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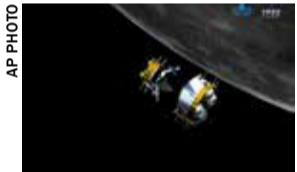
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**AN ONLINE PETITION IS BEING ORGANIZED BY LOCAL STUDENTS STUDYING IN TAIWAN TO REQUEST BOTH JURISDICTIONS TO SIMPLIFY QUARANTINE MEASURES** P2

**TOURISM AUTHORITY IS EXPECTING UP TO 30,000 DAILY VISITORS** P3

**FORMER LEADER OF THE 14K TRIAD BROKEN TOOTH REJECTS US TREASURY'S ACCUSATIONS THAT HE IS ENGAGED IN ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES** P2

**China** The European Union called on Chinese authorities to allow a Bloomberg News staffer who was detained last week in Beijing to have access to a lawyer, medical care and contact with her family. China has confirmed that Haze Fan, a Chinese citizen who has worked with Bloomberg News since 2017, was detained by the Beijing National Security Bureau on suspicion of endangering national security. The EU also expressed concern about other Chinese journalists and citizens who have disappeared this year, including for reporting on the Covid-19 outbreak.



**China** A space capsule bringing back the first moon rocks in more than four decades started its three-day return to Earth yesterday. The Chang'e 5 lunar probe, which had been orbiting the moon for about a week, fired up four engines for about 22 minutes to move out of the moon's orbit, the China National Space Administration said in a social media post.

**Hong Kong** has secured delivery of 15 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, with the first million to arrive as early as January, the city's leader said Friday. Hong Kong chief executive Carrie Lam said the city has reached agreements for 7.5 million doses each from Sinovac and Pfizer/BioNTech. As each person needs two doses, the 15 million would be enough to cover the city's population, she said.

**Taiwan** Employees and supporters rallied for a Taiwanese pro-China cable news channel as it was taken off air yesterday, after the government refused to renew its license, citing accuracy issues. CTiTV's channel 52 broadcast a countdown and then went black after midnight. The cable network, whose non-news channels were not affected, plans to continue putting news on YouTube and other digital platforms.

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# A WEIGHTY VENTURE

The Commission of Audit slams the developer of TCM Park in Hengqin for pursuing 'the most costly' development model resulting in billions of additional public funds P3



**VINTAGE VEHICLES INCREASING IN POPULARITY AMONG SOCIETY** P6



**DSEJ DEFENDS USE OF 'CRITICAL THINKING' IN POLICY** P2



**GOV'T MAY TAKE REFERENCE FROM HK QUARANTINE HOTEL SCHEME**

Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of the Macao Government Tourism Office, recently remarked that the government will use Hong Kong's quarantine hotel scheme as a reference if it needs to improve Macau's local scheme. People travelling to Hong Kong are required to undergo quarantine at a designated hotel not only at their own expense, but also with varying costs among different hotels. The tourism regulator has also hinted at the possibilities of finetuning the local scheme in light of efforts to revive the tourism industry.

**ORGANIZATION TO INTRODUCE 'QUIT-SMOKING SERVICE'**

The Smoking Abstinence & Good Health Association vows to roll out a quit-smoking service targeting special groups of smokers, such as casino staff. This is to complement the government's current measures relevant to smoking, the organization said. The association is now gathering opinions and data in the community to conceive a new service that helps these special groups of smokers to quit smoking in a more effective way.

# BUREAU DEFENDS USE OF 'CRITICAL THINKING' FOLLOWING ANM CRITICISM

ANTHONY LAM

**L**ocal democrat group New Macau Association's (ANM) disagreement with the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau's (DSEJ) word choice in referring to the Chinese term for "critical thinking" is among the numerous opinions the bureau has so far obtained, a bureau official has told the media.

The remarks were made by Cheong Man Fai, head of the bureau's Department of Youth, on the sidelines of a seminar on non-higher tertiary education and youth affairs. The department head was asked for a comment on the word choice.

Led by the DSEJ, the public consultation period for the Macau Youth Policy (2021-2030) has recently ended. The public consultation text formed the basis of the debate on the Chinese term for the concept.

In the current public consultation text, the education regulator has opted for a lighter Chinese term to refer to "critical thinking" which, the ANM considers, trivializes the idea. The ANM even worries that the trivialization will, at the end of



the day, raise up "slaves and robots" in the future.

To support its argument, the association emphasized that independent thinking and critical spirit are the core essential elements of the cultivation of innovative thinking, diversified development, and a global perspective.

The current Chinese term, according to the ANM, has no direct connotation with the English counterpart. The Chinese term used by the government is "the ability to examine and distinguish."

Cheong explained that the de-

cision was made when the bureau was compiling the public consultation text, as it heard comments that the Chinese term mostly used as the equivalent to the English term "critical" carries "implications of negation, opposition, defiance and conflicts."

For decades, the English term has been translated or referred to in Chinese with implications of practicing question and judgment. The government's word choice, according to Cheong, is "more accurate."

Cheong further explained that the government's Chinese term "fo-

cuses on enrichment of knowledge and independent thinking, which has no conflict with the term 'critical thinking'."

"Prudence and distinguishment between right and wrong are the premise of independent thinking," the education official further explained. She added that the change was made necessary as progress has been seen in society.

The government had opted for the decades-old version in its consultation text eight years ago.

In contrast, the education official considers the decades-old Chinese term "[having] restricted the thinking of youths," implying that the government sees itself as liberating future youths' mentalities.

Stressing that the government's word choice has strong support, the education official put off the debate and requested members of the public to focus on the overall picture instead of "getting too obsessive with and stuck on a particular term."

Furthermore, Cheong was not worried about the impact caused by the argument raised by the ANM, as it is one of many opinions obtained by the education bureau.

## 'Broken Tooth' rejects US Treasury's allegations

LYNZY VALLES

**T**he former leader of the notorious mainland mob, the 14K Triad who goes by the alias "Broken Tooth", has pledged that he is not a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), following the sanctions imposed on him last

week by the U.S. Treasury Department.

The U.S. blacklisted Wan Kuok-koi for the alleged illegal activities he engaged in to piggyback on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

In a video, Wan declared, "I seriously state that I am [...] a non-CPPCC member. The World Hong-

men History and Culture Association has been following the law. We have never taken the excuse of the [BRI] to carry out any offence," he said, as cited in a TDM report.

He was allegedly using business and other activities to try to "paper over illegal criminal activities" by framing his actions in terms of China's BRI.

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.

"I express such strong opposition towards the actions of the U.S. Treasury Department. I will preserve my interests and rights. I ask the U.S.

to immediately stop harming my reputation as well as that of the association," the former triad boss added.

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

## LOCAL STUDENTS IN TAIWAN PETITION TO EASE QUARANTINE MEASURES

**A**n online petition is being organized by Macau students studying in Taiwan to request both jurisdictions to simplify quarantine measures for this group of people, considering both places are low-risk for Covid-19.

As Lunar New Year approaches, discussions regarding these students' return to Macau are heating up. Normally, Taiwanese universities have an approximately one-month long break for the Lunar New Year.

Given current quarantine

measures – 14 days in each jurisdiction – these students will need to spend at least 28 days in quarantine if they plan to return to Macau for a holiday. As such, they will only have two to three days at most to spend with family and friends.

