

**The Macao SAR Government urges:**

Implement regular epidemic prevention measures;  
 Do our best to persist;  
 Wash hands frequently and wear a mask;  
 Keep a distance and avoid crowd gathering;  
 Perseverance leads to success.

Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

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**A 50-YEAR-OLD LOCAL RESIDENT IS BEING CHARGED BY POLICE AUTHORITIES OVER THE UNLAWFUL HIRING OF A DOMESTIC HELPER** P4

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**AROUND 800,000 DOSES OF COVID-19 VACCINE ARE EXPECTED TO BE IN PLACE TODAY FOR THE START OF THE IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM IN THE UK** P8

Indonesia's government said 1.2 million doses of a COVID-19 vaccine developed by China-based biopharmaceutical company Sinovac Biotech arrived in the country late Sunday. The government is still waiting for millions of other doses of the Sinovac vaccine to arrive in the form of raw materials that will be further processed by state-owned pharmaceutical holding company PT Bio Farma. However, Widodo said that emergency use authorization from the country's Food and Drug Control Agency is still needed for mass vaccinations to start.



Indonesian police yesterday fatally shot six followers of a firebrand cleric who returned last month from a 3-year exile in Saudi Arabia after criminal charges against him were dropped, officials said, prompting fears of more violence. Jakarta Police Chief Muhammad Fadil Imran said police were following a car carrying 10 supporters of Rizieq Shihab, the leader of the Islamic Defenders Front, yesterday morning. The followers attacked the police with guns and swords, threatening the officers' safety, he said.



South Korea's health minister said yesterday that the Seoul metropolitan area is now a "COVID-19 war zone," as the country reported another 615 new infections and the virus appeared to be spreading faster. The country has recorded more than 5,300 new infections in the past 10 days and Monday was the 30th day in a row of triple-digit daily jumps.

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# FREE SHOTS FOR LOCALS

The government announced that coronavirus vaccines will be free for Macau residents on a voluntary basis and will first be given to frontline workers P3



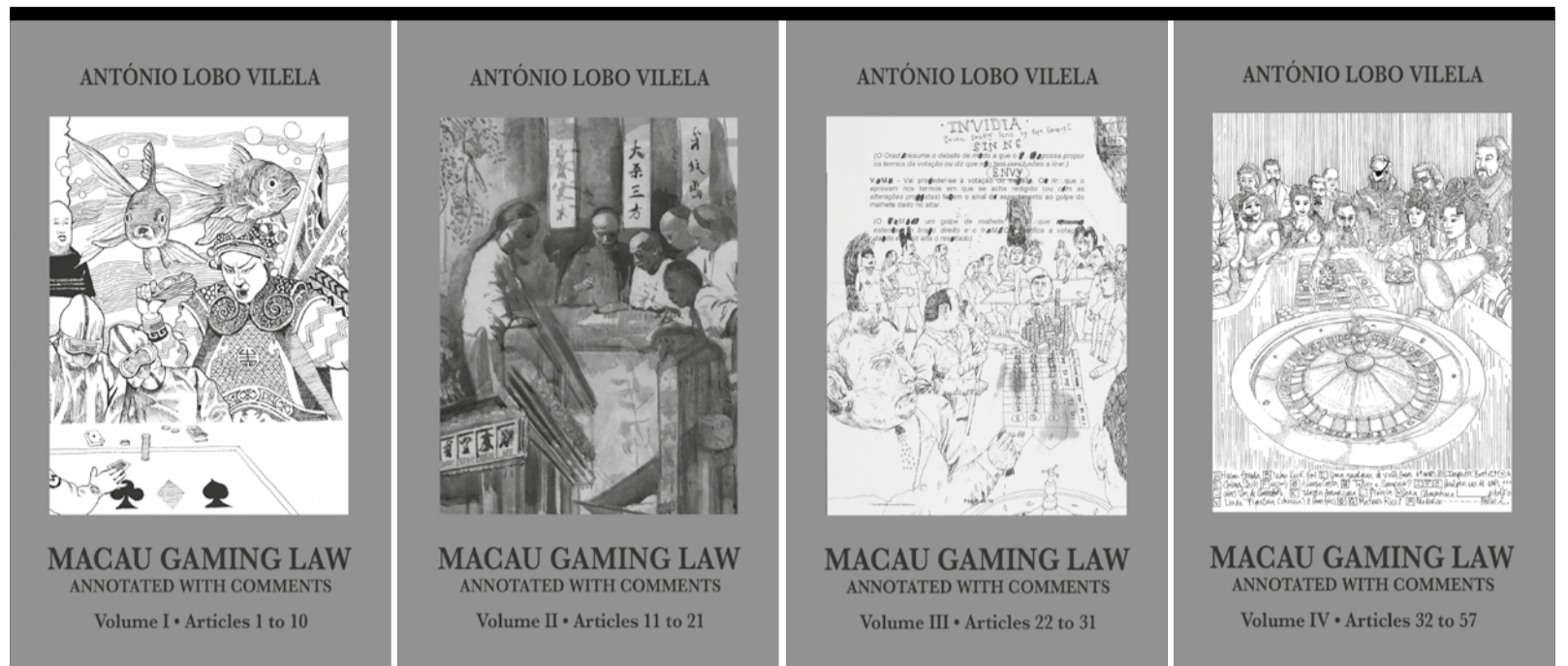
## GAMING LAW EXPERT LAUNCHES FIRST COMPREHENSIVE PUBLICATION ON MACAU GAMING LAW



P2

### MGTO WELCOMED MEDIA DELEGATION FROM MAINLAND

Titled "Integrated Media Visit to Macau", a delegation comprising 11 mainland China's news media paid a familiarization visit to the SAR for a coverage of the city's latest progress of pandemic prevention and economic revival. The delegation was in the region for a five-day familiarization visit. Following the Beijing Macao Week organized by the SAR in Beijing in September, the "Integrated Media Visit to Macau" is one of the outreach promotional projects of the Macao Government Tourism Office.



### GDI ANNOUNCES BIDDERS FOR FLYOVER NEAR PEARL OF THE ORIENT ROUNDABOUT

The Infrastructure Development Office (GDI) has recently announced the list of tender bidders for the proposed flyover connecting the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Immigration Checkpoint with the Areia Preta District. It was a tender by invitation. The Office requested quotes from four constructors, which all four have provided. The most expensive quote came in at MOP229 million by Companhia de Construção e Engenharia Kin Sun (Macau), Lda., while the cheapest was MOP180 million by Companhia de Construção Cheong Kong Lda.

### SLIGHT DECREASE IN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PRICE INDEX

The overall residential property price index for August to October 2020 decreased by 0.5% over the previous period (July - September 2020) to 267.6, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service. The index for the Macau Peninsula (267.9) fell by 0.7% while that for Taipa & Coloane (266.5) rose by 0.4%. Analysed by year of building completion, the indices for residential units completed between 6 and 10 years ago and for those built more than 20 years ago went down by 1.0% and 0.9% respectively.

