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LEADING AUTHORITIES OF BOTH MACAU AND CHINA ANNOUNCED THEIR COMMITMENTS TO DEEPEN CROSS-BORDER TOURISM TIES AT THE OPENING OF TRAVEL EXPO P4

HEALTH CHIEF DECLINES DISCLOSURE ON FUTURE COTAI HOSPITAL OPERATOR P4

INDONESIA IS RUNNING OUT OF OXYGEN AS IT ENDURES A DEVASTATING WAVE OF COVID-19 CASES; THE GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING EMERGENCY SUPPLIES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES P8



China's regulator ordered the removal from app stores of 25 apps owned by Didi Global Inc., the country's largest ride-hailing service, citing severe violations of rules against collecting personal data. The Cyberspace Administration of China had already taken down the main Didi app last Sunday, pending a cybersecurity review, after it debuted on the U.S. stock market last week.



Hong Kong One of the city's most established pro-democracy civic organizations said it is letting go its paid staff and halving the size of its steering committee after Beijing stepped up its crackdown on opposition activity in the semi-autonomous Chinese city. The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China is best known for organizing an annual rally and candlelight vigil remembering those killed in the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.



Indonesian security forces yesterday killed two suspected militants with ties to the Islamic State group who were believed to be connected to the killing of Christian farmers on Sulawesi island, the country's military said. The two men, identified as Rukli and Ahmad Gazali, were fatally shot during a pre-dawn raid by a five-man team of military and police in Central Sulawesi province's mountainous Parigi Moutong district, said Maj. Gen. Richard Tampubolon, who heads the joint operation. Parigi Moutong borders Poso district, considered an extremist hotbed in the province.

More on backpage

DISQUALIFIED OVER 'DISLOYALTY'

The electoral committee disqualified six candidate lists from the elections for 'not upholding the Basic Law.' In turn, the candidates will appeal the decision P3



ALL ABOUT MACAU

DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL CITY STILL YOUNG IN THE FACE OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS, SAYS CURATOR P2



FIA GT WORLD CUP EVENT DEPENDENT ON MACAU TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS P5

**TOXIN FOUND IN
LOCALLY-MADE
RAW DUMPLINGS**

Borax, which is a banned material in the preparation of food and food products, was found in the test samples of raw wonton and seasoned shrimps made by local eatery Wong Kun Sio Kung. It has grim implications for its outlets in Ginza Plaza and on Rua do Campo. The Municipal Affairs Bureau pointed out that although the material can prevent meat or shrimp from darkening, when consumed, it turns into Boric Acid, which is difficult to be released from the human body.

**MIECF TO RETURN
IN AUGUST**

Environmental Co-operation Forum & Exhibition (MIECF) will return to the expo halls from August 5 to 7, with the theme "Towards a Green and Low Carbon New Era". Held amid the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's MIECF is poised to enrich its online elements, including an online exhibition, online business matching and conference live streaming. Reviewing previous editions of the event, some enterprises successfully established collaborative relationships with enterprises in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to produce eco-friendly products, and some increased their turnover by about 20%.

**IPM HUMAN
SCIENCE AND
LANGUAGE
SYMPOSIUM CALLS
FOR PAPERS**

A duo of symposia, jointly held by the Macao Polytechnic Institute (IPM) and several foreign universities on human science, language and cognition, will be conducted online between November 29 and December 1. In preparation for the event, the higher education institution is now calling for papers. The papers submitted for the symposia must be brand new, having not been published or accepted for publication elsewhere. The IPM is inviting experts, scholars, researchers and other interested parties to sign up for the event for free.

MACAO INT'L DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL

CITY STILL YOUNG IN THE FACE OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS, SAYS CURATOR

ANTHONY LAM

DESPITE the arrival of new cinemas, the city's audience is still trying to get accustomed to the film festival culture, said Penny Lam, curator of the 5th Macao International Documentary Film Festival (MOIDF).

"Film festival is still a new thing to the local audience," Lam explained. "Macao is still very young in the face of documentary films, film festivals, artistic film productions and visiting non-commercial movie house."

Ironically, Lam finds the city quite special in terms of viewership. Many Macao documentary film viewers, he pointed out, are younger generations who are starting, or have not even started their careers. "In contrast, documentary film viewers outside of Macao are mostly older and from the middle-class," Lam said.

Looking into the future of the festival, Lam is planning to further expand the festival not only by its duration, but also types of events in the program, such as competitions and contests, wining and dining, as well as interactive events. "If a film is about food, I'm thinking of asking a cook to make the food item depicted in the film, and allow the audience to try it," Lam said.

Describing the festival, he said



that the main aim of the film festival is to close the gap between documentary films and the audience in general, "given the fact that commercial cinemas rarely screen documentary films."

Each of the past editions of the festival have tried to make a connection between itself and the city. It is inevitable that this year's will touch on the Covid-19 pandemic. "But the films will not be about the pandemic," Lam said. "It is a self-reflection of the daily lives during the pandemic."

For example, he said, there is a film depicting the lives of passengers who are stranded, or so-

meow quarantined, on a cruise ship. They have to consider the ship their home for a period of time and at the same time maintain civil interactions with other passengers. "This is actually what some of us have done in the past year," Lam said.

The range of films available has also earned a good name for the festival within or across the Greater Bay Area. Lam said that even though there is an established festival of its type in Guangzhou, the capital of the Guangdong Province, they may not screen the types of film picked in the Macao festival.

