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THREE DECEASED CATS WERE AGAIN FOUND AT IAO HON YESTERDAY, THE SAME AREA WHERE ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUPS REPORTED THE FINDINGS OF DEAD CATS LAST WEEK P2

GOV'T RAISES ORDERS OF COVID-19 VACCINES TO 1.5 MILLION P4

CROWN RESORTS ISN'T FIT TO RUN ITS NEW FLAGSHIP SYDNEY CASINO UNLESS IT REPLACES ITS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND RESTRUCTURES THE BOARD: INQUIRY P2



Hong Kong A court yesterday denied bail for government critic and newspaper publisher Jimmy Lai who is facing charges under a sweeping new national security law. The ruling by the Court of Final Appeal comes amid heavy pressure from the Chinese government and state media to keep Lai in custody, arguing that Lai's crimes against the state are particularly egregious and that he possesses the means to flee the semi-autonomous southern Chinese city.

Japan A navy submarine and a commercial ship from Hong Kong collided off Japan's southern coast, causing minor injuries to three crewmembers of the submarine, defense officials said. There was slight damage to the submarine's mast but it was able to continue sailing on its own.

India Businesses and shops closed in many parts of Indian-controlled Kashmir to mark the eighth anniversary of the secret execution of a Kashmiri man in New Delhi. Unlike in the past, no anti-India groups, which have long demanded the region's independence or its merger with neighboring Pakistan, called for the strike.



Iran yesterday launched a coronavirus inoculation campaign among healthcare professionals with recently delivered Russian Sputnik V vaccines as the country struggles to stem the worst outbreak of the pandemic in the Middle East with its death toll nearing 59,000. Health Minister Saeed Namaki said the vaccination would be simultaneously carried out in more than 600 medical centers across the country.

More on backpage

HO TAKES THE LEAD

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng led high-ranked officials yesterday by taking the first shot, aiming to send a message of trust and set an example for the population P5



ANIMA HAS RECEIVED DONATIONS TOTALING MOP809,000 AS A LIFELINE P2



IMMIGRATION LAW SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS MAY PROHIBIT NON-RESIDENTS FROM LEAVING TERRITORY P4

122 RESIDENTS TESTED NEGATIVE FOR ANTIBODIES

122 residents who are under medical observation after coming back to Macau via Tokyo on January 21 tested negative for antibodies, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center announced last night. Among the 122 quarantined residents, nine people who were categorized as close contacts are at the Public Health Clinical Center at Coloane Hill, 97 residents and 16 crew members are at the Grand Coloane Hotel. As for the two confirmed Covid-19 cases on the flight, the last nasopharyngeal nucleic acid tests were still positive. The 47th case had low fever but no signs of pneumonia; while the 48th case feels no discomfort.

RESIDENTIAL PRICE INDEX RECORDS SLIGHT INCREASE

The overall residential property price index for October - December 2020 increased by 0.2% over the previous period (September - November 2020) to 268.8, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service. The index for the Macau Peninsula (268.8) rose by 0.3%, while the figure for Taipa & Coloane (268.5) fell by 0.3%. Analysed by year of building completion, the indices for residential units built between 6 and 10 years ago and for those completed within the last five years increased by 3.8% and 1.3% respectively.

LAWMAKER CALLS FOR BETTER TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR KÁ HÓ AREA

Lawmaker Ella Lei has urged the local government to improve transportation services to the Ká Hó area. The government has recently developed the premises of Our Lady of Sorrows Church at Ká Hó into a leisure zone. Some of the properties are being used as a café and art salon. However, there is only one bus passing by the area. Lei would like to see more public transportation to this destination and more parking spaces in the vicinity.

CROWN RESORTS ISN'T FIT TO RUN SYDNEY CASINO, INQUIRY FINDS

CROWN Resorts Ltd. isn't fit to run its new flagship Sydney casino unless it replaces its chief executive officer and restructures the board, an inquiry recommended after a probe exposed wide-ranging governance and anti-money laundering failures.

Crown is "quite unsuitable" to hold the license, retired judge Patricia Bergin said in an excoriating 751-page report that reserved special criticism for CEO Ken Barton, billionaire shareholder James Packer and long-serving board members.

The Australian gaming group is Melco Resorts & Entertainment's former partner. In April last year, the Macau gaming group sold its last near 10% stake in Crown, accomplishing its plan to exit the Australian company.

Bergin recommended 10% individual ownership limits at casinos, which would force Packer to reduce his 36% stake. The watchdog will consider her findings at a special meeting Feb. 12.

Crown has "poor corporate

governance, deficient risk-management structures and processes, and a poor corporate culture," she said. "The scorching light of this inquiry has exposed a number of problems that would have otherwise remained unearthed and unresolved."

The gaming regulator had asked Bergin to oversee an inquiry after a series of media articles in 2019 alleged money laundering took place at Crown's casinos, and the company used junket operators with ties to criminal gangs. Yesterday's report leaves the immediate future of the company's AUD2.2 billion (USD1.7 billion) luxury Sydney resort in the balance. While retail operations at the site are underway, the start of gambling has been on hold since December.

'FACILITATING MONEY LAUNDERING'

Bergin said it was clear that Crown was "facilitating money laundering, exposing staff to the risk of detention in a foreign jurisdiction and pursuing

commercial relationships with individuals" connected to organized crime groups.

"It is obvious that such attributes would render an applicant quite unsuitable to hold a casino license in New South Wales," she said.

Crown said in a statement it was considering the report and would work with the regulator in relation to the findings. A spokesman for Packer's private investment company said it will consider the report in detail before commenting.

It was formerly alleged that the company had breached its New South Wales casino license by agreeing to sell a 19.99% stake in the company to Melco. However, the report did not find the sale of shares by Packer to the Macau operator as a breach to the casino license.

Last year's inquiry, which heard from senior management, board members and Packer, tore into the mechanics of the company and its ability to detect financial crime. At one stage, Bergin described the company's lack of transparency

as a "debacle."

Yesterday's report said Barton "has demonstrated that he is no match for what is needed at the helm of a casino licensee."

Bergin's report is one of the most damning critiques of an Australian company in decades, and a rare unvarnished assessment of the way one of Australia's most storied corporate dynasties - the Packers - does business.

It also caps a torrid period for Crown and Packer himself. In 2016, Chinese authorities rounded up Crown staff on the mainland, before a court convicted 19 current and former employees of illegally promoting gambling. Packer has since tried to sell some or all of his stake in Crown to at least two buyers, including Wynn Resorts Ltd.

Bergin concluded in her report that Crown had prioritized profits above "the safety and welfare of its staff in China, and more broadly its need to comply with Australian law and protect the casino from criminal exploitation." **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

A LIFELINE OF MOP809,000 TEMPORARILY BAILS OUT ANIMA

THE local animal rights alliance, Anima, has received donations totaling MOP 809,000 as a lifeline, according to an official statement on the association's Facebook page.

"Anima was able to pay the salaries for January (MOP 370,000), debts to suppliers from December (MOP236,000), debts to staff from last year (MOP20,000) and still have around MOP183,000 (of which MOP50,000 was a loan from a friend) to pay part of the salaries for February," former Anima president Albano Martins stated.

Anima was previously deep in financial difficulties due to a significant reduction in funds given by local casino operators last year, as well as a postponed

meeting by the Macao Foundation (FM) to discuss the timing and amount of annual financial support that Anima would receive from the government.

Normally, the FM holds a council meeting at the end of each year to discuss the delivery schedule and the amount of government funding. However, the meeting was postponed to this month due to Covid-19, but without a concrete timeframe for rescheduling.

"As we do not know when FM will have its meeting, we have decided to continue our campaign in order to collect enough money to pay the bills for January and the salaries for February," Martins said, adding the total amount needed will be around MOP 600,000. **HT**

THREE MORE DECEASED CATS FOUND

THREE deceased cats were found in an alley at Iao Hon yesterday, the same area where animal rights groups initially reported the findings of three deceased cats last week.

