

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

MacauDaily 澳門每日時報® Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Geldenhuys

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

Follow
CTM 5G
latest update
FREE Data
CTM 澳門電話

N.º 3676
FRIDAY
11 Dec 2020
T. 18º/22º
Air Quality Good

“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

MOP 8.00
HKD 10.00
2305 4271

THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE SEVENTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION IN 2021

P8

TESTING UNDERWAY FOR BUS RECORDING DEVICES

P4

CHINA WILL SANCTION MORE US OFFICIALS AND PLACE NEW TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON AMERICAN DIPLOMATS

P10

BLOOMBERG



China's government yesterday slapped more taxes on wine from Australia, stepping up pressure in a bitter diplomatic conflict over the coronavirus, territorial disputes and other irritants. China, Australia's biggest export market, already has blocked imports of its wine, barley, beef and other goods since the Australian government expressed support for a probe into the origin of the coronavirus pandemic that began in China last December.

AP PHOTO



Taiwan plans to create an independent agency to enforce digital privacy, a Cabinet minister says, tackling an increasingly urgent issue as countries step up surveillance during the pandemic. Taiwan is one of Asia's most robust democracies and has been praised for its outbreak response, which has kept its death toll at seven. But privacy advocates object to measures used to track the public and say there are too few safeguards for personal information. More on p9

AP PHOTO



Thailand Pro-democracy demonstrators in Bangkok marked United Nations Human Rights Day yesterday with rallies calling for the abolition of Thailand's strict royal defamation law, which was recently revived to prosecute more than 20 of the protest movement's leaders. Somyot Prueksakasemsuk, one of the leaders, submitted a letter to the United Nations yesterday urging it to pressure the Thai government to stop using Article 112 of the Thai Criminal Code, which forbids defamation of key members of the monarchy. More on p11

More on backpage

READY FOR THE TRACK

A group of youngsters are gearing up to carry the Macau flag to the top of the podium once race tournaments resume P6-7

RENATO MARQUES



US BLACKLISTS 'BROKEN TOOTH' FOR CORRUPTION, PIGGYBACKING

P2



GOV'T EXPECTING MOP29.5B IN THIS YEAR'S GAMING TAX

P2

MAN PRETENDS TO BE HIGH-RANKING OFFICIAL TO CARRY OUT SCAM

The Judiciary Police (PJ) has apprehended a 57-year-old Macau man, who is suspected of pretending to be a high-ranking government official in order to defraud his victim, who wished to immigrate to Macau. After the payment was made, the victim heard no more news about her immigration status. The victim lost a total of HKD160,000.

GOV'T ACCUSED OF DAMAGING FREE MARKET

The government has been accused of damaging free market competition by outsourcing a seniors' apartment project to China Construction Engineering (Macau) Company Limited (CCEM). Earlier, the government outsourced the project directly to CCEM for a price of 2.1 billion patacas. Six local construction groups recently expressed their disapproval of the outsourcing, noting, "The direct outsource is a behaviour that is damaging to the free-market. We do not support it."

RESIDENTS HAVE HIGHER CONFIDENCE IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

Macau residents' confidence in Macau and in the Central Government headed in two different directions in 2020, according to a survey conducted by the Macau University of Science and Technology. The survey also compared the respondents' confidence in One Country and Two Systems, in the Central Government's assistance towards Macau, and in the Central Government's policies for Macau, among others. Except for the higher confidence in the Macau government in 2020 compared to that in 2019, all other indexes of confidence dropped.

US SANCTIONS 'BROKEN TOOTH' FOR CORRUPTION, PIGGYBACKING

THE US has imposed a sanction on Wan Kuok-koi, an infamous gangster and triad boss in China who goes by the alias "Broken Tooth" for the illegal activities he engaged in to piggyback on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The US Treasury Department charged Wan, the former leader of the notorious mainland mob the 14K Triad, with the offence of using business and other activities to try to "paper over illegal criminal activities" by framing his actions in terms of China's BRI.

Under the sanctions, all assets possessed by Wan in the U.S. will

be frozen. American citizens and U.S.-tied companies will be banned from being involved in any business with him.

The sanction was imposed on December 9 on International Anti-Corruption Day. It came in the midst of the Trump administration intensifying its pressure campaign against China as part of its remaining term.

According to the statement published by the Treasury, Wan set up the headquarters of the World Hongmen History and Culture Association in Cambodia in 2018. "Hongmen" is a global Chinese fra-

ternal organization that was founded in the mid-1600s and now has a foothold around the world.

"The 14K Triad is utilizing Broken Tooth's World Hongmen History and Culture Association as an effort to legitimize itself," the Treasury said.

The government department pointed out that the association has a powerful business network that is involved in the development and launch of cryptocurrencies, real estate, and a security company specialized in protecting BRI investments across Southeast Asia.

Wan, now 65, led the 14K Triad

through a diverse range of criminal activities, including drug trafficking, illegal gambling, racketeering, human trafficking and other crimes.

Wan was born in Macau. He was put behind bars for a 14-year sentence in November 1999 on several charges related to murders and bombings carried out in Macau. He was released in 2012.

The Treasury also sanctioned two other people: Liberian senator Harry Varney Gboto-Nambi Sherman for alleged bribery and misappropriation, and Kyrgyz Republic Customs Service official Raimbek Matraimov for money laundering. **MDT**

Gov't expecting MOP29.46b in gaming tax in 2020

THE Macau government anticipates it will collect MOP29.46 billion in gaming taxes from the city's casinos in 2020, 70% less than the forecast of MOP98 billion that was reported in November last year.

The latest forecast was updated in the recent revision to the 2020 budget, which was approved by Legislative Assembly (AL) on December 9.

"Considering that the detrimental impact of Covid-19 on the city's gaming receipt is worse than expected," as stated in the AL document, the authorities readjusted the fiscal budget

and revised the gaming tax tally again to a lower number.

Out of all the gaming taxes the SAR government is to receive from throughout 2020, a total of MOP26.29 billion is expected to come from a direct tax on the city's casino gross gaming revenue (GGR). This is down 71.1% from the previously estimated figure announced in November last year.

Meanwhile, MOP210 million in taxes will derive from taxes on commissions paid to junket operators, dropping 41.7% from the November forecast.

The contributions of ca-

sino operators to special projects, such as urban development plans, the social security system and promoting tourism in the city, is expected to reach just MOP1.5 billion, down 71.1% from last year's forecast.

In the last 10 months of this year, the SAR government reaped MOP24.3 billion in gaming taxes, representing a sharp drop of 74% from the same period last year, according to the Financial Services Bureau (DSF).

The city's accumulated GGR from January to November was MOP52.62 billion, which

dropped sharply by 80.5% year-on-year, according to the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ).

The updated GGR is still a far cry from the revised annual GGR of MOP130 billion for 2020 and had already adjusted been from the initial MOP260 billion.

Macau has been known

to have one of the highest gaming taxation rates in the world, with a direct tax rate of 35% and an effective tax rate of 39% on GGR, including various levies.

In the newly-approved budget plan, the government will commit another MOP8.1 billion to cover expenses in December 2020. **MDT**

2021 ESTIMATED REVENUE DOWN TO MOP95.81 BILLION

THE new law text of the 2021 budget submitted by the government has adjusted the general comprehensive budget revenue from 96.03 billion patacas to 95.81 billion patacas. The budget balance was also adjusted from the original 850 million patacas to 600 million patacas. Yesterday, the First Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) held another meeting discussing the government's budget for 2021. The government has proposed allocating 26.6 billion patacas from the financial reserve to address the public administration deficit.

LIMBO WINS BEST FILM IN IFFAM

BEN Sharrock's *Limbo* won Best Film in the 5th International Film Festival & Awards - Macao, while Hirokazu Kore-eda was honoured for his achievements in film with the festival's 'Spirit of Cinema' award. The winning film, *Limbo*, was awarded a USD60,000 prize.

The film festival digitally screened 31 feature films

this year, including 11 in the International Competition section.

Meanwhile, Kore-eda said in his acceptance speech: "It is 25 years since I became a film director. Recently there have been many chances to receive these kinds of awards. Besides being ecstatic, I feel that my hard work has finally paid off. In the days to

come, I hope to continue to create and produce more movies, and continue the spirit of creativity and hard work."

The annual event was held virtually from December 3 to 8.

Commenting on the festival, Mike Goodridge, artistic director of IFFAM, said: "It was a daunting challenge for the whole



IFFAM team to take the festival online, but we are happy with the results and have received great feedba-

ck from the people of Macau and Hong Kong who have been enjoying the programme." **LV**

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

REACHING OUT!

+19,500

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報
Times

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

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

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com
ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR
Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

Advertisement advertising@macaudailytimes.com

For subscription and general issues:

general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

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

As a large-scale integrated enterprise deeply rooted in Macao, Wynn has been actively engaged in long-term partnerships with local small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for many years. During this year's pandemic, Wynn has been particularly attentive to the difficulties faced by SMEs, and has proposed various targeted efforts and support measures to help enterprises overcome these challenges and seize all opportunities to facilitate their business upgrade and transformation, thereby enabling them to keep pace with development trends in the post-pandemic era.

FORUM HOSTED TO DISCUSS NEW TRENDS IN E-COMMERCE

Wynn hosted the "2020 Wynn E-Commerce Forum and Local SME Procurement Partnership Meeting" last month where industry experts and local enterprises shared innovative business strategies and ideas on how to use new technology to transform and upgrade local industries, thereby enhancing market competitiveness. The event was well received and attracted attendance from over 300 local enterprises.