As such, documentary film enthusiasts who want to enjoy certain films on the big screen can visit Macao to watch the films they like.

This has somehow made the festival a tourism event. But this year, due to travel restrictions, Lam admitted that this group of viewers have thinned out.

Although he did not put it this way, the festival has somehow played a role in Chinese-Luso-phone interactions. The city has been designated a focal point of a particular cultural export in the broader national atlas.

This upcoming festival has a segment called "Taste of Portuguese", celebrating Portuguese productions. The three films were highly rated in the past couple of years.

The other segments of the festival are "New Release", "Classic Doc" and "Director in Focus - Anocha Suwichakornpong." However, the latter film "looks for audience who is more serious and curious," Lam explained.

Animal documentaries voiced-over by Sir David Attenborough highlights the genre's close proximity with common audience. However, Lam stressed that documentary films are meant for the big screen. It also has a storyline and development.

The festival is ongoing and will run until July 25.

Residential property price index up 1.5% in Mar-May

HONEY TSANG

THE overall residential property price index from March to May 2021 ticked up 1.5% compared to the preceding survey period from February to April to reach 267.6, according to the latest statistics provided by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

The indices for the Macao Peninsula were at 268.3, while those for Taipa

& Coloane stood at 264.8. Both figures increased by 1.8% and 0.3% respectively.

The existing residential units' index was at 287.8, up 1.6%. Within this category, the index for those in the Macao Peninsula was at 280.2, and that of Taipa & Coloane was at 318.4, increases of 1.9% and 0.3% respectively.

Broken down by age of building, the indices for

residential unit buildings with an age between 11 and 20 years and those over 20 years old advanced by 2.8% and 1.9% respectively.

Meanwhile, the index for pre-sale residential units increased by 1.5% to 297.5.

When segmented by floor area, the indices for residential units with a usable floor area between 75 and 99.9 square me-



ters and for those with 100 square meters or more grew by 1.9% and 1.7% respectively.

In terms of building height, the indices for re-

sidential units of buildings with seven stories or less and those with more than seven stories increased by 1.0% and 1.7% respectively.

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ELECTIONS 2021

Neto Valente says candidates' disqualification contrary to Basic Law

RENATO MARQUES

FOLLOWING Friday's announcement that a total of 21 aspiring candidates from six groups are ineligible to participate in the Legislative Assembly (AL) elections, the candidates, groups, and several noteworthy people from the community expressed their disagreement with the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission's (CAEAL) decision.

One of the most prominent opinions was by Macau's veteran and top lawyer, Jorge Neto Valente, who admitted to being shocked with CAEAL's decision and the arguments used to exclude the numerous candidates.

For Neto Valente, the decision of the CAEAL aims to defeat the candidates before the public can express its opinions of them at the polls, a fact that he believes to be contrary to the Basic Law that CAEAL based its decision upon.

"It is a way to defeat the candidates that wish to submit themselves to the people's suffrage. It is to defeat them in the secretariat [administrative procedure] and this is not freedom. The Basic Law is very clear, as is China's Constitution when both state that, in Macau, there is freedom

of expression," Neto Valente said in a phone interview to TDM.

"I am shocked because I know some of the disqualified [candidates]. I always follow what they say and some of them have been legislators and for decades have been contributing to Macau," the lawyer said. "I am very concerned when it is stated that they are not loyal and do not love Macau. The fact that they have different ideas and opinions from some of the authorities does not mean that they do not have the right to have them. When the Basic Law states that there is freedom of expression, we can think up some restriction to that, but one thing is for sure, freedom of expression means the right to think differently," he remarked.

"I, at many times disagree with what some of those disqualified [candidates] say, or do, or propose to do. I don't agree with their ideas, [but] defend that they have the right to express their ideas, because, otherwise, if this is not possible, then there is no freedom of expression," he concluded.

On Friday, CAEAL's chairman Tong Hio Fong said that the candidates had been disqualified due to "factual evidence" proving the candidates' disloyalty, adding that such decision was taken af-

RENATO MARQUES



ter a comprehensive evaluation on all AL election candidates was conducted, which contributed conclusively to the information provided by the Secretariat for Security.

"The people had not upheld the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), or they had not met the requirement of pledging allegiance to the MSAR of the PRC."

INFORMATION PROVIDED WAS REQUESTED BY CAEAL

Speaking on the sidelines of a meeting with AL legislators, Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak said that all the information on the candidates was provided by the Secretariat by request of the CAEAL.

"Obviously the request for information on the candidates was done by CAEAL and we have sent them [that] information. If they did not request it, we would have

not provided it since we do not have any role in the elections," Wong said, adding that the content of such information is highly confidential and only the CAEAL can reveal it.

"We do not have the obligation [to reveal the information] nor do we have any intention of doing so," Wong was quoted saying by several Chinese language media outlets, remarking that all the information provided was collected according to the laws.

ELECTIONS 2021

Candidates to appeal from disqualification decision

ON Saturday afternoon, several members of some of the lists disqualified from the elections spoke to the media during a press conference especially organized for this purpose.

Sulu Sou, Rocky Chan, Scott Chiang, Ng Kuok Cheong, and Paul Chan Wai Chi were among the lists of members who were present at the conference where they expressed their will to appeal the CAEAL decision.