In a statement, Albano Martins, former president of Anima, said that one of the bodies was nearly decomposed.

Anima has informed the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM).

IAM said in a statement last night that, following the report from Anima, the bureau attended the scene with the security police to follow up. A body was taken back to the bureau for autopsy and sent to police for investigation.

IAM urges the public not to dispose any evidence of

suspected animal cruelty or animal carcasses with an unknown cause of death by themselves.

Moreover, seven cats have been rescued and collected by IAM at the site.

All cats rescued yesterday will be moved to Cat's Paradise after one week in IAM's care.

Previously, Anima issued a statement on the discovery of three deceased cats, noting that they were following the case closely to avoid "it resulting in another closed case."

The group was referring to a similar case less than a month ago, where the bodies of five cats which were suspected to have died after falling from height at the Ocean Gardens residential development in Taipa. **LV**

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MacauDaily 澳門每日時報
Times
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR) Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR Lynzy Valles SENIOR WRITER Honey Tsang
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai
NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Daniel Beitler, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, Bloomberg, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua
SECRETARY Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com
SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION
ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com
OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com
ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR
Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84
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GAMING

Bernstein projects weaker revenue in first week of Feb

HONEY TSANG

MACAU'S gross gaming revenue (GGR) contracted in the first week of February compared with the same period in January 2021, driven by the continual pressure stirred up by recent Covid-19 outbreaks in China, according to a statement recently published by Sanford C. Bernstein Ltd, as cited in GGRAsia.

The investment research and institutional asset management company forecasts MOP1.5 billion in GGR, equivalent to USD187.8 million, during the first week of February.

This translates to a month-to-date average daily rate (ADR) of MOP215 million, down 17% and 76% from ADR MOP259 million and ADR MOP906 million in the same period in January 2021 and February 2019, respectively.

The brokerage also attrib-



uted the month-to-month GGR downtrend to the "typical slow-down" in the week before the Spring Festival.

The travel advisory issued by the municipal's government in China impelling people to stay put during Lunar New Year has had a dispiriting effect on reported travel intention among

mainland travelers, further impeding GGR performance in the first week of February.

Analysts at Bernstein is expecting "reduced visitation into Macau" for at least the next few weeks, as some mainland travelers have postponed their original trips during the holiday period to after the holiday.

Despite the brokerage's forecast, some chiefs of Macau's casino conglomerates have still been sanguine about business during Chinese New Year (CNY).

President of Sands China Ltd Wilfred Wong was among them. He stated in the opening ceremony of The Londoner Macao on February 8 that the group has "high expectations" regarding tourist arrivals in CNY.

"Despite the travel entreaty, we believe there will still be a lot of tourists [visiting Macau] from Guangdong Province. But still, tourist arrivals will come down to how many Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) permits will be approved for the holiday," he added.

Echoing Bernstein's projection, Wong is anticipating a slight delay in the peaks of hotel room bookings to periods beyond CNY. Prior to the pandemic, spikes in occupancy had habitually fallen within the first three days of the holiday.

Wynn Macau Ltd president and

executive director Ian Coughlan also delivered his view about CNY on an earnings call on February 4, saying that the recent fall in Covid-19 case numbers in China, following some spikes in late-December and January, is "very positive" for the city's tourism sector.

Coughlan said he is eyeing an occupancy rate on par with that of Golden Week in October last year.

"But certainly, [Covid-19 outbreaks in China have] affected bookings throughout town. So we're probably looking at more like an October Golden Week situation than the Christmas and western New Year period," he said.

He also believes the impact of recent outbreaks in China will be temporary, considering that the virus has been contained and vaccination has commenced.

Wong stated earlier that Macau's vaccination rollout will help to increase travel confidence and propel the city's tourism industry forward.

In Macau, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and other key authorities received their first dose of the inactivated vaccine, developed by China's state-owned pharmaceutical company Sinopharm Group, yesterday on February 9. The vaccination rollout for prioritized groups started yesterday. Vaccination for the general public will start on February 22.

AD

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3,782 NON-CHINESE DEPARTED MACAU WITH GOV'T ASSISTANCE

The Macau SAR government has assisted a total of 3,782 foreign persons to leave Macau between March 2020 and the end of 2020. Lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho wrote to the government regarding stranded non-resident workers and Macau local residents' mental health. The Labour Affairs Bureau did not comment on whether the bureau or the SAR government would implement flexible measures to facilitate the rehiring of stranded foreign workers. The Health Bureau (SSM) said that it continues to recognize the importance of local residents' mental health.

GOV'T OPEN TO CRIMINALIZING SEX WORK

Lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng has proposed that the local government criminalize the supply of sex services, and the security authority has said that it will keep an open mind on the matter. Wong proposed that the SAR government amend the definition of pornography, and set up laws to specifically tackle the distribution of pornographic leaflets. In 2020, the Judiciary Police (PJ) intercepted 29 individuals suspected of providing sex services.

MARCH 2 DEADLINE FOR PAYING TAXI LICENSE FEE

Macau taxi drivers must pay their taxi license fee before March 2. Drivers who fail to make the 100 pataca payment before the deadline will be unable to log into their taxi meter and their taxi operation will be suspended. The license fee covers the whole of 2021. As of February 5, over 9,300 taxi drivers have already applied for an electronic taxi license, over 2,600 of whom have already paid the license fee.

COVID-19

More vaccines ordered to face potential international shortage

RENATO MARQUES

THE government has ordered an additional 300,000 Covid-19 vaccine doses, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong U, informed on the sidelines of the vaccination program launch ceremony.

The total number of vaccines ordered has been

raised from the initial 1.2 million announced to 1.5 million, according to the Secretary and confirmed by the director of the Health Bureau (SSM), Lei Chin Ion.

Initially, the health authorities had informed that the government ordered a total of 1.2 million doses, which would be distributed in equal portions of

400,000 of the three main vaccines available at the time in the market: Sinopharm, Pfizer-BioNtech, and AstraZeneca.

The number has now risen, with the inclusion of 100,000 additional doses from Sinopharm as well as an additional order of 200,000 doses of a new vaccine from Gavi, the Vaccine

Alliance.

According to Lei, the additional order of vaccines is justified by the fact that local authorities cannot forecast when the supply of the vaccines previously ordered will arrive in Macau, nor whether the companies will be able to supply the full quantity ordered.

"We ordered more vac-

cines, namely from Sinopharm, because we fear that we cannot obtain enough from the other suppliers. There is currently a huge demand worldwide for the vaccine and even the European Union is having difficulties ensuring their supply for European countries. We want to ensure that we will have more vaccines and that we get them as early as possible," Lei said, explaining the new order.

Earlier, the Secretary said that the remaining 400,000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine would arrive continuously, expressing hopes that a second shipment

would arrive in Macau "at the end of the month," Ao Ieong said.

When questioned as to whether the government is considering opening the borders to people who have been vaccinated, Ao Ieong replied that such a decision still requires consideration and coordination with tourism policies, adding, "We can't assure that [even with the vaccine] we can fully prevent Covid-19. The vaccine is not 100% effective so we need to first see the reaction and if we can achieve a good level of immunity [in the community]; we will see what we can do."

IMMIGRATION LAW

SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS MAY PROHIBIT NON-RESIDENTS FROM LEAVING TERRITORY

JULIE ZHU

THE immigration law enacted earlier this month contains a new provision allowing the "security organizations to prevent non-residents from leaving the Macau SAR," leaving legislators heavily concerned about this unprecedented rule.

Yesterday, the Third Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) held a meeting to discuss the law – specifically, articles 20 through 27. These eight provisions are related to non-resident individuals.

Article 27 prescribes that the criminal justice system, referred to as "criminal police organizations" in the legislation, may prevent a non-resident from leaving Macau for the purposes of detaining that person, or for implementing an interim measure.

For the purposes of the legislation, member departments of Macau's criminal justice system include the Judiciary Police, the Macao Customs Services, the Commission Against Corruption, and the Public Security Police Force.

