of the younger generation "is a work of all society and all society must help."

The Secretary also noted that Macau has already a mechanism under which, when unlawful activities occur involving young people (between 12 and 16 years old), there is a follow up process with the individual's family to understand the problem and prevent those youngsters from continuing to commit such acts. Wong promised to continue following the policy.

72,000 BOTTLES RECYCLED BY REVERSE VENDING MACHINE

The Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) has been able to recycle over 72,000 plastic bottles through its reverse vending machines, according to a statement released yesterday. As of today, there are 42 reverse vending machines distributed all over Macau at 32 different locations. "The DSPA launched the reverse vending machine program in October of last year. The percentage of usage has been gradually increasing," the statement reads.

SULU SOU ASKS ABOUT POLICE INVASION OF PRIVACY

Lawmaker Sulu Sou has written an interpellation to the government asking about the invasion of privacy by police officers. Previously, the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) received a report accusing one police officer of checking individuals' border crossing records. Sou wants the government to explain the loopholes and problems in police authority's operations. He hopes that the police force can establish a monitoring mechanism to make sure that police powers will not "constantly expand."

Former leprosarium to house new ARTM project

LYNZY VALLES

TWO old houses from the former Ká Hó leprosarium will now house a gallery and coffee shop as part of a project conducted by the Association of Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers of Macau (ARTM), which is set to open to the public on December 19.

The main goal of the project is to better integrate those undergoing rehabilitation into society, teaching them a series of F&B and art skills.

The president of ARTM, Augusto Nogueira, told the Times yesterday that the stigma towards former drug users will remain. However, the association is doing its part to assist these people to live a new

chapter of their lives once they are out of the rehabilitation program.

The program lasts for a year but it will not mean that those who are undergoing it could leave the premises after a year.

Providing further explanation of the association's goal with the project, Nogueira said, "[It is a goal that] when they go out of the treatment, they can have better skills to be easier for them to find employment. We're going to cooperate with the local industry to help them."

The association is expected to offer vocational training and internship opportunities for former drug addicts to operate the coffee shop and art spaces. "We hope to find them



jobs but mainly, the project is for the training of the people to help them integrate better into the society, as well as make the place a tourist spot where

people can come and enjoy an afternoon," he added.

According to Nogueira, the project was first conceived in 2018.



Back in 2016, the government announced plans to convert the former leper colony in Ká Hó village in Coloane into a tourist attraction.

The plan to make the village a tourist attraction was noted by the former Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam.

MACAU HELPS ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN CONGJIANG WITH 73 PROJECTS, REACHING OVER RMB115 MILLION

GRACE YU

MACAU has provided poverty-relief measures to Congjiang County since 2018. This has helped the county improve educational facilities, achieve a better standard of living, sell agricultural products and increase the quality of training given to citizens.

A rural area in southwest China's Guizhou Province has undergone profound changes in recent years, thanks to assistance from Macau. Since donations began, in line with assisting facilities and agreements, over RMB115 million has been collected in total.

Congjiang, a poverty-stricken area of Guizhou Province, is administered by Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture and is one of the least developed areas in Southwest China's Guizhou Province, suffering deeply from poverty.

In 2018, the Macau government and Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Macau identified Congjiang as their target for poverty relief activities. A total of 27 assistance agreements have been signed since 2018, covering education, industrial development, employment, medical services, travel and talent cultivation. This initiative has been carried out on two levels – the government level and civil society.

According to the summary report from the Guizhou poverty alleviation and development office, a series of relief measures have been carried out in six fields:

EDUCATION. Macau has invested a total of around RMB84 million into education funds in Congjiang. This has supported the construction of 13 primary schools and kindergartens, benefiting 3,330 students in 6 towns.

The new Dadai Elementary School campus, which sits in a remote village inhabited by the Miao ethnic group, is one of the key projects. With an investment of some RMB30 million from the SAR government, the school is almost entirely equipped with complete teaching facilities.

In addition, Macau has assigned experts in early childhood education and excellent English teachers to Congjiang County, and they have trained 400 teachers there. Some 1,186 local teachers have been sent to Macau for exchange in a bid to improve their teaching capabilities. A RMB500,000 award was set up for outstanding rural teachers in Congjiang County. Selected Macau schools became

sister schools with six primary and middle schools in the county, resulting in a total of donation of RMB1.086 million.

Not only have schools provided assistance, the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Macau has also actively encouraged their staff to donate. This effort led to a total of RMB4.5 million being collected to support 9,000 primary and middle school students from poor families in Congjiang. The Macau Foundation also provided scholarships worth RMB1.66 million to six Congjiang students. Tak Chun Charity Association set up a student fund in the county, which is expected to benefit more than 900 students.

HEALTH CARE. Macau provided a total of RMB8.9 million to build 24 clinics in Congjiang. The Macau Foundation and the Song Qing Ling Foundation have donated 7 ambulances, worth RMB1.05 million, to health centers in various towns. Various health care services and facilities were created to provide dedicated services to cataract patients, students, the disabled, and people with hearing difficulties.

LIVING ENVIRONMENT. Macau societies jointly provided RMB6.64 million and helped 685 households in 9 villages in Congjiang renovate old houses to ensure living quality and housing safety. In addition, Macau's enterprises and associations helped with the installation of environment-related facilities, such as streetlights, safety fences and rubbish bins.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. With support from the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Corporation and Guiyang Customs, Congjiang County obtained a grain export quota and exported 112 tons of rice to Macau.