Linda Chen, Vice Chairman and Executive Director of Wynn Macau, Limited, gave a speech at the meeting where she said "This year, the global economy has been hit hard by the pandemic. Nevertheless, the new economic model of online marketing has at the same time demonstrated rapid global growth. In recognition of this, Wynn invited representatives from two world-renowned online marketing enterprises, Douyin and Alibaba Cloud, to share and discuss in depth how local SMEs can further e-commercialize and digitalize their businesses, as well as transcend geographical boundaries to develop beyond Macao, in this new era and new economy."

INDUSTRY EXPERTS INVITED TO SHARE INNOVATIVE BUSINESS IDEAS

The E-Commerce Forum included a sharing session and a round-table forum where Antonio Leong, Business Development Manager at Alibaba Cloud Intelligence International Macau, and Juan Wu, Strategy Director at Douyin, took the lead as keynote speakers. They shared an in-depth analysis and case studies on hot topics such as cloud computing technology, digital transformation for SMEs, online marketing models and promotion strategies amid the post-pandemic period.

Hosted by Mai Pang, Head



Wynn Supports Digital Transformation of Local SMEs

of the Economic Cooperation Division of the Macao Economic Bureau, the round-table forum invited key experts in the field, including Victor Mak, Lead Solution Architect at Alibaba Cloud Intelligence International Macau, who is an information technology veteran with 10 years of experience, to share and exchange valuable experience on important topics. These included the potential challenges and opportunities faced by SMEs in the process of digital transformation, as well as methods by which e-commerce platforms can be used to expand markets and seize development opportunities in the Greater Bay Area.

M-MARK ENTERPRISES ENCOURAGED TO EXPAND ONLINE MARKETING

In order to promote and encourage SMEs in Macao to continuously improve their use of technology and service standards, Wynn launched the "Wynn 'M-Mark' Promotion and Recognition Program" in cooperation with the Macao Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Association of Macau and Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Center (CPTTM) in October. Helena Lai, Senior Manager of the CPTTM, was invited to introduce the latest developments of the "M-Mark" certification, alongside a representative selection of 'M-Mark'-certified Wynn suppliers who were asked to share their experiences. The event attracted nearly 100



Antonio Leong (left) Business Development Manager at Alibaba Cloud Intelligence International Macau and Juan Wu (right) Strategy Director at Douyin

representatives from local enterprises.

Linda Chen stated, "The 'M-Mark' Promotion and Recognition Program further demonstrates Wynn's confidence in the certification of quality products in Macao. It also aims to help promote enterprises that have successfully acquired the 'M-Mark' certification for

the first time by providing them with support to set up professional e-commerce services that assist them in developing their online marketing channels, as well as collaborating with young entrepreneurs to allow those enterprises to gain access to a free-of-charge innovative consumption reward platform to promote their brands."

ONLINE ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DISTINCTIVE OLD SHOPS

Wynn launched the "Caring 8000" campaign in May this year, featuring mini games and a lucky draw operated through WeChat, to encourage more Macao residents to spend at local SMEs and, at the same time, offer Macao's distinctive old shops more opportunities in online business promotion and thereby enjoy the benefits brought by online marketing.

So far, more than 800 high-quality merchants in Macao have been successfully invited to participate in the "Caring 8000" initiative. These merchants can leverage the campaign's online platform to launch promotions, provide real-time business information and up-to-date offers, and attract residents to shop at their stores.



DEMOCRAT GROUP WANTS SECURITY IN CAREER, HOUSING PROSPECTS IN YOUTH POLICY

ANTHONY LAM

LOCAL democrat group New Macau Association (ANM) has cited Hong Kong and Taiwan as examples to prove that Macau should include youth careers and housing prospects, among other issues, in next decade's youth policies.

Represented by Director-General Icy Kam and Vice Directors-General Sulu Sou and Rocky Chan, the ANM expressed its "disappointment" at a press conference yesterday.

Sou added that the disappointment is mainly related to the fact that a number of existing elements found in the youth policies of this decade have been dropped or trivialized in the proposed policies for next decade.

Sou took the paragraphs related to "critical thinking" – which in Chinese has no direct connotation with the practice – as an example. The Chinese term used by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, which is the main entity responsible for the consultation, is "the ability to examine and distinguish."

"After extensive verification, we were finally able to confirm that the Chinese term actually refers to critical thinking," Sou said. Sou pointed out that the current consultation text should restore vision to the



current youth policies, which include: "cultivating a young generation with independent thinking and a critical spirit, as well as innovation and constructive capabilities" and "jointly creating a high-quality humanistic and social environment."

Chan took the same stance, saying that in order to achieve their vision of enhancing young people's sense of belonging and participation in society, the government has several responsibilities, namely strengthening young people's awareness of human rights, and democratic literacy. Drawing a causal link, he added that youth can fully understand their civil rights and the corresponding responsibilities and obligations, and can also attain a deeper understanding of local

history, geography, culture, and political, economic and social development.

"As such, the spirit of caring and participating in society can be cultivated and their social identity can gradually be established," Chan concluded, adding that reform and inclusion are the keys to increasing youths' care for the society in which they live.

According to a previous study commissioned by the government, most youth in Macau are not members of any youth association. However, the ANM noted the government regularly takes opinions from such associations into account, leaving most young voices unheard.

Kam cited the examples of Hong Kong and Taiwan to demonstrate the inferiority of the

local consultation process. For instance, in Taiwan, the youth policy consultation is led by its chief administrative entity.

In Macau, the consultation is led by the education regulator, which has no authority to order the other bureaus to cooperate. Nonetheless, the policies proposed concern more than a dozen of government entities which are not necessarily all under the same secretary.

Furthermore, Kam noted that the youth policies in Hong Kong have focuses on education, career and housing needs, as well as deliberation, debate and participation in politics. These elements are absent in the local consultation text.

The public consultation period on the "Macau Youth Policy (2021-2030)" will end today.

TESTING UNDERWAY FOR BUS RECORDING DEVICES

JULIE ZHU

SOME of the city's public buses are currently equipped with voice recording devices, but Director of the Transport Bureau (DSAT) Lam Hin San says that the authority has no intention of establishing new laws to regulate voice recordings inside buses, according to a report by TDM.

Yesterday, Lam made some comments on various bus-related topics, including bus recording devices.

The new bus contract between the government and bus companies requires buses to be equipped with voice recording devices. According to Lam, some buses are already equipped with voice recording devices and these devices are being tested currently.

From the perspective of the transport authority, installing voice recording devices inside buses is meant to enhance safety and to record what is happening inside the vehicles. As a result, the purpose of installing voice recording devices inside public buses is different from equipping taxis with a recording system. Thus the transport authority has no intention, at the current stage, of establishing laws for bus recording devices.

The operation of bus recording devices must comply with the city's personal data protection law.

Meanwhile, bus company TCM will only officially use the recording devices after approval is received from the personal data protection authority. The new bus contract will come into effect on January 1, and it is uncertain whether the operation of bus recording devices will start on the same day.

Each bus will be equipped with six recording devices. All the collected data will be retained by the bus company and will be erased every 10 days.

Gov't makes 'largest scale' amendment in 30 years to stamp duty law

JULIE ZHU

THE Third Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) believes that the government has just made the biggest changes to the city's stamp duty policy in 30 years.

Yesterday, the committee held a reading session on the amendment of the stamp duty policies.

In October 2019, the city's lawmakers passed the amendment of the stamp tax laws and the stamp duty general table.

The amendment proposed setting up a two-year transitional period to abolish stamp duty, to



abolish multiple specific types of stamp duty, and to increase the minimum administrative penalty fee against parties which fail

to fulfil tax obligations, proposing that the penalty increase from the current 100 patacas to 1,000 patacas.

In addition, the bill also proposes imposing stamp duty on the transfer of the right to use shops, places or other spaces in com-

mercial centers in order to prevent the loopholes inherent within the current law arising under the amended scheme.

Moreover, if there is a clause in the real estate lease stipulating that a dispute should be resolved through voluntary arbitration, the stamp duty can be halved, and the real estate lessor can also pay stamp duty based on an annual installment.

The chairman of the Third Standing Committee of the AL, Vong Hin Fai, characterized the amendment as the "amendment of the largest scale and the most systematic [nature] over the past 30 years."

At yesterday's meeting, the committee discussed the latest version of the law text submitted by the government.

PUBLIC RAISES QUESTIONS ON '195 CAREER'

Yesterday morning, the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) also held a meeting discussing the civil servants' career regime.

Following previous meetings, the committee has received a number of letters from members of the public asking about the "195 career."

Members of the public pointed out that the civil servants' career regime has not mentioned what happens to those without a high school degree but university degrees.

According to Chan Chak Mo, Chairman of the Second Standing Committee of the AL, the government will adjust the law text based on the opinions.

Bubble Up your Festive Spirit at MGM



Make this your ultimate Holiday calendar! MGM COTAI has dressed up and turned into a candy house this winter! Start humming the best Christmas carols at the 7.3 meters tall Chocolate Fountain at Anytime. Celebrate this magical season with major sweetness and warm to the heart highlights, from festive face painting to cute little gifts at MGM this year.



Kick off this holiday, rejoice and be merry at the Spectacle with Carols, Festive Symphony with the Macao Orchestra, the local school choir and ARI & The Party Animals. From traditional, classics to modern favorites, there will be something for everyone this winter to get in the mood of the holidays!