"The criminal police organizations cover a large range of departments. If any of these departments issue a departure-prohibition order, the order will be an administrative order but not a court order. The concerned non-resident person will be unable to leave Macau. We want to know the government's purpose behind the introduction of this provision, and how will the government implement the rule?" Vong Hin Fai, chairman of the Third Standing Committee, asked.



According to Vong, this provision is completely unprecedented.

The lawmakers' attention was also drawn to article 23 in relation to the prohibited entry of "persona non grata."

Section one of article 23 contains five categories of "persona non grata." These include those prohibited by international treaties; those suspected of having a relationship with criminal organizations, especially triads; those suspected of international terrorism; those posing threats to Macau's internal security; and those restricted by an administrative measure or a court verdict.

According to section one of article 23, the immigration au-

thority must refuse entry to any person within those categories.

Section two of article 23 then provides autonomy to the immigration authority to evaluate whether or not to refuse entry to such persons.

According to section two of article 23, the immigration authority can refuse to issue entry permits to those convicted of crimes both inside and outside of Macau and to those whom the immigration authority believes, with probable cause, to be planning to commit crimes in Macau.

"But, regardless of there being probable cause for the immigration authority to believe the persons are going to commit crimes in Macau, there would be no in-

vestigations at all. If there are no investigations, how can there be charges? When the persons have not even committed crimes, how can there be charges?" Vong questioned.

Article 26 prescribes that the entry prohibition is not a one-off measure and that the decision to refuse entry to a person can be extended.

"Is there a limitation on the extension of the entry ban?" Vong asked. He then pointed out that the law does not answer this question.

In addition, the border immigration office will only issue visitor visas to non-residents who have arrived in Macau without a valid visa.



COVID-19

CE leads high-ranked officials on first day of inoculation

RENATO MARQUES

THE Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng, was the first Macau resident to receive the Covid-19 vaccine, receiving his first dose as the vaccination plan started yesterday morning.

The CE led several high-ranked officials, including four of the government's secretaries, to commence the immunization process on the first day of the vaccination program, aiming to send a message of trust and set an example for the population.

After receiving the vaccination, the CE noted to the media that, although the government would like the population to follow suit, "There is absolutely no pressure. This is a voluntary process. We just wish that the population can cooperate with our preventive measures."

Questioned as to whether, with the rollout of the vaccination plan, the expectations of

economic recovery will increase, Ho said, "I think with the vaccine, what we can guarantee is the health of the population. This is our goal, to ensure [and] safeguard of the population's health. The economy comes next after the health is safeguarded."

Ho added that he expects to have his second dose of the vaccine faster than usual, as he needs to travel to Beijing soon. According to the CE, he should receive his second and final dose of the Covid-19 vaccine in about two weeks.

For the CE, being the first to get the vaccine was not just a matter of setting an example but also providing public assurance that, as was announced on Monday, the vaccine manufactured by the China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) is safe and can be administered to people over the age of 60 [the CE is 63].

"The manufacturer has already announced that there is no

age limit for the use of the vaccine. The main condition that drives the process is the health condition of each person," he remarked.

During the speech that officiated the launch of Macau's vaccination plan, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong U, also noted the importance of the vaccination as the most effective way to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and create immunity in the community.

"Although Macau is at a low risk, the global epidemiological situation is still not under control. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent Covid-19 at the moment. The launch of the vaccination program in Macau can create an immune barrier in society, providing greater protection [for] the life and safety of the population," Ao Ieong said. "The Chief Executive, together with [other] high-ranked officials, will be the first to be vaccinated, demonstrating to the public the go-

vernment's confidence in vaccines and hope that the population can respond to the government's call to 'protect yourself, protect your family, protect Macau and administer the vaccine proactively,'" she concluded.

Next in line to receive vaccinations after the CE were the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong; Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak; Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, and Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário.

The Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong, was absent from the vaccination process, which was justified by the CE with reference to the fact that in the absence of the CE from his official duties, Cheong would replace the CE in carrying out such duties. Cheong is scheduled to be vaccinated soon.

'VACCINES VITAL TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY'

The first day of the vaccination program in Macau led many frontline workers and others who are part of priority groups, to the specially organized Covid-19 vaccination room at the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center.

Out of the view of the cameras focused on the 30-government high-ranked officials who were receiving the first jabs, many frontline workers were awaiting their turn to receive the Covid-19 vaccine.

Among them was Maurice Chung, a medical clinic worker in Macau who was included in the first batch of people to get the vaccine.

To the Times, Chung expressed his feelings and reasoning as to why he believes getting the vaccine is important.

"Personally, I felt that [taking this vaccine] was just like taking the flu vaccine. There was nothing really special, and the experience was not painful or uncomfortable at all," Chung said. "I'm happy that I could be vaccinated. It's a positive for the protection of my personal health, as well as to bring back confidence for travelers. This is [an] important [factor] for the local economy."

"[In Macau] we are lucky [to have this opportunity to be] vaccinated. I think that other people in developing countries should be given this right and opportunity as well," he concluded.

The health authorities said yesterday that they expect that if around 50% of the population vaccinated, it should be enough to create herd immunity in society and effectively prevent the spread of the disease, even if eventually some cases occur in the future, the director of the Health Bureau (SSM), Lei Chin Ion, said on the sidelines of the vaccination event.

Questioned as to whether he thinks that such a figure can be achieved, the director said, "I believe residents will continue to support the government on the pandemic prevention and control measures and that we will achieve this figure. [...] But we are not forcing people to get the vaccine; it's a voluntary process. Our role is to instill confidence and offer options," Lei concluded.

SUPPORT OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CRUCIAL TO VACCINATION PLAN, GOV'T SAYS

THE central government's support of Macau was crucial to launching the vaccination plan, several government high-ranked officials noted on the sidelines of the commencement ceremony of the Covid-19 vaccination plan yesterday.

When questioned on the topic by the media, the Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng, explained that the central government's support can be seen "in the number of vaccines we could grant and in the early timeframe that we received them," Ho said. He added, "We are a small

city, and without cases [of the disease in the community], granting us this number of vaccines and allowing us to ensure that we will have vaccines for everyone is only possible with a high level of support from the central government."

The CE also noted that there are currently numerous orders from across the world for the vaccine produced in the mainland and that many airplanes were waiting at Beijing's airports to be loaded with vaccines to be shipped to many countries around the globe as he spoke.



Frontline workers await their turn to receive Covid-19 jab

CRIME

BUSINESSWOMAN DEFRAUDED CURRENCY EXCHANGE GANG OUT OF HKD190,000

A mainland woman has been charged with defrauding a currency exchange gang out of 190,000 Hong Kong dollars. The arrest follows an investigation by the Judiciary Police (PJ). PJ revealed some of the case's details during yesterday's joint police press conference.

JULIE ZHU



On Thursday, PJ officers arrested Huang, 36, of mainland China, on charges of fraud stemming from her alleged scheme to defraud a mainland man. The man was illicitly retailing exchange currency transactions in the casinos.

According to PJ, Huang and the alleged victim have known each other since November 2020 when they were introduced by a mutual acquaintance.

Since then, Huang and the victim exchanged currency three times. The victim profited from each trade and he increasingly began to trust Huang.

On November 15, Huang invited the alleged victim to meet in a casino, next to the Cage.

During the meeting, Huang de-

manded another currency exchange with the victim. However, unlike in previous instances, Huang convinced the victim to give her HKD190,000 dollars in cash and told the man that her money was inside a guest room of hotel, instructing him to go there alone to pick up the money.

Huang then gave the victim a key to access to the alleged guest room. However, while the victim was heading there, Huang left the casino and the city.

On February 4, the Public Security

Police Force (PSP) identified Huang while she was crossing the border to enter Macau.

Upon police interrogation, Huang denied all accusations.

However, there is reportedly enough evidence to lead the police to believe that the suspect committed the crime.