In their preamble, they remarked that Taiwan has lowered the bar to business travelers on trips, for a period shorter than three months, from low-risk areas. The students see the requirements applied to them as differential treatment.

They hope the two governments can "communicate to shorten the quarantine time for Macau students or make adjustments to entry measures." Nonetheless, they stressed that they are willing to comply with quarantine measures.

Taiwan has seen scattered imported cases detected during quarantine hotel stays, which the authorities categorized as being low risk in terms of community outbreak. Meanwhile, Macau has seen nearly 250 days without a new infection. **AL**

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# Commission of Audit criticizes MID for 'most costly' TCM park model choice

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Commission of Audit (CA) published an audit report on December 11 which criticizes Macau Investment and Development (MID) Limited, a public investment company, for pursuing "the most costly" development model for the Traditional Chinese Medicine Science and Technology Industrial Park (TCM Park) in Hengqin "without thorough consideration," resulting in billions of additional public funds.

Since its establishment in 2011, MID has been held responsible for the development of the TCM park — the first joint project stipulated in the "Guangdong-Macao Cooperation Framework Agreement" inked by the two governments.

Ever since 2016, MID gauged the investment costs for the entire TCM park — which was predicated on the "self-funded construction" model, and follows a principle of "lease only and not for sale".

In the report, the Commission criticized the company for "not appraising the pros and cons between different development models and not accounting for the estimated costs involved in respective possible models", before deciding to use the "most expensive" self-funded construction model — a decision that could have otherwise saved the government a hefty sum of capital.

According to the report, apart from the aforementioned model,



there are a series of land development models available, including land transfer, land lease, build-operate-transfer (BOT), joint construction, and other combinations of models.

In 2019, MID announced that the cost appraisal for the TCM park was estimated to be as high as RMB16.353 billion, RMB2.6 billion more than the previous estimate of RMB13.768 billion in 2014.

Regarding the huge jump in total estimated cost, the CA re-

prehended the firm for "falling short of clear analysis" by "not detailing how many gains the additional injection of investment can generate".

Besides, the CA discovered that MID has been laying the groundwork for a land sale arrangement in the future, which contradicts its development proposition of "lease only and not for sale".

In the wake of the release of the report, the Office of Secretary for Economy and Finance stressed that the authorities will inspect

and reform MID's management, assets, subsidiaries and investment plans.

"[The Office] has already provided instructions to the company to assess, in a thorough and effective way, the management and operation models now adopted, proposing global reform and adjustment plans, strengthening the inspection mechanism, [and] rationalizing the use of public resources to increase their efficiency," the Office of the Secretary noted.

In addition, the city's Chief Executive also pledged, in his Policy Address for 2021, to comprehensively reform and amend the positioning and development model of MID, to improve the efficiency of the project and promote the development of the TCM industry to the international market.

In response to the report, MID pledged to improve its management. However, it attributed the choice for self-funded construction partly to the difference in Macau and mainland China's land ownership systems.

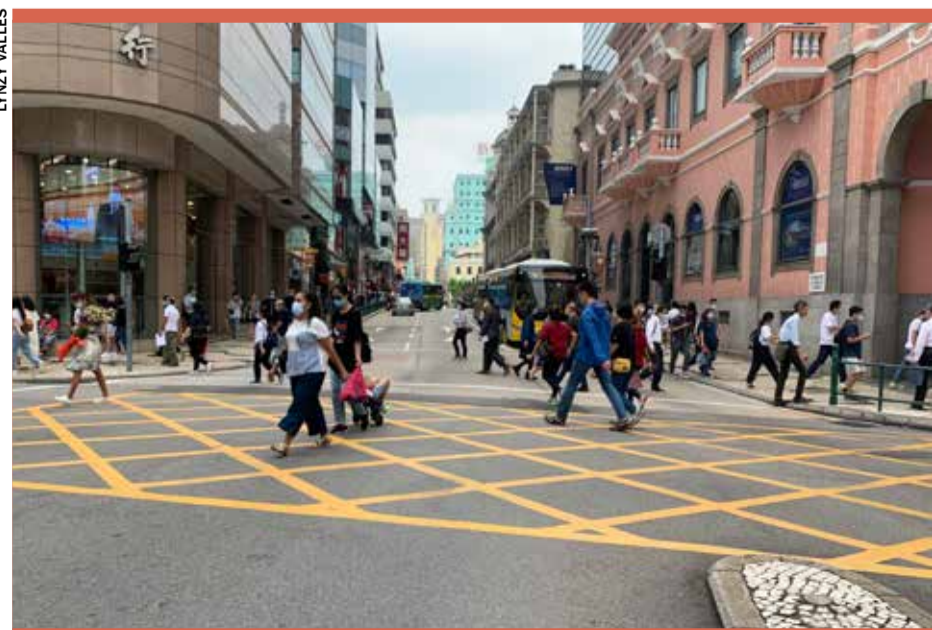
The CA also emphasized that the MID must expound to shareholders how to make profits and cover costs, which can help reassure "the public [that the] investment is worth the money."

The Commission probed MID's filed documents from March 2011 to June 2020 before publishing the report.

As of the end of 2019, MID had 21 subsidiaries, 17 companies of which were responsible for the TCM Park project and four others for the project of Guangdong-Macao General Cooperation Pilot Zone of Zhongshan City.

Between 2011 and 2019, six injections of capital were recorded at MID, which snowballed the firm's capital to MOP9.285 billion. Of that money, MOP8.964 billion was earmarked for investment projects, including MOP8.074 billion designated for the TCM park project and MOP890 million for Zhongshan City.

## MGTO expecting up to 30,000 daily visitor arrivals this festive season



STAFF REPORTER

**M**ACAU is expecting an average of 20,000 to 30,000 daily visitor arrivals during the forthcoming peak holiday season of Christmas and New Year's Eve, said Deputy Director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) Ricky Hoi.

Prior to Covid-19, holidaymakers from Hong Kong and Taiwan accounted for the largest number of arrivals to visit the city during the Christmas period. However, the MGTO is anticipating the daily number will decline to around 20,000 to 30,000 at

the end of this festive month, mostly due to the impact of the pandemic and travel restrictions, which are still in place.

In October, the city registered 581,986 travelers, up 29.6% month-to-month, yet down 81.9% year-over-year. Mainland visitors represented the biggest share of all arrivals in the month, at around 77.3%, while those from Hong Kong and Taiwan contributed around 16.4% and 2%, respectively, as stated by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

Hoi revealed that the city has recently seen an average of 20,000 daily arrivals. On November 20, the first day of the Macau Grand Prix, the city recorded over 28,000 visitor arrivals, making it the highest daily tally over the past nine months.

In response to the media's

query on whether the cancellation of the 2020 Macao Countdown Event and the following Fireworks Display would dampen tourism performance, Hoi said Macau's Christmas light displays and attractive packages rolled out by local hotels would be drawcards for visitors.

Moreover, the MGTO will step up efforts to promote the city as a "safe city destination" to draw more mainland visitors in the future, he added.

Regarding celebratory events during Lunar New Year, Hoi added that "[the MGTO] is still evaluating the situation to see if there are any favorable conditions to host the events." MGTO is working with the Health Bureau to assess the crowd density at the proposed events and the effects on the development of the pandemic during this period.



