

The Macao SAR Government urges:

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

Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

# MacauDaily 澳門每日時報 Times

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

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**PANSY HO HAS BEEN APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF THE MACAO CHAPTER OF UN'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MINISTRY – FRANCE-CHINA CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND PROMOTION CENTRE** P5

**FINDERS KEEPERS: MAN ACCUSED OF THEFT BY FINDING OF MOBILE PHONE** P4

**MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HAVE LARGELY BEEN REPLACED; CHANGES QUESTIONED BY ACTIVISTS** P4



**China's** state media lashed out at the latest move on Taiwan by the departing Trump administration, accusing U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo of "seeking to maliciously inflict a long-lasting scar on China-U.S. ties." A writer for the official Xinhua News Agency said that Pompeo "is only interested in stoking unwarranted confrontations, and has no interest in world peace."



**South Korea's** president Moon Jae-in said yesterday the country will offer free COVID-19 vaccinations to all its people in phases. The government earlier announced that inoculations will start in February. South Korean officials have said they'll have vaccines for 56 million people.



**Japan** More than 80% of people who were surveyed in two polls in the last few days say the Tokyo Olympics should be canceled or postponed, or say they believe the Olympics will not take place. The polls were conducted by the Japanese news agency Kyodo and TBS — the Tokyo Broadcasting System.

**Nepal** Riot police clashed for hours yesterday with thousands of protesters demanding a return of the monarchy that was abolished more than a decade ago and the reinstatement of a Hindu state. Police blocked the main road to the prime minister's office, using batons to beat the protesters, who responded by throwing rocks and sticks. There were no reports of serious injuries.

More on backpage

# STAY PUT **Gov't encourages locals to stay in Macau during CNY**



## COVID PROBE **WHO EXPERTS TO COME THIS WEEK TO CHINA LOOKING FOR VIRUS ORIGINS**



P6

### GOV'T SETS UP NEW AWARD CATALOGS

The Talents Development Committee has set up two new award catalogs to encourage local talent in Macau to obtain more certifications. According to a statement released by the committee, the Talents Training Reward and Certification Program will have four catalogs in 2021. The new awards are the modern financial talent professional certification award and the information technology talent professional certification award.

### FINES IMPOSED FOR LITTERING WITH CONSTRUCTION WASTE

From January 17, failure to properly dispose of construction material waste will attract a fine between 50,000 patacas and 200,000 patacas. Waste that is smaller than 0.2 cubic meters will incur a fine of at least 600 patacas and up to 10,000 patacas, according to the regulation of public locations. The 2019 environmental report pointed out that the amount of construction waste rose by approximately 19% to 2.39 million cubic meters in 2019, indicating an upward trend in the past decade.

### RML IN NOV UP 6.7%

The residential mortgage loans (RMLs) approved by local banks in November 2020 climbed by 6.7% month-to-month to reach MOP2.92 billion. New RMLs to residents increased 7.2% to MOP2.89 billion, amounting to 99.1% of the total. RML to non-Macau residents dropped by 28.1% to MOP25.1 million. Meanwhile, the new commercial real estate loans (CRELs) in November amounted to MOP1.85 billion, down 39.3% month-to-month, according to figures from the Monetary Authority of Macao.

# POLICE 'SUGGESTING' OR 'PETITIONING' MAY BE CONSIDERED A VIOLATION

JULIE ZHU

**P**OLICE officers who make suggestions or petitions to the government authority may be deemed in violation of their special obligations, according to the Third Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL).

Yesterday morning, the AL Third Standing Committee discussed the amendments to laws concerning security service and security force personnel. Government representatives who attended the meeting answered questions raised by some of the committee members.

Among approximately 40 discussed articles, lawmakers queried the article stating that security service and security force personnel shall not participate in any group demonstration which violates the disciplines, shall not participate in any political clubs or organizations with the nature of a trade union, and shall not participate in any activities organized by the concerned organizations.

Security service and security force personnel are under special obligations in regard to the three situations outlined above.



Chairman of the Third Standing Committee of AL Vong Hin Fai explained that the above-mentioned provisions already exist in other laws.

As to how the government will evaluate whether an activity is political or related to trade unions, Vong Hin Fai only said that the government will form an assessment in accordance with

Macau's law.

A member of the committee questioned whether the involved individuals will be considered to be in violation of their "special obligation" when two or more people from the security service and the security force "suggest" or "petition" in some cases.

Citing the reply from govern-

ment representatives, Vong said that according to law No. 5/94/M, article 2, "petitions, representatives and complaints are said to be collective when presented by a group of people through a single instrument and in a collective name when presented by a legal person representing the respective members."

Under the aforementioned provision, police officers may be regarded as violating their special obligation when two or more personnel are involved. However, government representatives reiterated that the actual situation needs to be considered while making a relevant judgement.

In addition, the law amendment suggests that security service and security force personnel are obliged to notify the government when their relatives complete a higher education course and when their family members receive a certification for an educational degree, when their relatives' educational background changes, or the officers have more family members. It is proposed that the concerned personnel notify the government regarding the allowances the family receives.

# DSEJ admits local students may not have sufficient knowledge about the SAR

ANTHONY LAM

**A**T the final public consultation session for the Non-tertiary Education Mid- to Long-term Planning (2021-2030), Lou Pak Sang, Director of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ), evaded a secondary school student's question on Cantonese education.

The secondary school student expressed the patriotism education in Macau, but thought the curriculum relating to family concepts and local culture was insufficient.

The plans stipulates four foci he reminded, in-

cluding nurturing national affection and international perspectives. In this respect, he believes enough work has been done by the education regulator.

However, the student pointed out that many secondary school students have a weak recognition of their local identity and lack knowledge about preserving local culture and history.

In addition, he noticed that the consultation text placed an emphasis on Mandarin and Portuguese, but remarked that many local students cannot even communicate fluently in Cantonese.

He recommended the DSEJ improve its work in these areas.

When Lou responded, he agreed that local students may not have sufficient knowledge about Macau. He added that adults may not have this either. However, he did not respond to the suggestions about promoting Cantonese and improving recognition of local identity.

The student also suggested the education regulator improve civil education, which, in his opinion, can encourage students to be aware of social issues.

### NO TIMETABLE FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION REGULATIONS

On the sidelines of the consultation session, Lou was asked if the new vocational and technical education regulations will be implemented in the foreseeable future.

Lou revealed that the government has no timetable for the implementation of the new regulations. However, he stressed that a draft of the regulations has been made, while promising to increase the pace of the implementation.

Indeed, the regulations were put into public consultation in June 2018 for a

month. No update has since been heard from the administration. The current Vocational and Technical Education Directive in action was promulgated in 1996.

Lou explained that the drafting of the regulations had to go through several departments, such as the legal advisor of the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture and the Legal Affairs Bureau.

He sees the regulations as unlikely to be implemented this year. He also hopes to work more closely with private enterprises on the regulations being discussed.

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# Gov't encourages locals to stay in town during CNY

ANTHONY LAM

**M**ACAU residents should consider spending their Lunar New Year holidays in the city and drop unnecessary travel, Dr Alvis Lo of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center advised at the weekly health press briefing yesterday.

"[The administration of] our country has discouraged the flow of people during the Lunar New Year period so as to further control the pandemic," Lo remarked. "After assessment, the Macau government suggests that its residents remain in Macau during the holiday period."

"We can see that there are risk factors in many places," the medical doctor added.

The mid-risk area list of the local health authority has recently expanded due to reported relapses of infection in many parts of the mainland. For example, two entire cities have been added to the list of places from which entrants will need to be quarantined



upon arriving in Macau. Previously, the list usually only listed particular districts, real estate properties or even specific streets which were designated as high risk.

The medical doctor cited the long period of the city not seeing new cases in support of the government's suggestion.

"We have invested in our defensive efforts for so long," Lo said. "The current condition was

not easily obtained. I hope we are able to maintain it."

Despite the suggestion, Lo stressed that this is not a directive. Residents can still travel if they consider it necessary.

He then pointed out that the vaccination program will start in the first quarter of the year, before asking local residents to help reduce "unnecessary risk factors."

In light of some new cases de-

tected on the mainland, Ma Chio Hong, division head at the Public Security Police Force, was asked if the authority has been keeping track of the health conditions of entrants from Hebei Province.

The police officer stressed that entrants from the mainland must possess a negative coronavirus nucleic acid test result and a Green Mainland Health Code in order to be admitted to Macau.

He also introduced that, should any suspicions arise at the border, police officers will refer the entrants to the Health Bureau (SSM) post at the border checkpoint for further confirmation of their health status and travel history.

"So, I'd like to say that mainland entrants in Macau are basically safe," Ma concluded.

However, the police officer could not provide figures on the number of Hebei entrants currently in Macau due to the method used by the authority to record tourist arrivals.

