

The Macao SAR Government urges:

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

Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

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THE MACAO GOVERNMENT PLANS TO CARRY OUT A PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR HAZARDOUS ITEMS MANAGEMENT LAW ON JAN. 23

SCAMS INVOLVING CASES OF ILLEGAL MONEY EXCHANGES CONTINUE TO GROW

LOCAL AUTHORITIES MAY EXTEND THE EXISTING SIX CASINO CONCESSIONS FOR THREE MORE YEARS UNTIL 2025: MORGAN STANLEY

Chinese Football Association is capping salaries for domestic and foreign players in its top-flight Super League in what it describes as a bid to maintain “sustainable growth” over the long term. Also under the new rules issued yesterday, all professional teams will be barred from showing the names of corporate sponsors on their playing shirts or provide any information on the jerseys other than the club name and its home city or province.

China's market regulator yesterday said it fined Alibaba Group and a Tencent Holdings-backed company for failing to seek approval before proceeding with some acquisitions. In a statement, China's State Administration for Market Regulation said that it fined Alibaba 500,000 yuan (\$76,500) for increasing its stake in department store company Intime Retail Group to 73.79% in 2017 without seeking approval. *More on p7*

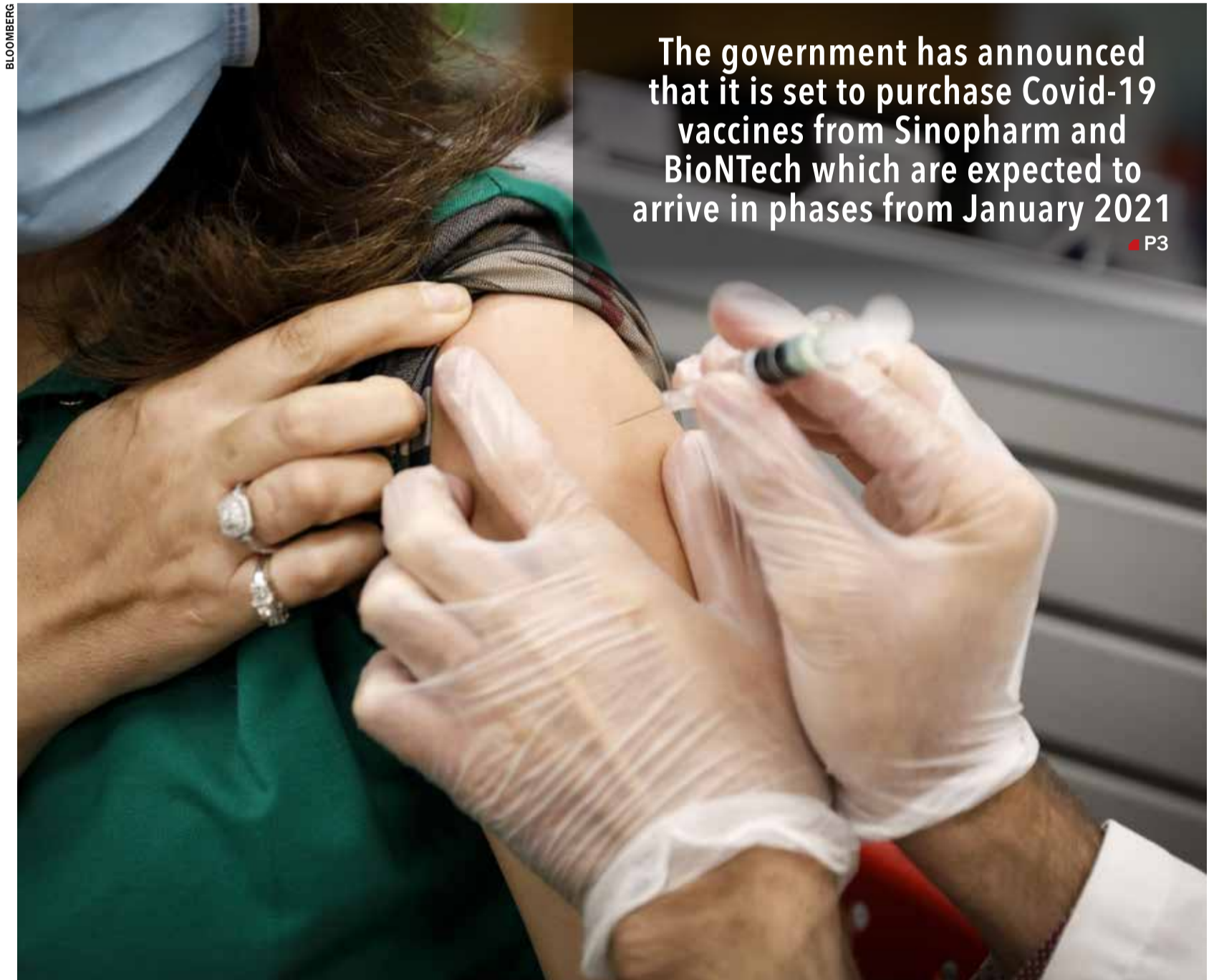


Malaysian authorities have seized more than two tons of crystal methamphetamine worth more than \$26 million aboard a small boat off the country's western coast, the largest ever such haul in the country's history. The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency said over the weekend that it made the seizure on Dec. 9 off the coast of Penang. The agency said in a statement that a maritime patrol found the drugs on a recreational boat that was behaving strangely.

Singapore has approved the use of Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine, and the first shipment will arrive by the end of this month, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said yesterday. Lee said Singapore, with a budget of over 1 billion Singapore dollars (\$750 million) for vaccines, has “placed multiple bets” by signing advance purchase agreements with vaccine makers including Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech, Moderna Inc. and China's Sinovac.

More on backpage

800,000 VACCINES



The government has announced that it is set to purchase Covid-19 vaccines from Sinopharm and BioNTech which are expected to arrive in phases from January 2021

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WONG SIO CHAK DID NOT RULE OUT ‘RISKS’ THAT MAY IMPEDE THE SMOOTH RUNNING OF THE NEXT AL ELECTION

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KNOWN FOR HER WORK AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SISTER JULIANA DEVOY PASSES AT 83

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446 RESIDENTS FROM SARs APPLY TO WORK FOR SHENZHEN GOV'T

A total of 446 residents from Macau and Hong Kong have applied to work as civil servants for the Shenzhen government, according to a report by the Global Times. It is the first time that the Shenzhen government is hiring Macau and Hong Kong residents as civil servants. The report claims that a single position at a community service office attracted 244 applicants. Shenzhen is hiring for five positions concerning administration, finance, urban planning, administrative management of foreign workers and medical industry supervision.

PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECT CONSTRUCTION EXPECTED IN 2021

The Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) expects the construction of the housing project at the former Pearl Horizon Project land plot to start in the beginning of next year. One of the plots will hold houses specifically for the buyers of the former Pearl Horizon Project, the government's "temporary houses" will occupy two land plots, and a seniors' apartment project will be located on the fourth land plot.

ARBITRATION CENTER TO HANDLE MORE TYPES OF DISPUTES

The Consumer Arbitration Center has set no limits for the amount of money involved in consumption disputes handled by the center. Starting from today, the former Consumer Arbitration Center will be renamed as the Consumer Mediation and Arbitration Center, according to a Chief Executive Decree that was published in the Official Gazette yesterday. For the first time, the center is also handling disputes between consumers and freelancers.



OPINION

CLIMATE CHANGE: LET'S KEEP THE SPIRIT OF PARIS ALIVE!