On February 5, PJ presented information about the case to the prosecution authority, which will then determine whether to file charges against the suspect. JZ

MAN ATTACKS CUSTOMS OFFICERS UPON INTERCEPTION WITH EXCESS WINE

A man cursed at and attacked Gongbei customs officers when he was intercepted by the Zhuhai customs department for carrying an excessive amount of wine while entering Zhuhai, the Gongbei customs authority has recently reported.

On the morning of February 6, the Macau resident, surnamed Lo, attempted to carry an excessive amount of wine over the border from Macau to Zhuhai. Gongbei customs officers spotted Lo and requested that he be inspected.

After he was searched, the officers ordered him to move to another area in order to instigate the relevant taxation processes regarding the wine.

Lo became agitated and refused to cooperate with the customs officers. He became non-compliant and attacked the customs

officers, destroying baggage examination devices and other devices on-site.

Gongbei customs officers then contacted the Zhuhai police department to handle the situation. Lo's behavior led to a temporary closure of one passenger channel at the Gongbei border gate.

Lo was arrested on charges of civil disobedience. According to a report by TDM, Zhuhai police authority is charging Lo with criminal offenses.

In April 2015, Gongbei customs authority intercepted a Macau woman transporting an excessive amount of wine to Zhuhai. She was ordered to pay duty taxes. While inside the duty-payment area, she drank all the wine in her possession. She spent nearly two hours drinking three liters of wine. She was reportedly obliged to pay a 50 renminbi duty fee for each bottle of wine, which was sold for 100 patacas per bottle in Macau. JZ

AD

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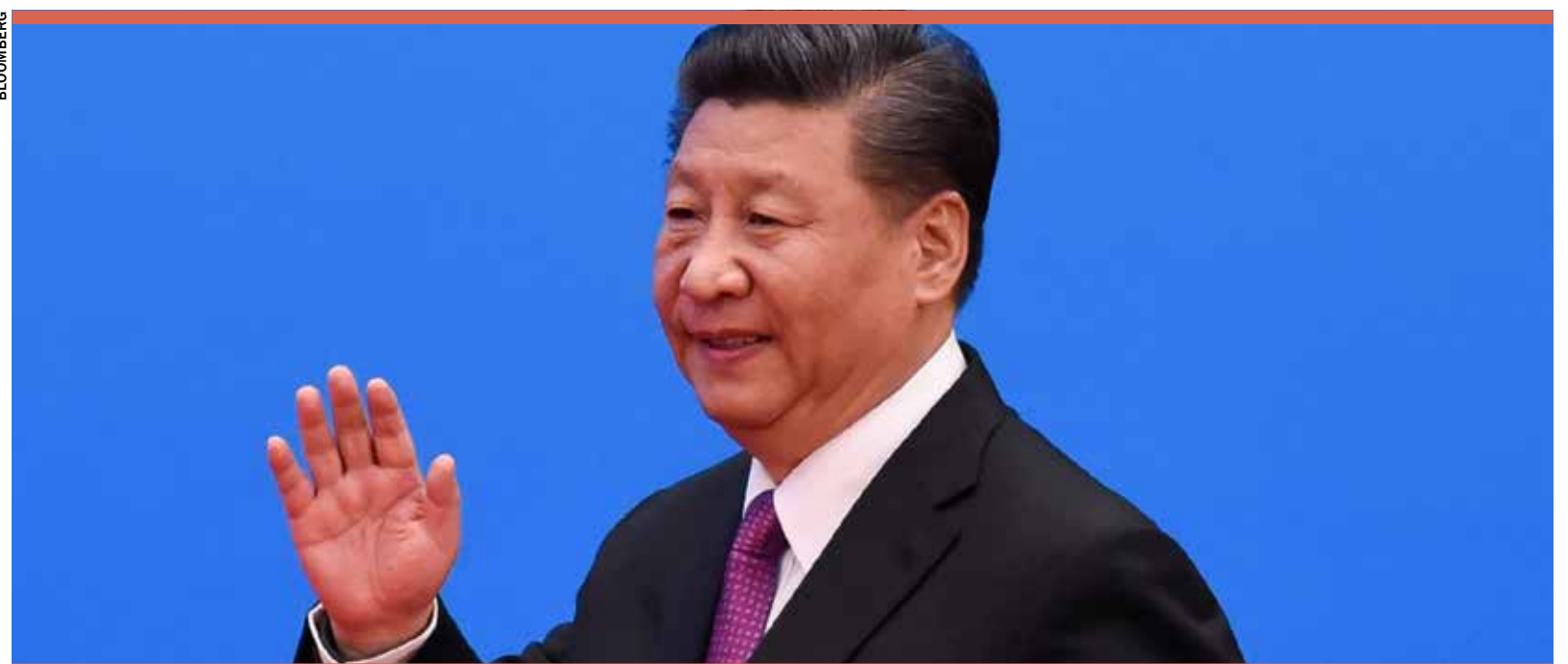
PRESIDENT Xi Jinping said China stands ready to provide eastern Europe with coronavirus vaccines, part of efforts to reboot relations harmed by the failure of the government in Beijing to deliver on investment promises.

The comments come amid tensions within the European Union over the bloc's procurement of shots to combat Covid-19, with member states unable to match the pace of other Western nations in inoculating their citizens. Chinese companies have already provided 1 million vaccine doses to Serbia, an EU aspirant that's also using Russia's Sputnik injection.

Addressing leaders and other high-level representatives at an online summit yesterday, Xi revealed that China plans to import more than \$170 billion of goods from the continent's former communist east in the next five years, during which time it will also double agricultural imports. Other initiatives include deepening ties green economy, e-commerce and health care.

Yesterday's meeting of the China and Central and Eastern European Countries forum - more commonly referred to as the CEE, or 17+1 - comes shortly after Beijing concluded a landmark investment deal with the EU following seven years of negotiation. There's been a lack of regular dialogue of late because of the pandemic.

China is working to rebuild diplomatic ties in Europe as it faces growing criticism from mainly Western countries over issues ranging from its handling of information on Covid-19 to its



Xi pitches vaccine to Eastern Europe in bid to revive ties

crackdown on Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang and a controversial national-security law for Hong Kong that could spark an exodus to the U.K.

It also wants to reset its relationship with the U.S. under Joe Biden after the Trump administration fueled global skepticism over China's intentions.

CEE took shape in 2012 as a way for China to forge ties with 16 eastern European countries, many EU members that felt overlooked by Brussels. Greece joined the group in 2019. Trade between China and these countries re-

ached \$103 billion last year, up 8.4% year on year, China's Commerce Ministry Spokesman Gao Feng said Feb. 4.

While supplying Serbia - and Hungary - with coronavirus vaccines developed by China's Sinopharm is seen as a success, a lack of investment has disappointed the region. Enthusiasm for the 17+1 is waning as some countries bristle at widening trade balances with China, despite the Asian country pointing to growing volumes with eastern Europe, according to a European diplomat in Beijing

who asked not to be identified.

"The economic benefits that CEE countries anticipated to achieve through the 17+1 framework haven't materialized," according to a late January newsletter compiled by Grzegorz Stec, an analyst with Berlin-based think tank Merics.

The cancellation of an in-person summit planned for April 2020 further weakened ties, and - in an apparent snub - Lithuania and Estonia said neither their president nor prime minister would attend yesterday's event, sending lower-level officials in

their stead, Politico reported.

China is hoping to carry out cooperation with eastern Europe in areas in line with the European Union's interests, said Wang Yiwei, director of the Institute of International Affairs at Renmin University in Beijing and a former Chinese diplomat.