Regarding Macau's capacity to handle a Covid-19 outbreak at a given timepoint, Lo explained that Macau has 266 beds in its isolation ward. In the first phase of Covid-19, Macau had only 180 beds in its isolation ward.

A makeshift hospital is also within the government's plan. Lo explained that it will provide assistance with the city's infrastructure needs in the event of a possible outbreak.

Contingencies have also been made in different divisions of the SSM to meet any resourcing needs.

"Staff in different divisions have been trained to handle sudden increases in the number of patients," Lo revealed. "We may need the whole staff of the SSM should a sudden influx of patients occur."

# Entreaty for mainland workers to not travel came amidst China's surge of Covid-19 cases

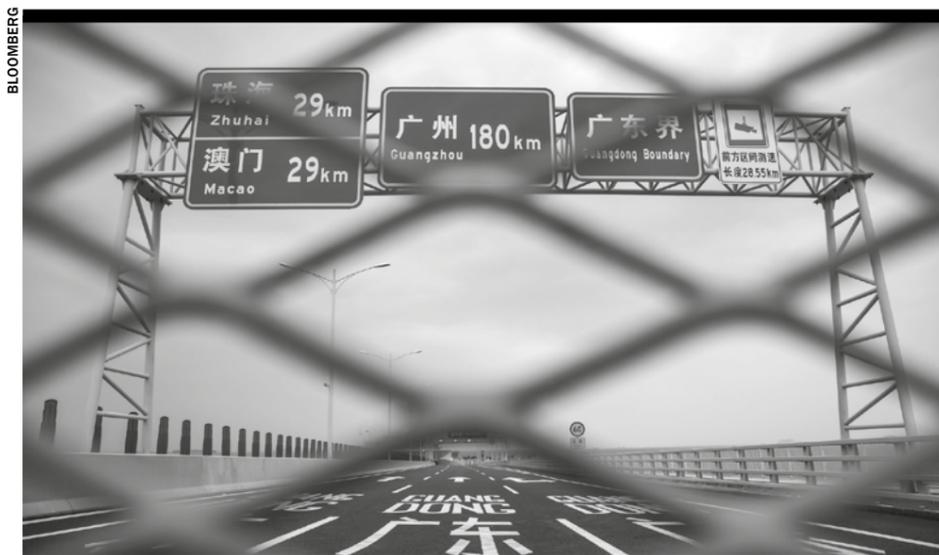
HONEY TSANG

**T**HE Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) issued an appeal yesterday, urging mainland workers residing in Macau not to return to their hometowns in China during the Spring Festival in a bid to minimize contagion risk.

The DSAL accentuated this advice in a meeting yesterday with representatives of the Macao Chamber of Commerce and the Associação de Agências de Emprego de Capital da China (Macau), the two alliances that are respectively devoted to promoting cross-border business exchange and providing vocational support to mainland workers in Macau.

In the exchange, DSAL authorities called on employers within the city's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to talk their mainland staff into staying in Macau during the holiday.

The move is intended to



"minimize people flow and gatherings" during the Lunar New Year holiday, DSAL stated in an announcement published yesterday.

The DSAL indicated its intent to also touch base with other business associations to convey the message later that day, such as the Industry and Commerce Federation of Macau Central and Southern District and the Industry and

Commerce Federation of Islands of Macau, said the statement.

Authorities emphasized that the plea is to ensure the MSAR region is in alignment with the recommendation of the National Health Commission and anti-pandemic measures implemented by the SAR government.

Recently, some of China's municipal governments,

such as Beijing, Shanghai, Anhui and more, have implored residents to spend the Lunar New Year within towns and avoid unnecessary cross-city travel.

Earlier, the Shenzhen municipal government promulgated a series of stringent measures to restrict domestic travel during the holiday. The measures prohibit leading members of public institutions and

state-owned enterprises from traveling to medium and high-risk areas, and asked them to take the lead to stay in Shenzhen during the holiday.

Changsha's Education Bureau also banned teachers, students and employees of the city's education system from visiting other provinces from now until the end of the winter holiday — a school holiday which usually lasts for a month around the Lunar New Year.

As of January 10, China saw 103 new Covid-19 cases — the first three-digit number and highest daily tally reported by the National Health Commission over the last five months. Among all confirmed cases, 85 were considered locally-transmitted cases, while the remaining 18 were imported cases.

Hebei province was hit the hardest by the new outbreak, accounting for almost all (or 82 out of 85) local cases recorded on Ja-

nuary 10. It was followed by two cases in Liaoning province and one from Beijing.

China last registered a three-digit daily number of Covid-19 cases on July 30, when it reported a total of 127 cases.

Following the DSAL's announcement, Ma Iao Lai, President of the Macao Chamber of Commerce and Standing Committee Member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, called on employers to offer arrangements to facilitate their employees to stay in Macau during the holiday to avoid a fresh wave of the pandemic.

This can also save unnecessary expenditure on quarantine facilities upon their return to Macau, Ma stressed.

In yesterday's media briefing, the Medical Director of the Conde de São Januário Hospital Alvis Lo reiterated the DSAL's guidance, urging mainland workers and local residents to avoid "unnecessary travel" and stay in Macau during the holiday.

The seven-day Lunar New Year holiday in 2021 falls between February 11 and 17.

RENATO MARQUES

CRIME

# MAN ACCUSED OF THEFT BY FINDING OF MOBILE PHONE

A 61-year-old man from the Philippines, who is in Macau as a non-resident worker, is being charged with illegally appropriating a mobile phone that he found on a street bench, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) reported yesterday during the regular joint police force press conference.

On January 5, the mobile phone owner, a 49-year-old Filipino woman, met a friend at Rua do Campo and sat on the street bench located in the surroundings of the pedestrian flyover.

After a short conversation with the friend, she left the location only to realize a few minutes later that she had left her mobile phone behind. Upon returning to the location, she did not find the phone.

The next day, she reported to the PSP that the phone had been lost at around 3:35 p.m. the previous day.

Reviewing the footage from street surveillance cameras, the PSP found that a few minutes after she left, a man who was passing by saw the phone

and took it.

The PSP was able to identify the suspect and took him in for questioning on January 8 around 12:35 p.m.

The man admitted to the police that he had taken the mobile phone, adding that he was not aware that such action was a punishable crime under Macau law.

### MAN FOUND PEEKING IN LADIES' ROOM

A 33-year-old local resident is being accused of a privacy intrusion after being caught peeking over the separator of a restroom in a restaurant located at Rua da Bacia Sul in Fai Chi Kei district.

According to the victim's report, a woman in her 20s spotted a man peeking from above the compartment wall while she was in the restroom

cubicle. The man immediately fled the restroom and the restaurant, but the woman chased him down the street and was able to capture a few photographs of the suspect before losing him.

She then reported the case to the PSP and handed over the photographs she had taken.

Making use of the street surveillance cameras, the PSP saw the man enter a residential building, and searched the building until they found him.

When taken into questioning, the man refused to cooperate with the PSP and remained silent without providing any explanation for his behavior.

The case has been forwarded to the Public Prosecutions Office to charge the man with an invasion of privacy.

JUNIPERPHOTON



CRIME

# Local woman involved in sham marriage over debt

RENATO MARQUES

A local woman is being accused of having engaged in a sham marriage to see an old debt repaid by the family of her alleged husband who is a mainland resident, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported yesterday during the regular joint press conference of the police forces.

According to the PJ spokesperson, the case was brought to the attention of police via a letter from an undisclosed

source, which claimed that the couple's marriage, through which the man acquired Macau residency documents, was fake.

After receiving the letter in April last year, the PJ commenced an investigation with the support of the Identification Services Bureau (DSI) and the Public Security Police Force (PSP).

According to records from DSI and PSP, it was revealed during the investigation that the couple registered their mar-

riage on August 13, 2019. The couple immediately submitted a request for a residency permit for the husband, a 57-year-old from the mainland. According to the records, the man had no previous link to Macau or the woman.

In October 2020, the PJ reported that the woman was called to testify on the case and had admitted to the crime. Her alleged reason for participating in the scheme was that she had acquired a debt of about

50,000 patacas that she had not been able to repay.

The woman said that the man's family in the mainland had offered to resolve her debt in exchange for her support in obtaining Macau residency for the man.

At the time of the woman's detention, the man's whereabouts was unknown and the PJ was unable to find him.

Last Saturday, the man was finally intercepted while he was attempting to reenter Macau. Upon questioning by the police force, he denied the accusation that the marriage was fake and undertaken solely for the purpose of obtaining the ID.

The man claimed that he had always lived with the wife, notwithstanding that both the border crossing records and the woman's testimony prove that such a claim is not possible.

They were both presented yesterday to the Public Prosecutions Office to be charged with document forgery, aggravated by another charge of forging a document of special value (Article 245 of Macau Penal Code) and incurring a penalty ranging between one and five years of imprisonment.

