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GRAND FINALE OF CHINA'S SIM RACING WILL BE HOSTED IN MACAU PERMANENTLY P5

CHINA HAS LOWERED THE AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOME SERIOUS CRIMES FROM 14 TO 12 P10

AP PHOTO



Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai, an outspoken advocate for democracy was granted bail nearly three weeks after he was remanded in custody over fraud and national security-related charges on December 12.

AP PHOTO



Japan is barring entry of all nonresident foreign nationals as a precaution against a new and potentially more contagious coronavirus variant that has spread across Britain. The Foreign Ministry says the entry ban will start today and last through Jan. 31.

Japan aims to eliminate gasoline-powered vehicles in about 15 years, the government said Friday in a plan to achieve Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's ambitious pledge to go carbon free by 2050 and generate nearly \$2 trillion growth in green business and investment.

Pakistan At least seven security men were killed when a group of militants attacked a paramilitary checkpoint early yesterday in a province rocked for years by an insurgency, a statement from Pakistan's army said. Officials say gunmen attacked the Frontier Corps post in the district of Harnai in Baluchistan province.

AP PHOTO



Afghanistan A series of explosions hit the Afghan capital, killing at least four people including two police officers, officials said. The deaths were caused by a sticky bomb attached to a police vehicle detonated in western Kabul, police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz said. The explosion wounded two civilians.

More on backpage

BETTER THAN EXPECTED

Tourist arrivals and hotel occupancy rate exceed city's anticipations P3

LYNZY VALLES



GOV'T SIGNS COLLABORATION AGREEMENT WITH CHINA MEDIA GROUP TO BOOST SPORTS, CULTURE P2

QUARANTINE MEASURES EXTENDED TO MORE MAINLAND CITIES P3

**WEATHER
BUREAU WARNS
OF COLD NEW
YEAR'S EVE**

The Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau forecasts that the weather on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day will be cold, with a minimum temperature of around 6 degrees Celsius. A winter monsoon will arrive on Wednesday, pushing the temperature from around 20 degrees Celsius on Tuesday down to a low of 9 degrees Celsius. A correct forecast will make the end of this year the coldest since 2005, which had a low of 4 degrees Celsius on New Year's Day.

**CONSUMPTION
CARD TO BE
TURNED INTO
COMMON
MACAU PASS**

As the consumption card scheme will conclude at the end of this month, the technology provider, Macau Pass, has recently announced that the over 600,000 cards currently in the market will be turned into common Macau Pass cards from January 20. Holders of the consumption cards will be able to use the card for daily payments after certain procedures, which will only be announced later on.

**EV SALES DOUBLE
THIS YEAR**

Records from the Macau Motor Traders Association indicate that sales of electric vehicles have doubled this year, revealed Daniel Cheng, director-general of the association. In comparison, overall car sales have dropped for about 10%. Cheng sees this as a satisfactory trajectory for EV development and thinks the vehicles will win a certain market segment. He also calls on the government to improve recycling processes for the used batteries of EV taxis.

GOV'T SIGNS COLLABORATION WITH CHINA MEDIA GROUP TO PROMOTE SPORTS, CULTURE

STAFF REPORTER

THE SAR government struck a strategic collaboration agreement with China's chief state media company China Media Group (CMG) on December 26, with a view to capitalize on CMG's clout to give Macau's sports industry a stronger presence and foothold, as well as better integrate the city into the nation's development.

In the partnership, both parties agreed to co-host the second season of "Top Speed China" in 2021, an online racing event simulator founded in 2020 and produced by the sports channel of CCTV, one of the divisions of CMG.

Following the signing ceremony, Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng officiated the inauguration ceremony of "Top Speed China" that same day at the Macau Science Center. He said in his opening remarks that the esports event will "unleash new opportunities for the promotion and development of Macau's sports events."

"We will continue to team up with CMG to open up more channels for circulating information about sports events, accelerate the development of the city's sports industry, deepen the city's economic diversification and shape Macau into a World Center of Tourism and Leisure," Ho added.

As per the accord, the final of the upcoming season of "Top Speed China" is set to take place in Macau in 2021, with players racing on the Guia Circuit.

Ho believes the Guia Circuit — an iconic and challenging circuit,



which has also been recognized as one of the world's most famous street circuits — will help inject big doses of excitement into the match and broaden its appeal.

Ho regards CMG as a leader, steering the development of the radio and television industry. He vowed to use the influence and broad appeal of CMG to better coordinate and organize Macau's key publicity reporting, promote the city's diverse culture, and power the development of the sports industry.

Aside from sports events, the agreement also indicated that the SAR government and CMG will deepen cooperations, making a series of productions,

including news reports, film and television dramas, documentaries and cultural programs.

Another highlight of the partnership will be the production of two extensive documentaries, "Aerial China Macau" and "The Taste of Macau," both of which will be presented in 4K resolution. Both parties will tap into the two programs to increase Macau's exposure and allure through its heritage sites, manifold culture and local cuisine.

President of CMG Shen Haixiong said during the signing ceremony that CMG would make the most of its resources to bring more world-class events for Macau's citizens and strive to broad-

cast the New Year's Gala in Macau. In addition, the company will work closely with the SAR government to position CMG as a media hub, which will be designated to enhance cooperations with Portuguese-speaking countries.

The agreement between the government and CMG was signed at the Macau Government Headquarters by Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong U and the director of CMG's Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan Office Xing Bo. It was witnessed by Macau's CE, the president of CMG and vice-director of the Central People's Government Liaison Office in Macau Zhang Rongshun.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

On Sunday evening [last week], I witnessed a youth sports event that resulted in a young boy being rushed to the hospital. The different behaviors that led to this unfortunate incident made me stop and reflect on the current state of our youth sports programs. Aren't youth development programs meant to help nurture our young and teach them the

values of sportsmanship, teamwork, respect and discipline? This evening was the exact opposite - there was anger, disrespect, indifference and total disregard for the rules by players, coaches, sports officials and spectators.

Perhaps it is time for us to step back and examine ourselves. Have we made "winning" the ultimate objective of youth sports? Are we placing a heavy weight and burden on our youth to

win at all cost? What happened to the joy of the game?

As adults, parents, educators, coaches, referees and sport officials — are we setting good examples for our young? Do we abide by social manners and exhibit human decency? Do we explain and insist that the players understand and live by the laws of fair play? Do we teach them the rules of conduct in sports and keep them ac-

countable for poor behavior? Perhaps it is time that we do.

There is enough hatred, disrespect and anger in the world. Shouldn't we try to give our youth an environment where there is a chance to change things for the better? After all, a victory in sports is short-lived, but the memory of human decency will stay for a lifetime.

A Soccer Parent

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Hotel occupancy rate increased during Christmas holiday

STAFF REPORTER

THE Director of Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes told the media on the sidelines of an event earlier that the city's hotels had fared well during the Christmas holiday, with some even achieving an occupancy rate of 80%.

"Since most visitors opted to stay overnight in Macau [during Christmas] we can see some hotels performed well in terms of occupancy rate," Fernandes said.

She ascribed the uptick in the hotel occupancy rate partly to the government's ongoing promotional efforts targeting mainland visitors. They included hotel discounts, airfare roll-backs and cash vouchers.

She stressed that authorities will carry on with the promotion strategy to entice more mainland holidaymakers to travel to Macau.

Chairman of Travel Industry Council Andy Wu said Macau's overall hotel occupancy rate stood at 40% to 50% during the Christmas holiday, as stated in a report published by Bastille Post.

The occupancy rate for hotels on the Cotai Strip even reached

LYNZY VALLES



80%, a noticeable improvement compared to Golden Week in October, Wu said.

Wu added that mainland visitors were attracted by the government's tourism promotions and more inclined to stay overnight during the festive period. But he indicated that if the recent outbreaks of Covid-19 cases repor-

ted in some parts of mainland China were not kept in check, it might prevent visitors from travelling to Macau.

Fernandes said she expected the number of daily visitor arrivals in Macau to stay at around 24,000 during the Christ-

On Christmas Day, Macau registered a total 27,800 visitor arrivals

mas period. On Christmas Day, Macau registered a total 27,800 visitor arrivals

On December 24 and 25, Macau registered a total of around 160,000 daily arrivals, according to the latest data provided by the Public Security Police Force (PSP). Among all arrivals, 135,000 entered Macau from the Border Gate at Portas do Cerco, while another 12,000 came through Hengqin Port.