Live Festive Symphony

If you are looking for something more of a Christmas tradition, watch the lovely children performing holiday ballet and immerse in the Tchaikovsky vibe, an absolute all-time favorite among audiences of all ages. Don't let the excitement end here! Continue with the immersive Sino Portuguese cultural experience at Grande Praça at MGM MACAU and enjoy a 40-min storytelling puppet show. Be sure to bring your family along!



Children's Ballet "The Gift at the Spectacle"



The Story Vendor at Mini Lisbon

After all the WOW performances, it is time we create something sweet and lovely to decorate this winter season. Keep the festive vibe going with Christmassy workshops including pinecone Christmas tree, floral decorations and framed 3D starry night lamp at 'M Art at MGM COTAI. Unleash your creativity and make your own decorations! Happiness never ends, complete your end-of-year holidays with celebratory menus such as themed afternoon tea, special teppanyaki omakase, festive buffet and more at our signature restaurants!



Light up your Winter Wonderland - Yolanda Kog

Let's raise the festive cheer and spirit with lots of live entertainment, special performances, workshops and celebratory dining at MGM.

MORE DETAILS



mgm.mo

New group of Macau racers ready to prove

RENATO MARQUES

A new batch of Macau racers is ready to start racing and challenge themselves against other competitors in their categories.

Starting from square one, which in motorsports is to say from kart racing, these young boys and girls are keen to move from training sessions to racing sessions as soon as racing events, which were halted due to the Covid-19 pandemic, resume.

To learn more about the first steps to becoming a race driver, the Times went to the Coloane Karting Track to get to know these youngsters aiming to carry the Macau flag to the top of the podium and follow in the footsteps of names such as André Couto, Rodolfo Ávila, and Charles Leong, just to mention a few that have achieved stardom.

Among the older teenage boys on the track, one young girl draws your attention. Her name is Vernice Lao. She is 10 years old and she is fast; this could well be her short biographical presentation.

After a training session where she accurately executed the ins-

tructions of her coach Cheong Chi Hou, one of the current top racers in Macau, Lao explained to the Times that she started karting in 2019 at 9 years old. Her passion for racing was triggered by her father, who took her to the Coloane Track to see the races.

Helped by her mother, Lao explained that she had tried playing with karts at the time, but she was too short to reach the accelerator and brake pedals. But after she grew a little, Lao's father decided to invest in making a kart suitable for her age and height, and she could not have been happier.

"I started driving karts last year. It's very exciting and very interesting. I always want to come back to the track to drive the kart," Lao said. "I want to join races as soon as possible and I think I have a good chance of winning."

Not only does Lao think she has a good chance, everyone in the karting paddock agrees. Her steady pace, lap times and almost flawless driving around the Coloane track foreshadow the many trophies that may come to decorate Lao's shelves.

When asked what about karting interests her, the adrenaline running through her veins

prompts a fast answer. "I like it because it's fast," she said with a smile on her face.

16-year-old racer Edward Lei has also been racing for about a year. For Lei, karting is a way to have fun with friends and to challenge himself mentally and physically for the moment.

Lei said, "I started to drive karts through an introduction from a friend [Maximiano Manhão] who introduced me to karting. I decided to join together with him and other friends."

Sharing Lao's passion for speed and excitement, Lei said, "Motorsports is so exciting, the speed but also the technology behind it is very captivating. Besides, it is such a physical sport [which people have no idea of until they try it]." He added that fun is the most important element for him at the moment, though he also thinks about joining racing events soon.

Ethan Chang is one of the less experienced racers in the group, and started to drive karts about a month ago. Chang told the Times about his first impression of karting and his goals in the sport.

"I thought it would be slower. I got too excited in my first run,

going at full speed, and I ended up in the grass," he recalls. "After that, I got used to the feeling. It is really fun and intense at the same time."

Analyzing his current performance, Chang noted that he feels that he is not yet going fast enough, "but I will continue to try to improve that and try to catch up to the other boys on the track."

Questioned as to whether he had previous experience in driving from computer simulators and how that experience compares to the reality on the track, Chang said, "Reality is very different [from computer simulations] and is a lot more exciting."

Recalling what led him to start driving karts, Chang said that he loves the idea and the feeling of driving. Since he is not old enough to have a driving license and to drive a car on the road, he started engaging in this sport when he was in the U.S..

"I started in these go-karts. They were electric powered and they were also very slow when compared to the kart that I am driving here. This kart is really fast and also it relaxes me in a way, as it gets my mind off everything else. I focus only on the dri-

ving and during that time I can free my mind from homework, exams, and all the school-related things. It takes my stress away completely. For the whole week, I look forward to karting," Chang explained.

Carlos Batista has been racing since July this year. The young racer said that driving a kart is a great experience and a great opportunity for the petrol head since a young age.

"I remember liking cars and racing since I was a baby. My father would hold me in his lap so we could watch the Formula One races together," Batista said, adding that he decided to try karting after a conversation with his father earlier this year.

"Apart from the [pure] speed and the driving, I am a quite competitive person and I like to race others," he noted, saying that he looks forward to being able to join races and to be awarded trophies.

Maximiano Manhão is also new to karting, but demonstrating great progress. Manhão is the son of a former local racer and a current Macau Grand Prix Rescue Car driver. His karting skills evolved very quickly, and

AD



BNU CORPORATE
企業服務

Easily manage your everyday business finances online

Business Online Banking

Accounts Inquiry · Payroll · Remittances
Tax & Contribution Payments · E-statements
Bank Draft · Cheque Book Request
Transactions Approval Status

Enquiry **2833 5533**

Login Business Online Banking
bnu.com.mo

BNU
Banco Nacional Ultramarino
大西洋銀行



仁德 *CENTRO MÉDICO PEDDER*
◆ 仁德醫療中心 ◆

We bring high quality of medical service to Macau

General Surgery : Dr. Fok Manson, Dr. Lai Cheuck Seen Edward, Dr. Lau Wing Kee Peter, Dr. Kwong Man, Dr. Nie Fu Zhong, Dr. U Chong San, Dr. Lei Chin Chong

Breast Surgery : Dr. Leong Iat Lun

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

Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

Paediatrics : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

Obstetrics & Gynaecology : Dr. Fong Kuan Io

Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery : Dr. Lam U Lin

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

ENT : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

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

General Medicine : Dr. Ng Kam Hong, Dr. Lam Weng Chio

Dietitian : Chan Lai U Joey

Avenida da Praia Grande No 599, Edifício Comercial Rodrigues 14 e 15 Andar, em Macau
T. 2832 2298 / 2832 2229 Website: www.peddermacau.com
Opening Hours: Mon - Fri 10:00 - 19:00 Sat 10:00 - 14:00 Sun & PH closed

themselves as soon as racing restarts

RENATO MARQUES



Top, from left: Carlos Batista, Edward Lei, Maxi Manhão and Ethan Chang - Bottom left: Vernice Lao - Bottom right: Team owner Daniel Tam

To start karting, the first step is always to become a member of the Macau motorsports governing body – the Automobile General Association Macao China, explains Tam. “Nowadays you cannot just come to the track and say to the staff that you want to drive as if you want to drive rental go-karts [which is possible during some hours]. You must be 18 years old and have a driving license. But this is different from driving racing karts,” he said.

“Besides joining the [motorsports] association, if you are underage you need to get an authorization from your parents. From then on we follow the CIK (Commission Internationale de Karting) procedures for sports licensing and to start driving.”

Questioned as to what the right age for learning to drive racing karts is, Tam said that recruits should be around eight years old. “It is possible to start younger than that in a Cadet car, but that’s mostly to have fun and understand the basics, and above all, to ensure that the young racer won’t fear the car when he or she needs to go out on track for the first time. Some young kids are very enthusiastic at first but as soon as they sit in the car and the engine starts, they get scared and they want to jump out, as reality is completely different from what they play in the videogames,” he said.

As Tam explained, the first sessions are done at the trackside in a small kart that the instructor can control at all times through a rope that he can pull, making the back wheels of the kart lift from the floor and stop immediately if necessary. This is done until the young trainee driver earns the ability to autonomously control their car.

“After that, they start to go on the track. The first sessions are led by a coach in a kart that will teach them where to turn, where to brake, to get familiar with the track. Only after those stages are passed do we provide a better and quicker kart for them,” Tam said.

“Manhão and Lei started just like that, in Rotax karts, very slowly and carefully. I told them, as I always do to new drivers: the kart is not a toy, it is a piece of sports equipment with which you need to be very careful, otherwise you risk hurting yourself and other drivers and causing damage,” he explained, adding that racing is a remarkable sport for learning how to be responsible and respectful, as these aspects also form part of the training.

“It’s also our responsibility to teach sportsmanship,” Tam concluded.

in just a few training sessions, he climbed the leader of the karting categories from the Rotax Max category (125cc engine without gearbox) to a KZ (top category karting with a 125cc engine equipped with a six-speed gearbox).

To the Times, Manhão simply explained, “I love karts, I love the adrenaline of going fast.” He noted that besides that, being involved with kart racing is also a very good opportunity to learn more about the mechanics and other aspects of racing besides driving.

“It’s all a very good learning process and for me, it’s perfect as I learn better when I’m working.

I prefer that to sitting in class and learning from reading only. I like hands-on learning,” Manhão said.

His fast evolution on the track has made the youngster think about more than just racing for fun, and he admits that he is aiming to race and perform well.

“I will of course try to improve and be better than all the others. I like the competition and I will fight for the best position possible,” he said, anticipating upcoming opportunities to finally move from practicing to racing.

“I hope I can do some races next year [since this year that was

not possible due to the cancellation of all the race events]. I am a bit nervous about the first race and about not knowing what to expect, but it’s a good nervous,” Manhão remarked.