A donation of RMB2.93 million was made by the Traditional Chinese Medicine Science and Technology Industrial Park as a collaborative effort between Guangdong and Macau, with an aim of improving Yao medicine, which originated in Congjiang. "The donation will help with the construction of the Yao medicine processing plant, the establishment of the Yao medicine planting demonstration base, the development of research and talent training," a report states.

In addition, the MSAR actively provided exhibition plat-

forms for Congjiang. The county has been invited to participate in Macau International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF) and Guangdong and Macau Branded Products Fair (GMBPF) for three consecutive years. With sale channels expanded, orders cumulatively reached RMB2.62 million. Since 2020, Macau has purchased more than 13,000 gift boxes with Congjiang products, reaching a total sales figure of RMB2.52 million.

CULTURE AND TOURISM. China Travel Service (Macau) Ltd. invested MOP1.5 million in 10 bus-body advertisements for Congjiang. The company also provides travel-related training for practitioners in the county.

Moreover, Congjiang was invited to participate in the 30th Macau Arts Festival, the 8th World Tourism Economic Forum, the 7th Macau International Tourism (Industry) Expo, and the 2019 CNY float parade, which enhanced Macau people's knowledge and understanding of the area.

EMPLOYMENT. The China-funded (Macau) Employment Agency Association has provided more than 600 Guizhou citizens with jobs in Macau in the past three years. This year, a special matching service was held between Macau and Congjiang, and 10 people from the county were hired to work in Macau.

People from all walks of life from Macau have actively provided assistance to help Congjiang shake off its poverty – as well as to boost Guizhou's economic growth. This assistance has often taken the form of donations.

Guizhou officials said that with the support of Macau, the people living below poverty line in Congjiang fell from 14.77% to 3.6% of its population.

Macau is an important platform for exchange and cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. Guizhou is one of the first groups of national inland areas set as an "economic pilot zone" and is an important land-sea connection for the Belt and Road Initiative in western China.

Guizhou and Macau could possibly develop a closer relationship through the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, the Pan-Pearl River Delta region's economic and trade cooperation, and the construction of New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor.



Central Government's Liaison Office in Macau listens to Wang Changfu, Chief of Congjiang Health Department, explaining on the health facility



Delegations from the Foreign Affairs Ministry's Office in Macau and the Macau SAR Government at the Gantuan Primary School donation ceremony



35 Congjiang teenagers performing in 2019 Macau Chinese New Year Floral Floats



The team of Bank of China, Macau Branch with students from Gantuan Primary School, which they sponsored



Dadai Primary School, sponsored by Macau

HONG KONG

Lam urges people to stay home as cases rise

HONG Kong leader Carrie Lam yesterday urged residents to stay home as the city grapples with a resurgence of the coronavirus, which has infected more than 600 people in the last week.

Lam asked citizens to "refrain from social gatherings" and said that people, in particular the elderly, should remain at home.

"The latest wave of the epidemic is rather severe. Every one of us should do our best and exercise a high level of discipline to fight the pandemic," she said at a regular news conference. "The coming two weeks is a crucial period."

The city reported 82 new infections yesterday, 23 of which were unlinked to known clusters. Hong Kong has reported 6,397 infections since the pandemic began, with 109 deaths.

Many of the new infections in Hong Kong have been tied to dance studios, and outbreaks have also been found among



AP PHOTO

staff and guests at several restaurants. The new uptick in infections follows a more than three month period during which Hong Kong reported just a handful of cases each day.

Authorities have responded by tightening social distancing restrictions, including closing entertainment venues such as karaoke bars and game centers and limiting public gatherings to two people. A hotline has been set up to allow the public to report large gatherings on yachts.

The growing number of

cases has further delayed a "travel bubble" between Singapore and Hong Kong that was initially slated for November. The bubble would have allowed visitors to travel between the cities without needing to quarantine if they tested negative for the coronavirus.

Statements by the Hong Kong government and Singapore's civil aviation authority said both cities have decided to postpone the bubble beyond December, given the high number of local cases in Hong Kong. **MDT/AP**

ZHOU XIAOXUAN

China #MeToo case heads to court after two-year delay

HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

ZHOU Xiaoxuan's says her prestigious internship with Chinese state TV soured after a popular host forcibly kissed her.

Outraged, Zhou took the previously taboo step of filing a lawsuit in 2018, joining the global #MeToo movement against sexual harassment. But the ruling Communist Party dislikes such grassroots activism and offers few ways to pursue complaints. Zhou waited two years for a hearing, while the host fought back by filing a defamation lawsuit.

Today, Zhou's case goes to trial in Beijing, highlighting the growing willingness of Chinese women to speak up about sexual harassment despite official resistance and censorship that eroded #MeToo's impact.

"There are very few sexual harassment cases who have a court hearing," Zhou said. "We hope each individual case can be a type of push forward."

The ruling party, whose late leader Mao Zedong famously declared, "women hold up half the sky," has improved their legal and social status but is far from delivering on its promise of equality. In some areas, conditions are deteriorating: Women have disappeared from leadership roles over the past three decades.

#MeToo's global spread helped to encourage activism in China. But that came at a time when President Xi Jinping's government is tightening controls and stamping out dissent.



AP PHOTO

Screenwriter Zhou Xiaoxuan

Women who complain face censorship and official resistance. It was only in 2019 that sexual harassment was added to court regulations as grounds for a suit.

