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MACAU HAS COLLECTED MOP12.3 BILLION IN GAMING TAX REVENUE FROM JANUARY TO APRIL - CIRCA 25% OF THE MOP50 BILLION GOAL FOR 2021

PANSY HO CONTINUES HER PATH OF REDUCING HER SHARES IN MGM RESORTS

MUST AND UM CONTINUE TO PLACE AMONG THE 100 BEST UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS IN ASIA, ACCORDING TO THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS



China The government has accused H&M, Nike, Zara and other brands of importing unsafe or poor quality children's clothes and other goods, adding to headaches for foreign companies after Beijing attacked them over complaints about possible forced labor in the country's northwest. A list of "quality and safety unqualified" products from 16 companies including T-shirts, toys and toothbrushes was released by the customs agency to mark International Children's Day this week.



Japan The countdown clock for the Tokyo Olympics hit 50-days-to-go yesterday, and the day also brought another problem for the delayed games. About 10,000 of 80,000 unpaid volunteers for the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics have told organizers they will not participate when the games open on July 23. Few volunteers are expected to be vaccinated since most will have no contact with athletes or other key personnel.

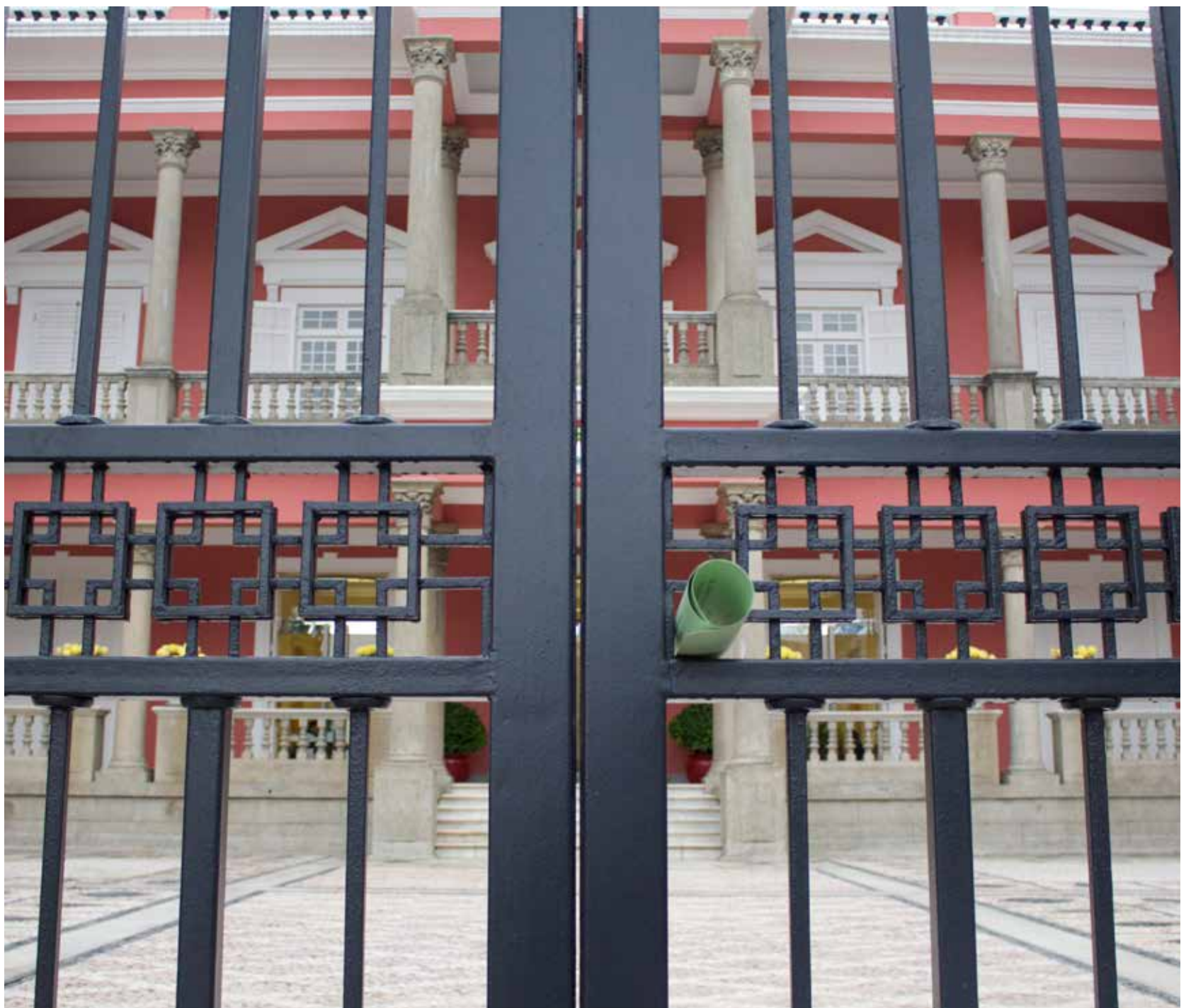


Taiwan A large cargo ship hit a tall overhead crane in a Taiwanese port yesterday, sending it smashing into another crane and then into a pile of shipping containers. One worker at the port was sent to a hospital for a cut on his arm. The 86,000-ton vessel, was preparing to dock at a port in Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan when it hit the crane, the port management company said.

More on backpage

FOUR OFFICES, ONE RULING

The Macau government, along with Beijing's offices in the city, showed support to the ruling of the top court to ban the June 4 vigil



HKSAR INCREASES COVID-19 TEST REQUIREMENT FOR ARRIVALS FROM MACAU, MAINLAND



GROUP TO MOVE JUNE 4 VIGIL ONLINE AGAIN

ANTHONY LAM

FOLLOWING last year's online vigil, the Macau Union for Democratic Development, represented by member and lawmaker Au Kam San, said at a press conference yesterday that this year's vigil would also be held online.

Unlike last year, the group will not invite in-person public participation this time. Au stressed that members of the public can still watch the vigil online, which will be broadcast on the group's social media platform.

At the time of the press conference, the judgement of the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) had not yet come out. Au stressed at the press conference that, regardless of the judgement, the vigil will be hosted online.

Yesterday evening, the court ruled in favor of the police.

The decision to not invite in-person public participation, as explained by Au, was made in order to avoid adversely affecting participants, because if the vigil is considered illegal by the police and the court, participation could be subject to criminal prosecution.

Au said that even if members of the public chose not to or will not have time to watch the online vi-

ANTHONY LAM



gil, the group invites them to light a candle at home in that evening, or do whatever they consider appropriate for the occasion.

Those participating online, meanwhile, can leave comments on the social media page, which may be selected by the organizers to be read out during the vigil, Au said.