ALEXANDRE GIORGINI*

FIVE years ago in France, for the first time in history, the world's nations came together in a single agreement to combat climate change. On 12 December 2015, under the French presidency of the 21st Conference of the parties on climate change (COP21), 194 countries – along with the European Union – signed the Paris agreement, a universal and legally binding climate change deal.

It sets the objective of limiting, by the end of the century, global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

By the end of this year, all nations are expected to submit updated plans to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. As we remember the 'Spirit of Paris' and the unique international momentum that brought the Paris Agreement into force with currently 189 ratifying parties, we also need to look to the future and make sure we hold ourselves to the commitments we made 5 years ago.

Time is already running out. 2020 is on course to be the warmest year ever recorded, according to the World Meteorological Organization. The UN Environment Programme predicts that global warming will reach 4 degrees Celsius by the end of the century if

the current trend goes on. Continuing rising temperatures are fueling extreme weather events such as wildfires, floods and hurricanes that wreak havoc on the lives and livelihoods of millions of people around the world.

I still remember vividly the widespread damage caused by super typhoon Mangkhut, soon after I took office here in September 2018.

This cyclone caused extensive damage across Southeast Asia and served as a chilling reminder of the disastrous effects of climate change. While respecting the objective of 1.5 degree of warming might not be enough to prevent negative effects such as a rise of global sea-level or widespread extinction of vulnerable species, staying within this limit could at least moderate the impacts for the sake of future generations.

We are currently facing a global pandemic that underlines yet again the importance of science, solidarity and decisive actions in the wake of global threats.

The drop-in greenhouse gas emissions due to the coronavirus-related global economic downturn is only temporary and will not be enough to reverse the trend. However, recovery from the pandemic could be humanity's chance for a reset to save

our planet. Government stimulus and recovery measures must be led by a sustainability-oriented approach.

France and the European Union are determined to seize this opportunity. Nearly a third of the French Government's 100 billion recovery plan to relaunch the economy will be spent to speed up ecological transition. In particular, France will support the thermal renovation of buildings, the decarbonization of industry, green hydrogen, cleaner transport and transformation of the agricultural sector.

“ Ho Iat Seng's announcements during his policy address in the fields of environmental protection and urban planning are certainly encouraging.

Simplified installation measures have been designed to facilitate foreign investment into the green economy, a good opportunity to grasp! At the European level, Member States already agreed to spend 30% of the upcoming EU budget to fight climate change during the 2021-27 period, on top of the 2019 Euro-

pean Green Deal, an action plan that reflects the long-term ambition of the EU to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

A major diplomatic momentum is therefore underway to make the post-pandemic recovery an opportunity for a more resilient future on a healthy planet.

On 12 December, France, the UK, and the UN co-host a virtual Climate Ambition Summit 2020 – an opportunity for world leaders to update their national commitments and an important milestone on the road to the COP26 that will take place in Glasgow next November. 2021 will also be a decisive year for biodiversity, with the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming in May.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng's announcements during his last policy address in the fields of environmental protection and urban planning are certainly encouraging. Strengthening the city's resilience to natural disasters - by improving flood control systems for example - will play a significant part in Macau's adaptation strategy to climate change.

The focus put on the development of a smart-city will also contribute to reducing the city's carbon footprint, notably by increasing the efficiency of its transportation system.

As Macau looks to a greener future, France is committed to enhancing its local cooperation in the area of sustainable development.

French companies are already making significant contributions in areas such as transportation - Setec and Egis Rail for instance - and water management. In that

field, SUEZ and its subsidiary Macau Water recently signed an agreement with the University of Macau to conduct research on marine ecosystems and water treatment technology, to protect the ocean and its biodiversity.

After Beijing's announcement that China will achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 and President-elect Joe Biden's promise to reenter the US into the Paris Agreement, the fight against climate change is more than ever, for the international community, a shared objective and a field for joint action.

***Consul-General of France in Hong Kong and Macau MDT EXCLUSIVE**

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Gov't expects 800,000 vaccines to roll out from January

ANTHONY LAM

THE government announced at yesterday's weekly Covid-19 press conference that 800,000 vaccines are expected to arrive in phases from January next year, with frontline medical staff and paramedics being prioritized.

Yesterday was also the first time the government disclosed that it opened discussion with pharmaceutical companies in March this year, which was about one month after Macau's first cases.

In July and September, the local government participated in and signed an agreement with the COVAX Facility, which aims to accelerate Covid-19 vaccine research and development.

The three most viable types of vaccine are the inactivated virus type by China's Sinopharm Group, the mRNA type by Germany's BioNTech SE and the adenovirus vector type by British-Swedish AstraZeneca.

Dr Leong Iek Hou of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention said yesterday that the government has expressed its intention to purchase 400,000 shots from each manufacturer.

However, the adenovirus vector type of vaccine has not yet been approved by any jurisdiction so far. Comparatively, the other two have been approved in some places, such as the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain for the Chinese vaccine, and the U.K. and the U.S., under emergency conditions, for the German-branded vaccine.

With that said, the government estimates the first two types of vaccines will arrive early next year, while the last type, from AstraZeneca,

BLOOMBERG



neca, only arriving in the second quarter.

Each type has its own pros and cons, but the mRNA type has raised extra concerns. Leong remarked that it is a new type of vaccine, and therefore there are greater concerns over its efficacy.

When the vaccines arrive, the authorities will administer the shots in phases, but will prioritize frontline epidemic control staff, including medical staff, fire fighters and paramedics, as well as police officers.

Furthermore, transport workers and frozen food processors will be prioritized. Lastly, local residents who need to travel abroad will also

be prioritized.

After these phases, the government will roll out the vaccines to other residents.

Nonetheless, Leong stressed that the vaccination will be administered on a voluntary basis. Her colleague, medical director of the government hospital, Dr Alvis Lo, as well as their superintendent, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Leong, previously made a similar pledge.

There might be conflicts between the vaccinations being voluntary and the workers being prioritized, though. It is unclear if frontline epidemic control personnel will be barred from work unless

they are vaccinated.

In the early phase of the vaccination scheme, certain people will not be accepted, namely minors under the age of 16, and women who are pregnant or plan to be so within the next three months.

Leong's justification was the insufficient data to support the administration of the vaccines to these groups. In order to avoid complications, they should therefore wait.

Lo has previously emphasized that the local vaccination scheme will only roll out when available vaccines pass all necessary tests and show positive results. News from various sources have reported that no vaccines have passed all

three mandatory phases of testing.

When questioned about the contradictions, Lo based his explanation on principle of trust, saying that the mid-term review of these vaccines has yielded acceptable results.

Furthermore, he said that in normal circumstances, a test of a vaccine administered on a group of tens of thousands of people should be – experientially – able to spot any complications or side effects.

“It is very likely that these pharmaceutical companies found more pros than cons in these vaccines,” Lo explained.

GOV'T ALLOWS 'SELF-SELECTED QUARANTINE HOTELS'

After taking references from “nearby places,” the government is now greenlighting people to make their own choice of quarantine hotel between the Sheraton Grand Macao and the yet-to-be-unveiled Lisboaeta Macao.

The updated scheme will kick off with a trial period from December 20 until January 31. A review will be conducted at the end to determine its suspension or continuation.

The update came days after Hong Kong announced its quarantine hotel plans, which allow people to choose to stay in luxury hotels such as the Landmark Mandarin Oriental and the Sheraton Hong Kong Hotel and Tower.

Under the updated scheme, non-locals coming into Macau will be sent to either of the two choices of hotel at their own cost. The option to be quarantined at other hotels is unavailable.

Meanwhile, local residents and relatives with them will have the freedom to choose to stay in a designated or self-selected hotel. Staying at a self-selected hotel, nonetheless, will be at their own cost. The government will not offer any subsidy or waiver.

