



PROSECUTOR SAYS BURDEN ON HUAWEI'S LAWYER TO PROVE INFO WAS SHARED WITH FBI BY SERGEANT BEN CHANG, CURRENTLY LIVING IN MACAU P5

HONG KONG LOOKS AT EASING TRAVEL FOR VACCINATED RESIDENTS: LAM P7

MACAU'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF LOCAL RESIDENTS GREW TO 3.9% FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2021 P4

AP PHOTO



Indonesia Two attackers blew themselves up outside a packed Roman Catholic cathedral during a Palm Sunday Mass on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, wounding at least 20 people, police said. Police later said both attackers were killed instantly and evidence collected at the scene indicated one of the two was a woman. The wounded included four guards and several churchgoers, police said.

AP PHOTO



Myanmar As the military celebrated the annual Armed Forces Day holiday with a parade in the country's capital, soldiers and police elsewhere killed scores of people while suppressing protests in the deadliest bloodletting since last month's coup. The online news site Myanmar Now reported that the death toll had reached 114. A count issued by an independent researcher in Yangon who has been compiling near-real time death tolls put the total at 107, spread over more than two dozen cities and towns. More on p8

AP PHOTO



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded his two-day official visit to Bangladesh, a trip that sparked both violent protests and enthusiasm that relations between the two neighbors will continue to grow. Modi arrived on Friday to join celebrations of Bangladesh's 50th anniversary of independence, but the visit was overshadowed by violent protests in the capital, Dhaka, and elsewhere. At least four people were killed and 40 injured.

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MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



# MIGRANT BLUES

Migrant groups worry that government U-turn on e-vouchers may exclude TNRs from economic relief - again P2

## THE PROTEST THAT NEVER WAS

COURTESY ALL ABOUT MACAU



# MIGRANT WORKERS GROUPS DISAPPOINTED WITH GOV'T U-TURN

RENATO MARQUES

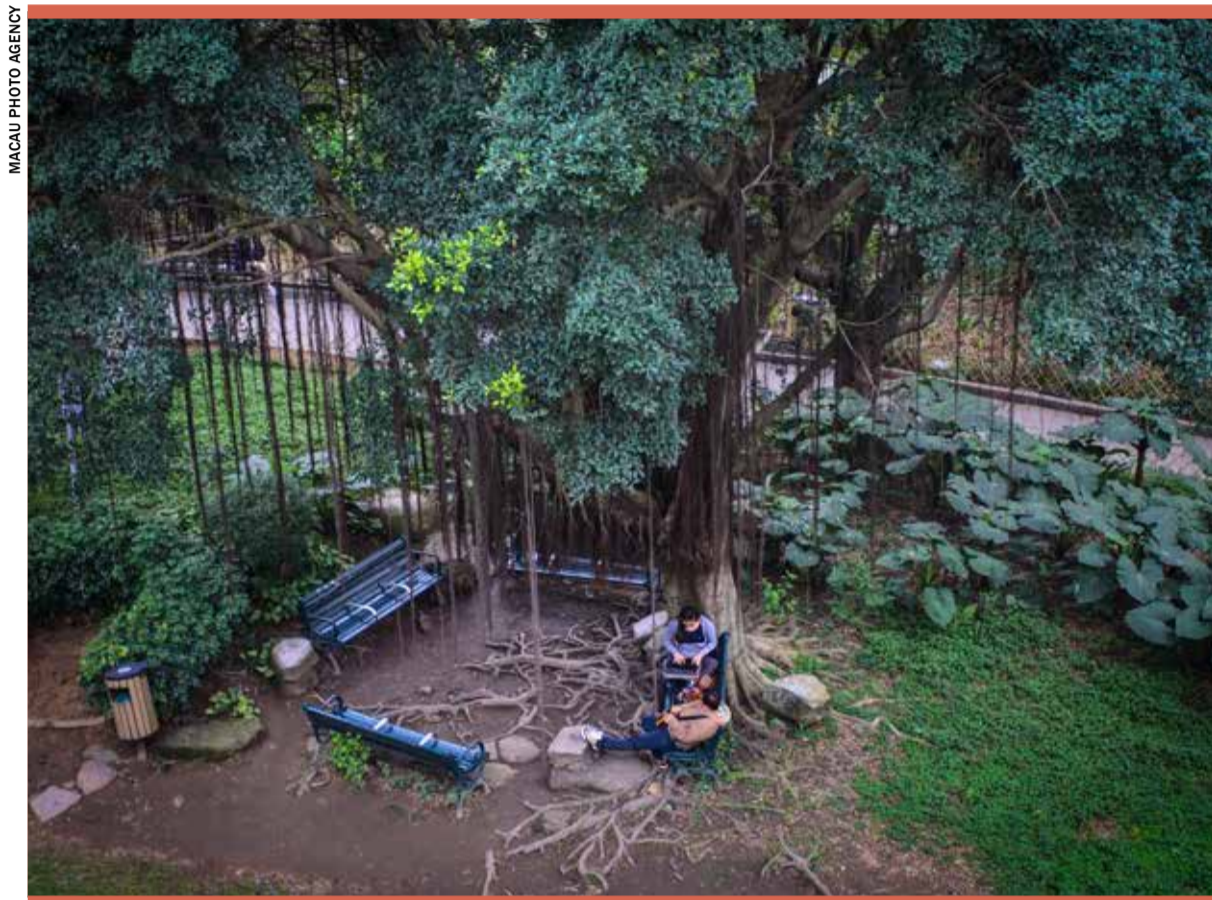
**M**IGRANT workers' groups have expressed deep disappointment in the government's U-turn regarding the e-vouchers scheme. They fear that their exclusion from any government support will add more weight to their burden.

The Times questioned Nedie Taberdo, president of the Green Philippines Migrant Workers Union in Macau, on the likelihood of the exclusion of non-resident workers (TNR) from the third round of the stimulus package. Taberdo said, "Well, since the announcement of this electronic coupons most of us were [already] anticipating this outcome."

She added "It will be a big disappointment to all blue card [TNR] holders if this happens." This was following Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong's announcement of the government's intention to retract the revised e-voucher scheme.

According to Taberdo, the fact that TNRs will likely be excluded from any governmental support is a significant problem that places added pressure on a weakened workforce.

"It's a big problem. Some of us



were hoping for this already so it could at least ease some burden, mostly to those who are in a 'no paid leave' situation," she said.

"[The government said] they pay great attention to ... public [opinion]... Migrant workers are also part of the public. We all

buy and consume products in Macau. Why exclude us again?" Taberdo also noted that among the community, the feeling is that this government response is outrageous.

Such an opinion was also backed by another Filipino workers'

association leader, Jassy Santos, who is the chairperson of the Progressive Labor Union of Domestic Workers. When questioned by the Times, Santos said that it "sounds like the Macau government is excluding migrants from everything. Migrants are

consumers as well and we contribute as well in our own way [to the economy]." Santos went on to ask, "Why [does] this government discriminate [against] us [again] by not including [migrant workers] in the scheme?"

When questioned on the same topic, the president of the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (IMWU), Yosa Wariyanti, also questioned the reasons behind the government's reversal.

"Why does the government not include us if we are consumers? I think we have the same right [being] here. The money we use and spend here also contributes to supporting the economy," Wariyanti said. "Even if we were granted consumption cards, we can't use them in our country, [we can only use them here]." She added that such money would always be injected into the local economy.

Wariyanti expressed hope that the government would reconsider and find an interim solution that would keep the e-vouchers system active for use by the TNR, while granting Macau ID holders the consumption cards.

"We hope that the government will still include us on this [support measure]," Wariyanti said. She added that when it was previously announced that there would be e-vouchers and that the TNRs would be included, "many Indonesian workers and other friends downloaded and learned how to use the [mobile] payment apps, hoping for that [outcome]."