At the press conference, Au described the decision of the police to ban this year's vigil — on the grounds of libel, defamation and instigation of devastation, alteration or subversion of an established system — as ridiculous.

He reiterated that with the law unchanged since 1995, the law is

being used to ban an activity even older than the law itself.

In addition, he stressed that the slogans cited by the police to justify the ban had long fallen out of use by the group. "We have changed to call for the construction of a democratic China, which I believe not even the mainland government [would]

oppose," he said.

When questioned as to whether they will commit criminal offenses, Au anticipates the group carrying out the vigil in a safe manner, with slogans that are not perceived as violating the law.

The online vigil will be held at 8 p.m. on June 4.

2022 FRINGE FESTIVAL CALLING FOR PROPOSALS, DEADLINE NEXT MONTH

THE 21st Macao City Fringe Festival, which is organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), is scheduled to take place in January next year.

The organizer is now calling for proposals for program activities and performance venues.

Local artistic and cultural associations, curators, producers, independent artists, higher education students, and all those interested in artistic creation are invited to submit their proposals.

Applicants are en-

couraged to show "innovative and bold spirit proposals to break the barriers of traditional venues, to create works that highlight the characteristics and the cultural connotations of the city," the IC said in a statement.

The submission deadline is 5 p.m. on July 9, 2021.

For the upcoming year, the festival will also include a new program category entitled "New Spark of Programmes Showcase," dedicated solely to local higher education students. The

maximum budget for the production of the selected programs is MOP20,000, and the selected groups will also be participating in a program preparation workshop, in which they will receive technical advice and equipment support from the organizers.

The IC said that with such a new addition it "is hoped that the event will help the industry to discover potential new talent, while providing practical opportunities for higher education students interested in artistic creation." RM



TWO MINORS HIT BY BUS ON ZEBRA CROSSING

TWO students were hit by a bus while on a zebra crossing in Rua Oito do Bairro Iao Hon on Wednesday at around 5 p.m.

The two boys are brothers aged eight and six.

In a video circulating on social media, it could be seen that one of the boys was cau-

ght under the bus. The older brother was said to have sustained injuries to his waist and cervical spine and a contusion on his left elbow.

The other student, meanwhile, sustained injuries to his right foot and contusions on both knees.

In a statement issued by public bus operator TCM, the firm conveyed its apologies to the two boys, the family and the general public.

It stressed that it attaches great importance to the traffic accident and had arranged an emergency team for a follow up on the matter.

In the same statement, the company explained that the driver stopped at the zebra crossing for pedestrians to cross before driving across.

However, when he started to drive at a speed of eight kilometers per hour, the two boys were walking on the left side of the zebra crossing and were hit. LV

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Gov't, China offices support top court's dismissal of June 4 appeal

ANTHONY LAM

YESTERDAY evening, the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) issued a judgement that dismissed an appeal filed by the Macau Union for Democratic Development on the police's ban on this year's June 4 vigil.

Justice José Maria Dias Azedo, writer of the verdict, listed a significant amount of legal literature to discuss concepts such as freedom of assembly, libel and instigation, which were core points used by the police to ban the vigil.

The court stressed that the repetition of an illegal act shall not make it legal.

Although the top court ruled in favor of the police, Justice Azedo added his voting declaration at the end of the verdict, noting that in his opinion, the removal of libelous or defamatory elements should constitute to the permission of the vigil.

In response to the court's judgement, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China,



the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Macao Special Administrative Region, the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in

the Macao Special Administrative Region and the Macau SAR government all issued their respective statement to show support.

The Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office described the deci-

sions by the police and the court to be completely legal and indicated a clear attitude towards the prohibition of activities that damage constitutional order.

The office stressed that the Ma-

cau SAR should respect the socialist system practiced in mainland China and the ruling status of the Communist Party of China as institutionalized by the Constitution.

On the other hand, the Foreign Affairs Ministry's Commissioner Office stressed that it stiffly opposes "any external forces' interference with SAR affairs." It reiterated the position of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, saying that the Macau SAR is under the Central Government.

It added that since the establishment of the Macau SAR, the government has been ruling the city pursuant to the Chinese Constitution and the Macau Basic Law.

The Liaison Office, meanwhile, expressed its position that it stiffly stands against any moves that challenge the constitutional order of the Special Administrative Regions of China.

The Macau SAR, it said, is bound by the constitution to safeguard sovereignty, national security and developmental interests.

The SAR government noted in a statement: "The Court of Final Appeal ruling reaffirms that the proposed assembly contravenes articles in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, and also contravenes the Basic Law of Macao and the local Penal Code."

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION PROPOSES LOWERING REBUILD THRESHOLD

Considering the unsatisfactory conditions of the lao Hon group of seven residential buildings, reconstruction should be done as soon as possible. Chao I Sam, vice director-general of the General Union of Neighborhood Associations has said. She proposes that the government increase the height of rebuilt buildings as well as add parking facilities and shops to lower the average cost of reconstruction. She also asked that they lower the threshold for rebuilding as reaching 100% consensus is difficult. Chao added that the lao Hon project could serve as a pilot example for other renewal projects.

CATERER ASSOCIATION ENCOURAGES INDUSTRY WORKER TO GET VACCINATED

Chan Chak Mo, president of The United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macao, has encouraged workers in the industry to get vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 to help avoid suspension of the mainland-Macao travel. He referred to the non-resident workers in the industry who live on the other side of the border, and said that travel restrictions will affect operations of caterers. They would need to pay extra money to maintain the workers in Macao or operate on a shortage of human resources.

UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

MUST AND UM CONTINUE IN ASIA'S 100 BEST IN 2021

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) and the University of Macau (UM) continue to place among the 100 best university institutions in Asia, according to The Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

According to the guide, the two local institutions have secured similar positions as in last year's rankings, with MUST placing in 32nd position (the same as in the 2020 edition), while the UM dropped one position from 37th place last year to 38th in 2021.

At the top, the Asian rankings continue to be led by the same institution, the Tsinghua University in Beijing.

As with previous editions, Asia's top five continues to be dominated by institutions in Beijing and Singapore (2nd place Peking University, 3rd National University of Singapore, and 5th Singapore's Nanyang Technological University). The only exception was the 4th position, occupied by the Univer-



sity of Hong Kong.

Worldwide, the score of the Tsinghua University equals that of Duke University in the USA, at 20th place on the world's list.

As for the local representatives, MUST continues to place in the range of the top "251 to 300" higher education institutions, while UM is placed between "301 to 350".

This is because The Times Higher Education does not specify precise rankings after rank 198.

MUST scored best in terms of its international outlook, acquiring the maximum score of 100 points, also improving from 2020 on all the other topics under analysis.