The government has not yet announced how bookings should be made.

Anti-domestic violence circle mourns passing of Sister Juliana Devoy

KKNOWN to the public for her work against domestic violence and her care for its victims, Sister Juliana Devoy, Director of the Good Shepherd Center, passed away yesterday morning at the age of 83 after suffering a stroke last week.

Described by social work academic Cecilia Ho as an on-the-ground social worker, Sister Devoy dedicated her entire career to combating domestic vio-

lence and protecting victims from repeated harm.

She was a pillar in the cross-sector group working to fully criminalize domestic violence back in 2012. At the time, the government wanted to make the offence a semi-public crime, meaning that only the victim would be legally able to initiate a domestic violence lawsuit, in contrast to the current legal classification, which allows the authorities to do so.

Often, members of the clergy are perceived to be detached from the world, but Sister Devoy could not be considered so, as least not to Ho, who was part of the aforementioned cross-sector group.

Talking to Chinese media, All About Macau, the academic recalled that Sister Devoy had completely changed her impression of the clergy. “Sister Devoy has lived out justice and human rights,” Ho said.

The Catholic nun was born in America in 1937. After graduating from high school in 1954, she entered the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Los Angeles, studying social work and sociology in college.

In 1963, she arrived in Hong Kong, where she began helping young girls with their life. This also marked the commencement of her half-a-century-long charity career in Macau and Hong Kong. **AL**

RENATO MARQUES



WONG SIO CHAK SAYS HK, MACAU ELECTIONS AFFECT EACH OTHER

JULIE ZHU

THE Secretariat for Security has not ruled out "risks" which may impede the smooth running next year of the election of the Legislative Assembly (AL), according to Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak.

On the sideline of yesterday's meeting of the Second Standing Committee of AL, Secretary Wong Sio Chak responded to a media question on the subject, saying that his sector will ensure next year's AL election is carried out in an orderly manner.

The official linked Macau's AL election to next year's election for the Legislative Council of Hong Kong.

"There are risks for every event. When two events [elections] are organized together, they affect one another," said Wong, who went on to explain that "you can judge what the illegal activities regarding various ceremonies and activities consist of, and of course, risks are not necessarily crimes."



Wong Sio Chak (right)

Over previous years, the Macau SAR has banned the entry of some individuals, particularly activists, lawmakers and other individuals from Hong Kong who oppose the establishment,

including solicitor Alver Ho, former Hong Kong lawmaker Leung Kwok-hung, as well as some student activists.

"We are not banning everybody who is coming to the city,"

Wong elaborated.

According to the official, the city's security force has been communicating with the security authority of Hong Kong regarding collaboration on security

across the two regions.

As of today, Macau's security force has not yet discussed the 2021 Macau election with its Hong Kong counterpart.

Macau didn't report incidents concerning any kind of attack to the city during the previous 2017 AL election.

However, Wong stated that if anyone attempts to prevent Macau's AL election from happening in an orderly fashion, the local security authority will take action to enforce the law.

Asked whether the security force is worried about creating unnecessary fear within the local community by publicly anticipating risks in the upcoming election, Wong said "our law enforcement is done in accordance with the law. If we don't enforce the law, we are being negligent."

The Secretary claims that the security force is only taking precautionary measures, implying that it is not trying to suppress political dissidents.

Wong says that the security force of Macau takes prudent security measures in all large-scale activities, including the election. Meanwhile, as to "who to choose" to be the lawmaker, Wong explicitly said that it is up to the voters.

Morgan Stanley: SAR likely to extend casino concessions for three more years

STAFF REPORTER

THE SAR government may extend the existing six casino concessions for three more years until 2025, investment bank Morgan Stanley stated in a note published.

The financial institution is expecting the decision to come into effect by June in 2021.

The current six gaming licences for local casinos are due to expire in June 2022. Under the current gaming law, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng is able to extend the concessions for up to five years.

As stated in the Policy Address for 2021, the government vows to begin revising the current gaming law by the first quarter of 2021. The amendment is expected to be completed by the fourth quarter of next year, before being submitted as a finalised draft bill to the Legislative Assembly (AL).

However, this timeframe may be affected



by a public consultation process promised by the city's leader.

In Morgan Stanley's announcement, analysts said it could take more than a year for open bidding to conclude as the SAR government must run a public consultation before submitting the bill to AL.

Owing to such time restriction, it may be hard to finalize a public tender process before June 2022.

Local authorities stated earlier that the revi-

sion of the gaming law is an essential step prior to a public tender process.

Back in March 2019, the government extended the concessions for SJM Holdings Ltd. and MGM China Holdings Ltd. to June 26, 2022. The new concession expiry date for these two operators coincides with that of the other four operators, which also expire in June 2022.

This move was viewed as "necessary preparation" in case an open bi-

dding process could not be finished before the licenses expired, Morgan Stanley analysts said.

The institution expects the casino operators to pay "a nominal one-time fee only" for each fresh concession.

The report also considered the possibility of a newcomer emerging in the open bid process. "But without a big piece of land to go with it, there will be no competitive threat to the existing players," the financial institution explained.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR HAZARDOUS ITEMS MANAGEMENT LAW TO START IN JANUARY

JULIE ZHU

THE government plans to carry out a public consultation on the law for the management and storage of hazardous items on January 23.

Yesterday, on the sidelines of a meeting of the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL), the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, revealed that the SAR government still intends to handle all types of hazardous items with a single law.

In the region, hazardous items are classified in nine groups. The government wants to gather all nine groups into the one place for centralized treatment.

Previously, local authorities announced its decision to transform the current Desafio Jovem Teen Challenge Center into the city's permanent hazardous items storage.

Wong anticipated that the public works department will initiate the construction of the storage facility soon, and will also carry out a public consultation period for the plan of the project.

Before Macau establishes a law to regulate hazardous items issues, and before the permanent storage is built, the government authority will collect hazardous items from different construction sites into one place for treatment.

In order to allow the local community to better understand the storage of hazardous items, in January next year, the government will invite experts from mainland China to give a talk to public department employees and other groups on the subject.

Also yesterday, the Second Standing Committee of the AL had another detailed reading of the recently passed new law concerning fire safety in buildings and specific locations.

During the meeting, government representatives responded to approximately 20 questions raised by the lawmakers.

According to the government's explanation, locations including tunnels, piers, and storage spaces are subjected to this law.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



Sands Cares Ambassadors help local community thrive and grow, rain or shine

SANDS CHINA LTD. considers it part of its corporate social responsibility to be fully engaged in the local community, helping it thrive and grow.

YEARS OF SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Caring for those in the community who are vulnerable and in need of assistance, Sands China's team members have been volunteering their time in the community in their off-duty hours since 2005. In 2009, the company decided to formalise those efforts through the establishment of the Sands Cares Ambassador (SCA) programme. Throughout these 11 years, the number of volunteers rose from 200 team members to a current membership of more than 3,300. The volunteers have put in more than 110,000 cumulative hours of service to date.

Since the SCA programme's founding, more than 500 activi-

ties have been organised. Those include participating in One Day Volunteer, visiting the homes of live-alone elderly for annual spring cleaning, responding to Typhoon Hato with relief efforts, and celebrating the 20th anniversary of the founding of Macao with the local community with a Sands Dream Explorer Activity. And as Sands China's dynamic integrated resorts bring in new and exciting attractions, SCAs accompany members of the community to enjoy the latest offerings, such as inviting Macau Special Olympics athletes to do a Tower Fun Run up The Parisian Macao's iconic Eiffel Tower with none other than David Beckham, and hosting special needs children to experience the innovative and interactive art space of teamLab SuperNature Macao.