Total passenger traffic was recorded at 310,000 that same day, an aggregate of 160,000 inbound passengers and 150,000 outbound passengers. Meanwhile, some 29,300 people departed the SAR in the same period.

According to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), Macau recorded a total of 636,351 visitor arrivals in November, up 9.3% month-to-month, yet down 78.1% year-on-year.

Overnight visitors and same-day visitors contributed roughly the same share in November, totaling 323,794 and 312,557 respectively. Meanwhile, the average length of stay among visitors that month increased by 0.5 days to 1.7 days year-on-year.

In terms of the source of visitors, the number of mainland visitors fell by 71.0% year-on-year to 588,511, with those travelling under the Individual Visit Scheme adding up to 197,311. Visitors from the nine Pearl River Delta cities in the Greater Bay Area totalled 327,413, of whom 159,079 (48.6%) came from Zhuhai. Meanwhile, there were 43,178 visitors from Hong Kong and 4,589 from Taiwan.

Quarantine measures extended to more mainland China cities

THE Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center has recently announced that the quarantine period will be lengthened to 21 days for individuals arriving from places outside of mainland China. The decision was made in response to the fast spreading coronavirus variant, the center explained.

Currently, only Macau, mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan residents are allowed into Macau, unless residents of the last three groups have visited a country outside of the Greater China Region in the 21 days prior. A small group of nationals from other countries, on the other hand, are also allowed in if they fulfil certain requirements.

In addition, the center's list of mid-risk areas is expanding, with several Chinese administrative regions included. Entrants from these regions will be quarantined for 14 days as they arrive in Macau.

The list of Chinese regions

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includes Beijing's Nanfaxin and Gaoliying Townships, Shenli Street in Beijing's Shunyi District, and Dashanzi Community of Jiuxianqiao Subdistrict in Beijing's Chaoyang District.

The list also includes Pitong Town, Xipu Town and Tangchang Town in Pidu District; and Tiaodenghe Subdistrict of Chenghua District in Chengdu, Sichuan. Several regions in Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang, Xinjiang and Liaoning are also on the list.

On Saturday, mainland

China reported 22 newly confirmed Covid-19 cases, including 12 locally transmitted cases and 10 arriving from outside the Mainland, the National Health Commission said yesterday.

Seven of the locally transmitted cases were reported in northeast China's Liaoning Province, while five were reported in Beijing, the commission said in its daily report.

Meanwhile, Beijing has urged residents not to leave the city during the Lunar New

Year holiday in February, implementing new restrictions after several new infections last week.

Two domestic cases were reported on Friday, a convenience store worker and a Hewlett Packard Enterprise employee. Another two asymptomatic cases were discovered in Beijing earlier in the week.

Beijing is conducting targeted testing in the neighborhoods and workplaces where the cases were found.

To contain any new outbreaks, the Beijing government has also canceled large gatherings such as sports events and temple fairs. It says applications for any major events will be strictly reviewed. Venues such as cinemas, libraries and museums have to operate at 75% capacity, the government said.

It also called on companies not to arrange business trips outside the city and abroad.

Lunar New Year is on February 12.

Separately, officials in the northeastern port city of Dalian said on Friday that they had tested over 4.75 million people for Covid-19 after 24 confirmed infections this month.

Authorities have shut schools and public spaces in five neighborhood divisions in Dalian, and only essential workers can leave their compounds to go to work. MDT/AP

MAINLAND CITIES INCLUDED IN MACAU'S LIST OF MID-RISK AREAS

BEIJING

Nanfaxin and Gaoliying Townships
Shenli Street in Shunyi District
Dashanzi Community of Jiuxianqiao Subdistrict in Chaoyang District

CHENGDU

Pitong Town, Xipu Town and Tangchang Town in Pidu District
Tiaodenghe Subdistrict of Chenghua District

Several regions in Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang, Xinjiang and Liaoning

LAWMAKER WARNS LOCALS TO WATCH FOR MAINLAND PROPERTY SCAMS

Lawmaker Leung Sun Lok calls on the locals to stay vigilant regarding property scams in mainland China, especially off-plan properties which have accounted for over 90% of dispute cases regarding cross-border property sales. To avoid unwanted losses, Leung suggests that local buyers check whether mainland developers possess the necessary certificates, such as land use permits and construction permits, before purchasing a property in China. They should also pay attention to the terms and conditions whilst signing the contract.

MORS INTRODUCED IN CHINA FOR THE FIRST TIME

The Macao Occupational Skills Recognition System (MORS) was introduced in Guangzhou for the first time. The endeavor was carried out by the Guangzhou Municipal Government, enterprises in the region and the Macau Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM). The four-day program will offer training to 25 tourism trainees in China. The MORS encompasses certification schemes for 16 tourism professions.

DSE PROPOSED TO MANAGE ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS

The government is renaming the Macao Economic Bureau (DSE) to the Economic and Technological Development Bureau, in the hope of authorizing more functions. Once the regulation comes into effect, the Transferência Electrónica de Dados - Macau EDI Van, S.A. will also integrate into the new economic authority. The local government hopes to strengthen promotion and improvement of the electronic customs declaration system. The regulation will come into effect on February 1.

ANTHONY LAM



COMMENTATORS, ANM OPPOSE GOV'T PLANS FOR SAI VAN

ANTHONY LAM

TWO draft planning condition graphs on the future of several land plots between the Sai Van and the Nam Van Lakes have received negative feedback from commentators and the New Macau Association (ANM) regarding the manner of consultation and the direction.

The public consultation on the draft started before the Christmas holidays and will end tomorrow. The ANM described the impromptu process as "a raid."

In the draft graphs, it was recommended that the height clearances for land plots C1 to C4, C12 and C14, which are located around the current Criminal Court Building of the Court of First Instance and the Legislative Assembly Building, be relaxed. If this is approved, buildings as tall as 50 meters may be built on the plots.

Cultural commentator Pan Lei noted on his social media account that should the plan be

approved, there will be a strong impact on the view both from and to Penha Church.

His opinion is that the proposed changes will obstruct the views from the Penha Hill. "It will be difficult to view the entirety of the Nobre de Carvalho Bridge and not even a bit of the sea," Lei wrote.

Lei stressed that he likes to bring friends from outside of Macau to enjoy the views from Penha Church because the view "is the best witness of Macau's 'Hill-Sea-City' landscape."

Meanwhile, urban planner Manuel Iok Pui Ferreira, who is also member of the Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee, hopes the government to not "make a bad start."

When interviewed by local Chinese media outlet All About Macau, the urban planner said he sees the need for scientific assessment of the views. "It is impossible that the developments can go

ahead with just two drafts," Ferreira said, noting that the lakeside is the only remaining undeveloped waterside area on the southern tip of the Macau Peninsula.

"It is impossible that the developments can go ahead with just two drafts."

MANUEL IOK PUI FERREIRA
URBAN PLANNER

Ferreira further explained that the impact on views is calculated scientifically in many jurisdictions, such as the U.K., Singapore, Taiwan or mainland China. It is an international habit to conduct such calculations before any development in or around sensitive areas.

Speaking to the same Chinese media outlet, urban planner Lam Iek Chit foresees an impact on the views between Penha Hill and No-

bre do Carvalho Bridge. The specific nature of the impact is difficult to predict because no information about the design of the buildings has been released.

The height of the current Court Building is 41 meters. The proposed extended height is 50.8 meters. Lam doubts that this will bring a great deal of benefit, with a difference of just three floors' and a narrow land plot.

Furthermore, Lam wonders whether the government has violated the Urban Planning Law, because the current draft graphs do not disclose a sufficient amount of information.

When speaking to Chinese newspaper Cheng Pou, Chan Tak Seng, a former member of the Urban Planning Committee, admitted that other regions do not treat seaside areas the way that Macau does.

"When the damage becomes decimation, others will not respect the city," Chan said.

Proposal for new bureau to be established in February

THE Executive Council (ExCo) has completed the draft for an administrative regulation regarding the integration of two government de-

partments, after suggesting the creation of a new bureau called the Government Headquarters Affairs Bureau.