# FIRST COMPREHENSIVE PUBLICATION ON MACAU GAMING LAW ISSUED

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE recently launched "Macau Gaming Law – Annotated with Comments" is a new, four-volume publication that covers all local gaming regulations with explanations and comments by legal expert António Lobo Vilela.

The book series is the first comprehensive publication on the Macau Gaming Law. The series aims to provide insights and facilitate access to a significant amount of uncompiled information for a wide range of readers, especially those with a professional or academic interest in obtaining detailed knowledge of the local gaming industry's regulations.

Speaking to the Times, the author explained that the books result from his own professional need to compile this information for easy research and access. The work spans around 20 years of collection, classification, and annotations.

"This publication has a comparative advantage which comes from the fact of being the first comprehensive book series on the topic of the Macau gaming," Vilela said, adding that this is one of its most attractive features, since "there is nothing [before this publication] written on this topic."

Without wanting to be overly specific about who might benefit from this work, Vilela noted

that the books are in English specifically because they are mostly aimed at people who are not based in Macau and who are accustomed to different jurisdictions and regulations.

Such readers may "have difficulties and doubts when analyzing the Macau system that is based in concessions and not on licensing." He went on to explain, "For instance, this system, in the mind of a person that is not used to the Romano-Germanic legal system, is very confusing and if you cannot explain the system, they will never understand why the law provisions have certain aspects, such as the duration, for example."

The author also said that the publication explained as to why gaming concessions have a timeline, noting, "this a very particular and special aspect of Macau law that does not exist in other jurisdictions in which the gaming industry is regulated by licenses."

He added that there were many other unique examples within the Macau system.

According to the author, the books can be a reference for various professionals and academics to explore the field. They also aim to explain the Macau gaming world to potential external investors.

In addition to having held several other jobs related to the gaming industry, Vilela was a

senior legal adviser to the commission that organized the first public tender to grant casino gaming concessions in Macau (2001-2002), and senior legal adviser to the Macau Gaming Commission, the governmental consultative body of the gaming industry between 2003 and 2009. He was also a member of the think-tank in charge of drafting the current legal and regulatory framework for the gaming industry, and both the gaming concession and sub-concession contracts. As a result, he has deep knowledge and professional experience in the field.

One of the most influential people in the process of creating the local gaming laws, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Former Commissioner for Legal Affairs, Macau Gaming Commission, and Senior Draftsman of Macau's legal and regulatory framework on casino gaming, noted in the preface of Volume I, "This publication is a massive repository of everything that has been produced on gaming that may be relevant for the interpretation and the understanding of the norms and precepts that are contained in this legal regulatory framework."

He added, "This publication will be a major step towards a better knowledge and understanding of Macau Gaming Law by these foreign professionals." He additionally noted that it is unlikely that a more complete

work will become available in the market for a long period, during which this will be a work of reference.

In another preface, Anthony Cabot, one of the most highlighted figures of American gaming laws, with over 37 years of gaming law practice, wrote, "This book [...] is not only an essential guide to the law of gaming and gambling in Macau but provides the historical background needed to provide full context for each provision of the gaming laws."

Cabot is a former chair of the gaming law practice and executive committee member at Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie LLP law firm.

The books, published by PC Consulting Limited, will be available via a print-on-demand system, in which interested parties can place their order through a special website created for macaugaminglaw.com, or through amazon.com.

As Vilela also remarked to the Times, the book covers include illustrations by local artist António Conceição Júnior, based on the works of other artists and with an intimate relationship to the gaming scene.

Vilela also noted that the idea of publishing these volumes came as a way to encourage more people from the community to take part in the project and give personal and local artistic input.

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# Free Covid-19 vaccination on a voluntary basis for residents

STAFF REPORTER

**M**ACAU'S citizens will be able to enjoy a free vaccination for Covid-19 if they request one. However, the SAR government cannot announce a concrete timetable for this program yet due to non-disclosure agreements with vaccine manufacturers, medical director of the Conde de São Januário Hospital Dr. Alvis Lo said at yesterday's media briefing.

The government has been negotiating with manufacturers from China and overseas, all of which have shown promising clinical results in their Covid-19 vaccines, Lo said, adding that authorities also came to an agreement on a non-disclosure term with several manufacturers.

"Thus, we cannot disclose the detailed figures of the vaccine and its timeframe at the moment," he said in response to a media question.

Lo's remarks came after Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong U, pledged in the plenary meeting last week at the Legislative Assembly (AL) to deliver the first batch of vaccines, prioritizing frontline staff, by the end of 2020.

In response to a question, Lo acknowledged that the vaccines will first be given to frontline workers who have been exposed to higher contagion risks compared to other people. This includes not only medical staff, but also the police force and firemen.

However, Lo did not confirm whether or not the first vaccinations will be delivered by the end of December, as had been pre-



viously claimed.

"Considering the city's current situation of Covid-19, there is still no need for the government to sanction vaccination for emergency use at this stage," he added.

The scale of distribution for the upcoming vaccines will largely hinge on the actual supply in the future. But it will prioritize those who are considered high-risk groups and those who are in need.

Most importantly, Lo stressed that all of the most potent vaccines are still in their third stage of clinical trials, meaning that their efficacy has not yet been evaluated and vetted by the world's credible academic journals.

"It still takes some for the potency of these vaccines to be laid bare," he added.

In the regular media briefing held yesterday by the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, the team affirmed that the Grand Coloane Resort has been designated again as a

quarantine facility as of Sunday.

Before the announcement at the media briefing, the Times published a story about the new policy. The inclusion of the resort into Macau's list of quarantine hotels was intended to house an expected influx of returnees this week who wished to be out of quarantine to enjoy Christmas in the nick of time.

As of December 7, a total of

1,402 people were undergoing the 14-day mandatory quarantine in Macau. Among them, the majority, 785, were tourists. Macau residents totaled 579. The remaining were blue card holders.

The city's weekly tourist traffic, including arrivals and departures, experienced a drop of 8.9% week-on-week from November 30 to December 6, amounting to 293,400.

## GOV'T CANCELS NEW YEAR COUNTDOWN EVENTS

**AFTER** an evaluation of the impact of the pandemic, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) announced that it will cancel the "2020 Macau Countdown Event." The Fireworks Display for New Year's Eve, supported by the Macao Government Tourism Office, will also be cancelled. The countdown events in Macau and Taipa feature many local and foreign performers, involving nearly

30,000 participants every year, the IC noted.

"The countdown event draws large numbers of people in the surrounding performance area close to the early morning hours, and such high density may risk having crowds gathering. In order to place public health in high priority, IC cancelled the countdown event this year," the bureau stated.

## EDUCATION

# Bureau to run survey on mainland teacher exchange program

**F**OR the first time in a decade, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) will run a survey asking local teachers about the mainland "instructor-teacher" program, Kong Chi Meng, Deputy Director of the bureau recently said.

About a month ago, social media users spotted an Official Gazette entry that announced the employment of 27

teachers from the mainland. They were earning the salary level of a senior technician in the government, equating to nearly MOP40,000 per month at current salary denomination.

Furthermore, information released subsequently showed that the government has run the program for nearly 12 years. However, the government has never re-

leased any reviews about the program and was accused of lacking in transparency as a result.