"The 17 countries are rather marginalized in the EU, yet they're at the center of the Eurasian continent," said Wang. "They therefore have geographical significance for China's aspirations to boost inter-connectivity." MDT/BLOOMBERG

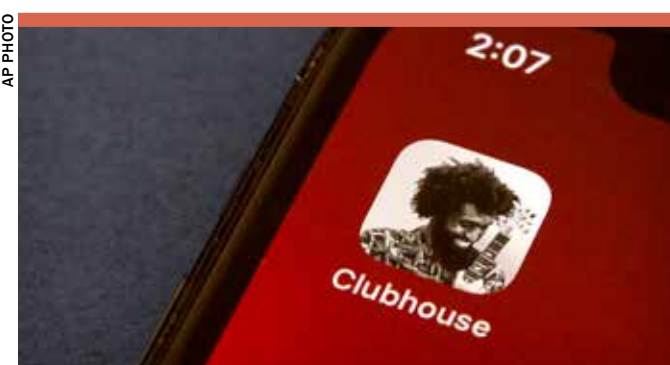
Gov't blocks Clubhouse, app used for political discussion

CHINESE authorities are blocking access to Clubhouse, a social media app that allowed users in China to discuss sensitive topics with people abroad including Taiwan and treatment of the country's Muslim minority.

The move adds Clubhouse to thousands of websites and social media apps to which the ruling Communist Party blocks access to try to control what China's public sees and reads.

Service to users in China was interrupted at about 7 p.m. Monday in Beijing, according to GreatFire.org, a nonprofit group in the United States that monitors Chinese internet filtering and tries to help users circumvent it.

President Xi Jinping's government refuses to



acknowledge the existence of its internet filters, but researchers abroad trace blockages to servers within state-owned China Telecom Ltd. through which internet traffic into and out of China is required to pass.

Xi's government promotes what it calls "internet sovereignty," or the right of political leaders to limit what their publics see online.

Clubhouse temporarily gave Chinese users an

uncensored forum to talk about politically sensitive issues. Unlike many other social media apps, it uses oral conversation, which allowed users in China to talk directly to people in Taiwan, the self-ruled island claimed by the Communist Party as part of its territory, and others abroad.

Topics for recent discussions included Xinjiang region in China's northwest, where the Communist Party has

interned more than 1 million ethnic Muslims.

The service requires users to be invited to join and to give their names and phone numbers. That prompted warnings

Chinese users might face official retaliation. It is unclear if anyone in China has been punished for using the service.

The ruling party also blocks access to Face-

book, Twitter and other global social media services and thousands of websites run by news organizations and human rights, Tibet, pro-democracy and other activists. AP

The International School Student Recruitment 2021-2022		Alberta Accredited International School Canada
Date of Application	PK to SK (Children entering kindergarten for the first time)	Please contact our admissions team via admission@tis.edu.mo or call +853 2853 3700
Date of Interview/ Admission Exam	PK - Grade 11	PK group interviews: March 13, 2021, 9:00am -12noon JK- Gr 3 group interviews: March 8 - 26, 2021 Gr 1 - 6 mock class (compulsory) : March 6, 2021, 9:30 -11:30 am Gr 1 - 3 admission interviews: March 8 - 26, 2021 Gr 4 - 6 admission exam: March 13, 2021, 1:00 - 4:00 pm Gr 7 - 11 admission exam: March 6, 2021, 1:00 - 4:00 pm
Open House	PK to Grade 12	February 27, 2021, 9:30am - 12noon
	Main Lobby	Registration 9:30 - 9:45 am
	Black Box Theatre (Rm 3480)	Information Session (PK-Gr 12) 9:45-10:15 am Displays & Campus Visits 10:15 am - 12:00 noon
Results Notification		April 9, 2021 via email and SMS
Scan QR code to apply online		Address: Avenida Wai Long, Macau University of Science and Technology, Block K, Taipa Tel: +853 2853 3700 Email: admission@tis.edu.mo Website: www.tis.edu.mo

TWO U.S. carriers conducted a military exercise in the South China Sea, signaling that U.S. President Joseph Biden and his administration are taking a strong stance to oppose China's territorial claims in the disputed waters.

The dual carrier operations by the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group and the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group yesterday conducted a "multitude of exercises aimed at increasing interoperability between assets as well as command and control capabilities," the U.S. Navy said in a statement. The exercises were used to demonstrate the Navy's ability to operate in challenging environments, it said.

"Through operations like this, we ensure that we are tactically proficient to meet the challenge of maintaining peace and we are able to continue to show our partners and allies in the region that we are committed to promoting a Free and Open Indo-Pacific," Rear Adm. Doug Verissimo, commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) Nine, said in the statement.

U.S. Seventh Fleet spokesman Lieutenant Joe Keiley said the carriers were operating in the southern part of the sea and "not near" the disputed Paracel or Spratly islands.

The dual carrier operations come as Biden seeks to send a signal to both U.S. allies and China that the U.S. will continue to patrol the South China Sea, of which China claims more than 80%. On Feb. 5, the USS John S. McCain conducted a freedom of navigation operation in



US exercises in South China Sea signal Biden's stance on Beijing's claims

the vicinity of the Paracel Islands.

"In the past the U.S. emphasized its policy mainly verbally, but since the Trump administration it has been promoting it much more explicitly with specific actions such as dispatching its two aircraft carriers to the South China Sea," said Yongwook Ryu, an assistant professor at the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy who focuses on East Asia. Biden "is sending out a clear message to Beijing that it is not going to be soft toward China on certain issues, including the South China Sea disputes, despite its willingness to cooperate

with China on some other issues such as climate change."

Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, and China are among those that claim sovereignty to parts of the South China Sea.

"The U.S. side has been frequently sending its military vessels to the South China Sea to flex its military muscles," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said yesterday in response to a question about the U.S. operation. "China will continue to take necessary measures to ensure our sovereignty, security and development interests. We will work with regional countries to ensure the peace and stability of

the South China Sea."

New U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a late January call with Philippine counterpart Teodoro Locsin that Washington rejected Beijing's maritime claims in the waters if they exceeded the maritime zones that China was permitted under international law. He pledged to stand with Southeast Asian claimants in the face of Chinese pressure.

The last time the U.S. conducted a dual carrier operation in the South China Sea was last July. About a month later, China sent a series of missiles into the South China Sea as a warning to U.S. aircraft carriers and regional bases. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

Taiwan says ties with US strong amid threats from China

As the U.S. Navy asserts its presence in the South China Sea, Taiwan's leader says its ties with Washington remain solid over the transition from the Trump to the Biden administration.

President Tsai Ing-wen said yesterday that U.S. military support remains firm even as China sends increasing numbers of military aircraft into Taiwan's southwestern airspace.

"I would like to reiterate that Taiwan will not back down when receiving



pressure and will not rashly advance when receiving support," Tsai said in a traditional Lunar New Year television address.

"As long as the Beijing authorities are willing to resolve conflicts, we also

want to have a dialogue with them under the conditions of equality and dignity," Tsai said.

While China and the U.S. have indicated a desire to curtail the raw animosity of the Trump years, both the Democratic and Republican parties maintain strong support for Taiwan and a tough approach toward China over trade, human rights and its increasingly assertive military and foreign policies.

Tsai's remarks came as the U.S. Pacific Fleet conducted exercises in the South China Sea combining ships and planes from the aircraft carriers Theodore Roosevelt and Nimitz. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1952 INDIA PASSES FIRST TEST OF DEMOCRACY



The Congress Party of India, led by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, has won an outright victory in the country's first general election.

The party has won 249 of the 489 seats contested in the Lower House, and even with 133 results yet to be declared it is clear that the Congress Party will control the next Parliament.

The victory has earned Pandit Nehru a further five-year term in office. He has led the interim government since 1947, when power passed from British to Indian hands, but this makes him India's first prime minister to be elected by universal suffrage.

The elections are widely seen as a test for India's ability to succeed as a democracy following independence from Britain two years ago.

They are the first to be held under the new constitution, drawn up with the British parliamentary system as a model.

There were fears that extremist groups would use the opportunity to whip up inter-ethnic tensions, but to everyone's relief voting has so far gone peacefully.

The polling operation is on a massive scale.

There are 176 million people eligible to vote, although only 15% can read or write.