Contributing more significantly to the ranking of the

university was the topic of citations, in which MUST's score went up 3.3 points to 86.3 points from 2020.

Scoring below the average continues to be the factors of Industry Income (34.8 to 40.3 points); Teaching (27.1 to 29.7 points); and Research (22.4 to 23.6 points).

Meanwhile, the public university also continued to score well on its international outlook, scoring now 99.3 points out of 100.

Citations also grow from 61.9 to 64.8 points, but Industry Income edged down by 0.1 points to 40.9.

The bigger drop from UM was registered in the category of Teaching, with the university dropping 2.3 points to a total of 30 in 2021 when compared to 2020.

This is also the first time that Macau presents three institutions classified in this ranking, with the first appearance of the University of Saint Joseph, placing in the range from "401 to 600" worldwide.

The UK's University of Oxford continues to top the worldwide rankings, followed now by the US's Stanford and Harvard universities. Stanford went up two positions from last year's 4th, while Harvard scored a major leap from 7th in 2020 to 3rd this year.

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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

GAMING RIGHTS GROUP FILES CANDIDACY FOR AL 2021

The New Macau Gaming Staff Rights Association has officially filed for candidacy in the 2021 Legislative Assembly (AL) elections to be held on September 12. The group has collected a total of 418 signatures. It is still unclear whether the association's president Cloee Chao will head the candidacy list. The association first ran in 2017 as a list called Front Line of Casino Workers (LFTC). However, it failed to make the cut after receiving only 3,126 votes.

FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICE DISCUSSES ANTI-LAUNDERING MEASURES

The Financial Intelligence Office (GIF) has yesterday organized a "Joint Meeting on Prevention and Suppression of Financial Crimes" to discuss preventive measures on anti-money laundering and combating financing of terrorism with financial institutions. The meeting is aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of prevention and suppression of financial crimes. According to a statement released by GIF, their vision is "to maintain financial stability with appropriate preventive measures and to reduce the risk of financial system being abused for laundering proceeds of crime."

GAMING

GOV'T COLLECTS CIRCA 25% OF GAMING TAX REVENUE GOAL

LYNZY VALLES

THE Macau government has collected MOP3.2 million in tax gaming revenue from the gaming industry, bringing the total revenue to MOP12.3 billion for the first four months of this year.

This tally is MOP8.1 billion less compared to the same period last year, or circa 25% of the MOP50 billion that the government is anticipating collecting throughout the whole year of 2021, as announced in the current budget plan in the fiscal year.

In the government's current budget plan for the fiscal year, it states its aim to gather some MOP50 billion from gaming revenue, which means that the city should acquire a total of nearly MOP4.2 billion in taxes per month.

In this year's budget bill, authorities anticipated that the gaming sector would rake in an annual gross gaming revenue (GGR) of MOP130 billion.

From January to April, the

BLOOMBERG



city's GGR tallied to MOP42.4 billion, recording a 28.7% year-on-year increase.

The severe downturn in GGR last year was due to the closure of borders, the halt of tourists from the mainland (except for those under the Individual Visit Scheme [IVS]), and the 15-day closure of casinos in February to deter the spread of the Covid-19.

Macau's government received around MOP29.8 billion from gaming tax in 2020, a drop of 73.6% year-on-year. The actual receipts generated from the city's casino industry in the full year of 2020 fared modestly better than the government's previous forecast of MOP29.46 billion announced in December 2020. This was the se-

cond amendment to — as well as a 42.2% decline from — the original forecast of MOP45.5 billion anticipated by the government in April last year.

The SAR government taxes casinos in Macau for 39% of gaming revenue — which includes a direct tax of 35% and other types of taxes for social and welfare purposes.

PANSY HO CONTINUES TO REDUCE PARTICIPATION IN MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL

RENATO MARQUES

THE co-chairperson and executive director of gaming operator MGM China Holdings Ltd (MGM) Pansy Ho is continuing on her path of reducing MGM's participation in the Macau gaming operator's parent company, MGM Resorts International.

According to a filing to the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong, where MGM China is listed, Ho sold a total of 2,016,788 shares in three consecutive days at the end of last month (May 26 to 28).

The transaction is worth a total of USD86 million (MOP687.2 million) and further cuts a slice of about 29.4% on the participation that Ho was holding.

This is the third time this year that Ho has reduced her participation in MGM Resorts International, pocketing as much as MOP1.4 billion.

Before the initial tran-



saction, in November 2019, Ho had just over 8.2 million shares. After the latest sales of late May, her stake is now reduced to about 4.7 million shares, representing a 42.7% cut in her participation in the company in just about six months.

Ho's participation in the U.S.-based company should be now 12.89%, less than half of the 27.44% that she was holding in late 2019, before initiating the sales.

In early March this year, after a previous reduction in the participation in the company, Ma-

cau-based gaming expert Ben Lee confirmed to the Times that the reduction of Ho's participation comes as part of a progressive plan for Ho's full disconnection from MGM, a scenario that should happen only after the tender for the new gaming concessions is complete.

Lee, managing partner of IGamiX Management & Consulting, said that Ho's reduction in links with MGM is a necessary move to take over of the family business at another Macau gaming operator, SJM Holdings Ltd.

HKSAR INCREASES COVID-19 TEST REQUIREMENT

THE Hong Kong government has increased the number of tests required for people returning to Hong Kong from mainland China or Macau in the wake of the new outbreak in Guangdong.

As cited in a RTHK report, individuals arriving under the Return2HK Scheme who have been vaccinated, will now be required to take three Covid tests, instead of two.

Those who have not been vaccinated, however, will be required to do five tests instead two. These tests should be done 72 hours before crossing the border and further testing will have to be carried out afterwards.

On November 23, the HKSAR government implemented a scheme dubbed the Return2hk Scheme. This initiative eased travel restrictions for Hong Kong residents returning to the city from Guangdong Province and Macau by welcoming them back without a compulsory quarantine period.

The Come2hk Scheme was launched in mid-May, a scheme proposed by the HKSAR government that

AP PHOTO



allows non-Hong Kong residents in Guangdong province and Macau to enter Hong Kong quarantine-free. The proposed move is part of the measures designed "to gradually resume the cross-boundary flow of people amongst Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macau in an orderly manner," Hong Kong's Secretary for Food and Health, Sophia Chan Siu-chee, said.

HK LOWERS AGE LIMIT OF BIONTECH TO 12

The HKSAR government said yesterday that teenagers aged between 12 and 15 would be eligible for the Fosun Pharma/BioNTech vaccine, down from the current age limit of 16, and that

specific arrangements will be unveiled next week.

Yesterday, Hong Kong's Center for Health Protection (CHP) reported one new imported case of COVID-19, taking the total tally to 11,849.

