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CTMA 40th ANNIVERSARY

**FULL TIME EMPLOYEES WORKING IN HOTELS PLUNGED 16% YEAR-ON-YEAR, WHILE RESIDENTS' AVERAGE EARNINGS STOOD AT MOP18,360**

▲ P2

**HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATE AT 58% IN APRIL WITH 694,000 MAINLAND TOURISTS**

▲ P3

**MAN SUSPECTED OF REPEAT SEX OFFENCES HAS BEEN ORDERED BY THE COURT TO BE TAKEN INTO PREVENTIVE CUSTODY ACCORDING TO THE PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS OFFICE**

▲ P2

AP PHOTO



**North Korean** leader Kim Jong Un has vowed an “uncompromising struggle” against anti-socialist elements at home, state media reported yesterday, as he tries to fortify his power amid pandemic-related difficulties and U.S.-led economic sanctions. The comments by Kim, the third member of his family to rule the impoverished nuclear-armed country, come as doubts increase about both North Korea's economy and whether it will engage in serious disarmament talks with Washington.

AP PHOTO



**Indonesia** A court sentenced a politically influential firebrand cleric to eight months in prison yesterday for violating health protocols by holding gatherings attended by thousands of supporters during the coronavirus outbreak. The panel of three judges at East Jakarta District Court, which was under heavy police and military guard, ruled that Rizieq Shihab had breached pandemic restrictions with events commemorating Prophet Muhammad's birthday and the wedding of his daughter.

AP PHOTO



**Sri Lanka** European firefighters and salvage experts have joined Sri Lankan crews battling a seven-day fire on board a container ship carrying chemicals, officials said yesterday. The fire on board the MV X-Press Pearl, which is anchored off Sri Lanka's capital Colombo, has spread to the quarterdeck where the ship's bridge is located, and a large number of containers have tumbled into the sea.

More on backpage

# HARD LABOR



**Secretary for Economy Lei Wai Nong was grilled for failing to guarantee local residents' priority access to jobs, resolve unpaid wages and the lack of transparency in Macau's layoff situation**

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**HK AMENDED ELECTORAL SYSTEM SARS' AFFAIRS OFFICE: A NEW CHAPTER OF 'GOOD GOVERNANCE'**

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AP PHOTO



**SSM CLARIFIES DEATH OF LAWYER NOT RELATED TO VACCINE**

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# NEW PHOTOGRAPHY ASSOCIATION HOPES TO BRIDGE CHINESE-PORTUGUESE COMMUNITIES

ANTHONY LAM

A new photography association that was inaugurated yesterday with 18 ethnic Portuguese founding members aims to include photographers of different ages, ethnicities and nationalities.

Several founding members of the association who were present at the inauguration ceremony yesterday held at the Portuguese Bookshop voiced agreement with this stated aim. They found interactions between Portuguese and Chinese photographers in Macau to be scarce.

Nuno Veloso, founding member of the association, admitted that he did not know any of the existing Chinese-speaking photography associations in Macau until he was preparing for the inauguration of the association. "Eventually I became aware that there were a huge number of them," Ve-



ANTHONY LAM

Photography by David Antunes

loso told the Times.

He added that Macau has a rich culture comprising different ethnicities. "We want the East; we want the West," he explained.

Another present founding member, André Ritchie, said that the association is not solely about level of skill, but

also enthusiasm for photography. He said that the association is open to co-organizing activities with other associations.

António Mil-Homens, founding member of the association, said when questioned what Macau photography is missing: "The con-

nection that the association is aiming to make."

He said that he has Chinese photographer friends who greeted one another each time they met, but he admitted that the relationships seemed superficial. He hopes the association will be able to change this situation and mix photographers from all quarters.

Beside the inauguration ceremony was a photo exhibition showing works of the founding members. The exhibition will be on display until June 12.

Half-tone is a non-profit cultural association, headquartered in the Macau SAR, which aims to promote contemporary photography in all its aspects.

It calls itself an inclusive and comprehensive association open to all those interested in photography as an artistic and/or documentary expression, regardless of their experience or approach.

# SUSPECT OF SEX OFFENCE AGAINST MINOR PUT IN CUSTODY

A man suspected of repeat sex offences has been ordered by the court to be taken into preventive custody in the wake of "vile details and the fact that [the suspect] has been involved in a previous, similar crime," the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) revealed in a statement.

The pronouncement of the preventive measure was made by the Court of Criminal Procedure, a pre-trial level court in Macau.

It was previously revealed that the suspect, a 25-year-old local resident who reportedly works in the delivery industry, was convicted and imprisoned with probation in 2012 for committing a sex offence on an individual under the age of consent, which is 14 in Macau.

Meanwhile, on May 19 this year, the man met with the underage victim whom he had known for three days. Afterwards, he brought the girl to his old residence where he reportedly raped her.

According to the Penal Code, an individual who commits sexual assault against an underage person is punishable by an imprisonment of between three and 10 years. The MP added that the similar crime on the man's criminal record will be taken into account when a court evaluates his sentence, should he be found guilty. **AL**

# FIRST FREIGHT-TRAIN SERVICE LAUNCHED BETWEEN GBA, ASEAN

THE Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area launched its first freight-train route travelling to ASEAN countries early this week.

A freight train loaded with goods worth about USD94,400 departed from Guangzhou, capital of south China's Guangdong Province, on Tuesday. The train will take about four days to reach its destination, the Vietnamese capital Hanoi.

Sinotrans Ltd., one of the route's operators, regards the international freight-train service as an important channel in the smooth operation of the global supply chain during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 alone, the company conducted 1,580 freight-train trips, carrying 157,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) of goods, with cargo volume up 23%, according to Sinotrans.

As the first freight route between the two regions, the new service is also expected to boost the development of countries and regions along the Belt and Road, the company said. **MDT/XINHUA**

# Hotel staff numbers down 16% y-o-y

LYNZY VALLES

AT the end of the first quarter of 2021, there were 49,685 full-time employees working in Hotels, down 15.9% year-on-year, as cited in a survey conducted by the Statistics and Census Service.

The average earnings (excluding bonuses) of full-time employees in March, meanwhile, rose by 1.0% year-on-year to MOP18,360.

Due to the pandemic, the average earnings of full-time employees in March last year were notably dragged down, as more employees were on unpaid leave in some industries. Due to the low base of comparison, average earnings in March this year generally increased.



BLOOMBERG

Last year, a few gaming operators admitted to reducing its staff numbers by not renewing their employment contracts.

This past quarter, Restaurants were staffing 23,914 full-time employees, a decrease of 3.9% year-on-year; their average earnings rose by 17.4% to MOP9,600.

Manufacturing had 8,537 full-time employees, down by

6.0% year-on-year; average earnings in March increased by 9.9% to MOP11,830.

In the Electricity, Gas & Water Supply sector, the number of full-time employees edged up by 0.5% year-on-year to 1,101, with their average earnings rising by 4.5% to MOP32,630.

At the end of the first quarter, job vacancies in Restaurants (1,108) and Hotels (626)

decreased by 198 and 360 respectively year-on-year, while those in Manufacturing (536) increased by 293. 83.1% and 50.8% of the vacancies in Hotels required knowledge of Mandarin and English respectively.

The job vacancy rate (1.2%) of Hotels dropped by 0.4 percentage points year-on-year in the first quarter, whereas the employee recruitment rate (2.4%) rose by 1.2 percentage points.