From February, the

Government Head Office Auxiliary Bureau and the Protocol, Public Relations and External Affairs Office will be merged into one bureau which

will handle government affairs.

Once the regulation comes into effect, the bureau will be led by one director and two deputy-directors, and will have three departments and eight divisions.

The Government Head Office Auxiliary Bureau currently has over 360 employees supporting

the daily operations of the Chief Executive office and of the offices of the secretaries.

The Protocol, Public Relations and External Affairs Office has over 50 people currently.

In addition, the Director of the Information Bureau will start serving as the government spokesperson. **JZ**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

China's sim racing finale to permanently be held in Macau

RENATO MARQUES

CHINA'S National Simulator Racing Grand Prix (SRGP) Grand Final will be hosted in Macau permanently, the organizers announced on Saturday at a ceremony at the Macao Science Center. The ceremony marked the launch of the second season of "Top Speed China," a television programme which is broadcast on networks under the China Media Group.

The announcement came after the GBA SRGP 2020 was hosted in Macau last week at City of Dreams Macau. Beijing sim racer Yin Zheng became the 2020 national champion at the event. Shenzhen's Zheng Zhaojie and Guangzhou's Huang Kuisheng also stood on the podium.

Pleased with his win, Yin said, "I'm very pleased that I won the championship. I felt that I was lucky because the other players were also very strong. Participating in this competition was a striking experience. This competition used Macau's Guia Circuit as



the race track so I also paid a visit to the actual circuit this time when I came to Macau. I will be happy to join again if similar events are happening in the future."

The event, which was hosted in Macau for the first time, was jointly supported by the Macau Sports Bureau and Sports Bureau of Guangdong Province. It was also co-organized by the Guang-

dong Automobile and Motor Sports Federation and L&L Sailing Up Sports. The Grand Finale saw 18 national finalists that competed for the final win in a simulator race around the Guia Circuit.

After becoming very popular over the last few years, esports took a great leap forward this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Several international cham-

pionships used the platform to promote racing during periods where traveling and organizing real races was not possible.

New esports, such as the SRGP, have also arisen during this time. The SRGP was launched in mid-October this year in collaboration with Chinese Central Television (CCTV), which broadcasted the races held in Jiangmen, Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Hong Kong, and Macau, both online and on satellite TV.

According to figures cited by CCTV, the event recorded a viewership of over 60 million spectators both online and offline.

The tournament, which started at the regional level, had a total of 15,000 participants. The best 36 players qualified to enter the Grand Finale of GBA SRGP 2020 in Macau.

In a statement, co-organizers Melco Resorts and Entertainment justified their support and hosting of the event, saying, "Esports has developed to become an attractive contemporary entertainment option, and Melco is delighted to bring this emerging new genera-

tion sport and entertainment experience to Macau."

The local gaming concessionaire also added, "As a global leader in integrated resorts, Melco is fully supportive of the Macau SAR Government's initiatives to promote diversification and to further elevate the city as a multi-faceted tourist destination. Melco is dedicated to developing local talent in the esports industry – paving the path for Macau's local players to participate in national tournaments."

Aside from the trophy, grand final winner Yin also took home a share of the prize money. The pool for the final was over RMB1 million in total.

The best classified local sim racer was Filipe Veloso Chan, who won the title of "Macau Champion" after finishing fourth in the grand finale.

After the race, Chan said, "I'm glad I've made it this far and am satisfied with my final result, but of course during the competition I [was] aiming towards being 'the National Champion'."

For the local sim racer, there is a lot of talent in Macau that can achieve good results in the future as esports develop locally.

"We have a lot of potential e-racing players in Macau and I'm hoping there will be more [local] participants joining the e-racing tournament in the future," Chan concluded.

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Property of the Week



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3 2 2



Taipa Village apartment

\$12,500/mth

630 ft²

2 1



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- [Coloane] One Oasis modern studio 1 691 ft² **\$6,357,000** (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Chun Fok apartment 2 834 ft² **\$8,998,000** (ref: 20036002)
- [Macau] Lakeview Tower 3 1,344 ft² **\$11,000,000** (ref: 19126001)
- [Macau] One Central Stylish 2 1,349 ft² **\$14,839,000** (ref: 19096004)
- [Taipa] Ocean Garden Fragrant Court 4 3,500 ft² **\$24,000,000** (ref: 20036001)

For Rent

- [Coloane] Houston Court 1 824 ft² **\$10,500/mth** (ref: 20091001)
- [Taipa] Villa da Taipa 3 1,450 ft² **\$11,000/mth** (ref: 20101002)
- [Taipa] One Central balcony 3 2,332 ft² **\$29,800/mth** (ref: 20101001)
- [Taipa] Private house 2 4,266 ft² **\$45,000/mth** (ref: 19055006ST)
- [Macau] Retail Shop, Barra area 1,968 ft² **\$48,000/mth** (ref: n/a)

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Macau to host large electronics fair next year, eyeing tech hub

RENATO MARQUES

MACAU will be staging a new large-scale electronics fair that aims to compete with renowned international consumer electronics fair Consumer Electronics Show (CES), which is hosted annually in Las Vegas.

The news broke first on technology media outlet TechCrunch, which reported last week that a CES competitor will be hosted in 2021 in Macau.

According to the source, at the helm of the project is Lu Gang, founder of Chinese tech media company TechNode, and local venture capitalist Jason Ho Kin Tung, who is also the son of Macau's current Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng.

The event will be co-organized by local government and non-government entities and backed by the Guangdong provincial government, with the aim of making it a Greater Bay Area (GBA) event.

Unlike the event in Las Vegas, the fair which will debut in Macau next year will not focus on

BLOOMBERG



consumer and enterprise-related electronics. Instead, it will feature more government-oriented electronics, Ho told TechCrunch.

Ho added that the fair aims to invite companies from across the globe that specialize in social and environmental technology, life sciences, advanced technology, and new infrastructure such as 5G, smart cities, and transportation-related technology.

"Macau has very good infras-

tructure [to host the event]. With the entertainment industry and the hotels, I think it's very suitable for doing an event that could potentially attract people to join," Ho was quoted saying to TechCrunch, adding, "I think Macau can be a platform that could help other countries to get into mainland China or even mainland China companies to [have] access to Asia-Pacific or Middle Eastern countries."

One of the bigger advantages Macau has in bridging China with the rest of the world is its "geopolitical neutrality."

"I always had a big dream that we [Macau] could [one day] compare ourselves with Singapore," Ho said, adding that this is a possibility as the local government is currently working to introduce more policies to attract foreign investment and the establishment of more overseas businesses.

For Ho, Macau now has a better opportunity to establish itself in the field of technology and in the meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) sector. Recent political tensions in neighboring Hong Kong have dragged away several technology-related events, such as Asia's largest tech conference "Rise," which relocated its upcoming event to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Concurrently, events such as CES Asia, hosted in the city of Shanghai, have also been canceled due to the US-China trade war, facts that lead the local organizer to believe that opportunities should arise for Macau to attract attendees from Asia's tech community and others with an interest in China.

Named "Beyond," the electronics fair is currently scheduled to take place around mid-June next year, although the organizers are assuming that the date may change with developments in the Covid-19 situation and the related border control measures in the upcoming months.

The organizers lifted the veil on some of the corporations and entities that are likely to participate in the event, with the list including names such as Alibaba, ByteDance (mother company of TikTok), BMW, DJI, Foxconn, SenseTime and Tencent. Others include several provincial governments from the Mainland and neighboring regions.

AD

Academic Year 2021/2022

Central Registration for Children Entering Kindergarten for the First Time



Aims

To optimise schools' enrolment mechanism, simplify the procedures that parents complete for their children entering kindergarten for the first time and enable parents to confirm which school to enrol their children as early as possible.

Eligibility

Macao residents aged 3 by 31st December, 2021, who will enrol in infant education in Macao for the first time.