Over the past two weeks, there were 21 cases altogether reported in Hong Kong, all imported from overseas, the CHP said.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam there has been no locally transmitted case in Hong Kong for more than 30 days, an encouraging sign for the epidemic control.

She called on residents to actively obtain the vaccine so that herd immunity can be achieved to fend off the next wave of the epidemic outbreak. LV

COVID-19

Taiwan says China exploiting vaccines for political gain

TAIWAN'S foreign minister yesterday said China is seeking political gains abroad in return for providing vaccines and other pandemic assistance, partly to increase pressure on Taiwan, which it claims as its own territory.

Beijing's Communist Party leaders "further exploited the pandemic to impose their political agenda on many others," Joseph Wu said in a video conference with the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan.

In particular, China's "vaccine diplomacy" is creating divisions among countries in Central and South America, giving Beijing an opportunity to exert its influence in the Western Hemisphere, Wu said.

Beijing is providing access to its domestically produced vaccines, other anti-coronavirus resources and development funding to "those who are willing to accept political partnership with Beijing," he said.

"China then uses this partnership to lure or pressure those allies of Taiwan and the U.S. to lean toward Beijing. Through the-



Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu attends a remote press conference with Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan in Tokyo, yesterday

se maneuverings, China is trying to gain political influence in the region at the cost of Taiwan and the U.S."

China says its overseas assistance comes without political conditions, but has aggressively used its economic might in recent years to poach Taiwan's few remaining allies and erode the influence of the U.S. and other democracies.

Wu said China has already left a "trail of debt, corruption and an

erosion of democratic governance" in some countries in Asia, Africa and Europe that agreed to Chinese financing for ports, railways and other infrastructure projects under leader Xi Jinping's signature Belt and Road Initiative that has boosted China's influence abroad.

China has sold hundreds of millions of coronavirus vaccine doses abroad and donated millions more, mainly to developing nations in Africa. The World Health Organization has given

emergency authorization for two Chinese-developed vaccines, but the companies, particularly Sinopharm, have faced criticism over a lack of transparency in sharing data.

China has shut Taiwan out of an increasing number of international organizations, including the WHO, and has blocked Taiwan's cooperation with the U.N. organization's anti-pandemic efforts, including the COVAX initiative that distributes vaccines

to middle- and low-income countries, Wu said.

However, he said Taiwan is gaining greater international political support to be included in the WHO as either a member or observer.

"That is helping the Taiwanese people and we really appreciate it," Wu said.

Along with the diplomatic pressure, China has been upping its threat to use military force to bring Taiwan under its control by holding military exercises and sending military aircraft near the island. Wu said Taiwan's government and citizenry are "absolutely committed to self defense" and the administration is working to boost its military capabilities, including through the purchase of weapons from the United States.

Taiwan split from mainland China during a civil war in 1949 and has never been governed by China's ruling Communists.

Wu also accused Beijing of deliberately raising tensions in the South and East China Seas.

China is employing "all means possible to induce a crisis just below the threshold of a major war," Wu said.

He emphasized the closeness of ties between Japan and Taiwan, a former Japanese colony, despite their lack of formal diplomatic relations.

"Taiwan and Japan share the values of freedom, democracy, human rights protection and the rule of law," Wu said. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

Gov't defends Cambodia relations after US expresses concern

CHINA said yesterday its relationship with Cambodia has made positive contributions to regional peace and stability, after the U.S. expressed concerns about the presence of the Chinese military in the Southeast Asian nation.

In a meeting with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on Tuesday, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman focused on China's construction of new facilities at Ream Naval Base.

She sought clarification about the demolition of two U.S.-funded buildings at Ream without notification or explanation, and "observed that a [Chinese] military base in Cambodia would undermine its sovereignty, threaten regional

security, and negatively impact U.S.-Cambodia relations," according to the State Department.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said China and Cambodia enjoyed a "traditional friendship" and were "comprehensive strategic and cooperative partners."

"The two sides have carried out fruitful cooperation in various fields, which has brought tangible benefits to the two peoples and made positive contributions to regional peace and stability," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing.

The State Department said Sherman urged Cambodia's leadership to maintain an independent and balanced foreign poli-

cy, "in the best interests of the Cambodian people."

Sherman raised the issue again during a visit to Thailand on Wednesday, saying that she had candid conversations with Hun Sen "about the direction the country is headed," including China's presence at Ream and Cambodia's human rights and "anti-democratic record."

Ream faces the Gulf of Thailand that lies adjacent to the South China Sea, where China has aggressively asserted its claim to virtually the entire strategic waterway. The U.S. has refused to recognize China's sweeping claims, and the Navy's 7th Fleet routinely sails past Chinese-held islands in what it terms freedom of navigation operations. **MDT/AP**

BUDAPEST TO RENAME STREETS TO PROTEST CHINESE UNIVERSITY

BUDAPEST city officials are planning to rename streets in an area where a Chinese university loyal to China's Communist Party is due to open a branch, in a signal of protest and solidarity with the victims of human rights abuses by Beijing.

The new names will be Uyghur Martyrs' Road, Free Hong Kong Road, Dalai Lama Road and Bishop Xie Shiguang Road, and they are expected to receive formal approval by the city in the next few days, according to the MTI news agency.

Budapest's liberal Mayor Gergely Karacsony said Krisztina Baranyi, the mayor of the city's 9th district, where the Chinese university is to be built, announced the plans on Wednesday, saying they sought to honor those

who have suffered at the hands of the Chinese state.

The Dalai Lama is the spiritual leader of Tibet, the Uyghurs are an ethnic Muslim group that some Western countries say is the victim of genocide and the late bishop was the target of religious repression.

The move comes as part of a larger effort to oppose plans by conservative Prime Minister Viktor Orban to host an elite Chinese university campus in the nation's capital.

Hungary signed a strategic agreement a few weeks ago with the Shanghai-based Fudan University on opening a campus in Budapest by 2024 that will enroll international students. It would be the school's only foreign outpost, and the first Chinese university campus in

the 27-nation European Union.

The \$1.8 billion investment will be paid by Hungary with the help of a loan from a Chinese bank.

The mayor and other critics argue the massive investment places an undue financial burden on Hungarian taxpayers and is indicative of Orban's increasing ties to autocracies in Beijing as well as Moscow.

Mayor Karacsony says the project also raises national security concerns, since the university has pledged its loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party.

Baranyi has said she will hold a local referendum to block construction of the campus.

A demonstration is planned for Saturday where Karacsony intends to give a speech opposing the university. **MDT/AP**

Netanyahu foes push for quick vote to end his 12-year rule

LAURIE KELLMAN,
TEL AVIV

PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's opponents pushed yesterday for a quick parliament vote to formally end his lengthy rule, hoping to head off any last-minute attempts to derail their newly announced coalition government.