TALENT EXISTS, REALIZATION DEPENDS ON SUPPORT FROM MACAU AND FAMILIES

Local youngsters have enough talent and can be trained to be successful at racing, but these achievements ultimately dependent on support from their families and Macau, says Solar Racing Team owner Daniel Tam.

Tam, who has been working in

this field for many years, thinks that without such support, namely at the financial level, talent will be lost because motorsport is an expensive sport and requires investment to achieve higher goals.

“These kids are all very new to the sport and they are all very talented. If they were not, I would not accept them [in my team]. It’s as simple as that because I don’t want to waste time for them, for the parents and myself,” Tam said, adding, “If they are good – which they are – I am willing to teach them and support with all my [resources].”

ELECTORAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION TO BE SET UP BY MONTH'S END

IN accordance with the law, the Electoral Affairs Commission for the Legislative Assembly Election will be established by the end of this year, Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon told reporters yesterday.

Cheong said the government is now laying the groundwork for the seventh Legislative Assembly Election in 2021. The preparatory work, with regards to voter registration and the Commission, has gone well so far, Cheong added.

In light of the pandemic, authorities will also formulate a Covid-19 prevention plan for the election period, he said.

"It is hard to predict how the epidemic will go [next year] during the election period. We will zero in on both electoral endeavors and prevention measures against Covid-19," he said.

The 2021 Legislative Assembly Election will be



Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon

scheduled after the summer holiday and before October, Cheong said.

The Legislative Assembly Election law stipulates that the Commission, which

comprises of a chairman and at least five other members, must be appointed by the Chief Executive a year before the election year. All members of the Commission

are required to be permanent residents of Macau.

The quadrennial Legislative Assembly Election was last held on September 17, 2017.

LAWMAKERS' AGENDA

WU CHOU KIT DENIES SULU'S SENTIMENTS ON WHISTLEBLOWERS

RENATO MARQUES

IN an unusual occurrence on Wednesday, lawmaker Wu Chou Kit used some of his speaking time to reply to a spoken inquiry that another lawmaker had made to the government earlier.

The event occurred at the Legislative Assembly (AL) during the period before the agenda, when Wu, after presenting his spoken inquiry, took the last few seconds of his time to address the plenary and reply to Sulu Sou. Sou had questioned the government over the need to protect so-called "whistleblowers," especially in cases involving corruption or unlawful activities performed by government officials.

Sou noted that most cases of corruption and other unlawful activities that cause harm to society

are often revealed by people with inside knowledge on the topic or by the media.

The lawmaker called on the government to establish a Whistleblower Protection Act locally, similar to those that exist in other jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Japan, to protect the whistleblowers who are essential for the revelation of the truth.

Wu replied almost immediately to Sou's inquiry, stating that the local corruption watchdog and audit committee already possess similar mechanisms, denying the idea articulated by Sou that potential whistleblowers in Macau are under pressure and often refrain from revealing their knowledge of corruption and other cases due to fear of retaliation.

AD

CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT OF GIVING AT LANDMARK

Discover the perfect gift to delight your loved ones!

Unlimited rewards await you! From 20th November until 31st December, earn Christmas Rewards of up to 7%.

DISCOVER MORE

LANDMARK Terms and conditions. Hongkong Land

2020名優商品展
GuangDong & Macao Branded Products Fair

www.guangdongmacao.fair.com

Opening Hours:
11/12/2020 11:00-20:00
12-13/12/2020 10:00-20:00

11 - 13 / 12 / 2020
The Venetian Macao - Expo Hall A

Organisers: Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute, Department of Commerce of Guangdong Province

Free Admission

Grand Opening
Amazing Shopping Carnival of GMBPF, with a Variety of Activities and Numerous Discounts!

Welcome to Our Carnival

2nd Prize: APPLE iPhone 12 Pro Max 256GB
1st Prize: YAMAHA Vespa
3rd Prize: PS5

Event Program of Guangdong & Macao Branded Products Fair (GMBPF)

11 December Friday

Time	Event	Venue
10:00-11:00	Opening Ceremony	The Grand Stage
11:00-12:00	Forum on Technology Innovation Cooperation and Industry Collaborative Development in Guangdong Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay Area	
13:30-15:40	Magic Performance - Magic Leo	The Grand Stage
15:40-16:00	Product Promotion: Chip Beng Coffee	
16:00-16:20	Product Promotion: Yuxie (Zhuhai) Biotechnology Co., Ltd	
16:30-18:30	Local Singer - Sophia	

12 December Saturday

Time	Event	Venue
11:00-12:30	Christmas Cookies Handmade Workshop	Beside Guangdong and Macao Gourmet Channel Area
14:40-15:00	Magic Performance - Magic Leo	The Grand Stage
	Duet - Sui & Si	
	Creative Marketing Seminar • Power of Branding - Thoughts of Macao Enterprises on Brand Building • Brand Image and Packaging Design • The Importance of Food Photography	
16:00-16:30	Four Over Coffee Handmade Workshop	
16:30-18:00	Bacalhou Entertainment Kitchen	Beside Guangdong and Macao Gourmet Channel Area
18:30-18:45	Youth Dance Performance	The Grand Stage
18:45-17:00	Product Promotion: K Three Idea Company Limited	
17:00-17:20	Product Promotion: Guangdong Cookway Technology Co., Ltd	
18:00-18:30	Local Singer - Cherry	
18:30-18:35	Local Singer - Cherry	
18:35-18:38	Percussion Music	

13 December Sunday

Time	Event	Venue
14:40-15:00	Percussion Music	The Grand Stage
15:00-15:20	Product Promotion: Navel Technology Group Co., Ltd	
15:20-15:40	Product Promotion: Pinnacle Chain (Macau) Technology	
16:00-18:00	Bacalhou Entertainment Kitchen	Beside Guangdong and Macao Gourmet Channel Area
17:00-18:00	Local Singer - Makiy Duet - Sui & Si	The Grand Stage
18:00-18:30	Local Singer - Makiy	
18:30-18:35	Duet - Sui & Si	
18:35-18:38	Local Singer - Makiy	
18:38-18:45	Local Singer - Makiy	
18:45-18:48	Local Singer - Makiy	

*For Reference Only

Hotline (853) 8798 9636
Coordinator: Creation Advertising Co., Ltd.

Authority says two Canadians have been indicted, tried



CHINA'S Foreign Ministry said yesterday that two Canadians who have been held for two years in a case linked to a Huawei executive have been indicted and put on trial, but gave no details.

Former diplomat Michael Kovrig and businessman Michael Spavor have been confined since December 10, 2018, just days after Canada detained Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, who is also the daughter of the founder of the Chinese telecommunications equipment giant.

Asked about the Canadians at a daily briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said the two had been "arrested, indicted and tried," in what appeared to be the first public mention that they had been brought to court.

Chinese prosecutors had announced earlier this year that Kovrig had been charged on suspicion of spying for state secrets and intelligence, and Spavor on suspicion of spying for a foreign entity and illegally providing state secrets.

Neither China nor Canada

has released specifics about their cases.

Canada detained Meng at the request of the United States, which is seeking her extradition to face fraud charges.

Hua said her case and those of the Canadians were "different in nature," with Meng's being a "purely political incident." Despite that, China has consistently linked the fate of the two Canadians to its demands that Meng be released immediately.

Canadian Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne issued a statement Wednesday marking their two years of captivity, saying: "These two Canadians are an absolute priority for our government, and we will continue to work tirelessly to secure their immediate release and to stand up for them as a government and as Canadians."

"I am struck by the integrity and strength of character the two have shown as they endure immense hardship that would shake anyone's faith in humanity," Champagne said.

Meng's arrest severely damaged relations between Canada and China, which has

sentenced two other Canadians to death and suspended imports of canola from Canada.

Meng, the chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies, is living in a luxury Vancouver home while her extradition case continues in a British Columbia court. The U.S. accuses Huawei of using a Hong Kong shell company to deceive banks and do business with Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions.

It's not publicly known where Kovrig and Spavor are being held or under what conditions, although Canada's ambassador to China testified to a House of Commons committee this week that they were "robust."

Canadian diplomats had been denied all access to the two men from January to October because of coronavirus precautions cited by the Chinese side. On-site visits were banned and not even virtual visits were permitted.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who has described China's approach as coercive diplomacy, spoke last month with U.S. President-elect Joe Biden about the case of the two men and said he expects Biden to be a good partner in persuading Beijing to release them.

Canada's Foreign Ministry did not immediately reply to an emailed request for comment on Hua's remarks. AP

Digital Minister: Taiwan to guard privacy

HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

TAIWAN plans to create an independent agency to enforce digital privacy, a Cabinet minister says, tackling an increasingly urgent issue as countries step up surveillance during the pandemic.

Taiwan is one of Asia's most robust democracies and has been praised for its outbreak response, which has kept its death toll at seven. But privacy advocates object to measures used to track the public and say there are too few safeguards for personal information.

The proposed council, if approved by lawmakers, would have power to enforce privacy rules, Audrey Tang, who is in charge of open government initiatives and social innovation, told The Associated Press in an interview.

President Tsai Ing-wen said creating such a body would be a priority



Taiwan's Digital Minister Audrey Tang

following her re-election in January. The opposition Nationalist Party made a similar proposal to the legislature this month.

The agency "will truly be independent," reporting directly to the head of Tsai's Cabinet, Tang said yesterday.

Other governments including China and South Korea track the public with smartphone apps, credit

cards and other technology. In Europe, governments have faced strong public resistance to tracking apps due to privacy concerns.