# MUST delegation visits Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing

**A** delegation of the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) led by the institution's chancellor Liu Chak Wan recently went to Beijing to visit the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The delegation was warmly received by the latter's president, Hou Jianguo.

In return, Liu expressed his gratitude to the academy for its support of MUST. He also introduced the new president of MUST, Chair Professor Joseph Lee, to the academy's management. They were then briefed on the latest news from the university, as well as key development aspects and the latest con-

ditions in Macau.

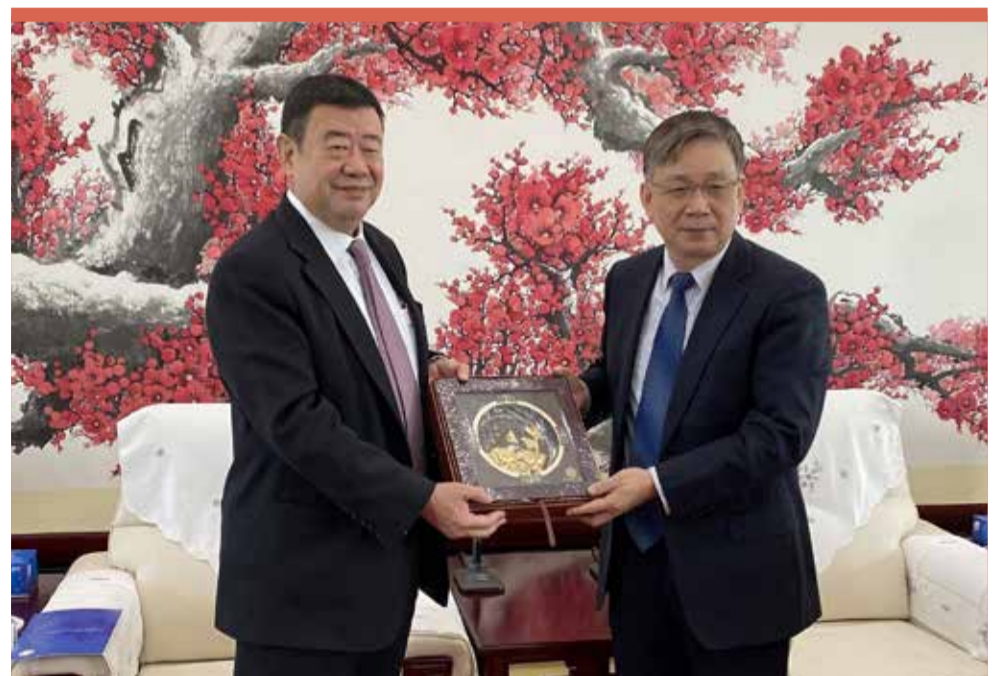
Chair Professor Liu Liang, director of the State Key Laboratory of Quality Research in Chinese Medicine, and now honorary president of MUST, highlighted the university's research on pandemic containment technology and its future focus on traditional Chinese medicine research.

Chair Professor Zhang Keke, director of the State Key Laboratory of Lunar and Planetary Sciences, familiarized the academy's management with the progress of Macau's first scientific satellite, MUST One, among other astronomical projects.

The delegation also included Dr Tong Ka Lok, vice president of MUST, and other key personnel.

## MUST ATTAINS ESITOP 1%

MUST's Molecular Biology and Genetics Studies have been ranked as the top 1% globally in the Clarivate Essential Science Indicators (ESI) institution benchmarks. Molecular Biology and Genetics Studies are the second discipline to attain this achievement for the university. In the last decade, 153 papers by MUST have been collected by the ESI, with 15,431 citations. 13 papers were highly cited papers. **AL**



Liu Chak Wan (left) and Hou Jianguo

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# SSM calls off demonstration against e-vouchers prompting mixed feelings, reactions

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Health Bureau (SSM) on Saturday night called off the demonstration scheduled for yesterday to express public dissatisfaction with the relief measures presented by the government as part of the third round of the economic stimulus package, announced on March 15.

The demonstration was organized by the Macao Community Development Initiative (MCDI), a group headed by pro-democracy lawmakers Au Kam San and Ng Kuok Cheong. Their aim was to once again express public views on the new method of support for internal consumption, known as e-vouchers, that did not gather much support after their announcement.

According to the organizers, the protest was intended to call on the government to retract such measures and present others that are more "consensual" among the population - that is, the return to last year's "consumption cards" - so that every citizen in Macau would benefit from the measure.

Au took to social media to announce that the demonstration had been called off at the last minute by the SSM, which claimed that the organizers could not guarantee that the Covid-19 pandemic prevention and control measures could be fully enforced.

In a statement, Au noted the cancellation and apologized to the public for the last-minute information. Au also appealed to the public not to gather in Tap Seac Square (the original venue from where the street protest was to start) to avoid "misunderstandings that could lead to an accusation by the police forces of illegal assembly."

Exhibiting a constructive approach to the matter, Au said, "Striving for social justice and reasonable policies have never depended on one [single] moment, but [instead] requires the public to pay extensive attention to the government's policies, measures and behaviors and express their opinions in a timely manner." Au added that the acknowledgments made earlier by the Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng as well as the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, which promised to review the method, were already a victory for the public in expressing their views and wishes to the government.

Au noted that Lei told lawmakers and assured suppor-

COURTESY ALL ABOUT MACAU



ters that the government would follow the public opinion.

At the time, the lawmakers noted, above all, that the new method proposed by the government of distributing electronic discount coupons for payments made through mobile applications was not suitable for the use of a large portion of the population, especially not children and the elderly.

## SSM BLAMES PROTEST ORGANIZERS

In a statement released by the SSM on Saturday evening, the director of the SSM said the Bureau had requested the suspension of a protest planned for yesterday, "due to the organizer's failure to [assure the health authorities] that the necessary epidemic-control measures would be implemented during the event." The director added that the authorities made the decision to suspend the public activity "after taking into account the unpredictability and uncertainty of the number of people that could potentially attend the event."

According to SSM, the organizers had initially estimated that around 150 people would participate in the demonstration, and later updated this figure to around 500.

In the same statement, the SSM asserted that besides the number of attendees to the event, the organizers could also not comply with other rules such as body temperature checking to ensure that participants did not have a fever. They added that organizers would not be able to guarantee that every participant would wear a face mask at all times; would not be able to enforce social distancing measures (1 meter apart in between participants); and could not ensure that passers-by would not join the event during its course and could not gather at any point.

## LAWMAKER SLAMS DOUBLE-STANDARDS

Pro-democracy lawmaker Sulu Sou has expressed his views on the events that led to the cancellation of the protest.

In a statement issued in the name of the New Macau Association (NMA), the lawmaker claimed that authorities have, once again, perpetuated double standards in the application of pandemic prevention and control measures.

"In the past, the Public Security Police Force and the Heal-

th Bureau have repeatedly made use of epidemic prevention [measures] as an excuse to obstruct citizens from legally exercising their freedom of assembly and protest, which is already precarious," Sou said. "However, at the same time, certain large-scale activities can be carried out as usual, such as the Grand Prix, marathon events, charity bazaars, food festivals, etc."

Sou said that the NMA is "gravely dissatisfied with the SAR government's use of multiple standards of epidemic prevention to

make demanding requirements that even the government itself cannot guarantee, to arbitrarily infringe the rights and freedoms of citizens constitutionally enshrined without sufficient justification." Sou claimed that with such a decision, the director of SSM is violating the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Code and that the Law on Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases. According to Sou, these provisions "carry several flaws that [could] lead to its invalidity [by] seriously deviating from the most basic principle of legality that all administrative acts should comply, which highlights the authorities' eagerness to suppress the citizens' legal exercise of freedom of protest."