Taking into consideration that the SCAs possess various talents, the company decided to form a working committee for the SCAs to better let them unleash their

skills and capabilities, aiming to organise more systematic community activities with the overall goal of serving more people.

This September, the SCA programme celebrated its 11th anniversary with a ceremony at The Venetian Macao, featuring the inauguration of the new SCA working committee and an award presentation for three Macao winners of the Mr. Sheldon G. And Dr. Miriam Adelson Citizenship Awards – created in 2017 to honour the family's long-term commitment to philanthropy and the legacy of giving they have instilled within the organisation.

"Every team member has his or her own talents, which include skills from electronics repair to performing arts and everything in between. In order to precisely put these skills into actions that benefit the community, there are organising committees holding meetings regularly to brainstorm, and to discuss ideas and innovative ways to contribu-

te," says Annie Lam, Director of Community Affairs.

During the challenging time this year under the pandemic, Sands China's dedication and support to the community has never ceased. Sands China has pledged to donate MOP20 million to help contain the spread of the virus and to assist with relief efforts in mainland China, and reserved another MOP5 million for supporting the local community in implementing preventive measures.

The company has donated a total of over 650,000 pandemic health and hygiene items like hand sanitizer, medical gloves and shower caps to local community organisations, with 500,000 medical facemasks donated to the Macao SAR government, as part of the company's pledge to support Macao's efforts to combat the fast-spreading virus.

"Macao is our home," said Sands China Ltd. President Dr. Wilfred Wong. "And Sands China

cares for our home, as we walk together with our community in taking care of each other. We are very proud of our Sands Cares Ambassadors for their commitment to service to the Macao community over the years, and for exemplifying Sands China's core values as representatives of the company in the community. Sands China is pleased to see the establishment of the Sands Cares Ambassador working committee, and we hope it will further strengthen our efforts to continue giving back to society and injecting more positive energy into the community."

SCAs BY THE NUMBERS

● Volunteers	3,300+
● Total volunteer hours	110,000+
● NGOs served	330+
● Total activities	500+

CRIME

SCAMS INVOLVING ILLEGAL CURRENCY EXCHANGE CONTINUE

RENATO MARQUES

THE number of scams involving cases of illegal money exchanges performed in or around local casinos continue to grow. According to a crime report from the Judiciary Police (PJ), another two such cases were reported to the force over the last couple of days. A PJ spokesperson revealed during the regular joint press conference of the police forces that these cases involved the loss of a total amount of HKD488,500.

In one of the cases, the victims, a couple from the mainland, told the police that a 35-year-old woman who is their neighbor in the mainland had told them back in November that she was involved in performing currency exchange in Macau, which made her a good profit. She apparently asked if they were interested in being part of the scheme.

The deal was simple: the couple would supply her with HKD currency, which she would later change to RMB currency from her alleged clients. The profits of this would be shared among them.

The couple accepted the deal and on December 4 traveled to Macau, where they provided a total of HKD428,500 to the suspect, who had also traveled to Macau.

After that, they went sight-

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



seeing in Macau and spent a total of six days in the city. During that time, the couple said that the suspect handed them small amounts of cash daily (a total of HKD12,000 for the first five days), purportedly because they had been doing the currency exchange job. However, on December 9, after she lost all the money in the casino, the suspect returned

to the couple and asked for more money. They found it strange that she was asking for money without handing them any profits in return and questioned her until she admitted that she had not been doing any currency exchange and, instead, she had used all the money to gamble.

The couple then took her to the PJ and filed a complaint.

The woman admitted the crime and was presented to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on December 11 to be accused of fraud involving a large sum of money.

In the other unrelated case, also reported yesterday, a 27-year-old man from the mainland became involved in a difficult situation after he attempted to exchange HKD50,000 in bank-

notes for gaming chips at a casino located in the ZAPE area in the early hours of December 10.

The cage staff of the casino noticed that the banknotes were fake and called the police.

The man explained to the PJ he had received those banknotes from a man and a woman, also from the mainland, the previous day. He said that the couple approached him in the street and offered to exchange RMB for HKD at a favorable rate.

The PJ began investigating the case and, upon reviewing footage of the location indicated by the man, realized that his story matched with the footage.

In addition to the HKD50,000, the man, now considered a victim, still had another HKD10,000 in forged banknotes in his possession, which he handed over to the police.

Later that day, the PJ managed to locate the two suspects. They first found and detained the man, who refused to cooperate, and later they found the woman in her hotel room.

In the woman's room, investigators also found another 139 forged HKD1,000 banknotes and a Chinese identification document. After analysis, the PJ realized that the ID was also a forgery.

Similarly to the male suspect, the woman denied the crime but the PJ says that a forensics investigation conducted on the fake banknotes revealed that they had the suspects' fingerprints.

Both suspects were presented to the MP on December 11 to be accused of fraud involving a high amount as well as forgery of a document of special value.

Authorities find two men with illegal weapons in their luggage

RENATO MARQUES

TWO Taiwanese men in two separate incidents were found attempting to travel back to Taiwan from Macau, carrying illegal weapons in their luggage, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) said yesterday during the joint police forces regular press conference.

The unrelated cases occurred at the Macau International Airport on two consecutive days over last weekend.

On the first day, a 52-year-old male was stopped from traveling after an X-ray machine inspection revealed that he was carrying a pair of nunchucks and a collapsible baton (com-

MICHAL PARZUCHOWSKI



monly used for self-defense and as a law enforcement tool), both of which are considered illegal weapons.

Taken to the police station for questioning, the man said that he used

both instruments as physical exercise tools.

He also told the police that he had acquired both products from an online shop for the price of RMB400.

On December 13, a

second man, also from Taiwan, was caught in a similar situation, carrying the same type of collapsible baton in his luggage.

Questioned by the police, the 45-year-old man struggled to explain the purpose of the instrument, claiming that he used it to "test the solidity of the products that his company manufactures."

To the officers, he also claimed to have bought the item on the internet from a shop in the mainland, paying RMB145.

Both men were presented to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday morning to be charged with the crime of possession of an illegal weapon.

CROSS-BORDER BILL PAYMENT LAUNCHED

LOCAL residents can now pay public utility and subsistence bills in Guangdong Province via 10 local banks, following the launch of a direct payment system for Guangdong and Macau.

Yesterday, the Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM) and the Bank of China Guangdong Branch launched the system, which they considered a "milestone" in the implementation of cross-border bill payment activities.

The platform now allows local residents to pay public bills via local banks who joined the service, and through the collaboration of three utility and financial groups from Zhuhai and Jiangmen: the Huafa Group, Jiangmen Water and the Guangdong

Broadcasting and Television Network.

"The completion and implementation of the cross-border bill payment activities [...] symbolize a milestone in promoting interconnection between financial infrastructures between Guangdong and Macau," AMCM noted in a statement.

The maximum limit for transactions is set at RMB50,000 and the daily bank transaction limit is RMB20,000.

Local banks included in the platform are: Bank of China Macau Branch, Tai Fung Bank Limited, BNU, OCBC Wing Hang Bank Limited, ICBC Macau, Banco Comercial de Macau, S.A., China Guangfa Bank, Macau Chinese Bank, Luso International Banking Limited and Well Link Bank. LV

Alibaba, Tencent unit fined under anti-monopoly law

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINA'S market regulator yesterday said it fined Alibaba Group and a Tencent Holdings-backed company for failing to seek approval before proceeding with some acquisitions.

It also is launching a review of a merger of two online streaming platforms in the latest tightening of controls over the internet sector.