The United States is wrestling with how to enforce data privacy following thefts from corporate and government databases. The Trump administration is pressing the Chinese owner of video service TikTok to sell its U.S. unit and

is trying to bar messaging service WeChat from the country on the grounds that they might gather too much personal data about Americans.

In Taiwan, authorities use a system dubbed an "electric fence" based on cell phone location data to track people who are supposed to be quarantined. It alerts police if the person's phone leaves a design-

nated area.

Taiwan is one of the world's most digitally connected societies with an internet penetration rate of around 82%, according to government survey in 2017. The global penetration rate for internet usage was 53.6% in 2019, according to the U.N. International Telecommunication Union.

Taiwan's Central Epidemic Command Center was given expanded powers to take "necessary response measures" under legislation enacted in April.

Privacy activists expressed concern about merging of databases to give the epidemic agency information including about immigration. They said there should be limits on how data could be used or how long it would be held.

"The criticism is valid," Tang said. However, she said the government has set up no new data collection and instead relied on data-

bases such as health insurance cards and a disaster warning system that already were in place.

Tang said Taiwan's lack of a central agency to enforce digital privacy prevents it from qualifying for the top level of information sharing with the European Union under the 27-nation trade bloc's stringent data protection rules.

Taiwan's approach was "a balance between collectivism and individualism," Tang said.

"The most we can do during that fight of a pandemic is not to make the norm even more destructive for privacy purposes," she said.

Tang was an entrepreneur and activist for open government before joining Tsai's Cabinet.

In a Twitter message to U.S. President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in November, Tang said, "Governments around the world can start with one simple principle: trust the citizens more." AP

AP PHOTO



POMPEO UNLOADS ON US UNIVERSITIES FOR CHINA TIES

MATTHEW LEE, WASHINGTON

SECRETARY of State Mike Pompeo yesterday (Macau time) accused U.S. universities of caving to Chinese pressure to blunt or bar criticism of the Chinese Communist Party. The attack, which included identifying two university administrators by name, comes as the Trump administration seeks to cement its anti-China policies before leaving office in January.

Pompeo took aim at universities across the U.S., claiming they refused to address the Trump administration's concerns about China's attempts to influence students and academics. He speci-

fically called out the president of MIT, alleging he refused to host Pompeo's speech, and a senior official at the University of Washington over a case involving a Chinese student.

Both universities swiftly and emphatically denied the charges.

Pompeo defended the Trump administration's tough stance on China in remarks at the Georgia Institute of Technology. The speech came less than a month before Georgia's two critical run-off races that will determine control of the Senate.

"Americans must know how the CCP is poisoning the well of our higher education for its own ends, and how those actions de-

grade our freedoms and our national security. If we don't educate ourselves, we'll get schooled by Beijing," he said. "They know that left-leaning college campuses are rife with anti-Americanism, and present easy target audiences for their anti-American messaging."

Pompeo has been a champion of the administration's hardline stance on Chinese policies in Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong, the western region of Xinjiang and the South China Sea, and he has made similar pronouncements before. He has imposed multiple layers of sanctions on Chinese officials; restricted visas for Chinese diplomats, journalists and academics; and lobbied other countries

to reject Chinese high-tech communications.

But his comments were striking in that he named the two American university officials as complicit in alleged Chinese malfeasance.

Pompeo said he had initially wanted to give his Georgia Tech speech at MIT, but the president of the renowned scientific institution, Rafael Reif, had turned him down for fear of offending Beijing.

"MIT wasn't interested in having me give this speech on their campus," Pompeo said. "President Rafael Reif implied that my arguments might insult their ethnic Chinese students and professors."

MIT spokeswoman Kimberly Allen rejected Pompeo's assertion, saying the university declined to host the speech because of coronavirus restrictions. She said several other prospective high-level events had also been rejected.

Reif "had real concerns that a high-level visit might not only draw crowds but suggest to students that MIT was not taking its own rules seriously," she said. "President Reif verbally conveyed MIT's decision — based on a commitment to the health of our students and our surrounding community — with his deep regrets."

Pompeo also criticized Sarah Castro, the University of Washington's director of federal relations, for allegedly refusing to help Vera Zhou, a student of Chinese origin who had been detained in China in 2017, so as not to jeopardize a "multimillion-dollar deal" between the university and Beijing.

"Now, thank God, Vera was eventually released, and returned to the U.S.," Pompeo said of the student. "But no thanks to the University of Washington, and no thanks to its deal with China."

A statement from university spokesman Victor Balta called Pompeo's remarks a "shameful" and "outrageous" deflection by an administration that took "no effective action" on behalf of Zhou.

"That the Secretary of State would think a university has more power in this situation than the United States government is bizarre," he said. "That he would single out a staff member by name is unbecoming of the office and his statement is flatly wrong."

The university has no record of contact from the State Department regarding any negotiation with China, Balta said, and officials don't know what "multimillion-dollar deal" Pompeo was referencing. He added that, as of this quarter, Zhou is again enrolled at the university. **AP**

Authorities to sanction US officials, curb some diplomat travel

CHINA said it will sanction more U.S. officials and place new travel restrictions on American diplomats in retaliation for measures taken by the Trump administration over Hong Kong.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying didn't provide specific names of those sanctioned, but said they included people in the executive and legislative branches and their immediate families, as well as non-government organizations. China would also revoke visa-free entry to Hong Kong and Macau for U.S. diplo-

matic passport holders, Hua told a regular briefing in Hong Kong yesterday.

The U.S. announced sanctions Monday against 14 members of China's National People's Congress, the country's rubber-stamp legislature, as President Donald Trump tries to ratchet up pressure on Beijing before President-elect Joe Biden takes office. The U.S. has taken a slew of actions against Beijing in recent weeks, including restricting travel visas for Communist Party members and banning cotton imports from a military-linked firm in Xinjiang.

A spokesperson at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing declined to comment on China's latest sanctions but referred to a statement expressing concerns about Beijing's actions toward the financial hub.

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. Prominent activists Joshua Wong and Agnes

Chow were also sentenced to prison 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.

While Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam has complained about U.S. sanctions limiting her access to banking services, many American officials targeted by China's "firm countermeasures" have seen little impact other than the assumption that they wouldn't be welcomed in China. Beijing's ability to hit back is limited by the

BLOOMBERG



U.S. dollar's dominance in international finance.

The greenback accounted for a far larger share of global banking transactions, as the Communist Party resists calls to ease

currency controls. That makes it more difficult for multinational banks - including China's state-run lenders - to avoid compliance with U.S. sanctions. **BLOOMBERG**

THAILAND

Activists urge UN to help repeal royal defamation laws

CHALIDA
EKVITTHAYAVECHNUKUL,
BANGKOK

PRO-DEMOCRACY demonstrators in Bangkok marked United Nations Human Rights Day yesterday with rallies calling for the abolition of Thailand's strict royal defamation law, which was recently revived to prosecute more than 20 of the protest movement's leaders.

Somyot Prueksakasemsuk, one of the leaders, submitted a letter to the United Nations yesterday urging it to pressure the Thai government to stop using Article 112 of the Thai Criminal Code, which forbids defamation of key members of the monarchy. Somyot, a former magazine editor, was previously imprisoned for seven years for publishing articles deemed to violate the lese majeste law.

"Article 112 is an outdated law that no other countries have endorsed. It prevents people from expressing their opinion freely and the government has used it to destroy its opponents," Somyot said.

Somyot said the pro-democracy group will send representatives



to a U.N. human rights conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in May 2021.

The protests also coincided with Thailand's Constitution Day, a national holiday marking the country's adoption of its first constitution in 1932, which meant that many offices in the city were closed. The demonstrations drew significantly smaller crowds than other recent rallies, which have

attracted tens of thousands of participants.

Ahead of the protests, government security officials erected barricades using shipping containers and barbed wire, and police were deployed to prevent any possible move toward Chitralada Palace, the residence of King Maha Vajiralongkorn.

For months, the student-led protest movement has been

campaigning for Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha and his government to step down, the military-implemented constitution to be amended to make it more democratic, and the monarchy to be reformed.

Many in the movement believe the monarchy, whose fortune is estimated at more than \$40 billion, holds too much power for a constitutional monarchy.

Their challenge is fiercely opposed by royalists, including many in the army, who consider the royal institution an untouchable bedrock of national identity.

A conviction on a lese majeste charge can result in up to 15 years in prison for each offense. The law is controversial in part because anyone — not just royals or authorities — can lodge a complaint, and it has been used as a weapon in political vendettas.

By early afternoon the group that gathered outside the U.N. building had moved to join another one rallying beside a memorial to protesters killed in a crackdown by security forces in 1973.

"Some people were in prison for years just because they spoke the truth," said Parit Chiwarak, one of the protest leaders, speaking about the law protecting the royal family. "We will do everything to get rid of this law and reform the entire system of the monarchy."

The royal defamation law had not been enforced for three years after King Maha Vajiralongkorn informed the government that he did not wish to see its use.

But according to the group Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, 23 people have been charged under the law since Prayuth said last month that it would be among those used against demonstrators going forward.

Prayuth is a former army general who came to power in a 2014 coup and was elected prime minister last year. AP

Australia excluded from global climate meeting as policies lag

JASON SCOTT
& JESSICA SHANKLEMAN

AROUND 70 leaders including Boris Johnson and Emmanuel Macron will use a global climate summit this weekend to outline new pledges to cut greenhouse-gas emissions. Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who supports fossil fuels, will be conspicuously absent.