# GOV'T APPOINTS NEW MEMBERS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

JULIE ZHU

THE organizational members of the Women and Children Affairs Committee have largely been replaced, according to a notice published in the Official Gazette. Approximately one third of previous organizational committee members have been replaced by the government with new groups.

The organisations that have been removed from the committee include Sisters of the Good Shepherds' Mutual Assistance Center for Women, Creche Sin Meng, the Methodist Church, the Ze Ai Charity Association, and the Zonta Club of Macau. These organisations have been replaced with new members, namely the Macao Chamber of Commerce, the Macao Youth Federation, Macao Association of Female Servants, Macao Catholic Family Advisory Council, and the Macao Media Workers Association.

The Women and Children Affairs Committee was established in 2016. Its objectives are to work towards development goals in relation to women and children in Ma-

cau, and contribute to policy development on domestic violence issues and other matters affecting women and children.

According to a report by All About Macau, President of the New Macau Association, Icy Kam, voiced her doubts over the government's standards for appointing members to the committee.

Kam believes that the decision to remove the Sisters of the Good Shepherds' Mutual Assistance Center for Women from the membership has also removed an important source of professional opinions on women and children matters. Kam also cited a report to note that none of the five new associations have specialised experience in women and children's services.

The activist postulated that the government is seeking to hear different opinions by changing the constitution of committee membership. However, there are other organizations which have been appointed as the committee members since 2016 when the committee was established.

# 38 public projects left idle in Q3 2020

HONEY TSANG

A total of 38 projects within the government's Investment and Development Expenditure Plan (PIDDA) were left idle in the third quarter (Q3) of 2020, the Legislative Assembly's (AL) Follow-up Committee for Public Finance Affairs disclosed yesterday.

The head of the committee Mak Soi Kun ascribed the lack of progress on these 38 projects — which had a combined value of MOP 470 million in public expenses — to the hindrance posed by the pandemic.

The number of projects with a "zero budget utilization rate" was 38 in Q3 2020, down 13 quarter-over-quarter.

There were six projects found without any utilization from the assigned budget between the start of 2019 and Q3 2020.

Among them, the construction project of the west ring office building of the Sports Bureau (ID) was the most pronounced when it came to the course of the delay.

The ID's project has been left idle for a staggeringly long period since 2012. The lengthy delay is attributed to the ongoing litigation associated

with the construction project, Mak explained whilst quoting a representative of the ID.

In light of the legal dispute, the ID has set aside MOP6.6 million for lawsuits every year — which the bureau said will come to an end within two years.

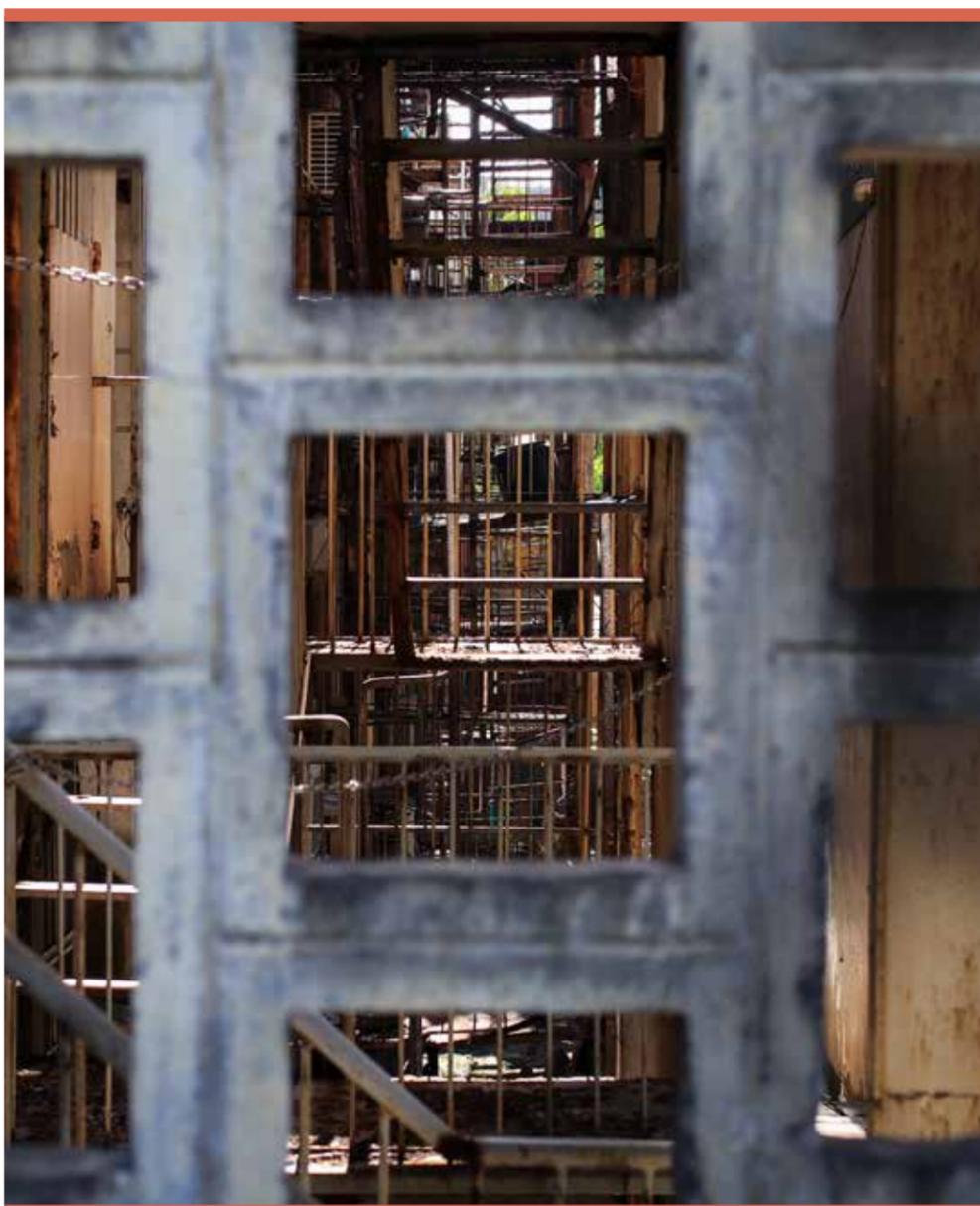
Some departments attending yesterday's meeting stated that some of their projects had already caught up with their schedules for the fourth quarter of 2020.

Despite a large number of barren projects, the committee stated that the actual expenditure within the PIDDA in Q3 2020 reached MOP3.46 billion, which was even higher than the sum of the first two quarters last year. This drove the budget execution rate to advance 44.6%.

As of the third quarter, the budget approved through the PIDDA totaled MOP 13.76 billion, up around MOP21.8 million from the previous quarter, according to the committee.

In addition, the Infrastructure Development Office stated in the meeting that the budget earmarked for the construction project of senior citizen housing, which has already commenced, was capped at MOP2.1 billion.

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



## SMG ISSUES WARNING ON CONTINUED TEMPERATURE DROP

LYNZY VALLES

THE Macau public have braced themselves for the past few days of cold weather, with the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) issuing an Orange Cold Weather Alert and warning the public to take precautions against the cold weather.

The SMG has forecast today's weather to range from 6 to 14 degrees Celsius, in a similar range as tomorrow's forecast of 8 to 16 degrees Celsius. The bureau has also warned that light flooding may occur in the Inner Harbour area today from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. due to astronomical tides.

Yesterday, unverified weather information was circulated on social media, with netizens expressing worries over the upcoming cold season.

The post stated that, according to the meteorological bureau in Guangdong Province, the region (including Hong Kong) will experience the coldest Lunar New Year. It estimated that the coldest temperature will be minus 2



degrees Celsius, on January 24.

However, a Hong Kong verification platform on social media has dismissed the weather report as fake, noting that not even the Hong Kong Observatory has issued such a prediction.

A similar information statement predicting the weather forecast for the January 23 to February 17 period was widely circulated in 2017; however, the Hong Kong weather bureau was cited as the authority rather than the

weather bureau in Guangdong.

The SMG had not issued clarification on the matter by press time.

Nonetheless, the local weather bureau has advised the public to be cautious of the cold weather, which can trigger hypothermia.

Over the weekend, Hong Kong recorded at least 11 deaths under the cold weather warning as the city suffered the impact of a winter monsoon near the coast of Guangdong.

## PANSY HO APPOINTED HEAD OF LOCAL UN BODY

ANTHONY LAM

LOCAL entrepreneur Pansy Ho has been appointed President of the Macau Chapter of the United Nations Economic and Social Ministry – France-China Cultural Exchange and Promotion Centre.

In her business capacity, Ho also holds offices of Executive Chair, Shun Tak Holdings Limited; Managing Director, Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau, more commonly known as the STDM; as well as Co-Chairperson and Executive Director of MGM China Holdings Limited.