"What is happening [in the elections] jeopardizes not only the candidates' but also the rights of everyone in Macau," Chiang said, adding that it is a basic right of anyone being accused of something to know exactly what they are being accused of.

Noting that there is a lot of work to do and very li-



tle time left to prepare an appeal, Chiang said it was not possible to do much until today. The CAEAL had not provided the information to the disqualified candidates as of Friday, July 9, as it was after working hours and the administrative services are closed over the weekend. Thus, taking the first step of learning more information about

the accusations could only be done from today after 9 a.m.

Chiang added that the law allows an appeal to both the CAEAL and the courts, with the latter to be done no later than July 26.

On the same matter, incumbent lawmaker Sou said that when he decided to fight for a better Macau, he knew that was a daily,

around-the-clock job and that his will to continue to do so has not changed.

"I am willing to fight. To me, every day is like the last day. My responsibility is to fight hard every day. Today's mission is to fight restlessly," Sou said, adding that he is disappointed with the fact that after 21 years, Macau's elections have stopped being fair.

Previously, Ng has also expressed the will to appeal the decision, adding that he also has the intention to write a letter to the Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng on the matter.

Ng said that if the decision of disqualifying the candidates, of which he is also a part, is merely administrative, it is possible to explain and appeal — but if the basis of such evaluation is a political decision, then no appeal could be effective.

"We will appeal to the court to explain everything. If this problem is only a technical problem, I think we can completely explain and solve the problem — but if it is a political decision, I don't think that any appeal can remove [retract] this decision. Maybe it really is a

political decision and if so, I will like to have an answer from the Chief Executive to know if this is a political decision by the CE or a political decision from the Central Government," Ng said, noting that if it is a political decision, this will hurt Macau's future.

In his turn, Chan said that he plans to appeal the CAEAL decision. The leader of the New Macau Progress Association (APNM) acknowledged that all five candidates from his list have been disqualified from the elections.

"All candidates from our list must be considered eligible and must be able to run in these legislative elections. We do not accept this decision," Chan said, claiming that he will fight to reverse the decision. **RM**



9TH MITE ACCENTUATES “TOURISM+” CONCEPT

HONEY TSANG

At the high-profile opening ceremony of the 9th Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo (MITE) on July 9, leading authorities of both Macau and China announced their commitments to collectively deepen cross-border tourism ties.

As one of the officiating guests, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong addressed the guests and shared that the MITE plays a principal role as “a bridge across Macau, the mainland and different parts of the world,” enabling tourism-related industries worldwide to forge relationships and explore more business opportunities.

Lei calls on practitioners to capitalize on platforms provided by the MITE to jointly develop more novel and innovative travel offerings — in a bid to gear themselves up for the full resumption of international travel in the future.

Secretary of the Bureau Party Committee and Inspector at Level 1 of the Bureau of International Exchanges and Cooperation of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Man Hongwei, also delivered an opening speech at the event.

He emphasized that the mainland and Macau have long been engaging in close collaboration, and proactively formulating plans to mount hybrid promotional activities. These tactics are designed to give reassurances to today's travelers during the Covid-19 pandemic era and accelerate the tourism recovery for both regions.

FIVE FOCUSES OF ‘TOURISM+’

The MITE, held at The Venetian Macao from July 9 to 11, was organized by Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, and coordinated by the Macau Travel

Agency Association.

The Expo was designed to give prominence to the government's new hook — the “Tourism+” element. In doing so, the MITE zooms in on five focuses repre-

senting the exemplar of the concept.

They included a more consolidated use of cloud technology to host exhibitions via an online-mixes-offline hybrid format. With the help of this, the “Cloud B2B” period in this year's MITE was extended from two days to 14 days to provide more time for exhibitors and buyers to connect.

The next focus was an enlarged scale in the exhibition zone of “Macao Street,” with a huge pavilion for local hotels to showcase their products.

Another exhibition highlight featured the “Gastronomy” section, where a demonstration of culinary expertise was incorporated for the first time.

The other two aspects were the heightened promotion of cultural tourism and the city's distinctive shops.

“The Expo manifests a variety of tourism elements offered by Macau including two of our glamorous calling cards, the World Heritage Site — the “Historic Centre of Macao” and Macau's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy,” Lee said.

The MITE boasted a total of 708 booths, with 394 exhibitors participating this year, inclu-

ding 106 Macau's exhibitors, 265 exhibitors from the mainland and Taiwan region, and 23 international exhibitors.

The event also attracted 341 buyers. Around 197 were hosted buyers from the mainland and 144 were online buyers worldwide.

“The [Expo] is going to showcase a comprehensive overview of novel tourism products and the resumption of some tourism sites in China to Macau's tourism practitioners and public,” Man added.

“Through this Expo, we believe the participants and exhibitors can further understand and explore more [business] opportunities and to better complement each other, and unitedly achieve a win-win outcome,” Man stated.

The MGTO has been the steering role to accelerate the Tourism+ concept. The MGTO earlier entered a partnership with one of China's online travel agencies Ctrip. They co-launched the MGTO's Official Flagship Store on Ctrip App during the kickoff day of MITE.

In addition, the MGTO also made a huge push of its own initiative, launching the “Incubation Plan for Macao's KOL in Tourism” on July 11.