The latest political maneuvering began just hours after opposition leader Yair Lapid and his main coalition partner, Naftali Bennett, declared they had reached a deal to form a new government and muster a majority in the 120-member Knesset, or parliament.

The coalition consists of eight parties from across the political spectrum with little in common except the shared goal of toppling Netanyahu after a record-setting 12 years in power. The alliance includes hardliners previously allied with Netanyahu, as well as center-left parties and even an Arab faction — a first in Israeli politics.

Netanyahu lashed out at his foes yesterday, signaling that he will continue to exert pressure on former allies who joined the coalition. "All members of Knesset who were elected with right-wing votes need to oppose this dangerous leftist government," he wrote on Twitter.

The drama riveted Israelis at a time when tumult has not been in short supply: four inconclusive elections



Yamina party leader Naftali Bennett (left) and Yesh Atid party leader Yair Lapid

in two years followed by an 11-day war in the Gaza Strip last month that was accompanied by mob violence between Jews and Arabs in cities across the country. The country also is emerging from the coronavirus crisis that caused deep economic damage and exposed tensions between the secular majority and the ultra-Orthodox minority.

Yet the political debate has focused squarely on Netanyahu, who is facing corruption charges — and whether he should stay or go.

"We never had a coalition like this," said Hillel Bar Sadah at a coffee shop in Jerusalem. "We like to have a new spirit, we like to have some unity."

The owner of the coffee shop, Yosi Zarifi, said he trusts that Netanyahu will return to power — and distrusts the coalition.

"Everybody is clear that this trick will not last, there won't be any glue (to keep it

together) here," he said.

The anti-Netanyahu bloc announced the coalition deal just before a deadline at midnight Wednesday. The agreement triggered a complex process that is likely to stretch over the next week.

The coalition has a razor-thin majority of 61 votes in parliament. Now the question is whether the group's votes will hold together in order to name a new parliament speaker, who would then preside over a vote required to confirm the new government.

If the group can't manage that, the current speaker, who is a Netanyahu ally, could use his position to delay the vote and give Netanyahu more time to sabotage the coalition.

As the coalition was coming together in recent days, Netanyahu and his supporters ramped up a pressure campaign against former hawkish allies, including Bennett and his No. 2 in the

Yamina party, Ayelet Shaked.

Netanyahu accused them of betraying their values. His supporters launched vicious social media campaigns and staged noisy protests outside Shaked's home. The prime minister's Likud party also called for a demonstration yesterday night outside the home of Yamina lawmaker Nir Orbach, urging him to quit the coalition.

That's a taste of the pressure to be expected for lawmakers on the right. And some on the left now have time to think about whether they will pay for this partnership in the next election.

"There will be a lot of pressure, especially on right-wingers, especially for religious right-wingers," said Gideon Rahat, a political science professor at Hebrew University. "They will go to the synagogue and people will pressure them. It will be a nightmare for some of them."

Netanyahu and his supporters called a meeting later yesterday to discuss their next steps.

Under the coalition agreement, Lapid and Bennett will split the job of prime minister in a rotation. Bennett, a former ally of Netanyahu, is to serve the first two years, while Lapid is to serve the final two years — though it is far from certain their fragile coalition will last that long.

The historic deal also includes a small Islamist party, the United Arab List, which would make it the first Arab party ever to be part of a governing coalition. **MDT/AP**

FactSet. The economy remains down 8.2 million jobs from its level in February 2020, just before the virus tore through the economy.

Yet U.S. employers are posting a record number of available jobs. And many of them have complained that they can't find enough workers to meet rising customer demand.

Job growth slowed sharply in April compared with March, a pullback that was widely attributed to a labor shortage in some industries, especially at restaurants and other employers in the hospitality sector. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1989 MASSACRE IN TIANANMEN SQUARE



Several hundred civilians have been shot dead by the Chinese army during a bloody military operation to crush a democratic protest in Peking's (Beijing) Tiananmen Square.

Tanks rumbled through the capital's streets late on 3 June as the army moved into the square from several directions, randomly firing on unarmed protesters.

The injured were rushed to hospital on bicycle rickshaws by frantic residents shocked by the army's sudden and extreme response to the peaceful mass protest.

Demonstrators, mainly students, had occupied the square for seven weeks, refusing to move until their demands for democratic reform were met.

The protests began with a march by students in memory of former party leader Hu Yaobang, who had died a week before.

But as the days passed, millions of people from all walks of life joined in, angered by widespread corruption and calling for democracy.

Tonight's military offensive came after several failed attempts to persuade the protesters to leave.

Throughout the day the government warned it would do whatever it saw necessary to clamp down on what it described as "social chaos".

But even though violence was expected, the ferocity of the attack took many by surprise, bringing condemnation from around the world.

US President George Bush said he deeply deplored the use of force, and UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said she was "shocked and appalled by the shootings".

Amid the panic and confusion students could be heard shouting "fascists stop killing," and "down with the government".

At a nearby children's hospital operating theatres were filled with casualties with gunshot wounds, many of them local residents who were not taking part in the protests.

Early this morning at least 30 more were killed in two volleys of gunfire, which came without warning. Terrified crowds fled, leaving bodies in the road.

Meanwhile reports have emerged of troops searching the main Peking university campus for ringleaders, beating and killing those they suspect of coordinating the protests.

Courtesy BBC News

EMPLOYMENT

US JOBLESS CLAIMS DROP TO 385,000, ANOTHER PANDEMIC LOW

PAUL WISEMAN,
WASHINGTON

THE number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell last week for a fifth straight week to a new pandemic low, the latest evidence that the U.S. job market is regaining its health as the economy further reopens.

The Labor Department said Thursday that jobless claims dropped to 385,000,

down 20,000 from the week before. The number of weekly applications for unemployment aid, which generally reflects the pace of layoffs, has fallen steadily all year, though it remains high by historical standards.

The decline in applications reflects a swift rebound in economic growth and the job market's steady recovery from the coronavirus recession. More Americans are venturing out to shop, tra-

vel, dine out and congregate at entertainment venues. All that renewed spending has led companies to seek new workers.

Employers have added 1.8 million jobs this year — an average of more than 450,000 a month — and the government's May jobs report on Friday is expected to show that they added an additional 656,000 last month, according to a survey of economists by the data firm

IN CONTEXT

The demonstrations in Tiananmen Square have been described as the greatest challenge to the communist state in China since the 1949 revolution.

They were called to coincide with a visit to the capital by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, by students seeking democratic reform.

Troops were used to clear the square despite repeated assurances from Chinese politicians that there would be no violence.

It has been suggested that the Communist leader Deng Xiaoping personally ordered their deployment as a way of shoring up his leadership.