Morrison wasn't invited to the United Nations Climate Action Summit on Saturday because he hadn't come up with an ambitious enough pledge, according to two people familiar with the matter. The summit marks the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius - a target which the world has yet to achieve.

As a prerequisite for speaking, leaders had to provide a guidance note se-



Prime Minister Scott Morrison

ting out what they would announce. Recent months have seen major emitters including China, South Korea and Japan commit to stop polluting completely by 2060 or sooner. The European Union is debating a target to cut carbon 55% or more by the end of the next decade compared with 1990 levels.

Asked in parliament whether he had been invi-

ted to address the summit, Morrison replied: "Climate and energy policy will be set here in Australia in Australia's national interests - not to get to a speaking slot at some international summit."

'CORRECT THE MISTRUTHS'

Countries that don't come forward with "concrete and ambitious" plans

won't be allowed to speak, U.K. Business Secretary Alok Sharma said last week. "What we're not looking for is general commentary. We're looking for very clear ambition and targets," said Sharma, who is helping to organize the summit in his capacity as president of the next round of global climate talks, known as COP26.

General commentary seems to be exactly what the prime minister of Australia - the world's third-biggest emitter per person -- had been planning to deliver. Last week, he said addressing the summit was "a great opportunity to correct the mistruths" about Australia's record of emissions reduction.

Morrison has spent the year promoting the role of Australia's oil and natural gas exports in pulling the country out of the pandemic-induced recession. That contrasts with annou-

ncements by his three biggest customers - China, Japan and South Korea - that they will pursue net-zero targets.

The summit organizers' decision to exclude Morrison suggests his conservative government's continued support for the fossil-fuel industry, which reaps A\$120 billion in exports a year, is increasingly unpalatable on the world stage. Joe Biden's presidential election victory means the U.S. will join a growing list of nations making the pledge to zero emissions, leaving Australia one of only a handful of developed nations yet to commit.

NET-ZERO GOALS

Around 20 countries are expected to use the summit to announce their new 2030 climate pledges, known as Nationally Determined Contributions, toward reaching the Paris agreed tem-

perature goal. Leaders from regional governments and cities are also set to speak alongside businesses and representatives of civil society, including young people.

"The world is impatiently waiting for Australia" to do more to combat climate change, Christiana Figueres, the former executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, told an online summit last week. Government climate policies over the past decade have put the nation in a "suicidal situation," she said.

"Just because Australia has been depending on coal exports for a large chunk of the income coming from exports doesn't mean that Australia is condemned to continue to depend on that," said Figueres, who is now the director of Mission 2020, a global lobbying group. BLOOMBERG

Pfizer says some vaccine documents accessed in EMA hack

AP PHOTO



TIMOTHY ANNETT
& RILEY GRIFFIN

PFIZER Inc. said it had submitted some documents to Europe's top drug regulator regarding its Covid-19 vaccine had been accessed in a cyber-attack on the agency.

The U.S. drugmaker and German partner BioNTech SE said in a statement they had been told by the European Medicines Agency that some documents relating to the regulatory submission for their experimental vaccine that had been stored on the EMA server had been unlawfully accessed.

The companies said that none of their systems had been breached in connection with the incident and that they are "unaware that any study participants have been identified through the data being accessed."

Pfizer and BioNTech said the EMA informed them that the attack would have no effect on the timing of the vaccine review. Regulators are already evaluating clinical trial data on a rolling basis, and a clearance is expected toward the end of the year.

Pfizer shares closed yesterday down 1.7% to \$41.85 in New York.

The EMA issued a brief statement yesterday (Ma-

cau time) saying that it had been attacked and had "swiftly launched a full investigation, in close cooperation with law enforcement and other relevant entities." It declined further comment.

Moderna Inc., another U.S.-based pharmaceutical company with a comparable Covid-19 vaccine in development, said it hadn't received any notification from the European regulator about a data breach.

"We are engaged with them and monitoring the situation," a company spokesperson said. "Moderna remains highly vigilant to potential cybersecurity threats."

Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna two-dose vaccine regimens rely on a new technology known as messenger RNA. Moderna is slightly behind Pfizer in the race to bring forth an authorized Covid-19 vaccine. The biotechnology company has approached the EMA for a conditional marketing authorization and is also under a rolling review. A clearance could be issued within weeks, according to the EMA.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the American drug regulator, de-

clined to say whether it had been targeted recently by hackers. "Information security and the protection of industry and public health information are among FDA's highest priorities," according to Stephanie Caccamo, media relations director. "The agency is always enhancing its cybersecurity strategies to ensure FDA information security systems provide adequate protection of industry data and public health information on a continual, long-term basis."

The hackers pretended they were from one of the world's largest cold-chain providers

Since the pandemic began, hackers aligned with governments including Russia and China have been accused of targeting companies and research institutions working on Covid-19 research. Cybersecurity researchers at International Business Machines Corp., for instance, recently disclosed that unknown hackers, probably tied to a nation-state, were targeting companies and government agencies involved in vaccine distribution.

The hackers pretended they were from one of the world's largest cold-chain providers, who offer the type of refrigeration necessary for certain vaccines. It wasn't clear if the victims fell for the scam. But if they did, the credentials they stole could help an attacker "gain insight into internal communications, as well as the process, methods and plans to distribute a Covid-19 vaccine," IBM Security said in a statement.

In addition, in November, Microsoft Corp. said hackers in Russia and North Korea had targeted seven "prominent" companies working on vaccines and treatment research. Microsoft, which didn't identify the companies, said

the majority of the attacks were blocked. In July, the U.K., U.S. and Canadian governments accused Russian intelligence of attempting to steal private information from researchers racing to develop a vaccine. And in May, the U.S. government warned that hackers working for the Chinese government were trying to steal research on vaccines and treatments from U.S. health care, pharmaceutical and research organizations. **BLOOMBERG**

this day in history

2001 30,000 POSTAL JOBS 'TO BE CUT'



Up to 30,000 Post Office workers could lose their jobs over the next 18 months, Consignia, the company which runs the service, has announced.

The company previously said it was to launch a £1.2bn cost-cutting package but today's news was the first indication of the scale of the jobs affected.

Consignia's Chief Executive John Roberts made the announcement as he spoke to the House of Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee today.

"We haven't finalised numbers. We could be looking at anything up to 30,000 redundancies," Mr Roberts said.

Mr Roberts said it is hoped the bulk of the cuts would be through natural wastage, voluntary redundancies and contracting out activities like cleaning and catering.

He also said many parcel routes would be franchised out. Consideration would also be given, he said, to transferring mail from trains on to road and air transport.

Earlier this year Consignia announced a reduction of about 10,000 managers' positions with many of the staff affected to be moved to other jobs.

Consignia has been hit by falling profits and lost £281m in the first six months of this year.

It aims to cut costs by 15% by March 2003 in order to stay profitable and inline with competitors.

Bosses blame the losses on the rising popularity of e-mail and text messaging along with the current economic climate and the rail chaos since the Hatfield crash.

Other factors are also said to be the cost of installing post office computers, Parcelforce's losses and the autumn decision not to increase stamp prices.

But Mr Roberts refused to be drawn on whether the company's semi-privatised status had anything to do with its financial difficulties.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The announcement was met with the threat of strike action from postal unions. They argued any compulsory redundancies would force Post Office workers on to the picket line creating further profit slumps for Consignia. The company appointed a new chairman, Allan Leighton, in 2002 to turn round the fortunes of the Post Office and bring it back into profit. He did this but at a cost - 30,000 jobs were cut and thousands of post offices were closed in order to stem losses that peaked at more than £1bn in the year to March 31 2002. The organisation reverted to the name Royal Mail Group plc split into three divisions - Royal Mail, delivering letters, Parcelforce, delivering parcels and Post Office Limited, managing the nationwide network of post office branches as retail outlets. From January 1, 2006, the Royal Mail lost its 350-year monopoly and the UK postal market became fully open to competition.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
All of the enthusiastic people around you might be driving you a bit nuts today. You are simply not feeling the love like they are, and you are in no mood for the pep rally.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Any type of communication will be entertaining today, from emails to short chats to rolled eyes! Sharing the latest news, gossip and controversies with other people is a fun thing to do.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Have you been suspicious of a person who is just outside of your social circle for a while? Their words have not always matched their actions, and their flighty behavior has been driving you nuts.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
When someone reaches out to you today, be as receptive to them as you have time to be. Stifle your urge to not get involved with someone you don't know very well.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
There are a lot of demanding people around you right now. Aren't they in for a surprise when you let them know that you have your own plan, and are going to follow it?

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
You won't be too interested in what the outside world has to offer right now—you'd much rather explore the ideas in your own mind. Creativity is an important part of who you are.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
If you have to spend time with someone who you don't really respect today, try not to be unfriendly. Smile and treat them the way you would like them to treat you.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Today, getting social in a big group of new people is not going to be as appealing to you as staying at home will be. It's not that you will be feeling shy or antisocial.