RESUMPTION OF SEVEN-DAY VALIDITY PERIOD FOR COVID-19 TEST TO REVIVE TOURISM

The Macau SAR government has mandated the resumption of the 7-day validity period for the Covid-19 test for cross-border commuters and travelers as of midnight on July 10. It is expected to be a boon to speed up the city's tourism revival, Macao Government Tourism Office's (MGTO) director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes stated.

Following MITE's opening ceremony, Fernandes told the press, “The daily tourist arrivals tipped 20,000 in these days. [The tally] is [already] a positive signal for the city's tourism situation.”

She said that the relaxed cross-border travel measures can be an added catalyst to help advance the daily figures to return to the average of April and May.

Some advisories issued by several Mainland schools suggest their students avoid unnecessary travel. The MGTO director said it will continue to monitor the situation to see whether this may cool down travel intention to visit Macau among Mainland travelers.

Fernandes reaffirmed that Hong Kong is the second-largest source market to Macau, just after China. The MGTO authorities have been actively communicating with Hong Kong's authorities to ensure they can publicize the necessary travel information towards Hong Kong travelers shortly after the inter-city border reopens.

In terms of vaccine passports, she said that the proposal is still being reviewed. HT

Health chief declines disclosure on future Cotai hospital operator



It is not appropriate to disclose too much about the speculated operating entity of the future Island Hospital for the time being, Alvis Lo, director of the Health Bureau, recently said.

The medical doctor added that the matter is still in the planning, researching and exploring phase, leaving a lot of room

for changes.

Last week, Cheung Chun Wing, managing subdirector and associate medical consultant of the private Kiang Wu Hospital, revealed that the preliminary information available to him pointed to the direction of the future medical facility being operated by a mainland entity “with higher quality and long history.”

When questioned on the matter, along with refraining from making further disclosures, Lo said that he would not rule out any possibility. He assured

journalists that the government was in talks with “different entities”, but there was no confirmed plan so far.

He said the government is willing to listen to different opinions on the matter when he was asked why a Hong Kong medical entity, which generally enjoys stronger confidence in Macau, was not considered.

In addition, he revealed that the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine of the University of Hong Kong has been commissioned to run a study on Macau's medical system. AL

FIA GT World Cup exclusively dependent on Macau travel restrictions

RENATO MARQUES

THE return of drivers and machinery for the FIA GT World Cup event to Macau's Guia circuit solely depends on the easing of local border restrictions by November, the event promoter, SRO Motorsports Group (SRO), acknowledged in a letter sent to drivers and teams kicking off the registration for the event.

According to the promoter, the event is set to return to the streets of Macau by November this year in the same format as the previous edition, held in 2019.

The event includes, along with practice and qualifying sessions, a 12-lap qualifying race to be held on Saturday (November 20) and a final 16-lap cup race on Sunday (November 21).

In the notice, SRO notes that



holding the event is dependent on local travel restrictions.

"Should the travel restrictions into Macau still be in place by the closing of registration on August 31 (or there being no fixed date confirmed for their relaxation), the FIA GT World Cup may not be held in 2021," the promoter stated, adding, "Should that happen, the FIA

will refund any registration deposits that have been received."

One evolution from previous editions is the grading of the drivers allowed to compete from this year onwards. It now allows Bronze-graded drivers to compete alongside the Platinum, Gold, and Silver-graded drivers, which were the only grades previously admitted.

REGISTERED ORGAN DONORS NEARLY 5,000

STAFF REPORTER

THE total number of registered organ donors in Macau was 4,978 people as of May 31 this year, according to data released by the deputy director of the Health Bureau (SSM) Cheang Seng Ip.

In reply to a query from lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng, Cheang explained that the chances of obtaining suitable organs for patients are low due to the small population base.

However, Cheang noted that Macau signed a letter of intent with the mainland for organ donation and sharing in November 2017, enabling Macau to join the organ donation system.

To promote organ donation, Cheang said that SSM has launched a series of publicity efforts, including setting up an organ donation promotion team to encourage the participation of more potential donors, and raise community interest in and support for organ donation.

"At present, Macau has yet to solve the problem of sourcing human organs, but the SSM is actively working on staff training, facilities and equipment, and interdepartmental cooperation to make adequate preparations for the launch of organ transplantation," he said in his response.

AD

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TECH

CHINESE REGULATOR HALTS HUYA-DOUYU GAME-STREAMING MERGER

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINA'S market regulator on Saturday blocked the merger of Tencent-backed game streaming platforms Douyu and Huya following an anti-monopoly investigation, as authorities ramp up scrutiny of some of the country's biggest technology companies.

Huya and Douyu — which provide videogame live-streaming services akin to Twitch in the U.S. — are two of the largest companies of their kind in China. Both count gaming firm Tencent among their investors.

China's State Administration for Market Regulation said in a statement that a merger between Huya and Douyu would give Tencent control over the merged entity.

"From the perspective of different key indicators like revenue, number of active users, resources for streamers, the total share is very substantial and the elimination and restriction of competition can be foreseen," the statement said.



AP PHOTO

Authorities have stepped up oversight of some of China's largest technology firms over concerns of monopolistic behavior and unchecked growth, as well as how companies are collecting and using data from their millions of users.

Also Saturday, China's cyber-regulator issued draft measures that

said companies holding personal information of over a million users must apply for cybersecurity approval if they plan to list abroad. The Cyberspace Administration of China said in a statement that the review and approval is necessary because of risks that the data could be "affected, controlled, and maliciously exploited

by foreign governments."