Timeline (Year 2021)

Enrolment information	Starting from 1 st January onwards, parents can consult the enrolment information on the DSEJ website or school website.
Central Registration	Parents register on the DSEJ website or at the DSEJ counters Between 6 th and 20 th January.
Schools release the interview dates and time	Between 4 th and 9 th February
School admission interviews	Between 27 th and 28 th March
Schools release the admission list and the period for online confirmation	Release of the admission list on the DSEJ website and by schools on 9 th April Parents check the admission lists and confirm which school to enrol their children in on the DSEJ website Between 9 th and 12 th April
Schools release the admission list of waitlisted students	From 14 th April onwards
Parents of admitted students register at schools in person	Between 15 th and 17 th April (on school working days)
Parents of waitlisted students go in person to process registration / school transfer procedures	Between 19 th and 30 th April (on school working days)
Enrolment at other schools	If a child has not yet been admitted to any school by 19 th April, or parents want to enrol their child in other schools, parents can visit the DSEJ website to check the status of K1 places available at different schools, and go to the schools that still accept enrolment for enquiries and registration.

Gentle Reminder:

- To enrol in Macao schools, non-Macao residents must possess a stay or residence permit for over 90 days issued by the authorised entity of the Macao SAR. Parents must process the registration at any of the DSEJ counters.
- Schools set no limit to the number of registrants and interviews. There is also no priority for early registration in the Central Registration system. Therefore, parents do not need to rush to be the first to register.
- Parents only need to bring the identification document(s) of their children to the school to process the registration or school transfer procedure according to the requirement of the schools.
- The DSEJ will provide "Service of consultation and arrangement of school places" to parents who are in need.

For enquiries : 8397 2309

For details, please browse
DSEJ website : www.dsej.gov.mo





MGM Instills Craftsmanship into Talent Development Programs

First Integrated Resort Operator to Introduce Craftsmanship into Staff Training



MGM continues to demonstrate craftsmanship spirit by practicing strong work ethics, pursuing perfection, staying focused at work and being innovative. In support of the Nation's advocacy of craftsmanship, MGM collaborated with Guangdong Federation of Trade Unions and Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) to kick off the "Fostering & Nurturing Great Craftsmanship in Greater Bay Area (Macau)" initiative and hold the "Sharing Session on Nanyue Craftsmanship" at the MGM Theater. The three parties signed a memorandum of understanding, making craftsmanship part of MGM's talent development programs and allowing team members to expand their skill sets and horizons in diverse ways. At the community level, MGM joined forces with trade unions and schools to impart the spirit of craftsmanship to the younger generation. The efforts will help Macau nurture a pool of talents with craftsmanship traits, which would eventually enrich the quality of culture in the Greater Bay Area.

NURTURING TALENT WITH CRAFTSMANSHIP TRAITS

Pansy Ho, Co-Chairperson and Executive Director of MGM China Holdings Limited, said in her online speech, "In pursuit for excellence is a key for enterprises to boosting their overall strength and growing with employees, thus creating a better life for everyone. MGM adheres an innovative and diverse approach to nurture local talent. Now we take a step further and become the first integrated resort operator to make craftsmanship the kernel of our staff training programs, which helps enhance work ethics of team members. As a result, we will be able to enhance the soft power and cultural sophistication of our team, contributing to Macau's development into a tourism education and training base in the Greater Bay Area. As we strive to support our Nation's development in the new era, we feel duty-bound to help optimize and sustain Macau's human capital."

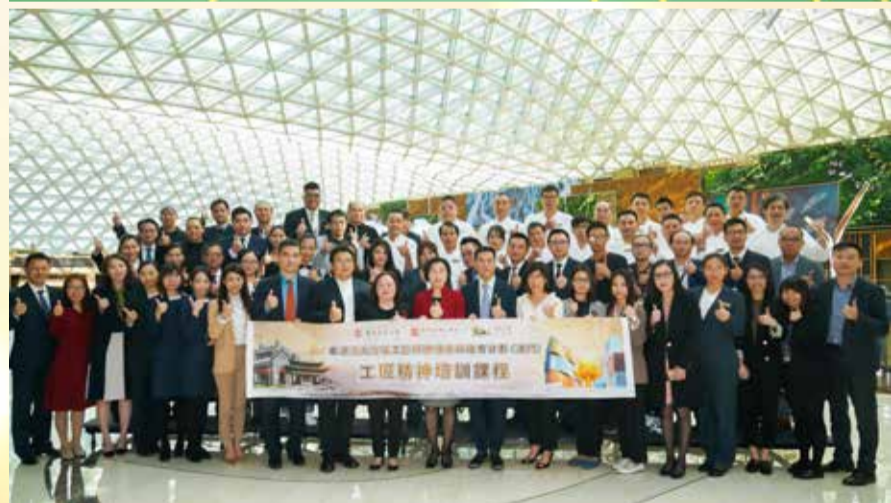


ENHANCING COMPETITIVENESS OF MACAU LABOR FORCE

Choi Kam Fu, Vice Director General of FAOM, believed that the new initiatives will enhance the professional virtues and competitiveness of Macau labor force. The launch of training programs which highlights craftsmanship will better their understanding of the Nation. They will be inspired to hone their skills and build up an innovative mindset to drive the development of both the Nation and Macau. Through the increasing cooperation among employers, employees and the government, as well as the introduction of craftsmanship courses and to extend this concept to more enterprises and other industries, he hoped that the spirit of craftsmanship will be deeply ingrained in the general public.



Team Members and the Community Introduce this Concept to Staff Training



IMPARTING SPIRIT OF CRAFTSMANSHIP TO YOUNGER GENERATION

MGM also invited the inheritors to speak at a seminar on Guangzhou embroidery at Lou Hau High School and Premier School Affiliated to Hou Kong Middle School, which drew a total of nearly 300 teachers and students. At the “Guangzhou Embroidery Experience” workshop held at MGM COTAI, the masters guided 40 participants to stitch embroidery flowers and explore the folk art. Going forward, MGM will continue to promote craftsmanship with different parties, such as holding Lingnan culinary masterclass and other sharing sessions.



PASSING ON INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The organizers were pleased to have Liang Xiuling, Liang Xiuyuan and Liang Xiaoman, inheritors of Guangzhou embroidery, to co-host the “Sharing Session on Nanyue Craftsmanship”. One of the four major schools of embroidery in China, Guangzhou embroidery was included in the first national intangible cultural heritage list. Renowned for her perfect blend of folk art, craftsmanship and innovative presentation, Liang Xiuling shared her insights which allowed the audience to appreciate the spirit of craftsmanship in Lingnan culture. In a similar vein, MGM organized the “Craftsmanship Training Course” for frontline staff, where they learned from professional speakers arranged by Guangdong Federation of Trade Unions. The two events benefitted 300 MGM frontline team members and individuals from different organizations.



COVID-19

MOROCCO ACQUIRES 65 MILLION VACCINE DOSES FROM CHINA, UK

TARIK EL BARAKAH,
RABAT

MOROCCO announced it has acquired 65 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines from China's Sinopharm and Britain's AstraZeneca, as the north African kingdom prepares to launch a COVID-19 vaccination program that aims to immunize 80% of the country's adult population.

Health Minister Khalid Ait Taleb announced the figure at a Cabinet meeting Thursday. The government didn't indicate whether the vaccines were purchased or provided by Covax, the global project to provide vaccines to developing countries, or a combination of both.

His ministry said last week that Morocco has not yet received the vaccines.

Mustapha Ennaji Moulay, head of the virology department at the Hassan II University in Casablanca and a member of the government's COVID-19 scientific committee, said that regulators are reviewing the Sinopharm vaccine's documentation, and that the vaccination program is expected to begin in the coming days.

Morocco has one of the most advanced vaccination plans in the region. The country has also reported the second-highest number of virus infections and deaths in Africa, after South Africa.

The Moroccan health minister said the government's target is vaccinating 25 million of the country's

AP PHOTO



36 million people, all free of charge, according to orders from King Mohammed VI.

While the Moroccan government has been promising vaccinations since earlier this month, the minister said preparations have now reached a "very advanced" stage. He said authorities were carrying out simulations at all the immunization sites "to avoid any obstacles that may arise during the implementation of the vaccination program."

In a first phase, the vaccine will be administered to medical personnel, public authorities, security services, education workers and people suffering from chronic diseases. The Ministry of Health said it has deployed a computerized system to re-

gister the target population and track their health status after they receive the vaccine.

Moulay said Morocco has sought to diversify supply by signing contracts with multiple countries.