In a statement, China's State Administration for Market Regulation said yesterday that it fined Alibaba 500,000 yuan (\$76,500) for increasing its stake in department store company Intime Retail Group to 73.79% in 2017 without seeking approval.

China Literature, an online publisher and e-book company spun off by Tencent, was fined the same amount for also not seeking approval for its acquisition of New Classics Media. Separately, Shenzhen Hive Box, backed by Chinese courier firm SF Express, was censured over its acquisition of China Post Smart Logistics.



China's market regulator is also reviewing the merger of two major Chinese game streaming platforms, DouYu International Holdings and Huya Inc. Tencent, the world's largest gaming company that owns stakes in both firms, is

leading the deal and would have controlled 67.5% of voting shares in the merged business.

The moves come amid stepped up scrutiny of monopolistic behavior by internet companies. Last month, China released dra-

ft regulations to clamp down on anti-competitive practices in the industry, such as signing exclusive agreements with merchants and the use of subsidies to squeeze out competitors.

"We hope that operators rea-

lize that the anti-monopoly law applies to all entities," the regulator said in a separate statement.

"Platform companies are not outside the anti-monopoly law. Internet platform companies should strictly abide by anti-monopoly laws and regulations and maintain fair market competition," it said.

Stock prices for Alibaba and Tencent both fell about 2.6% yesterday.

E-commerce giant Alibaba acquired InTime Retail to help it combine e-commerce and offline retail, while China Literature bought New Classics Media to expand its content offerings.

Alibaba and Tencent, operator of the popular WeChat messaging service, are among China's biggest technology companies.

Both companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

China's tightening control of internet companies mirrors a similar focus on technology companies in the U.S., where lawmakers and regulators are probing companies like Facebook and Google over anti-competitive practices. Earlier this month, the Federal Trade Commission accused Facebook of buying up its rivals to quash them and wipe out competition. The FTC called for Facebook's acquisitions of WhatsApp and Instagram to be unwound. AP

Trump raises China concerns as reason to veto defense bill

DARLENE SUPERVILLE,
WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Donald Trump offered a new rationale yesterday (Macau time) for threatening to veto the annual defense policy bill that covers the military's budget for equipment and pay raises for service members: China. He did not outline his concerns.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers say the wide-ranging defense policy bill, which the Senate sent to the president on Friday, would be tough on China and must become law as soon as possible.

Both the House and Senate passed the measure by margins large enough to override a potential veto from the president, who has a history of failing to carry out actions he has threatened.

"The biggest winner of our new defense bill is China! I will veto!" Trump said in a new tweet.

The White House did not immediately respond to an emailed request for com-



ment on Trump's specific concerns about China.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said the bill would help deter Chinese aggression. Other GOP backers of the measure, including Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the second-ranking Senate leader, and Rep. Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, have tweeted that the bill would counter threats from countries such as China.

Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Trump's declaration that China is the biggest winner in the defense bill is false. Reed also noted the shifting explanations Trump has given for the veto threats.

"President Trump clearly hasn't read the bill, nor does he understand what's in it," Reed said. "There are several bipartisan provisions in here that get tougher on China than the Trump Ad-

ministration has ever been."

A potential override of a veto would be a first for Trump and would come not long before he leaves office Jan. 20. A two-thirds vote is needed in each chamber for the bill to become law without Trump's signature.

The president has made numerous threats over Twitter to veto the bill over a requirement that military bases honoring Confederate leaders eventually be renamed. He also threatened a veto to force

lawmakers to include provisions — unrelated to the military and national defense — to punish social media companies he claims were biased against him during the election.

Congress has approved the bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act, for nearly 60 years in a row. The current version affirms 3% pay raises for U.S. troops and authorizes more than \$740 billion in military programs and construction.

The measure guides Pentagon policy and cements decisions about troop levels, new weapons systems and military readiness, military personnel policy and other military goals. Many programs can only go into effect if the bill is approved, including military construction.

McConnell, in a rare break with Trump, had urged passage despite Trump's threat to veto it. McConnell said it was important for Congress to continue its nearly six-decade long streak of passing the defense policy bill.

In addition to the budget

and pay raises it would provide, McConnell said the bill will "keep our forces ready to deter China and stand strong in the Indo-Pacific."

Gallagher tweeted last week that the United States was at the beginning of a "New Cold War" with China and that the defense bill "takes important steps to help us meet these challenges and ultimately win this competition." Thune had said in a tweet that the measure would help the U.S. defend against threats from China and Russia. "It's important for this bill to become law ASAP," he said.

Trump tweeted last Tuesday that he will veto "the very weak" defense bill unless it repeals Section 230, part of the communications code that shields Twitter, Facebook and other tech giants from content liability. The White House said in a policy statement that "Section 230 facilitates the spread of disinformation online and is a serious threat to our national security and election integrity. It should be repealed." AP

AP PHOTO



GERMANY

Health minister urges EU to approve vaccine faster

KIRSTEN GRIESHABER, BERLIN

GERMANY'S health minister demanded that the European Union's regulatory agency work faster to approve a coronavirus vaccine and bring an end to the suffering on the continent, while other officials suggested yesterday that residents should forgo Christmas shopping as a new lockdown loomed that will close schools and most stores.

Chancellor Angela Merkel and the governors of Germany's 16 states agreed Sunday to step up the country's lockdown measures beginning Wednesday and running to Jan. 10 to stop the exponential rise of COVID-19 cases. Merkel said existing restrictions imposed in November failed to significantly reduce the number of new infections. Germany has been hitting records of new daily infections and virus deaths in recent weeks.

Expressing impatience, Health Minister Jens Spahn said in tweets late Sunday that Germany, which has created more than 400 vaccination centers and has activated about 10,000 doctors and medical staff to start mass vaccinations as early as Tuesday, was hamstrung by the lack of regulatory approval.

It was especially galling because the vaccine developed by Germany's BioNTech and American drug-maker Pfizer has been authorized for use in Britain,

the United States, Canada and other countries. But it's still waiting for approval by the European Medicines Agency, or EMA, and can therefore not be used in Germany yet or in any of the EU's 27 nations.

The EMA has a Dec. 29 meeting on vaccines but Spahn said the agency's assessment and approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine should "take place as quickly as possible."

"This is also about the trust of the citizens in the European Union's capacity to act," Spahn wrote. "Every day that we can start sooner with the vaccinations lessens the suffering and protects those who are the most vulnerable."

Spahn had previously said that going through EMA approval was the right path.

His ministry said that for January, between 3 to 4 million BioNTech vaccination doses were ready to be given in Germany. It said for the first quarter of 2021, up to 11 million vaccination doses were expected.

In recent weeks, hospitals across Germany have repeatedly warned that they were reaching their limits in caring for COVID-19 patients and that staffing on intensive care units was becoming a problem. Yesterday, 4,552 COVID-19 patients were being treated in ICU units, 52% of them on

respirators.

Germany's central disease control center yesterday reported 16,362 new confirmed cases — about 4,000 more than a week before. The Robert Koch Institute reported 188 new deaths, bringing the country's overall death toll to nearly 22,000.

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier appealed to Germans to support and adhere to the new lockdown measures.

Germany's central disease control center yesterday reported 16,362 new confirmed cases — about 4,000 more than a week before

"The virus still has a tight grip on us," Steinmeier said. "The situation is bitterly serious: Thousands of death cases in one week and an infection scenario that threatens to spin out of control. There is no way we can avoid drastic measures."

Others urged people to avoid last-minute Christmas shopping or panic buying.

"I wish and I hope that people will only buy what they really need, like groceries," Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said. "The faster we get these infections under control, the better it is for everyone."