As far as is understood, mainland teachers have been brought into Macau to instruct local teachers on their teaching methods and skills. It is also believed that mainland teachers familiarize local teachers with national education standards and curricula.

Some media outlets reported that teachers were not happy with the effectiveness of the program. They said that although some mainland teachers were rigorous and respected their job immensely, others were perfunctory in their approach.

When questioned why the regulator has only received positive feedback so far, Kong did not give a justification. Rather, he

reiterated that the regulator has channels to receive feedback from local teachers.

Kong expressed his trust in local teachers' willingness and ability to express themselves honestly with regard to the program. However, he did not comment on the question of whether teachers had a supportive environment to express themselves when the regulator is extensively praising the program.

He also admitted that some mainland teachers received the chance to remain in Macau after the conclusion of their time in the program. **AL**

## DSAL: CONSTRUCTION SITES, CASINOS HAVE THE MOST JOB HAZARDS

In the latest survey on occupational safety, conducted by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), authorities determined that the sites with the greatest number of accidents were construction sites, kitchens, casinos and logistic areas. Over 90% of surveyed organizations claimed that they conducted evaluations to identify hazards and risks in their working environments and formulate measures to reduce risks. The surveyed organizations stated they had taken measures to avoid accidents, like strengthening inspections, improving the working environment and providing personal protective equipment to staff.

## LAWMAKER URGES FOR AN EXPLANATION OF OVERDUE TRAINING SCHEME

Lawmaker Mak Soi Kun made a written query earlier, urging the government to explain why a civil servant training program proposed five years ago has still not been rolled out. The training program was supposed to cultivate talents within government departments and help individuals to climb up the ladder within these organizations. The government announced that the pilot program of this scheme is still in the experimental stage.

## HKD RTGS SYSTEM REACHED HKD62B WORTH OF TRANSACTIONS IN OVER A MONTH

Since its establishment on October 19, the Macau Hong Kong Dollar Real Time Gross Settlement (HKD RTGS) System, set up by the Monetary Authority of Macao, processed a total of 10,000 transactions, with a tally amounting to around HKD62 billion. The system is said to reduce the time for inter-bank transfers of Hong Kong dollars, and costs. Some scholars regard the system as a tool to enhance the efficiency of the city's financial market, foster the development of the bond market and act as the center for cross-border renminbi settlement.

RENATO MARQUES

CRIME

# WOMAN CHARGED OVER UNLAWFUL HIRING OF DOMESTIC HELPER

A 50-year-old local resident is being charged by the judiciary authorities over the unlawful hiring of a domestic helper from Vietnam, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) spokesperson informed yesterday during the regular joint press conference of the police forces.

According to the PSP, the case was discovered after the domestic helper was caught during an anti-prostitution operation at the Lao Hon area on December 2. The woman was caught by the PSP together with another six women from the mainland and Vietnam, all on tourist visas.

At the time of detention, this woman caught the attention of the police since she was the only one from the group in the possession of a non-resident worker permit (blue card) that traced back to a job as a domestic helper.

Questioned on the topic, the woman said she had engaged in sex work as a way to get "easy money," but she failed to provide any details or information about the family or the place where she was supposedly employed.

Later, the police took her to the surrounding area of the working address noted in her blue card but she also failed to identify the house of the family she supposedly worked for.

At the listed address, a man

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



answered the door and told the PSP officers that he had no idea who the woman was, adding that

his family does not have any domestic helper.

Later, the PSP contacted the

woman whose contact details were attached to the blue card as the person who had hired her. The

casino worker then admitted to the police that she had hired the woman back in August this year through an employment agency.

She also said that she had agreed to not request any work from her or pay any salary, allowing her to stay in Macau and search for jobs.

The local woman added that the reason she did this was that she had learned through friends that if you have children over 12 years old, the immigration department will reject the request for domestic helpers, and since her son was about to be 12, she decided to take the "quota" as a preventive measure in case she needed to hire a helper later.

The PSP tried also to ascertain the responsibility of the employment agency but they claimed they were unaware of any agreement between the woman and the helper.

The case has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office to charge the local woman with making false declarations and document forgery in relation to her application for hiring a non-resident worker.



## CE congratulates AIPIM on its 15th Anniversary

ALTHOUGH not present at the 15th anniversary celebration of the Macau Portuguese and English Press Association held yesterday, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng sent his written regards to the association, praising it for its contributions to the

harmony and stability of the city.

José Carlos Matias, President of the association, described 2020 as a difficult year. However, he praised all English and Portuguese journalists for remaining strong in their ability to cope with the pandemic.

In an interview with the Times on the sidelines of the event, Matias expressed his optimism in the industry in the coming year, although he refrained from making further predictions because he will be concluding his presidency soon.

"I need to abide to the

association's charter, which has a restriction on the number of terms of presidency," he explained.

He recalled that the association has defended journalism rights in the past year, adding that he is satisfied overall with the association board's performance.

Inês Chan, director of the Government Information Bureau, was present at the celebratory cocktail party on behalf of the government head. Representatives from the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Macau SAR and the Macao Office of the Foreign Affairs Office of the People's Republic of China were also present at the ceremony, which was held at the Macau Military Club.

In addition, the consul-general of the Portuguese Republic, the Republic of Mozambique and the Republic of Angola also attended the ceremony.

Matias also thanked the Government Information Bureau, the Forum Macau, the Macao Foundation and the Rui Cunha Foundation for their consistent support. **AL**

## DSEJ: BUDGETING INVESTMENT AGAINST GDP 'IMPRACTICAL'

**BUDGETING** education investment against the city's gross domestic product (GDP) is impractical, Lou Pak Sang, director of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ), said at a public event.

Although the GDP forecast for the city will be low, this year the government has made a relatively light cut to the city's education budget, which is about 10% of last year's budget.

Earlier this month, it was announced that the education sector will face a 1 billion pataca cut in 2021, as per the 2021 Budget bill presented by the government. Meanwhile, using this year as an example, the education official explained that should a proportionate mechanism exist, next year's education budget would see a huge cut.

He even cited the UN's Incheon Declaration, which defines quality education and education goals, among other details, while advocating for an education investment ranging from 15% to 20% of the overall government budget.

Macau's figure for education investment last year was 14%.

The education official also disclosed that the bureau has been striving towards educational equality, meaning that resource-rich schools should not be the only ones that can provide extraordinary opportunities to their students.

Future policies will work towards the goal, he added.

The DSEJ will be merged with the Higher Education Bureau on February 1 and renamed as the Education and Youth Development Bureau. **AL**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# GEG's Responsible Gaming Efforts to Bring Families Together By Building A Healthy Community



GEG title sponsored BYSS in organizing the "Parent-Child Day Out in Adventures 2020" event, delivering responsible gaming messages to the community through the innovative 'learning together' parent-child teaching approach.