Morocco has said it will start its vaccination program with the Sinopharm vaccine, though it hasn't yet completed advanced trials to prove that it's safe and effective. The vaccine, which was tested on 600 Moroccans as part of clinical trials this autumn, has been approved for emergency use in a few countries and the company is still conducting late-stage clinical trials in multiple countries.

Morocco's initial vaccine deliveries will come from

China, but Morocco also plans to produce the vaccine locally.

The AstraZeneca vaccine is still in advanced trials in countries including Britain and the U.S. and hasn't been approved yet.

Morocco's daily virus case count has fallen slightly in the last two weeks, but a dip in testing is raising concerns that the virus could be spreading faster than reported.

As a preventive measure to curb the spread of the virus during New Year's celebrations, authorities banned public and private gatherings, closed restaurants in the country's main cities, and imposed a curfew that went into effect Wednesday night and is set to last for three weeks. AP

according to a white paper in June by the Supreme People's Procuratorate, China's highest procuratorial organ.

Previously, minors who committed serious crimes have received what appeared to be lenient punishments, causing public outrage.

In one instance, a 13-year-old boy from the northern city of Dalian was given just three years of correctional education after he was found guilty of murdering a 10-year-old girl in October 2019, prompting calls for legislative amendments and tougher penalties for minors who commit such crimes. AP

CHINA ORDERS ANT GROUP TO RECTIFY BUSINESSES

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINESE regulators have ordered Ant Group, the world's largest financial technology company, to rectify its businesses and comply with regulatory requirements amid increased scrutiny of anti-monopoly practices in the country's internet sector.

The People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, summoned Ant executives over the weekend and ordered them to formulate a rectification plan and an implementation timetable of its business, including its credit, insurance and wealth management services, the regulators said in a statement yesterday.

The statement said that Ant Group lacked a sound governance mechanism, defied regulatory compliance requirements and engaged in regulatory arbitrage. It also said that the company used its market position to exclude rivals and hurt the rights and interests of consumers.

The meeting came after Chinese regulators last month halted Ant's \$37 billion stock debut in Shanghai and Hong Kong over regulatory changes, and comes just days after China announced an anti-monopoly investigation of e-commerce giant Alibaba Group, which owns a 33% stake in Ant Group.

The orders from regulators could limit Ant Group's expansion and throw its lucrative finance businesses into disarray.

Ant Group, which started out as a payments services for Alibaba's e-commerce platform Taobao, has since expanded to offer insurance and investment products to its hundreds of millions of users in mainland China. Jack Ma, the founder of both Alibaba and Ant Group, is one of China's richest and most prominent entrepreneurs.

Regulators ordered Ant Group to establish a financial holding company and hold sufficient capital. They also said that Ant Group should return to its payments origins, enhance transparency around transactions and prohibit unfair competition, while improving corporate governance and ensuring that it complies with regulatory requirements for its businesses.

Ant Group said in a statement Sunday that it would comply with regulatory requirements and enhance risk management and control, and that a working group would be set up to make the necessary rectifications.

"We appreciate financial regulators' guidance and help," the statement said. "The rectification is an opportunity for Ant Group to strengthen the foundation for our business to grow with full compliance, and to continue focusing on innovating for social good and serving small businesses."

The scrutiny of Ant Group and Alibaba comes as China closely examines the influence of the country's internet sector.

Last month, China released draft 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.

Alibaba and a company spun off by Tencent Holding Ltd. were fined this month for failing to apply for official approval before proceeding with some acquisitions.

Last Tuesday, regulators met with executives of Alibaba and five other major Chinese internet companies and warned them not to abuse their dominance to drive out competitors through use of exclusive contracts, predatory pricing and other tactics, according to a statement by the State Administration of Market Regulation. AP

LAW

Beijing lowers age of criminal liability to 12 for some crimes

CHINA has lowered the age of criminal responsibility for some serious crimes from 14 to 12, as it looks to combat juvenile crime committed by children.

Under an amended law, children aged 12 to 14 will be held criminally liable for "intentional homicide or intentional injury that leads to death or causes others severe disabilities by extremely

cruel means."

The amendment, which was passed over the weekend by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, will take effect on March 1.

Those under the age of 14 who commit crimes apart from those mentioned in the newly amended law will be exempt from criminal

punishment, but could be given correctional education.

Currently, the age of criminal liability in China is 16, with those between 14 and 16 held criminally responsible for serious crimes such as rape, robbery and intentional homicide.

The amendment to the law follows a rise in juvenile crimes from 2018 to 2019,



People queue in line to wait for coronavirus testing while maintaining social distancing near a Christmas decoration at Seoul Plaza in Seoul

PANDEMIC

After early success, South Korea sleepwalks into virus crisis

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea had seemed to be winning the fight against the coronavirus: Quickly ramping up its testing, contact-tracing and quarantine efforts paid off when it weathered an early outbreak without the economic pain of a lockdown. But a deadly resurgence has reached new heights during Christmas week, prompting soul-searching on how the nation sleepwalked into a crisis.

The 1,241 infections on Christmas Day were the largest daily increase. Another 1,132 cases were reported Saturday, bringing South Korea's caseload to 55,902.

Over 15,000 were added in the last 15 days alone. An additional 221 fatalities over the same period, the deadliest stretch, took the death toll to 793.

As the numbers keep rising, the shock to people's livelihoods is deepening and public confidence in the government eroding. Officials could decide to increase social distancing measures to maximum levels on Sunday, after resisting for weeks.

Tighter restrictions could be inevitable because transmissions have been outpacing efforts to ex-

pand hospital capacities.

In the greater Seoul area, more facilities have been designated for COVID-19 treatment and dozens of general hospitals have been ordered to allocate more ICUs for virus patients. Hundreds of troops have been deployed to help with contract tracing.

At least four patients have died at their homes or long-term care facilities while waiting for admission this month, said Kwak Jin, an official at the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency. The agency said 299 among 16,577 active patients were in serious or critical condition.

"Our hospital system isn't going to collapse, but the crush in COVID-19 patients has significantly hampered our response," said Choi Won Suk, an infectious disease professor at the Korea University Ansan Hospital, west of Seoul.

Choi said the government should have done more to prepare hospitals for a winter surge.

"We have patients with all kinds of serious illnesses at our ICUs and they can't share any space with COVID-19 patients, so it's hard," Choi said. "It's the same medical staff that has been fighting the vi-

rus for all these months. There's an accumulation of fatigue."

Critics say the government of President Moon Jae-in became complacent after swiftly containing the outbreak this spring that was centered in the southeastern city of Daegu.

The 1,241 infections on Christmas Day were the largest daily increase in South Korea

The past weeks have underscored risks of putting economic concerns before public health when vaccines are at least months away. Officials had eased social distancing rules to their lowest in October, allowing high-risk venues like clubs and karaoke rooms to reopen, although experts were warning of a viral surge during winter when people spend longer hours indoors.

Jaehun Jung, a professor of preventive medicine at the Gachon University College of Medicine in Incheon, said he anticipates infections to gradually slow over the next two weeks.

The quiet streets and long lines snaking around testing stations in Seoul, which are temporarily providing free tests to anyone regardless of whether they have symptoms or clear reasons to suspect infections, demonstrate a return of public alertness following months of pandemic fatigue.

Officials are also clamping down on private social gatherings through Jan. 3, shutting down ski resorts, prohibiting hotels from selling more than half of their rooms and setting fines for restaurants if they accept groups of five or more people.

Still, lowering transmissions to the levels seen in early November — 100 to 200 a day — would be unrealistic, Jung said, anticipating the daily figure to settle around 300 to 500 cases.

The higher baseline might necessitate tightened social distancing until vaccines roll out — a dreadful outlook for low-income workers and the self-employed who drive the country's service sector, the part of the economy the virus has damaged the most.

"The government should do whatever to secure enough supplies and move up the adminis-

tration of vaccines to the earliest possible point," Jung said.

South Korea plans to secure around 86 million doses of vaccines next year, which would be enough to cover 46 million people in a population of 51 million. The first supplies, which will be AstraZeneca vaccines produced by a local manufacturing partner, are expected to be delivered in February and March. Officials plan to complete vaccinating 60% to 70% of the population by around November.

There's disappointment the shots aren't coming sooner, though officials have insisted South Korea could afford a wait-and-see approach as its outbreak isn't as dire as in America or Europe.