In some states, including Saxony in eastern

Germany and North Rhine-Westphalia in the west, schools are already closed or mandatory school attendance lifted so parents can keep their children home.

Starting Wednesday, schools nationwide will be closed or will switch to home schooling; most non-food stores will be shuttered, as will businesses such as hairdressers. Restaurant takeout will still be permitted, but no eating or drinking can take place on site.

With the exception of Christmas, the number of people allowed to meet indoors will remain restricted to five, not including children under 14. The sale of fireworks traditionally used to celebrate New Year's will also be banned as will public outdoor gatherings on New Year's Eve.

Michael Kretschmer, the governor of Saxony, which has been especially hard hit, told the German news agency dpa that this Christmas, for the first time in his life, he won't be attending midnight Mass. He urged other Christians to do the same.

"I don't need it for my belief and I think it is right if all of us hold off during this sensitive time," Kretschmer said. "Joseph and Mary were also on their own on the Holy Night." AP

this day in history

1993 ANGLO-IRISH PACT PAVES WAY FOR PEACE



The British and Irish prime ministers have signed The Joint Declaration of Peace which they hope will end 25 years of bombing and murder in Northern Ireland.

After nearly two years' negotiation the two leaders, John Major and Albert Reynolds, today stood united on the steps of 10 Downing Street.

The nine-point document gives the IRA and Loyalist paramilitaries the opportunity to take part in negotiations for peace if they first agree to observe a three-month ceasefire.

Reaction has been mixed even though this is the furthest the British Government has ever moved towards the possibility of a united Ireland.

The declaration states that Britain would not prevent Northern Ireland leaving the United Kingdom and joining the Irish Republic, but that the ultimate decision would lie with the people of Northern Ireland.

John Major gave reassurances in the declaration that Britain had "no selfish, strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland".

But he warned the terrorists that if they lost this opportunity, it might never come their way again.

The two premiers made it clear that if the declaration was not successful in bringing peace to the province the two governments would work together to combat terrorism in whatever ways were necessary.

Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, said its initial response was one of "disappointment". The party's Northern Ireland chairman Mitchel McLaughlin said the declaration did not go far enough in meeting the aspirations of the nationalists.

And James Molyneux, leader of the official Ulster Unionists, spoke of "deep unease" among his Loyalist supporters.

The Democratic Unionist leader, the Rev Ian Paisley, called it "a dark hour of treachery".

Later, in a rare prime-time television broadcast the Prime Minister, Mr Major, called on Ulster "to put the poison of history behind us."

"We cannot go on spilling blood in the name of the past. We must all have the courage to look to the future."

"The time to choose peace is long overdue. But only the men of violence can decide whether they will talk instead of bomb, discuss instead of murder."

The leader of the Labour Party, John Smith, welcomed the declaration saying it was "an important first step towards a new political settlement".

The declaration also won the full backing of US President Bill Clinton. He said: "No side which claims a legitimate stake in the future of Northern Ireland can justify continued violence on any grounds."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The IRA declared a ceasefire at the end of August 1994 and the Loyalists announced a ceasefire on 13 October that year. On 9 December British officials met Sinn Fein representatives for their first formal talks in 22 years.

But the peace initiative did not last. The IRA ceasefire ended on 9 February 1996 when a huge bomb was planted in London's Docklands.

A new ceasefire was announced in July 1997 and the Good Friday Agreement was signed in April 1998. It included plans for a new Northern Ireland assembly with some devolved powers from London.

But the Assembly has been suspended several times, the last in October 2002 after allegations that the IRA had been spying within the Northern Ireland Office.

Direct rule finally ended in May 2007 when the Northern Ireland Assembly was restored with DUP leader Ian Paisley as first minister and Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness as his deputy.

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.

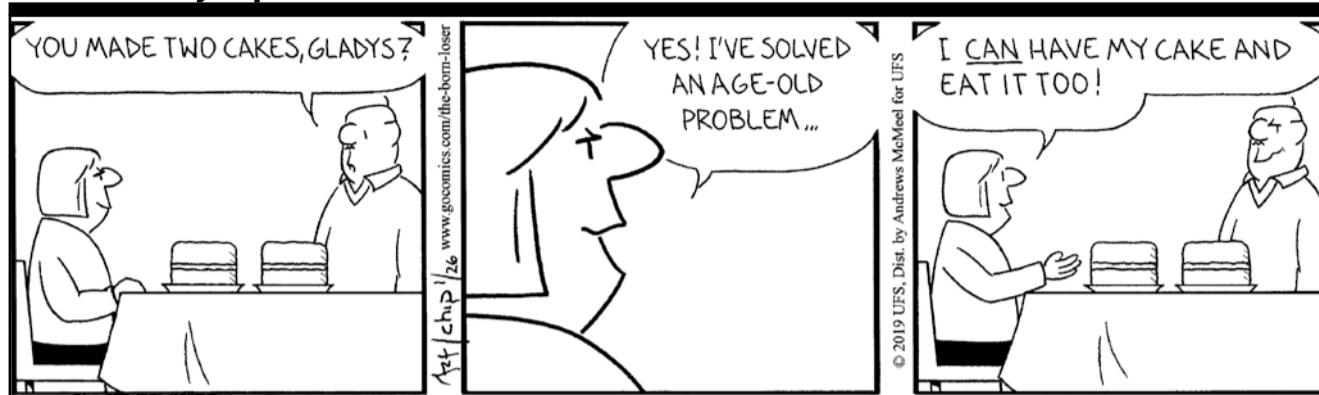
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 You will do a wonderful time of entertaining yourself during lulls in the day, which is a good thing—because there are going to be quite a few. And no one to interrupt them.

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 Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-9	0	clear
Harbin	-25	-16	clear
Tianjin	-7	1	clear
Urumqi	-17	-10	clear
Xi'an	-5	2	cloudy
Lhasa	-4	12	clear
Chengdu	1	4	drizzle
Chongqing	7	8	overcast
Kunming	7	20	clear
Nanjing	-4	4	cloudy
Shanghai	1	6	cloudy
Wuhan	-3	6	cloudy
Hangzhou	-1	6	cloudy
Taipei	15	17	drizzle
Guangzhou	9	14	cloudy
Hong Kong	13	16	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-5	-3	moderate snow
Frankfurt	3	7	overcast
Paris	9	11	drizzle
London	7	11	overcast
New York	0	5	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Agree; 7- ___ in turkey; 10- Black, in poetry; 14- Wrinkle; 15- N.Y. neighbor; 16- ___ Bell; 17- Prestige; 18- Nutritional std.; 19- Cancer's critter; 20- Pool where animals drink; 23- Like Fran Drescher's voice; 26- Falsehood; 27- Of the kidneys; 28- Bibliography abbr.; 29- Cushion; 30- Sedan, compact, or convertible, e.g.; 31- Most feeble; 33- Jockey Turcotte; 34- Found it!; 37- Test site; 38- Cow or doe; 39- CPR specialist; 40- Alphabet trio; 41- Decade div.; 42- Downcast; 43- Hobby; 45- Witnessed; 46- Carrier to Copenhagen; 47- From the U.S.; 48- British buddy; 51- Bad-mouth; 52- Rubber-stamps; 53- Without regard to; 56- Chair; 57- TV planet; 58- Damned; 62- Cumberbund; 63- Marseilles Mrs.; 64- Dodged; 65- Tennis great Arthur; 66- Give one star, say; 67- Moving spontaneously.

