

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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26 Jan 2021

“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

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PHOTOSHOP: THE FACES AND TITLES OF INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES DECORATED BY THE MSAR GOVERNMENT FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SOCIETY IN 2020 P6-7

MALL MANAGERS CALL FOR GOV'T TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO OLD COMPLEXES P3

A TOTAL OF 177,663 NON-RESIDENT WORKERS WERE REGISTERED IN MACAU IN DECEMBER, DOWN 9.6% YEAR-ON-YEAR P2

BLUECARDS INCLUDED

TNRs included in waived Covid-19 vaccines P5

AP PHOTO



Vietnam Almost 1,600 leading members of the ruling Communist Party meet this week to approve future policy and help select the nation's top leaders amid talk whether the current party chief will stay. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, 76, defied conventional wisdom by winning a second term in 2016 against a favored opponent. Trong has made his name by presiding over economic growth and waging a popular war on corruption.

XINHUA



Chinese rescuers have found the bodies of nine workers in a mine explosion, raising the death toll to 10, officials said yesterday. Eleven others were rescued a day earlier after being trapped underground for two weeks at the gold mine in Shandong province. One person was still missing. The cause of the accident at the mine, which was under construction, is under investigation.

AP PHOTO



Hong Kong's government yesterday morning ended an unprecedented lockdown after testing thousands of residents living in an area that had reported an increasing number of coronavirus cases, authorities said. The lockdown, which was implemented in the early hours of Saturday, covered 16 buildings in Kowloon's Yau Tsim Mong district, known as a working-class neighborhood with many subdivided apartment units.

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SECRETARY LEI PLEDGES TO CRACK DOWN ILLICIT PROMOTION OF MAINLAND REAL ESTATE P3

AP PHOTO



CHINA PUSHES FRINGE THEORIES ON PANDEMIC ORIGINS, VIRUS P8

LAWMAKERS' AGENDA

LEI CHAN U WANTS LRT TO INCLUDE NAM VAN AND SAI VAN

Lawmaker Lei Chan U has urged the local government to reconsider sections of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) at Nam Van and Sai Van. In his interpellation to the government, Lei argued that the two lines will only require the construction of a few bridges and that the remainder of the sections would be tunnels under lakes. Lei believes that the aforementioned design will be able to minimize the sections' negative impact upon or damage to the environment and world heritage.

LEONG SUN IOK ASKS ABOUT GAMING INDUSTRY PROSPECTS

Lawmaker Leong Sun Iok has questioned the government regarding the future of the gaming industry, and employment protection. In his interpellation to the government, Leong sought answers from the government regarding its policies and measures on reinforcing the gaming industry, protecting employment and creating more jobs for local residents. Leong hopes the aforementioned matters will be considered by the government before making decisions on the next gaming concession.

MAK SOI KUN COMPLAINS ABOUT PROBLEMATIC PIPELINE SYSTEM

Lawmaker Mak Soi Kun has recommended that the local government take care of the problem of "tangled pipes". In his interpellation to the government, Mak pointed out a situation in which the installation of pipes and hoses in some buildings in Macau have been altered, resulting in safety issues, in addition to other problems. Mak wants the government to regulate the issue to prevent viruses from spreading through the pipes and hoses.



MACAU PHOTO AGENCY

FOREIGN WORKER TALLY ON A DOWNWARD SLOPE

HONEY TSANG

THERE were a total of 177,663 non-resident workers registered in Macau as of December 2020, down 9.6%, or 18,875 fewer year-on-year, according to the latest statistics released by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL).

The decline was mainly driven by the reduced number of non-resident workers from China. In December 2020, Macau was home to 112,214 mainland

blue card holders, 10,140 fewer than the figure of the same period in 2019, 122,354.

The single largest group, or 31%, of the current mainland workers in Macau, were engaging in businesses related to hotels, restaurants and similar activities in December last year, followed by 23% in construction-related endeavors and another 17% in wholesale and retail trade.

Non-resident workers from the Philippines and Vietnam

also fell significantly, by 2,553 and 2,313, respectively, to 31,228 and 12,491, respectively, in December 2020.

Among all origins, blue card holders from Korea, Japan and Taiwan plunged by 49.2%, 35.9% and 33.7%, year-on-year, respectively, in December 2020, representing the sharpest decline in terms of the percentage change.

According to the latest figures provided by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), the

unemployment rate of local residents was 4.0% from September to November 2020, down by 0.1 percentage points, compared to the previous period from August to October 2020.

To safeguard the job entitlements of locals, the DSAL last week pledged to explore job opportunities offered by Macau's large enterprises and require the companies to prioritize hiring locals if they are deemed fit for the specific position.

The bureau also promised to bar foreign workers from applying for certain positions, in a bid to help locals secure employment.

Earlier, the DSAL also rolled out a training program and job-matching platforms — established to cultivate local young talent within the construction and engineering industry — to further meet the growing demand for these positions. The move is to align with a series of the city's urban development projects planned under the Urban Master Plan 2020-2040.

DSAL's latest figures revealed that around 15%, or 26,984, of all foreign workers engaged in construction works in December 2020. It was the second-biggest industry, just after domestic work, in terms of the total number of employed foreign workers.

Last year, Macau's Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said in the media briefing following the release of his Policy Address for 2021 that the government is pleased to set the system for the withdrawal of non-resident workers in motion — on short notice — for whichever industry locals are inclined to engage with.

Taiwanese returning home from Macau passes away during quarantine

A Taiwanese man who had returned home to Taiwan from Macau passed away during his quarantine-upon-arrival period, according to a report by Taiwan's Central News Agency.

Taiwan authorities have preliminarily ruled out the possibility of homicide.

The 50-year-old man returned to Taiwan from Macau on January 15. According to the Covid-19 measures in place, he was required to undergo mandatory quarantine at one of the designated hotels in Tainan, the city of his habitual residence. It is the first death during quarantine recorded in

the city.

The hotel in which he underwent quarantine is located in the city's Annan District.

Citing information from the authorities, the report pointed out that the man had a history of diabetes. Before starting his trip back home from Macau, he tested negative to Co-

vid-19 after undergoing the SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test.

He reported no symptoms upon arrival in Taiwan.