To name a few properties, the above entities own and operate the Macau Tower, the New Yaohan Shopping Center, and the MGM resorts in Macau respectively.

In a statement issued by the UN Centre's Macau Chapter, Ho said, "I feel extremely glad to receive the appointment as the President of the Macau



Chapter. The France-China Cultural Exchange and Promotion Centre, being an influential body, has been a crucial bridge connecting China and France."

She added that she has long known the important role of the centre due to her "long-term in-depth communications with France."

"Meanwhile, I am not unfamiliar with international organizations' operations," she further highlighted. She noted that she is a member of a UN Council, and is the

tourism ambassador of the UN World Tourism Organization, among other positions.

In addition, she holds positions in various regional and national organizations, alongside titles of about a dozen governmental medals.

"I am anticipating working with the [international] centre President to uplift the centre to a new level," Ho said, adding that several seminars and forums will be held in various locations to celebrate 2021 as the China-France Cultural Tourism Year.

**OPINION**

**China Daily**

Xinhua Editors

**RESPONSIBLE CHINA CONTRIBUTES TO GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT**

China has seen considerable growth in its economic, technological and composite national strength.

The rise of a responsible country like China does not threaten others or pose danger to the world. Instead, it has contributed more to global prosperity and the common well-being of humanity.

A white paper issued Sunday by China's State Council Information Office testifies to that.

The mission of China's international development cooperation in the new era is to promote a global community of shared future.

China has expanded the scale of its international development cooperation. In terms of foreign assistance, it allocated 270.2 billion yuan (about 41.4 billion U.S. dollars) in the forms of grants, interest-free loans, and concessional loans from 2013 to 2018.

And the cooperation has been carried out in various forms from complete projects to goods and materials, technical cooperation, South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund, medical teams and outbound volunteers.

The least developed countries in Asia and Africa are among the major beneficiaries.

China has also been helping other developing countries realize the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals, from reducing poverty, enhancing food security, improving health care, to promoting gender equality and eco-environmental protection.

And it is not just the government. Chinese medical teams and volunteers spread out across the world to help people in need; Chinese technicians and agricultural professionals taught their counterparts in developing countries viable new technologies and skills to increase income.

Last year, in the face of the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic, China launched the most intensive and largest-scale emergency humanitarian assistance mission since 1949 and did all it could to aid and assist more than 150 countries and international organizations.

China has also pledged to make COVID-19 vaccines available as a global public good once they have been developed and applied in the country.

The white paper reaffirmed China's commitment to "doing all we can to support developing countries in the fight against COVID-19."

All these speak volumes about China's will and the actions it takes as a responsible country.

At present, China has entered a new development phase and is embarking on a journey to fully build itself into a modern socialist country.

But it will always consider its own growth in the context of the common development of all humanity.

No matter how strong it grows, China will remain a builder of world peace, a contributor to global prosperity and a defender of international order, contributing even more to the common well-being of humanity.

**CHINA: WHO EXPERTS ARRIVING THURSDAY FOR VIRUS ORIGINS PROBE**

EXPERTS from the World Health Organization are due to arrive in China this week for a long-anticipated investigation into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic, the government said yesterday.

The experts will arrive on Thursday and meet with Chinese counterparts, the National Health Commission said in a one-sentence statement that gave no other details.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the experts would be traveling to the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus was first detected in late 2019.

Negotiations for the visit have long been underway. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus expressed disappointment last week over delays, saying that members of the international scientific team departing from their home countries had already started on their trip as part of an arrangement between the WHO and the Chinese government.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said China had approved the visit following consultations between the sides and called it an opportunity to "exchange views with Chinese scientists and medical experts on scientific cooperation on the tracing of the origin of the new coronavirus."



WHO's Tedros

"Along with continuous changes in the epidemic situation, our knowledge of the virus deepens, and more early cases are discovered," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing, adding that the search for the origin will likely involve "multiple countries and localities."

China's government has strictly controlled all research at home into the origins of the virus, an Associated Press investigation found, while state-owned media have played up fringe theories that suggest the virus could have originated elsewhere.

The AP investigation found that China's government is handing out hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants to scientists researching the virus' origins in southern Chi-

na. But it is monitoring their findings and mandating that the publication of any data or research must be approved by a new task force managed by China's Cabinet, under direct orders from President Xi Jinping, according to internal documents obtained by the AP.

The culture of secrecy is believed to have delayed warnings about the pandemic, blocked the sharing of information with the WHO and hampered early testing. Australia and other countries have called for an investigation into the origins of the virus, prompting angry responses from Beijing.

There was no immediate comment from the WHO yesterday's announcement, but U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric had earlier told reporters at U.N. headquarters

in New York that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "is fully supportive of Dr. Tedros' and WHO's efforts to get a team in there."

"It's very important that as the WHO is in the lead in fighting the pandemic, that it also has a leading role in trying to look back at the roots of this pandemic so we can be better prepared for the next one," Dujarric said. "We very much hope" that China's reported comments that it is working with the WHO and looking for a smooth visit "will happen."

The virus' origins have been the source of intense speculation, much of it centered around the likelihood that it was carried by bats and passed to humans through an intermediary species sold as food or medicine in traditional Chinese wet markets.

China has largely stemmed new cases of domestic transmission, but said yesterday that scores of people have tested positive for the coronavirus in Hebei province, bordering Beijing.

That outbreak comes amid measures to curb the further spread of the virus during next month's Lunar New Year holiday. Authorities have called on citizens not to travel, ordered schools closed a week early and conducted testing on a massive scale. **MDT/AP**

**Indonesia green-lights emergency use of Chinese vaccine**

INDONESIA'S Food and Drug Authority yesterday green-lighted emergency use of the COVID-19 vaccine produced by China-based Sinovac Biotech Ltd., with vaccinations of high-risk groups expected to start later this week.

Conditional vaccination of healthcare workers and other civil servants using the vaccine, called CoronaVac, is expected to begin this week.

"Based on the data and considering the guidance from (the World Health Organization), CoronaVac has met the requirements to get the permit to use the vaccine," the chief of Indonesia Food and Drug Mo-

nitoring Agency, Penny Lukito, said at a news conference.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo said he would be the first person to receive the vaccine.

"Why is the President first? It's not about putting myself first, but to ensure everyone that this vaccine is safe and halal," Widodo said on social media.

The vaccine was cleared for emergency use after Indonesian authorities reviewed clinical trial data from Brazil, Turkey and Indonesia, which are all taking part in Phase III clinical trials of the vaccine.

Brazil's Instituto Butantan said last week

that the vaccine was 78% effective in mild cases and 100% effective against severe and moderate infections based on 220 COVID-19 cases from 13,000 volunteers.

In December, Turkish authorities announced an efficacy rate of 91.25% from interim analysis of 29 cases in a trial with 7,371 volunteers. Some 12,450 volunteers, including 1,500 healthcare workers, are involved in the Phase III clinical trials. Further results have not been made publicly available.

Indonesia conducted its own Phase III clinical trials of the vaccine with 1,620 volunteers. Results announced at yesterday's news conference

said the efficacy rate was 65.3%.

Indonesia's highest Islamic body, the Indonesian Ulema Council, announced last week that the COVID-19 vaccine is halal, or fit for consumption by Muslims, further paving the way for use and distribution in the world's most populous Muslim country.

But some experts have said they would prefer more data from the clinical trials.

Griffith University epidemiologist Dr. Dicky Budiman said that many people have questioned and expressed doubt about the vaccine, as the data Indonesia used for emergency

authorization is only preliminary.

Research into the vaccine is not completed yet and will still take some time, he said.

Sao Paulo's Butantan Institute, Sinovac Biotech Ltd.'s partner in Brazil, did not disclose data such as results by age and gender or the number of asymptomatic volunteers in the sample, which many epidemiologists require to assess whether the shot complies with safety standards. Officials in Brazil said details would be published after Brazil's health regulatory agency approves the vaccine.

Authorities in China and Bolivia have both issued emergency authorization for the CoronaVac vaccine. Chinese health officials have said that some 9 million doses have been administered in China. **MDT/AP**

# Beijing denies coercive birth control measures in Xinjiang

A Chinese official yesterday denied Beijing has imposed coercive birth control measures among Muslim minority women, following an outcry over a tweet by the Chinese Embassy in Washington claiming that government polices had freed women of the Uighur ethnic group from being “baby-making machines.”

Xu Guixiang, a deputy spokesperson for the Xinjiang regional government, told reporters that birth control decisions were made of the person's own free will and that “no organization or individual can interfere.”

“The growth rate of the Uighur population is not only higher than that of the whole Xinjiang population, but also higher than that of the minority population, and more significantly higher than that of the [Chinese majority] Han population,” Xu said. “As for the so-called forcing ethnic minority women in Xinjiang to wear IUDs, or undergo tubal ligations or abortions, it is even more malign.”