It also said there's a risk of important data being illegally used or transferred out of the country.

Last week, the cyber-regulator ordered a cybersecurity investigation into ride-sharing platform Didi Global Inc. The food delivery platform Meituan is also under an anti-monopoly probe, and

e-commerce giant Alibaba was fined a record \$2.8 billion earlier this year for antitrust violations.

China's market regulator said the decision to ban the merger between Huya and Douyu is the first instance of regulators prohibiting market concentration in the internet sector.

The two companies first announced last October that they planned to merge, but market regulators later said that they would review the \$6 billion deal.

Tencent said it was notified by the regulator that the merger has been halted.

"The company will abide by the decision, comply with all regulatory requirements, operate in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, and fulfill our social responsibilities," the company said in a statement Saturday.

Earlier this week, Chinese authorities said they would also increase supervision of companies listed overseas.

Under the new measures, regulation of data security and cross-border data flows, as well as the management of confidential data, will be improved.

Authorities also plan to crack down on illegal activities in the securities market, and will investigate and punish acts such as the fraudulent issuance of securities, market manipulation and insider trading. **MDT/AP**

CANADA JUDGE WON'T ALLOW HUAWEI EXEC TO SUBMIT NEW EVIDENCE

A Canadian judge has denied the request from a senior executive for Chinese communications giant Huawei Technologies to submit new evidence into her extradition hearing.

"The application is denied," said Associate Chief Justice Heather Holmes said Friday.

Holmes said her reasons for the refusal will be issued in 10 days.

Canada arrested Meng

Wanzhou, Huawei's chief financial officer who is also the daughter of the company's founder, at the Vancouver airport on Dec. 1, 2018, at the request of the U.S., which wants her extradited to face fraud charges. The arrest infuriated Beijing, which sees her case as a political move designed to prevent China's rise.

The U.S. accuses Huawei of using a Hong Kong shell company cal-

led Skycom to sell equipment to Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions. It says Meng committed fraud by misleading the HSBC bank about the company's business dealings in Iran.

Meng's lawyers had asked the court to allow recently obtained the evidence from HSBC through a court agreement in Hong Kong.

The documents include internal email chains and spreadsheets that Meng's

team argued show senior executives knew more about Huawei's control over another company that did business in Iran than U.S. prosecutors claim.

During a hearing in June defense lawyers had said the new evidence would "fatally" undermine the case against Meng.

Canadian government lawyers argued the evidence was more suited to a trial, not an extradition hearing.

Meng will be back in

court Aug. 3.

That hearing is expected to take up to three weeks and will cover arguments over whether Meng was subjected to an abuse of process, the remedy related to that alleged abuse, and the actual committal hearing to determine if she should be extradited to the United States.

Soon after Meng's arrest, China arrested Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig in apparent

retaliation and charged them with spying. Both have remained in custody with limited access to visits by Canadian consular officials.

The two made closed-door court appearances over the last week. Canadian consular officials were barred from attending the proceedings and no verdicts were announced.

Meng remains free on bail in Vancouver and is living in a mansion. **MDT/AP**

AD

HOLIDAY RENTAL HOUSES
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This warning signal is issued when heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall over extensive areas, exceeding 50 millimetres in an hour, and is likely to continue.

Yellow rainstorm warning signal - level 1
This warning signal is issued when heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall over extensive areas, exceeding 25 millimetres in an hour, and is likely to continue.

For more information scan the QR code

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地球物理暨氣象局
Direção dos Serviços Meteorológicos e Geofísicos

AP PHOTO



Leaders of North Korea, China vow to strengthen ties

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

THE North Korean and Chinese leaders expressed their desire yesterday to further strengthen their ties as they exchanged messages marking the 60th anniversary of their countries' defense treaty.

In a message to Chinese President Xi Jinping, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said it is "the fixed stand" of his government to "ceaselessly develop the friendly and cooperative relations" between the countries, the state-run Korean Central News Agency said.

Xi said in his message that China and North Korea have "unswervingly supported each other," according to China's official Xinhua News Agency.

"The world has recently seen accelerating changes unprecedented over the past century," Xi said. "I wish to [...] lead bilateral relations to uncea-

singly rise to new levels to the benefit of the two countries and their peoples."

North Korea has been expected to seek greater support from China, its major ally and aid benefactor, as it grapples with economic hardship exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic and crippling U.S.-led sanctions over its nuclear weapons program. China, for its part, sees preventing a North Korean collapse as crucial to its security interests and would need to boost ties with North Korea and other traditional allies amid fierce rivalry with the United States, some experts say.

Kim said in his message that the bilateral treaty "is displaying its stronger vitality in defending and propelling the socialist cause of the two countries [...] now that the hostile forces become more desperate in their challenge and obstructive moves."

Under the 1961 Treaty of Friend-

ship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, North Korea and China are committed to offering one another immediate military and other aid in the event of an attack.

North Korea-China ties go back to the 1930s, when Kim Il Sung, the grandfather of Kim Jong Un, led Korean guerrillas as they fought alongside Chinese soldiers against Japanese colonizers in northeastern China. The two countries established diplomatic relations in 1949, one year before North Korea launched a surprise attack on South Korea and started a three-year war that killed hundreds of thousands of people.