### GOV'T IN TALKS WITH MAINLAND CHINA REGARDING DIGITAL CURRENCY

The Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) is currently in communication with the People's Bank of China regarding the issue of digital currency from the bank. In a reply to lawmaker Leong Sun lok's interpellation, AMCM says it will carry out research on the feasibility of issuing digital currency, and it has already planned to amend the law associated with issuing currency.

### ENGINEER PROPOSES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TAX

The Macau Institution of Engineers recently held a forum on solid waste management, during which lawmaker Wu Chou Kit proposed to the government charging a special environmental protection tax. Wu, who is also the president of the association, pointed out that some food wrapping materials on the market are unable to be recycled. As such, a tax on food suppliers may encourage suppliers to use recyclable materials to wrap food.

### DSAL RECORDS 430 DISMISSAL COMPLAINTS AS OF OCTOBER

The Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) has, as of October this year, received a total of 430 complaints regarding dismissals. The complaints concern 735 people, which represents a 9% decrease year-on-year. Among the cases, 19 complaints are related to the dismissal of 29 people from travel agencies. As at the end of October, DSAL has forwarded a total of 10 cases to the Macao Foundation about government subsidized companies being suspected of unreasonably dismissing workers.

# GROUP CALLS FOR GOV'T'S INTERVENTION IN MAINLAND PROPERTY INVESTMENT 'SCAM'

**A** group of local residents is calling on the Macau SAR government for help after they encountered problems while purchasing properties in parts of mainland China, particularly in Zhuhai.

On Friday, the group, accompanied by lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho, presented a letter to the Macau Government Headquarters in the hopes of receiving assistance from the Chief Executive.

The petitioners had reportedly purchased properties from several different real estate projects in Zhuhai. Before they purchased the properties, the developer said that the project had been approved and could be used for commercial and residential purposes.

However, after they made the purchase, they realized that the properties could only be used as offices, but not as houses.

Approximately 100 Macau local residents bought properties from these projects.

The apartment buyers have, according to the lawmaker, each spent at least 4 million yuan on the residences.



Speaking to the press, the lawmaker said that the petition has gathered 30 signatures from people who were allegedly scammed, including local civil servants, but did not want to make an appearance.

"They do not want to involve their professional jobs in what I call a scam," Coutinho said.

Previous statistics of the Macau Federation of Trade Unions' office in Guangdong province said that majority of the complaints received

from Macau residents related to investment failures in mainland China's real estate market, together with complaints concerning property management and illegal guesthouses.

"Many of them went to [local real estate] agencies who suggested they buy houses in the mainland. [They have] signed many documents. All of [the agents] publicized that they were houses," Coutinho told the press.

The lawmaker hopes that,

in future, there can be a mechanism of cross-region arbitration to help local residents solve disputes related to property investment in mainland China.

Currently, those who purchased the houses are not able to even file a lawsuit at a mainland court because they have not received their contracts of purchase, which have not been signed. The contracts will only be signed when the entire payment is settled. **MDT**

# DSEJ to offer more external study chances for students

JULIE ZHU

**T**HE Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) hopes to provide more opportunities for students with different talents and strengths to study outside of Macau.

On Friday, the Non-Tertiary Education Council and the Youth Affairs Committee held a joint meeting to review the two organizations' key projects in 2020 and 2021, as well as the recently-passed non-tertiary education private school protocol.

During a press conference after the meeting, the Chief of the DSEJ's Department of Youth, Cheong Man Fai, discussed the bureau's plan to support Macau youth.

According to Cheong, the DSEJ hopes to provide more external study

opportunities to students who do not perform excellently in school exams but who show a brilliant performance in other fields or possess other qualities.

The bureau wants to enhance these specific students' confidence, and expand their horizons.

During the meeting, multiple members of the two committees raised questions concerning the basic principle of the establishment and operation of the board of school.

On August 20, the non-tertiary private school law No.15/2020 came into effect, which requires all private schools to establish a school board.

As of today, 64 out of 67 private schools have already established their own school boards or



other relevant organizations.

On the same day, the public consultation period on the Macau Youth Policy (2021-2030) officially ended.

Preliminary statistics show that the DSEJ received over 500 opinions from its 13 public consultation sessions in addition to 80 opinions submitted online and in

person.

Details of the consultation report will be published at a later date.

According to the DSEJ's conclusion, the public mostly endorsed the consultation text and agreed to redefine "youth" so that more individuals will be covered. Many who expressed their opinion are hoping the local government enhances support to young families.

## BUREAU URGES PARENTS, TEACHERS TO PAY ATTENTION TO STUDENTS' NEEDS

**ON** Friday, a 16-year-old male secondary school student jumped to his death. Speaking about the matter, Wong Ka Kei, who heads the Department of Education of the DSEJ, expressed his sorrow regarding the incident and sent his condolences to the late student's family.

The DSEJ has noted that it is optimizing its campus crisis management mechanisms. However, it admitted that the mechanisms

may not be effective in some cases. Therefore, Wong hopes that local parents, teachers and counsellors can pay more attention to the needs of their students. The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) encourages residents to be aware of their psychological and emotional state as well as that of their relatives and friends. In case of any needs, residents can call Caritas' Life Hope hotline (28525222) or IAS' counseling hotline (28261126).



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



# Sands China prioritizes talent development, appreciates long-serving team members

**S**ANDS CHINA has always attached great importance to the professional development of team members, and the company's focus on providing team members with ideal development prospects has helped increase employee loyalty. Including the 949 team members celebrating 10- or 15-year anniversaries in 2020, more than 8,100 team members have now served the company for 10 years or more, representing more than 30 per cent of Sands China's employees. Among them, over 2,200 have hit the milestone of 15 years of service. Over 1,300 of them have been with the company since 2004.

Amid the pandemic and economic situation that has been ongoing since the beginning of the year, the integrated resort operator did not switch its priority in terms of investing in its team members, in a bid to assist them in accelerating in their careers.

Sands China considers its human resources initiatives as an essential part of the company's commitment and determination to nurture local talent. The company created the Sands China Academy as a platform to give team members training for their career development, and to help foster professional talent in the wider Macau community, while implementing a human capital strategy that is constantly innovating and evolving.

Sands China's various human resource development initiatives centre around three key features. The company strives to provide programmes that are diverse, hi-

gh-quality, and dynamic as the market evolves.

**Diversity:** Offering an abundance of horizontal and vertical management talent development programmes in order to meet the ever-changing business and market needs, thereby contributing to the pool of diversified talent in Macau.

**High quality:** Screening and shortlisting of potential candidates and building a pool of qualified trainers based on strict criteria to ensure high standards for participation

**Dynamic:** Keeping abreast of the times and adjusting programmes based on the latest market trends.

"Over the past decade, Sands China has remained committed to local talent development by continuously improving its human capital strategies in line with the direction set by the Macau SAR government," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

"To that end, the company created the Sands China Academy as a platform to help foster professional talent in the Macau community across sectors to contribute to the development of Macau and our country."

"With the company this year encountering unprecedented challenges, our team members' hard work and dedication are even more commendable. With their perseverance and determination to overcome adversity, we are confident that we can usher in a new spring after a long and cold winter." Dr. Wong added.

The integrated resort operator continues to collaborate with local

and international universities, government departments and educational institutions.

Through a variety of horizontal and vertical management talent development programmes, Sands China is able to encourage team members to develop in different fields, challenging potential candidates with high standards for participation, while adjusting programmes from time to time based on the latest market trends.