An Associated Press investigation in June found that the Chinese government was forcing draconian birth control measures on Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, including IUD fittings, contraceptives, and even abortions and sterilizations.

The measures are backed by the threat of detention, with parents



Xu Guixiang, a deputy spokesperson for the Xinjiang regional government

with three or more children swept into camps and prisons if they're unable to pay massive fines. As a result, the birth rate in Xinjiang's minority regions plummeted by over 60% in just three years, even as Beijing eases birth restrictions on the Han population ahead of a looming demographic crisis.

Twitter took down the Chinese Embassy's Jan. 7 tweet following protests by groups that accuse Beijing of seeking to eradicate Uighur culture. Users complained

the tweet was a violation of rules set by Twitter, which is blocked in China along with Facebook and other American social media platforms.

“China's fascist government is now openly admitting and celebrating its use of concentration camps, forced labor, forced sterilizations and abortions, and other forms of torture to eliminate an ethnic and religious minority,” Nihad Awad, national executive director of The Council on Ame-

rican-Islamic Relations, said in an emailed statement.

China has been waging a year-long campaign against what it calls terrorism and religious fanaticism in Xinjiang and the embassy's tweet referenced those polices, saying: “Study shows that in the process of eradicating extremism, the minds of Uygur women in Xinjiang were emancipated and gender equality and reproductive health were promoted, making them no longer

baby-making machines.”

The tweet cited a study by Li Xiaoxia, a Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences researcher who has asserted that the birth control measures in Xinjiang are voluntary.

Li's papers in past years laid the theoretical foundations for justifying mass birth control measures. In one 2017 paper, Li said having many children was a sign of “religious extremism and ethnic separatism.” Li worried that predominantly minority districts were breeding grounds for terrorism, calling it “a big political risk.”

Yesterday's news conference was the latest attempt by Beijing to deflect rising international criticism over its policies in Xinjiang, particularly over alleged forced labor and the detention of more than 1 million Uighurs, Kazakhs and others in prison-like centers for political indoctrination. China says the centers are intended to combat extremism and teach job skills, but former residents and rights groups say they target Islam and minority languages and culture. AP

## INDIA RETURNS CHINESE SOLDIER WHO CROSSED DISPUTED BORDER

A Chinese soldier seized by India's military in the remote Ladakh region, where the two countries are locked in a border standoff, was handed back to China yesterday, the army said.

India took the soldier into custody last Friday, when China said one of its soldiers had gone missing “due to darkness and complicated terrain” along the disputed high-altitude border.

The soldier was returned to China at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point, the Indian military said in a statement.

He was the second Chinese soldier to be detained by India since tensions escalated last year along the disputed border.

The standoff between the Asian giants began last May with a fierce brawl, and exploded into hand-to-hand combat with clubs, stones and fists on June 15 that left 20 Indian soldiers dead.



China is believed to also have had casualties, but has not given any details.

Both sides have sent reinforcements to the border, with troops settling in for the winter. In September, a few shots were fired for the first time in decades, breaking a longstanding agreement not to use firearms during border confrontations between soldiers of the two countries.

Indian and Chinese soldiers often lose their way in the Himalayan region.

In October, India detained a Chinese soldier in Ladakh's Demchok area and freed him after he was found to have strayed across the de facto border.

In September, China released five Indian hunters who went missing from the eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh. AP



British Chamber of Commerce in Macao

### britcham

#### 32.9sq kms: The Challenges facing Macao's Urban Master Plan

Join our panel of experts over lunch as they delve into the challenges facing Macao's Urban Master Plan that is meant to guide the development of Macao through to the year 2040.

Panelists:

- Rui Leão - President of the International Council of Portuguese Speaking Architects & President of Docomomo Macao
- Christine Choi - President of the Board of Directors Architects Association of Macao & co-founder of JWCC Architecture
- Manuel Wu - Urban Planner, member of the Macao SAR Heritage Committee & Managing Director of Macao Explorer Cultural Travel

Moderator:

- Norris Au - Urban Planner & founding member of Asia Placemakers

**Business Luncheon**  
Date: 20 Jan 2021 (WED)  
Venue: The Vista, MGM Cotai  
Time:  
12:00: Registration  
12:30: Luncheon, presentation & panel discussion  
14:00: Close

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Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi

USA

# Pelosi says House will impeach Trump, pushes VP to oust him

**H**OUSE Speaker Nancy Pelosi says the House will proceed with legislation to impeach President Donald Trump as she pushes the vice president and the Cabinet to invoke constitutional authority force him out, warning that Trump is a threat to democracy after the deadly assault on the Capitol.

The House action could start as soon today [Macau time] as pressure increases on Trump to step aside. A Republican senator, Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, joined Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska in calling for Trump to "resign and go away as soon as possible."

A stunning end to Trump's final 10 days in office was underway as lawmakers warned of the damage the president could still do before Joe Biden was inaugurated Jan. 20. Trump, holed up at the White House, was increasingly isolated after a mob rioted in the Capitol in support of his false claims of election fraud.

Judges across the country, including some nominated by Trump, repeatedly dismissed cases and Attorney General William Barr, a Trump ally, said there was no sign of any widespread fraud. Pelosi emphasized the need for quick action.

"We will act with urgency, because this President represents an imminent threat," Pelosi said in a letter yesterday [Macau time] to colleagues.

"The horror of the ongoing assault on our democracy perpetrated by this President is intensified and so is the immediate need for action."

Pelosi's leadership team will seek a vote on a resolution calling on Vice President Mike Pence and Cabinet officials to invoke the 25th Amendment, with a full House vote expected on Tuesday.

After that, Pence and the Cabinet would have 24 hours to act before the House would move toward impeachment.

During an interview on "60 Minutes" aired yesterday, Pelosi invoked the Watergate era when Republicans in the Senate told President Richard Nixon, "It's over."

"That's what has to happen now," she said.

With impeachment planning intensifying, Toomey said he doubted impeachment could be done before Biden is inaugurated, even though a growing number of lawmakers say that step is necessary to ensure Trump can never hold elected office again.

"I think the president has

disqualified himself from ever, certainly, serving in office again," Toomey said. "I don't think he is electable in any way."

Murkowski, long exasperated with the president, told the Anchorage Daily News on Friday that Trump simply "needs to get out." A third, Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., did not go that far, but he warned Trump to be "very careful" in his final days in office.

House Democrats were expected to introduce articles of impeachment today. The strategy would be to condemn the president's actions swiftly but delay an impeachment trial in the Senate for 100 days. That would allow President-elect Joe Biden to focus on other priorities as soon as he is inaugurated Jan. 20.

Rep. Jim Clyburn, the third-ranking House Democrat and a top Biden ally, laid out the ideas as the country came to grips with the siege at the Capitol by Trump loyalists trying to overturn the election results.

"Let's give President-elect Biden the 100 days he needs to get his agenda off and running," Clyburn said.

Corporate America began to show its reaction to the Capitol riots by tying them to campaign contributions.

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's CEO and President Kim Keck said it will not contribute to those lawmakers — all Republicans — who supported challenges to Biden's Electoral College win. The group "will suspend contributions to those lawmakers who voted to undermine our democracy," Kim said.

Citigroup did not single out lawmakers aligned with Trump's effort to overturn the election, but said it would be pausing all federal political donations for the first three months of the year. Citi's head of global government affairs, Candi Wolff, said in a Friday memo to employees, "We want you to be assured that we will not support candidates who do not respect the rule of law."

Senate Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said an impeachment trial could not begin under the current calendar before Inauguration Day, Jan. 20.

While many have criticized Trump, Republicans have said that impeachment would be divisive in a time of unity.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., said that instead of coming together, Democrats want to "talk about ridiculous things like 'Let's impeach a president'" with just days left in office.

Still, some Republicans might be supportive.

Nebraska Sen. Ben Sasse said he would take a look at any articles that the House sent over. Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger, a frequent Trump critic, said he would "vote the right way" if the matter were put in front of him.

The Democratic effort to stamp Trump's presidential record — for the second time — with the indelible mark of impeachment had advanced rapidly since the riot.

Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., a leader of the House effort to draft impeachment articles accusing Trump of inciting insurrection, said that his group had 200-plus co-sponsors.

The articles, if passed by the House, could then be transmitted to the Senate for a trial, with senators acting as jurors to acquit or convict Trump. If convicted, Trump would be removed from office and succeeded by the vice president. It would be the first time a U.S. president had been impeached twice. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1976 CRIME WRITER AGATHA CHRISTIE DIES



The most popular novelist in the world, Dame Agatha Christie, has died leaving rumours of a multi-million pound fortune and a final book waiting to be published.

The British author, who sold an estimated 300 million books during her lifetime, had been in poor health for several years. She died at her home in Wallingford in Oxfordshire, aged 85.

Two London theatres dimmed their lights this evening - St Martin's where her record-breaking "The Mousetrap" is now in its 24th year and the Savoy, where "Murder at the Vicarage" will have its 200th performance next week.