A responsible gaming culture not only contributes to the industry's health, but helps support the health and well-being of employees and their families. Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) is committed to promoting responsible gaming, making it a fundamental part of its corporate social responsibility by continuously enhancing team members' understanding and awareness of the topic. This year's theme is "family", a series of activities is successfully held to promote and sustain a responsible gaming culture by cooperating with several social service organizations to organize a wide range of



GEG launched over 50 sessions of "Responsible Gaming Program Workshop" from June to August, providing more than 40,000 training hours for over 5,000 team members.

responsible gaming promotional activities such as training programs, roadshows, parent-child workshops and adventure experience days for its team members and the community.

## RESPONSIBLE GAMING AND FAMILY HARMONY

GEG launched a series of family-based responsible gaming programs around the theme of the Macau SAR Government's responsible gaming promotions, including the "Family Fun: Money Management" and "Building Positive Family Relation-

ships" workshops as well as the "Game Fun with Responsible Gaming 2020",



GEG and SKH co-organized a parent-child themed "Family Fun: Money Management Workshop", of which more than 30 team members and their family members attended.

"The Family is in Your Hands" and "Take Better Care of Yourselves and Loved Ones" responsible gaming roadshows, to help team members understand the importance of mutual support between family members and learn the potential family problems associated with problem gambling and prevention measures. "We are delighted to work with GEG for many years to increase the team members' awareness of the link between responsible gaming and family harmony which is important to their health and family



Ms. Yedda leong (second right) expressed support to GEG's team members at the "Building Positive Family Relationships Workshop".

being. This has also helped contribute to the success of our organization's related efforts in preventing gambling disorder," said Ms. Yedda leong, Center-in-charge of Macao Catholic Family Advisory Council.

## BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY COMMUNITY

In addition to educating team members and helping them to explore how individual choices can impact their families, GEG also strengthened its collaboration with the community to support young people and their families to create a healthy life attitude to resist impulses to gamble. Recently, GEG made a donation to the Bosco Youth Service Network ("BYS") in support of its launch of a new service "FREEland" for the community works to support teens in gambling addiction



GEG made a donation of MOP100,000 to BYSS in support of its start-up of the "FREEland" gambling addiction prevention services.

preventions and treatments. "To move forward the community's promotion of teenage gambling and substance abuse prevention, we need the support and participation of all stakeholders. We thank GEG for being the first gaming operator to support our new service, showing care and concern for teens with special needs. We look forward to building a long-term partnership with GEG, and to developing a one-stop addiction prevention and recovery service in Macau," said Mr.

Nelson Wong, President of BYSS. GEG also collaborated with the non-profit organization by sponsoring its hosting of a parent-child adventure experience event, which included various parent-child adventure experiences, board games, interactive games booth and parenting seminars, delivering key responsible gaming messages through parent-child learning and responsible gaming education. The event has attracted the participation of over 120 parents and their children.

## COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS



Team members attended a roadshow jointly organized by GEG and the Macau Youth Volunteer Association before the Lunar New Year to learn about all required health and safety guidance during the pandemic.

GEG is a pioneer in promoting responsible gaming as the first gaming operator to establish a dedicated responsible gaming team in Macau since 2008. Over the years, GEG continues to jointly work with relevant government bodies, academic groups, social service institutions and gambling disorder prevention centers to put responsible gaming measures into practice to build a responsible gaming culture in our society. Since the launch of responsible gaming promotion, GEG has organized a host of activities, attracting over 70,000 team members to participate in its trainings, roadshows, visits, seminars and workshops with its employee-oriented responsible gaming Initiatives. GEG also spreads heartfelt messages of support to team members around the festive seasons



The S.K.H. Macau Social Services Coordination Office was invited to arrange a "Your Ideal Home" seminar at the 8th GEG Responsible Gaming Awareness Week.

and major sports events like the Chinese New Year and the World Cup to deepen their responsible gaming awareness and reinforce the importance of rational gaming behaviors on themselves and their families.

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY MAKING A COMMITMENT**



# Sands China awards suppliers, local SMEs in ceremonies

STAFF REPORTER

FOR the first time ever, Sands China Ltd. hosted two ceremonies on the same day to honor distinguished suppliers for the group and support local small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The two ceremonial events — dubbed the 2020 Sands Supplier Excellence Awards and the Sands Procurement Academy Graduation — were held at The Venetian Theatre.

This was the first time the gaming operator tied the two ceremonies together. This was done to offer encouragement and inspiration for graduates of the Procurement Academy through showcasing the successful stories of suppliers honored in the Award ceremony.

President of Sands China, Wilfred Wong, said he hoped the training would help the graduates to “advance their enterprises and lead them to receive their own awards in the future.”

Eight winners were bestowed with 2020 Sands Supplier Excellence Awards across seven prize types.

Macexpo Exhibition Co. Ltd. secured the SME prize, while the Corporate Culture & Sustainability prize went to China Travel Service



(Macao) Limited.

Other firms were honored with prizes for their noteworthy quality management, service, innovative capability, cost management and project delivery skills.

The Sands Supplier Excellence Awards, in which a judging committee of Sands China executive management handpicks the group's most outstanding suppliers every year, marked its eighth year in 2020.

During the pandemic, the group has remained committed to supporting local SMEs through va-

rious initiatives. The Sands Procurement Academy graduation ceremony is among them.

Since its establishment in 2017, the Academy has enlisted a total of 240 suppliers. A total of 54 local SMEs graduated this year.

The two events were attended by authorities and executives, including Zhang Jianhua, assistant director general of the economic affairs department of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macau SAR, and various Sands China executives.

# CHAMBERS KICK OFF FESTIVE SEASON WITH GATHERING

A total of five Chambers of Commerce in Macau held their annual Inter-Chamber Christmas Party at Naam Garden at Grand Lapa Hotel, attracting some 200 guests.

The participating Chambers were those of the USA (Amcham) represented by President Robert McBain, Australia (Austcham) represented by Chairman Patrick Lui, Britain (Britcham) represented by Chairman Keith Buckley, Canada (Cancham) represented by President Howard Stribbell, and France (FMCC) represented by Chairman Ruger Verschuuren.

“No doubt the Covid-19 and related travel restrictions boosted the attendan-

ce compared to previous years,” said the Britcham Chairman, Buckley.

A lucky draw was also held, with prizes donated by individuals and companies.

Musical entertainment was provided by the Family String Trio, who played a selection of classical music.

The non-profit organisations animate their network of members by organizing various types of events, an annual charity gala dinner, technical seminars, breakfast meetings, business luncheons and guided tours.