Hundreds, and possibly thousands, of people were killed in the massacre, although it is unlikely a precise number will ever be known.

Peking has since become more widely known as Beijing.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Expressive Mercury locks into a square with disorienting Neptune today, making it easy to mentally slip off into a world of fantasy. Triple check your texts and emails to alleviate confusion or mixed messages!



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

This aspect can also lend itself confused feelings around your potential. Fortunately, the me-first Aries moon can help you move through it all - so long as you keep a low profile and prioritize peace.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

It's easy to feel like you're lost at sea today, Gemini. Your ruling planet, messenger Mercury, locks into a reality-bending square with illusionist Neptune today.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

It's an ideal day for therapy and journaling, since you're also likely to be wrestling with career concerns. The fiery Aries moon helps you direct constructive energy towards your ambitions as a positive outlet.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Your goals may feel especially elusive to you beneath Friday's skies, Leo. Don't fall for that deceptive mental mirage! Mercury butts heads with illusory Neptune today.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Reality seems to be slipping away from you today, Virgo. Rather than go chasing after it, sit back and observe what's intuitively bubbling up from below.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Educational and travel plans are especially vulnerable to shifts and changes of heart today. Elsewhere, the eager Aries moon calls attention to the unspoken partnership stories swirling in your heart.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Listen to the insights emerging around your needs but hold off on making impulsive decisions. The go-getter Aries moon helps you move through any residual stress with exercise and dedication to your workflow.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Today's cosmic landscape is rife with tensions to navigate, Sagittarius. Things are likely to get heated and truths unearthed, as hot-headed Mars locks eyes with emotionally raw Pluto.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Refrain from sending in applications and aim to keep a low profile instead, as it's easy for confusion to run amuck with this aspect. Elsewhere, the solitary Aries moon encourages homebody behavior.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You're not likely to be seeing things clearly beneath Friday's skies, Aquarius. Mental Mercury wanders into a mind-melting square with illusory Neptune today.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Things are undoubtedly changing beneath your feet, Pisces. Your home and family connections are beginning to shift today, as messenger Mercury squares off with reality-bending Neptune.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

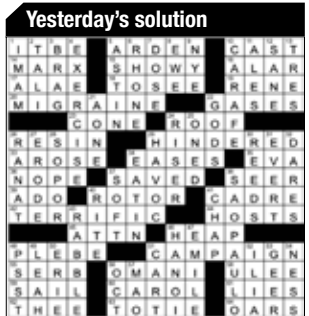
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	17	30	fine
Harbin	10	19	thunderstorms
Tianjin	18	26	cloudy
Urumqi	16	29	cloudy
Xi'an	18	30	cloudy
Lhasa	16	24	fine
Chengdu	22	32	rain
Chongqing	24	28	rain
Kunming	19	29	cloudy
Nanjing	15	24	cloudy
Shanghai	28	36	thunderstorms
Wuhan	20	26	cloudy
Hangzhou	9	18	thunderstorms
Taipei	16	28	cloudy
Guangzhou	12	26	fine
Hong Kong	18	31	fine
WORLD			
Moscow	17	31	clear
Frankfurt	8	14	rain
Paris	8	15	rain
London	7	16	cloudy
New York	14	24	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Put to shame; 6- Cereal grain; 10- Competent; 14- Saline; 15- German Mrs; 16- Croat, e.g.; 17- Bar, legally; 18- Bungle; 19- Big brass; 20- Old World lizard; 22- Made a hole; 23- Hebrew month; 24- Distress; 26- New Jersey cager; 29- "Trinity" author; 31- Ich bin ___ Berliner; 32- Al Jolson's real first name; 33- Sheet of stamps; 34- Methuselah's claim to fame; 38- Clanton foe; 40- Oxlike African antelope; 42- Token taker; 43- Majestic; 46- A single time; 49- Oklahoma city; 50- ___ Grande; 51- Hard to find; 52- Lion tail?; 53- Cocktail; 57- Uncovered; 59- Neighborhoods; 60- Make firm; 65- Words of denial; 66- Came down to earth; 67- Alleviated; 68- Model married to David Bowie; 69- Basic unit of heredity; 70- Rubberneck; 71- Autos; 72- Somewhat; 73- Mortise insert;

DOWN: 1- Just ___; 2- Wild party; 3- Neighbor of Sask.; 4- Mouthlike opening; 5- Stimulated; 6- Part of a church service; 7- He sang about Alice; 8- Mock; 9- Prefix meaning "beneath"; 10- Amazes; 11- Brief advertisement; 12- Trademark; 13- Skirt; 21- Pasternak heroine; 22- Seethe; 25- Stutz contemporary; 26- Scottish refusals; 27- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 28- Diamond cover; 30- Spanish Mister; 35- Wings; 36- Deities; 37- JFK postings; 39- Belongs; 41- With undiminished force; 44- Reformer Jacob; 45- ___ vivant; 47- Cancer's critter; 48- Most strange; 53- Frenzied; 54- Smell, usually a pleasant one; 55- Pave over; 56- Atoll unit; 58- Overjoy; 61- Singer Turner; 62- This ___ outrage!; 63- Goose egg; 64- Garden site; 66- Turkish honorific;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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EURO 2020

RONALDO BACKED BY TALENTED PORTUGAL SQUAD

TALES AZZONI

A record-chasing Cristiano Ronaldo won't be the only attraction for Portugal when it tries to win a second straight European Championship title.

Ronaldo will attempt to become the all-time leading scorer with a national team, but this time there will be a lot more to watch for in Portugal's squad.

The defending champions are bringing one their most talented teams in years to Euro 2020, loaded with players who can support Ronaldo and make Portugal a contender again.

The talent pool is arguably greater than it was five years ago in France, when Portugal won the title with a squad that succeeded with efficiency rather than extraordinary play. The Portuguese earned the trophy with only one victory in 90 minutes during the entire tournament.

At Euro 2020, Portugal will play in a difficult Group F that also includes Germany, France and Hungary. Both Germany and Hungary will have home games against Portugal in the group stage.

"I have great confidence in my

AP PHOTO



players and I have the conviction that Portugal is a title candidate," Portugal coach Fernando Santos said.

The 36-year-old Ronaldo will be backed this time by the likes of João Félix, Bernardo Silva, Bruno Fernandes, Rúben Dias and Diogo Jota.

Many of those players will be

in position to thrive in large part because of the tournament's postponement caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Jota was a Wolverhampton player who hadn't played much for his country last year but is now a regular for Liverpool and his national team, scoring six goals in 12 international games. Rúben Dias

has improved after his first season at Manchester City, while Fernandes has established himself as one of Manchester United's top playmakers. João Félix earned an extra year of experience with an Atlético Madrid team that thrived in the Spanish league.