At 1:25 p.m. during a routine follow-up operation on Sunday, the man disclosed to a health staff that he was experiencing swelling in his lower limbs. La-

ter, when the hotel staff attempted to contact the man, no response was received. At 10 p.m. on Sunday, authorities unlocked the hotel room door and found the man dead.

A post-mortem investigation will be conducted to identify the cause of death, according to the report. **AL**

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Times

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Gov't plans to crack down illicit real estate advertisement

JULIE ZHU

THE Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong has recently met with Zhuhai authorities to discuss plans regarding the crackdown on illicit mainland real estate advertisements.

According to a statement released by the Macao Economic Bu-

reau (DSE) yesterday, Lei met with high-ranking officials, including Zhuhai's Deputy Party Committee Secretary Liu Jiawen, in the neighboring region.

The two sides discussed the protection of Macau residents' rights in investing in mainland real estate projects.

According to the bureau, individuals, more specifically Macau

residents, can check the "five certificates" status of a Zhuhai real estate project through Zhuhai's real estate transaction commodity platform. The "five certificates" consist of five kinds of Mainland government approvals pertaining to a mainland housing project. The Macau government provides the link on the Macao Consumer Council's website.

Officials from Zhuhai have pledged to step up "training" and "publicity of law" towards Zhuhai's advertisement agencies, real estate companies and real estate agencies.

The discussion between the local government and the Zhuhai government is most likely the result of a series of recent complaints raised by some local residents,

who claimed that they sustained financial losses after having invested in Guangdong real estate projects.

In the most recent alleged incident, a group of local residents said that they had invested in a housing project in Zhuhai. However, the construction process has been suspended as the developer lacks enough capital.

The Macau government does not have jurisdiction over a case outside of the city. Over the course of the past few years, DSE has been tackling illicit real estate advertisements in Macau.

As of January 18, and since the beginning of 2020, DSE opened 119 supervision files for housing advertisement cases, having issued penalties in relation to nine cases, all involving mainland projects.

Late last year, a group of local residents asked the SAR government for help after they encountered problems while purchasing properties in parts of mainland China, particularly in Zhuhai.

The petitioners had reportedly purchased properties from several different real estate projects in Zhuhai. Before they purchased the properties, the developer said that the project had been approved and could be used for commercial and residential purposes. However, after they had made the purchase, they realized that the properties could only be used as offices, and not as houses.

This case was supported by lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho.

MALL MANAGERS CALL FOR GOV'T TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO OLD COMPLEXES

HONEY TSANG

THE management of some local malls are advising the SAR government to launch supportive measures to help shopping complexes in Macau speed up their revitalization projects and thrive once again.

The Capitol Theatre, a retail and theatric complex renovated and repurposed from a historical theatre established in the 1930s on Rua de Pedro Nolasco da Silva, is one of the archetypes of mall revitalization.

After a one-year effort of refurbishment and modernization, the mall reopened its doors to customers in 2020. However, the tenants have reported a low customer visitation rate to the mall, which some vendors have ascribed to the impact of Covid-19.

Kuan Vai Lam, the chairman of the board of the company which owns most of the shares of Capitol Theatre, told TDM earlier that the mall's occupancy rate currently stands at 80%,



with 30% of occupants not operating on a regular basis.

To attract more customers, the mall is set to engage in novel partnerships with cultural and creative communities. Yet, Kuan is pinning hope on new measures introduced by the government to facilitate the redevelopment undertakings of local malls.

Meanwhile, the Centro Comercial Camoes on Av. do Alm. Lacerda is an abandoned

building-turned-shopping center which reopened last year.

Kot Man Kam, the chairman of the shopping center, told TDM that it is difficult for the mall to feature cultural and entertainment elements due to its limited communal space. He also urges the government to launch some sort of stimulus and low-interest loan schemes to aid the process of mall revitalization.

JOHN MO SENTENCED TO SIX YEARS FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT

HONEY TSANG

JOHAN Mo, the former dean of the Law Faculty of the University of Macau (UM), has been found guilty of sexually assaulting a mainland female student in 2018, and has been sentenced by the Court of Second Instance to six years imprisonment.

Mo will also be required to pay MOP100,000 to the victim, a university student currently enrolled in another university, as compensation for the mental damage he caused to her.

The Court of Second Instance ruled that Mo sexually assaulted the victim, who had lost consciousness and was thus unable to resist Mo's actions at the time.

Although Mo, the defendant, had not been charged for this particular crime, the court said



it had the right to alter the term of the charge, as this violation, with a lower degree of penalty, was in line with the legal interests of the previous charge against Mo, being the rape charge.

In February 2019, the Court of First Instance acquitted Mo of the rape charge in the case. This prompted the Public Prosecutions Office, which disagreed

with the verdict, to appeal to the Court of Second Instance.

The other two suspects, who were also present during the incident, were convicted of not intervening to save the victim. The second suspect was sentenced to five months in prison and three years' probation, while the third was sentenced to a 30-day fine.

FIRE SAFETY LAW

GOV'T BIDS TO RECONCILE POTENTIALLY OVERLAPPING CONTRACTS

JULIE ZHU

THE local government has purportedly decided to review a specific article of the recently approved fire safety law in order to reconcile potentially overlapping contracts, according to the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL).

Yesterday, the Second Standing Committee of the AL had the third meeting to discuss the fire safety law, which lawmakers approved in November last year.

The AL Second Standing Committee's discussion focused on five articles, in particular from the 27th to the 31st, which mostly concern responsibilities for fire system technology problems, as well as conflicts of interest and transparency concerning fire services contracts.

According to the law, a contractor responsible for drafting a fire safety plan, for providing the concerned fire system installation service, or for supervising the concerned project before the government issues an approval of utility to the building, is banned from



participating in the inspection, testing and other maintenance of the same building after the utility approval is issued.

However, another prescription explicitly requires the planning, installing or supervising contractor (first contractor) to be held responsible for technical problems incurred within two years.

The government aims to en-

sure transparency by prescribing the aforementioned article, but some members of the AL Second Standing Committee have raised questions anticipating potential prolonged lawsuits led by this specific regulation.

Summarizing the lawmakers' questions, Chairman of the AL's Second Standing Committee Chan Chak Mo pointed out that

the two articles could create a scenario in which the first contractor is still bound to provide maintenance services in accordance with the contract, whereas there must be another contractor involved to provide a service.