DOWN: 1- IV units; 2- Meal crumb; 3- PBS benefactor; 4- Narrow footway; 5- Everyday; 6- What's left; 7- Oppressively hot; 8- Actress MacDowell; 9- Ollie's partner; 10- One engraving; 11- Member of the nobility; 12- Florida citrus center; 13- Prestigious prize; 21- Overjoyed; 22- Bestows; 23- In a fresh manner; 24- Shed ___; 25- Swedish imports; 29- Nonsense; 30- Unconscious states; 32- Compositions; 33- Meal; 34- Inner self (Lung); 35- Comfortably informal; 36- Copycats; 44- Food ordered to go; 45- Boil; 46- Make queasy; 48- Beethoven's ___; 49- Fields; 50- Refuse; 51- Skin layer; 52- Convex molding; 54- Splendor; 55- As previously given, in footnotes; 59- Start of the 16th century; 60- Snake-like fish; 61- HST's successor; 26- Collect; 27- Feminist Abzug; 28- Church instrument; 29- Charlottesville sch.; 31- 1980's movie starring Bo Derek and Dudley Moore; 32- Brief brawl; 33- Sporting blades; 34- Until now; 39- Greek vowel; 40- Facial hair; 41- ___Magnon; 42- Blissful; 44- Can ___ now?; 48- Ignited; 49- Bundle; 51- Delight; 52- Thermoplastic yarn; 54- Radius neighbor; 55- At hand; 56- Lady's man; 57- Anthem opener; 59- Spy name; 60- Bronte heroine; 61- Parks on a bus; 64- Polo Grounds legend; 65- Dinghy thiny;

Yesterday's solution

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	



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 Cattleya & Poplar Court
\$1,088,000 1 🚗

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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 Noronha, Ari Calangi, Jacob Jagers, Mario Venditti

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Tech giants could face fines as high as 10% annual revenue

NATALIA DROZDIAK

Tech giants deemed to be gatekeepers could face fines as high as 10% of annual revenue if they don't comply with new European Union rules on data usage to be unveiled yesterday, according to a draft of the regulation seen by Bloomberg News.

Companies that could include Google, Amazon.com Inc., and Apple Inc. will be banned from using any data from business users to compete with them or from treating their own services more favorably in rankings, among other obligations. Nasdaq futures pared gains.

A company that "systematically infringes" the obligations could face orders by the European Commission to make behavioral and structural changes, such as divesting businesses. Companies will be considered to be in systematic non-compliance if the EU has issued at least three fines within a period of five years.

The rules are still in draft form and could be subject to revisions. A spokesperson from the European Union could not immediately be reached for comment. Spokespeople from Google, Apple and Amazon didn't immediately respond for comment.

The new Digital Markets Act will target "gatekeeper" firms, defined by the



European Commission by a number of criteria, including the number of users in the millions and overall revenue in the billions of dollars, as well as their significant impact on the single market, the document said. The designations will be updated by the commission every two years, according to the document.

The gatekeeper regulation is part of a wider package of tech policies due to be unveiled on Dec. 15. The EU will also propose separate rules that will force greater responsibility on platforms for what users post on their sites, threatening fines as high as 6% of global revenue for very large social

media platforms if they don't comply with orders to remove terror propaganda or other illegal posts.

The EU's plans come as regulators around the world are bearing down on tech giants, which they see as having become too big, too powerful and too profitable. Facebook Inc. already faces the threat of a business break-up in the U.S. after it was sued by U.S. antitrust officials and a coalition of states that want to unwind its acquisitions of Instagram and WhatsApp.

EU digital chief Margrethe Vestager has said the gatekeeper rules should complement antitrust law, which grants regulators

power to investigate firms for past behavior.

Despite years of probes and fines into companies such as Alphabet Inc.'s Google, smaller companies say EU regulators have failed to restore competition quickly enough. By contrast, the new rules are designed to head off bad tech behavior before it happens, EU officials have said.

Once the commission formally proposes the new rules, it could still take months, if not years, before they become law. It will still need sign-off from the bloc's other lawmaking institutions, including the European Parliament and the Council of European member states. **BLOOMBERG**



UK BUSINESSES PLEAD FOR TIME TO AVOID BREXIT CLIFF EDGE

DEIRDRE HIPWELL & JENNIFER RYAN

British business groups pleaded with the government to extend the time they have to prepare for the nation's departure from the European Union after leaders from both sides agreed to continue talks.

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Sunday gave negotiators another shot at reaching a deal on the terms of trade before the Brexit transition period ends on Dec. 31.

Lobby groups responded with relief at the prospect that the sides may yet avoid a no-deal divorce, which would mean the application of costly tariffs and quotas. The raft of changes that Brexit nevertheless entails - from licensing standards to paperwork requirements - mean U.K. companies still have a lot of work ahead to adjust to their new relationship with the nation's biggest trading partner.

"Government must move with even more determination to avoid the looming cliff edge of January 1st," Tony Danker, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, said in a statement. Measures must include "negotiated grace periods to allow firms to adjust to either deal or no deal."

U.K. and EU negotiators will try to forge a deal over the next few days, and if talks make progress, it is possible an agreement could be struck by the middle of the week, people on both sides said. Still, the extent of the preparation needed has spurred business lobbies to ask the government not to rush them.

Though Britain voted to leave the EU more than four years ago, trade talks have come down to the wire as politicians haggle over key issues like fisheries. Companies, meanwhile, have to try to adapt for life beyond Dec. 31 without knowing the fundamental rules of engagement. **BLOOMBERG**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China, MUST host celebrity chef Lan Minglu



Sands China Ltd. recently hosted two talent development activities featuring celebrity chef Lan Minglu at The Venetian Macao and at the Macau University of Science and Technology

(MUST) geared at helping elevate the continual learning of Macau's food and beverage talent.

Sands China has over 3,100 team members working in food and beverage

related departments, according to a statement issued by the gaming operator. The training initiative was one of the company's professionalism training efforts, and served as a way of facilitating interaction within the region's food and beverage industry. It had the aim of promoting the inheritance of traditional food culture and exchange among industries.

"Activities like this are part of our company's ongoing efforts to provide professionalism training to our team members and to help nurture local food and beverage talent," said Wen Hongyan, senior vice president of human resources for Sands China Ltd.

Wynn accumulated over 50 million steps in 'Walk for a Million' virtual walk



Wynn brought together about 5,400 team members and their family and friends to participate in the 'Walk for a Million' virtual walk, accumulating a combined total of 50,026,770 steps.

Following Wynn's donation of MOP600,000 to the Charity Fund from the Re-

aders of Macao Daily News last month, Wynn also raised a total of over MOP45,000 from the charity raffle tickets, SME charity sale and the children's section of the "WE Volunteer 10th Anniversary Double Appreciation Charity Fun Fair", which was donated to the Charity Fund to support the Walk for a Million event.

In addition, Wynn supported and promoted this annual charity event through various channels, including internal employee communications, and organized promotional activities and a lucky draw in the back-of-house area to encourage team members and their relatives and friends to sign up for the online charity event.

OPINION

World Views

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THE WORLD NEEDS BIDEN TO LEAD ON CLIMATE REPORTING

President-elect Joe Biden's pledge to rejoin the Paris climate agreement sends an important signal to the world about U.S. leadership. But the action will merely take us back to four years ago. To push us forward, on his first day in office, President Biden should bring together a group of G-20 leaders to join the U.S. in endorsing a mandatory standard for global businesses to measure and report the risks they face from climate change.

It's a critically important step that's entirely within reach, because such a standard already exists and has won widespread global support.

In 2017, under the auspices of the Financial Stability Board, the international Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), which I chair, issued a set of guidelines to help companies measure and report climate risks and opportunities, including those associated with the shift away from fossil fuels. That information empowers companies to protect themselves and embrace opportunities; provides investors with information they need to make smart decisions; and will help drive more capital to companies that are acting responsibly.