Dame Agatha is believed to have left one last novel, as yet unpublished, featuring one of her most famous characters, the deceptively clever Miss Marple, as well as an autobiography.

During her lifetime, Dame Agatha published 83 books, including novels, romances written under the pseudonym of Mary Westmacott, short stories, poetry and the scripts for her plays.

She married Colonel Archibald Christie in 1914. While he was away during the war she worked as a nurse at her local hospital in Torquay, where she learned about the poisons that later featured in so many of her crime novels.

Dame Agatha established her name as a crime writer with her first detective book in 1920, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, in which she created her much-loved Belgian detective, Hercule Poirot.

In December 1926 she sparked a police search when her car was found abandoned in a chalk pit at Newlands Corner on the Surrey Downs.

It emerged she and her husband had had a row. Several days later she turned up in a hotel in Harrogate booked in under the name of a woman who was revealed to be her husband's mistress.

She divorced and married again, well-known archaeologist Sir Max Mallowan, and divided her life between several country and town homes, archaeological digs and the regular production of one thriller a year.

She was made a Dame of the British Empire in 1971. Newspaper estimates of her fortune vary, but in the late 1950s she was reputed to be earning about £100,000 a year. [...]

She once said: "I only write one book a year now, which is sufficient to give me a good income. If I wrote more, I'd enlarge the finances of the Inland Revenue who would spend it mostly on idiotic things."

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Dame Agatha Christie's will was published on 30 April 1976 and revealed she had left only £106,683, having managed to dispose of most of her wealth before she died.

She left most of her property to her husband and daughter with a number of smaller bequests such as £500 to her gardener, £250 to her secretary and £200 to her garden manager.

*Sleeping Murder*, Miss Marple's last case, was published after her death. Her autobiography was also published posthumously.

Her legacy lives on in Torquay, Devon, where her daughter by her first marriage Rosalind Hicks lived until her death in 2004. Today there is a museum and a bronze bust of the author at the harbourside.

Her only grandson, Matthew Pritchard, is chairman of Agatha Christie Ltd.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
 Acknowledge this attention and go ahead and play up to it. Charm everyone and work that dynamic duo magic. It makes everyday activities so much more fun.

**TAURUS**  
 Apr. 20-May. 20  
 As the day continues, good news will keep on coming, and this time you'll be the one applauding loudly. See how that works? Your people are a community of cheerleaders, therapists, and treasured advisers.

**GEMINI**  
 May. 21-Jun. 21  
 Complicated plans can be simplified under your intellectual gaze today. You have an uncanny ability to cut right through all the noise and get to the real heart of any matter.

**CANCER**  
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
 You've been feeling calm and contented with the way things are going, but today you might see some problems pop up. Watch out for others who aren't doing what they should be doing.

**LEO**  
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
 Your ideal mate is more likely to be someone who makes you smile than someone who makes you swoon. Remember this when you're considering which crushes to pursue.

**VIRGO**  
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
 Your bank account isn't as flush as you may think, and a quick review of your accounts could go a long way toward keeping you in a more economical state of mind.

**LIBRA**  
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
 If you spend too much time thinking about how to make everything equal and fair between you and your friends, you'll end up wasting a lot of time and creating way too much work for yourself.

**SCORPIO**  
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
 Someone as charming and fun to be around as you can't let one little no get you down! Rejections happen. The only way you can avoid them is to never take any risks.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
 Even if you only have an hour to spare today, do something different. It's time you checked out what's going on with the rest of the world. You'll get some bright ideas for new projects or travel.

**CAPRICORN**  
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
 This day is loaded with intensity for you. Every time you make eye contact with someone, you'll feel a strong, meaningful subtext at work. Are they trying to tell you something?

**AQUARIUS**  
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
 Keeping life light and breezy will be pretty easy today, especially if you're surrounded by friends who understand how to have a good time. Keep it simple, keep it low maintenance, and you'll keep smiling!

**PISCES**  
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
 You're way overdue for a heart-to-heart talk with one of your closest friends. Make a serious effort today to talk with them or schedule a time for the near future.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sanson**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

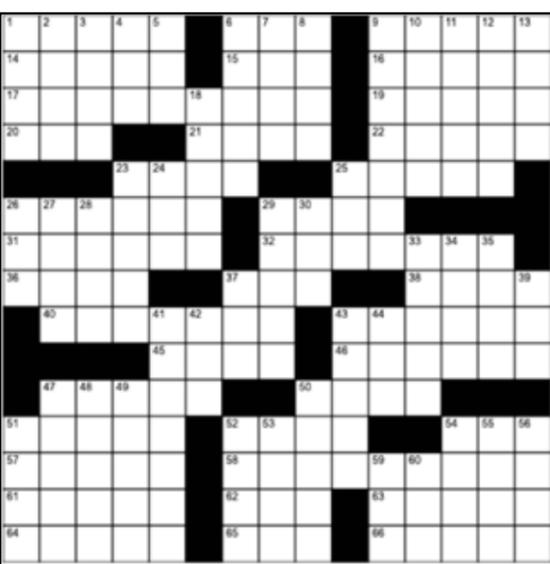
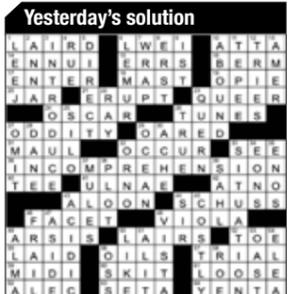
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-8	5	cloudy
Harbin	-23	-9	snowshower
Tianjin	-6	5	clear
Urumqi	-15	-2	clear
Xi'an	-4	11	clear
Lhasa	-3	17	clear
Chengdu	-2	8	cloudy
Chongqing	0	11	cloudy
Kunming	-1	5	overcast
Nanjing	-4	9	clear
Shanghai	-1	8	clear
Wuhan	-4	12	clear
Hangzhou	-1	11	clear
Taipei	9	12	cloudy
Guangzhou	4	14	clear
Hong Kong	9	15	clear
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-12	-9	flurry
Frankfurt	-1	2	sleet
Paris	5	7	drizzle
London	8	10	drizzle
New York	0	1	clear

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- One of the Baldwins; 5- Adlai's running mate; 10- Small amounts; 14- Den of wild animals and dragons; 15- Everyday; 16- Brio; 17- Longfellow's bell town; 18- Actress Witherspoon; 19- Delhi wrap; 20- Takes care of; 22- Most strange; 24- AOL, e.g.; 25- \_\_\_ silly question...; 26- Unfinished detail; 30- Golf clubs; 35- 1970 Jackson 5 hit; 36- Battery size; 37- Singer Yma; 38- Ryot; 41- Run; 43- More war; 44- Eight-time Norris Trophy winner; 45- Photographer Goldin; 46- Apportion; 47- Digital tool; 50- Japanese wrestling; 53- Done, to Donne; 54- Shut in; 58- Checked; 62- Make angry; 63- Part of Hispaniola; 66- St. Petersburg's river; 67- Final Four org.; 68- Director Lubitsch; 69- Singer Stefani; 70- The \_\_\_ the limit; 71- Irritable; 72- Gas burner or Sicilian volcano;

DOWN: 1- Dear, dear; 2- Overdue; 3- Green land; 4- Turning point; 5- Continental inhabitant; 6- Compass dir.; 7- Datebook abbr.; 8- Relaxes; 9- Streamlined; 10- Ricky's portrayer; 11- Winglike parts; 12- Keeps out; 13- Agitated state; 21- Half a fly; 23- Elevate; 25- Nabokov novel; 26- Reindeer herders; 27- Belief involving sorcery; 28- Florida citrus center; 29- Writer Hentoff; 31- Capek play; 32- Muscat native; 33- Birth-related; 34- View; 39- Sun. talk; 40- You \_\_\_ right; 41- Man-mouse connector; 42- Precedence; 44- Lennon's love; 48- Bruce \_\_\_ was a famous kung-fu movie star; 49- Outer edge; 51- Doorkeeper; 52- Funny Anne; 54- Sea eagles; 55- Small notch; 56- Pottery material; 57- Grazing sites; 59- Salamander; 60- Level; 61- Comic Carvey; 64- Officeholders; 65- Medicinal amt.;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



**FOR SALE**

**Simplex Apartment w/ Outdoor Terraces**  
 HK\$16,900,000 4,080 ft<sup>2</sup> 2 3

**FOR RENT**

**Large 3 Bedroom- Hellene Gardens**  
 \$21,800/mth 2,530 ft<sup>2</sup> 3 2 2

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

**Apartment in the Historical Centre**  
 HK\$3,900,000 840 ft<sup>2</sup> 2 1

**PROPERTY LIST**

- [Macau] Seaview Garden 3 2 2  
 1,420 ft<sup>2</sup> \$10,900,000 (ref: 20016004)
- [Taipa] Manhattan 3 2 2  
 1,720 ft<sup>2</sup> \$12,980,000 (ref: 19096006)
- [Taipa] Houston Court 1 1 1  
 980 ft<sup>2</sup> \$10,500/mth (ref: 20091001)
- [Taipa] One Central balcony 3 4 4  
 2,332 ft<sup>2</sup> \$29,800/mth (ref: 20101001)

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## CHINA'S GEELY, BAIDU ANNOUNCE ELECTRIC CAR VENTURES

**C**HINESE automaker Geely says it will form an electric car venture with tech giant Baidu, adding to a flurry of corporate tie-ups in the industry to share soaring technology development costs.