In the same statement, the NMA also called on everyone to take this matter as a serious one and urged the authorities "to handle epidemic prevention work fairly, instead of favoring ... non-governmental activities as they please, or even trampling on the citizens' basic rights of freedom of assembly and protest guaranteed enshrined by constitutional legislation."

## ECONOMY CHIEF HINTS AT RETURN OF CONSUMPTION CARDS

**T**HE Office of the Secretary for Economy and Finance retracted the e-vouchers scheme announcement two weeks ago in a statement published just a few hours before the Health Bureau called off yesterday's demonstration. Secretary Lei Wai Nong's office noted that, following public opinion, the government would work on the return of consumption cards.

In a statement published just a few hours before the notice from the Health Bureau that called off the demonstration, the Office of the Secretary for Economy and Finance retracted the e-vouchers scheme announcement from two weeks ago. The statement noted that, following public opinion, the government would work on the return of consumption cards.

"The government has learned the public prefer the electronic consumption card model that was employed in 2020 and will press ahead with work in that direction, in a bid to enable members of the public to enjoy more conveniently the consumption benefits to be provided by the government," the statement said. "An announcement regarding optimization will be made soon, once technical details have been finalized."

In the same statement, the Secretary noted that the government has paid great attention to the opinions of the public regarding optimization of the electronic consumption benefits plan. The statement went on to say that officials from several departments under the Secretariat for Economy and Finance, "have held recently a total of 15 information sessions and met with representa-



Secretary Lei Wai Nong

tives from 19 associations, to garner their opinions regarding the plan."

Lei also noted that, in addition to those sessions and meetings, his office also received opinions from members of the Legislative Assembly, scholars, and individuals from the community.

Last year, the government introduced the first two rounds of prepaid consumption card plan, which distributed a total of 8,000 patacas to every Macau ID holder in two installments from May to December.

The recently presented third round included a different scheme requiring users to spend first before being granted an e-voucher, which could be used as a discount on the next purchase.

Last Tuesday, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng apologized to the public for the red tape involved in the MOP5 billion e-voucher program, part of the third round of stimulus package announced earlier on March 15. **RM**

### MACANESE CHEFS SHOWCASE DELICACIES IN HANGZHOU

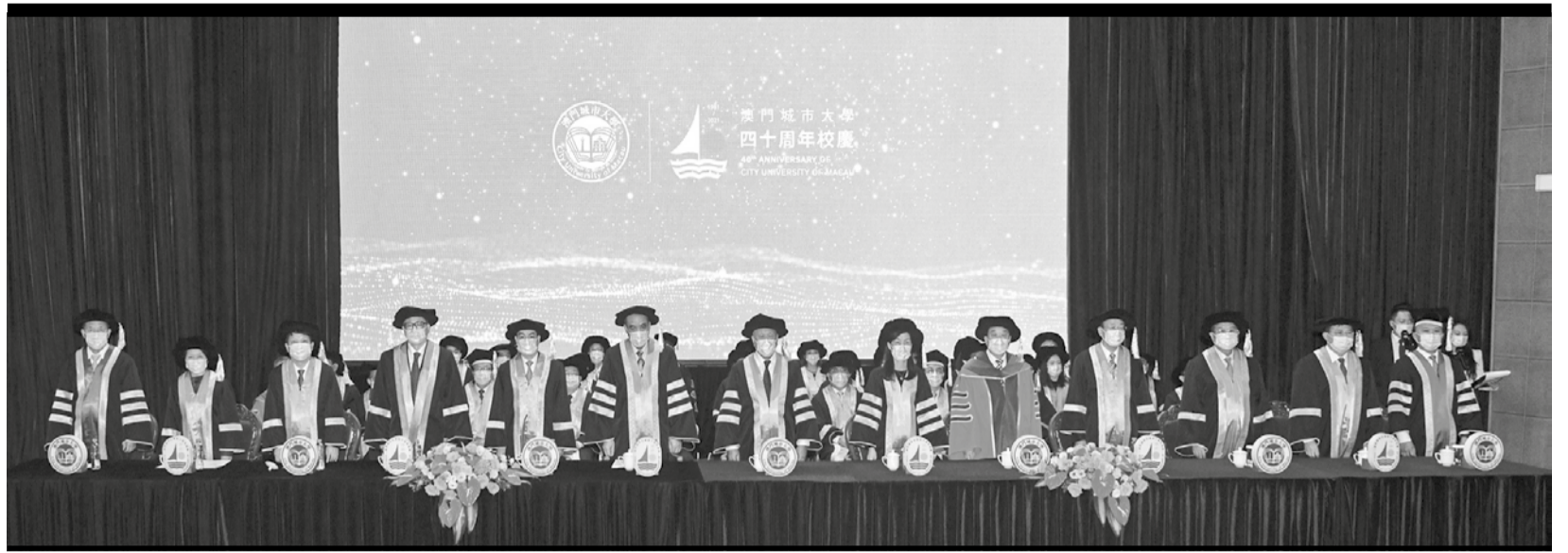
During the Taste of Macao Food Promotion, which will run in Hangzhou until April 11, two renowned Macanese chefs, Antonieta Manhão and Rita Cabral, will elaborate on the characteristics of Macanese gastronomy for a team of local chefs. They will work with the chefs to prepare a Macanese buffet dinner at the Grand Hyatt Hangzhou. The Macanese chefs will not only pass on the culinary legacy to local chefs, but also inspire them with innovative fusions in traditional culinary arts. Hangzhou resident Ms Liu deemed her first encounter with Macanese cuisine a wonderful surprise.

### HO ION SANG ASKS ABOUT CONSOLIDATION OF GOV'T ADVISORY ENTITIES

Lawmaker Ho Ion Sang pointed out that in the past 20 years of the Macau Special Administrative Region, the government has set up more than 40 advisory entities, with many sharing similar functions. He cited social opinions on the complexity of these entities and questioned whether they can really function well. As such, he asked the government about details of the next phases of public restructuring. He also asked whether the government has plans to restructure advisory entities through standardization, in the hopes of improving efficiency.

### TWO COVID RELAPSE CASES NOT COUNTED AS IMPORTED INFECTIONS

Two local residents who returned from the U.S. and the U.K. on March 7 with positive test results for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies will not be counted as imported cases. Outgoing director of the Health Bureau, Lei Chin Ion, explained that it would cause confusion to the global tolls if they were counted as such. The bureau further explained that the viral densities of the two individuals were so low that a high possibility of contagion is not expected.



### CITYU 40TH ANNIVERSARY

## QIAO XIAOYANG, PAUL PUN CONFERRED HONORARY DOCTORATE DEGREES

ANTHONY LAM

As part of the celebratory events marking its 40th Anniversary, the City University of Macau (CityU) held a conferment ceremony of honorary doctorate degrees yesterday. Chinese legal professional Qiao Xiaoyang and local charity worker Paul Pun were the recipients.

Holding the position of Secretary-General of charity organization Caritas Macau for years, Pun has become something of an icon for the organization. He has led uncountable projects aiding communities in need in Macau. One of his many projects is the annual Charity Bazaar, which has been held in the city without fail for more than half a century.

Yesterday, Pun was conferred with a Doctorate honoris causa in Social Science.

Meanwhile, Qiao has held several national positions which focus

on popularizing and promoting the Basic Law in the two Special Administrative Regions. He has also served as a vice-chairman of the legislative affairs commission of the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

Qiao has held positions on the Hong Kong SAR Preparatory Committee and Macao SAR Preparatory Committee, overseeing the work prior to, during and after the transfer of sovereignties.

Qiao was conferred with a Doctorate honoris causa in Law.