Both the local unemployment and underemployment rates have risen during the first quarter (Q1) of this year, registering a growth of 0.2% quarter-to-quarter, reaching now 4%. The labor force living in Macau totaled 396,600 with a participation rate of 69.9%.

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# Amended electoral system an 'institutional achievement': PRC spokesperson

LYNZY VALLES

A Chinese central government spokesperson yesterday commended the passage of a bill by the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to improve Hong Kong's electoral system.

The spokesperson for the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of the State Council said the endorsement of "Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Bill 2021" - which contains amendments to local electoral laws - marks the completion of the local legislative work improving the HKSAR's electoral system.

As cited in a Xinhua report, the spokesperson said that it is another institu-



tional achievement in ensuring law-based governance in Hong Kong and will open a new chapter of good governance.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam hailed the passage of the bill as a landmark occasion for ensuring "patriots administering Hong Kong" in accordance with "One country, two systems".

The bill will be published in the gazette and come into effect on May 31.

Wang Chen, Vice-Chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, announced the shake-up of the city's electoral framework on March 5 at the opening meeting of the 13th NPC.

During the last day of the Two Sessions, the nine-article resolution was ratified by an almost-unanimous vote — with 2,895 votes in favor, zero votes against, and one abstention.

This move is designed

to ensure the HKSAR is administered only by "people who love the country and love Hong Kong."

In a response to the move, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng affirmed his commitment to fully support the central government's latest proposal to enhance the neighboring region's electoral system for its "prosperity and stability."

Also in March, Ho emphasised the determination of the SAR government to adhere to the fundamental principle of "patriots governing Macau."

He also stated that the upcoming Legislative Assembly elections in Macau, set for September 12, must be held in line with the political principle and standard of maintaining patriots to the core.

## APRIL HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATE STOOD AT 58%

LYNZY VALLES

THE average occupancy rate of guest rooms surged by 45.9 percentage points year-on-year to 58.5%, with the rate of 3-star hotels stood at 68.5%, according to data from the the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

The number of guests checked into hotels & guesthouses leapt by 550.3% year-on-year to 694,000 in April, with mainland guests (603,000) and local guests (61,000) increasing by 761.2% and 149.3% respectively.

The massive surge was due to the fact that last year, amid the pandemic outbreak, borders were closed and the central government suspended the issuance of tourist visas for Chinese travelers to Macau.

In April, the number of guests staying in hotels & guesthouses increased by 36.1% year-on-year to

2,148,000, whereas their average length of stay held stable at 1.7 nights.

From April 9 to 15, the city's occupancy rate averaged around 61.0%, up 12.7% from 48.3% at the Spring Festival Golden Week.

The average occupancy rate of guest rooms in the first four months of 2021 was 48.4%, up by 13.8 percentage points year-on-year.

There were no inbound package tour visitors in April and the number of visitors joining local tours added up to 11,000. Outbound residents using the services of travel agencies totalled 20,000, and 98.5% went to mainland China. In the first four months of 2021, visitors joining local tours soared by 81.8% year-on-year to 17,000, whereas outbound residents using the services of travel agencies declined by 49.9% to 44,000.

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## EIGHT NOMINATION LISTS RECEIVED SO FAR

The Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission announced that it has so far received eight nomination lists for the September 12 Election, of which three have been verified and confirmed. For the time being, no repeat nominations have been found. Voters can check or update their registered details online or in-person. Meanwhile, the commission also announced that one campaign venue would be removed and two relocated. The Carmo Market and the Largo Maia de Magalhães venues will be relocated to Ocean Garden coastal promenade and Seac Pai Van Subsidized Housing, respectively.

## GUANGDONG HEALTH CODE MALFUNCTIONED YESTERDAY

The Public Security Police Force (PSP) announced yesterday that the conversion between Macau and Guangdong Health Codes saw malfunctions that same day. The PSP was in constant contact with the Health Bureau regarding the situation. The PSP has also deployed more officers to maintain order at local borders and maintained regular communications with the authorities in Zhuhai to ensure uninterrupted flow at border checkpoints. The Macau Health Code prevailed briefly as a contingency.

## HK GOODS REPORTEDLY TAKEN MACAU DETOUR BEFORE EXPORT

Some local manufacturers have said that due to various restrictions levied at Hong Kong - such as the U.S. requiring Hong Kong goods to be labelled "Made in China" - some exports have taken a detour through Macau. They also revealed that since two years ago, certain Hong Kong manufacturers have returned or relocated to Macau to enjoy lower tax when exporting to the U.S. In terms of import, it was revealed that goods from Taiwan are still popular and retain stable rate of import.



# LAWMAKERS GRILL ECONOMY CHIEF ON LACK OF 'SAFETY NET' FOR RESIDENTS' SALARIES, EMPLOYMENT

RENATO MARQUES

A group of lawmakers grilled the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, with questions and concerns regarding the lack of regulations and rule enforcement to guarantee that local residents continue to get priority access to jobs, and to the payment of their salaries.

The topic was the highlight of yesterday's plenary session at the Legislative Assembly (AL) where Lei met lawmakers' inquiries.

From the start, lawmaker Ella Lei kicked off the inquiry by calling for the installment of a compensation regime for the suspended workers. She did so given the recent spate of many known cases of workers laid off, or in precarious circumstances with reduced or suspended income.

In reply, the Secretary echoed his previous responses to questions from lawmakers on the matter. He restated the difference between unpaid leave and situations in which salaries are reduced or even unpaid.

As stated on previous occasions, Lei remarked that unpaid leave and layoffs are dependent on mutual agreements between employers and their employees, hinting that the government cannot interfere with such arrangements and agreements without breaching labor law provisions.

According to the Secretary, this year the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) has only recorded 427 cases of labor conflict between employers and their employees, involving a total of 686 people.

These numbers were very different from those that lawmakers, namely Ella Lei and Leong Sun Iok, presented. They noted tens-of-thousands of employees that see their survival and of their fami-

lies threatened. These employees claim to have not received salaries for "many months, or even over one year," according to Lei.

Lawmaker Lei called for the amendment of current laws, and for the establishment of an emergency fund mechanism that would allow workers to see their salaries (totally or partially) secured when employers do not fulfill such duty.

Without stating clearly whether or not the government intends to promote any changes to the current system and rules, Secretary Lei noted only that the government will continue to review and adjust the laws and regulations when necessary, taking into account public opinion.

Lawmaker Leong was not happy with the response, noting that it is necessary and urgent to review said mechanism. Leong asserted that employers can abuse the existing mechanism in retaliation to attempts to report employer wrongdoings. He also highlighted the fact that "the costs involved in a lawsuit to retrieve unpaid wages are too high for the workers already [struggling]." He called on the government to revise the whole regime.

Leong noted that although the rules clearly state that layoff situations require agreement between both parties, and claimed "we know very well that in many cases the workers were forced to accept that decision from the employer." He added: "until this moment, we have [had] no mechanism that can safeguard the rights of the workers."

Adding to the debate was lawmaker Sulu Sou, who recalled previous statements from the Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng acknowledging that the government does not have data on the layoff situation in Macau.

"This fact alone already reveals that the juridical regime has flaws

and needs to be perfected," Sou said, going on to advance a solution.