Also included in the Euro 2020 squad was 22-year-old forward

Pedro Gonçalves, who has never played for the senior national team. Gonçalves was key in helping Sporting Lisbon win its first Portuguese league title since 2002.

"The list is not the result of an analysis of two or three days," Santos said. "If I called up these players, it's because they all have great quality."

There could have been even more talent in Portugal's squad had youngster Pedro Neto not been ruled out because of a knee injury. He was one of the best players for Wolverhampton in his first year as a regular starter and also had established himself in Portugal's squad.

Dias and Silva, another key player for English champion Man City, are some of the players who will be returning from the 2018 World Cup squad that was eliminated by Uruguay in the round of 16.

The defense again will be led by 38-year-old Pepe, the most valuable player in the Euro 2016 final, when Portugal defeated host France.

Ronaldo will be playing in his fifth straight European Championship and will be looking to add yet another record to his name. He is six goals from tying the all-time scoring record for a men's national team.

The Juventus forward has scored for Portugal in every calendar year since his first international goal in 2004. MDT/AP

AD

合夥人 PARTNERS:

- 官樂怡 Rui José da Cunha °
- 山度士 Álvaro Rodrigues °
- 馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata °
- 趙魯 Zhao Lu °
- 馬傑安 João Nogueira Marques

大律師 ASSOCIATES:

- 高文軒 Adelino Correia °
- 羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues *
- 白秀蘭 Susana Batalha
- 馬潔冰 Maria João Marques
- 陶義德 António Isó de Azevedo
- 白穎怡 Iclíia Berenguel
- 冼玲鳳 Mariana Afonso Esteves
- 薛明恩 Maria Antónia Giestas
- 飛嘉華 Carlos dos Santos Ferreira °
- 杜力信 Nelson de Azevedo
- 馬秀文 Sofia Mendes Martins
- 宋哲言 João Gonçalves Assunção
- 巴慧雅 Vera Bastos
- 莫永誠 Rui Velez de Moura
- 安東尼 António Manuel dos Santos
- 歐文傑 Miguel Evaristo
- 陳芷喬 Joana Chan
- 顏曉蓉 Teresa Xiaorong Yan
- 諾瑪莉 Maria Noras
- 康靜雅 Viviana Hong
- 梁淑嵐 Ana Leon

實習律師 TRAINEE LAWYERS:

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- 張偉鴻 Cheong Wai Hong
- 李莉 Lei Lei
- 陳健雄 Eurico Chan
- 吳霆鋒 Ng Teng Fong

法律專家 JURISTS:

- 羅成軒 José J. Rodrigues
- 潘卡莉 Candice Pun
- 斐彥德 Gonçalo Figueiredo
- 羅嘉慧 Emily Lo
- 陳子健 Chan Chi Kin



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& NOTARIES
SINCE 1996

GENEROUS EXPRESSION

WHEN Joseph Krug founded the House of Krug in 1843, his dream was to craft the very best champagne he could offer, every year, regardless of annual climate variations. Every year since 1843, the House of Krug honours his dream with a new *Édition* of Krug Grande Cuvée, the most generous expression of champagne. Today, over one hundred and seventy-five years after Krug Grande Cuvée was first created, the House of Krug presents Krug Grande Cuvée 169ème *Édition*.

Set to release this month at partnered outlets in Hong Kong and Macau, Krug Grande Cuvée 169ème *Édition* was composed around the harvest of 2013. The season began with a seemingly endless winter, followed by a rainy and cool spring. While summer was hot and sunny, the season was also marked by hailstorms that took their toll on the vineyards. The resulting wines were complete and expressive.

A light golden colour with fine, vivacious bubbles holds a promise of pleasure. On the nose are the aromas of flowers in full bloom, as well as ripe, dried, and citrus fruits, marzipan, and gingerbread. The palate displays an alluring combination of hazelnut, nougat, barley sugar, jellied and citrus fruits, almonds, brioche, and honey. This champagne can be enjoyed as an aperitif, paired with the sharp and nutty tasting notes of Jabugo ham and mature Comté, or served to accompany seafood, Indian or Moroccan food, and desserts such as carrot cake, tarte tatin and cheesecake.



TASTE OF EDESIA

Lunch of a lifetime

IRENE SAM, MDT

WYNN PALACE has recently organised a collaboration between Executive Chef of **Wing Lei Palace**, Tam Kwok-Fung, and Sheng Gor, one of Asia's most well known celebrity chefs who operates a private kitchen frequented by *crème de la*

crème in the world of gastronomy. Before the Covid 19 pandemic, it was not hard to find individuals such as Alain Ducasse and Asian movie stars relaxing themselves with a glass of wine in Sheng Gor's kitchen.

Indeed, such a collaboration did not disappoint. Highlights on the lunch menu included Sheng Gor's deep-fried crab meat puff

with pork friter, which requires the chef to have perfect temperature and control when cutting the pork fat which constitutes the outer layer of the wonder. Nevertheless, Chef Tam outshone with his steamed fried rice with octopus and diced abalone in lotus leaf, which paired umami characteristics of the sea beautifully with the earthy aroma of lotus leaf.

Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu, MDT



THE ABERDEEN 1500 METRES TURF

2021-04-05|Sat|14:00

OFFSPRING of Holy Roman Emperor are consistent performers in all major racing jurisdictions, some also scored in high grade races across the globe. One of Holy Roman Emperor's offspring in MJC **Pursuing Eagle** is also a model of consistency; his trainer W. Smith is going to give him another crack this Saturday in his pet distance 1500 metres turf, he should again be in the money but the odd won't be as huge as his first trail in the same distance on 18 April. On Saturday he drawn barrier 2, W.Smith also engage his last race winning jockey S Nakano to ride him. I am very confident that **Pursuing Eagle** will run a big race this Saturday. Pursuing Eagle is only 3 years old and it looks like he still got plenty left in the tank. Forget about his last race in 1200 metres turf, it was a bit too short but he still fought in for gutsy third, so back to 1500 metres he should again be spot on. He will be my NAP for Saturday's meeting.

Race 3 Horse no. 2 Pursuing Star Win and Place bets.



OPINION

China Daily
 China Daily, Editorial

**CHINA SHOULDERING
 ITS RESPONSIBILITY
 TO PROVIDE
 VACCINES FOR
 COMMON GOOD**

With the developed countries having flexed their financial muscles to gain pole position in the race to acquire COVID-19 vaccines, the World Health Organization's green light to a second Chinese vaccine is good news for those countries that have been pushed to the back of the chasing pack.

Especially as its "easy storage requirements make it very manageable and particularly suitable for low-resource settings," as WHO Assistant Director-General for Access to Medicines and Health Products Mariangela Simao said in a statement announcing the news on Tuesday.