Zhou accuses CCTV host Zhu Jun of groping and forcibly kissing her in 2014. She is asking for a public apology as well as 50,000 yuan (\$7,600) in damages.

In a series of social media posts, she said she was alone with Zhu in his dressing room for a few minutes. She said he tried to reach into her dress and drag her onto himself, and then forcibly kissed her. The posts were shared widely and reposted by many on the Chinese internet and prompted a great amount of media coverage.

When Zhou filed suit in 2018, such complaints were treated as labor disputes or under other laws that didn't relate directly to sexual harassment. Zhou's was termed a "personality rights dispute."

Her lawyers have asked for it to be heard under the new legal provision that explicitly cites sexual harassment.

Zhu, the CCTV host, has denied the allegations. A call to his phone wasn't answered. A person who answered at the number in public records for the law firm that represents him said the firm had moved and had no new number.

Zhu has a countersuit pending against Zhou asking for damages of 650,000 yuan (\$100,000).

Zhou expressed hope her case will show "there are problems in the legal process."

The movement took off in 2018 in China when a college student in Beijing publicly accused her professor of sexual harassment.

In a rare victory, a woman who used the alias Liu Li won a sexual harassment suit against her former boss in July. The boss, a social worker in the western city of Chengdu, was required to issue a public apology but no damages were awarded.

Activists want more legislative changes and legal tools.

"No matter what the result is, we feel that doing this has meaning," Zhou said. **AP**

NEW ZEALAND JOINS AUSTRALIA IN DENOUNCING CHINA'S TWEET

NEW Zealand has joined Australia in denouncing a graphic tweet posted by a Chinese official that shows a fake image of a grinning Australian soldier holding a bloodied knife to a child's throat.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said yesterday that New Zealand has voiced its concerns directly with Chinese authorities.

"This is an image that wasn't factual. It wasn't correct. And so in keeping with our principled position where images like that are used, we will raise those concerns and we'll do it directly," Ardern told reporters.

China has not backed down from the tweet and said there will be no apology.



AP PHOTO

Jacinda Ardern

"The accusations made are simply to serve two purposes. One is to deflect public attention from the horrible atrocities by certain Australian soldiers. The other is to blame China for the worsening of bilateral ties. There may be another attempt to stoke domestic nationalism," the Chinese Embassy said

in a statement yesterday.

The rift between the two nations has grown since the Australian government called for an independent inquiry into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic. China has since imposed tariffs and other restrictions on a number of Australian exports. **MDT/AP**

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PANDEMIC

European regulator to decide Dec. 29 on first virus vaccine

FRANK JORDANS,
MARIA CHENG & SAMUEL
PETREQUIN, BERLIN

THE European Medicines Agency will convene a meeting on Dec. 29 to decide if there is enough data about the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech for it to be approved, the regulator said yesterday.

The agency also said it could decide as early as Jan. 12 whether to approve a rival COVID-19 vaccine developed by Moderna Inc.

The German pharmaceutical company BioNTech and its U.S. partner Pfizer said earlier that they had asked the regulator for speeded-up, conditional approval of their coronavirus vaccine, concluding the rolling review process they initiated with the agency on Oct. 6.

The move comes a day after rival Moderna said it was asking U.S. and European regulators to allow the use of its COVID-19 vaccine.

BioNTech said if the vaccine, currently named BNT162b2, is approved, its use in Europe could begin before the end of 2020. The companies said last month that clinical trials with 44,000 participants showed the vaccine is 95% effective. The efficacy rate in particularly vulnerable older age groups was more than 94%, they said.

In a statement, the EU medicines regulator said it had already begun a "rolling review" of the Moderna vaccine based on laboratory data previously submitted by the company and would now assess data on how well that vaccine triggers an immune response and whether it is safe enough for broad use across Europe.

The agency said that "if the data are robust enough to conclude on quality, safety and effectiveness," then it could approve the Moderna vaccine at a meeting scheduled for Jan. 12.

BioNTech and Pfizer have already submitted a request for emergen-

AP PHOTO



cy approval with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.K. regulator MHRA, as well as rolling submissions in other countries including in Australia, Canada and Japan.

"We have known since the beginning of this journey that patients are waiting, and we stand ready to ship COVID-19 vaccine doses as soon as potential authorizations will allow us," Pfizer's chief executive Albert Bourla said in a statement.

BioNTech said it stands ready to ship stockpiles of vaccines where they are needed when the Amsterdam-based agency or the FDA approve the vaccine.

"Depending on how the authorities decide we can start delivering within a few hours," said BioNTech's chief operating officer, Sierk Poetting.

The European Union's top official said around 2 billion doses of potential COVID-19 vaccines have been secured for the bloc's 27 nations, with the first deliveries likely to start be-

fore the end of the year.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said EU nations have started working on their vaccination plans and on the logistics for delivering tens of millions of doses across the bloc, a major challenge for the EU.

"If everything goes well, the first European citizens might already be vaccinated before the end of December," Von der Leyen said. "And it will be a huge step forward toward our normal life. In other words, I just wanted to say there is a light at the end of the tunnel."

The Commission, the EU's executive arm, has secured deals allowing to purchase doses with Moderna, AstraZeneca, Sanofi-GSK, Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, BioNTech-Pfizer and CureVac.

Von der Leyen however urged EU citizens to remain "disciplined till we have reached finally a vaccination that is appropriate to eradicate this virus."

Germany's science minister said yesterday that

the same safety standards are being applied in the approval process for coronavirus vaccines as for other drugs and that this would be key to gaining the widest possible public acceptance for COVID immunization.