Geely Holding Group, which also has separate electric car brands, said Monday the venture with Baidu.com Inc. would focus on intelligent and connected vehicles. It gave no details of investment or when products might be released.

Global and Chinese automakers have launched

partnerships to share the multibillion-dollar costs of developing electric vehicles for China under government pressure to meet sales quotas.

China is the world's biggest market for the technology, accounting for about half of global sales. The ruling Communist Party spent billions of dollars on subsidies in an attempt to take an early lead in the industry. It is shifting the burden to manufacturers by requiring them to earn credits from selling electric vehicles or face penalties

that have yet to be announced.

Privately held Geely, best known abroad as the owner of Sweden's Volvo Cars, is one of China's biggest independent automakers. Its brands include Geely, Lynk & Co., Geometry and Polestar, all of which sell electric vehicles. Geely is the biggest shareholder in Malaysia's Proton and Britain's Lotus.

Baidu operates China's most popular internet search engine. It is regarded as one of the world's leading developers of automated driving technology. AP

## BITCOIN'S BIGGEST PLUNGE SINCE MARCH SHAKES FAITH IN CRYPTO BOOM

ERIC LAM

**A** steep selloff in Bitcoin is fueling concern that the cryptocurrency bubble may be about to burst.

Bitcoin slid as much as 21% over Sunday and Monday in the biggest two-day slide since March. While the digital token recovered some of the losses during the European session, it was still down for the day.

"It's to be determined whether this is the start of a larger correction, but we have now seen this parabola break so it might just be," said Vijay Ayyar, head of business development with crypto exchange Luno in Singapore.

Bitcoin has more than quadrupled in the past year, evoking memories of the 2017 mania that first made cryptocurrencies a household name before prices collapsed

just as quickly. Prices almost reached USD42,000 on Jan. 8 with retail traders and Wall Street investors clamoring for a piece of the action.

Bitcoin slid 6.2% to \$35,555.59 as of 10:37 a.m. in London.

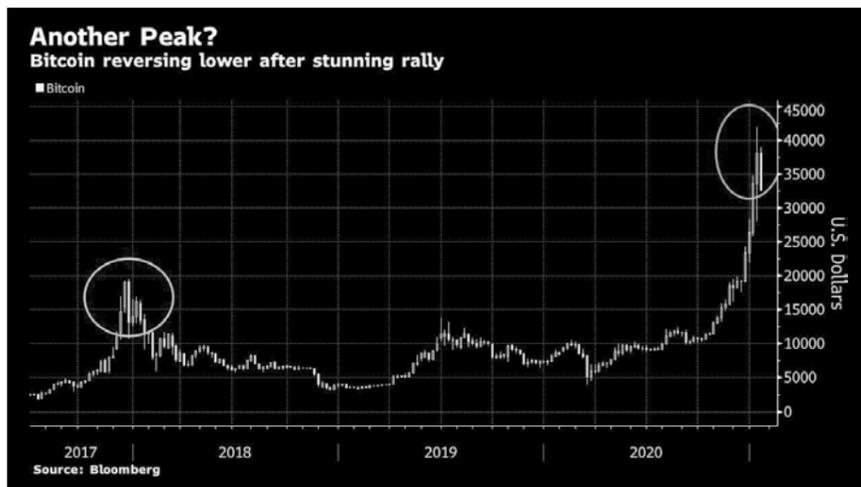
"Time to take some money off the table," Scott Miner, chief investment officer with Guggenheim Investments, said in a tweet from his verified Twitter account. "Bitcoin's parabolic rise is unsustainable in the near term." In late December, Miner predicted Bitcoin could eventually reach \$400,000.

True believers in Bitcoin argue the rally this time is different from past boom-bust cycles because the asset has matured with the entry of institutional investors and is increasingly seen as a legitimate hedge against dollar weakness and inflation risk. Others worry that

the rally is untethered from reason and fueled by vast swathes of fiscal and monetary stimulus, with Bitcoin unlikely to ever serve as a viable currency alternative.

With so many investors wanting to get rich on Bitcoin, the asset is drawing the attention of regulators. On Monday, the U.K.'s financial watchdog issued a stark warning for consumers looking to profit from crypto: be ready to lose everything.

"Investing in cryptoassets, or investments and lending linked to them, generally involves taking very high risks with investors' money," the Financial Conduct Authority said in a statement. The FCA's concerns include price volatility, the complexity of products offered and the lack of consumer protection regulation around many of the products.



## CORPORATE BITS

### GEG awards contractors with best occupational safety, health performance



Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) Project Development recently organized the "Best Safety Award 2020" presentation ceremony to recognize the outstanding occupational safety and health (OSH) performance of the

supervisors, contractors and subcontractors of its new development sites in Cotai. Attended by representatives from GEG's contractors and subcontractors, awards were presented to contractors with the best safety

record, contractors with the best housekeeping enhancement, contractors with the best safety enhancement program, subcontractors with the best safety, and supervisors with outstanding OSH.

As cited in a statement issued by the gaming operator, Simon Kwok, Senior Vice President of Project Development of GEG, said "Ensuring the safety of all construction site personnel is an important mission for the team and a top priority for GEG's development projects. We appreciate our stakeholders for their efforts and contributions, and hope that we can all continue to work together to establish a wholesome OSH culture."

### Sheraton Grand, The St. Regis to offer wedding packages in expo



Couples planning their wedding are invited to visit The 43rd Wedding, Banquet, Beauty & Jewellery Expo at The Venetian Macao, to take advantage of a range of wedding packages and new wedding concepts on offer at

Sheraton Grand Macao and The St. Regis Macao.

At the wedding expo running from January 15 to 17, couples can enjoy a 20% discount for wedding packages of 15 tables or more at Sheraton Grand Macao,

confirmed before January 31, as well as a range of extra benefits including room upgrades, free-flow beverages for two hours and complimentary eight-hour limousine service.

According to a statement released by the resort, booking 25 tables or more can enjoy additional 60-minute signature couples' spa treatment at Shine Spa for Sheraton.

The St. Regis Macao is offering a 20% discount for bookings of 15 tables or more, confirmed before January 31, together with extra privileges including Royal Albert afternoon tea for six persons and enjoy 80-minute signature couples' spa treatment at Iridium Spa.

FOOTBALL

# Spurs show no mercy to 8th-tier Marine, Crawley stuns Leeds

STEVE DOUGLAS

MARINE 0, TOTTENHAM 5

**T**HE biggest mismatch in the FA Cup's 150-year history delivered a predictably one-sided result as Tottenham showed no mercy to an eighth-tier opponent whose lineup featured a garbage collector and a factory worker.

It was left, then, to Crawley to provide the so-called "giant killing" long associated with the storied competition, with a British reality TV star helping the fourth-tier team complete a stunning 3-0 win over Leeds.

On a classic day in the world's oldest club knockout competition, Tottenham's stars entered the humble surroundings of Rossett Park — a cosy ground located alongside a row of townhouses, from which horn-blasting residents got a free view of the action — and came away with a 5-0 victory over Marine, a team of part-timers 161 places lower in English soccer's pyramid.

AP PHOTO



Tottenham's Carlos Vinicius scores passing Marine's goalkeeper Bayleigh Passant

A first-half hat trick from Carlos Vinicius, who was filling in as striker for Harry Kane, settled any early nerves among Tottenham's players who dressed for the game in a makeshift locker room that is usually a bar. For the locals watching the game from behind a wall or metal fencing — some with a glass of wine in their hands

— there was the treat of internationals like Gareth Bale and Sergio Reguilon coming on as second-half substitutes.

"I'm not English but I know what this means for everyone," Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho said, "so I brought a good team — not just for the result but also for the meaning of the cup."

So, the dream is over for Marine, though a match broadcast live in 40 territories worldwide will be a huge money-spinner and potential life-changer for a tiny club from England's northwest whose world has been turned upside down amid a pandemic that prevented any fans from attending the biggest game in its history.

For Crawley, however, the road to Wembley Stadium is still very much open, with the unlikely win over Leeds proving a fairy-tale moment for one of its late substitutes, in particular.

Summing up the "magic of the FA Cup" — a phrase often trotted out at the third-round stage of the competition when the country's top teams enter — was the sight of Mark Wright coming on for Crawley in the final minutes for his debut in professional soccer.