"We do not need to change the Labor Law - what we need to do is perform a better reading of the labor law. DSAL says only wage reductions need to be communicated. The layoff situation [ultimately] is also a situation that causes a wage reduction." Sou explained that said the DSAL notes on their official website that layoffs are strongly recommended to be contained to a period no more of one month. However, this is not what the reality shows.

"This [one month] is just a suggestion by the DSAL, because the labor law does not state anything on that matter. What happens if the employer requests the worker to be on layoff for over six months - can he resign with a just cause? I don't think so," remarked Sou. He stressed that it is useless and unproductive for the government to continue asserting that an agreement between workers and employers is needed.

On the topic, lawmaker Au Kam San recalled that there was previously a layoff regime that came from a period in which Macau's economy was mostly supported by the manufacturing industry. This regime was then revoked when the AL started to discuss a minimum wage regime, as a layoff scheme was now considered unnecessary.

"I think we are now clearly seeing that the old regime [of the compensation of worker layoffs] had its value," Au said, adding, "It is needed to legislate again to guarantee the interests of the population."

Trying to balance the debate were lawmakers Ip Sio Kai and Mak Soi Kun, who opposed the idea that added guarantees should be granted to the workers.

The lawmakers expressed that negotiation with the employers is also necessary, as the previous lawmakers were trying to push the responsibilities onto the employers.

"We need to see if these companies and employers have the capacity to do this. I know in many cases the employers opt for layoffs because they are also in a poor situation and have no other way out. We need to have a balance here," Mak said.

## TRADE UNION LAW IS THE SOLUTION

During the debate over the lack of guarantees from laws and their enforcement, lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong intervened to point out the optimum solution to all the problems and difficulties previously discussed by the lawmakers.

Ng said the solution was in the Trade Union Law, which several lawmakers have been trying to establish in Macau for many years.

"The government says it is going to revise [the law] but never says when, and also already clearly stated several times that they have no figures on the problem. When it was here [at the AL] the last time, the CE even asked the Workers' Association [Macau Federation of Trade Unions] to hand the figures [of workers in layoff] to the government," said the lawmaker.

"We are forgetting that this is the reason that we have been calling for decades for the establishment of the trade union law. But there isn't one and the government wants now for the associations to act like if there is?" Ng asked rhetorically.

"The figures [on layoffs] are not to sanction the employers, but to be able to understand the reality and to draft policies according to it," Ng concluded.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**T**O provide colleagues with practical knowledge of the Greater Bay Area's business and entrepreneurship opportunities, Melco Resorts and Entertainment hosted a seminar titled "Follow your Dreams."

Melco supports the government's direction for development in the Greater Bay Area. 300 of its colleagues were invited to participate in the virtual and in-person event, where young entrepreneurs in Macau and the Greater Bay Area spoke about business environment and development opportunities.

Attendees Mr. Chan Hon Sang, Deputy Director of Economic and Technological Development Bureau; Mr. Zhao Su, Assistant to Economic Affairs Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR; Mr. Li Juren, President, Macau Youth Entrepreneur Association; Mr. Frankie Wong, Vice President, Macau Youth Greater Bay Area Development Association and Ms. Leong Lai San, Sanna, Manager, Investor Service Department, Business Development Services Division, Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute were welcomed to the event by Melco representatives including Dr. Kent Wong, Chief Advisor; and Mr. Stanley Chan, Senior Vice President, Resorts Operations.

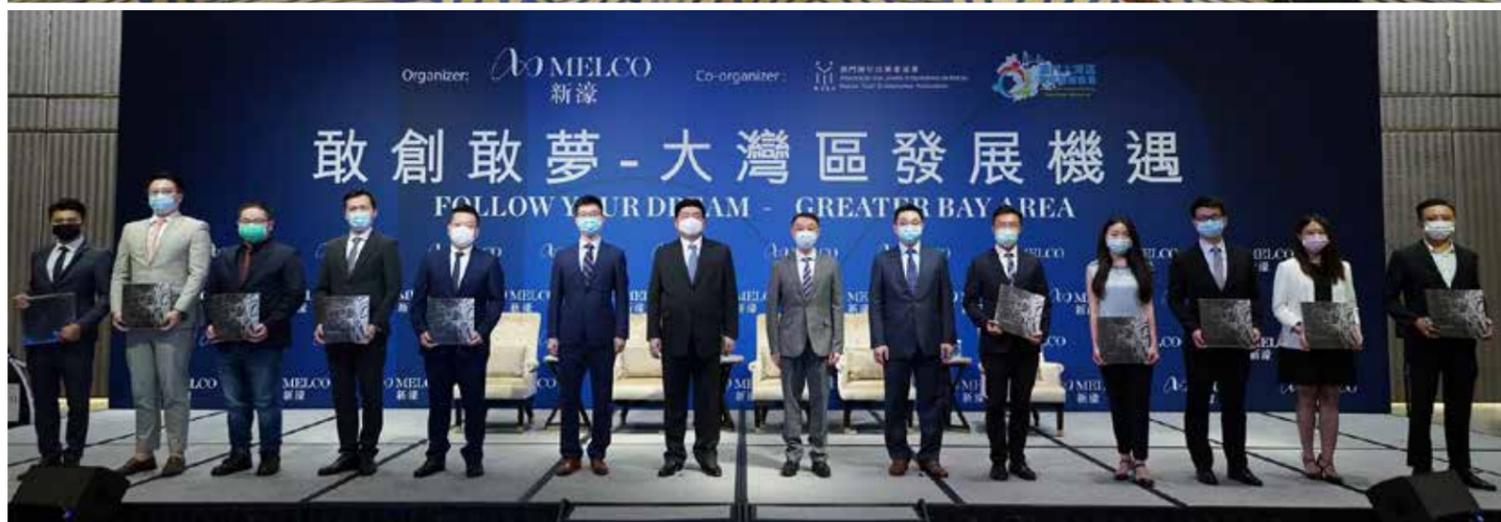
Dr. Kent Wong, Chief Advisor of Melco Resorts and Entertainment, said, "The GDP of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is close to US\$1.7 trillion. It is one of the most open and economically vigorous regions in the country, and which has huge development potential.

With the region's continued development, the area's business environment has seen great improvement to bring us unprecedented new opportunities.

Dr. Wong expressed hopes that after the event, "our colleagues will have gained a deeper understanding of the job market and workplace culture in the Greater Bay Area, so that goals can be set for their future development and to encourage colleagues to bravely pursue their entrepreneurial dreams."

#### THE HEART OF ROADSHOWS

To further help local SME suppliers to explore business opportunities, Melco has also hosted Heart-of-House Roadshows in the employee-only areas of City of Dreams, Studio City and Altira since the beginning of 2020.



## Melco promotes local SME prosperity and development

### SUPPORTING MACAU'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTEGRATION THROUGH 'FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS' SEMINAR FOR COLLEAGUES

During a time when the Covid-19 pandemic has severely impacted the global economy, Melco hosted a total of around 90 roadshows, supporting a total of about 100 local SME suppliers and NGOs who were invited to exhibit and sell products including electronics, food and wine, household items, personal care, skin care, and seasonal decorations.