South Korea's earlier success could be attributed to its experience in fighting a 2015 outbreak of MERS, the Middle East respiratory syndrome, caused by a different coronavirus.

After South Korea reported its first COVID-19 patient on Jan. 20, the KDCA was quick to recognize the importance of mass testing and sped up an approval process that had private companies producing millions of tests in just weeks.

When infections soared in the Daegu region in February and March, health authorities managed to contain the situation by April after aggressively mobilizing technological tools to trace contacts and enforce quarantines.

But that success was also a product of luck — most infections in Daegu were linked to a single church congregation. Health workers now are having a much harder time tracking transmissions in the populous capital area, where clusters are popping up just about everywhere.

South Korea has so far weathered its outbreak without lockdowns, but a decision on Sunday to raise distancing restrictions to the highest "Tier-3" could possibly shutter hundreds of thousands of non-essential businesses across the nation.

That could be for the best, said Yoo Eun-sun, who is struggling to pay rent for three small music tutoring academies she runs in Incheon and Siheung, also near Seoul, amid a dearth of students and on-and-off shutdowns.

"What parents would send their kids to piano lessons" unless transmissions decrease quickly and decisively, she said.

Yoo also feels that the government's middling approach to social distancing, which has targeted specific business activities while keeping the broader part of the economy open, has put an unfair financial burden on businesses like hers.

"Whether it's tutoring academies, gyms, yoga studios or karaokes, the same set of businesses are getting hit again and again," she said. "How long could we go on?" AP

EU nations eagerly kick off mass Covid-19 vaccinations

VANESSA GERA & NICOLE WINFIELD, ROME

EUROPEAN Union nations kicked off a coordinated effort yesterday to give COVID-19 vaccinations to the most vulnerable among the bloc's nearly 450 million people, marking a moment of hope in the continent's battle against the worst public health crisis in a century.

Health care workers, the elderly and leading politicians got some of the first shots across the 27-nation bloc to reassure the public that the vaccinations are safe and represent the best chance to emerge from the pandemic.

"It didn't hurt at all," said Mihaela Anghel, a nurse at the Matei Bals Institute in Bucharest who was the first person to get the vaccine in Romania. "Open your eyes and take the vaccine."

In Rome, five doctors and nurses wearing white scrubs sat in a semi-circle at the Spallanzani infectious diseases hospital to receive their doses.

"The message is one of hope, trust and an invitation to share this choice," said one of the recipients, Dr. Maria Rosaria Capobianchi, who heads the virology laboratory at Spallanzani and was part of the team that isolated the virus in early February. "There is no reason to be concerned."

Italian virus czar Domenico Arcuri said it was significant that Italy's first vaccine doses were administered at Spallanzani, where a Chinese couple visiting from Wuhan tested positive in January and became Italy's first confirmed cases. Only later would northern Lombardy become the epicenter of the outbreak in Europe. Italy now has the continent's worst confirmed virus death toll at nearly 72,000.

"Today is a beautiful, symbolic day: All the citizens of Europe together are starting to get their vaccinations, the first ray of light after a long night," Arcuri told reporters outside the hospital.

But he cautioned: "We all have to continue to



be prudent, cautious and responsible. We still have a long road ahead, but finally we see a bit of light."

The vaccines, developed by Germany's BioNTech and American drugmaker Pfizer, started arriving in super-cold containers at EU hospitals on Friday from a factory in Belgium.

In the Los Olmos nursing home in the Spanish city of Guadalajara, northeast of Madrid, a 96-year-old resident and a caregiver were the first Spaniards to receive the vaccine.

"Let's see if we can all behave and make this virus go away," said Araceli Hidalgo, the elderly resident, after receiving her injection.

The Czech Republic was spared the worst of the pandemic in the spring only to see its health care system near collapse in the fall. In Prague, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis received his shot at dawn Sunday and asserted: "There's nothing to worry about." Sitting next to him in a wheelchair was World War II veteran Emilie Repikova, who also received the shot.

Altogether, the EU's 27 nations have recorded at least 16 million coronavirus infections and more than 336,000 deaths — huge numbers that experts still agree understate the true toll of the pandemic due to missed cases and li-

imited testing.

All those getting shots will have to come back in three weeks for a second dose.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen released a video celebrating the vaccine rollout, calling it "a touching moment of unity." The vaccination campaign should ease frustrations that were building up, especially in Germany, as Britain, Canada and the United States kicked off their inoculation programs with the same vaccine weeks earlier.

As it turned out, some EU immunizations began a day early in Germany, Hungary and Slovakia. The operator of a German nursing home where dozens of people were vaccinated Saturday, including a 101-year-old woman, said "every day that we wait is one day too many."

Each EU country is deciding on its own who will get the first shots, with most vowing to put the elderly and residents in nursing homes first.

EU leaders are counting on the vaccine rollout to help the bloc project a sense of unity in a complex lifesaving mission after it faced a year of difficulties in negotiating a post-Brexit trade deal with Britain.

"It's here — the good news at Christmas," said German Health Minister Jens Spahn. "This vacci-

ne is the decisive key to end this pandemic ... it is the key to getting our lives back."

Among the politicians who planned to get virus shots on Sunday to promote a wider acceptance of vaccinations were Slovakian President Zuzana Caputova and Bulgarian Health Minister Kostadin Angelov.

Meanwhile, the first cases of a new virus variant that has been spreading rapidly around London and southern England have now been detected in France and Spain. The new variant, which British authorities said is much more easily transmitted, has caused European countries, the United States and China to put new restrictions on travel for people from Britain.

Japan became the latest country to act, announcing it would temporarily ban all non-resident foreigners from entering through Jan. 31 as a precaution against the U.K.'s new variant.

Germany's BioNTech has said it's confident that its coronavirus vaccine works against the new U.K. variant, but added that further studies are needed to be completely certain.

The European Medicines Agency on Jan. 6 will consider approving a second coronavirus vaccine, this one by Moderna, which is already being used in the United States. AP

this day in history

1980 GREEN LIGHT FOR BREAKFAST TELEVISION

A shake-up of broadcasting franchises has paved the way for the launch of breakfast television.

The Independent Broadcasting Authority announced the breakfast contract will go to TV-am and will launch in 1983, a

year later than planned, to lessen the impact on independent local radio.

It will also avoid clashes with a fourth channel launching in 1982 and the impact on company revenues.

In regional franchises TSW, Television South West, will take over from Westward, which was praised by the IBA for its control of management problems but was faced with fierce competition.

TVS, South and South East Communications, will take over from Southern which faced three times as much competition as any other company and was praised for its religious and children's schedules.

The IBA said it ultimately chose companies with programme makers of particular promise.

In separate statements both companies, which have a long established history, said they were "shattered" by the decision.

The IBA's announcement today also shocked many with its decision to award breakfast news to the new company TV-AM and not ITN.

The TV-am consortium is headed by Peter Jay, former UK ambassador to Washington, and the journalist David Frost.

Esther Rantzen, Anna Ford and Angela Rippon have been involved in the bid for a year and will join as programme makers from its inception.

They will be joined by Michael Parkinson, Robert Kee and Mr Frost as the presenters of the morning programme starting at 0615 GMT until 0915.

Mr Frost said the show would provide a "fast moving magazine programme" for all the family.

IBA also announced changes within the remainder of the 15 companies which fought against bids from 29 rival companies.

Yorkshire TV and Tyne Tees cannot be controlled by Trident, their holding company but must be run separately with firm proposals by February.

In the East and West Midlands, the new split area, ATV must restructure the company and reduce the shareholding of its parent body to 51% by February.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

TV-am had a rocky rise to popularity and an abrupt end. The IBA set TV-am's launch at May 1983 to allow the new Channel 4 a secure start, but brought this forward to February with news the BBC was launching a rival "Breakfast Time".

The BBC launched its morning show in January and received higher ratings than TV-am.

It led to a cull of employees at TV-am including Peter Jay, Anna Ford and Angela Rippon in favour of "people-next-door" Anne Diamond and Nick Owen.

But ratings continued to plummet until Greg Dyke's creation of furry puppet Roland Rat who proved popular with children.

TV-am was transformed with a softer image and by the late 1980s it had amassed huge audiences.