China fought alongside North Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War, while U.S.-led U.N. forces supported South Korea. About 28,500 U.S. soldiers are still stationed in South Korea to deter potential aggression from North Korea. China doesn't deploy troops in North Korea. **MDT/AP**

GOV'T OPPOSES US MOVE TO ADD CHINESE ENTITIES TO EXPORT CONTROL LIST

CHINA is firmly opposed to the United States adding 23 Chinese entities to its "entity list" of export controls, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) said yesterday.

The move, in disregard of facts, came on so-called grounds such as "human rights," as the United States generalized the concept of national security and abused export control measures, according to the MOC spokesperson.

"This is an unjustified suppression of Chinese enterprises and a serious damage to international economic and trade rules, which China firmly opposes," the spokesperson said.

Urging the United States to immediately stop the wrong practice, the spokesperson said China will take all necessary measures to safeguard Chinese companies' legitimate rights and interests. **MDT/XINHUA**

AP PHOTO



ADVERTORIAL

GREAT TIMES

A Taste of Summer Extravagance

AS the summer holidays take off, it is time for a myriad of gastronomic excitement with someone that feeds everyone's appetite! From now until Aug 31, every Monday to Friday, enjoy a locals' privilege of 20% off on dining at MGM MACAU and MGM COTAI by presenting valid Macau resident identification cards, plus an additional 5% by settling with any designated form of electronic payment methods. Let your taste buds take a trip with a distinctive array of food!

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Indonesia short on oxygen, seeks help as virus cases soar

NINIEK KARMINI,
JAKARTA, INDONESIA

JUST two months ago, Indonesia was coming to a gasping India's aid with thousands of tanks of oxygen.

Today, the Southeast Asia country is running out of oxygen as it endures a devastating wave of coronavirus cases and the government is seeking emergency supplies from other countries, including Singapore and China.

A shipment of more than 1,000 oxygen cylinders, concentrators, ventilators and other health devices arrived from Singapore on Friday, followed by another 1,000 ventilators from Australia, said Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, the government minister in charge of Indonesia's pandemic response.

Beside those donations, Indonesia plans to buy 36,000 tons of oxygen and 10,000 concentrators — devices that generate oxygen — from neighboring Singapore, Pandjaitan said.

He said he is in touch with China and other potential oxygen sources. The U.S. and the United

Arab Emirates also have offered help.

"We recognize the difficult situation Indonesia currently finds itself in with a surge of COVID cases," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said. In addition to sending vaccines, the U.S. is working to increase assistance for Indonesia's broader COVID-19 response efforts, she said, without elaborating.

Overall, Indonesia, the world's fourth-most populous country, has reported more than 2.4 million infections and 64,631 fatalities from COVID-19. Those figures are widely believed to be a vast undercount due to low testing and poor tracing measures. Indonesia reported the highest toll of 1,040 deaths on Wednesday and nearly 39,000 confirmed cases on Thursday and Friday.

Hospitals are swamped, with growing numbers of the ill dying in isolation at home or while waiting to

receive emergency care.

On Java, Indonesia's most populous island, hospitals began setting up makeshift intensive care units in mid-June. Many patients are waiting for days to be admitted. Oxygen tanks were rolled out onto sidewalks for those lucky enough to get them, while others have been told they have to find their own.

Overall, Indonesia, the world's fourth-most populous country, has reported more than 2.4 million infections and 64,631 fatalities from Covid-19

Emergency rooms at a public hospital in Bandung city closed earlier this week after running out of oxygen amid panic buying fueled by soaring infections in the West Java provincial capital, said Yaya Mulyana, the city's deputy mayor.

"Panicked people bought oxygen tanks even though they didn't need

them yet," Mulyana said. "That has led to oxygen supplies running out."

At one hospital in Yogyakarta, in central Java, 63 COVID-19 patients died in one day -- 33 of them during an outage of its central liquid oxygen supply, though the hospital had switched to using oxygen cylinders, spokesman Banu Hermawan said.

Indonesia donated 3,400 oxygen cylinders and concentrators to India when a brutal outbreak ravaged the country. As its own cases surged, Jakarta then canceled a plan to send another 2,000 oxygen concentrators to India in late June.

The daily need for oxygen has reached 1,928 tons a day. The country's total available production capacity is 2,262 tons a day, according to government data.

"I asked for 100% of oxygen go to medical purposes first, meaning that all industrial allocations must be transferred to medical," said Pandjaitan, the government minister. "We are racing against time, we have to work fast."

Given the rapid spread of the highly infectious delta variant, he warned that Indonesia could face a worst-case scenario with 50,000 cases a day. The next two weeks will be critical, he said.

The Ministry of Industry responded by issuing a decree that all oxygen supplies be sent to hospitals overflowing with coronavirus patients, and asked industry players to cooperate.

Oxygen is used in making many products, including textiles, plastics and vehicles. Oil refiners, chemical manufacturers and steel makers also use it. But industry leaders have fallen in line in supporting government efforts to maximize supplies for

hospitals.

The government has redirected oxygen supplies from industrial plants in Morowali in Central Sulawesi, Balikpapan on Borneo island, and Belawan and Batam on Sumatra islands, Pandjaitan said. Smaller oxygen industries have also been directed to produce pharmaceutical oxygen. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

990 YELTSIN RESIGNATION SPLITS SOVIET COMMUNISTS

The populist politician and president of the Russian parliament, Boris Yeltsin, has resigned from the Soviet Communist Party.

The resignation has also led to a declaration from the small but influential radical reform group Democratic Platform that they would also break away.