Providing opportunities for promotion and direct sales to 16,000 colleagues working in the Melco Macau properties, the event successfully created a total of nearly MOP6.5 million in total sales. As of May this year alone, Melco has held about 30 innovative road shows in the Heart-of-House for employees, creating a total turnover of nearly 2.8 million MOP for more than 40 local SMEs and NGOs.

Further to promoting sus-



tainable economic growth and prosperity for local SMEs through Heart-of-House roadshows, Melco's commitment to SME success is also implemented through ongoing programs such as Melco SME Academy, the "Knowing You, Knowing Us" campaign and Express Payment Scheme.

Melco SME Academy offers

training and business development opportunities for SMEs to become better equipped in the face of challenge, while the 'Knowing You, Knowing Us' campaign enables SMEs and Melco to better understand each other's requirements, standards and offerings. The fast track payment initiative - Express Payment Scheme - was launched to ensure Melco's SME partners will be paid within 14 days of receipt of deliverables with aim to ease cash flow pressures and help suppliers overcome the challenges of these unprecedented times.

This drive was highlighted by Ms. Akiko Takahashi, Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff to Chairman and CEO of Melco

Resorts and Entertainment, Mr. Lawrence Ho:

"Melco continues to gladly support and collaborate with local SMEs and NGOs through our innovative Heart-of-House roadshow series to help vendors generate revenue as well as market exposure, especially through the unprecedented challenges of the past 1.5 years."

She added that via roadshows and further ongoing programs such as the Melco SME Academy, the 'Knowing You, Knowing Us' campaign and Express Payment Scheme, "we strive to continue realizing our commitment to the local community - to enhance SME prosperity and to help local businesses succeed."



# FRANCISCO GAIVÃO DIES AT 48, SSM SAYS CASE NOT RELATED TO VACCINE

RENATO MARQUES

**F**RANCISCO Galvão, a 48-year-old Portuguese lawyer in Macau, passed away on the evening of May 26 from a case of acute epiglottitis.

He was initially hospitalized on May 19 due to stroke. The lawyer passed away at the Kiang Wu Hospital where he had been since last Wednesday upon the sudden onset of the condition.

The life-threatening disorder's severity is due to the common obstruction of the airway at the larynxes.

A statement from the Health Bureau (SSM) noted that the event was recorded as a potential Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) to a Covid-19 mRNA vaccine, as he had been inoculated one week earlier on May 13.

After an investigation by the SSM's special working group assessing adverse



requests a medical error examination, the examination procedure including an autopsy will be initiated to further clarify the cause of death." They added that the bureau will also provide Galvão's family "all the necessary assistance."

In several statements that followed the news of his

events after Covid-19 vaccinations, the group concluded that the onset of the disorder and the vaccination were coincidental and unrelated.

Even so, in the same statement, the SSM notes, "if the deceased's agent formally re-

death, friends and several official entities have expressed sorrow about Galvão's passing.

The Macau Lawyers Association noted in one of these statements that "as a professional, as well as a person, Dr.

Francisco Galvão earned both the respect and consideration of all those that had the privilege to meet him," expressing, on behalf of his professional associates, the condolences to the family and friends.

As a lawyer, Galvão had practiced law in Macau for about 20 years both in private practice and as a representative of one of the gaming concessionaires.

In another statement, the British Chamber of Commerce in Macao (BCCM), an association of which the lawyer was a member, also expressed sadness at learning of the passing of Galvão.

In a public statement, BCCM said about Galvão, "he was an expert in his legal field and a very respected member of the Macau community. He will be sorely missed by all. Our thoughts are now with all of his family and friends, in Macau and abroad."

Another friend, Ambassador Vitor Sereno (former Consul-general of Portugal in Macau) also expressed, through social media, his grief for a man he dubbed "A Coimbra's friend and one of the first to welcome me with arms wide open when I first arrived in Macau in 2013."

Galvão is survived by his three sons.

# BOC DISCUSSES ONLINE CREDIT CARD ABUSE

**R**EPORTS on credit card abuse have become a feature of the Judiciary Police (PJ) press announcements recently. Even the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, commented on the matter, outlining the investigative difficulties the PJ face as most cases take place overseas.

Managing the matter is as difficult as investigating it. The Bank of China (BOC), Macau Branch has noted that credit card abuse has moved from offline to online because card copying is becoming more difficult - cards are now increasingly equipped with chips.

For better security, card brands often require two-step verification when online purchases are made. A one-time password is sent to the card owner's cellphone for verification.

However, representatives of the bank have expressed regret that some retailers have chosen to waive the two-step verification requirement for the sake of convenience. This has resulted in access points for credit card abuse. Previously, the bank has pointed to Apple as one of these less-secure retail platforms.

Instructing the public to manage this malpractice, the bank stressed that if abuse is suspected, the card owner should enquire with their bank and, if it is proven, instruct the bank to suspend their card.

The BOC noted that normally it takes one to two months to investigate and verify the malpractice. **AL**

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# Court tries Chinese Australian writer on espionage charge

**C**HINA yesterday put a Chinese Australian writer on trial for alleged espionage and denied the Australian ambassador in Beijing access to the hearing.

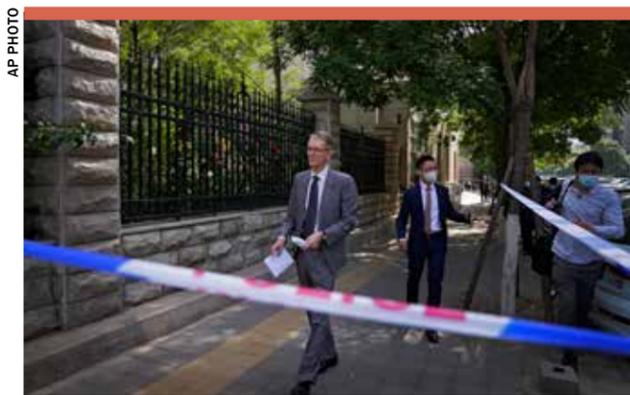
Yang Hengjun has been held since arriving in China in January 2019 and has had no access to family and only limited contact with his lawyer, the Australian government has said.

Ambassador Graham Fletcher walked to the court complex gate in Beijing and returned after he was denied entry, telling journalists it was "regrettable" that diplomats were prevented from observing the trial.

His government had been told earlier that a representative would not be allowed to attend the trial because it is a national security case. Fletcher said China has only said that the charge against Yang involves espionage.

"This is deeply regrettable and concerning and unsatisfactory," Fletcher said. "We've had longstanding concerns about this case, including lack of transparency, and therefore have concluded that it's an arbitrary detention."

Authorities have not released any details of the charges against Yang, a novelist who reportedly formerly worked for China's Ministry of State Security as an intelligence agent.



Australian ambassador Graham Fletcher (left) leaves the court after he was denied to attend the espionage charges case for Yang Hengjun, in Beijing, yesterday

Yang's lawyer, Mo Shaoping, said the hearing concluded shortly before 5 p.m., with a verdict to be issued at a later date, but declined further comment, saying "the case involves state secrets."

Yang has denied the accusation against him, and while a conviction is virtually certain, it isn't clear when the verdict will be handed down. The espionage charge carries penalties ranging from three years in prison to the death penalty.

In comments believed to have been dictated to diplomats in March and reproduced in Australian media, Yang said the lack of fresh air and sunshine had taken a toll on his health but that spiritually, "I'm still strong."

"There is nothing more liberating than having one's worst fears realized," Yang said.