In the scenario Chan pointed out, there may be two contracts covering the same subject matter simultaneously. Such a situation

could lead to multiple legal disputes.

The fire safety law is designed to give the government authority more power over fire safety issues.

The law also prescribes that personnel from the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) and the Fire Services Bureau (CB) are entitled to enter most buildings and breach a location without a warrant issued by a court, or without issuing an advance notification to the concerned parties.

However, there are some exceptions. DSSOPT and CB officers must be in possession of a warrant issued by a court, or must have the consent of the concerned parties before entering a residential building, a law firm or a medical clinic. The government is considering in these cases that law firms and medical clinics are in possession of important client records.

This specific explanation was not well comprehended by some lawmakers, who believe that other locations, including engineering companies, also hold important documents.

CRIME

MAN ACCUSED OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OVER ASSAULT UPON WIFE AND KIDS

RENATO MARQUES

A 45-year-old civil servant has been accused of domestic violence and bodily harm over disputes with his wife and children, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported yesterday during the regular joint police forces press conference.

An incident on January 17 prompted the victim to file the complaint. She told the PJ that this was not the first time such an incident had taken place and that it had occurred on more than one instance.

According to the woman, she had lost her temper and reprimanded her daughter for not focusing while she was helping her daughter with her studies. Upon hearing her scold her daughter, her husband

came into the room and pulled the woman out with force, causing her to fall on the ground and fall hard against a cabinet.

The woman also added that her husband punched her at least once.

The victim said that such episodes were common and that it was not only done to her but her children as well.

Explaining the case to the PJ, she said that the husband often disagreed as to the way she disciplined the children and the way in which they were educated, causing many conflicts between them.

The woman was accompanied by her children as she filed the complaint. Her 10-year-old son, the oldest child, also told the PJ that the father often hit him because of disobe-

dience and bad grades at school.

At the time of the complaint, the woman presented injuries on her arm and fingers, while the boy also had marks on his face, which they claimed were due to violence from the father.

When questioned by the PJ, the man admitted to having pulled his wife out of the room on that day, but refused the claims of having hit her or caused her or the children any injuries.

The PJ spokesperson said that the PJ believes that there is enough evidence against the man and that they have forwarded the case to the Public Prosecutions Office on January 22, after which time the man was charged over the two crimes of domestic violence and bodily harm.

CRIME

BUILDING GATEKEEPER ACCUSED OF SEXUALLY ASSAULTING TWO FEMALES, ONE UNDERAGE

RENATO MARQUES

A 52-year-old non-resident worker from the mainland, who works as a gatekeeper and janitor in a public housing building in Macau, has been accused of sexually assaulting two women in the street. One of the victims is an underage high school student, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) revealed yesterday during the regular joint press conference of the police forces.

The cases occurred last Friday in just a few minutes apart, the PSP said citing the reports from the victims.

The first case occurred around 7:40 p.m. at Rua dos Currais, in the Northern district, when a teenager told her mother that some moments before, a man who had passed by them had indecently assaulted her. The girl said she was scared and did not inform her mother immediately so the man got away from her before she told her mother of the incident.



The second case was reported later by a woman in her 20s. She said that while walking at the Rua Marginal do Canal das Hortas, the same man also indecently assaulted her. She said that she shouted at him and chased him for some time along the street but he managed to get away.

Nevertheless, she was able to provide a photo of the man, who was dressed in all black, which she took while chasing him.

Following the reports, the PSP managed to find the man later that evening at a leisure area in Ilha Verde.

When questioned by the police, the suspect claimed that he was just walking along the street and had non-intentionally touched someone, claiming that the incident occurred by misfortune.

He also added that he had run from one of the victims because she was chasing him saying that she would file a complaint to the police against him and that he feared that.

The case has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office where the man will be charged with breaching Article 164-A of the Macau penal code.

Covid-19 shots for blue card holders, int'l students to be free of charge

ANTHONY LAM

THE government has decided that local residents, non-resident workers and non-resident students will receive their shots free-of-charge, Dr Alvis Lo of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center announced at yesterday's weekly press briefing.

Previously, the government only announced that Macau's citizens will be able to enjoy a free vaccination for Covid-19 if they request one, not mentioning whether the city's migrant workers and international students would be covered.

"Macau residents, non-resident workers and [international] students who are attending local schools [are covered]. This is our vaccination plan which, in addition to protecting individuals, can also create [herd] immunity," said Lo.

The government announced last week that it will arrange insurance for Covid-19 vaccine recipients, just in case they develop any side effects.

As the government has set the target of rolling out local Covid-19 vaccinations within the first quarter of this year, the authorities have provided more details regarding the scheme yesterday, although the date is still unconfirmed.

Previously, several senior officials, including Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, have stressed that according to laws, vaccination in Macau has to be voluntary.

Yesterday, Lo reiterated this stand when he was questioned whether vaccine recipients have the freedom to choose which type of vaccine to take.

"First, the vaccine recipients should be fully aware [of the activi-

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



ty, side effects, etc.) and volunteer to take the vaccine," Lo explained. "Second, the three types of vaccine are for recipients to choose, provided that they are available."

With three different types of vaccines available at the best-case scenario and each vaccination requiring two shots, Lo was asked whether the vaccines are interchangeable between shots. The medical doctor answered emphatically in the negative.

As for follow-ups on recipients, according to Lo, this is not restricted to Covid-19 vaccines, as there is a side effect monitoring system in Macau to ensure the safety of all vaccine recipients.

"But judging from the population being vaccinated so far, the safety of the vaccines should not be a big problem," Lo explained.

On a later date, the government will launch a website for interested individuals to book their vaccination time. Leong Iek Hou, coordinator of the Center, revealed that all recipients will undergo medical assessment and must sign a declaration of acknowledgement prior to

taking their shots.

All three types of vaccine have age floors and ceilings. Leong said that, for the time being, individuals not within the age range will not be able to receive shots.

She also reiterated that getting the vaccines does not equate to the suspension on mask wearing and nucleic acid tests for border crossing. Individuals may need to receive reactivation shots regularly to retain antibody levels.

None of the vaccines has arrived in Macau yet, the center disclosed.