These chambers also provide a platform for member companies and individuals to create an exchange and develop business opportunities. LV



AD

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為了保護客戶和員工的健康和安全，我們將繼續按照本地政府的建議在辦公室入口處實施預防措施。

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# US poised to sanction more China officials over Hong Kong

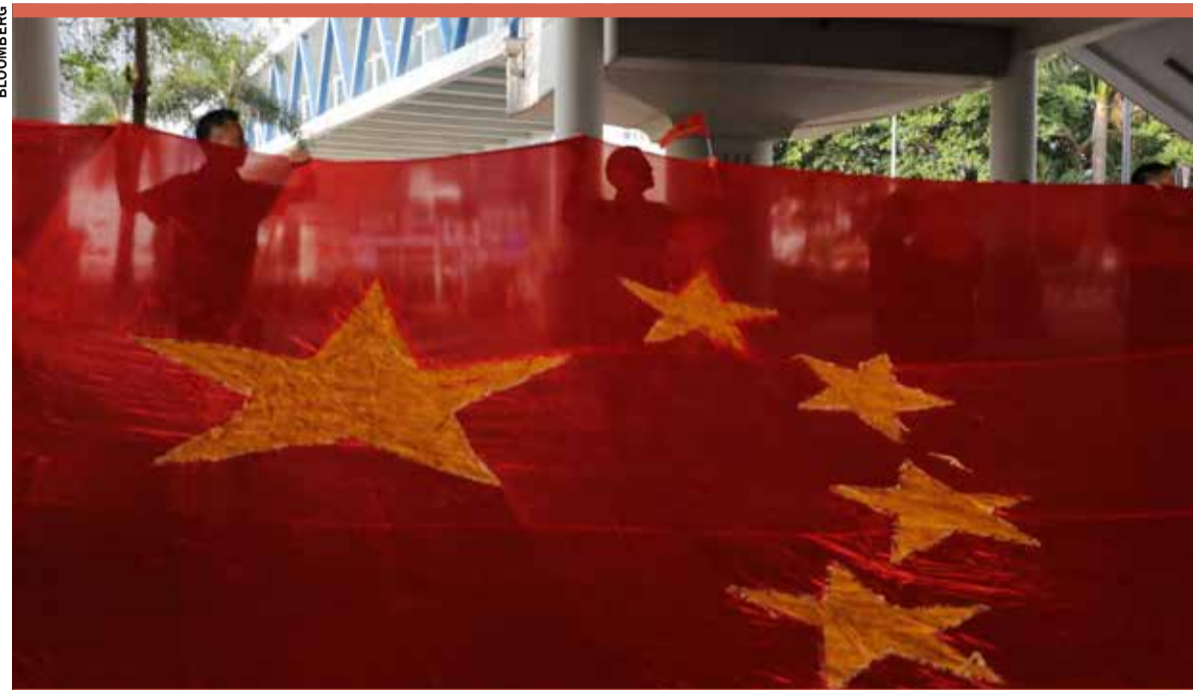
NICK WADHAMS  
& KAREN LEIGH

**T**HE U.S. is preparing to sanction at least a dozen more Chinese officials over their role in the recent disqualification of Hong Kong legislators, according to two people familiar with the plans.

The latest round of sanctions over Hong Kong could be rolled out as soon as Monday, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the measures haven't been formally announced. The move comes as President Donald Trump continues to pile pressure on China's Xi Jinping and the ruling Communist Party in his final weeks in office.

While the names or positions of any of the potential targets weren't immediately known, U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo was expected to sign off on a list that included high-ranking officials. The Trump administration had previously declined to sanction any members of the Politburo's supreme Standing Committee.

News that the U.S. was preparing sanctions on some Chinese officials helped sour the tone in global financial markets in Asian trading Monday morning, and futures on the S&P 500 Index slipped 0.2%.



As many as 14 people were expected to be impacted, Reuters, which first reported the sanctions, said separately.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said on Monday Beijing would take countermeasures should the U.S. continue down the "wrong path," without elaborating.

"If the reports are true, I believe you can imagine China's position," Hua said. "We firmly oppose and strongly condemn U.S. interference in China's internal affairs and sanctions on Chinese personnel under the pretext

of Hong Kong. We have expressed our positions to the U.S. side many times and made legitimate and necessary responses."

Hua spoke hours after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told the U.S.-China Business Council that Washington and Beijing should "work together" to "achieve a smooth transition" of their ties.

Beijing "could demand sanctions relief in exchange for concessions in future negotiations," said Nicholas Turner, a lawyer who advises on sanctions at Steptoe and Johnson in Hong Kong. "It's unlikely the Biden

administration will roll back sanctions that are politically popular in Washington. Trump-era sanctions could become sticking points in the U.S.-China relationship for years to come."

## 'WORK TOGETHER'

Hong Kong has continued to be rocked by political upheaval in recent weeks. Last month, China passed a resolution allowing the disqualification of Hong Kong lawmakers who weren't deemed sufficiently loyal - prompting opposition legislators to resign en masse.

Their departure fueled concern about Hong Kong's autonomy from Beijing in the wake of China-drafted national security legislation imposed on the former British colony in June. Prominent local activist Joshua Wong was also sentenced to more than a year in prison last week for leading a 2019 protest outside police headquarters, the latest in a series of moves by Chinese and local officials to clamp down on the city's battered opposition.

The U.S. has already hit officials with sanctions over Beijing's crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong, including the city's Chief Executive Carrie Lam. Lam recently said she was collecting "piles of cash" at home as the measures barred her from basic banking services.

Trump indicated to aides in July that he did not want to further escalate tensions with China and had ruled out additional sanctions on top officials for now, Bloomberg News reported at the time. Before that, his team had created a list of officials that included Vice Premier Han Zheng, a member of the party's powerful seven-member Politburo Standing Committee, Bloomberg said, citing people familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity.

An even more senior target would be National People's Congress Chairman Li Zhanshu, the party's No. 3 official and Xi's former chief of staff. The legislative body led by Li has been directly responsible for China's most controversial measures on Hong Kong in recent months, including the loyalty resolution. **BLOOMBERG**

## HONG KONG

# Police arrest eight over university protest

ZEN SOO

**H**ONG Kong authorities arrested eight people yesterday in connection with an unauthorized protest at a university campus last month, amid a widening crackdown on dissent in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

The arrests were made in relation to a demonstration at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in which more than 100 people protested a decision to hold graduation ceremonies online. Such ceremonies are often used as a way for students to express political views.

Some protesters had called for Hong Kong's independence, and held up signs that read "Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of our ti-



mes," which are considered to have secessionist notions and are outlawed under the city's national security law.

Police said they arrested eight people for an unauthorized protest and inciting secession, but did not specify who they were.

"We only arrested those who were shouting slogans, displaying flags that involved some national security concerns," Li Kwai-wah, senior superintendent of police of Hong Kong's National Security Department, said at a news conference.

Arthur Yeung, a graduate from the university who also ran in the city's district council elections last year, is suspected to be among those arrested. A post on Yeung's Facebook page said he was arrested at his home yesterday morning.

Two district councillors, Isaac Lee and Eason Chan, were also arrested, according to posts on their respective Facebook pages.

The eight arrested are currently being investigated by national security officers, according to local newspaper South China Morning Post, which cited unnamed sources.

The arrests come as Hong Kong and Beijing have increasingly clamped down on dissent in the city, following Beijing's imposition of a national security law in Hong Kong in June aimed at curbing months of political unrest and anti-government protests last year.

The crackdown has prompted accusations that Beijing is violating the autonomy it promised when the former British colony was returned to China in 1997. It also has triggered warnings that the ruling

Communist Party is damaging Hong Kong's appeal as a global business center and one of Asia's most dynamic cities.