### 'PATRIOTS GOVERNING MACAU' EDUCATION

Representing the Chief Executive, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong gave a speech at the ceremony yesterday. She reiterated that higher education should abide by the principle of "Patriots Governing Macau." Education with a patriotic focus should be practiced in higher

education institutions in order to "nurture youth talents with the correct values and [a] sense of responsibility."

She added that institutions should also become accustomed to the new requirements for the development of the Greater Bay Area and the country, while utilizing Big Data and IT to renew manners of transfer of research results. This will, in Ao Ieong's words, provide reliable support for Macau's technological development and economic diversification.

### CITYU SEES NEW RECTOR ONBOARD

Professor Jun Liu has been appointed as the Rector of the City University of Macau as of March 1, 2021. Liu is a professional linguist, intercultural communication specialist and language educator.

As an international leader in

the field of language education, Liu was the first Asian and non-native English-speaking President of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. International (TESOL) from 2005 to 2007. He also received the James E Alatis Award of Outstanding Service to TESOL in 2016.

He has served as Vice President of the International Research Foundation of English Language Education since 2015; Vice President of Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (2013-2019), and Board Member of the Association of International Education Administrators (2015-2018).

Liu believes that the CityU will seize this historic opportunity to develop higher education in Macau and adhere to the ethos of a metropolitan university rooted in the culture and values of the city and region it inhabits, while cultivating young talent with both patriotism and a global outlook.

## Local unemployment rate grows to 3.9%

HONEY TSANG

MACAU'S unemployment rate of local residents was at 3.9% for the period December 2020 to February 2021, a rise of 0.2% points from the previous period of November 2020 to January 2021, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has revealed in its latest statistics.

The unemployment rate of local residents was higher than the general unemployment rate of 2.9%, which also displayed an increase of 0.2% points, period-to-period.

The number of unemployed grew by 600 from

the previously surveyed period to 11,500. The majority of the unemployed job seekers had engaged in gaming-related activities and the construction industry.

Meanwhile, the city's underemployment rate increased by 0.1% to 4.5%. The city saw 18,100 underemployed individuals, up 400 from the previous period. Most are currently employed by the gaming sector and transport and storage-related enterprises.

The number of employed people in Macau totaled 386,900, whilst the number of employed residents was 282,600, down

by 2,300 and 1,500, respectively, from the previous period.

Overall, the underemployment rate and the unemployment rate in the latest surveyed period grew by 3.7% and 1.0% points, year-on-year, respectively.

Cloe Chao, the president of the New Macau Gaming Staff Rights Association, noted earlier at a media briefing on March 26 that the city's unemployment rate has been on the rise and urged the government to reinstate consumption cards in due course to help mitigate the financial hardship some people are facing in town.



# Prosecutor says burden on Huawei lawyer to prove info shared by sergeant Chang

HONEY TSANG

**T**HE claims made by Huawei's chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou's lawyers that information pertaining to her phone was sent to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) by a retired Canadian police officer, currently living in Macau, have no grounds and should be rejected, a Canadian justice department lawyer told an extradition hearing Friday [Macau time].

The retired officer, Ben Chang, was a former staff sergeant at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). He is currently living in Macau and serving as an assistant vice-president for security at Galaxy Casino in Macau, according to the South China Morning Post.

"There is no evidential basis to reach such a conclusion," Canadian Justice Department lawyer John Gibb-Carsley told Associate Chief Justice Heather Holmes at the hearing.

Gibb-Carsley emphasized testimony made earlier by RCMP



Chief Financial Officer of Huawei, Meng Wanzhou, on the way to the court

information technologist Jayson Allen, who scouted Chang's outgoing emails. Allen confirmed he did not find any emails from Chang to the FBI on or after December 4, 2018, which is the day another RCMP officer opened and photographed the details of Meng's devices at the request of the FBI.

Chang hired a lawyer in Macau and refused to testify. He offered an affidavit to the hearing, denying that he had shared any information from Meng's phone with the FBI.

Holmes raised the issue of Chang's refusal to testify at the hearing, saying, "he was a senior police officer and ... generally, re-

tired police officers testify in relation to cases they were involved with before their retirement and that's not happening here."

Meng's lawyers stated that Chang's refusal to testify at the hearing brought his affidavit into doubt. The move also solidifies their argument that Meng had fallen victim to the conspiracy be-

tween the Canadian police force and the FBI.

On Dec. 1, 2018, authorities in Canada arrested Meng Wanzhou at the Vancouver airport upon the request of the U.S., which has accused Huawei of using a Hong Kong shell company, Skycom, to sell equipment to Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions. She was accused of committing fraud by misleading the HSBC bank about Huawei's business dealings in Iran.

The U.S. is seeking to extradite her to the U.S. to face a fraud trial. Beijing denounced the arrest, claiming that this is instead a political move plotted to suppress China's rise.

Meng has remained free on bail and has been residing in Vancouver.

The extradition hearing is likely to come to an end soon, with hearings expected to conclude on May 14. Associate Chief Justice Heather Holmes will then rule on whether to approve the extradition. However, if there are any appeals, proceedings could span for years.

## PARADISE ENTERTAINMENT REPORTS NET HKD189.2M LOSS FOR 2020

HONEY TSANG

**P**ARADISE Entertainment Ltd, the casino management services and gaming equipment provider, has reported a net loss of HKD189.2 million for the full year of 2020 - a stark contrast to the profit totaling HKD926,000 it made in 2019, according to the annual result report released last week.

The sharp decline in earnings by the Group has been ascribed to the negative impact of the pandemic and "subsequent quarantine measures as well as travel restrictions imposed by jurisdictions including Macau and Hong Kong," according to the statement.

Another dampener was the termination of management services provided to Casino Waldo, a satellite casino under Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd (GEG), from March 1 last year. This resulted in a loss on disposal/write-off of property, plant and equipment totaling HKD9,663,000; and ano-



ther impairment loss of HK\$5,000,000 in property, plant and equipment, the release said.

The loss was due to the forced shutdown of all local casinos for at least 15 days from February 5 in 2020, a measure imposed by the government to contain Covid-19. It was also hindered by operational constraints, such as the requirement that all patrons present proof of negative Covid-19 test results, and the cessation of operation in Casino Waldo.

To offset the loss, "the Group explored other businesses by making use of its extensive network in the PRC to provide procurement services on behalf of overseas customers."

Paradise Entertainment is still operating Casino Kam Pek Paradise in Macau, a satellite casino under SJM Holdings Ltd (SJM). As of 31 December 2020, the Group had around 770 employees, including around 380 casino staff employed by SJM to work at Casino Kam Pek Paradise.

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# CHINA SANCTIONS US, CANADIAN OFFICIALS OVER XINJIANG

**CHINA** announced new sanctions against U.S. and Canadian officials in a growing political and economic feud over its policies in the traditionally Muslim region of Xinjiang.

A statement from the Foreign Ministry this weekend said the head of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Gayle Manchin, will be barred from visiting mainland China, Hong Kong or Macau, and having any dealings with Chinese financial entities.

The commission's vice chair, Tony Perkins, was also included on the sanctions list, along with Canadian Member of Parliament Michael Chong and the body's Subcommittee on International Human Rights.

China has strongly rejected accusations of human rights abuses in Xinjiang and has launched calls for boycotts and other punishments against foreign firms including retailer H&M and Nike, along with sanctions against foreign government officials and activists whom it says are spreading false information about its policies toward Uyghurs and members of other Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang.

"They must stop political manipulation on Xinjiang-related issues, stop interfering in China's internal affairs in any form and refrain from going further down the wrong path. Otherwise, they will get their fingers burnt," the Foreign Ministry statement said.

China announced sanctions



Friday against British officials and H&M products were dropped from Chinese websites over their opposition to buying cotton from Xinjiang. The ruling Communist Party's Youth League lau-

nched attacks on H&M following the European Union's decision to join the United States, Britain and Canada in imposing sanctions on Chinese officials blamed for abuses in Xinjiang.