DELEGATES TO NPC, CPPCC VACCINATED IN ZHUHAI

Public broadcaster Radio Macau reported yesterday that Macau representatives of the National People's Congress (NPC) and members of the Chinese People Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) have taken their first shot recently in Zhuhai, under the arrangement of the central government's Liaison Office.

The vaccine shots were administered in Zhuhai in light of the upcoming key events in Beijing's

political calendar in Beijing in March.

Lawmaker Vong Hin Fai told the media outlet that the majority of them went to a hospital in Zhuhai to take the first jab, while the second dose will be given beginning of next month.

The delegates have received the Chinese-made vaccine, Sinopharm.

SHERATON BLACKS OUT 14 DAYS FOR QUARANTINE BOOKINGS

One of the two self-selected quarantine hotels, the Sheraton Grand Macao, is applying a black-out period on its quarantine hotel mission between February 6 and 19. It has hence suspended taking new quarantine bookings as of January 16, according to a Macao Government Tourism Office official at the press briefing.

The resort at which the hotel is located, the Londoner Macao, is set to officially open on February 8. Although the tourism official did not disclose the reason behind the hotel's decision, it is believed to be connected to the slated opening.

AMENDMENTS TO FDCT REGULATIONS TO TAKE EFFECT ON FEB. 1

The Executive Council has completed its discussion over the amendments to the Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT), which is set to take effect on February 1. The amendments include appointing Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong as the chairman of the Fund and the Board of Trustees; increasing measures to promote the city's development of scientific and technological innovation, and restructuring the advisory committee. The changes are intended to generate better synergy between the Fund and the forthcoming restructured economic bureau to foster technological advancement.

AL SEMI-AUTOMATED PARKING GARAGE NOT FOR PUBLIC

The semi-automated parking garage built underneath the Praça da Assembleia Legislativa will not be available for the general public, according to reports. The construction of the parking garage is expected to conclude in the first quarter of this year. By the time it finishes, the garage will provide a total of 199 parking spaces for light-duty vehicles, 168 of which will be automated parking spaces, and 50 spaces for motorbikes.

Latest local Covid-19 patient not down with mutated virus strains

ANTHONY LAM

DNA analysis has shown that Macau's latest Covid-19 patient, who was detected in Macau last Thursday, is not carrying any type of mutant SARS-CoV-2 strains, Dr Alvis Lo of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center announced at yesterday's weekly press briefing.

The patient, a 43-year-old local woman who has returned from Dubai with

stopovers in Singapore and Tokyo, alighted from her final leg of flights at the Macau International Airport, where her nasopharyngeal samples were taken for two separate Covid-19 tests, namely a rapid test and a regular one.

Her rapid test result showed that she had contracted the virus. She showed no symptoms or discomfort upon arrival in the city. She is now hospitalized in the isolation ward of the government

hospital in a stable clinical condition.

Meanwhile, Lo disclosed that the patient is showing no pneumonia.

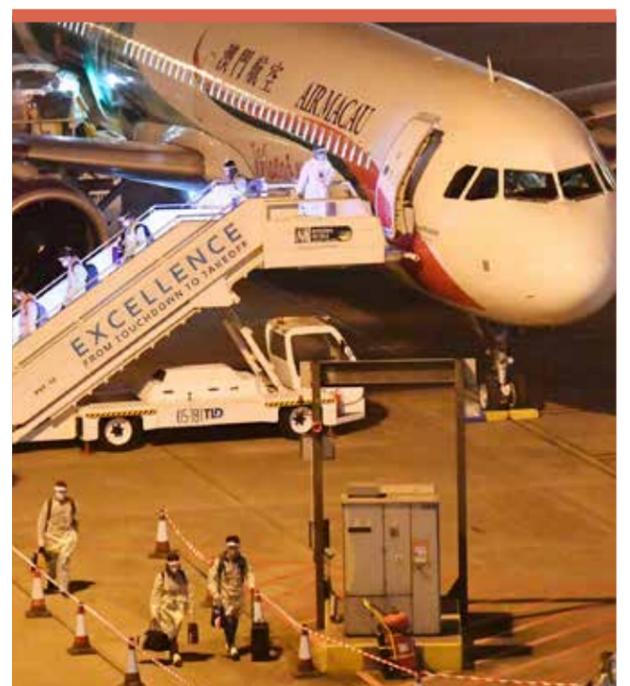
Furthermore, the health authorities have also conducted antibody tests on the patient, which yielded a negative result for the IgM antibody and positive for the IgG antibody.

The former type of antibody exists at an early stage of SARS-CoV-2 contraction, while the latter at a later stage. The patient's

result hence showed that the contraction took place some time ago.

"Our analysis is that the contraction is at least three weeks old," Lo concluded.

The 26th round of the Centralized Mask Supply will start tomorrow. Each resident or non-resident worker is entitled to 30 masks at the price of MOP24 with their ID. Children aged between 3 and 8 years can get 30 adult masks, 30 children masks or 15 of each.

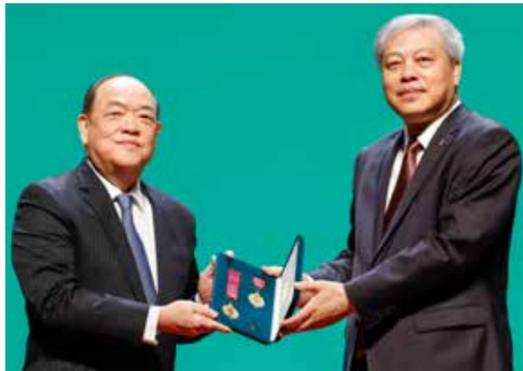


DECORATIONS 2020

CE honors outstanding individuals



Medal of Merit – Professions - Health Bureau (Chang Weng Wa)



Medal of Merit – Industry and Commerce - The Macau Chinese Enterprises Association (Fu Jianguo)



Medal of Merit – Industry and Commerce - The United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macau (Chan Chak Mo)



Medal of Merit – Tourism - Association of Macau Tourist Agents (Luo Qun)



Medal of Merit – Tourism - Macau Travel Agency Association (Lao Nga Wong)



Medal of Merit – Tourism - Travel Industry Council of Macau (Wu Keng Kuong)