The 33-year-old Wright has taken part in reality TV shows "The Only Way Is Essex," "I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!" and "Strictly Come Dancing," and also hosted TV shows in the United States. But he has continued to pursue his dream of becoming a soccer player, and joined Crawley last month on a non-contract basis in a move that has been documented in a BBC program.

For some, Wright's late showing summed up a triumph of perseverance. For others, it simply capped a humiliating day for Leeds and its widely admired Argentine manager, Marcelo Bielsa, whose record in three seasons in the FA Cup reads: played three, lost three.

"He was very complimentary afterward," Crawley manager John Yems said of Bielsa, "but I suppose when you lose 3-0, you can't be anything but." **MDT/AP**

AD

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**OPINION**

**Our Desk**

Anthony Lam



**MCD READS MDT!**

In my previous Our Desk article, the lack of marketing by a particular chain restaurant for other types of meat products – other than the prime quality type of beef – was discussed.

Following the publication of the article – whether it be a coincidence or sign of effectiveness – the fast-food chain started hanging posters highlighting its chicken products, including chicken burgers, on street-facing windows of its outlets.

It has given me the sneaking – but flattering – feeling that the chain does read our paper! Phew!

To my disappointment, the promotion only went for two weeks or so before it was replaced again by another promotion for its beef products. I wasn't quite surprised because the chain has been placing abundant marketing weight on the promotion of its beef products.

As time went on, the chain started advertising its Lunar New Year celebratory products. Despite being originally from the United States, the fast-food chain has been a spectacular example of glocalization, even marching into classrooms as a lecture topic.

Anyway, the chain has “revived” its “Wealth and Bliss-inviting Burger”, which has been there for several consecutive Lunar New Year already. If my memory serves me well, the chain has previously offered the burger with different patties, including chicken, pork and beef.

This year, however, the chain decided to highlight the last type of meat only, dropping the former two. The decision is easily explicable because the sign for this Lunar Year is the Ox, and obviously the chain wants to highlight that.

My only comment is that I find it weird to extensively consume the type of meat in its lunar year.

Nonetheless, the chain has previously added other meat options in the middle of the Lunar New Year promotion. It piqued my curiosity as to whether it will administer the same tactic to generate greater public demand.

Contributing half of my article to meat may infuriate non-meat-eaters, or vegetarians. I must stress that I feel nothing negative about their dietary choice. I have even pressed restaurants extensively to offer wider vegetarian options whenever I have had the chance.

I still remember when I was at the press session of the opening of a fancy café, I questioned the owner about vegetarian offerings at the café. I did so, to the extent that not only did the owner think I was a vegetarian, they also confused healthy foods with vegetarian ones, despite the fact that the latter can also be greasy, fatty and heavy.

I was browsing a local vegetarian social media group the other day. Someone criticized a five-star hotel for making expensive vegetarian set menus. Set aside the fact that they were not welcoming the hotel's effort to promote vegetarian fine dining, it just sounded to me like they were criticizing Alain Ducasse or Robuchon restaurants for charging MOP2,000 per person for a dinner.

Let's not forget the fact that the menu they were commenting on has 10 courses in total, with the result that each dish averages out to cost less than MOP100.

Some other questions lingered in my mind: is truffle vegetarian? Is Matsutake Mushroom? Is 30-year-old preserved tangerine peels? What about ginseng? And aged Pu-er tea?

I simply want to point out that vegetarian dining – just because the ingredients are vegetables – need not be inexpensive by its nature alone.

What is also important is that I'm not saying that vegetarian dining has to be expensive. Rather, it must be emphasized that there should be different styles of vegetarian dining experiences to cater to various occasions and populations.

Some people fancy fine-dining for special celebrations, while others prefer down-to-earth eateries.

Israel yesterday advanced plans to build 800 new settler homes in the occupied West Bank, a move that could strain ties with the incoming administration of President-elect Joe Biden.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced the move, saying it would include 100 homes in a settlement where an Israeli woman was killed last month in an attack allegedly carried out by a Palestinian assailant.

The announcement will burnish Netanyahu's right-wing credentials in a tough campaign ahead of March elections, but it could anger Biden, who is opposed to settlement expansion

and has clashed with Israel over it in the past.

Israel captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem in the 1967 war, territories the Palestinians want for their future state. Nearly 500,000 Israelis live in settlements scattered across the West Bank. The Palestinians view settlements as a violation of international law and an obstacle to peace, a position with wide international support.

The Palestinian Authority's Foreign Ministry condemned the latest announcement, accusing Israel of “racing against time” to build settlements before President Donald Trump leaves office.

**HONG KONG'S NEW  
 TOP JUDGE URGES  
 IMPARTIALITY IN COURTS**

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

HONG Kong's new top judge warned yesterday that the semiautonomous Chinese territory's courts need to show they are impartial amid a flurry of politically charged cases or risk losing public trust.

Hong Kong has been in a state of political crisis after months of antigovernment protests in 2019 led to Beijing imposing a national security law on the city to quash dissent. Pro-democracy supporters have decried the security legislation as authorities suppressing the freedoms Hong Kong was promised when it was handed over from British control in 1997.

Last week, 55 pro-democracy activists were arrested in a sweeping police operation, and prominent pro-democracy activists such as Joshua Wong, Agnes Chow and outspoken media tycoon Jimmy Lai are currently in jail for their activism.

Hong Kong Chief Justice Andrew Cheung, who was sworn in yesterday, said that judges in the city's courts must be careful with the appearance of impartiality in terms of what they say in court or what they write in



New Hong Kong's Chief Justice, Andrew Cheung

their judgments, especially in cases with a political nature.

“Any lapses in this regard, given the potentially polarizing nature of these cases, could lead to suspicion of partiality, which is not conducive to maintaining public confidence in our judicial system,” Cheung said in his first speech delivered as chief justice.

He said that it is equally crucial to the public and business community that there is confidence in the judicial system. Cheung also said that it is important to the international reputation of Hong Kong that the city is governed by the rule of law under the so-called “one country, two systems” framework that allows Hong Kong freedoms not found in

mainland China.

Cheung also condemned threats of violence and doxxing attacks on judges, describing them as futile and reprehensible.

“Comments and criticisms, sometimes extreme and harsh ones, are unavoidable. Whilst the freedom of speech of everyone in society must be fully respected, there must not be any attempt to exert improper pressure on the judges in the discharge of their judicial functions,” he said.

Cheung said that while there is a system in place to ensure the accountability of judges in Hong Kong, “there is room for further enhancement of the transparency and accountability” of the complaint-handling mechanism. AP

**GERMANY**

**MERKEL SAYS TRUMP'S TWITTER  
 EVICTION 'PROBLEMATIC'**

GERMAN Chancellor Angela Merkel considers U.S. President Donald Trump's eviction from Twitter by the company “problematic,” her spokesman said yesterday.

Twitter permanently suspended Trump from the microblogging platform on Friday, citing a “risk of further incitement of violence” in the wake of the storming of the U.S. Capitol by supporters of the outgoing president.

Asked about Twitter's decision, Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert, said the operators of social media plat-

forms “bear great responsibility for political communication not being poisoned by hatred, by lies and by incitement to violence.”

He said it's right not to “stand back” when such content is posted, for example by flagging it.

But Seibert also said that the freedom of opinion is a fundamental right of “elementary significance.”

“This fundamental right can be intervened in, but according to the law and within the framework defined by legislators — not according to a decision by the ma-

agement of social media platforms,” he told reporters in Berlin. “Seen from this angle, the chancellor considers it problematic that the accounts of the U.S. president have now been permanently blocked.”

Facebook on Thursday suspended Trump's account through Jan. 20, the day of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, and possibly indefinitely.

Merkel herself does not have a Twitter account, although Seibert does and many German government ministers do. AP



**Pakistan** Despite a steady rise in coronavirus cases, a five-day vaccination campaign against polio was launched yesterday amid tight security, hoping to eradicate the crippling children's disease this year. The previous campaign took place last August — during a brief decline in fatalities and infections from the coronavirus.



**Kazakhstan** Dozens of people protesting the opposition-free election were detained in the country's capital and in its principal city, but were released after several hours. Five parties are competing for seats in the lower house of parliament, but all are loyal to the government. The country's only registered opposition party declined to field candidates.

**Russian** President Vladimir Putin yesterday hosted his counterparts from Armenia and Azerbaijan, their first meeting since a Russia-brokered truce ended six weeks of fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh. Putin said that the peace agreement has been successfully implemented, laying the foundation for a fair settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He noted that further moves to restore traffic links in the region after the decades-long conflict would now be discussed.



**Vatican** Pope Francis has changed church law to explicitly allow women to do more things during Mass, while reaffirming they cannot be priests. Francis amended the law to formalize what is common practice in many parts of the world: that women can read the Gospel and serve on the altar as eucharistic ministers. Previously, such roles were officially reserved to men even though exceptions were made.