So far more than 1,600 companies and organizations in nearly 80 countries on six continents have endorsed or adopted TCFD reporting guidelines. Together they represent more than \$16 trillion in total market capitalization, and they include financial firms with more than \$155 trillion in assets under management. A number of countries have endorsed the framework, including Canada, France and Japan, and New Zealand and the U.K. have already announced they will make risk disclosure along TCFD guidelines mandatory.

As the world's biggest economy, official U.S. support for the TCFD guidelines would serve to unify the global effort to measure climate risk, remove uncertainty about the direction of regulation, and enable the creation of a single system that is consistent across borders and industries. On the other hand: To not make disclosure an immediate priority, or to create a new U.S. standard different from what the rest of the world is already adopting, would be a highly costly mistake that would deal a major blow to climate progress globally.

Climate risk data—like any kind of financial data—is only useful to investors if they can compare it across companies on an apples-to-apples basis. If the data isn't consistent and comparable, it's not very helpful. And when financial regulation is confusing or contradictory across different jurisdictions, it can inhibit investment and economic growth—or worse, set the conditions for future economic crises.

The 2008 crisis demonstrated the devastation that can happen when risks aren't properly understood, consistently disclosed, and priced into markets. But more than a decade after the crisis, financial markets are still operating largely in the dark when it comes to climate change, which is one of the biggest risks facing the global economy.

In the U.S., public companies are required to disclose key information about their financial health in quarterly and annual filings to the Securities and Exchange Commission, so that shareholders and investors can make informed decisions. However, those requirements currently don't specifically include information about risks and opportunities associated with climate change, even though it will affect virtually every industry either directly or indirectly.

This lack of information leaves companies and investors—including public pension systems and individual retirement accounts—vulnerable to major losses. It threatens the resilience and stability of the global economy. It skews the market unfairly in favor of companies that are exposed to or ignoring risks, and unfairly away from companies that are acting responsibly. And by hiding opportunities for smart investment, it is slowing the global response to climate change.

Business leaders know they can't afford to ignore climate change or pretend it isn't happening. They want to reduce the risks their companies face. The problem is, they often don't have enough information to act. That is starting to change, as more and more leaders from the public and private sectors and from countries around the world recognize the importance of better risk disclosure and are endorsing the TCFD guidelines.

[Abridged]

3 DEAD, 5 MISSING AFTER SHIPS COLLIDE ON CHINESE RIVER

Rescuers in China were searching yesterday for five sailors missing after a collision between two ships at the mouth of the Yangtze River that left at least three dead.

State broadcaster CCTV showed dramatic footage of crews pulling 11 of the 16 sailors who had been on board the container vessel Xinqisheng 69 from the water, three of whom showed no signs of life.

The Yangtze is China's most heavily trafficked river and the point at which it meets the East China Sea, just north of the commercial hub of Shanghai, brings together ships from all directions.

State media reported the container ship Oceana lost power shortly before midnight on Sunday, after which the Xinqisheng 69 collided with it, capsized and sank. It had been carrying 650 cargo containers, according to the China Daily newspaper.

THE BUZZ

ONE GOOD THING

7-YEAR-OLD RAISES MONEY FOR HOSPITAL'S PANDEMIC GEAR



Hayley Orlinsky

HAYLEY Orlinsky has made so many bracelets, looping colorful rubber bands over her thumb and index finger again and again, that she no longer must watch her hands.

The spunky 7-year-old from Chicago has spent most of the coronavirus pandemic crafting the creations as a fundraiser to buy personal protective equipment for a children's hospital.

So far, the endeavor has generated nearly USD20,000 for Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital, prompting praise and purchases from Chicago politicians, a Broadway actor and her beloved White Sox.

Hayley's initial goal was \$200, which she quickly surpassed, charging \$3 a bracelet or \$5 for an added charm.

It's hard for the second grader to grasp how much more \$20,000 is by comparison—but she figures it's a lot.

"It's more than the tooth fairy gives," she said.

It all started when she heard news stories about PPE shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic and was inspired to help. The money Hayley raises goes directly to Lurie through a fundraising office.

Lurie hasn't had any problems getting gear and has used the money to pay for masks, goggles, face shields, gloves and other items for medical workers and visitors, said Tracey McCusker, an asso-

ciate director at the hospital's foundation.

While many enterprising young people are raising funds for causes close to the heart, the amount Hayley has brought in is unusual.

"Her fundraiser is exponentially more than our typical kid fundraiser," said McCusker who estimates \$500 to \$1,000 is about average.

For Hayley, the mission is personal. She spent her first days of life at Lurie's neonatal intensive care unit after experiencing breathing problems. She wanted the doctors, nurses and medical staff working with kids to "protect themselves."

Her mother, children's book author Lori Orlinsky, estimates the effort has created roughly 8,000 bracelets, most of them made by Hayley. The fundraiser has been a family project: A 4-year-old sister helps organize the bands by color and both parents help mail the finished products nationwide.

Family friend Alysson Bourque, who lives in Sunset, Louisiana, purchased some before joining the project, looping bracelets with her own children.

"We were excited that bracelets were a symbol of hope and goodwill and brought people together in a time where people feel disconnected," said Bourque, who also writes children's books.

Others have pitched in, too.

Over the summer, Hayley introduced the idea at Apachi Day Camp, a summer program she's attended for years. After Hayley's pitch, campers of all ages were on board.

"It just became a thing that everyone wanted to do," said Beth Miller, a camp director. "It bonded the kids."

Hayley, who loves gymnastics and dancing, makes bracelets throughout the day, between online classes and often while watching television or listening to Taylor Swift and Kelly Clarkson. Sometimes her hands get sore.

"I need a manicure," she said.

Her high-profile donors include Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and actor Miguel Cervantes, who played the lead role in the Chicago production of "Hamilton" and has appeared in plays in New York. The White Sox recognized her at a game.

Hayley, whose experience in sales includes selling the most cookies in her Girl Scout troop, has no immediate plans to stop making bracelets. The entrepreneur is continually dreaming up ways to bring in more money. She's done holiday themed-bracelets, sports teams colors and red and light blue bracelets to represent the Chicago flag.

"I want to do it until coronavirus is over," she said. "It feels like I'm helping a lot of people." AP



India Tens of thousands of protesting Indian farmers called for a national farmers' strike, the second in a week, to press for the quashing of three new laws on agricultural reform that they say will drive down crop prices and devastate their earnings. The farmers are camping along at least five major highways on the outskirts of New Delhi and have said they won't leave until the government rolls back what they call the "black laws."

Pakistan A roadside bomb exploded near a police station in the Pakistani garrison city of Rawalpindi, wounding at least 23 people, police said. Initially police said a hand grenade was thrown near a water filtration plant across the road from the police station, but a senior Rawalpindi police officer Ahsan Younas later confirmed the blast was from a device planted on the side of the road.



Emirates An oil tanker off Saudi Arabia's port city of Jiddah suffered an explosion yesterday after being hit by "an external source," a shipping company said, suggesting another vessel has come under attack off the kingdom amid its yearslong war in Yemen. The apparent attack on the Singapore-flagged BW Rhine, which had been contracted by the trading arm of the kingdom's massive Saudi Arabian Oil Co., marks the fourth assault targeting Saudi energy infrastructure in a month.

US government agencies were ordered to scour their networks for malware and disconnect potentially compromised servers after authorities learned that the Treasury and Commerce departments were hacked in a monthslong global cyberespionage campaign discovered when a prominent cybersecurity firm learned it had been breached. In a rare emergency directive, the Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity arm warned of an "unacceptable risk" to the executive branch from a feared large-scale penetration of U.S. government agencies.