Medal of Bravery - Centre for Disease Control and Prevention of the Health Bureau (Lei Pui I)



Medal of Bravery - Department of Respiratory Medicine of Conde S. Januário Hospital of the Health Bureau - (Cheong Tak Hong)



Medal of Bravery - Tourism Crisis Management Office (José Daniel Caldeira David)



Medal of Bravery - Department of the Macau Special Administrative Region



Decoration of Honour - Grand Lotus - Zhong Nanshan



Decoration of Honour – Golden Lotus - Chinese Educators' Association of Macau



Decoration of Honour – Golden Lotus - Lau Si Io



Medal of Merit – Culture - Seng Kwong Bookshop Limited (Ieong Tou Ian)



Medal of Merit – Culture - Ng Wai Kin



Medal for Dedication – Department of Environmental Hygiene and Licensing of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (Fong Vai Seng)



Medal of Merit – Culture - Kuan Kun Cheong



Medal of Merit – Philanthropy - Lei Chin Ion



Medal for Dedication – Department of Food and Environmental Hygiene of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (Cheong Kuang)

Individuals, entities in awards



Checkpoint Surveillance
Customs Service of the
Administrative Region of the
People's Republic of China (Ian Chan U)



Medal of Bravery - Infectious Disease
Response Ambulance Team of the Fire Services
Bureau (Cheong Hou In)



Medal of Bravery - Immigration Department
of the Public Security Police Force (Ngai
Soi Pan)



Medal of Bravery - Intelligence and Support
Department of the Judiciary Police (Sam
Kam Weng)



Honoric Title - Merit - The team to Africa for anti-
pandemic support work (leong Pui I)



Decoration of Honour - Grand Lotus - Fernando Chui Sai On



Decoration of Honour - Silver Lotus - Bank of China Limited
Macau Branch (Li Guang)



Honoric Title - Merit - The team to assist homecoming of
Macau residents stranded in Hubei Province via a chartered
flight (Leong Mei Choi)



Decoration of Honour - Silver Lotus - Viriato Manuel Pinheiro de
Lima (Álvaro António Mangas Abreu Dantas)



Honoric Title - Merit - The team to assist homecoming of
Macau residents stranded on cruise ship Diamond Princess
in Japan (leong Chon Kit)



Decoration of Honour - Golden Lotus - Leong Vai Tac



Decoration of Honour - Golden Lotus - Ma Io Kun



Environmental
Affairs Bureau



Medal for Dedication - Fong Hou In



Medal for Community Service - Lam Chong



Safety of the
People (Lai Tat)



Medal for Community Service - Lo Iek Long



Medal for Community Service - Leong Iek Hou



Macau Daily Times presents today on these pages, as a tradition, the faces of those that have been distinguished by the MSAR government for their deeds in 2020. The Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, last Friday presented awards to 34 individuals and organisations, in recognition of either their achievement, outstanding contribution, or distinguished service on behalf of Macau. The 2020 Decorations, Medals and Certificates of Merit Awards Ceremony of the MSAR was held at the Macau Cultural Centre. The list was based on recommendations from the Committee of Nomination of Medals and Honorary Titles. The awards for Decorations of Honour include the Decoration of Honour - Grand Lotus; the Decoration of Honour - Golden Lotus; and the Decoration of Honour - Silver Lotus. Such

awards are for individuals or entities that have made outstanding contributions to the image and reputation of the region. Seven types of Medal of Merit were awarded covering: Professions; Industry and Commerce; Tourism; Education; Culture; Philanthropy; and Sports. Each of the awards in these categories was for individuals or entities that have made major or excellent contributions in their respective fields. Meanwhile, Medals for Distinguished Service were awarded to public entities, organisations or their staff for outstanding performance in their duties or community service. Certificates of Merit, including the Honoric Title - Prestige and the Honoric Title - Merit, commend Macau residents or others who have made a major contribution to the reputation, development or social progress of the city.



Workers in protective overalls walk past the Hankou railway station on the eve of its resuming outbound traffic in Wuhan, last April

Gov't pushes fringe theories on pandemic origins, virus

HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

CHINESE state media have played up questions about Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine and whether it could be lethal to the very old. A government spokesperson suggests the coronavirus could have emerged from a U.S. military lab.

As the ruling Communist Party faces growing questioning about China's vaccines and renewed criticism of its early COVID response, it is hitting back by encouraging fringe theories that some experts say could cause harm.

State media and officials are sowing doubts about Western vaccines and the origin of the coronavirus in an apparent bid to deflect the attacks. Both issues are in the spotlight because of the ongoing rollout of vaccines globally and the recent arrival of a WHO team in Wuhan, China, to investigate the origins of the virus.

While fringe theories may raise eyebrows overseas, the efforts also target a more receptive domestic audience. The social media hashtag "American's Ft. Detrick," started by the Communist Youth League, was viewed at least 1.4 billion times last week after a Foreign Ministry spokesperson called for a WHO in-

vestigation of the biological weapons lab in Maryland.

"It's purpose is to shift the blame from mishandling by (the) Chinese government in the pandemic's early days to conspiracy by the U.S.," said Fang Shimin, a now-U.S.-based writer known for exposing faked degrees and other fraud in Chinese science. "The tactic is quite successful because of widespread anti-American sentiment in China."

Yuan Zeng, an expert on Chinese media at the University of Leeds in Great Britain, said the government's stories spread so widely that even well-educated Chinese friends have asked her whether they might be true.

Inflaming doubts and spreading conspiracy theories might add to public health risks as governments try to dispel unease about vaccines, she said, saying: "That is super, super dangerous."

In the latest volley, state media called for an investigation into the deaths of 23 elderly people in Norway after they received the Pfizer vaccine. An anchor at CGTN, the English-language station of state broadcaster CCTV, and the Global Times newspaper accused Western media of ignoring the news.

Health experts say deaths unrelated to the vaccine

are possible during mass vaccination campaigns, and a WHO panel has concluded that the vaccine did not play a "contributory role" in the Norway deaths.

The state media coverage followed a report by researchers in Brazil who found the effectiveness of a Chinese vaccine lower than previously announced. Researchers initially said SinoVac's vaccine is 78% effective, but the scientists revised that to 50.4% after including mildly symptomatic cases.