More than 1 million members of the Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities have been confined to detention camps in Xinjiang, according to foreign governments and researchers.

The Chinese government rejects complaints of abuses and says the camps are for job training to support economic development and combat Islamic radicalism.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the sanctions "baseless" retaliation for U.S. measures against Chinese officials.

"We stand in solidarity with Canada, the U.K., the EU, and other partners and allies around the world in calling on the PRC to end the human rights violations and abuses against predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang and to release those arbitrarily detained," Blinken said in a statement.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said China's decision to sanction an opposition Conservative lawmaker as well as a parliamentary subcommittee is an attack on freedom of speech regarding human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

"China's sanctions are an attack on transparency and freedom of expression — values at the heart of our democracy," Trudeau said on Twitter.

Michael Chong, the opposition Conservative foreign affairs critic who has been sanctioned, said, "We who live freely in democracies under the rule of law must speak for the voiceless," Chong said on Twitter. **MDT/AP**

## BEIJING BARS NINE BRITISH INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES FROM ENTERING MAINLAND, MACAU, HONG KONG

**CHINA** has announced sanctions against several relevant British individuals and entities.

According to a statement by a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, the United Kingdom originally imposed unilateral sanctions against relevant Chinese individuals and entities. The UK cited the human rights issues in Xinjiang when imposing these sanctions, Xinhua reported.

"This move, based on nothing but lies and disinformation, flagrantly breaches international law and basic norms governing international relations, grossly interferes in China's internal affairs, and severely undermines China-U.K.

relations," said the Foreign Ministry's statement.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has summoned the British Ambassador to China to lodge solemn representations, expressing "firm opposition and strong condemnation."

The Chinese side has decided to sanction nine individuals and four entities on the UK side "that maliciously spread lies and disinformation, Xinhua reported last week. They are: Tom Tugendhat, Iain Duncan Smith, Neil O'Brien, David Alton, Tim Loughton, Nusrat Ghani, Helena Kennedy, Geoffrey Nice, Joanne Nicola Smith Finley, China Research Group, Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, Uyghur Tribunal, and Essex Court Chambers.

"As of today, the individuals concerned and their immediate family members are prohibited from entering the mainland, Hong Kong and Macau of China. Their property in China will be frozen, and Chinese citizens and institutions will be prohibited from doing business with them. China reserves the right to take further measures," said the statement.

According to the state-run agency, citing the statement, "China is firmly determined to safeguard its national sovereignty, security and development interests, and warns the U.K. side not go further down the wrong path. Otherwise, China will [respond resolutely]." **PC**

# Two in Seattle, San Francisco face anti-Asian hate charges

**PROSECUTORS** in Seattle and San Francisco have charged men with hate crimes in separate incidents that authorities say targeted people of Asian descent amid a wave of high-profile and sometimes deadly violence against Asian Americans since the pandemic began.

Hundreds of protesters took to the streets of Los Angeles and throughout the San Francisco Bay Area yesterday [Macau], the latest in a series of rallies in response to what many said has become a troubling surge of anti-Asian sentiments.

"We can no longer accept the normalization of being treated as perpetual foreigners in this country," speaker Tammy Kim told a rally in LA's Koreatown.

At rally attended by more than 1,000 people in San Francisco's Civic Center, the city's police chief, Bill Scott, drew loud applause when he said, "Hate is the virus, and love is the vaccination."

On Friday, prosecutors in King County, Washington, charged Christopher Hamner, 51, with three counts of malicious harassment after police say he screamed profanities and threw things at cars in two incidents last week targeting women and children of Asian heritage, The Seattle Times reported Saturday.

In San Francisco, Victor Humberto Brown, 53, made a first court appearance after authorities say he repeatedly punched an Asian American man at a bus stop while shouting an

anti-Asian slur.

Brown was initially booked on misdemeanor counts, but prosecutors recently elevated the case to a felony, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. He said in court that he has a post-traumatic stress disorder.

In Seattle, according to court documents, Hamner yelled profanities and threw things at a woman stopped at a red light with her two children, ages 5 and 10, on March 16. Three days later, authorities say Hamner cut off another car driven by an Asian woman, yelled a profanity and the word "Asian" at her and then threw a water bottle at her car after charging at her when she pulled into a parking spot.

Hamner was being held

on \$75,000 bail on Saturday. It wasn't immediately clear if Hamner, who has not yet made a court appearance, had retained an attorney or would be assigned a public defender.

In the first instance, the woman told her 10-year-old daughter to try to take a cellphone photo of the man. The woman, identified by KIRO-TV as Pamela Cole, posted about the incident on social media and a friend's husband identified Hamner as a possible suspect.

The second woman who was accosted had a dashboard camera in her vehicle that captured the license plate of the other car, which is registered to Hamner, according to court documents. The po-

lice detective investigating the case reviewed the video and determined the women's assailant "was clearly Hamner," according to the charges.

Cole, who said she identifies as part Chinese and part Malaysian, told KIRO-TV she felt like "a sitting duck" when Hamner approached her car, hitting his fists together and screaming at her to "Get out! Get out!" while spewing profanities about her Asian heritage.

"I was in complete shock. Are you talking to me?" Cole told the station.

"He jumps out the car, and he's charging at us," she said. "That was the scariest part for me."

In San Francisco, Ron Tuason, an Army veteran

of Filipino, Chinese and Spanish descent, told the Chronicle he was at a bus stop in the city's Ingleside neighborhood on March 13 when Brown approached him, yelling "Get out of my country" before using a racial slur meant to denigrate Asian people. Tuason said Brown also said, "It's because of you there's a problem here."

Tuason, 56, said he believes Brown was referring to the coronavirus. Brown punched him multiple times, he said, knocking him to the ground. He suffered a black eye and a swollen cheek as a result of the attack and said he's also experiencing memory loss.

Police found Brown shortly after Tuason called 911. **MDT/AP**

ADVERTORIAL

## SANDS CHINA NEWS

### Long-serving Sands China Team Members a Testament to Company's Focus on Nurturing Local Talent

Sands China has always attached great importance to the professional development of team members, and the company's focus on providing team members with ideal development prospects has helped increase employee loyalty. Including the 949 team members celebrating 10- or 15-year anniversaries in 2020, more than 8,100 team members have now served the company for 10 years or more, representing more than 30 per cent of Sands China's employees. Among them, over 2,200 have hit the milestone of 15 years of service. Over 1,300 of them have been with the company since 2004. In that time, the company has fostered significant growth in the number of local residents in management positions, soaring from 20 per cent in 2004 to nearly 90 percent in 2020.

Emma Fan, a human resources officer who has been with Sands China for 15 years, began her career in the table games department before transferring to the human resources department through the company's horizontal development programme. Emma was the opening team of Venetian Macao, Sands Cotai Central and Parisian Macao. She said: "I joined this company 15 years ago, and have grown a lot, both personally and professionally. Now I'm proud to be part of the opening team of The Londoner Macao! During these 15 years, our company pays attention to our needs, and my superiors and colleagues are very caring and supportive to each other. This is like my second home!"

"Sands China is proud of our long-serving team members for their loyal and diligent service over the years, and we are grateful for their continuous dedication," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd. "With the company encountering unprecedented challenges in 2020, their hard work and dedication are even more commendable; they have worked hand-in-hand with the company in both good times and bad. With our team members' perseverance and their determination to overcome adversity, we are confident that we can usher in a new spring after a long and cold winter."



## Hong Kong looks at easing travel for vaccinated residents: Lam

HONG Kong is looking into making it easier for vaccinated residents to travel to encourage more people to get inoculated, Chief Executive Carrie Lam said in a statement on Saturday.