## OVER 19,500 VERTICAL PROMOTIONS SINCE 2004

Over 3,000 Sands China team members have taken advantage of the success of nearly 40 program-

mes such as the Sands China Integrated Resort Business Analyst Development Programme and the Sands China Manager Development Programme for Integrated Resorts to develop their talent and expertise.

Sands China's All-Round Food and Beverage Management Programme, a collaboration with the Labour Affairs Bureau, hopes to nurture Macao young talent to the food and beverage industry, as talent in the sector is currently in high demand in the local market. And with the Train-the-trainer development series, regular performance reviews ensure maintenance of high standards.

More so, to date, more than 410 team members have passed their exams to become certified trainers.

The integrated resort operator offers a variety of horizontal and vertical mobility opportunities to its team members through the Sands China Academy. Since 2004, team members have earned more than 19,500 vertical promotions, and have taken advantage of over 2,000 horizontal career movements. Over the years, the Academy has provided more than 12 million on-the-job training hours for its team members; more than 10,000 retail employees and 226 SMEs have successfully completed its programmes.

## TEAM MEMBERS EXPRESS HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TOWARDS COMPANY

**FOR SANDS CHINA,** they value their team members' overall wellbeing, considering them as significant partners in operating the business.

Several team members have expressed heartfelt gratitude towards the company, considering themselves fortunate to be working with a company that prioritizes and values local people.

The team members admit that the current times are one of the most challenging periods for local residents as the SAR undergoes economic crisis, greatly affecting the workforce. Some of the company's training programmes last for 18 months, allowing employees to work in different departments.

Lei Weng San, acting assistant manager at one of the integrated resort operator's F&B departments, is a fresh graduate who is keen to excel in the Food & Beverage area. Commenting on the programme he undertook, Lei said, "This provided me with management skills training and on the job training in a well-planned programme. It's very well-rounded and has helped me find my direction in my career within a short period of time."

Another team member, Uni Lei, currently an Integrated Resort Business Analyst, said that by joining the programme, she was able to participate in six different departments, such



From left: Uni Lei, Lei Weng San and Pierre Lai

as Finance, E-Commerce and Strategic Analysis, among others.

"This is a great opportunity for me to further discover whether I fit into the industry, and to earn valuable experience in data analysis for integrated resort decision making," said Lei.

Their statements echo the goal of the integrated resort operator: for team members to experience well-rounded work opportunities in the areas they are interested in. A table games pit manager, Pierre Lai, remarked, "Completing the company's Train-the-trainer programme opened doors for me for some potential horizontal development, and regular assessments ensure that trainers have always met the standard. I would like to try working in other departments with the knowledge gained through this training."



RENATO MARQUES



Eddie Lam



## VINTAGE CULTURE APPRECIATED FOR STYLE, NOT JUST 'NOSTALGIA'

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE number of local fans and supporters of so-called "Vintage Culture" has been growing over the past few years. Such a trend has been adhered to by people of all ages and from all walks of life. This culture, characterized by having an interest in antique items and doing certain things using old methods, can be seen in a wide range of activities. Such culture has been particularly noticeable through the growing interest in vintage vehicles.

To further understand locals' interest in vintage cars and other aspects of vintage culture, the Times spoke to Eddie Lam, the Chairman of the Macau Vintage Vehicle Culture Association (MVV), in an exclusive interview.

Although he clearly states that the association aims to gather members who own vehicles that are at least 20 years old, Lam told the Times that age is a flexible aspect.

"We love old cars and especially the ones that are over 20 years old. But this is not a mandatory criterion [to be part of the association] as sometimes there are vehicles that are not that old but are somehow unique, which is what we want to highlight," Lam explained.

"Some of their uniqueness is due to the fact that they are models of limited production, or because there are only very few of them in Macau. Even if they are a common model, they may be special because they have been particularly customized by

their owners, making them very different from others," he added.

Noting that many vintage car owners in Macau have a nostalgic attachment to their cars which comes from old memories and old days of Macau, he also noted that not all the motivation is based in nostalgia and that not all members of MVV are "elderly people."

"We currently have 108 members with ages that range from the early 20s to 70s. Some of them like vintage cars because they evoke old memories and feelings. Either their car is from a long time ago or is a car owned by their parents or family members with whom they have a deep attachment and emotional relationship," Lam said.

"But that is not always the case. Some people just acquired an interest in vintage culture and vehicles on their own. For those people, I think the old comic books [namely Japanese Manga] play an important role. Many fans of vintage cars started as fans of 'Initial D' [a Japanese street racing manga serialized in a Weekly Young Magazine from 1995 to 2013], for example. But I guess there many other influences," he added.

The number of vintage vehicles in Macau is hard to quantify with precision, but Lam tried his luck in advancing a number. "Well, we have over 100 members and of course that is a small percentage of the vintage car owners, but I can say that our members, on average, each own two to three of these vehicles

[placing the number on certainly over 300]."

Lam recalls that, after the participation of MVV members in a vehicle parade last month, during the Macau Grand Prix event, "I immediately received around 15 new requests from people wanting to be members of the association."

### EXPENSIVE LIFESTYLE SUPPORTED BY PASSION

When questioned as to how expensive it is to acquire, maintain and care for these types of vehicles in Macau, Lam does not hesitate to acknowledge this to be an "expensive lifestyle" but also one that requires, above all, a lot of passion.

"These are our babies," Lam says, comparing the ownership and maintenance of the cars to raising a child, "We treat them like that and so all our efforts are dedicated to them," he says, noting that the feeling of seeing a well-taken care of vintage car running smoothly is very rewarding.

One of the difficulties noted by all members is the parking, as the rental fees of car parks have grown exponentially in the past few years too.

In a bid to cope with such difficulties, MVV also provides members with space where they can keep their cars for a very attractive fee.

"Last year, I managed to rent a big [old warehouse] at a reasonable rental fee and also the rental contract is acceptable. There we can park over 40 cars.

This is very important because if you have a safe space – a safety garage [where you can keep your cars] – you are more willing to invest in them and to keep them and even buy more," Lam said.

And to increase the owners' knowledge of how to care for their cars, the MVV is already planning a series of workshops, which will start next year.

"Most of the owners are actually not very knowledgeable about car mechanics or bodywork. We know this, as I am not either. But we aim to invite people who can pass some knowledge to the owner about what they should focus more on or pay attention to when rebuilding or maintaining vintage vehicles," Lam said. He noted that other workshops on how to proceed in the case of an accident or if your car stops on the bridge or a dangerous area are also being planned by the association.

"We want people to be more knowledgeable and more aware. This is something that we want to do also to contribute more to road safety and society in general. Especially in Macau, we see that most people do not know how to proceed in situations like this [failures and malfunctions] and in which, many times, people put their lives at risk," he added.

### SPECIAL CAR SHOW X CHRISTMAS MART STARTING THIS WEEKEND

Starting this Saturday, December 19, and running until

December 26, MVV will be hosting a special end-of-year event together with Macau Tower.

A vintage and custom car show will enliven the area of the Macau Tower as part of a Christmas Mart that aims to attract not just car owners and fans, but entire families.