After the Brazil news, researchers at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a government-supported think tank, reported seeing an increase in Chinese media disinformation about vaccines.

Dozens of online articles on popular health and science blogs and elsewhere have explored questions about the effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccine at length, drawing on an op-ed published this month in the British Medical Journal that raised questions about its clinical trial data.

"It's very embarrassing" for the government, Fang said in an email. As a result, China is trying to raise doubts about the Pfizer vaccine to save face and promote its vaccines, he said.

Senior Chinese government officials have not

been shy in voicing concerns about the mRNA vaccines developed by Western drug companies. They use a newer technology than the more traditional approach of the Chinese vaccines currently in use.

In December, the director of the Chinese Centers for Disease Control, Gao Fu, said he can't rule out negative side effects from the mRNA vaccines. Noting this is the first time they are being given to healthy people, he said, "there are safety concerns."

The arrival of the WHO mission has brought back persistent criticism that China allowed the virus to spread globally by reacting too slowly in the beginning, even reprimanding doctors who tried to warn the public. The visiting researchers will begin field work this week after being released from a 14-day quarantine.

The Communist Party sees the WHO investigation as a political risk because it focuses attention on China's response, said Jacob Wallis, a senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

The party wants to "distract domestic and international audiences by pre-emptively distorting the narrative on where responsibility lies for the emergence of COVID-19," Wallis said.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying got the ball rolling last week by calling for the WHO investigation of the U.S. military lab. The site had been mentioned previously by CGTN and other state-controlled outlets.

"If America respects the truth, then please open up Ft. Detrick and make public more information about the 200 or more bio-labs outside of the U.S., and please allow the WHO expert group to go to the U.S. to investigate the origins," Hua said.

Her comments, publicized by state media, became one of the most popular topics on Sina Weibo.

China isn't the only government to point fingers. Former President Donald Trump, trying to deflect blame for his government's handling of the pandemic, said last year he had seen evidence the virus came from a Wuhan laboratory. While that theory has not been definitively ruled out, many experts think it is unlikely. **AP**

this day in history

1950 INDIA BECOMES A REPUBLIC



The independent republic of India is officially born today, after nearly 100 years of British rule.

A public holiday has been declared throughout the country, and millions of people have been celebrating with processions and ceremonies to hoist the new flag of India for the first time.

India has been running her own affairs since the actual transfer of power from British to Indian hands on 15 August 1947.

But today's ceremonies mark the cutting of her last ties to Britain. India's first president has been sworn in, replacing the King as the country's head of state, and the new constitution ratified.

In the capital, Delhi, the day began with the 34th and last Governor-General of India, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, reading out a proclamation announcing the birth of the Republic of India.

The new President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, then took the oath of office.

Dr Prasad was a key campaigner in the nationalist movement of Mahatma Gandhi, along with India's interim Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The president then addressed the crowd first in Hindi, and then in English.

"Today, for the first time in our long and chequered history," he said, "we find the whole of this vast land... brought together under the jurisdiction of one constitution and one union which takes over responsibility for the welfare of more than 320 million men and women who inhabit it."

Dr Prasad then drove through the streets in his state coach, greeted by thousands of people along the way.

The crowds were jubilant, but restrained - a marked change from the highly-charged atmosphere of August 15 1947, when the British finally left India.

Then, there were scenes of total chaos as the police struggled to control the crowd, and riots broke out across the city.

Over the next two years, hundreds of thousands died in the terrible violence that followed partition - the division of the British colony into two nations, the secular but Hindu-dominated India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Then in 1948 the man who steered India to independence, Mahatma Gandhi, was assassinated.

Today, the place where he was cremated on the banks of the River Jumna became a site of pilgrimage for thousands of people.

Dr Prasad visited the spot soon after daybreak and joined in paying homage to the memory of the man now known as "the father of the nation".

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Dr Rajendra Prasad served for 12 years as India's president, retiring in 1962. He died in February 1963.

Jawaharlal Nehru became India's first elected prime minister in the first general election in 1952.

He governed the country until his death in 1964, and remains a towering figure in India's early political history.

He broke new ground by following a non-aligned policy, steering a difficult course between the two main power blocs of the communist East and capitalist West during some of the most difficult years of the Cold War.

He dreamed of a socialist society, and created a vast public infrastructure.

He also ran a virtually closed economy, a policy which was strongly criticised in later years.

In the 1980s and 1990s, India began to open up to the outside world, encouraging economic reform and foreign investment.

CHINA TACKLES PANDEMIC WITH MASS CONSTRUCTION ONCE AGAIN

A sprawling quarantine center is more than 4,000 rooms is being thrown up in northern China in response to a COVID-19 outbreak in Shijiazhuang, a city of more than 10 million people in Hebei province.

Satellite images from the European Space Agency show dramatic changes over 10 days in an area where there had been only flat land before construction started on Jan. 13.

Rows of prefabricated houses can be seen. The official People's Daily newspaper said more than 600 rooms were ready by Jan. 19. Another 3,600 are to be added by the time of completion.

Construction workers and materials have been sent from all over the country to help build the center, state media reported. It's common practice for China to mobilize resources nationwide to tackle natural disasters and other crises.

Last year, two hospitals, Huoshenshan and Leishenshan, were built within days to treat COVID-19 patients in the city of



This combination of satellite images released by Copernicus shows a massive quarantine camp built in Shijiazhuang in Hebei province

Wuhan, where the coronavirus was first detected.

China has largely curbed the domestic spread of the virus, but is battling outbreaks this winter in its frigid north. The National Health Commission yesterday reported 145 new cases in the latest 24-hour period, including 11 in

Hubei province.

The quarantine center is designed to house people who have been in contact with COVID-19 patients. Each room, for one person only, is 18 square meters and comes with bedding, a desk, an air conditioner, a television and Wi-Fi, the China News Service reported. AP

COMAC

CHINA'S CHALLENGER TO BOEING, AIRBUS TO FINALLY BEGIN DELIVERIES

CHINA is finally reaching the finish line in its long-delayed attempt to build a jet capable of competing with narrowbody planes from Airbus SE and Boeing Co., according to the state-owned company in charge of the program.

Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China, or Comac, will deliver its first C919 single-aisle jet by the end of the year, Communist Party-backed newspaper Global Times reported Sunday, citing Comac general engineer Yang Zhigang.