"We have been actively studying whether social distancing measures can be further adjusted if a certain number of people are vaccinated, and we will discuss with other regions whether we can mutually provide travel convenience to vaccinated tourists," Lam said in an emailed release.

About 430,000 people in Hong Kong have received at least the first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine since the city began inoculating on Feb. 26, according to Lam. This accounts for 6.6% of people in Hong Kong aged 16 or older who are eligible for inoculation, she said.

Hong Kong has imposed a stringent tracing and testing program and conducted 100,000 nucleic acid tests a day on average in March, according to Lam. After an outbreak in a gym near the city center this month, an average of 10 close contacts were identified for each confirmed case. About 1,500 people from the cluster were sent to quarantine centers and some 3,300 people underwent virus testing, the chief executive said in the statement.

### FOSUN, BIONTECH FIND NO SAFETY ISSUES

Initial investigations by BioNTech SE and its regional distributor found no safety concerns with batches of vaccines sent to Macau and Hong Kong, after packaging defects prompted a halt in the use of the Covid-19 vaccine in the city.

Early findings didn't rule out the possibility that packaging de-

fects may have been because of environmental factors during long-haul transport, the Hong Kong government said in a statement, without specifying. The government, BioNTech and Shanghai Fosun Pharmaceutical Group Co. aim to conclude the investigation within a week, it said.

The vaccination campaign suffered a setback last week when Hong Kong and Macau temporarily suspended shots manufactured by BioNTech because of packaging defects. The suspension risks eroding public confidence in the inoculation, which had provided the SARs residents an alternative to those made by Chinese firms.

The defects, which included loose vial caps and stained bottles, affected a small number of bottles, according to HKSAR officials. About 1.3 million doses have been delivered to the financial hub, and around 150,000 people had received BioNTech shots in Hong Kong prior to the halt.

Fosun and BioNTech have studied the entire supply chain, including the sealing process in BioNTech's German facilities, vaccine packaging, transport to Hong Kong, logistical processing and storage after their arrival in the city, as well as inspections at community vaccination centers. They found no "obvious systematic factors" that could have led to the defects from packaging to usage, according to the statement.

The companies also said that they didn't believe the defects were results of cold chain and logistic management issues. Random testing of remaining vaccine vials with intact packaging didn't find evidence of leakage.

MDT/BLOOMBERG

BLOOMBERG



MYANMAR

# Protests continue a day after more than 100 killed

**P**ROTESTERS in Myanmar returned to the streets yesterday to press their demands for a return to democracy, just a day after security forces killed more than 100 people in the bloodiest day since last month's military coup.

Protests were held in Yangon and Mandalay, the country's two biggest cities, as well as elsewhere. Some of the demonstrations were again met with police force.

At least 114 people were killed Saturday as security forces cracked down on protests against the Feb. 1 coup that ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government, according to the online news service Myanmar Now. The reported fatalities included several children under 16 years old.

Similar tallies of the death toll were issued by other Myanmar media and researchers, far exceeding the previous highest death toll on March 14. The number of killings since the coup is now more than 420, according to multiple counts.

The coup reversed years of progress toward democracy after five decades of military rule and has again made Myanmar the focus of international scrutiny.

The Saturday killings by police and soldiers took place throughout the country



Anti-coup protesters run around their makeshift barricade they burn to make defense line during a demonstration in Yangon yesterday

as Myanmar's military celebrated the annual Armed Forces Day holiday with a parade in the country's capital, Naypyitaw.

The bloodshed quickly drew international condemnation, both from diplomatic missions within Myanmar and from abroad.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was shocked by the killings of civilians, including children.

"The continuing military crackdown is unacceptable and demands a firm, unified & resolute international response," he wrote on Twitter.

In the United States, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a tweet that

his country was "horrified by the bloodshed perpetrated by Burmese security forces, showing that the junta will sacrifice the lives of the people to serve the few."

The military chiefs of 12 nations issued a joint statement condemning the use of force against unarmed people.

"A professional military follows international standards for conduct and is responsible for protecting — not harming — the people it serves," it said. "We urge the Myanmar Armed Forces to cease violence and work to restore respect and credibility with the people of Myanmar that it has lost through its actions."

The statement was issued by the defense chiefs of Australia, Canada, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The human rights group Amnesty International revived criticism that the international community was not doing enough to end the state violence in Myanmar.

"U.N. Security Council member states' continued refusal to meaningfully act against this never-ending horror is contemptible," said Ming Yu Hah, the organization's deputy regional director for campaigns.

The Security Council has condemned the violence but not advocated concerted action against the junta, such as a ban on selling it arms. China and Russia are both major arms suppliers to Myanmar's military as well as politically sympathetic, and as members of the council would almost certainly veto any such move.

In recent days the junta has portrayed the demonstrators as the ones perpetrating violence for their sporadic use of Molotov cocktails. On Saturday, some protesters in Yangon were seen carrying bows and arrows. It has said its use of force has been justified to stop what it has called rioting. **AP**

## this day in history



### 1971 MANSON SENT TO GAS CHAMBER



Charles Manson and three members of his hippy cult have been sentenced to death in Los Angeles.

They were found guilty of the August 1969 murders of seven people and one unborn child at the beginning of the year.

Their victims included eight-months pregnant actress Sharon Tate - wife of film director Roman Polanski.

None of the defendants heard their verdicts as they were ejected from the courtroom for disrupting proceedings - as they had done several times during the nine month trial.

Manson, 36, was led out after telling the judge and jury: "you don't have any authority over me. You're not nearly as good as me."

His accomplices - Susan Atkins, 22, Patricia Krenwinkel, 23 and Leslie Van Houten, 21 - were dragged screaming from court.

Ms Atkins shouted: "It's gonna come down hard. Lock your doors. Protect your kids."

The prosecution - led by Vincent Bugliosi - depicted Manson as a satanic monster who controlled the women whom he described as "mindless robots".

Jury member Marie Mesmer said: "He was the leader, the worst...I think he's a dangerous influence on society, highly dangerous."

The women - who, like Manson, had shaved their heads - admitted carrying out the killings under the influence of the hallucinogenic drug LSD but denied Manson's involvement.

It took the jury 10 hours to give their verdict in a case that has cost the state of California over £400,000 (over \$1m).

As well as the Tate murder Atkins, Krenwinkel and Manson were condemned for killing Polish writer Voyteck Frykowski, coffee heiress Abigail Folger, Hollywood hairdresser Jay Sebring and a friend of Sharon Tate's caretaker, Steven Parent.

Ms Van Houten was sentenced for murdering supermarket owner Leno la Blanca and his wife.

Judge Charles Older said he would pass formal sentence on 16 April, when he may reduce the punishments to life imprisonment, but it is considered unlikely he will do so.

Manson is expected to be confined to the notorious 'death row' in San Quentin to wait for the final outcome of his - automatic - appeal.

Courtesy BBC News

EGYPT

## TWO TUGBOATS SPEED TO SUEZ CANAL AS SHIPPERS AVOID IT



**T**WO additional tugboats sped yesterday to Egypt's Suez Canal to aid efforts to free a skyscraper-sized container ship wedged for days across the crucial waterway, even as major shippers increasingly divert their boats out of fear the vessel may take even longer to free.

The massive Ever Given, a Panama-flagged, Japanese-owned ship that carries cargo between Asia and Europe, got stuck Tuesday

in a single-lane stretch of the canal. In the time since, authorities have been unable to remove the vessel and traffic through the canal — valued at over \$9 billion a day — has been halted, further disrupting a global shipping network already strained by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Dutch-flagged Alp Guard and the Italian-flagged Carlo Magno, called in to help tugboats already there, reached the Red

Sea near the city of Suez early Sunday, satellite data from MarineTraffic.com showed. The tugboats will nudge the 400-meter-long Ever Given as dredgers continue to vacuum up sand from underneath the vessel and mud caked to its port side, said Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement, which manages the Ever Given.