Anja Karliczek cited the fact that European regulators plan to hold a public hearing on Dec. 11 about the approval request by BioNTech and Pfizer.

Speaking to reporters in Berlin, Karliczek stressed that the vaccine will be voluntary and that authorities will work hard to inform the public about possible side effects that a small percentage of recipients might experience after immunization, such as headaches, exhaustion and fever.

Marylyn Addo, a doctor at Hamburg's UKE hospital who is involved in the trials for a rival vaccine, said the rapid development of a vaccine was the result of enormous efforts by scientists, early funding and experience from previous vaccines. AP

this day in history



1954 US SENATE CONDEMNS MCCARTHY

The United States Senate has censured Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy for conduct unbecoming to a senator.

The vote was 67 to 22, with all the Democrats and about half the Republicans voting against him.

He has been condemned on two counts:

- Contempt and abuse of a Senate committee that looked into his financial affairs in 1952
- Insulting members of this committee on national television thereby bringing the Senate "into dishonour and disrepute" and obstructing the constitutional process.

In April this year, McCarthy attacked Secretary of the Army Robert T Stevens and General Ralph Zwicker for refusing to help him in an investigation of espionage at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

After years of witnessing his crusade against alleged Communists in government, the entertainment industry, and education, his attack on the army was the final straw and a committee was set up to look into the senator's behaviour and its impact.

The Watkins Committee, chaired by Republican Senator Arthur Watkins, deliberated from 31 August until 13 September.

Its final report said the senator from Wisconsin should be censured for his conduct in Senate and treatment of General Ralph Zwicker.

Sen McCarthy called the Watkins Committee "the unwitting handmaiden of the Communist Party" and told American TV audiences the whole proceeding was a "lynch party".

His words led to this latest motion to condemn him.

In a news conference soon afterwards, the senator told journalists he was relieved "the circus" was over so that he could return to his job of rooting out "Communism, crime and corruption".

But the Democrats, who won this year's elections, take over in January and he will no longer be allowed to chair the Senate Permanent Investigating Subcommittee charged with looking into Communist influence on government.

Mr McCarthy became a senator in 1946 but it was not until 1950 that he came to prominence. In February of that year he made a speech at Wheeling, West Virginia where he held up a piece of paper claiming it to be a list of 205 communists working in the State Department.

Although a Senate committee under Millard Tydings exonerated the State Department, Mr McCarthy continued to make accusations on radio and television but was never able to produce any solid evidence.

But in March 1951 the conviction of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for passing atomic secrets to the Russians helped boost popular support for McCarthy's campaign.

After the Republicans took control of Congress in 1953, he began his anti-Communist crusade in earnest and ruined the careers of many.

Courtesy BBC News



IN CONTEXT

This was the beginning of the end of Senator Joseph McCarthy's reign of terror in the United States in which he exploited the public's fear of Communism. His unsubstantiated and sensationalist attacks gave rise to the term "McCarthyism".

After the 1954 censure his influence rapidly declined, as did his health. He died on 1 September 1957 from cirrhosis of the liver induced by years of heavy drinking. Although McCarthy and his exaggerated and embarrassing accusations were silenced, there was still a general paranoia about "reds under the bed".

Throughout the 1950s the congressional House Un-American Activities Committee made its own investigations and accusations that ruined the careers of many prominent personalities in the movie industry during the 1950s. This was finally abolished in 1975.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You're in just that type of mood right now, so if you don't absolutely have to be around an authority figure you're already at odds with, do something else.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Look down at your plate before you go back to the buffet for a second helping. Do you still have perfectly good food in front of you? Well, don't waste it.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
As the song says, you're in the mood for love simply because they're near you. You won't settle for just any old candlelit-dinner-type thing, though. You're in the mood for a whole lot more. You want it all!

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Whether it's an authority figure, partner, good friend, or anyone else who throws a monkey wrench in your day, you'll be gracious, smile, and do whatever they ask with no complaints.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Today would be a good day to be by yourself if you can swing it. People could be a bit testy and tempers could flare. No sense getting into an unnecessary argument that everyone will just regret tomorrow, right?

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Organization is the key to your success. Making sure everything is in its place before you start will save endless time in the long run. Proving this to yourself now is money in the bank for next time.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Don't even try to hide your feelings from the ones you love and who love you. The mood you're in is the one that inspired that ancient phrase about wearing your heart on your sleeve.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
You could still be a little irritated about past events, but it really is time just to let go and forget it. Do yourself and anyone you live with a favor and move on. Holding grudges only hurts you.