The C919, comparable to the Airbus A320 and Boeing 737, had its first flight in 2017 but has yet to carry any commercial passengers. Representatives from Comac weren't immediately available to comment.

Even if the first C919 is delivered as promised, it will take many years before Comac becomes a serious threat to the Western aerospace

duopoly, according to Peter Harbison, chairman emeritus of Sydney-based CAPA - Centre for Aviation. The company won't have the sales volumes necessary to convince mainstream non-Chinese customers they should take a chance on a new aircraft, he said.

"Airlines don't want expensive orphans and the alternative is to buy an economically large number in order to get scale, still with uncertain spares and engineering support," Harbison said in an email.

Still, with President Xi Jinping's government eager to reduce China's reliance on Airbus and Boeing, Comac can afford to plan for the long term. That's why it's moving ahead on an even more ambitious project this year, with Yang saying it would begin manufacturing of the CR929, a twin-aisle jet it's developing with a Russian partner. MDT/BLOOMBERG

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AP PHOTO

FOOTBALL

Chelsea fires coach Frank Lampard halfway through second season



ROB HARRIS

FRANK Lampard was fired by Chelsea yesterday halfway through his second season in charge after being unable to replicate his success as the club's record scorer in his first Premier League managerial job.

Chelsea has lost five of its last eight Premier League games and dropped to ninth place, despite Lampard benefiting from nearly \$300 million spent on new players for this season.

Chelsea said the performances had "not met expectations" and left the team "without any clear path to sustained improvement" — making a change of managers necessary with former Paris Saint-Germain coach Thomas Tuchel set to be hired.

Reflecting Lampard's standing at the west London club, the firing after 18 months in the post was announced in a rare statement by owner Roman Abramovich.

"This was a very difficult decision for the club, not least because I have an excellent personal relationship with Frank and I have the utmost respect for him," owner Roman Abramovich said. "He is a man of great integrity and has the highest of work ethics. However, under current circumstances we believe it is best to change managers.

"On behalf of everyone at the club, the board and personally, I would like to thank Frank for his work as head coach and wish him every success in the future. He is an important icon of this great club and his status here remains undiminished. He will always be warmly welcomed back at Stamford Bridge."

Lampard leaves with the lowest points-per-game record of the dozen managers since Abramovich bought the club in 2003.

As the pressure has grown, the cracks were showing ahead of Sunday's FA Cup win over Luton, when Lampard hit out at perceived negative coverage of the team.

But his own shortcomings of a fledgling coaching career were being exposed and sentimentality counted for little despite being instrumental to the trophy-laden revival of the club as a player since the takeover by Abramovich.

Chelsea brought back its midfield great as coach in 2019 despite him having only a single season's experience in management in the second division with Derby.

He achieved Champions League qualification in his first season by securing a fourth-place finish in the Premier League. The rush to dismiss Lampard is indicative of the impatience shown by Abramovich, particularly

when the team is slipping away from the Champions League spots.

Getting the best out of expensive squad reinforcements proved beyond Lampard — particularly Germany forward Timo Werner, the headline signing of the summer transfer window spending spree. Since Nov. 14, the only goal he has scored in all competitions for Chelsea was a tap-in against fourth-division club Morecambe in the FA Cup and he missed a penalty against another lower-league side — Luton.

After securing one of the biggest jobs in English management so early in his coaching career, Lampard leaves Stamford Bridge without any success having lost the 2020 FA Cup final to Arsenal.

Lampard is a Chelsea great after scoring 211 goals from central midfield from 2001-14, during which he won every major honor at the club including three Premier League titles and the Champions League. He was associated with some of the best moments in the club's history and admired for his work ethic and making the most of his talent.

Next in the dugout at Stamford Bridge is set to be Tuchel, Sky's German sports channel first reported.

It would be a swift return to coaching for the German less than a month after being fired by PSG following a power struggle

with the Qatari ownership.

Tuchel is only five years older than Lampard but vastly more experienced in coaching having been forced to retire from playing at 24 due to injury.

Tuchel made a name

for himself in Germany by showing faith in young players during a five-year stint with unheralded Mainz. In 2009, he was promoted to take charge of the Mainz first team after just one year in charge of the youth side, and

quickly promoted young talent.

He lasted only two years at Borussia Dortmund before being fired despite winning the German Cup after falling out with officials — just as he would do at PSG. AP

AD



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OPINION

World Views

The Editors, MDT/Bloomberg

**BIDEN NEEDS AN
 INNOVATION AGENDA**

From the cotton gin to the mobile phone, the U.S. has produced some of the most useful inventions of the past three centuries. Yet by several measures, its traditional leadership in science and technology is now under threat. As Joe Biden's administration gets underway, reviving American ingenuity should be among his top priorities.

As a start, Biden should push to raise government investment in research and development. Federally funded research has been a crucial component of America's scientific success, helping to produce everything from GPS to search engines to the internet itself. In recent years, almost one-third of patents granted have relied on it. Yet federal R&D spending as a share of GDP has stagnated at about 0.7% over the past three years, down from a historical average of 1.1%.

Reversing this worrying trend will cost a lot — about \$240 billion annually, up from \$164 billion last year. But few steps are more essential for boosting innovation, productivity and competitiveness. Innovation also has a vital role to play in shifting the economy to clean energy, which Biden has rightly emphasized. His plan for a cross-agency research team, dubbed ARPA-C, to investigate far-out energy technologies is on the right track. Pairing such investment with better incentives for private-sector R&D (using subsidies or more generous tax credits) would help boost jobs, incomes and economic growth. Prioritizing breakthrough technologies like artificial intelligence and quantum computing, meanwhile, would go a long way toward sustaining American leadership in the industries of the future.

Another priority should be improving digital literacy across the government. Expanding successful programs such as the 18F office and the U.S. Digital Service, which act as in-house tech consultancies for federal agencies, would help. Biden should also consider adding an office within the White House to evaluate how proposed regulations would affect innovation. Such efforts should help rationalize government tech policy, lure more talented workers into public service, and ensure that promising businesses aren't burdened by misguided new rules.