"We have done several of these events before, but this will be special, since it is an eight-day event. We have partnered with several people and organizations including the Macau Tower to present an event that is directed to all families and that, besides the car show, includes a mart and art workshops dedicated to the younger children," the chairman of MVV said, adding that contrary to other events of this kind, this will have a different dynamic.

"We usually do two-day or three-day events that present the same cars during that period. This time, it is an eight-day event and we want it to be more interesting so we are not going to present the same cars during the eight days but, instead, we will have different themes every two or three days ranging from customized cars, vintage cars and also the [very popular in Asia] Japanese Kei cars [microcars] so people can see different things and can return to the venue several times during the holidays period," Lam concluded.

For the chairman of the association, this will be a very meaningful event, as 2020 was a very difficult year for everyone, remarking, "We want to welcome 2021 with renewed energy [that is why the event was named 'ReBorn']. We will restart our engine and give it a deep step on our accelerator [to the future]."



HONG KONG

# Lai charged with endangering national security

ANNIE LEE & IAIN MARLOW

**H**ONG Kong media tycoon and prominent pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai was charged with colluding with foreign forces under the city's sweeping new national security law and denied bail in a court appearance on Saturday.

Prosecutors told the West Kowloon Magistracy that Lai committed the offense - calling for a foreign entity to impose sanctions or engage in hostile activities against Hong Kong or China - between July 1 and Dec. 1 this year.

The case was adjourned to April 16 for the investigation to continue and for evidence, including about 1,000 Twitter posts, to be reviewed.

"It will be based on who he spoke with on Twitter and in interviews - it basically looks like it's all based on open press interviews," said Mark Simon, Lai's long-time personal assistant. "It would be



more confidence boosting of the Hong Kong legal system if they had more to present than what was shown today."

In early December, Lai, the 73-year-old founder of Next Digital Ltd. and owner of the pro-democracy Apple Daily newspaper, was denied bail on new charges

relating to his dramatic August arrest under Hong Kong's controversial new security measures.

The formal charges under the national security law, which Beijing forced on the city in late June after bypassing the local legislature, could prompt further criticism from the U.S. and the U.K.,

which both said the measure was an erosion of Hong Kong's freedoms. Chinese and Hong Kong officials have defended the law as necessary to restore stability to the Asian financial hub after it was rocked by sometimes-violent protests throughout 2019.

Shares of Next Digital climbed as much as 18% on Friday after the reports Lai was to be charged. Hong Kong residents have piled into shares of the company to show support for Lai, including a more than 1,100% surge in two days after his arrest in August that propelled the stock to a seven-year high.

In a statement released late on Friday, Next Digital said it sees no "immediate material adverse impact" on its operations from the absence of Lai.

### INTERNATIONAL OUTCRY

Lai is a prominent critic of Beijing and Hong Kong's authorities, while his Apple Daily newspaper has vigorously championed the

city's protest movement. In an interview with Bloomberg TV in late May, he called on U.S. President Donald Trump to hammer Hong Kong's economy to punish authorities for their imposition of the national security law.

"Our only salvation is for President Donald Trump to impose sanctions," he said at the time, adding that the most impactful initial move would be to freeze the bank accounts of top Chinese officials. "We are very hopeful that by the weekend he will impose very draconian sanctions on China."

His arrest and a dramatic police raid on the Apple Daily newspaper in August prompted an outcry from foreign governments including the U.K., which said the law was being used to crack down on press freedoms in the former British colony.

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman, James Slack, said at the time that Lai's arrest was "further evidence that the national security law is being used as a pretext to silence opposition."

A group of western envoys wrote an open letter in November condemning the erosion of media freedoms in the Asian financial hub, a situation they said had been worsened by Beijing's imposition of the "vaguely defined" national security law. **BLOOMBERG**

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SPAIN

# Barcelona concert tests use of same-day COVID-19 screening

**E**AGER for a live music show after months of social distancing, more than 1,000 Barcelona residents gathered to participate in a medical study to evaluate the effectiveness of same-day coronavirus screening to safely hold cultural events.

After passing an antigen screening, 500 of the volunteers were randomly selected to enjoy a free concert inside Barcelona's Apolo Theater.

The other 500 who didn't get selected were sent home. They will form a control group that will allow the organizers to analyze if there was any contagion inside the concert hall despite the screening with antigen tests, which while not as accurate as other types of tests, do produce results in 15 minutes as compared to several hours, or days, later.

Carolina Rius was one music lover willing to accept the risk of mingling among a large group of people indoors so she could finally experience a concert without having to remain seated and two meters apart as currently dictated by health authorities.

"I really, really missed going to concerts, above all to hear some rock 'n' roll," the 56-year-old Rius said. "I don't feel like a guinea pig. I feel



like I am taking a stand. The world of culture, and above all the concert halls, are having a very bad time of it and I don't want them to shut for good.

"And if they end up choosing me in the draw to go to a concert, that will be the cherry on top."

The study is organized by Barcelona's The Fight AIDS and Infectious Diseases Foundation along with the Primavera Sound music festival. The study was given the go-ahead by the regional authorities in northeast Catalonia.

"This is not a party, this is a scientific study," Dr. Boris Revollo, the virologist who designed the study's protocols, told The Associated Press. He insisted that the use

of same-day antigen screening for large events wasn't a substitute for face masks and other sanitation rules, but he believed it could be a powerful tool to help make large events safe enough until vaccines are widespread enough to beat back COVID-19.

"This could be useful in all types of events, from cultural events, to business congresses, to sporting events," Revollo said. "And young people, as we have seen, are holding their own clandestine parties because they have no other outlet."

The 500 allowed into the five-hour music festival of rock groups and disc jockeys had to wear face masks and use hand disinfectant.

Social distancing, however, on the concert floor

wasn't enforced in an attempt to get as close as possible to a real concert atmosphere. The crowd reveled in the newfound freedom, dancing closely together and jostling one another for a bit of fun.

The face masks stayed put except in the upstairs bar where organizers allowed them to be removed to have the one drink volunteers were treated to.

All 1,000 of the volunteers will also undergo two PCR tests, which have a higher capacity to detect the virus than the same-day antigen test, first on Saturday before the concert, and then again eight days later. Revollo said these PCR tests will allow him and his fellow investigators to determine if any infected people got past the same-day antigen screen and, if so, did they infect others inside the show.

Epidemiologist Joan Caylà, who has no connection to the study, said that while "vaccines are still far off" before they reach everyone, even the successful use of antigen testing wouldn't eliminate the need to keep events small and highly controlled.

"It is very important that those attending the event act responsibly," Caylà said. "A certain risk of causing an outbreak exists." AP

ISRAEL

# Netanyahu: 'Business as usual with Iran' will be mistake

**I**SRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday said it would be a mistake "to go back to business as usual with Iran," signaling Israeli resistance to an expected push by President-elect Joe Biden to revive the international nuclear deal with Iran.

Netanyahu spoke at a press conference with Robert O'Brien, President Donald Trump's national security adviser.

But his comments appeared to be aimed at Biden, who has said the

U.S. will rejoin the nuclear deal if Iran agrees to strict adherence. The deal, which lifted sanctions on Iran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, has unraveled since Trump withdrew from it in 2018.

Netanyahu led an unsuccessful fight against the deal when it was negotiated by then-President Barack Obama in 2015 and welcomed Trump's withdrawal three years later. Netanyahu says the deal will not prevent Iran from developing a nuclear wea-

pon and fails to address other belligerent Iranian behavior, such as its support for proxies across the region and its development of a long-range missile program.