The split leaves Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev with a party in tatters.

It was thought that Mr Gorbachev had appeased the reformers by ensuring the defeat of hardline conservative Yegor Ligachev in the race for the deputy leadership yesterday.

His favoured candidate, the pro-reform Vladimir Ivashko, was elected instead.

But it was not enough. Within hours of another vote to approve new party rules which still restrict factions operating within it, Mr Yeltsin stood up to address a hushed auditorium.

"In view of my great responsibility towards the people of Russia and in connection with the move towards a multi-party system I cannot fulfil only the instructions of the party," he said.

"As the highest elected figure in the republic, I have to bow to the will of all the people."

He then turned and left the chamber without another word.

Some delegates shouted "Shame", while a few clapped.

Mr Gorbachev, clearly expecting the move, was heard to say, "That ends the process logically," before instructing delegates to withdraw Mr Yeltsin's congress mandate.

The departure of a group of Democratic Platform delegates less than an hour later confirmed the split - the first since the Bolshevik-Menshevik divide which put Lenin in power in 1903.

Among those leaving are the popular new mayor of Leningrad, Anatoly Sobchak, and the mayor of Moscow, Gavriil Popov.

Mr Yeltsin has been a figurehead for radical reform of the party system for the last 18 months, and has been a trenchant critic of President Gorbachev for not going far enough with party reforms.

Despite that, he has remained at the centre of the Communist Party structure. His name was put forward for inclusion in the new Central Committee to be chosen this evening.

His real strength lies in his popular support among ordinary Russian people.

In an opinion poll carried out by the Moscow News newspaper earlier this month he scored an 84% popularity rating, making him by far the most trusted figure on the Soviet political scene.



Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Days later, tens of thousands of demonstrators gathered beside the walls of the Kremlin to voice their opposition to the Soviet Communist Party.

In August 1991, the rivalry between reformist and conservative elements of the congress erupted in an attempted coup against Mikhail Gorbachev.

Boris Yeltsin became a national hero after he mounted a tank to rally the people against the coup.

After the formal collapse of the Soviet Union later in 1991, Boris Yeltsin, who was already president of Russia, found himself at the head of a world superpower.

His presidency was marked by rapid economic and political reform.

He took on the remnants of Soviet conservatism again in 1993, in an armed clash in which the Parliament building was shelled and 100 people died.

He went on to win the first post-Soviet presidential election in 1996, despite plummeting popularity ratings.

In the same year, he underwent major heart surgery, and there were serious concerns about the state of his health. Amid growing criticism of his erratic behaviour, including several embarrassing gaffes on the international stage, Yeltsin stood down from the presidency on 1 January 2000.

His chosen successor, Vladimir Putin, won the next election a few months later.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 If you're uncertain of your feelings, keep your opinions to yourself. Today is not the day to try to come people by giving them ultimatums. The knowledge you have will enhance your reputation.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Time spent with family, children, or good friends will be regenerating and positive. You can pick up valuable information if you listen to those with more experience.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Lowered vitality could affect your work. You can make money if you put your mind to it. Make sure you concentrate if operating machinery or vehicles.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You need to make changes that will raise your self esteem, such as a new hairstyle or a new image. You may want to take extra special care of your luggage if you are traveling today.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You can make drastic changes in your professional direction today. You are best to do your research before taking on such a venture. Try not to be overbearing where family is concerned.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 You may be looking through rose colored glasses. Someone may be trying to take advantage of you. Try to concentrate on research and acquiring information that will be of value in your chosen field.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Too much work and no play will not only result in fatigue and frustration but also loneliness, too. You can enjoy the company of others and come in contact with an ideal mate, if you get out and mingle.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Don't make large purchases unless you have discussed your choices with your mate. Take time to find out all you can. Avoid letting family get involved in your personal life.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Finish overdue paperwork and catch up on letter writing and reading. Your involvement in organizational events could open doors to new and exciting opportunities.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Relatives may play an important role in your personal life. Throw yourself into your work. You will be a real chatterbox today. Try to be fair in your dealings with acquaintances.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Involvement with prestigious organizations will be to your advantage. Help elders get their personal papers in order. You can make new friends who could turn into intimate connections.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Romance and social activity will be a promising combination. You may want to take another look at the investment you are about to make. You are going through a period of questioning.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	23	27	rain
Harbin	22	30	thunderstorms
Tianjin	28	36	fine
Urumqi	23	34	cloudy
Xi'an	25	31	rain
Lhasa	23	28	overcast
Chengdu	26	38	cloudy
Chongqing	26	35	cloudy
Kunming	28	35	cloudy
Nanjing	21	29	cloudy
Shanghai	26	34	thunderstorms
Wuhan	28	37	fine
Hangzhou	22	31	thunderstorms
Taipei	28	35	cloudy
Guangzhou	20	27	rain
Hong Kong	26	33	rain
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- Warns; 7- Kind of school; 10- Knocks lightly; 14- Out, in bed; 15- Metal-bearing mineral; 16- Shrinking sea; 17- Cavalry soldier; 18- Song syllable; 19- Tabula ____; 20- Specialist in the study of the human mind; 23- Jackie's predecessor; 26- ____ Lingus; 27- Noted Civil War biography; 28- Skeptic's scoff; 29- Boxer's warning; 30- Choose; 31- King Arthur's palace; 33- Phooey!; 34- Car club; 37- From ____ Z; 38- Single unit; 39- This ____ stickup!; 40- ____ be an honor; 41- Cock and bull; 42- Toothpaste type; 43- Domain; 45- Cabinet dept.; 46- Family nickname; 47- Do followers; 48- Residence; 51- Son of Jacob; 52- Interior; 53- Contemptuous; 56- Stumble; 57- PIN requester; 58- More bohemian; 62- ____ She Lovely?; 63- Skater Midori; 64- Innovation of the late 20's; 65- Hwys.; 66- Qui's opposite; 67- Most cunning;