Symbols are being used on ballot papers for each of the parties and independent candidates, so that those who cannot read know where to cast their vote.

Voters are not even required to mark their ballot papers - they simply have to put them into a box marked with the symbol of their favoured candidate.

About 18,000 candidates are running for 4,412 seats: 497 in the Lok Sabha, or lower house of parliament, and the rest in state government.

Although the Congress Party, which has been inextricably linked with the drive for independence, has secured an absolute majority in the parliamentary elections, it suffered some unexpected setbacks in state elections.

In three southern states in particular - Madras, Hyderabad and Travancore-Cochin - the party failed to win an outright majority in the face of strong support for the Communist Party.

The result has caused some concern in the Congress Party. The states do not have to follow central government policies, so the Communist Party's strength there could potentially cause the government serious difficulties.

However, two of the most feared militant parties - the Hindu Mahasabha, and the separatist Sikh Akali Party - did so badly that both parties are expected to collapse following the elections.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Communist Party of India (CPI) continued to be a thorn in the government's side for some years, particularly in the southern states.

In 1957 it was elected to rule the state government of Kerala (formerly Travancore-Cochin and neighbouring Malabar), only to have the government dismissed and President's Rule declared in 1959.

The CPI is now split into several splinter groups. The Congress Party, largely led by Nehru family members, continued in an almost unbroken run of power until 1989.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 It doesn't matter whether you're actively looking to add some romance to your life right now or not. Today, you will be unable to escape the flirtatious energy that is flowing all around you.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Today, a jolt of new life could be injected into one of your older relationships. Either you're suddenly seeing them in a new light, or they're seeing you differently. It doesn't much matter.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Just taking a long, leisurely walk around your neighborhood might do the trick. Dancing is another great idea. If you can't hit the town, just turn up the radio and move your body!

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You'll want to play it safe today. There is a lot of confusion in the air right now, and your communication could be what's causing it. People could take what you say the wrong way.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Give all of your opinions during a meeting or discussion so that everyone in the room knows where you stand. You will get back way more than you give, maybe not today, but very soon.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Be careful about making any compromises today. Sure, things might look logical at first, but you could get burned in the end unless you go over the details and get things nailed down.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 It's not the time to back off and jealously guard your energies. Now is the time to reach out and connect with other people. Let them see what you're capable of.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Be very careful about doing any business transactions with friends or family members right now, no matter how much said business transactions seem like a sure thing.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Skip talking about the weather. Instead, touch on more significant topics. If you can make an emotional connection, you can encourage a positive change in someone you might never even meet again.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Just ask for what you want. If you deserve something, you'll get it. And if you don't, you won't. If it's no, it's not the answer you want to hear, but at least you'll know sooner and can move on to bigger and better things.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Entertain yourself with solo pursuits. This is not a good day for team sports because your ability to do what you're told won't be strong. You'll be prone to asking a lot of questions of your authority figures.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Your mind is razor sharp today, and it will enable you to tackle all your assignments and commitments with the grace of a ballet dancer! Other people would feel overwhelmed if they were in your toe shoes, but not you!

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

9x9 grid for EASY Sudoku puzzle.

EASY+

9x9 grid for EASY+ Sudoku puzzle.

MEDIUM

9x9 grid for MEDIUM Sudoku puzzle.

HARD

9x9 grid for HARD Sudoku puzzle.

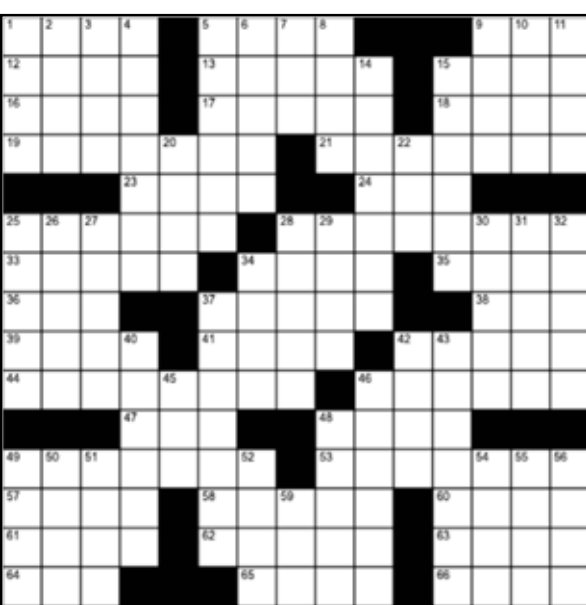
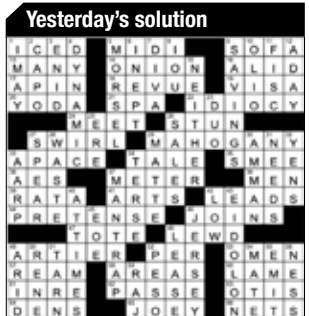
WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION for various cities in China and the World.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Stepped; 5- Periods of history; 9- Parisian possessive; 12- Fermented grape juice; 13- Small nails; 15- Slay; 16- Economist Smith; 17- Command to the band; 18- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 19- Ladies of Spain; 21- Extend the duration of; 23- Zilch; 24- "Much ___ About Nothing"; play by Shakespeare; 25- Figure of speech with "like" or "as"; 28- Bookish; 33- In readiness; 34- Classic autos; 35- Barbie, e.g.; 36- VCR button; 37- Years; 38- 1959 Kingston Trio hit; 39- Pitfall; 41- The last Mrs. Chaplin; 42- Island in the Bay of Naples; 44- Sebaceous cyst; 46- Parentless child; 47- Legal thing; 48- On the peak of; 49- Ragtime dance; 53- Dehydrate; 57- Pet name; 58- Sherpa's home; 60- Capital of Italy; 61- Custardy dessert; 62- Growl angrily; 63- Like Death Valley; 64- Religious sch.; 65- Up ___ good; 66- Swabbies;

DOWN: 1- "___ the night before Christmas ..."; 2- Travel on; 3- Son of Judah; 4- Satanic; 5- Natural gas component; 6- Worker's reward; 7- Perform; 8- Jump lightly; 9- Japanese soup; 10- Brio; 11- Garden pest; 14- Austrian composer; 15- Scar tissue; 20- Acting part; 22- Like some jobs; 25- Somewhat, colloquially; 26- Not moving; 27- Book after Jonah; 28- Medicinal shrub; 29- Garment of ancient Rome; 30- Pizazz; 31- Extremely; 32- Killed; 34- Chamber; 37- Gives slack; 40- Individual; 42- Black bird; 43- Existing power structure; 45- Soak flax; 46- Verdi opera; 48- I don't give ___; 49- Does in; 50- Egypt's river; 51- Dutch cheese, wrapped in red wax; 52- Confined, with "up"; 54- When said three times, a 1970 war movie; 55- Islamic ruler; 56- Beatty Oscar film; 59- Kung ___ chicken;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



FOR SALE Simplex Apartment w/ Outdoor Terraces HK\$16,900,000 4,080 ft² 2 3

FOR RENT Manhattan Apartment, Taipa \$18,500/mth 1,626 ft² 3 2

Rain Dance Property "We dance until it's SOLD!" Apartment in the Historical Centre HK\$3,900,000 840 ft² 2 1

PROPERTY LIST [Taipa] Taipa Village (2 units) 4 2 \$8,380,000 (ref: 19096006) [Taipa] Manhattan 3 2 \$12,980,000 (ref: 19096006) [Coloane] Hellene Gardens 2 3 \$19,800/mth (ref: 20121002) [Taipa] Split Level Commercial space 2,000 ft² \$42,000/mth (ref: 20121004)

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BLOOMBERG



Nicolas Aguzin

HONG KONG EXCHANGE NAMES JPMORGAN'S AGUZIN NEW CEO

HONG Kong's stock exchange named Nicolas Aguzin, who heads JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s international private bank, as its new chief executive officer.