In response, the U.S. has imposed sanctions on more than 10 Hong Kong and mainland Chinese officials, including Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam.

Asked about a report that the U.S. might sanction more officials, a Chinese government spokesperson in Beijing said that China would respond to any U.S. action with countermeasures.

"We have made it clear many times that China has always resolutely opposed and strongly condemned U.S. interference in China's internal affairs and the so-called sanctions against Chinese personnel on the basis of the Hong Kong issue," foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said. **AP**



# UK gears up for huge vaccination plan watched by the world

PAN PYLAS, LONDON

**S**HIPMENTS of the coronavirus vaccine developed by American drug-maker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech were delivered Sunday in the U.K. in super-cold containers, two days before it goes public in an immunization program that is being closely watched around the world.

Around 800,000 doses of the vaccine were expected to be in place for the start of the immunization program today, a day that Health Secretary Matt Hancock has reportedly dubbed as "V-Day," a nod to triumphs in World War II.

"To know that they are here, and we are amongst the first in the country to actually receive the vaccine and therefore the first in the world, is just amazing," said Louise Coughlan, joint chief pharmacist at Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, just south of London.

"I'm so proud," she said after the trust, which runs Croydon University Hospital, took delivery of the vaccine.

Last week, the U.K. became the first country to authorize the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for emergency use. In trials, the vac-

cine was shown to have around 95% efficacy. Vaccinations will be administered starting Tuesday at around 50 hospital hubs in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will also begin their vaccination rollouts the same day.

Governments and health agencies around the world will be monitoring the British vaccination program, which will take months, to note its successes and failures and adjust their own plans accordingly. The U.S. hopes to start vaccinations later this month. British regulatory authorities are also examining data on the vaccines from American biotechnology company Moderna and AstraZeneca-Oxford University.

Russia on Saturday began vaccinating thousands of doctors, teachers and others at dozens of centers in Moscow with its Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine, which was approved over the summer after being tested in only a few dozen people.

The excitement in Britain, which has Europe's highest virus-related death toll at more than 61,000, was palpable.

"Despite the huge complexities, hospitals will kickstart the first phase of the largest scale vaccination campaign in our

country's history from Tuesday," said Professor Stephen Powis, NHS England's national medical director.

Patients aged 80 and above who are already attending hospitals as outpatients and those being discharged after a stay in the hospital will be among the first to receive the jab. Hospitals will also start inviting over 80s in for a vaccine shot and will work with nursing homes to book staff into vaccination clinics. Any appointments not taken up will be offered to those health workers deemed to be at the highest risk of COVID-19. Everyone who is vaccinated will need a booster jab 21 days later.

Buckingham Palace refused to comment on speculation that Queen Elizabeth II, 94, and her 99-year-old husband, Prince Philip, will soon be vaccinated and then make it public, a move that could reassure anyone nervous about getting a vaccination.

"Our goal is totally to protect every member of the population, Her Majesty, of course, as well," Dr. June Raine, chief executive of Britain's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, which authorized the vaccine, told the BBC.

The U.K. has secured 40 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine, which can cover 20 million people. Since the British government will only immunize people over 16, around 55 million people in the U.K. will be eligible. In total, Britain has procured 357 million doses of seven vaccine candidates, including 100 million of the much cheaper Oxford vaccine, which has a lower efficacy rate than the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

Now that the first tranche of the vaccine has arrived from Pfizer's manufacturing plant in Belgium, checks are being conducted by a specialist medical logistics company to ensure there was no damage in transit. This could take up to a day.

Each box containing the vaccines, which includes five packs of 975 doses, will need to be opened and unpacked manually at specially licensed sites. After that, the vaccines will then be made available to hospitals.

Delivering the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is complicated because it needs to be stored at super-chilled temperatures: about minus 70 degrees Celsius. Fortunately, the vaccine is stable at normal refrigerator temperatures, between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius, for a few days, meaning it can be stored locally. After defrosting the vaccine, which takes a few hours, additional time is required to prepare it to be given in a shot.

Public Health England has secured 58 special Twin Guard ultra-low temperature freezers that provide sufficient storage for approximately five million doses. The fridges, which are not portable, each hold around 86,000 doses.

The vaccine won't just be provided by hospitals. Local doctors' offices and other local health care centers are being put on standby to start delivering the vaccine, with a small number expected to do so the week of Dec. 14. More medical practices in more parts of the country will be phased in during December and in the coming months.

There are plans for vaccination centers treating large numbers of patients in sports areas and conference centers and for local pharmacies to be able to offer the jabs as they do with annual influenza shots. **AP**

## this day in history



### 1986 SOVIETS LAUNCH SPACE STATION MIR

The Soviets have opened a new phase in space exploration with the launch of the world's biggest space station, Mir.

The successful launch of Mir comes just over three weeks after the American space shuttle Challenger disaster, in which seven astronauts died.

At next week's Communist Party congress in Moscow the Mir project is likely to be hailed as proof that the Soviets are leading the peaceful exploration of space.

Mir, which means both peace and world in Russian, is intended to provide a base for a permanently manned complex orbiting the Earth.

It succeeds the Soviet Salyut models, the last of which, Salyut 7, was launched in April 1982 and is still in orbit.

The Americans also had a space station, Skylab, which suffered damage on its initial launch and eventually proved too costly to maintain and fell back to Earth in 1979.

Soviet officials say their new craft represents the transition from research to large-scale production activities in space.

The station has six docking stations, which means other modules or laboratories can be added to it, expanding its size and capability.

The deputy head of the Soviet cosmonaut training centre, Alexei Leonov, said it would only be possible to determine how long Mir would remain in orbit after it had completed its first flight.

He said the cosmonauts, now taking part in a special training programme, would have separate cabins with windows and even individual desks and armchairs.

Mr Leonov explained that Salyut 7 was too small for the plans now being implemented by Soviet experts.

It has only two docking stations and can support a crew of only three, whereas Mir can carry between six and ten people.

The main work of the first cosmonauts on board Mir will be to continue with the experiments in materials processing, begun on Salyut 6 and 7.

Other activities will include observation of the Earth using high-powered cameras, as well as helping locate mineral deposits on Earth and monitor the seas for trawlers.



Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The first crew arrived on board Mir on 15 March 1986 and it remained more or less continuously occupied until November 2000. Crew member Valeri Polyakov stayed up a record 439 days.

The end of the Cold War marked a new era of space co-operation.

In September 1993 US Vice-President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin announced plans for a new space station, which would later be called the International Space Station, or ISS.

In preparation for this new project, the US became more closely involved with Mir.

From March 1995 seven US astronauts consecutively spent 28 months on Mir, during which time the spacecraft suffered a number of emergencies including a large fire on 23 February 1997 and a collision with an unmanned cargo ship on 25 June 1997.

Mounting costs contributed to the decision to bring down Mir. While Mir contributed little in the way of scientific advances, it did allow scientists to learn more about how astronauts can survive in space for long periods of time.

Mir remained in space until 23 March 2001, during which time it orbited the Earth more than 86,000 times.

It re-entered the Earth's atmosphere near Nadi, Fiji, and what remained of the 135-tonne craft fell into the South Pacific Ocean.





MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# ANT, GRAB BECOME FIRST TECH FIRMS TO RUN BANKS IN SINGAPORE

CHANYAPORN CHANJAROEN & YOOLIM LEE

**A**NT Group Co. and a venture led by Grab Holdings Inc. won licenses to run digital banks in Singapore, paving the way for the technology giants to expand their financial services in the Southeast Asian hub.

Sea Ltd. is also among the four winners announced by the Monetary Authority of Singapore after almost a year of deliberation. A consortium involving China's Greenland Financial Holdings Group Co. is the other successful candidate.

Singapore joins the U.K. and Hong Kong in opening up its banking system to purely digital entrants, as it seeks to inject innovation and competition into a market dominated by traditional lenders. The permits are coveted given the city's status as a rapidly growing wealth management center and a gateway to Southeast Asia, where the digital lending market is expected to quadruple in five years.

"Following a very competitive digital banking license process in



Hong Kong recently, digital banks in Singapore will now be one of the first to capitalize on the booming Southeast Asia market," said Mark Robinson, technology sector lead partner for Asia Pacific at Herbert Smith Freehills in Singapore. "Other countries in the region will follow suit, including Malaysia, as financial services continue on the path to further liberalization and greater digitization."

Digital full banks will be allowed to take deposits and pro-

vide banking services to both retail and corporate customers. Digital wholesale banks can only target small and medium-sized businesses and other non-consumer segments. They are expected to start operating from early 2022, MAS said.

"MAS applied a rigorous, merit-based process to select a strong slate of digital banks," Managing Director Ravi Menon said in a statement. "We expect them to thrive alongside the incumbent banks

and raise the industry's bar in delivering quality financial services, particularly for currently underserved businesses and individuals."

MAS, which had previously said it may grant as many as three wholesale licenses, said it will review whether to issue more in the future. The authority also said it had taken into consideration the impact of Covid-19 on the business plans and projections of applicants.

## FRESH COMPETITION

The entrants will provide fresh competition for lenders such as DBS Group Holdings Ltd. While more than 90% of Singapore's adult population have bank accounts, the newcomers are likely to target segments including unsecured personal loans, as well as small and medium-sized firms that may not have good access to financing.

MAS was unswayed by Ant's woes in its home market of China after a series of regulatory clampdowns derailed its much anticipated initial share sale.

"What happened in China didn't have much bearing on the decision we made on whom to give licenses," MAS Chief FinTech Officer Sopnendu Mohanty said in a Bloomberg Television interview yesterday. The authority is focused on Ant's potential to serve small and medium-sized businesses through "a truly digital transformation," he said.

In a statement, Ant touted its "substantial experience and proven success" working with partner financial firms to serve SMEs. "We look forward to building stronger and deeper collaborations with all participants in the financial services industry in Singapore," it said.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# Madrid on the brink in CL group stage; Messi vs Ronaldo

**R**EAL Madrid is used to breezing through the Champions League, rather than facing must-win matches near the end of the group stage.

But poor performances this season have left Zinedine Zidane's team needing a victory on against Borussia Mönchengladbach to ensure the record 13-time European champions don't miss out on the knockout phase for the first time in the club's Champions League history.

With a draw, Madrid can still squeak through to the round of 16 if Shakhtar Donetsk loses at Inter Milan.

Madrid has never failed to get past the group stage in its 25 previous campaigns. Before falling in last season's round of 16, Madrid had reached at least the semifinals for eight consecutive seasons, winning the title four times in that stretch.

Lionel Messi's latest meeting with old rival Cristiano Ronaldo features as the other main attraction in the last of the group games. Messi's Barcelona hosts Ronaldo's



Juventus today with both already qualified.

Group B has proven to be the most competitive. Gladbach leads it with eight points. Madrid and Shakhtar each have seven, two more than last-place Inter. All four can still advance, and all four can still miss out.

When Gladbach hosted Madrid in October, the German club was leading 2-0 until Karim Benema and Casemiro scored late to salvage a 2-2 draw.

Madrid's only two wins both came against Inter. It was beaten twice by Shakhtar.

Struggling in attack, Madrid has also had problems in defense, conceding nine goals in five group games, its worst defensive record up to this point in the competition. A hamstring injury has sidelined defensive leader Sergio Ramos for the last two weeks. Injuries to right backs Dani Carvajal and Álvaro Odriozola have forced Zidane to play a forward, Lucas

Vázquez, in their spot.

"We're going through a bit of a tough spell lately," said Zidane. "The recent days have been difficult, but this team is full of character. It thrives on challenges and this win is hugely important for what is to come".

Gladbach can go through with a draw. In the case of a loss at the Alfredo Di Stéfano Stadium, it would need Shakhtar and Inter to draw.

### STALEMATE

Two of the trio of Paris Saint-Germain, Manchester United and Leipzig will advance from Group H; the other having to settle for the Europa League. All three are tied on nine points.

Last year's losing finalist PSG can win the group with a victory over eliminated Istanbul Basaksehir today. It can even advance with a loss as long as United's game at Leipzig does not end in a draw.

A draw in Germany would be enough for United. Leipzig will aim to beat United because a draw will leave the German team needing Basaksehir to upset PSG.

If he plays, PSG star Kylian Mbappe will be trying to break his 13-match, nine-month scoring drought in the Champions League.

Here's a look the group games for today:

### GROUP E

Chelsea welcomes Krasnodar and Sevilla is at Rennes with absolutely nothing at stake. Chelsea is already through as group winner and Sevilla is through in second place. Krasnodar is going to the Europa League; Rennes will place fourth.

### GROUP F

Borussia Dortmund is already classified but can claim the group outright if it wins at eliminated Zenit St. Petersburg. Lazio can advance for the first time in 20 years if it avoids defeat against Brugge, which must win in Rome to progress to the next stage.

### GROUP G

Barcelona will win the group unless Juventus can overtake it in head-to-head goals. Barcelona won 2-0 in Turin. Ronaldo missed that possible rematch with Messi after catching the coronavirus.

The two best players of their generation have not faced another since Ronaldo left Real Madrid in 2018.

Dynamo Kyiv hosts Ferencváros. Both teams have one point. AP

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OPINION

World Views

Wang Xiyue, MDT/Bloomberg

**DON'T LET IRAN GET AWAY WITH HOSTAGE-TAKING**

One year ago today, I was released from Iran as an American hostage in a prisoner swap. I went to Tehran in 2016 with little knowledge of its contemporary political reality. After a 40-month ordeal in the notorious Evin Prison, I left the country with the hard-learned knowledge that the Iranian regime is obdurately hostile toward the West, especially the U.S., and loathes diplomacy.

This year, as Thanksgiving approached, I could not help thinking of other hostages still held in Iran — at least 11 foreign nationals whose names are known to the public. Eight of them are in prison and three others are under house arrest.

Two days before Thanksgiving, I learned that the death sentence of my fellow inmate, Iranian-Swedish academic Ahmad Reza Djalali, has been reactivated, ostensibly a gambit against Europe ahead of the trial of an Iranian diplomat implicated in a thwarted attack in 2018. The Iranian judiciary informed Djalali's lawyer that the sentence would be carried out very soon.