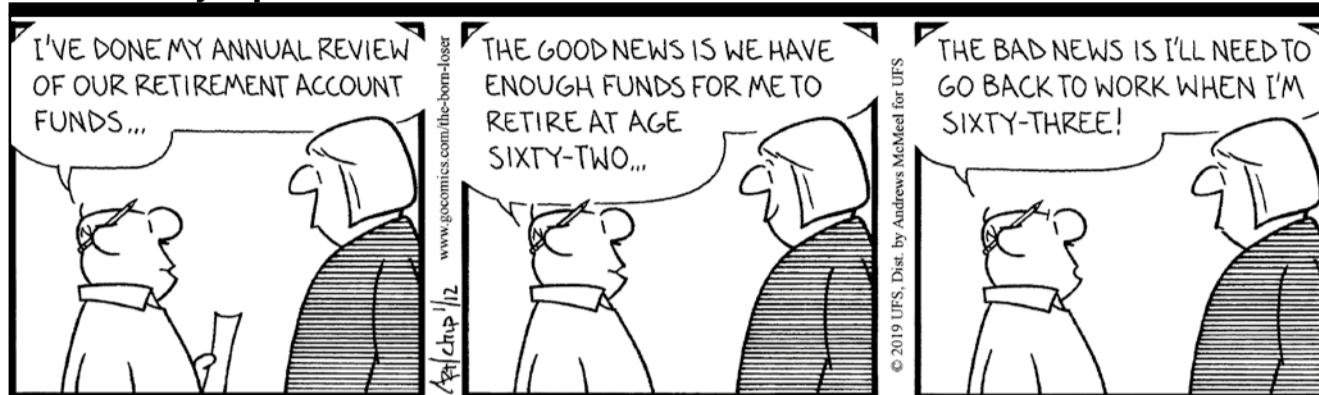
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
In your opinion, life is meant to be a series of extended vacations, which certainly explains why you move so much, so easily, and with such abandon. It's not that you're irresponsible, exactly.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You might feel like keeping a low profile these days, and it's no wonder. The stars are heating things up. Don't be too surprised if something you did in the past catches up with you.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
It's not exactly that you're aiming to aggravate everyone you cross paths with, especially the ones you love. You just can't hold back your feelings or, more importantly, your ideas.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
What happened? You got off to such a great start, but you're suddenly feeling tired. Don't be surprised if your huge lead slows back down to a walking pace.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

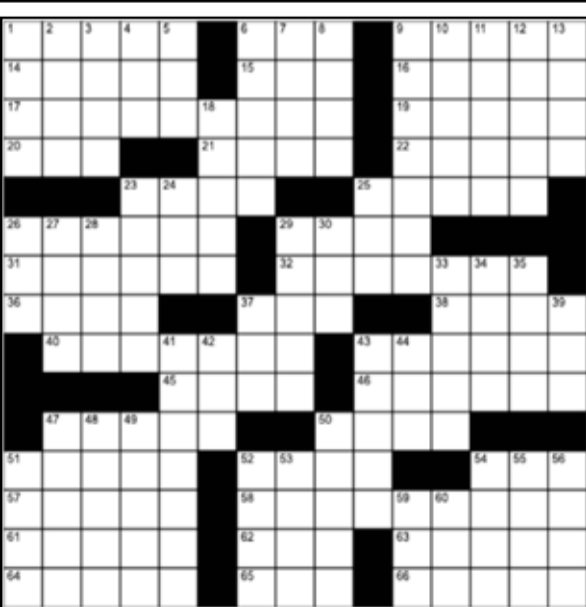
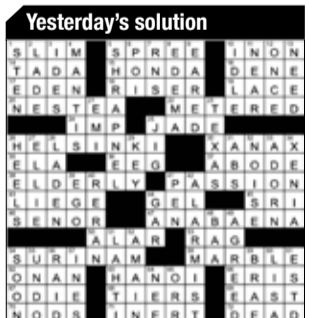
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-4	3	cloudy
Harbin	-17	-9	clear
Tianjin	-1	3	overcast
Urumqi	-15	-9	clear
Xi'an	1	5	overcast
Lhasa	-3	12	cloudy
Chengdu	7	9	drizzle
Chongqing	9	11	drizzle
Kunming	6	19	cloudy
Nanjing	6	9	overcast
Shanghai	10	13	cloudy
Wuhan	4	8	overcast
Hangzhou	9	13	overcast
Taipei	18	21	drizzle
Guangzhou	14	23	clear
Hong Kong	17	22	clear
WORLD			
Moscow	-3	-1	sleet
Frankfurt	0	2	overcast
Paris	5	7	drizzle
London	1	7	drizzle
New York	6	9	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Gather; 6- Nope; 9- Bitterly pungent; 14- Hollowed pumpkin; 15- Euro forerunner; 16- Glisten; 17- Organising; 19- Decaf brand; 20- Road with a no.; 21- Author James; 22- Ruhr city; 23- Nope; 25- Let go; 26- King Minos, for one; 29- Constituent; 31- Outcome; 32- Peter or Paul, but not Mary; 36- "A Jug of Wine..." poet; 37- TV attachment; 38- Harden by heat; 40- Warm weather garment; 43- Hoarded; 45- Dosage abbr.; 46- Alberta's home; 47- Savory jelly; 50- Network of nerves; 51- Register as a participant; 52- Poker declaration; 54- Lyricist Gershwin; 57- Shed ___; 58- Ninth month of the year; 61- Bobby of the Black Panthers; 62- Baton Rouge sch.; 63- Paris divider; 64- Expressed disapproval; 65- Mentalist's claim; 66- Clueless;

DOWN: 1- Cracked; 2- Trading center; 3- 43,560 square feet; 4- Jamaican popular music; 5- Solomon, to David; 6- Sound of a horse; 7- Skin eruption; 8- Enormous; 9- Maintains; 10- Pursue; 11- Washer cycle; 12- Signed; 13- Faculty head; 18- Haggard; 23- Complete reversal; 24- Actor Holbrook; 25- To and ___; 26- ___Magnon man; 27- Radiation measures; 28- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 29- Covenants; 30- Spring mo.; 33- Steak order; 34- Pasternak heroine; 35- Made do, with "out"; 37- Big shot; 39- Writer LeShan; 41- Agitated; 42- Home of the Trojans; 43- Hound's trail; 44- Rat-a-___; 47- Pays to play; 48- Meat; 49- Norman Vincent ___; 50- Shred; 51- Bridge seat; 52- Any of the Antilles; 53- Imbrogio; 54- Nile wader; 55- Lacoste of tennis; 56- Region; 59- Conductor ___-Pekka Salonen; 60- Encountered;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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