But a new government act on broadcasting in 1990 changed the way franchises were awarded and TV-am lost out, going off air in 1992.

BITCOIN MINERS IN NORDIC REGION GET A BOOST FROM CHEAP POWER

JESPER STARN

THE Nordic region once again has become a lucrative place to mine cryptocurrencies, thanks to a plunge in electricity prices.

The wettest weather in at least 20 years boosted production from hydro-electric plants, leaving Sweden and Norway with some of the lowest power prices in the world. The resulting glut in the most important raw material for making the virtual coins coincided with a year when the price of Bitcoin tripled.

The currencies are made in giant computer farms that process complex algorithms in halls as big as airport hangars. That makes electricity one of the key inputs, with operations sometimes consuming as much power as that used by 70,000 households. The current market dynamics give big miners alternatives to places where Bitcoin are usually created such as China, Kazakhstan and Canada.

Their luck follows several years of poor margins from higher electricity costs and lower prices for most virtual currencies. Many of the miners that were attracted to the region during the last rally in 2017 have left.

"The ones that stayed through the difficult period, like us, are quite happy now," said Philip Salter, head of operations at Hong Kong-based Genesis Mining Ltd., which



operates a data center in Boden, Sweden. "There were times we were not making any profit at all, but during the last year our profitability has more than tripled."

Unusually wet weather along with mild temperatures boosted hydro reservoirs across Nordic region to the highest level in more than 20 years, leaving the area awash in generation capacity. The result is power prices close to zero for extended periods. Average prices this year are about a third of those in Germany, Europe's biggest power market.

Norway had the lowest electricity prices for industrial users last year among the 30 member-nations in the International Energy Agency. It also had the lowest prices for non-households in the European Union during first half of this year, narrowly beating Iceland, another crypto-currency hot-spot.

"These prices are some of the lowest you can find

in the world if you disregard fees and taxes," said Tor Reier Lilleholt, head of analysis at Norwegian consultant Watsight AS. "What we saw this summer was that the low levels registered over such a long time."

The main environmental benefit from basing the mining in the Nordic region is that the electricity is almost carbon-free, consisting mostly of hydro, nuclear and wind power. That is becoming increasingly important for the many institutional investors attracted to cryptocurrencies and one of the main factors behind the latest price surge. Having coin flowing from the Nordic region helps reduce the political risk profile of Bitcoin.

"There is a very important strategic shift away from mining in China to mining in western countries like Sweden as Bitcoin investors become more public and want more stability and critical safety," said Salter at Genesis.

"It is one of the biggest developments in Bitcoin mining to look out for."

Comparing electricity prices around the world is difficult since they vary between industries and regions due to taxes, fees and subsidies. One attempt by the World Bank, which measures the bills of an imaginary warehouse in the capital of each nation, puts Sweden and Norway well below China but above other centers for making crypto-currency, like Kazakhstan and Mongolia.

The cost of power is poised to become even more significant for miners. The hash-rate, the amount of calculation needed to produce each coin, is steadily increasing. And in May, miners' rewards were cut by a so-called halving, a reduction in the amount of tokens they receive as a way to maintain scarcity.

Many of the miners that left the region after the 2017-18 boom and bust could return. The November announcement of \$35 million investment from Dutch blockchain company Bitfury Holding BV to expand their Norwegian site could mark the start of a new trend.

"We have seen a notable up-tick in investor appetite for Bitcoin mining opportunities in Norway," said Tyler Page, a business developer at Bitfury. "This year's energy prices were particularly low as Bitcoin prices have increased." **BLOOMBERG**

MUSK SAYS IT'S 'IMPOSSIBLE' TO TAKE TESLA PRIVATE, MULLS NEW IPO

NILUKSI KOSWANAGE

BILLIONAIRE Elon Musk said it's "impossible" to take Tesla Inc. private now even though he would have liked to spend more time on innovation.

"Tesla public company duties are a much bigger factor, but going private is impossible now (sigh)," Musk said in response to a tweet saying he should optimize his time in areas such as innovation. "Engineering, design & general company operations absorb vast majority of my mind & are the fundamental limitation on doing more."

Tesla shares, which were included in the S&P 500 index this week, have surged eightfold this year ahead of the addition to the benchmark measure. The gain is twice the advance of the next best performer on the gauge. The share price jump also created millionaires among its investors, and propelled Musk's net worth by \$132.2 billion to \$159.7 billion, making him the world's second-richest person, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Musk also said Starlink, SpaceX's budding space-internet business, would likely be a candidate in his group to go public once its revenue growth becomes "rea-

sonably predictable," echoing similar comments by the company's president to investors earlier this year.

Space Exploration Technologies Corp. has already launched more than 240 satellites to build out Starlink, President Gwynne Shotwell said at a private investor event in February.

A listing would give investors a chance to buy into one of the most promising operations within the closely held company. "Right now, we are a private company, but Starlink is the right kind of business that we can go ahead and take public," she said then.

Investors have to this point had limited ways to own a piece of SpaceX, which has become one of the most richly valued venture-backed companies in the U.S. by dominating the commercial rocket industry.

In addition to a contract from NASA for a version of its next-generation Starship spacecraft that can land astronauts on the moon in 2024, SpaceX also has an agreement with a Japanese entrepreneur for a private flight around the moon in 2023. And it will be ready to launch its first Starship flight to Mars in 2026, Musk said earlier this month. **BLOOMBERG**

CORPORATE BITS

Conrad Macao launches 'A Taste of The Londoner Macao' package



To celebrate the first phase opening of The Londoner Macao integrated resort, Conrad Macao has launched 'A Taste of The Londoner Macao' Room and Afternoon Tea Offer, including luxurious

accommodation for two in a Deluxe Room and afternoon tea set at Churchill's Table restaurant.

The package is available for booking from now until March 30, 2021, for stays

between Jan. 22 and March 31, 2021.

Churchill's Table is a British-themed restaurant with design inspired by classic Victorian food hall, according to a statement.

With seating extending out into Crystal Palace lobby, it offers international breakfast, all-day Mediterranean lunch and dinner, themed signature afternoon tea, entertaining evening dessert and cocktail experiences. The extensive retail area inside Churchill's Table restaurant also features its own branded chocolate, biscuits, cakes, sweets, bakery and pastry items, jams, honey and more.

Melco announces adoption of water refill system



As part of Melco Resorts & Entertainment's commitment to eliminate single-use plastic (SUP) and its Zero Waste Resorts goal by 2030, the gaming operator has installed the Nordaq 2000 Refilling System at Morpheus at City of Dreams, with further plans to imple-

ment the system across its entire property portfolio in Macau, including hotels at City of Dreams, Studio City and Altira Macau in 2021.

With the capacity to fill 2,000 bottles of purified water per hour on-site, the system will help replace the use of plastic

bottles in Melco-operated resort guest rooms, the gaming operator said in a statement.

It is estimated that the initiative will eliminate the production, transportation, and supply of 14.8 million plastic bottles annually, significantly reducing plastic waste and its associated carbon footprint.

Denise Chen, Senior Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer of Melco Resorts & Entertainment, said, "We are pleased to extend these efforts through the Nordaq water refill system for guest room use as we continue to adopt alternative, cutting edge solutions to not only eliminate the use of SUP but also enhance the guest experience."

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

NBA

Young leads Hawks to second win, 122-112 over Grizzlies



CLAY BAILEY, MEMPHIS (TENN.)

TRAE Young scored eight straight points down the stretch and finished with 36 points as the Atlanta Hawks beat the Memphis Grizzlies 122-112 yesterday [Macau time].

Kevin Huerter added 21 points for the Hawks, who won their second straight. De'Andre Hunter finished with 15 points and rookie Nathan Knight added 14 points, going 4 of 5 from the field and 2-for-3 shooting from 3-point range.

Ja Morant led Memphis with 28 points and seven assists, and Kyle Anderson finished with 20 points and 14 rebounds. Dillon Brooks added 19 points before fouling out in the closing seconds.

Huerter said the goal was to stop the Grizzlies' transition game and keep them out of the paint, where they are one of the

best teams in the league.

"For the most part, I think we did a pretty good job at that. We tried to turn a lot of them into shooters," Huerter said, later adding: "Trying to keep them out of the paint, and we did our thing offensively."