Finally, a critical ingredient in Silicon Valley's success over the years has been openness to immigration. Yet the country is squandering its traditional advantages in this regard. Although foreign-born students now make up half or more of U.S. doctoral graduates in critical fields such as engineering, math and computer science, the government offers no permanent visa for them and the previous administration spent four years devising new ways to antagonize them.

Promisingly, Biden has pledged an immigration overhaul starting on his first day. But the details — and his commitment to them — will prove decisive. To boost U.S. competitiveness, he should increase visas for skilled workers and prioritize applicants with in-demand STEM skills; exempt international graduates of U.S. schools with advanced science degrees from the cap on green-card allotments; and offer a startup visa for entrepreneurs who create new jobs. Taken together, such steps would help America remain a beacon for the world's best scientists, engineers and technologists.

Innovation has powered the American economy for decades, but it doesn't occur by magic. As Thomas Edison, inventor extraordinaire, famously held, it's mostly hard work. Biden's administration should keep that in mind, and get to it.

Indian and Chinese soldiers brawled last week along the countries' disputed border, Indian officials said yesterday, as a monthslong standoff between the nuclear-armed rivals continued.

The clash in the Naku La area of Sikkim came four days before the countries held a ninth round of talks on Sunday on ending tensions in another disputed border area in the remote Ladakh region.

The Indian army described the clash at Naku La as "a minor face off" and said it "was resolved by local commanders as per established protocols."

An army statement did not provide any other details, but asked media "to refrain from overplaying or exaggerating" the incident.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said he did not have information to provide on the incident but urged India "not to take any unilateral action that may further complicate or exacerbate the border tension."

Two Indian security officials said at least 18 Chinese soldiers tried to cross into Indian-claimed territory at Naku La last Wednesday night and were blocked by Indian soldiers, leading to clashes with sticks and stones.

**REBELO DE SOUSA WINS
 BY LANDSLIDE; FAR-RIGHT
 ENTERS PORTUGAL'S
 MAINSTREAM POLITICS**

PORTUGAL'S president was returned to office for a second term with a resounding victory yesterday [Macau time] in an election held amid a devastating COVID-19 surge that has made the European country the worst in the world for cases and deaths.

Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, who had been widely expected to win, captured 61% of the vote.

Rebelo de Sousa, a center-right moderate and former leader of Portugal's Social Democratic Party, will serve a 5-year term that will be his last due to term limits.

He devoted most of his victory speech to the COVID-19 pandemic, saying his first thoughts went to its victims and promising to work for an economic recovery once it was over.

Portugal has the world's highest rates of new daily infections and deaths per 100,000 population, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University, and its public health system is being engulfed.

"Everything starts with the battle against the pandemic," Rebelo de Sousa said.

Socialist candidate Ana Gomes came second with 13% but close behind in third was André Ventura, a newly arrived right-wing populist whose 12% was a stunning development. Such a showing for Ventura would have been unthinkable until recently and will send a shudder through Portuguese politics.

Four other candidates ran for head of state.

One of the reelected president's first tasks will be to decide next month whether to approve a new law allowing euthanasia. Parliament has passed the bill, but the head of state could try to block it or send it to the Constitutional Court for vetting.

The turnout was just shy



Incumbent Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa delivers a speech following the results of Portugal's presidential election, in Lisbon

of 40% — significantly lower than in recent elections and apparently confirming concerns that some people would stay away for fear of becoming infected with COVID-19. Political leaders said that when the pandemic began to worsen there was no longer enough time to change the Portuguese Constitution to allow the election's postponement.

"Everything starts with the battle against the pandemic."

MARCELO R. SOUSA

Rebelo de Sousa, 72, was long viewed as the front-runner. He is an affable law professor and former television personality who as president has consistently had an approval rating of 60% or more. He collected more votes Sunday than in his 2016 victory.

Rebelo de Sousa has worked closely with the center-left minority Socialist government, supporting its pandemic efforts.

He also has endeared himself to the Portuguese with his easygoing style. Photographs taken by pas-

sers-by of him in public places, such as one last year of him standing in line at a supermarket wearing sneakers and shorts, routinely go viral.

With the country in lockdown, the election campaign featured none of the usual flag-waving rallies but restrictions on movement were lifted for polling day.

Authorities increased the number of polling stations and allowed for early voting to reduce crowding on election day. In other precautions, voters were asked to bring their own pens and disinfectant to polling stations. Everyone voting wore a mask and kept a safe distance from each other.

Prime Minister António Costa, in a tweet, urged people to turn out for the ballot, saying that "unprecedented planning" had gone into ensuring that the vote could take place safely.

Portugal has 10.8 million registered voters, around 1.5 million of them living abroad.

Every Portuguese president since 1976, when universal suffrage was introduced following the departure of a dictatorship, has been returned for a second term. No woman or member of an ethnic minority has ever held the post. MDT/AP

Australia's medical regulator has approved use of its first coronavirus vaccine, paving the way for inoculations to begin next month. The Therapeutic Goods Administration yesterday gave provisional approval for people aged 16 and over to use the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech. The regulator said priority would be given to groups that include aged-care residents and workers, frontline healthcare workers, and quarantine workers.



USA Dr. Anthony Fauci (right) said that President Joe Biden's goal of administering 100 million vaccinations in the first 100 days actually means about 67 million Americans should be protected from COVID-19 during that time. Fauci, the government's top infectious diseases expert, said the president's goal refers to 100 million shots, not people. Current vaccines require two shots.

Greece Sifis Valyrakis, a former minister and resistance fighter against Greece's 1967-74 military dictatorship who twice made daring escapes, was found dead at sea yesterday [Macau time]. He was 77. Valyrakis had sailed with his inflatable craft at noon (10:00 GMT) off the coast of the island of Evia in central Greece, where his family has a vacation home. His wife alerted authorities to his absence. His craft was found in the afternoon without him and his body was found just after 18:30 GMT, the coast guard said.



Netherlands Politicians and local leaders yesterday condemned rioters who clashed with police in about 10 towns and cities across the country a day earlier, on the second night of a coronavirus curfew. "It is unacceptable," Prime Minister Mark Rutte said. "This has nothing to do with protesting, this is criminal violence and that's how we'll treat it." Worst hit was Eindhoven, where police clashed with hundreds of rioters who torched a car, threw rocks and fireworks at officers, smashed windows and looted a supermarket at the railway station.