PROPERTY LIST

- [Macau] One Oasis modern studio 2 1 1
691 ft² \$6,357,000 (ref: n/a)
- [Macau] Lakeview Tower 3 2 1
1,344 ft² \$11,000,000 (ref: 19126001)
- [Taipa] One Central balcony 3 4 1
2,332 ft² \$29,800/mth (ref: 20101001)
- [Taipa] Private house 2 3 3 3
4,266 ft² \$45,000/mth (ref: 190550065T)

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

HOTTEST DEBATE ON WALL STREET IS BUYING BITCOIN OVER GOLD

BITCOIN has shot to a record just as billions of institutional dollars have fled gold.

Whether that's a simple coincidence or the start of a rotation that would have a profound impact on crypto and the precious-metals market is impossible to know for sure. But the debate is now heating up on whether the world's largest digital currency can one day rival bullion as an inflation hedge and portfolio diversifier.

Bitcoin's tumble last week, the biggest since March, after a 150% run-up this year underscores the famous volatility of the asset class that has kept mainstream investors at bay. Yet if they start moving just a small portion of their gold holdings into the \$350 billion Bitcoin industry, it would be a game-changer for diversification strategies on Wall Street.

"Gold was really the safe asset of the past world and baby boomer generation," said Jean-Marc Bonnefous, a former commodities hedge fund manager turned crypto investor. "Now it's being replaced by automated assets like Bitcoin."

The digital currency is a trading



ground for a motley crew of retail players, speculative pros and exotic quants, while traditional investors have hitherto stayed on the sidelines. That seems to be changing with Guggenheim Partners LLC just the latest manager to join the bandwagon, alongside Paul Tudor Jones and Stan Druckenmiller.

Funds like family offices are selling their gold exchange-traded

funds holdings for the digital currency, according to analysts at JP-Morgan Chase & Co. Bullion-backed funds have dropped 93 tons of metal, worth some \$5 billion since Nov. 6. Grayscale Bitcoin Trust, the preferred vehicle for institutional investors, has doubled in dollar terms since the start of August.

Bitcoin's market capitalization is currently only 3.1% the size of

gold, according to James Butterfill, investment strategist at CoinShares, which sells investments in digital currencies. If that increased to 5%, it would imply a price of \$31,300 compared to around \$19,500 currently, he estimated.

"Bitcoin is establishing itself as a credible store of value," Butterfill said. "This is particularly appealing during this time of unprecedented loose monetary

policy. For these reasons investors are naturally comparing it to gold."

Still, there are good reasons for bullion's poor performance recently, like progress toward a coronavirus vaccine that has reduced demand for havens. With market-derived inflation expectations relatively stable, one conclusion might be that gold is simply moving along with animal spirits, while Bitcoin has been in a speculative fervor.

The latter has also found a fan at the world's largest asset manager - evidence of its growing appeal on Wall Street. The currency is "here to stay" backed by demand among millennials and its strength as a medium of exchange.

Trading Bitcoin "is so much more functional than passing a bar of gold around," analysts say.

One of the differences between the two is that all transactions can be viewed on the blockchain, while a large part of gold trade takes place on London's over-the-counter market, where less data is available.

"The transparency in Bitcoin is helping drive a lot of interest," said Lyle Pratt, an independent investor who owns Bitcoin. "Gold is kind of like a blackbox, you have to trust the custodians to tell you about any flows in the market."

MDT/BLOOMBERG

AD



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

BASKETBALL

Bogut retires, ending his bid for an Olympic medal

ANDREW Bogut is retiring after 15 years in professional basketball, with injuries, age and the COVID-19 pandemic ending his bid for one last shot at an Olympic medal.

The 36-year-old Australian had initially targeted a retirement date after the 2020 Olympics, but the postponement of the Tokyo Games to next year was a stretch too far. Yesterday he made it official.

Bogut was the No. 1 draft pick by Milwaukee in 2005 and won an NBA championship with the Golden State Warriors in 2015.

"I just can't physically and mentally get to 2021 with the way the body has been," Bogut said on his "Rogue Boggles" podcast. "I mean, I could, on a lot of painkillers and with a lot of physical and mental anguish, but it's just not worth it at this point in my career."

Bogut played for Sydney in the National Basketball League the past two seasons, winning the NBL's MVP in 2019 and leading the Kings to a grand final last season, but was hampered by back and ankle injuries.

"The last two years have been a real challenge for me just to get out of bed in the morning some days, let alone go to a training session or a game," Bogut said. "The body, probably from 2018 onwards, was han-

AP PHOTO



Andrew Bogut of Australia

ging by a thread.

"It was real challenging and from the 2019-20 season that thread was completely frayed

and in little pieces. It was real frustrating for me."

Bogut played a key role in Australia's fourth-place finish at last

year's World Cup in China and has been on the Australian team's roster since the 2004 Athens Olympics.

The Melbourne-born Bogut was named The Associated Press college basketball player of the year in 2005 while playing for Utah, just before becoming the first Australian to be chosen No. 1 in the NBA draft.