"As long as Iran continues to subjugate and threaten its neighbors, as long as Iran continues calling for Israel's destruction, as long as Iran continues to bankroll, equip and train terrorist organizations throughout the region and the world, and as long as Iran persists in its dangerous quest for nuclear

weapons and the means to deliver them, we shouldn't go back to business as usual with Iran," Netanyahu said Sunday. "We should all unite to prevent this major threat to world peace."

O'Brien arrived days after the U.S. announced that Israel and Morocco were establishing full diplomatic relations — making it the fourth such deal between Israel and an Arab state brokered by the outgoing Trump administration.

O'Brien said the Trump administration's pressure campaign against Iran has been successful and said the string of agreements between Israel and Arab countries would cement what he called "the legacies of peacemakers" Trump and Netanyahu. AP

## this day in history

### 1972 LAST MOON MISSION RETURNS

The last manned space mission to the Moon is on its way back to Earth, bringing to an end the US programme of lunar exploration.

The two Apollo 17 astronauts, Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt, completed their third lunar walk after a short ceremony in which they bade farewell to the Moon and unveiled a small commemorative plaque at the Taurus-Littrow valley.

On it was written, "Here man completed his first explorations of the Moon, December 1972."

Eugene Cernan also read out loud the postscript: "May the spirit of peace in which we came be reflected in the lives of all mankind."

The plaque also bore the signatures of the astronauts and the US President Richard Nixon.

"This is our commemoration," added Commander Cernan, "which will be here until someone comes back to read it again to further the meaning of Apollo."

His colleague, Dr Schmitt, called the voyages to the Moon man's "first evolutionary steps into the universe", and said, "I can think of no more significant contribution that Apollo has made to history."

Apollo 17 has already been hailed as the most successful of them all.

Commander Cernan and Dr Schmitt, the first trained geologist in space, gathered more material than ever before, spent longer on the surface and drove further away from the landing craft than in any previous Apollo mission.

They also set up six automatic research stations which will continue to operate after their departure.

The mission made one potentially ground-breaking discovery: an orange soil, found yesterday at the Shorty crater, is believed to be the first indication yet that there has been volcanic activity on the Moon.

During their last drive, the astronauts explored the base of the 6,000 ft (1,800 metres) high mountain known as North Massif. They then went north-east to the very different range known as the Sculptured Hills.

Twelve men have now walked on the Moon since Neil Armstrong stepped out of Apollo 11 in July 1969.

There are no plans at present for astronauts to return, although Nasa still hopes men might fly back to the Moon in the 1980s, possibly as a joint US-Soviet venture.



Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Harrison Schmitt retired from Nasa in 1975, and Eugene Cernan in 1976.

Captain Cernan went on to anchor television programmes about the space shuttle, and founded his own consultancy company.

Dr Schmitt became the Republican Senator for New Mexico, a post he held for six years.

Although Apollo 17 marked the end of US missions to the Moon, Nasa continued to develop space exploration.

The following year, Skylab was launched. The first US space station, it was a continuation of the Apollo programme and housed three different Apollo crews.

The last crew left in 1974 and Skylab returned to Earth in 1979, some years earlier than expected, and disintegrated over Western Australia.

Nasa also developed the space shuttle, launched for the first time in 1981.

More recently, space exploration has focussed on unmanned missions to Mars and beyond, and on the construction of the International Space Station.

In January 2004 the US President, George Bush, said American astronauts would return to the Moon by 2020 as the launching point for missions further into space.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
**Mar. 21-Apr. 19**  
 Your love will not be willing to listen to your criticism. It will do you some good. Your desire for excitement and adventure may be expensive.

**TAURUS**  
**Apr. 20-May. 20**  
 You could be quite erratic regarding your personal relationship. Your involvement in interest groups may bring you popularity. All your energy should be directed into moneymaking opportunities.

**GEMINI**  
**May. 21-Jun. 21**  
 Be discreet about your personal life or whereabouts. Be mysterious. Take time to catch up on gossip and make plans to do a little adventure travel. Don't rely on others to do your work.

**CANCER**  
**Jun. 22-Jul. 22**  
 A day at the beach may satisfy the whole family. You can make changes to your domestic scene that will benefit all who reside there. Take a short business trip if possible.

**LEO**  
**Jul. 23-Aug. 22**  
 Need some adventure in your life? Exotic destinations beckon you. Travel should be on your agenda. You may find yourself changing plans for some form of entertainment.

**VIRGO**  
**Aug. 23-Sep. 22**  
 Avoid friends or acquaintances who drink too much. Don't blame everything on your mate. You may end up being blamed if anything goes wrong.

**LIBRA**  
**Sep. 23-Oct. 22**  
 You should include children in your activities. Don't let peers distract you or push their work your way. False information is likely if you listen to idle chatter or gossip.

**SCORPIO**  
**Oct. 23-Nov. 21**  
 Stubborn about making changes around your home. You can spend a passionate evening with someone you cherish if you make your plans early. Rewards for past good deeds will highlight your day.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
**Nov. 22-Dec. 21**  
 This may not be the day to get involved in risky joint financial ventures. Travel for business or pleasure will be enlightening. This is a great day to start that new health regimen you've been talking about.

**CAPRICORN**  
**Dec. 22-Jan. 19**  
 Be careful not to show your temper when dealing with the boss. Find out if they have other commitments. Make sure that you have covered yourself legally and try not to let your temper get out of hand.

**AQUARIUS**  
**Jan. 20-Feb. 18**  
 Your involvement with children will be most rewarding. Pleasure trips will be favorable and bring about romance. Your courage and willpower will enable you to get rid of destructive habits as well.

**PISCES**  
**Feb. 19-Mar. 20**  
 So smile! You may find yourself mixed up in a triangle of sorts. Communicate with relatives who may need advice in order to find solutions to their existing problems.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

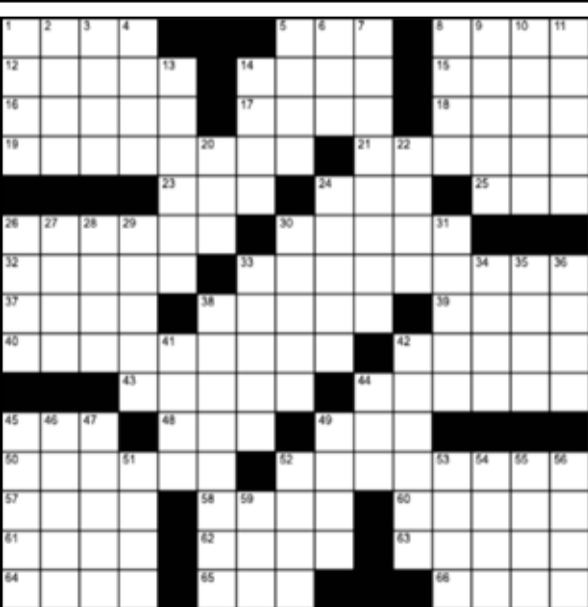
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-9	-1	clear
Harbin	-23	-15	clear
Tianjin	-7	-1	clear
Urumqi	-17	-10	clear
Xi'an	-4	3	cloudy
Lhasa	-5	13	clear
Chengdu	3	5	drizzle
Chongqing	6	9	drizzle
Kunming	8	21	clear
Nanjing	-1	3	cloudy
Shanghai	3	7	cloudy
Wuhan	1	4	cloudy
Hangzhou	2	8	overcast
Taipei	16	19	drizzle
Guangzhou	11	18	overcast
Hong Kong	16	21	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-6	-5	overcast
Frankfurt	4	6	cloudy
Paris	7	10	drizzle
London	10	12	drizzle
New York	4	10	drizzle