On Thanksgiving eve, Iran's release of Australian scholar Kylie Moore-Gilbert made international headlines. News footage showed that three Iranian convicts of a botched assassination attempt in Thailand arrived in Tehran, receiving a hero's welcome by Iranian officials in the airport as Moore-Gilbert departed. Australian media lauded her release as a "diplomatic feat well done."

The scene of Moore-Gilbert waiting in the VIP lounge of Tehran's Mehrabad Airport reminded me about how I myself anxiously awaited my departure from the country in that very place. While I am elated to see her returning home, a somber question looms large against the backdrop of Djalali's imminent sentence: Why does the Iranian regime keep taking foreigners hostage as political leverage?

The simple answer is that this tactic always works. Starting from the U.S. Embassy hostage crisis in 1979, the regime has inevitably got something in return for releasing captive foreigners, be it some form of financial gain, repatriation of Iranian prisoners detained overseas or other political concessions from foreign governments. Inevitably, too, these swaps have been described as "diplomacy."

But when the old hostages are sent home, the regime simply arrests new ones to replenish its stock of political pawns. The vicious circle is repeated.

The irony here is that the regime's hostage-taking is in fact a manifestation of its anti-diplomacy orientation. The Islamic Republic, from its formation in 1979, has consistently defied international norms, and frequently rejected the use of diplomacy and dialog as means of mitigating its differences with other countries.

This is because of its revolutionary outlook and a unique, divine-sanctioned sense of hubris. No other state actor in the contemporary world has so frequently encouraged or tolerated the seizure and ransacking of foreign diplomatic representations. These are gross violations of the most basic diplomatic principles, but they are perfectly justifiable in the regime's rhetoric of "revolution" and "quashing the global arrogance."

Iran's refusal to come to terms with the West and its neighbors have brought upon itself ever-increasing sanctions and economic isolation. To survive, the regime routinely recruits collaborators, offering handsome financial rewards for laundering money and circumventing sanctions. It also sends operatives abroad to assassinate political dissidents and foreign foes, and to carry out terrorist attacks.

The regime is committed to repatriate the perpetrators of these illicit activities detained overseas, to ensure the confidence and loyalty of current and would-be collaborators and operatives. The Iranian returnees in recent prisoner swaps have for the most part fallen into this category. My interrogators at Evin Prison made it clear that I was a pawn for prisoner exchange: "To get our brothers back, we will do anything!"

[Abridged]

German explosives experts successfully defused and disposed of a 500-kilogram bomb in the country's financial capital Frankfurt, which was dropped during World War II and discovered during recent construction.

About 13,000 residents were evacuated from the city's Gallus district and trains were stopped from running through the area as Hesse state experts went to work on the bomb.

The bomb was found during construction last week and experts had estimated they would need at least six hours to defuse it,

but they were able to complete their work in under two hours, the dpa news agency reported.

By evening, Deutsche Bahn said trains were running again and residents were able to return to their homes. Around 700 who were unable to find places to stay with friends or family during the operation were looked after in Frankfurt's convention center.

Even 75 years after the end of World War II, such finds are relatively common in Germany, testament to the ferocity of the conflict.

NOBEL CEREMONIES GO LOW-KEY THIS YEAR BECAUSE OF CORONAVIRUS



AP PHOTO

THE pomp and ceremony of the Nobel prize ceremonies have been reined in this year amid measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus. There will be no glitzy banquet honoring winners in Stockholm or Oslo as the global pandemic curtails the usual celebrations.

Instead, their achievements will be recognized and rewarded at low-key ceremonies where they live and work in Europe and the United States, with the first one Monday in Berlin.

Twelve laureates were named in 2020. A Nobel prize comes with a 10-million krona (\$1.1 million) cash award — to be shared in some cases — diplomas and gold medals. Traditionally, the lavish Nobel ceremonies are held Dec. 10, the anniversary of the death of prize founder Alfred Nobel, at an ornate city hall in Stockholm for all but the Peace Prize that is held in Oslo in neighboring Norway. Nobel wanted it that way, for reasons that he kept to himself.

The 2020 Nobel prizes were announced in October. The prize for physiology and medicine was awarded to Harvey J.

Alter, Michael Houghton and Charles M. Rice "for the discovery of Hepatitis C virus." The prize for physics honored Roger Penrose, Reinhard Genzel and Andrea Ghez for their breakthroughs in understanding black holes, while the chemistry prize went to Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer A. Doudna for a powerful gene-editing tool.

The literature prize was awarded to American poet Louise Glück "for her unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal." The World Food Program won the peace prize for efforts to combat hunger.

But the pandemic means that the award ceremonies have been dialed down this year. They start in Berlin on Monday where Charpentier of France will receive her medal and diploma from the Swedish ambassador.

Throughout the week, the others will get their medals and diplomas. Penrose, a British scientist, will be awarded his in London by Sweden's envoy to the United Kingdom while German scientist Genzel will be honored at the Bavarian State Chancellery in Munich,

in southern Germany.

Moving across the Atlantic, Alter will get his award at the National Institutes of Health in Washington D.C. from Sweden's ambassador to the United States. The Scandinavian country's Consul General in New York, will hand it over to Rice.

Tomorrow, Sweden's Honorary Consul in San Francisco, Calif., will present them to Ghez, Doudna, and Paul R. Milgrom and Robert B. Wilson, who won the Nobel prize for economics for helping make auctions run more efficiently.

On Friday, the Peace Prize will be awarded virtually with a presentation in Oslo by the head of the Norwegian Nobel Committee and a ceremonial presentation and an acceptance speech in Rome, Italy, by David Beasley, head of the United Nations World Food Program.

In Stockholm on the same day, a webcast ceremony will be held and King Carl XVI Gustaf is expected to hold a speech.

It has not been announced yet when Glück and Houghton will receive their diploma and medal in their respective homes. AP



AP PHOTO

**India** At least one person has died and 200 others have been hospitalized due to an unidentified illness in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, reports said yesterday. The illness was detected Saturday evening in Eluru, an ancient city famous for its hand-woven products. Since then, patients have experienced symptoms ranging from nausea and anxiety to loss of consciousness, doctors said. Officials are trying to determine the cause of the illness.



AP PHOTO

**Belarus** More than 300 people were detained in the Belarusian capital, where crowds of people took to the streets for the 18th consecutive weekend, demanding the ouster of the country's authoritarian leader who won a sixth term in office in an election widely seen as rigged. Thousands of people took part in dozens of small rallies scattered all over Minsk, a new tactic the opposition employed instead of one large gathering to make it harder for the security forces to target the protesters.

**Germany** Chancellor Angela Merkel's chief of staff says he expects coronavirus vaccinations to start in Germany "in the very first days" of the new year. The trained doctor says he's prepared to help vaccinate people himself. European Union authorities are expected to make a decision by Dec. 29 on approving the first vaccine for use. Germany is getting special vaccination centers ready.

HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Thursday December 10. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.