After a protracted search, the 52-year-old banker was appointed to a three-year term as the top boss at Hong Kong Exchanges & Clearing Ltd., according to a statement that confirmed an earlier Bloomberg News report. He will replace Charles Li, also a former JPMorgan banker, who announced his resignation in May and left at the end of last year after a decade at the helm.

"Aguzin's extensive experience in Hong Kong, mainland China, Asia and globally, and his deep knowledge of global capital

markets, will help HKEX continue to build its competitiveness," the company said in a statement. It will "support the ongoing growth and development of Hong Kong's unique financial markets," it said.

The pick of an outsider with deep roots in the international finance community comes as China's tightening grip on the former British colony has raised concerns about the city's status as a financial hub. He's also stepping in as the bourse is riding a boom in big Chinese company listings and inflows of mainland cash.

In its long search, the board had been split between picking a candidate who can operate with confidence in China or one with a strong international back-

ground, people familiar have said. Aguzin, known as "Gucho," will start on May 24, subject to approval by Hong Kong's Securities and Futures Commission.

The choice was met with some skepticism in Hong Kong.

"Charles Li was able to push through landmark initiatives largely because he knows the mainland and how to navigate among Chinese officials," said Christopher Cheung, a Hong Kong lawmaker representing the financial services sector. "It seems on the surface that Aguzin doesn't have that background."

While not from Hong Kong, or mainland Chinese like his predecessor, the Argentine-native is well-connected in the region after

serving as JPMorgan's chairman and CEO of Asia Pacific from 2012 to 2020. Before that he led the bank in Latin America and held various senior investment banking roles after joining the U.S. bank as a financial analyst in 1990.

The incoming CEO will need to build on Li's success over the past years in linking the exchange closer to China, while also facing increased competition from mainland bourses in Shanghai and Shenzhen.

SERVING BEIJING

He'll be working under chairman Laura Cha, who's well-connected in China and sees the bourse's role as serving Beijing's interests and avoiding competition

with the mainland, a person has said. Cha moved to tighten control over the bourse late in Li's tenure, asserting more board control over hiring and placing checks and balances on strategic decisions, a person has said.

HKEX's shares close 0.8% lower at HK\$514.5 in Hong Kong, paring this year's gain to 21%.

JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon congratulated Aguzin on his "important new role."

"Gucho is an outstanding leader and human being who has led businesses around the world for JPMorgan Chase with distinction over the past three decades," he said in a statement.

Li was dubbed "Mr. China" for linking the bourse closer to the mainland and helping open doors for foreign investors. The exchange's revenue doubled during his tenure and its stock has surged ahead of the broader market.

Li's major setback, however, was the failed attempt to take over the London Stock Exchange Group Plc in 2019. The failed 29.6 billion-pound (\$40 billion) bid has dented appetite for making the bourse more of a global institution, which was one of the four targets Li set for this tenure, a person has said.

In an interview with Bloomberg in December, Li said the CEO's job is all about "steering conflict" both in Hong Kong and on the mainland, but also one that entails taking risks. Tightening links further with the mainland is the "irreversible" path for the bourse, he said.

Even so, the push toward the mainland is not all welcome in China, in part as it seeks to promote its mainland bourses and open its financial markets. Expanding the link to include several benchmark stocks has proved difficult. One sticking point is whether to include shares like Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., which are dual listed and with weighted voting rights.

CORPORATE BITS

MGM organizes spring cleaning for senior citizens



For the tenth consecutive year, the MGM organized spring cleaning, provided complimentary haircuts, massage and celebrated Chinese New Year with the elderly.

As part of MGM's effort to send care and festive wishes

in the community, the series of caring events benefitted a total of 470 senior citizens.

This year, MGM partnered with a small-to-medium-sized cleaning company to carry on this decade-old tradition at Mong Ha Elderly

Center of Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), Seac Pai Van Family and Community Service Center of General Union of Neighborhood Associations of Macau (UGAMM), and Centro de Dia Brilho da Vida of Caritas Macau. Communal areas such as assembly rooms, activity rooms, dining halls and washrooms, were cleaned and sanitized.

Performances were also held at the three centers. As a token of blessings, MGM presented them with gift bags which contained oatmeal, longevity noodles, pre-packaged Chinese soup, MGM Lunar New Year banners, as well as assistive tools like magnifying nail-clipper.

Melco receives four accolades at Macau Energy Saving Activity 2020



In recognition of Melco Resorts & Entertainment's energy conservation efforts, the company has been honored with four accolades at Macau Energy Saving Activity 2020.

Studio City and City of Dreams were awarded 1st Runner-up and Excellence Award of the Hotel Group B category respectively, and Studio City and Altira Macau were recipients

of Continuous Energy Saving Award (Hotel Group).

Organized by CEM, the Macau Energy Saving Activity 2020's results are based on year-on-year kilowatt-hour (kWh) savings of the general public and businesses from July to October every year.

As part of Melco's wider strategy towards carbon neutrality, in Macau, the resorts have achieved accumulated energy savings of 19.6m kWh (calculated on an annual basis) by the end of 2020. According to a statement issued by the gaming operator, the group continues to assess and implement energy saving measures to progress towards their goal of Carbon Neutral resorts by 2030.

FOOTBALL

Bayern beats Al Ahly to reach Club World Cup final

AL AHLY 0, BAYERN 2

ROBERT Lewandowski scored twice as Bayern Munich cruised into the Club World Cup final with a controlled 2-0 win over Egyptian club Al Ahly yesterday [Macau time].

Bayern was firmly in control of the semifinal against the African champion and took the lead in the 17th minute when David Alaba cued up Lewandowski in space in the penalty area to hammer a shot in low.

Lewandowski missed a chance for 2-0 when he sent a lob over the bar with only the goalkeeper to beat late in the first half, but made up for it with a header off Leroy Sané's cross in the 86th.

In the final tomorrow, Hansi Flick's team will take on Mexican club Tigres, which beat Brazil's Palmeiras 1-0 on Sunday. That made Tigres the first team from CONCACAF to reach a Club World Cup final.

Bayern is playing for what would be its sixth title in 12 months after the German league and cup, the Champions League, and the German and



Bayern's Robert Lewandowski celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the Club World Cup semifinal soccer match

European Super Cups.

The Club World Cup is typically a low-intensity way for the Champions League winner to add another trophy to its collection against opponents with comparatively miniscule budgets. Bayern's only Club World Cup title to date in 2013, beating Raja Casablanca of Morocco in

the final, started a run of seven consecutive wins by European teams.

Playing in Qatar meant a dramatic change of temperature for Bayern. The German team played in driving snow at Hertha Berlin on Friday before flying to the gas-rich Middle Eastern nation, where daytime tempera-

tures in recent days have been close to 30 degrees.

Bayern has longstanding sponsorship ties to Qatar and has frequently held training camps there, to the opposition of some supporters' groups concerned about human rights in the 2022 World Cup host nation. AP



SNOWBOARDING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS MOVED TO ASPEN FROM CHINA

THE snowboarding world championships were moved yesterday from China to the United States because of travel restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic.

The International Ski Federation said Aspen will stage slopestyle, halfpipe and big air events from March 8-16. Zhangjiakuo had been scheduled to host the event from Feb. 18-28.

The Colorado resort will also now host four World Cup events — two each in snowboard and freeki — after the worlds.