Excavators dug yesterday on the eastern wall of the Suez Canal, hoping to free the bulbous bow of the Ever Given that plowed into the embankment, satellite pictures from Maxar Technologies showed. **MDT/AP**

## IN CONTEXT

Judge Older confirmed the death penalty in his judgement on 19 April 1971.

It had been one of the longest-running murder trials in US history, with a jury sequestered for longer than ever before - 225 days.

The California Supreme Court abolished the death penalty in 1972 and the four were given life sentences.

Manson and four other (male) accomplices were subsequently convicted for the murders of Gary Hinman and Donald (Shorty) Shea.

Charles Manson has endured as a cult figure for various extremist groups and has been the subject of various films and documentaries.

In April 2002 Manson was refused parole for the 10th time and Van Houten had her fourteenth request turned down in June of that year. Atkins and Krenwinkel have also had numerous parole applications refused.







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Property of the Week



**2 Bedroom Apartment With Balcony**  
**HK\$4,800,000** 750 ft<sup>2</sup> 2 🏠 1 🏠



Nestled on the main street of Old Taipa, the location is closely connected to the cultural heritage zones of Macau. This two-bedroom apartment which sets on the second floor of a walk-up building is nicely renovated and equipped with appliances. This property has been popular on the rental market for years and the owner has decided to put it up for sale.

The area is convenient with grocery stores, fresh food markets, and dozens of restaurants nearby. Viewings can be arranged anytime.

Viewing by appointment. Find out more on [www.jmlproperty.com](http://www.jmlproperty.com)



Rain Dance Property "We dance until it's RENTED!"



**Manhattan E Unit, Taipa**  
**\$17,500/mth**  
1,626 ft<sup>2</sup>  
3 🏠 2 🏠



Property Hotlist



**Seaview Garden, Macau**  
**\$10,900,000**  
1,420 ft<sup>2</sup>  
3 🏠 2 🏠



**Wonderful layout, Nova Taipa**  
**\$17,000/mth**  
2,530 ft<sup>2</sup>  
4 🏠 3 🏠



**Taipa Village studio with Enclose Balcony**  
**\$7,900/mth**  
360 ft<sup>2</sup>  
1 🏠



More Listings

For Sale

- [Macau] Stylish apartment ZAPE 2 🏠 1 🏠 720 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$7,600,000** (ref: n/a)
- [Coloane] Hellene Gardens 1 🏠 3 🏠 2 🏠 1,663 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$7,900,000** (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Taipa Village big apartment 4 🏠 2 🏠 1,404 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$8,380,000** (ref: 19096006)
- [Taipa] Nam Kwai Duplex 4 🏠 4 🏠 1,746 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$10,500,000** (ref: 20116001)
- [Taipa] Delightful residence 2 🏠 3 🏠 4,080 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$16,900,000** (ref: 19116003)

For Rent

- [Taipa] Villa da Taipa 3 🏠 2 🏠 1,450 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$11,000/mth** (ref: 20101002)
- [Taipa] Designer apartment 2 🏠 1 🏠 900 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$11,500/mth** (ref: 20121001)
- [Taipa] One Central w/ balcony 3 🏠 3 🏠 2,332 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$29,800/mth** (ref: 20101001)
- [Macau] Retail Shop, Barra area 1,968 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$48,000/mth** (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Commercial office- BCM building 4,100 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$85,000/mth** (ref: 21011001)

Recent Movements

**Rented**

Split Level Commercial Space, Taipa Village

**Rented**

Coloane Village, Houston Court 1 Bedroom Apartment

**SOLD**



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FOOTBALL

# Ronaldo rages after no goal and no VAR in draw at Serbia

SERBIA 2, PORTUGAL 2

**C**RISTIANO Ronaldo ripped off his captain's armband and tossed it onto the field as he stomped off in disgust after Portugal's 2-2 draw at Serbia in World Cup qualifying yesterday [Macau time].

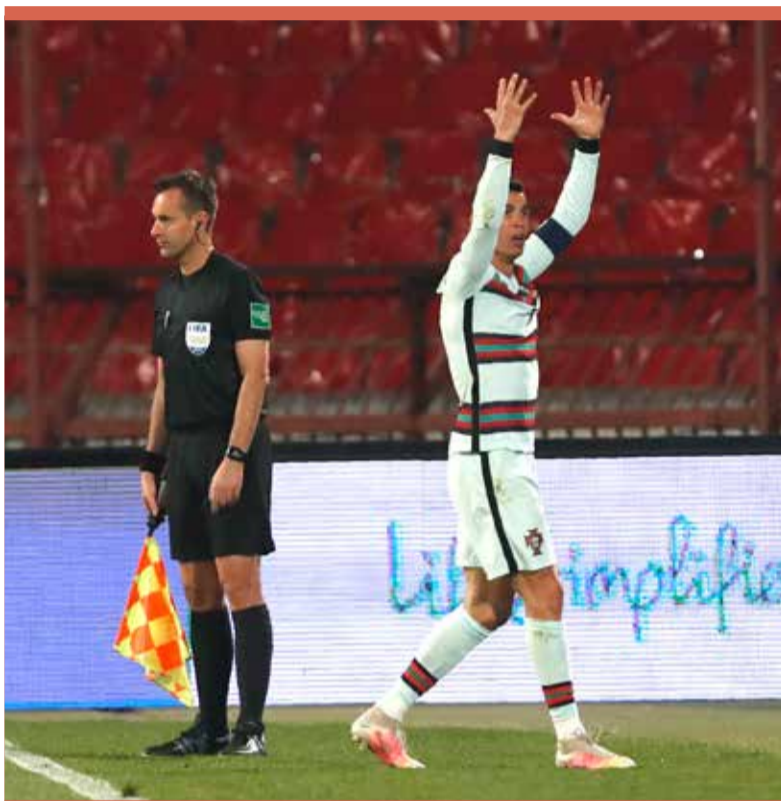
In a split second, Ronaldo had gone from savoring a last-gasp winner for his country to protesting what he considered a clear refereeing oversight with no video review available.

The Portugal star came oh-so-close to scoring a stoppage-time goal when Serbia defender Stefan Mitrovic slid and swept the ball to apparent safety though TV replays indicated it was a goal.

For Ronaldo, the ball had completely crossed the line. For Dutch referee Danny Makkelie it had not, and he rewarded Ronaldo's complaints with a yellow card.

The incident will no doubt be used by fans of video review to argue for the use of VAR in qualifying matches for the world's

AP PHOTO



most important soccer tournament.

Juventus forward Ronaldo made a veiled reference to the incident in a social media posting

after the match.

"Being captain of the Portugal team is one of the greatest sources of pride and privileges of my life. I always give and will give

everything for my country, that will never change. But there are difficult times to deal with, especially when we feel that an entire nation is being harmed. Lift your head and face the next challenge now!" Ronaldo wrote in Portuguese on his Instagram account.

For 10-man Serbia, it was the perfect ending to an inspired fightback from a two-goal deficit.

For Diogo Jota, Portugal should have done more with the two goals he scored in the first half.

"It looked like the hard part was done, but then they changed the system in the second half, scored quickly, and built on from there," Jota said. "At 15 minutes into the second half, we have already let Serbia draw. We had to kill the game."

Serbia and Portugal were left with four points each atop Group A.

Luxembourg is next with three points after it stunned Ireland with a 1-0 victory in Dublin. That left Ireland and Azerbaijan with zero points.

Portugal looked ready to roll to a convincing win after Jota scored

with two headers.

The Liverpool forward got Portugal going in the 11th with a run to the left post where Bernardo Silva found him with a perfectly placed cross. Ronaldo helped by drawing in three Serbia defenders before laying off for the unmarked Silva on the right side of the box.