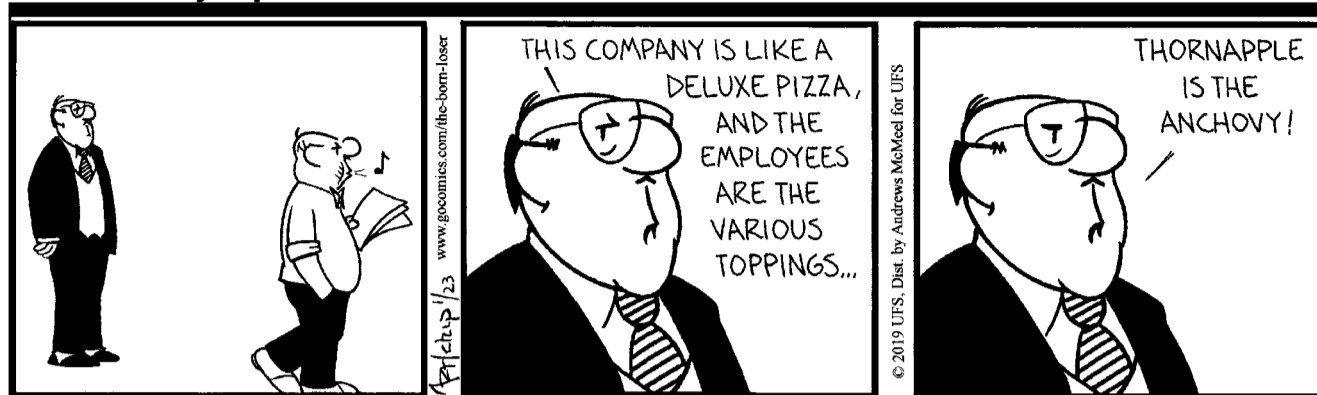
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
You will do a wonderful time of entertaining yourself during lulls in the day, which is a good thing—because there are going to be quite a few. And no one to interrupt them.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Children need to be disciplined in order to grow up to be considerate, mature people—but grownups need order in their lives to stay considerate and mature. There is too much disarray in your life right now.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Have conviction in everything you do today—no matter what it is. Today, you have to commit to what you are doing, even if it's just shopping, visiting a friend, or going to a movie.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You will have a wonderful time just watching the world go by today—there is so much beauty there that you had never noticed before! Your creativity feeds off this type of realization.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-4	5	clear
Harbin	-16	-10	clear
Tianjin	-2	6	clear
Urumqi	-10	-4	cloudy
Xi'an	-2	7	cloudy
Lhasa	-4	15	clear
Chengdu	7	10	overcast
Chongqing	10	12	drizzle
Kunming	7	19	clear
Nanjing	8	10	overcast
Shanghai	10	12	drizzle
Wuhan	4	12	cloudy
Hangzhou	9	11	drizzle
Taipei	20	21	drizzle
Guangzhou	18	23	cloudy
Hong Kong	18	23	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-9	-4	cloudy
Frankfurt	-2	1	flurry
Paris	3	7	drizzle
London	6	10	drizzle
New York	4	11	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Chilean pianist Claudio; 6- Like cool cats; 9- Erupts; 14- Lathers; 15- Aliens, for short; 16- Artificial waterway; 17- Ribbons; 19- Latin stars; 20- Common article; 21- Belinda Carlisle's "Should ___ You In?"; 22- Role for Clark; 23- Fish appendages; 25- Quite bright; 26- Coarse; 29- Mozart's "___ kleine Nachtmusik"; 31- Humbly; 32- Rote procedure; 36- Org.; 37- The French word for "no"; 38- It smells; 40- Slender and pointed; 43- Ultimatum ender; 45- Skilled; 46- Dark brown/red color; 47- Muscat native; 50- Riga resident; 51- Blackboard crayon; 52- Boast; 54- ___ polloi; 57- Capital on the Red River; 58- Person who attacks; 61- Peace goddess; 62- Some NFL linemen; 63- Gush forth; 64- Stun gun; 65- Twosome; 66- Donnybrook;

DOWN: 1- Helper; Abbr.; 2- Portnoy's creator; 3- Hard to find; 4- Copycat; 5- ___ Today; 6- Backs of feet; 7- Raison d' ___; 8- Hey, over here!; 9- Bright red color; 10- Turkish title of old; 11- Computer key; 12- Witchlike; 13- Strip of wood; 18- Like some gum; 23- Amusing; 24- Out of sorts; 25- Bearded beast; 26- ___ little teapot...; 27- Scottish loch, home to a monster; 28- Support for a broken limb; 29- Wear down, physically or emotionally; 30- Electrically charged atom; 33- Sluggish; 34- ___ contender; 35- Canadian gas brand; 37- Latin word meaning "nothing"; 39- Poetic time; 41- Taller and thinner; 42- Kimono accessory; 43- Last Greek letter; 44- Long-tailed rodent; 47- Butler's love; 48- Horse locks; 49- Home ___; Culkin movie; 50- Oater prop; 51- Voucher; 52- Poet; 53- Queue after Q; 54- Auditorium; 55- On a single occasion; 56- Spillane's "___ Jury"; 59- ThinkPad maker; 60- Bruce ___ was a famous kung-fu movie star;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



FOR SALE

Duplex in Central Macau
HK\$4,940,000 1,100 ft² 2 1 1

FOR RENT

Macau Riviera Open View
\$15,000/mth 866 ft² 2 2 2

Rain Dance Property
"We dance until it's SOLD!"

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

PROPERTY LIST

- [Taipa] Unique Studio 1 1 1
650 ft² \$3,780,000 (ref: 20076001)
- [Taipa] Buckingham 2 2 2
1,439 ft² \$11,770,000 (ref: 19045004)
- [Taipa] Villa da Taipa 3 2 2
1,450 ft² \$13,000/mth (ref: 20101002)
- [Cotai] One Oasis high ceiling 3 2 2
2,100 ft² \$30,000/mth (ref: 20111002)

jml 卓雅物業
property since 1994

(853) 2835 2699
hello@jmlproperty.com
www.jmlproperty.com

f jmlmacau @ jmlproperty

合夥人 PARTNERS:

官樂怡 Rui José da Cunha[®]
 山度士 Álvaro Rodrigues[®]
 馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata[®]
 趙魯 Zhao Lu[®]
 馬傑安 João Nogueira Marques

大律師 ASSOCIATES:

高文軒 Adelino Correia[®]
 羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues^{*}
 白秀蘭 Susana Batalha
 馬潔冰 Maria João Marques
 陶義德 António Isóo de Azeredo
 白穎怡 Içilia Berenguel
 冼玲鳳 Mariana Afonso Esteves
 薛明恩 Maria Antónia Giestas
 飛嘉華 Carlos dos Santos Ferreira[®]
 杜力信 Nelson de Azevedo
 宋哲言 João Gonçalves Assunção
 巴慧雅 Vera Bastos
 莫永誠 Rui Velez de Moura
 安東尼 António Manuel dos Santos
 歐文傑 Miguel Evaristo
 陳芷喬 Joana Chan
 顏曉蓉 Teresa Xiaorong Yan
 諾瑪莉 Maria Norias
 康靜雅 Viviana Hong
 梁淑嵐 Ana Leon

實習律師 TRAINEE LAWYERS:

黃濼賢 Frederico Vong
 張偉鴻 Cheong Wai Hong
 陳健雄 Eurico Chan
 吳堂鋒 Ng Teng Fong

法律專家 JURISTS:

羅成軒 José J. Rodrigues
 潘卡莉 Candice Pun
 麥彥德 Gonçalo Figueiredo
 羅嘉慧 Emily Lo
 陳子健 Chan Chi Kin

[®] 私人公證員 Notary Public ^{*} 中國委託公證人 China Appointed Attesting Officer [®] 顧問 Of Counsel



To protect the health and safety of our Clients and Staff, we continue implementing prevention measures at the office entrance, as recommended by the local Authorities.

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。

A: Av. da Praia Grande 759, 3-5 Floors Office hours:
 Macau SAR, China Mon-Thu: 9:30-13:00, 14:30-18:30
 地址: 澳門南灣大馬路759號3-5樓 Fri: 9:30-13:00, 14:30-18:00
 Tel: (853) 2837 2642 / 2837 2623 Sat: 9:00-13:00

WWW.CCADVOG.COM

律師事務所



C&C
LAWYERS
& NOTARIES
SINCE 1996

19 DEC

D2 CLUB MACAU PRESENTS

AFRO VIBES

PERFORMING
ABELX
DJ MALAGUETA
JAY CUEVAS
JRD
DJ LUVISH
BETCHY BARROS

LIVE AT
D2 CLUB MACAU
ENTRANCE: \$150 / 2 DRINKS
Macau Fisherman's Wharf, Edif. New Orleans III
澳門漁人碼頭新奧爾良館 III
Tel: (853) 2872 3777

JAZZ-Y CHRISTMAS
DEC 25
22:30 TILL LATE

**GROOVY GHOST
THE HOT DOG EXPRESS
DJ HERBIE BANGKOK**

LIVE MUSIC PARTY

Groovy Ghost
Addison Wong, Johnny Yau, Carmen Ip, Alex Cheng
The Hot Dog Express
Ivan Piñeda, Paulo Pereira, Miguel Naronha, Ari Calangi, Jacob Jagers, Mario Venditti

200 MOP / 2 DRINKS

Macau Fisherman's Wharf, Edif. New Orleans III
澳門漁人碼頭新奧爾良館 III
Tel: (853) 2872 3777

TASTE OF EDESIA

A memorable Christmas feast

IRENE SAM, MDT

CHRISTMAS is just around the corner and as individuals are preparing for the holidays, many are deciding on where to eat and spend quality time with loved ones. Italian cuisine is easily a first choice when it comes to Christmas dinner. At Galaxy Macau's **Terrazza Italian Restaurant**, high quality ingredients are selected for every dish. The establishment's Christmas set menu this year starts with a slow roasted veal rump, tuna sauce, capers and veal glaze. The

tender meat is cooked to perfection accented with a dreamy mousse that showcases the umami characteristics of tuna. Another highlight is the handcrafted Cappelletti with chicken consommé, a delicious comfort food that soothes the senses before a delicious free range yellow chicken with pumpkin, glazed chestnut and black truffle is served. A generous slice of classic Italian Panettone with candied fruits and orange sabayon concludes the sumptuous meal that will surely create warm moments and wonderful memories.