All the events are subject to changing travel limits and quarantine demands as more transmissible variants of COVID-19 spread. MDT/AP

AD

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Urology : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

Paediatrics : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

Obstetrics & Gynaecology : Dr. Fong Kuan Io

Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery : Dr. Lam U Lin

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

ENT : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

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登錄 Inscrição

法人商業企業主登記編號 N° de Registo do Empresário Comercial, Pessoa Colectiva : 43255(SO)

申請編號 AP. 29/12012021

登錄事項 Facto inscrito : 解散及因完成清算而消滅 dissolução e extinção pelo encerramento de liquidação

原因 Causa : 股東決議 deliberação dos sócios

清算及分割 Liquidação e partilha : 公司沒有任何資產和債權或債務來攤分或承擔

帳目核准通過日期 Data da aprovação das contas : 31-12-2020

文件 Documentos : 議事錄 acta 31-12-2020, 清算人報告書 relatório dos liquidatários 31-12-2020, 損益表 conta de ganhos e perdas 31-12-2020, 資產負債表 balanço 31-12-2020

登記官梁采怡 A Conservadora, Liang Tsai I

登錄 Inscrição

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登記官梁采怡 A Conservadora, Liang Tsai I

OPINION

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DIFFERENCES AND DIVERGENCES NO REASON FOR SINO-US CONFLICT

Be it calling China the “most critical challenge” or “most serious competitor”, the terms US President Joe Biden has adopted, although they may sound similar, are subtly different to those employed by his predecessor.

This was reinforced in a CBS interview aired on Sunday in which he said he is not going to deal with China the way his predecessor did, and his administration is focusing on the international rules of the road. Thus, despite his assertion he would “hold China accountable”, he clearly knows it is the policies of the Donald Trump administration that have created the grave situation that threatens to derail Sino-US relations.

With a spokesperson for the State Department affirming the administration adheres to the one-China principle, the necessary keystone for relations is in place, it was good to hear Biden say last week that he is willing to cooperate with China, certainly for US interests.

But breaking the impasse in relations entails a change of policy on the part of Washington, not Beijing. Since he added that, “We need not have a conflict but there is going to be extreme competition”, it is easy to associate that term with Trump’s extreme pressure tactics against China. Which means that although there might be essential differences in the two back-to-back administrations’ approaches to China, the intensity of their approaches could be of the same level.

Despite this, the awareness of the need for self-correction on the part of the US represents crucial progress. Yet, it must be pointed out that although China welcomes this, it has no reasons to feel grateful for it. It was therefore a positive development that the phone call between the countries’ top diplomats on Saturday provided the two sides with a chance to lay their cards on the table in a frank way.

However, there is no escaping the fact, as Yang Jiechi told his US counterpart Antony Blinken, the Sino-US relationship is at a critical moment. Managing their competition will be a difficult challenge, and the only way they can pass that test is by fostering greater mutual trust. And that can only be achieved through unequivocal conversations.

Candid dialogue is the only way to prevent suspicions and misgivings about each other’s actions and intentions from festering into grievances, and also the only way to agree on remedial actions to ease respective concerns. Beijing and Washington have both acknowledged that their differences and divergences are no cause for conflict. Nor are they insurmountable obstacles to cooperation, as long as they can be properly managed.

China’s US policy is consistent, which is why, as Chinese Ambassador to the US Cui Tiankai told the media on Saturday, the ball is still in the US court. The onus is on the Biden administration to mend what the previous administration so rashly broke.

UN EXPERTS: NORTH KOREA USING CYBER ATTACKS TO UPDATE NUKES

THE BUZZ

North Korea has modernized its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by flaunting United Nations sanctions, using cyberattacks to help finance its programs and continuing to seek material and technology overseas for its arsenal, U.N. experts said.

The panel of experts monitoring sanctions on the Northeast Asian nation said in a report sent to Security Council members yesterday [Macau time] that North Korea’s “total theft of virtual assets from 2019 to November 2020 is valued at approximately \$316.4 million,” according to one unidentified country.

The panel said its investigations found that North Korean-linked cyber actors continued to conduct operations in 2020 against financial institutions and virtual currency exchange houses to generate money to support its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs.

In its weapons development, the experts said, Kim Jong Un’s government has also produced fissile material — an essential ingredient for producing nuclear weapons — and maintained its nuclear facilities. [More on macaudoailytimes.com](https://www.macaudailytimes.com)

WHO TEAM

CORONAVIRUS UNLIKELY TO HAVE LEAKED FROM CHINA LAB

THE coronavirus most likely first appeared in humans after jumping from an animal, a team of international and Chinese scientists looking for the origins of COVID-19 said yesterday, dismissing as unlikely an alternate theory that the virus leaked from a Chinese lab.

A closely watched visit by World Health Organization experts to Wuhan — the Chinese city where the first coronavirus cases were discovered — did not dramatically change the current understanding of the early days of the pandemic, said Peter Ben Embarek, the leader of the WHO mission.

But it did “add details to that story,” he said at a news conference as the group wrapped up a nearly four-week visit to the city.

And it allowed the joint Chinese-WHO team to rule out one theory on the origins of the virus. The Wuhan Institute of Virology has collected many virus samples, leading to allegations that it may have been the source of the original outbreak, whether on purpose or accidentally.

But experts now consider the possibility of such a leak so improbable that it will not be suggested as an avenue of future study, said Embarek, a WHO food safety and animal diseases expert.

China had already strongly rejected that possibility and has promoted other theories. The Chinese and foreign experts considered several ideas for how the disease first ended up in humans, leading to a pandemic that has now killed more than 2.3 million people worldwide.

Embarek said the initial findings suggest the most likely pathway the virus followed was from a bat to another animal and then to humans, adding that would require further research.



“The findings suggest that the laboratory incidents hypothesis is extremely unlikely to explain the introduction of the virus to the human population,” he said.

The mission was intended to be an initial step in the process of understanding the origins of the virus, which scientists have posited may have passed to humans through a wild animal, such as a pangolin or bamboo rat. Transmission directly from bats to humans or through the trade in frozen food products are also possibilities, Embarek said.

The WHO team’s visit is politically sensitive for Beijing, which is concerned about being blamed for alleged missteps in its early response to the outbreak. An AP investigation has found that the Chinese government put limits on research into the outbreak and ordered scientists not to speak to reporters.

The team — which includes experts from 10 countries who arrived on Jan. 14 — visited the Huanan Seafood Market, the site of an early cluster of cases in late 2019.

Marion Koopmans, a Dutch virologist on the team, said that some animals at the market were susceptible or suspected to be susceptible to the virus, including rabbits and

bamboo rats. And some could be traced to farms or traders in regions that are home to the bats that carry the closest related virus to the one that causes COVID-19.

She said the next step would be to look more closely at farms.

Liang Wannian, the head of the Chinese side, said the virus also appeared to have been spreading in other parts of the city than the market, so it remains possible that the virus originated elsewhere.

The team found no evidence that the disease was spreading widely any earlier than the initial outbreak in the second half of December 2019.

“We haven’t been able to fully do the research, but there is no indication there were clusters before what we saw happen in the later part of December in Wuhan,” Liang said.

The visit by the WHO team took months to negotiate. China only agreed to it amid international pressure at the WHO’s World Health Assembly meeting last May, and Beijing has continued to resist calls for a strictly independent investigation.

While China has weathered some localized resurgences of infection since getting the outbreak under control last year, life in Wuhan itself has largely returned to normal. **AP**



Afghanistan A string of attacks yesterday killed five government employees and four policemen, officials said. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks. In the capital, Kabul, gunmen opened fire and killed four employees of the ministry for rural development, according to Ferdaws Faramarz, spokesman for the city’s police chief.

Emirates A spacecraft from the United Arab Emirates was set to swing into orbit around Mars in the Arab world’s first interplanetary mission yesterday, the first of three robotic explorers arriving at the red planet over the next week and a half. The orbiter, called Amal, Arabic for Hope, traveled 300 million miles in nearly seven months to get to Mars with the goal of mapping its atmosphere throughout each season.



UN agencies received approval from Ethiopia’s government to send 25 more staff members to embattled Tigray, a region where the United Nations says hunger is growing and much of the area has been inaccessible to humanitarian workers. U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric called the clearance “a first step towards ensuring that aid workers in Tigray can deliver and ramp up the response given the rapidly rising needs in the region.”



Morocco Heavy rains flooded an illegal garment factory in the northern Moroccan city of Tangier, killing at least 28 workers. Local authorities said firefighters and emergency workers rescued 10 people from the factory, in the basement of a residential villa. Rescuers searched for others who might have been trapped in the sudden flooding.