Yang appeared to be in

satisfactory health, Fletcher said.

Australia will continue to "advocate strongly" for Yang and did not see a link between his case and the overall state of ties with China, Fletcher said.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said China was following international practice in barring observers from attending a case involving state secrets.

The trial comes at a time of deteriorating relations between the two countries, brought on by Chinese retaliation against Australian legislation against foreign involvement in its domestic politics, the exclusion of telecommunications giant Huawei from its 5G phone network, and calls for an independent investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 outbreak that was first detected in China in late 2019. **MDT/AP**

## CHINA LEADS THE WORLD IN 5G BASE STATIONS: VICE MINISTER

**C**HINA has taken a global lead in the development of 5G, with a total of 819,000 5G base stations built so far, accounting for over 70 percent of the world's total, a government official said this week.

Liu Liehong, vice minister of industry and information technology, released the figures at the ongoing China International Big Data Industry Expo

2021 in Guiyang, capital of southwest China's Guizhou Province.

The number of 5G terminal connections in China has exceeded 310 million, accounting for more than 80 percent of the world's total, according to Liu.

During the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020), China built the world's largest optical-fiber

and 4G network, with over 99 percent of the villages across the country connected to both technologies.

The three-day big-data industry expo, showcasing cutting-edge scientific and technological innovations and achievements, kicked off on Wednesday. It has attracted 225 enterprises from home and abroad, according to the organizing committee. **MDT/XINHUA**

AD



### Congratulations TIS Graduates!

The International School of Macao would like to extend its warmest congratulations to the Class of 2021. TIS is proud of all of its graduates who have been accepted to 350 universities and colleges worldwide, including:

Emily Carr University, Canada; **OCAD University, Canada**; Queen's University, Canada; University of Toronto, Canada; University of Waterloo, Canada; University of British Columbia, Canada; Western University, Canada; Carnegie Mellon University, USA; Michigan State University, USA; Penn State University, USA; Purdue University, USA; San Diego State University, USA; University of California - Berkeley, USA; University of California - Davis, USA; University of California - Los Angeles, USA; University of Michigan, USA; University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, USA; University of Notre Dame, USA; University of Texas - Dallas, USA; University of Washington, USA; University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA; Coventry University, UK; Durham University, UK; Hult Business School, UK; Imperial College London, UK; King's College London, UK; Leeds Art University, UK; Oxford University, UK; Queen Mary University of London, UK; University of Southampton, UK; University of Edinburgh, UK; University of Essex, UK; University of Manchester, UK; University of Sheffield, UK; University College, London, UK; University of Warwick, UK; China University of Political Science and Law; Southeast University; Sun Yat-sen University; University of Nottingham-Ningbo; Chinese University of Hong Kong; City University of Hong Kong; Education University of Hong Kong; Hong Kong Baptist University; HKUST; University of Hong Kong; IFT, Macao; Macao Polytechnic Institute; MUST; University of Macao; USJ; National Taiwan University; National Cheng Kung University (NCKU); Australian National University; Monash University, Australia; University of Auckland, Australia; University of New South Wales, Australia; University of Queensland, Australia; University of Sydney, Australia; University of Melbourne, Australia; Mason University Korea; SUNY Korea; Delft University of Technology, Netherlands; University of Amsterdam, Netherlands; University of Groningen, Netherlands;

\* Bold denotes Class of 2021

We wish you every success as you pursue your academic careers.

- |                              |                         |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Nicole Alves Cordeiro        | Jake Grima              | Joe Preece              |
| Mandix Au                    | Logan Hodgson           | Melantha Pun            |
| Natalie Au                   | Angelia Huo             | Polette Shyna Reyes     |
| Kiky Chak                    | Mário Iau Graça Ribeiro | Melissa Ritchie Acconci |
| Cintia Chan                  | Hugo Ip                 | Pearl Sandel            |
| Edwin Chan                   | Nicole Iun              | Alden Sio               |
| Matthew Chan                 | Cameron Kazim           | Derek Sit               |
| Norah Chan                   | Andrew Kingham          | Nathan Tagulao          |
| Leandro Manuel Chan Siqueira | Meagan Kuan             | Meleager Tam            |
| Hei Chang                    | Latishia Lee            | Wilson Tho              |
| Jerry Chao                   | Nestor Lee              | Angel Tsang             |
| Ellie Chao                   | Nathan Leung            | Owen Ung                |
| Kellie Cheong                | Jennifer Leuthard       | Michael Winston         |
| Max Cheong                   | Jason Liu               | Pui Kuan Wong           |
| Gemma Chou                   | Josephina Liu           | Bosco Wu                |
| Mudmee Da Silva Braga        | Luning Liu              | Donald Wu               |
| Miguel Domingues Sa Carneiro | Edwin Lui               | Amy Xu                  |
| Danael Estadieu              | Adelino Luis Ho         | Zoe Zhang               |
| Avinash Givane               | Luke Ning               |                         |



AP PHOTO



COVID-19

# China says politics behind Biden call for virus origin probe

**C**HINA yesterday accused the Biden administration of playing politics and shirking its responsibility in calling for a renewed investigation into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic that was first detected in China in late 2019.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at a daily briefing that President Joe Biden's order showed the U.S. "does not care about facts and truth, nor is it interested in serious scientific origin tracing."

Biden told U.S. intelligence officials to redouble their efforts to investigate the origins of the pandemic, including any possibility the trail might lead to a Chinese laboratory.

After months of minimizing that possibility as a fringe theory, the Biden administration is joining worldwide pressure on China to be more open about the outbreak, aiming to head off Republican complaints the president has not been tough enough to press China on alleged obstruction.

Republicans, including former President Donald Trump, have promoted

the theory that the virus emerged from a laboratory rather than naturally through human contact with an infected animal in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

Zhao also said the U.S. must open itself up to investigations into its biological laboratories, including at the Naval Medical Research Center's Biological Defense Research Directorate at Fort Detrick in the state of Maryland.

"The U.S. side claims that it wants China to participate in a comprehensive, transparent, evidence-based international investigation," Zhao said. "We would like to ask the U.S. side to do the same as China and immediately cooperate with the World Health Organization on origin tracing research in a scientific manner."

Biden earlier yesterday [Macau time] asked U.S. intelligence agencies to report back within 90 days. He directed U.S. national laboratories to assist with the investigation and the intelligence community to prepare a list of specific queries for the Chinese government. He called on China to cooperate with international

probes into the origins of the pandemic.

Republicans, including former President Donald Trump, have promoted the theory that the virus emerged from a laboratory accident rather than naturally through human contact with an infected animal at a traditional wet market in Wuhan.

Biden in a statement said the majority of the intelligence community had "coalesced" around those two scenarios but "do not believe there is sufficient information to assess one to be more likely than the other." He revealed that two agencies lean toward the animal link and "one leans more toward" the lab theory, "each with low or moderate confidence."

Prior to the president's statement, his administration had sought to avoid public discussion of the lab leak theory while privately suggesting it was farfetched.

In another sign of shifting attitudes, the Senate approved two Wuhan lab-related amendments without opposition, attaching them to a largely unrelated bill to increase U.S. investments in innovation.

Biden still held out the possibility that a firm conclusion may never be reached, given the Chinese government's refusal to fully cooperate with international investigations.