"He is a revered and iconic Boomer and whilst he would have loved to joined the team in Tokyo his decision to step away is selfless in many ways," Australian Boomers head coach Brian Goorjian said. "His body has taken a toll, he knows it and it validates his team-first mentality as a legendary Boomer!"

The Australian Olympic Committee paid tribute to Bogut, who played at Athens in 2004, Beijing in '08 and helped the Boomers to fourth place at the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro. Bogut missed the London Olympics in 2012 because of injury.

"Andrew was so much more than a big man, he had an aura about him," said John Coates, who leads the AOC and is a vice-president of the International Olympic Committee. "He was an inspirational figure for the Australian Olympic team and a leader on and off the court."

"This is not just a loss for basketball in Australia but a loss for the Australian Olympic movement. I know it must have been a difficult decision for him, but the great athletes know when it's time." AP

Pré-qualificação do Concurso Público n.º MTRM2/CR-2020/07/003

"Fornecimento de Uniformes do Pessoal à MTR (Macau)"

Encontra-se aberto o processo de pré-qualificação do concurso público para o fornecimento de uniformes do pessoal à MTR (Macau). O presente concurso inclui, mas não se limita à aquisição dos materiais utilizados na confecção dos uniformes, à manufactura e ao fornecimento dos mesmos e dos respectivos acessórios, à entrega dos uniformes e aos serviços de pós-venda e de adequação.

Os interessados podem exigir, através do envio de e-mail para procurement@mtr.com.mo, até dia 23 de Dezembro de 2020, a documentação da pré-qualificação do referido concurso, e devem enviar os documentos, devidamente preenchidos, para o mesmo endereço de e-mail, antes das 18h00 do dia 23 de Dezembro de 2020.

Para mais informações do concurso, consulte www.mtr.com.mo.

02 de Dezembro de 2020

MTR Operações Ferroviárias (Macau) Sociedade Unipessoal Lda.



CENTRO MÉDICO PEDDER

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OPINION

World Views

Tae Kim, MDT/Bloomberg



ZOOM WON BIG AGAIN. WHY AREN'T INVESTORS IMPRESSED?

Zoom Video Communications Inc. has had a monster year in almost every way. The video-conferencing upstart got a huge boost in the spring amid Covid-induced lockdowns, and it's still a must-have for many as the resurgent pandemic reinforces stay-at-home habits and remote-work trends. Sales and profit have consistently beat estimates every quarter, and the company keeps raising its guidance.

The latest numbers continued the trend. Zoom yesterday [Macau time] reported fiscal third-quarter financial results that beat the Wall Street consensus, including a more than fourfold rise in sales from a year earlier, and it raised forecasts again. But Zoom shares fell about 5% in after-hours trading following the earnings release, a different reaction than in prior quarters.

It's understandable. The stock is already up an astounding 600% this year, including 47% alone since its prior earnings release. The higher Zoom's valuation rises, the more that's needed for even diehard bulls to add to their positions. And the positive developments on Covid-19 vaccines give less of a reason to bet on Zoom benefiting from a longer outbreak. All that said, Zoom's long-term prospects remain strong and may prove durable beyond the pandemic.

Zoom, the leader in its field, has become synonymous with video-conferencing the way Kleenex is another word for tissue, and the company continues to win market share for its ease of use and reliability. Last week, social media was filled with grateful Zoom Thank-giving posts, many expressing gratitude toward the company for lifting its 40-minute meeting limit during the holiday. It is likely people will continue to use Zoom to stay in touch with friends and family even when the Covid-19 crisis subsides.

In terms of business clientele, the work-from-home trend could be a lasting structural shift. Last week, PayPal Holdings Inc. CEO Dan Schulman told Bloomberg Television the pandemic has spawned changes that could permanently favor remote work. The executive expects the "vast majority" of his workforce to work from home at least a couple of days a week. It also may take longer than expected for the vaccines to roll out. Schulman said it could be late summer 2021 or early fall before PayPal asks its employees to return to physical offices.

Schulman isn't alone among business leaders predicting such changes. Earlier this month at the New York Times DealBook conference, Bill Gates said he expects that more than 50% of business travel and more than 30% of days in the office will "go away." I agree with that sentiment. Business behavior and its norms are vastly different from pre-Covid-19 era. In most instances, a video conference call will now suffice for the in-person sales meetings that were often required pre-pandemic. This new standard bodes well for Zoom.

It's been a heck of a year for Zoom. Its stock isn't cheap, trading at nearly 45 times next year's estimated 12-month sales after its big rally this year. But the technology market is typically a winner-take-all or winner-take-most proposition for category leaders such as Zoom. If the company can continue to dominate its space for years to come, Zoom can grow into its valuation. As of now, there are no signs it will give up its No. 1 position anytime soon.

AUSTRALIA HOSTS FIRST GROUP OF OVERSEAS STUDENTS SINCE VIRUS

THE BUZZ

Australia has welcomed its first group of international students to arrive since the coronavirus pandemic began, with more due to follow.

A charter flight carrying 63 students from mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia landed this week in the northern city of Darwin.

The students will all attend Charles Darwin University, with some new to the campus and others previously enrolled. They are part of a pilot program aimed at boosting the local economy and providing a template for international students to arrive in other parts of Australia.

The arriving students were required to undertake a pre-departure health screening and have been placed in a quarantine facility for two weeks before they can begin attending classes.

Simon Maddocks, the Vice Chancellor of Charles Darwin University, told reporters they have been working with officials for seven months to make the trip happen.