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1-Pop; 5- Singer Torne; 8- Brio; 12- Water wheel; 14- Mother of the Titans; 15- Leaf tool; 16- Render weaponless; 17- Bath powder; 18- Wading bird; 19- Period of high birthrate; 21- Go with; 23- FedEx rival; 24- Joan of \_\_\_\_ French heroine; 25- \_\_\_\_ Tafari (Haile Selassie); 26- Current; 30- Son of Abraham; 32- Heep of "David Copperfield"; 33- Subsequent to childbirth; 37- River sediment; 38- Recipient; 39- Steak order; 40- Bad breath; 42- Takes it easy; 43- Gymnast Comaneci; 44- Round of voting; 45- Fitting; 48- Banned spray; 49- Cut (off); 50- Immature insects; 52- Gauges; 57- Hip bones; 58- Hwys.; 60- \_\_\_\_ Gay; 61- Type of phone; 62- Farm females; 63- Stigma; 64- Author \_\_\_\_ Stanley Gardner; 65- Speck; 66- Minerals;

**DOWN** 1- Rebuff; 2- The last Mrs. Chaplin; 3- Colorless; 4- Breezy; 5- Polite address; 6- It's a moray; 7- Tear roughly; 8- Actor Stoltz; 9- Toil; 10- Director Kurosawa; 11- Bird homes; 13- Surprise attack; 14- Old Pontiacs; 20- Make a choice; 22- Examine, search; 24- Donkeys; 26- Succulent; 27- Type of song, to be sung solo; 28- Work the soil; 29- Kind of kitchen; 30- Ancient region of Asia Minor; 31- Christmas song; 33- Postulate; 34- Like some orders; 35- Woody's boy; 36- In case; 38- Feeble; 41- I did it!; 42- Passes by degrees; 44- Fur scarf; 45- Wonderland girl; 46- More wan; 47- Run of bird-song; 49- Not as much; 51- Low-lying area; 52- Bump into; 53- Golden rule preposition; 54- Laugh heartily; 55- Peace Nobelists Wiesel; 56- Lacking; 59- Snake eyes;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



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[Taipa] Manhattan D unit 4🏠 2🚗 2,305 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$15,980,000** (ref: n/a)  
[Taipa] Jade Garden family home 4🏠 3🚗 3,180 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$18,000,000** (ref: 19126002)



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2🏠 1🚗



SCAN ME

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[Taipa] Macau Riviera 2🏠 2🚗 866 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$15,000/mth** (ref: 20111001)  
[Taipa] Manhattan 3🏠 2🚗 1,626 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$18,500/mth** (ref: 20031001)  
[Macau] One Central 2🏠 2🚗 1,269 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$25,000/mth** (ref: n/a)

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# China's love affair with Australian wine ends in a messy breakup

SYBILLA GROSS

**C**HINA'S assault on Australia's wine industry is becoming quite the buzzkill.

The latest round of tariffs - which could push import duties to over 215% in total - have left Australia's winemakers reeling. Over the past 25 years, China, with its growing middle class and appetite for cool region Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and other big reds, has become Australia's biggest and most enthusiastic customer. Australia surpassed France as the top exporter to the country by value in 2019; last year, China spent USD904 million on imports, about 40% of Australia's total shipments, according to Wine Australia.

"They love our style, and they know our flavors," said Mitchell Taylor, whose Clare Valley-based Taylors Wines in South Australia gets a fifth of its annual export revenue from China. "They have a very perceptive palate, so wine's been a natural area for them to explore and to enjoy."

Those buyers are quickly dis-



appearing. Whisperings of tariffs to come pushed China's purchases up 94% in October, according to China customs data; Australian winemakers benefited from a corresponding 40% jump in prices. Official data for November isn't available yet, but the measures are expected to be an effective death knell, wiping out demand and pushing prices lower.

Now the Australian industry, still reeling from bush fires that scorched vineyards in early 2020

and the coronavirus epidemic that's hobbled demand, is rethinking its entire global distribution plans. Shares of Melbourne-based Treasury Wine Estates, best known for its Penfolds brand, fell as much as 12% following the first tariff announcements.

### EMERGENCY PLAN

The umbrella group, which owns Wolf Blass and Snoop Dogg-affiliated 19 Crimes, among others, announced an emergency

plan would include reallocating its Penfolds Bin and Icon labels to other luxury markets and accelerate a drive to produce more wine in other countries to avoid made-in-Australia duties.

Australia's next biggest clients, the U.S. and U.K., aren't likely to offer much solace. With the luxury market cornered by California and Europe respectively, Australia's become better known for bargain labels like Yellow Tail. "We'll really need to sell the luxury story of Australian wine," said Taylor.

### NEW MARKET

Breaking into a new market, particularly one with existing preferences, doesn't happen quickly. Winemakers spend years courting and educating distributors, retailers and sommeliers about new flavor profiles and the specifics of terroir. The pitch is different too, Taylor said. Customary gift-giving and lavish dinners worked in China, whereas Americans look to wine journalists and global competitions, along with widespread advertising and promotion.

"We all have to look at how we're

going to reposition ourselves and reengage in other markets where we've perhaps shorted them," said Alister Purbrick, chief executive officer of central Victoria's Tahbilk Wines. He's doubling down on the domestic market for now, but sees opportunity in another emerging market: India. Tariffs there have so far kept most exporters at bay, but he sees longer-term potential in shifting consumer preferences and the rise of a younger, more global generation.

"We feel that that wine market would develop similarly to China's," said Purbrick, adding that his company is better positioned to weather the storm than smaller exporters. "Whichever way you look at it, there's going to be some pain," he said. "Our good friends in China have really pulled the rope off the guillotine."

Meanwhile, Chinese importers and retailers will look elsewhere. A Guangdong wine dealer who gave his family name as Ni said he's raised his prices on Australian wines and plans to start importing from other countries including France, Chile and Argentina.

Business with China had the potential to double "in the foreseeable future," according to Taylor. "China was always the driver of our figures," he said. "We just know the winemakers in France, Chile and New Zealand are cheering." **BLOOMBERG**

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**OPINION**

**World Views**

Clara Ferreira Marques, Bloomberg



**THE VACCINES THAT COULD USE A SHOT IN THE ARM**

In a pandemic, trust is everything. Beijing and Moscow saw early the potential benefits of pulling ahead in the race to produce an effective inoculation against Covid-19. Apart from the public health benefits and the keen awareness in both governments of the need to be self-reliant, a clear win would validate top-down models of government and innovation. It would also mean a much-needed image boost, at home and abroad.

In the end, both have had success. Moscow in August, to great fanfare, became the first to grant regulatory approval for a vaccine, one of its two leading candidates. By then, Beijing had already allowed doses of one of its own vaccines to be given to its military. About a fifth of all shots listed by the World Health Organization as undergoing clinical trials are Chinese. Yet without more transparency about research and testing — and a little less propaganda — neither country will earn the confidence needed to reap the full reward.