"The failure to get our inspectors on the ground in those early months will always hamper any investigation into the origin of COVID-19," he said.

Administration officials continue to harbor strong doubts about the lab leak theory, viewing China's refusal to cooperate in the investigation more as emblematic of other irresponsible actions on the world stage.

Andy Slavitt, Biden's senior adviser for the coronavirus, said Tuesday that the world needs to "get to the bottom ... whatever the answer may be."

"We need a completely transparent process from China; we need the WHO to assist in that matter," Slavitt said. "We don't feel like we have that now."

Zhao said the administration's position came in "in total disregard of facts and science ... while totally ignoring the doubts over the origin-tracing work and failure of pandemic response in the U.S."

"This fully shows that the U.S. side does not care about facts and truth, nor is it interested in serious scientific origin tracing, but wants to use the epidemic to engage in stigmatization and political manipulation, and to shirk responsibility," Zhao said. "This is disrespectful to science and irresponsible to people's lives, and moreover, it undermines the global unity of efforts to fight the epidemic." **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1959 MONKEYS SURVIVE SPACE MISSION



Two monkeys have become the first living creatures to survive a space flight.

Able, a seven-pound female rhesus monkey, and Baker, a one-pound female squirrel monkey, were fired 300 miles into space in the nose-cone of a Jupiter missile AM-18 from Cape Canaveral in Florida.

The flight, which reached speeds of up to 10,000 mph (16,090 km/h) lasted 15 minutes and the monkeys were recovered 1,500 miles (2,413 km) away in the South Atlantic near Puerto Rico.

The pair, who were weightless for nine minutes, were monitored throughout the flight for changes in their heart beats, muscular reaction, pulse velocity, body temperature and rate of breathing.

A spokesman from the Medical Research and Development Command of the US Army said the monkeys were in "perfect condition" on their return. Data recorded throughout the flight will be analysed over the next two weeks.

Although regarded as a success by space experts, the mission has been heavily criticised by animal welfare groups.

The American Embassy in London received protests from the League Against Cruel Sports and the Conference of Anti-Vivisection Societies, which is made up of 29 animal welfare groups.

A statement from the League Against Cruel Sports read: "Such action as this falls within the category of scientific devilry rather than scientific research."

It added: "In the name of humanity we beg of you to drop these vile experiments."

The statement from the Conference of Anti-Vivisection Societies had the same tone. It read: "Cowardly acts such as this can never be justified on the grounds of expediency and all thinking people will be disgusted to learn of this latest misuse by scientists of defenceless animals."

Able and Baker are due to return to Washington from Puerto Rico in a military transport aircraft.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Able died from the effects of anesthesia given for removal of electrodes implanted for the historic mission. A subsequent post mortem examination revealed she had suffered no adverse effects from her flight into space. Baker survived a similar operation and lived until 1984. Able and Baker were not the first animals sent into space. On 3 November 1957 the Russians sent a dog Laika, which was mostly Siberian husky, into orbit. But days into the flight the dog died. Between 1957 and 1961 13 dogs were sent into space by the Russians, five of whom died. On 13 December 1958 the Americans sent the first animal, a squirrel monkey named Gordo, into space aboard a Jupiter AM-13 booster rocket. The monkey survived the flight but after landing a flotation device in the nose cone failed and Gordo died. On 18 October 1963 the first cat, Felix, was sent into space by the French and survived. Since then animals including frogs, fish, crickets and even worms have been sent into space.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Today's skies put you in the mood to accomplish things, Aries. The moon glides into capable Capricorn, sending your focus towards your ambitions and current career trajectory.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Messages concerning your finances, talents, and resources are likely to be making their way to your doorstep - as your ruling planet, magnetic Venus, merges with news-bringing Mercury.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Intimate relationships take precedence over everything today, Gemini. You need some quiet time away from it all to figure out the deeper stories stirring in your heart of hearts.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Tune into the subconscious insights coming to you from dreams, visions, and happenstance today - as bond-building Venus merges with mental Mercury.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Look to your social network today, Leo. Opportunities are coming through the people you're connected to, as gift-bearing Venus merges with socialite Mercury.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
It's easy to feel good under today's benevolent skies, Virgo. Your ruling planet, messenger Mercury, receives a visit from blessing-bestowing Venus today.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Be on the lookout for important news making its way to you today, Libra. Your ruling planet, charming Venus, receives a visit from message-bearing Mercury.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Important conversations are waiting to be initiated under today's skies, Scorpio. The moon's presence in serious Capricorn pushes you to express yourself.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
The moon floats through capable Capricorn all day, sending your focus towards your underlying feelings of validity and self-worth. This energy reminds you to be present...

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Tune into your most pressing needs today, Capricorn. The moon slides into your sign first thing this morning, helping you happily burst back out onto the scene after a few days in hiding.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Time alone from the world is in order under today's skies, Aquarius. The hermit-like Capricorn summons you inward to focus on restorative activities and solitude.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Expressive Mercury merges with gift-giving Venus, bringing a jovial, pleasure-seeking lightness to the atmosphere. This union also brings positive circumstances to the home or family front.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

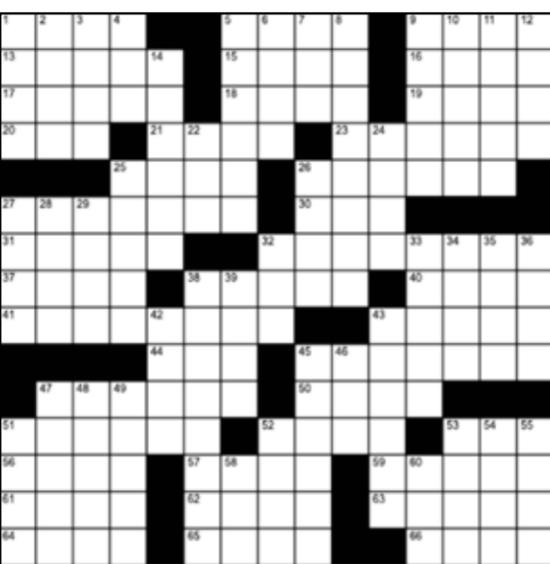
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	15	31	cloudy
Harbin	14	30	clear
Tianjin	15	21	rain
Urumqi	16	24	rain
Xi'an	20	26	cloudy
Lhasa	15	27	sunny
Chengdu	23	27	rain
Chongqing	25	31	rain
Kunming	18	23	rain
Nanjing	14	19	overcast
Shanghai	27	37	cloudy
Wuhan	17	23	rain
Hangzhou	13	30	cloudy
Taipei	14	23	overcast
Guangzhou	10	24	cloudy
Hong Kong	17	28	clear
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	17	31	clear
Frankfurt	8	14	rain
Paris	8	15	rain
London	7	16	cloudy
New York	14	24	cloudy

**CROSSWORDS**

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

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



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



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**Rain Dance Property**  
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1,626 ft<sup>2</sup> 3 2

AD

**H**ow has small Iceland been able to play such a big role in the world? The confluence of geology, fish and rugged explorers seems to have infused Icelanders with their durable, modest, optimistic and confident character and produced an outsized number of achievers — among them Nobel Prize and Academy Award winners.

However, that cool Icelandic confidence backfired when Icelandic bankers in the early 2000's financial crash brought shock and shame. But not for long: Iceland is leading the way again, this time with the highest rate of women working full time.