The WHO's approval of the vaccine provides a big boost to the world, which "desperately needs multiple COVID-19 vaccines to address the huge access inequity across the globe".

Those countries that were anxiously awaiting the WHO's endorsement as a domestic legal requirement to import the vaccine will have heaved a sigh of relief as they will now be able to open their doors to it. And, having already approved the Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use last month, the WHO's nod to the Sinovac vaccine means the COVAX program will now be provided with both of the major vaccines produced by the world's largest manufacturer of COVID-19 vaccines. Through COVAX, the WHO has distributed roughly 60 million doses so far to developing countries. But that's a far cry from its goal of 2 billion doses for this year.

China is doing what it can. The Chinese Foreign Ministry announced on Tuesday, that production of the first batch it has pledged to provide the COVAX program, 10 million doses, has now been completed. In all, China has produced about 900 million doses of vaccines so far, of which more than 600 million doses have been administered at home, and the rest donated to more than 80 developing countries and exported to more than 50 countries. The safety and efficacy of the Chinese vaccines have been fully proved by these countries.

As one of the first countries to vow to make its vaccines global public goods and call on other major vaccine producing countries to follow suit, China has taken concrete actions to fulfill its pledge. It is not only the largest contributor of vaccines to the world, but also one of the most active promoters of coordinated international efforts to fight the virus. The country supports waiving intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines, and it is encouraging its vaccine developers to carry out joint production with other developing countries.

This is in stark contrast to some of the developed countries, which have hoarded vaccines beyond their actual needs. Which explains why African countries account for only 1 percent of the administered doses worldwide.

It is estimated that China can produce 3 billion doses of the vaccines by the end of this year, and its production capacity will reach 8 billion doses next year. That means it is set to serve as the main source of bullets in the global war against the virus.

Buckingham Palace barred ethnic minorities from office jobs during the 1960s, the Guardian newspaper reported yesterday, citing documents in Britain's National Archives.

The revelation, published on the newspaper's front page, was based on papers showing that Queen Elizabeth II's chief financial manager told civil servants in 1968 that it was not the palace's practice to hire "coloured immigrants or foreigners" for clerical posts and other office jobs.

The palace replied forcefully to the historical allegations, stressing that the queen and her household comply "in princi-

ple and in practice" with anti-discrimination legislation.

"Claims based on a second-hand account of conversations from over 50 years ago should not be used to draw or infer conclusions about modern-day events or operations," a palace spokesman said, speaking on the customary condition of anonymity.

The Guardian's allegations stem from its investigation into the palace's use of a mechanism known as "crown consent," under which the monarch grants permission for Parliament to debate laws affecting her.



AP PHOTO

**SLOW TO START, CHINA
 MOBILIZES TO VACCINATE
 AT HEADLONG PACE**

HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

In the span of just five days last month, China gave out 100 million shots of its COVID-19 vaccines.

After a slow start, China is now doing what virtually no other country in the world can: harnessing the power and all-encompassing reach of its one-party system and a maturing domestic vaccine industry to administer shots at a staggering pace. The rollout is far from perfect, including uneven distribution, but Chinese public health leaders now say they're hoping to inoculate 80% of the population of 1.4 billion by the end of the year.

As of Wednesday, China had given out more than 704 million doses — with nearly half of those in May alone. China's total is roughly a third of the 1.9 billion shots distributed globally, according to Our World in Data, an online research site.

The call to get vaccinated comes from every corner of society. Companies offer shots to their employees, schools urge their students and staffers, and local government workers check on their residents.

That pressure underscores both the system's strength, which makes it possible to even consider vaccinating more than a billion people this year, but also the risks to civil liberties —

a concern the world over but one that is particularly acute in China, where there are few protections.

"The Communist Party has people all the way down to every village, every neighborhood," said Ray Yip, former country director for the Gates Foundation in China and a public health expert. "That's the draconian part of the system, but it also gives very powerful mobilization."

China is now averaging about 19 million shots per day, according to Our World in Data's rolling seven-day average. That would mean a dose for everyone in Italy about every three days. The United States, with about one-quarter of China's population, reached around 3.4 million shots per day in April when its drive was at full tilt.

It's still unclear how many people in China are fully vaccinated — which can mean anywhere from one to three doses of the vaccines in use — as the government does not publicly release that data.

Zhong Nanshan, the head of a group of experts attached to the National Health Commission and a prominent government doctor, said on Sunday that 40% of the population has received at least one dose, and the aim was to get that percentage fully vaccinated by the end of the month.

In Beijing, the capital, 87% of the population

has received at least one dose. Getting a shot is as easy as walking into one of hundreds of vaccination points found all across the city. Vaccination buses are parked in high foot-traffic areas, including in the city center and at malls.

But Beijing's abundance is not shared with the rest of the country, and local media reports and complaints on social media show the difficulty of getting an appointment elsewhere.

"I started lining up that day at 9 in the morning, until 6 p.m., only then did I get the shot. It was exhausting," Zhou Hongxia, a resident of Lanzhou, in northwestern Gansu province, explained recently. "When I left, there were still people waiting."

Zhou's husband hasn't been so lucky and has yet to get a shot. When they call the local hotlines, they are told simply to wait.

Central government officials on Monday said they're working to ensure supply is more evenly distributed.

China has even focused on vaccinating its citizens abroad, donating vaccines to Thailand, some of which were used to inoculate its nationals before most Thais received their doses. Globally, it has vaccinated more than 500,000 overseas citizens under what it calls the "Spring Sprout" program. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

Sri Lanka Authorities in Sri Lanka were trying to head off a potential environmental disaster yesterday as a fire-damaged container ship that had been carrying chemicals was sinking off of the country's main port. The Singapore-flagged MV X-Press Pearl started sinking Wednesday, a day after authorities extinguished fire that raged on the vessel for 12 days. Efforts to tow the ship into deeper waters away from the port in Colombo failed after the ship's stern became submerged and rested on the seabed.



AP PHOTO

Iran A massive fire at an oil refinery near Iran's capital burned into a second day yesterday as firefighters struggled to extinguish the flames. The fire began at the state-owned Tondgooyan Petrochemical Co. to the south of Tehran on Wednesday night, sending a huge plume of black smoke into the sky over the capital.

Bahrain has begun offering a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine for some people six months after they received two shots of China's Sinopharm vaccine. The mixing of vaccines comes as the Mideast island nation struggles through its worst wave of the virus despite being one of the top countries in the world in per-capita inoculations.



AP PHOTO

Belarus A dissident journalist who was arrested after his plane was diverted to Belarus said in a video from prison that protests against the country's authoritarian leader had fizzled and the opposition should wait for a better moment to revive demonstrations. It was Raman Pratasevich's second such appearance that allies dismissed as having been coerced.