For an indication of the trust deficit, look at the way the market responded to Russia's green light for its Sputnik V vaccine, or to news the flagship vaccine is more than 90% effective. They were yawns compared to the unbridled enthusiasm after Moderna Therapeutics published encouraging data in July, or indeed ongoing excitement as the vaccine from Pfizer Inc. and German partner BioNTech SE goes through the U.S. regulatory approval process. Last month, positive results for that inoculation from a large-scale clinical trial were enough to push the S&P 500, MSCI World and the MSCI All-World indexes towards record highs, in no small part thanks to the robust evidence about the vaccine's effectiveness.

China faced a higher trust hurdle from the start. It saw the first cases and there were questions from the earliest days of the outbreak over how swiftly it had shared information, perhaps missing opportunities to slow the spread. Even if it was not a repeat of 2002 and 2003, when Beijing took months to disclose the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, wariness lingered. Then there's the impact of past vaccine scandals, most recently over substandard inoculations in 2018. Controls have been overhauled since.

It's no accident that Brazil's president, Jair Bolsonaro — no stranger to mixing health policy and the demands of populist politics — in October criticized the Sinovac Biotech Ltd. vaccine being tested in his country by arguing people didn't feel safe "because of its origin." In circumstances which have baffled local researchers, the final-phase trial has since been suspended.

Russia's plight has not been too different. The country has not been a vaccine research or production powerhouse, but an increasingly isolated government still saw the opportunity to boost its international standing and earn the sort of halo Soviet science did with the race to put humans in space. The first vaccine was, no surprise, named Sputnik V.

Yet with scarce data and plenty of government promotion, the dash for approvals and show over results has not translated into impressive diplomatic or domestic wins. For Russia, manufacturing hiccups haven't helped at home, nor have accusations from several countries in July that Moscow-backed hackers tried to steal research. According to an October survey by the Levada Center, an independent pollster, 59% of Russians questioned said they would not take the vaccination. As Tatiana Stanovaya, head of political consultancy R.Politik put it to me, the Kremlin, which saw the vaccine as a question of pride and self-affirmation, simply overdid the hype. The result has been an acute lack of public trust.

[Abridged]

**FLAMETHROWER DRONE INCINERATES WASP NESTS IN CHINA**

A drone has been converted into a flying flamethrower in central China in a fiery campaign to eradicate more than 100 wasp nests.

Blue Sky Rescue, a volunteer group that conducts search and rescue and other emergency work, have teamed up with villagers in Zhong county near the city of Chongqing.

They raised 80,000 yuan to buy a drone and equip it with a gasoline tank and an arm-length nozzle.

Videos released by Blue Sky show a recent mission by the six-arm drone. It hovers above a hive as large as a suitcase before swooping down. The drone

operator flips the ignition switch, and the drone spits bursts of fire onto the hive.

"The burning ashes of the wasp's nest gradually peeled off and fell, and the surrounding residents applauded and praised the rescue team," said an article on a local news app run by state-owned Chongqing TV.

The article quotes a resident thanking Blue Sky for helping the village: "Now we don't have to worry about being stung by a wasp."

Blue Sky said it has destroyed 11 hives so far. There are more than 100 to go.



**TOP OFFICIALS COMMEMORATE NANJING MASSACRE VICTIMS**

**T**he Macau SAR government held a memorial ceremony yesterday to mourn the 300,000 victims of the Nanjing Massacre.

Nearly 300 people commemorated the event at the Security Forces Higher School in Coloane.

High-ranking officials including Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng; Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Edmund Ho; Vice Director of the Central People's Government Liaison Office in Macau Zhang Rongshun; and the Deputy Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Wang Dong.

A minute of silence was observed for the victims of the 1937 massacre.

Also, teachers and students joined the memorial ceremony.

"It's very meaningful because it lets the student understand that the Nanjing Massacre was not only a tragedy in Chinese history but also a catastrophe in human history. I hope everyone can learn a lesson and remember this war and treasure peace," a local teacher told the press, as cited by TDM.

Meanwhile, the people of Nanjing also observed a minute of silence, and sirens were heard across the city to mourn the 300,000 victims of the Nanjing Massacre.

Despite the winter chill, thousands of people clad in dark attire attended the seventh national memorial ceremony for the massacre victims in Nanjing, east China's Jiangsu Province, with white flowers pinned to their chests to convey their condolences. Attendees included massacre survivors, local students, and foreign



Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng

visitors.

At exactly 10:01 a.m., sirens began to blare, and drivers across the city stopped their cars and sounded their horns. Pedestrians paused for a minute of silence in remembrance of the victims.

More than 80 teenagers read out a declaration of peace and citizen representatives struck the Bell of Peace. White doves, symbolizing hope for peace, were released to fly over the square of the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders.

China's national flag flew at half-mast in the square.

**HISTORY NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN**

Xia Shuqin, 91, was one of the massacre survivors present at yesterday's memorial ceremony.

She was only eight when Nanjing fell to the Japanese invaders. She lost seven of her family members in the mass killing and barely managed to live after suffering multiple knife wounds.

Touching the names of her families engraved on a memorial wall yesterday, she said though it has been more than 80 years, the trauma of

losing beloved family members still haunts her.

"I'm here today to mourn not only for my family but also for all the lost lives in the massacre," she said.

The number of registered survivors has decreased to 73 so far this year.

In a bid to better spread the history, the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders has been recruiting international volunteers since 2008 to explain the history to foreign visitors and translate the memorial hall's historical materials.

In October this year, a total of 73 foreign volunteers from countries including the United States, Iran and South Korea went on duty in the memorial hall.

"This place serves as a reminder for the future, a lesson that must never be forgotten, no matter how painful or sad it is to remember," said Jonathan Gragert, one of the volunteers from the United States.

"It is the responsibility of every man, woman, and child to remember the horror that happened here so that such an event can never happen again," said Gragert, who teaches at a Nanjing university. **MDT/AP**

**Indonesian** police have arrested a man believed to be the military leader of the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah network who has eluded capture since 2003, authorities said. Aris Sumarsono, known as Zulkarnaen, was arrested last week by counterterrorism police without resistance in a raid at a house in East Lampung district on Sumatra island.



**Russian** nuclear submarine successfully test-fired four intercontinental ballistic missiles in a show of readiness of Moscow's nuclear forces amid tension with the U.S. The Defense Ministry said that the Vladimir Monomakh submarine of the Pacific Fleet launched four Bulava missiles in quick succession from an underwater position in the Sea of Okhotsk. Their dummy warheads hit their designated targets on the Chiza shooting range in the Arkhangelsk region in northwestern Russia more than 5,500 kilometers away.

**Brexit** Britain and the European Union say talks will continue on a free trade agreement — a deal that if sealed would avert New Year's chaos for cross-border traders and bring a measure of certainty for businesses after years of Brexit turmoil. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had set yesterday as the deadline for a breakthrough or breakdown in negotiations.



**Paris** police took nearly 150 people into custody at what quickly became a tense and sometimes ill-tempered protest this weekend against proposed security laws, with officers wading into the crowds of several thousand to haul away suspected trouble-makers. Police targeted protesters they suspected might coalesce together into violent groups like those who vandalized stores and vehicles and attacked officers at previous demonstrations.