WELLNESS SANCTUARY OF RELAXATION

CHRISTMAS is the best time to pamper oneself and let go of negative emotions and memories from the past before the New Year begins. Regarded as one of the most luxurious venues for massages and facials, The Spa at Wynn in Wynn Macau has designed a head-to-toe spa journey for winter. Titled the "Holiday Gemstone Ritual," the holiday treat offers a soothing body massage, gemstone facial and

rose quartz foot massage. The rejuvenating journey begins with a relaxing full body massage featuring a blend of lavender, rosemary and ginger oils to alleviate tired muscles, followed by a facial that includes a collagen diamond mask filled with plant-based serums. While soaking in all of the nutritious elements of the diamond mask facial, guest will enjoy a foot massage as the final touch to the experience.

Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu



THE CARDIFF 1500 METRES TURF (FRI) & THE HULL 1500 TURF (SAT)

2020-12-11|Fri|19:40 & 2020-12-12|Sat| 15:10

IT'S pity that the international racing fraternity who come to Hong Kong for the HKIR this week cannot make it to Macau to experience our racing over here. However, business as usual in MJC and this week MJC also operates a double header for punters. It is a week with four race meetings, ie 2 simulcast and 2 from MJC. I have 2 horses to propose for our readers in this week's MJC meetings. First this Friday's evening meeting -The Cardiff over 1500 metres turf, no one could ignore **Chi Chai Sing Sang's** (top picture) chance in this race, he is open to further improvement in his racing career under W.Smith. He's a strong chance in this race. On Saturday The Hull over 1500 metres turf, preference goes to **Luen On Poseidon** (bottom picture) from G. Allendorf's yard, this horse is also on his upward trend, he has the ability to challenge the big boys in the field, back to 1500 meters he should be very competitive and make his presence felt.

**On Friday Race 2 Horse no.1 Chi Chai Sing Sang to Win
On Saturday Race 3 Horse no.10 Luen On Poseidon Win & Place bets**



OPINION

World Views

Lionel Laurent, Bloomberg



**BORIS JOHNSON'S
BREXIT DIVIDE-AND-RULE
PLAN IS FAILING**

Wednesday was supposed to be Boris Johnson's ultimate showdown: A face-to-face meeting with Ursula von der Leyen, boss of the European Commission, to make a once-and-for-all final decision on a Brexit free trade deal with days to go before a Dec. 31 deadline.

It ended up more like every other crunch point in this tortuous saga: Groundhog Day, with a promise to keep negotiating until Sunday. Despite attempts to wrap the talks up with enough of a buffer for parliamentary ratification if there's a deal — or emergency contingency planning if there isn't — it's now clear to everyone that the discussions could really go right up to the end of the transition period on New Year's Eve.

For the U.K. prime minister in particular, the tete-a-tete's less than satisfactory outcome drives home that his tactic of trying to split the EU along Franco-German lines isn't working.

Of course German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron weren't in the room with Von der Leyen, Johnson and their negotiating teams. They were preparing for a European Union leaders' summit with a jam-packed agenda including Covid-19.

Meanwhile, Johnson has been using every opportunity to send messages over the heads of the Commission's exhausted negotiators to the German Chancellery and the Elysee Palace. Recent public wrangling over French fishing rights in British waters seemed tailor-made to isolate Macron; and this week, Johnson called for a softer approach to proposed level playing-field rules that might allow for "automatic" retaliation if broken. No U.K. prime minister could accept those, he said. The narrative that France alone is standing in the way of an achievable deal that would save Germany's export machine 8.2 billion euros (\$9.9 billion) in annual losses is one frequently pushed by the Brits.

The problem for Johnson is that nobody's taking his bait. France's recent loud threat to veto any unsatisfactory deal has limited the U.K.'s ability to play hardball to win concessions. Merkel, meanwhile, has backed Macron by saying any British proposals that undermine the EU single market — such as unfair regulatory arbitrage — will lead to no deal. Johnson's previous antics, such as threatening to rewrite the terms of leaving the EU regarding goods crossing the Irish border, haven't endeared him to the bloc.

Italy's prime minister told Brussels not to "give a millimeter," while Spain's foreign minister called for a deal but "not at any cost."

What drives this unity is the sense that signing a bad deal with Johnson, who has a reputation for renegeing on agreements, could have longer-lasting consequences for the EU single market than the disruption of a no-deal scenario. Obviously, the latter would be messy and painful. After all, the U.K. is the bloc's third-biggest trading partner. But economic forecasts suggest it would be worse for Britain, and the Europeans feel they're more in control of the proceedings as a result. The countdown to the only real deadline is building pressure.

Despite some recent progress on areas like the treatment of Northern Ireland, fatigue and pessimism are gaining ground, some say there is only "half an inch" of negotiating room left before crossing EU red lines. Others, perhaps wishfully, point to the lack of panic in the financial markets as proof that failing to reach a deal is a less scary prospect than it used to be.

A deal would be in the interests of both sides, but behind Von der Leyen's polite readout of last night's dinner, Paris and Berlin actually seem ready for the worst-case scenario. If Johnson wants to avert that, it's time for him to employ more than charm and bluster.

[Abridged]

Portugal's immigration chief quit yesterday [Macau time] after an outcry over the death of a Ukrainian man suspected of being tortured by officials before dying in custody at Lisbon airport.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement that Cristina Gatões had tendered her resignation, which was accepted with immediate effect.

The Ukrainian man tried to enter Portugal without a visa last March and was detained by immigration inspectors. Two days

later he was found dead in his holding cell.

The public prosecutor has charged three inspectors with manslaughter.

Gatões said last month that investigations had found that the Ukrainian's treatment at the airport had led to his death.

"I'm pretty certain that what we are looking at is a case of torture," she told public broadcaster RTP.

The government says it plans to restructure the immigration service and install panic buttons in airport holding cells.

BREXIT

**UK SAYS EU TRADE
TALKS FACE 'MOMENT OF
FINALITY' ON WEEKEND**



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (right) and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson

BRITAIN'S foreign minister said yesterday that negotiations on a trade deal with the European Union will reach a "moment of finality" this weekend, with both sides assessing chances of an agreement as slim.

To prepare for a possible no-deal exit on Jan. 1, the EU yesterday proposed four contingency measures to make sure air and road traffic can continue as smoothly as possible for the next six months.

It also proposes that fishermen will still have access to each others waters for up to a year, to limit the commercial damage of a no-deal split. The plans depend on the U.K. offering similar initiatives.

"Our responsibility is to be prepared for all eventualities," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

Von der Leyen and U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson held a three-hour dinner meeting in hope of unblocking stalled talks, but came away without making substantial progress.

"We understand each other's positions. They remain far apart," von der Leyen said.

They told their negotiators to keep talking, but set Sunday as decision day.

U.K. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said the deadline set by Britain and the EU for a decision was final — though he added "you can never say never entirely."

"We understand each other's positions. They remain far apart."

URSULA VON DER LEYEN
EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRESIDENT

Without a deal, the bloc and Britain face a tumultuous no-deal split at the end of the month, threatening hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions in losses.

Britain left the EU on Jan. 31, but remains in its economic structures until the end of the year. That means a serious economic rupture on Jan. 1 that could be chaotic if there is no trade agreement. A no-deal split would bring tariffs and

other barriers that would hurt both sides, although most economists think the British economy would take a greater hit because the U.K. does almost half of its trade with the bloc.

Months of trade talks have failed to bridge the gaps on three issues — fishing rights, fair-competition rules and the governance of future disputes.

While both sides want a deal, they have fundamentally different views of what it entails. The EU fears Britain will slash social and environmental standards and pump state money into U.K.

industries, becoming a low-regulation economic rival on the bloc's doorstep — hence the demand for strict "level playing field" guarantees in exchange for access to its markets.

The U.K. government sees Brexit as about sovereignty and "taking back control" of the country's laws, borders and waters. It claims the EU is trying to bind Britain to the bloc's rules indefinitely. AP



Iran The leaders of Iran and Afghanistan yesterday inaugurated the first railway link between the two countries, expressing hope it would enhance trade links across the region. The 140-kilometer line running from eastern Iran into western Afghanistan will eventually be expanded by 85 kilometers to reach the Afghan city of Herat, providing a crucial transport link for the landlocked country, where decades of war have hindered infrastructure development.

Azerbaijan A military parade was held yesterday in the Azerbaijani capital in celebration of the peace deal with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh that saw Azerbaijan reclaim much of the separatist region along with surrounding areas. The agreement took force exactly a month ago and put an end to six weeks of fierce fighting between the two ex-Soviet nations over Nagorno-Karabakh. It was seen as a major victory in Azerbaijan, but prompted mass protests in Armenia.



Spain Firefighters in northeastern Spain found two bodies in an abandoned building occupied by migrants and other squatters that caught fire and partially collapsed, while emergency works continued yesterday to extinguish the flames and assess if more people were trapped inside. The fire in Badalona, a suburban town of 200,000 north of Barcelona, also injured at least 18 people, including three who are in very critical condition, authorities said.

Canada's health regulator approved Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, days ahead of possible approval in the United States, and said it hopes to start giving the shots next week. The vaccine made by U.S. drugmaker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech vaccine already has been authorized for use by the United Kingdom and Bahrain, and officials have said they expect the U.S. authorization within days.