The game was a showdown between two of the league's top young point guards in Young and Morant, both of whom had big season-openers. Young had 37 points in the Hawks' 124-104 win at Chicago, while Morant scored a career-high 44 in a home loss to San Antonio.

Young, who was limited to 12 points in the first half, scored 10 points in the final 2:40 against the Grizzlies, starting with the eight straight to keep Memphis from overtaking Atlanta.

"I think shots just went down," Young said of the second half. "I was getting some really good looks in that first half. Shots just weren't going in. For all of us. [...] I think we got the rust off (in the

first half) and played really well as far as scoring throughout the rest of the game."

The young guards carried their teams through the first half, with the Hawks also getting an early burst from Huerter, who had 13 points at the break, hitting all five of his shots.

The Hawks held a 58-56 lead at the half.

"We're both young talents trying to be the face of the league," Morant said. "We've played against each other many times. [...] The sky's the limit for [Young]."

TIP-INS

Hawks: Split a pair of preseason games against the Grizzlies in Memphis. [...] Starting frontline player Danilo Gallinari did not play due to a left foot contusion. [...] Knight, who signed a two-way contract with the Hawks after a four-year career at William & Mary, scored his first NBA points in the first quarter.

Grizzlies: Reserve G De'Anthony Melton was a late scratch due to health and safety protocols. "In terms of a return date, I'm new to this process," Memphis coach Taylor Jenkins said, adding: "We don't have a firm timeline yet. It's to be determined." [...] Kyle Anderson reached 2,000 career points in the first quarter. [...] Morant reached 500 assists in the second quarter. **AP**

Atlanta Hawks guard Trae Young (11) is defended by Memphis Grizzlies center Jonas Valanciunas (17)

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OPINION

World Views

Marcus Ashworth, MDT/Bloomberg



**BORIS JOHNSON
 UNLEASHES THE ANIMAL
 SPIRITS WITH BREXIT DEAL**

The completion of the long-awaited Brexit trade deal comes just as U.K. markets closed for the Christmas break, but things are set fair for next year when liquidity returns.

The pound versus the dollar remains the best indicator of sentiment — and it was about the only market open when the deal was announced on Christmas Eve in Europe. It had pushed up to its highest level for two years as speculation mounted that a deal was close. Sterling is still fundamentally cheap, although it has stayed so for a very good reason amid the nightmare of seemingly never-ending trade negotiations.

As long as the agreement is ratified by the European Union's member states and both the British and European parliaments, the pound should head higher toward \$1.40. But don't expect a return to the \$1.50-plus levels seen before the 2016 referendum. The U.K. economy still has the major handbrake of Covid-19 to overcome, although at least the sometimes distracted Boris Johnson can give the pandemic his full attention now.

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Much of the country, including wealthy London and southeast England, are in hard lockdowns, which may continue for much of the first quarter of 2021. It's not until the spring, when mass vaccinations will have been rolled out, that any Brexit premium can really be enjoyed. With the threat of "no deal" put aside, gross domestic product should increase by more than 6% in 2021, according to Bloomberg Economics. That could easily rise if vaccines allow for an earlier lifting of restrictions on economic activity.

The FTSE 100 index was little changed on Thursday but many of its constituents make most of their revenues overseas, so a stronger pound is not their friend. The FTSE 250 index, which better reflects the domestic economy, has been rising recently, and it should be an outperformer next year.

The big unknown for the economy will be the return of M&A and animal spirits in business: If foreign direct investment — once a winning hand for Britain — returns after five long years of uncertainty, the U.K. equity market could well be the place to be in 2021. That is not a sentence I've been able to write for many years.

One important caveat is that financial services have been largely left out of this deal, and a wider settlement between the City of London and the EU won't be resolved until March at the earliest. This sector makes up 7% of U.K. gross domestic product and it's the country's highest export revenue earner. At least there will be no cross-retaliation inflicted on the finance industry if Britain reneges on its agreements in other sectors. And Britain looks to have avoided the so-called "headnote," which would have allowed the EU to restrict the outsourcing of financial services from the continent to London.

U.K. government bonds, known as Gilts, have fallen in price this week as expectations of a deal grew and their appeal as a safe haven diminished. Gilts should steadily widen in spread compared to their European counterparts next year as the European Central Bank is likely to pursue its bond-buying programs for longer and to a greater extent than the Bank of England.

Britain has been trapped for half a decade in its internal and external battle to resolve its relationship with Europe. That is not over but a more promising chapter is about to start. And even though Europe's yields will be lower, the BOE will still keep the U.K.'s interest rates on a short leash for the foreseeable future. The pound and domestically focused equities should benefit from these benign conditions. Investors will just be relieved to see a possible end to permanent crisis.

At least seven people were killed and another seven injured in a knife attack in northeastern China, state media reported yesterday.

The attack in the city of Kaiyuan in Liaoning province was carried out outside a sauna and bathhouse. The suspect, identified by the media by his surname Yang, was arrested while the motive for the attack remains unknown.

Chinese law restricts the sale and possession of firearms, and mass attacks are generally carried out with knives or homemade

explosives.

Perpetrators of similar attacks in the past have been described as mentally ill or bearing grudges against society.

In earlier attacks, a school security guard wielding a knife injured at least 39 people at a kindergarten in the southern region of Guangxi in June this year. The culprit was sentenced to death.

In 2018, a man killed one and injured 12 in a knife attack at a shopping mall in Beijing.

**EU, UK UNVEIL VAST
 TRADE PACT SET TO
 ENTER FORCE ON JAN 1**

THE European Union and the United Kingdom made public yesterday the vast agreement that is likely to govern future trade and cooperation between them from Jan. 1, setting the 27-nation bloc's relations with its former member country and neighbor on a new but far more distant footing.

EU ambassadors and lawmakers on both sides of the English Channel will now pore over the "EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement," which contains over 1,240 pages of text. EU envoys are expected to meet today to discuss the document, drawn up over nine intense months of talks.

Businesses, so long left in the dark about what is in store for them, will also be trying to understand its implications.

Most importantly, the deal as it stands ensures that Britain can continue to trade in goods with the world's biggest trading bloc without tariffs or quotas after the U.K. breaks fully free of the EU. It ceased to be an official member on Jan. 31 this year and is days away from the end of an exit transition period.

But other barriers will



Michel Barnier, center, carries a binder of the Brexit trade deal during a special meeting of Coreper, at the European Council building in Brussels

be raised, as the U.K. loses the kind of access to a huge market that only membership can guarantee. They range from access to fishing waters to energy markets, and include everyday ties so important to citizens like travel arrangements and education exchanges.

EU member countries are expected to endorse the agreement over the course of next week. British legislators could vote on it on Wednesday. But even if they do approve it, the text would only enter force provisionally on New Year's Day as the European Parliament

must also have its say.

EU lawmakers said last weekend that there simply wasn't enough time to properly scrutinize the text before the deadline, and they will debate and vote on the document in January and February, if the approval process runs smoothly.

Despite the deal, unanswered questions linger in many areas, including security cooperation — with the U.K. set to lose access to real-time information in some EU law enforcement databases — and access to the EU market for Britain's huge financial services sector. AP



Iran A series of avalanches killed 10 people in a mountainous area north of the capital, state TV reported yesterday. The report said rescue teams were searching for a number of missing people after the avalanches struck in four different areas. State TV aired footage of emergency crews using a helicopter to search for those missing and injured.

Turkey An earthquake with a 5.3 magnitude shook Elazig province yesterday. Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu tweeted there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.



Vatican Pope Francis yesterday proclaimed an upcoming year dedicated to the family as he doubled down on one of his papal priorities and urged renewed attention to his controversial 2016 document on family life. Among other things, the document opened the door to letting divorced and civilly remarried couples receive Communion, sparking criticism and even claims of heresy from conservative Catholics.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Kin Cheung



Maskmas. A family wearing protective masks to prevent the spread of coronavirus, celebrate the Christmas season, at the waterfront of Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong on Christmas Eve.



Africa Voting has begun in Central African Republic's presidential and legislative elections after a campaign period marked by violence between rebels and government forces. Despite calls from the opposition to delay the vote amid the insecurity, the Constitutional Court rejected a postponement. President Faustin-Archange Touadera, seeking a second term, has tried to reassure candidates and voters that the voting will be secure.