"All being well, we hope we can continue to run these flights through the early part of next year as we see the Australian higher education system and the vocational training system return to engaging international students," he said.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK SEEN BRIGHTENING BUT DANGERS REMAIN



AP PHOTO

The world economy will bounce back to its pre-pandemic levels by the end of next year, a global watchdog predicted yesterday, though that recovery will be uneven across the countries and big risks remain.

In a wide-ranging report on the economy, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said that progress on coronavirus vaccines means that the outlook has improved for the first time since the pandemic began.

"The road ahead is brighter, but challenging," wrote Laurence Boone,

chief economist at the OECD, in the report.

It predicts the global economy will shrink about 4.2% this year and rebound by the same rate in 2021 before growing 3.7% the following year.

China, which has brought its virus infections under control better than many major economies, will account for a big part of that economic recovery, while Europe, Japan and the U.S. will lag, the OECD said.

The organization, which advises countries on economic policy, said that governments should conti-

nue to support people who have been hit hardest by the pandemic and the restrictions on public life and businesses.

It recommends investing public money in areas that deliver long-term benefits like health care, education, reducing inequality and fighting climate change. Global cooperation is sorely needed to maximize the impact of government efforts to bring the economy back to health.

"International cooperation has faltered in recent years, just when it was needed more than ever," Boone said. AP



AP PHOTO

Pakistan Despite a government ban and arrests of hundreds of activists, Pakistani opposition supporters rallied in a central city, calling on Prime Minister Imran Khan to resign over alleged bad governance and incompetence. The rally in the city of Multan was held a day after police, on orders from the government, carried out the arrests and banned the gathering, defending the move as necessary to combat the coronavirus pandemic in Pakistan.



AP PHOTO

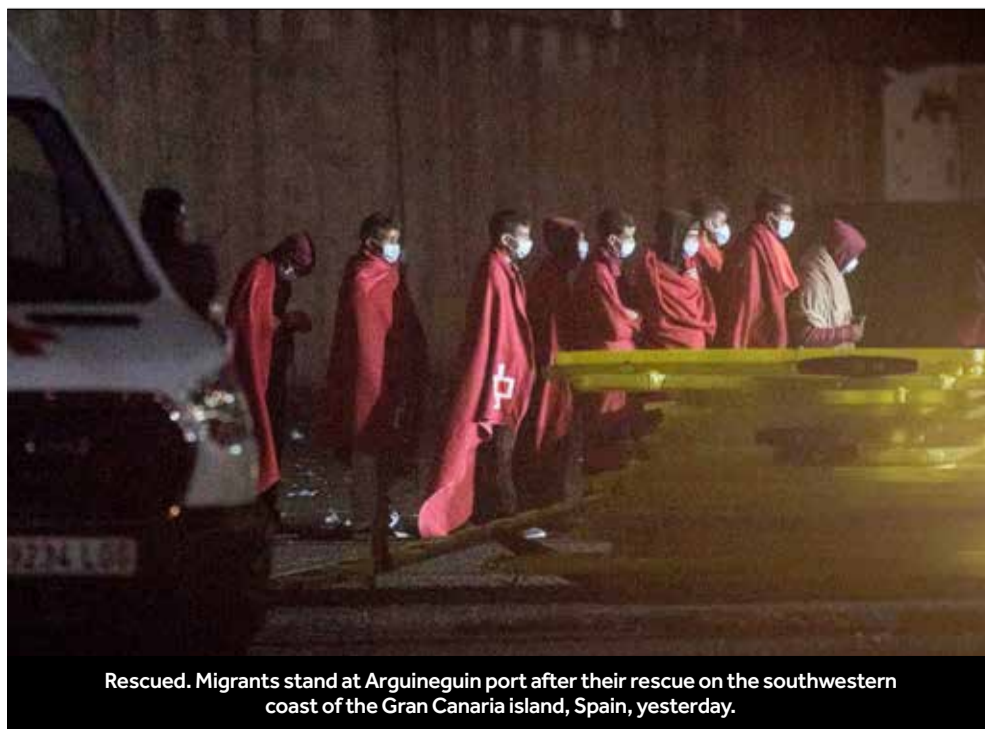
US Dr. Scott Atlas, a science adviser to President Donald Trump who was skeptical of measures to control the coronavirus outbreak, is leaving his White House post. A White House official confirmed that the Stanford University neuroradiologist, who had no formal experience in public health or infectious diseases, resigned at the end of his temporary government assignment. Atlas confirmed the news in a tweet.

Germany More than 180 police officers raided homes in three German states early yesterday after the German government banned a far-right group, the interior ministry said. The homes of 11 members of the far-right group Wolfsbrigade 44 were searched in Hesse, Mecklenburg West-Pomerania and North Rhine-Westphalia to confiscate the group's funds and far-right propaganda material, the German news agency dpa reported.

Puerto Rico A huge, already damaged radio telescope in Puerto Rico that has played a key role in astronomical discoveries for more than half a century completely collapsed yesterday. The telescope's 900-ton receiver platform fell onto the reflector dish more than 400 feet below. The U.S. National Science Foundation had earlier announced that the Arecibo Observatory would be closed. An auxiliary cable snapped in August, causing a 100-foot gash on the 1,000-foot-wide dish and damaged the receiver platform that hung above it. Then a main cable broke in early November.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Javier Fergo



Rescued. Migrants stand at Arguineguin port after their rescue on the southwestern coast of the Gran Canaria island, Spain, yesterday.