Author Egill Bjarnason in "How Iceland Changed the World: The Big History of a Small Island" views his home island with combination of the wry humor of Bill Bryson, the pointed observations of Anthony Bourdain and the meanderings of a mildly befuddled history professor.

Yes, 31 Icelandic bankers were sentenced to jail terms for crimes in the early 2000's global financial crash, but as the author points out, the nation learned some unexpected lessons from its shame. Just two of the bankers were women, who assess risk more conservatively than the men, according to a study the author quotes.

**BOOK IT**

# FOR SUCH A SMALL PLACE, ICELAND HAS A BIG INFLUENCE

Iceland soon followed with the first female bank boss, police chief, wrestling federation leader and sheep farmers association director.

Like a proud dad, Bjarnason explains the superlatives of his homeland and its people.

— One of Iceland's greatest explorers reached North America 500 years before Columbus.

— Its parliament is the oldest in the world.

— Iceland never has had a military.

— Iceland's "most universally praised national hero is a dry and colorless librarian."

— Iceland completed the world's first national census, "nearly exhausting the nation's paper supply."

— In 1980, Vigdis Finnbogadóttir became the world's first woman president elected in a direct vote.

The book drags a bit in the pages about the early Norse going back and forth but we get a window on how a unique topography, climate and position in the world shaped the character of

today's 360,000 Icelanders who live on an island in the North Atlantic about the size of Ohio.

That's less than the population of Bakersfield, California, best known as an oil and agriculture center at the south end of California's great Central Valley.

We're certain to be hearing more about Iceland in the years ahead — the country has become a lab for climate change, losing 309 square miles of glaciers in the last 20 years.

How did the people of a land blessed with such land, volcanoes and vast fisheries become global leaders in so much? We're left wanting more on the Icelandic psyche but we're left to draw our own conclusions.

Bjarnason notes that Icelanders "love educational programming" and never in the nation's history has one of the five political parties gained a majority in parliament. And, he writes, "ideas and trends travel fast in a place where everyone is part of the same conversation."

Imagine that in America.  
**JEFF ROWE, MDT/AP**

## HOW ICELAND CHANGED THE WORLD



THE BIG HISTORY OF A SMALL ISLAND

"How Iceland Changed the World: The Big History of a Small Island," by Egill Bjarnason (Penguin)

AD

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<sup>o</sup> 私人公證員 Notary Public    <sup>\*</sup> 中國委託公證人 China Appointed Attesting Officer    <sup>\*</sup> 顧問 Of Counsel



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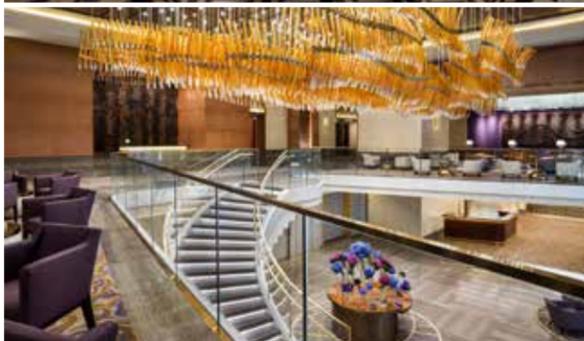
## FASHION INSPIRATION FROM THE 90s

**T**HIS month, Shanghai Tang launches Yuni Ahn for Shanghai Tang, an exclusive collaboration with eponymous designer Yuni Ahn. Yuni Ahn for Shanghai Tang debuts with a Pre-Fall 2021 Collection of ready-to-wear, bags, shoes, scarves and accessories inspired by the spirit of today's modern women and their confidence and attitude.

Through the collaboration, Yuni Ahn, the former creative director of Maison Kitsuné and design director of Celine, brings a bold design sensibility to Shanghai Tang with an everyday luxury wardrobe infused with Chinese elements. Featuring modern design motifs inspired by the qipao, lattice, bamboo and moon, Yuni Ahn for Shanghai Tang weaves these redefined elements throughout the collection.

The creative concept for Yuni Ahn for Shanghai Tang originates in Ahn's formative experiences living in Hong Kong during the 1990s. Recalling the crackling energy found in Chungking Mansions, Ahn retraced her steps into this nostalgic era by revisiting Wong Kar-wai's classic Chungking Express. Amidst the dramatic mood, colours and cinematography of the iconic 1994 film, Ahn was ultimately drawn to the magnetic performance of the film's female leads and how the evolution of '90s on-screen stars into aspirational heroines inspired today's strong and independent modern women.

To develop the collection, Ahn spoke with today's modern Chinese women to get a better understanding of the fashion and style they seek. Ahn then distilled these insights to create streamlined pieces made for the current generation.



### TASTE OF EDESIA

# Whiskey with New York heritage

IRENE SAM, MDT

**C**ELEBRATING The St. Regis Bar's New York heritage and the city's renowned whiskey culture, "A Flight of Whiskey" at Macau's St. Regis Bar offers whiskey lovers four of the finest whiskeys

specially sourced from distilleries in New York itself. Highlights include Hudson Baby Bourbon Whiskey, a classic bourbon whiskey distilled from 100% New York corn aged in new charred American oak barrels, with caramel and sweet vanilla notes, a touch of rye spiciness to the

tongue and Kings County Barrel Strength Bourbon Whiskey from the oldest and largest whiskey distillery in New York City's Brooklyn and using corn grown in the state and malted barley from the United Kingdom.

To complement the exemplary whiskey selection, culinary experts have also fashioned four tantalising bites designed to enhance and provide balance to the flavours of each of the distilled spirits such as light oak smoked salmon with almond cream and rye pumpernickel, a brown butter honey and corn custard tartlet, an indulgent cherry foie gras and a meltingly smooth jaffa chocolate truffle.

## Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu, MDT



### THE BRAZIL 1350 METRES SAND

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**L**UCK plays a vital role in the sports of king, my pick on Dawson last Saturday was a classic example, he got every chance to win, who knows, his jock dropped his whip on the way and he missed his win by a very thin margin in a tight photo finish. Unfortunately, that's horse racing. Hope my pick this Friday would obliged, my pick this week is **City Lucky Star**, he is a proven sand performer and already scored 2 wins from 1350M to 1510M sand. There is no reason to doubt that he cannot win another solid sand race this Friday, although he carries top weight in this weak race, but I am confident C.L Cheung his regular rider can handle him well from barrier 7. C.L Cheung has partnered City Lucky Star to win his last two races. This Friday night he may add another win for **City Lucky Star's** connection.

Race 2 Horse no. 1 City Lucky Star Win and Place bets



**OPINION**

**World Views**

Chris Bryant, MDT/Bloomberg



**WHEN TO BUY A LAMBORGHINI? THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT**

For those who aspire to cryptocurrency riches, the entreaty "When Lambo?" long ago became a popular way to refer to that blessed day when you're finally wealthy enough to buy a luxury sportscar.

The soaring price of Bitcoin and other financial assets means more and more people are in a position to join that club. And after having been stuck at home for a year the newly wealthy are in a mood to spend. This is undoubtedly good news for Lamborghini's owner, Volkswagen AG, which has seen the attractiveness of its Italian subsidiary shoot up among potential buyers of the asset.