Serbia tried to respond through runs by left back Filip Kostic and the playmaking of midfielder Dusan Tadic. But the hosts never seriously threatened Anthony Lopes' net before Jota made it 2-0.

This time it was for right back Cédric to send a cross to the heart of the box where Jota separated from Nikola Milenkovic and sliced a glancing header off the post and into the net in the 36th.

The double gave Jota five goals in 11 international appearances.

But Serbia got back into the match after coach Dragan Stojkovic made two changes at halftime.

Substitute Nemanja Radonjic needed less than a minute to pass for Aleksandar Mitrovic to head home and set a Serbia national team record with his 39th international goal.

Serbia pressed for an equalizer, and Lopes was eventually beaten in the 60th when Serbia mounted a counterattack, with the ball flowing forward from Tadic to Radonjic, who played Filip Kostic clear to slot the ball home. **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

World Views

Virginia Postrel, MDT/Bloomberg



**MUSEUMS SOLD MORE ART DURING PANDEMIC. WHY GO BACK?**

The coronavirus has been rough on museums. An October survey for the American Alliance of Museums found that two-thirds had cut back on public programs, more than half had laid off or furloughed staff and nearly a third were still closed to the public.

Those that were open had spent an average of \$27,000 on virus precautions and had only about 35% their normal attendance. On average, the museums expected to lose 35% of their budgeted income in 2020 and 28% of normal operating income this year. Twelve percent said they had a "significant risk" of closing permanently by this fall.

That's made art museums reconsider the ethics of selling parts of their collections. Controversially, the Association of Art Museum Directors has established a temporary safe harbor from censure or sanction for member museums that "deaccession" artworks "to support the direct care of the museum's collection."

In October, the Brooklyn Museum of Art sold 10 pieces, including a painting by Lucas Cranach the Elder, for \$6.6 million at Christie's and a larger group of works at Sotheby's for \$19.9 million. The money, along with that from future sales, will go to build a \$40 million endowment supporting care of the collection. In the same Sotheby's sale, the Palm Springs Art Museum, which has been closed for a year, sold a Helen Frankenthaler painting for \$4.7 million.

Under normal circumstances, the association prohibits museums that sell art from using the revenue for operations or capital improvements. Proceeds can only go for buying more art. Museums that break the rule can be barred from borrowing art from other museums for exhibits, among other punishments. The moratorium on sanctions lasts through April 10, 2022.

But why not make the emergency measure permanent? Why not expand it to permit other uses of sales proceeds? The moratorium opens a small crack in a cartel that keeps large numbers of artworks out of sight, hampers the flexibility of long-standing institutions to develop new strategies, and limits the availability of art to upstarts.

Most large museums display only 5% of their collections at a time. "As a rule of thumb, consider the least distinguished object in a gallery, and you can be sure that there are one or two just a teeny bit inferior, and a dozen nearly as good, in a warehouse or the basement," wrote Michael O'Hare, a public policy professor at University of California at Berkeley, in a 2015 article calling for art museums to do more to foster public engagement with art.

There is, of course, the danger that museums will sell timeless treasures to chase passing fads or overpay their executives. But as the successful backlash against the Baltimore Art Museum's plans to sell some modernist masterworks demonstrates, people who care about a museum's collection have ways of exercising their influence. Museum boards and professional staff deserve the flexibility to make the trade-offs appropriate to their institution's circumstances, with or without a pandemic.

The Macau SAR recorded 32,647 visitor arrivals on Friday, the highest daily number since the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic last year, the Government Tourism Office announced over the weekend.

During the past week from March 20 to 26, Macau registered on average 27,120 tourist arrivals daily, up 109.5% compared to the Spring Festival Golden Week holiday and up 77.8% from the daily average in February, the office said.

Of late, the number of visitors to Macau has gradually grown, as vi-

sitors from the mainland are no longer required to quarantine upon entry, thanks to stable epidemic situations on both sides, according to the office.

The office has made multiple efforts to promote Macau as a safe destination for mainland tourists. These efforts include organizing promotional events in major cities on the mainland and offering coupons for mainland tourists making payments in Macau on on-line platforms.

**ALBANIA STARTS MASS COVID VACCINATIONS BEFORE TOURIST SEASON**

LLAZAR SEMINI, TIRANA

ALBANIA started a mass inoculation campaign yesterday ahead of the summer tourism season after acquiring 192,000 doses of Chinese coronavirus vaccine Sinovac earlier this week.

Hundreds of people age 70 and above gathered at Tirana's main Skanderbeg Square to get a jab in two big tents.

Liri Bizhiti, 76, one of those waiting in line, was happy to receive the vaccine after a year of isolation, and on the same day as her husband.

"Thank God it came," she told The Associated Press while accompanied by her daughter. "We are so happy."

Vaccination has proceeded slowly in the Balkan country since mid-January before the arrival of the Sinovac vaccine, with Albania receiving less than 100,000 Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Sputnik V doses. The country has inoculated 65,000 medical personnel, people age 80 and over, and schoolteachers so far.

Albania, which has a population of 2.8 million, has signed contracts for a total of about 2.5 million vaccine doses from Pfizer, As-



AP PHOTO

traZeneca, Sputnik V and Sinovac. The government is continuing to work on securing new vaccine contracts so the entire population can be fully vaccinated by early 2022.

Earlier this week, Prime Minister Edi Rama went to Turkey and brought back the 192,000 Sinovac doses. The remainder of the 500,000 Sinovac doses Albania is due to receive will come in two months.

Rama also said Sinovac would build a factory in Albania to produce different vaccines.

Albania aims to give at least 10,000 shots a day and to complete 500,000 jabs by June, Health Minister Ogerta Manastirliu said.

"This process will not stop and our ambitious plan of vaccination aims that in 14 months we complete it (for the entire po-

population) and achieve immunization," the minister said.

The government aims to make the country ready to welcome tourists this summer. In the years before the virus outbreak, tourism became a significant industry in the country's economy.

"I believe that this tourist season will be more relaxed as a result of the attacks against the chain of infections," Rama told journalists after touring the vaccination center at the square.

Foreign tourists coming to Albania won't be required to show proof that they've been inoculated with a coronavirus vaccine.

Albania has registered more than 123,000 coronavirus cases and 2,204 confirmed deaths as of Saturday, according to health authorities. AP

Iran and China have signed a 25-year strategic cooperation agreement addressing economic issues amid crippling U.S. sanctions on Iran, state TV reported. The agreement dubbed the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, covers a variety of economic activity from oil and mining to promoting industrial activity in Iran, as well as transportation and agricultural collaborations, according to the report.



AP PHOTO

Egypt Two trains crashed in southern Egypt, killing at least 32 people and injuring 165, authorities said in the latest of a series of deadly accidents. Someone apparently activated the emergency brakes on the passenger train, and it was rear-ended by another train, causing two cars to derail and flip on their side, Egypt's Railway Authorities said, although Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouly later added that no cause has been determined.

Belarus Police in Minsk arrested more than 100 people who assembled for a protest march to call for the resignation of the country's authoritarian president. The planned event in the capital indicated that supporters of the political opposition seek to revive the wave of mass protests that gripped Belarus for months last year but were dormant during the winter. During the first sizable anti-government protests of 2021, more than 200 people were detained.



AP PHOTO

Turkey Hundreds of demonstrators gathered for anti-government protests, demanding amid a heavy police presence the reversal of recent decisions by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that affect students, women and the LGBT community. The president issued a surprise decree a week ago ending Turkey's participation in a landmark treaty aimed at protecting women from violence.

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd



The game must go on. A boy bicycle-kicks a ball in a flooded area of the Belen community in Iquitos, Peru.