This week Volkswagen received a non-binding 7.5 billion-euro (\$9.2 billion) offer to acquire Automobili Lamborghini SpA from a consortium that includes Quantum Group AG and investment firm Centricus Asset Management, according to Autocar magazine. The German giant said Lamborghini wasn't for sale, but it shouldn't be so quick to dismiss the idea.

Now would be the perfect time to realize full value from Lamborghini, which is controlled by Volkswagen's Audi subsidiary. Orders are booming and rival Ferrari NV's richly valued shares show there's strong investor demand for luxury sportscar manufacturers. As with Ferrari, the expensive and delicate task of electrifying Lamborghini's thirsty engines still lies ahead — so it might be a good moment to hand that job to someone else.

At the very least, the consortium's offer will remind investors of the value that's locked up in Volkswagen's unrivalled stable of luxury car brands. If only it were bolder in doing something about it.

Volkswagen doesn't break out Lamborghini's profitability but it's become a decent money spinner. After the pandemic interrupted production, sales have been rocketing lately. The unit generates double-digit operating margins, Volkswagen boss Herbert Diess confirmed recently. That's thanks largely to the new Urus SUV, of which Lamborghini sells more than 4,000 yearly. The brand's street cred with the newly affluent crypto crowd may have played a role, too. Its customers are typically younger than Ferrari's, Diess notes. Lamborghini sold about 7,400 vehicles last year, compared with Ferrari's more than 9,000.

Lamborghini hasn't done anything to lure new Bitcoin millionaires that's as crass as Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd. — the British company's special edition "Wraith Kryptos" saloon is billed as an "homage to the clandestine world of cryptology" and incorporates a coded message that customers are invited to solve. But "When Lambo" isn't just for laughs. At least one Lamborghini dealership claims to accept payment in crypto.

So why not take advantage of the hype? Volkswagen flirted with an initial public offering or sale of Lamborghini last year before deciding to keep it. The company has developed an unfortunate habit of tantalizing investors with potential asset sales and then retreating. A separate listing for its Porsche unit isn't a high priority, Diess said in March, weeks after giving investors (and financial columnists) cause for hope.

It's reassuring that Volkswagen doesn't think it needs money from asset sales to fund its massive spending on electric vehicles and software. (Lamborghini has just unveiled its own hybrid and electric strategy, which will cost about 1.5 billion euros over four years.)

But the German company's hesitancy toward divestments has taken some of the shine off its soaring share price. While the more liquid preference shares are still up 43% this year, they're more than 10% below last month's peak.

Impulse decisions might be fine for Elon Musk's Tesla Inc. but building a consensus for big strategic sales takes years at Volkswagen's Wolfsburg headquarters. That's because of the outsize influence of workers, the Porsche/Piech families and the State of Lower Saxony.

And yet it was Diess who raised the question of whether "brilliant" luxury brands like Lamborghini would remain as valuable once their growling combustion engines are replaced by electric motors. The fat takeover offer that landed on his desk this week provides a compelling alternative.

**PRODUCTION OF ANOTHER COVID-19 VACCINE TO BEGIN IN WEEKS**

**THE BUZZ**

Production of another potential vaccine against COVID-19 will begin within weeks, its developers Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline said yesterday as they launched a large trial enrolling 35,000 adult volunteers in the United States, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The study will test vaccine candidate formulas against the original coronavirus that spread from Wuhan, China, and against the variant first seen in South Africa, the pharmaceutical firms said.

If the trial is successful, regulators could approve the vaccine for use in the last three months of the year, the drugmakers said in a statement.

"Manufacturing will begin in the coming weeks to enable rapid access to the vaccine, should it be approved," they said.

Their statement quoted Thomas Triomphe, who leads vaccine research and development at Sanofi Pasteur, as saying: "We are encouraged to see first vaccinations starting to take place in such an important, pivotal Phase 3 study."

Earlier this month, the firms said their vaccine candidate triggered strong immune responses in all adult age groups in preliminary trials after an earlier setback, boosting optimism the shot may join the fight against the pandemic this year.

AP PHOTO



**HONG KONG BANS TIANANMEN CRACKDOWN VIGIL FOR SECOND YEAR**

**H**ONG KONG authorities for the second year have banned the June 4 candlelight vigil to commemorate the bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, organizers said yesterday.

The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, which organizes the candlelight vigil annually, said in a statement that the police had objected to the event in light of social distancing restrictions, which prohibit large gatherings.

For years, Hong Kong and Macau were the only cities in China where people were allowed to mark the 1989 anniversary of Beijing's crushing of the Chinese democracy movement.

The vigil was also banned

in Macau this week by the authorities.

The ban on the vigil comes as Beijing has tightened control over the semi-autonomous Chinese city, after months of anti-government protests in 2019.

Beijing and local authorities have cracked down on dissenting voices, launching mass arrests of pro-democracy activists and imposing a sweeping national security law to penalize crimes like secession and subversion.

Yesterday, the legislature passed a bill amending electoral laws that drastically reduces the public's ability to vote, while increasing the number of pro-Beijing lawmakers making decisions for the city.

Last year, the June 4 vigil was banned for the first

time, with police citing public health risks from the coronavirus pandemic. Still, thousands turned up at Victoria Park — where the vigil is held each year — singing songs and lighting candles. No arrests were made at the time.

More than 20 people, including activist Joshua Wong, media tycoon Jimmy Lai and Lee Cheuk-yan, a leader of the alliance, were arrested later and charged for taking part in an unauthorized assembly. Wong and three district councilors were sentenced on May 6 to between four and 10 months in jail after pleading guilty.

Organizers this year have urged people to light a candle no matter where they are on June 4. **MDT/AP**

**Egypt** The president held talks yesterday with his counterpart in Djibouti as part of Egyptian diplomatic attempts to build more African alliances amid an ongoing water dispute with Ethiopia. El-Sissi and Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh agreed that the Ethiopian dam should be filled and operated according to "a fair and binding legal agreement" that could maintain regional stability and preserve the interests of all parties.

**EU** nations sketched out plans for new sanctions yesterday against Belarus that will target economic sectors close to its authoritarian president, as they sought to strike back at him for the forced diversion of a passenger jet to arrest a dissident journalist. EU foreign ministers meeting in Lisbon vowed to continue to ramp up the pressure on Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko — whose disdain for democratic norms and human rights has made his country a pariah in the West.

AP PHOTO



**Germany** and Norway inaugurated a new undersea cable yesterday that directly links the two countries' electricity networks, a project that has been described as a key step in Europe's effort to shift away from fossil fuels to renewable energy. The 2-billion-euro project, called Nordlink, will allow Germany to export excess electricity from its wind parks to Norway, where it can be stored in the Nordic nation's vast hydropower reservoirs.

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

AP Photo/Bullit Marquez



Graduate student Drew McWhirter (left) and Raquel Corniuk, a research technician at the Center for Marine Debris Research, pull apart a massive entanglement of ghost nets, decades old fishing gear that wreaks havoc on marine life and coral reefs in Hawaii.

AP PHOTO



**Congo** Tens of thousands of people are fleeing the city of Goma in eastern Congo fearing another volcanic eruption by Mount Nyiragongo, which spewed lava near the city last week. Traffic was jammed and pedestrians streamed through the streets, desperate to escape the impending danger. A new eruption could occur at any moment, the military governor of Congo's North Kivu province, Lt. Gen. Constat Ndima Kongba, announced yesterday.