DOWN 1- Satisfied sound; 2- Baton Rouge sch.; 3- Golfer Ernie; 4- Reprieve; 5- Fluff, as bangs; 6- Agile; 7- Female parent; 8- Diamond flaw?; 9- Distribute cards; 10- Aim; 11- Thin as ____; 12- Out; 13- Roofing stone; 21- Bloc; 22- Parentless child; 23- Book after Jonah; 24- Ease up; 25- Office notes; 29- Dead duck; 30- Watering hole; 32- Lumberjack; 33- Two-piece bathing suit; 34- Assisted; 35- Tiny particles; 36- Allow to enter; 44- Cartilaginous; 45- Experts; 46- Falls-jumping fish; 48- Up and about; 49- Rupture; 50- Suppose; 51- Same here; 52- Wall painting; 54- First son of Adam and Eve; 55- Cereal grain; 59- Tina's ex; 60- Frozen Wasser; 61- Emeritus; Abbr.;

Friday's solution

C	L	A	P	E	R	O	S	C	O	O	L
O	A	H	A	S	E	R	T	A	O	M	N
M	O	A	N	S	T	R	E	E	N	C	A
C	R	E	A	M	I	R	O	N	I	C	
D	A	S	H	I	N	G	A	M	E	N	
O	R	T	H	E	O	R	A	C	L	A	R
G	R	A	P	E	H	A	L	L	T	A	R
G	A	T	T	Y	K	E	S	Y	O	O	
E	D	I	T	R	A	I	N	I	S	L	A
D	E	C	O	R	A	T	E	C	A	N	A
S	P	U	N	T	C	I	N	E			
S	A	S	S	E	S	B	O	T	E	R	S
O	L	I	O	M	A	N	I	R	I	C	E
M	A	L	I	W	A	R	G	E	I	T	A
E	N	L	E	R	A	S	D	E	N	S	

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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	
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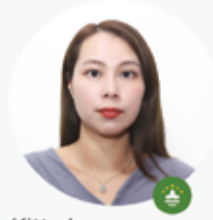
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Property of the Week



Lakeview Mansion
HKD 13,800,000 1,979 ft² 3 2

This generous size 3 bedroom apartment is located in one of the most popular locations in Macau close to Grand Lisboa Hotel. The apartment includes 2 baths, 3 individual balconies and a spacious kitchen. The unit also has ample natural light, and the master bedroom has an en suite bathroom with a built-in wardrobe.

Fantastic location near most major banks, New Yaohan department store and Senado square. There are also plenty of restaurants, shops, and bus stations nearby.

Viewings by appointment.
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Ref: 2106 6004

Property Hotlist



Lakeview Tower
HKD 11,000,000
1,344 ft²
3
2



Ref: 1912 6001



Taipa Village
HKD 10,900/mth
740 ft²
1
1



Ref: 1910 1006



Soi Cheung
HKD 9,900/mth
650 ft²
1
1



Ref: 2107 1002

More Listings

For Sale

- [Taipa] Taipa Village 2 1 750 ft² **HKD 4,680,000** Ref: 2103 6002
- [Macau] Jardim do Dragao 2 1 840 ft² **HKD 6,680,000** Ref: 2106 6001
- [Taipa] Taipa Village 4 2 1,404 ft² **HKD 8,380,000** Ref: 1909 6006
- [Macau] Basement style 2 2 2,200 ft² **HKD 9,990,000** Ref: 1511 5464
- [Taipa] Manhattan 3 2 1,720 ft² **HKD 12,980,000** Ref: 1909 6006

For Rent

- [Taipa] Old Taipa Studio 1 470 ft² **HKD 7,800/mth** Ref: 2106 1004
- [Taipa] Manhattan 3 2 1,720 ft² **HKD 16,900/mth** Ref: 2106 1002
- [Taipa] Chun U Villa 4 3 1,979 ft² **HKD 17,500/mth** Ref: 2104 1001
- [Macau] One Central 2 2 1,269 ft² **HKD 18,500/mth** Ref: 2005 1002
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788 ft²
2
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FOOTBALL

Messi pays his debt to Argentina with Copa America title

ARGENTINA finally made Lionel Messi cry with joy.

After losing four times in finals, early exits in major tournaments and even a decision to retire from the national team, the superstar celebrated a much-awaited title with Argentina at yesterday's 1-0 win against Brazil in the Maracana Stadium.

The title ended Argentina's 28-year drought of major trophies, with Messi as the best player with four goals and five assists. The captain also broke the team's record for international appearances with 151 matches.

"I needed to remove from myself the thorn of achieving something with the national team," Messi said after celebrating with his teammates.

When Uruguayan referee Esteban Ostojich blew the final whistle, Messi knelt down on the pitch and covered his face with his hands.

After he lifted the Copa America trophy, Messi said on the pitch and spoke to his family on the phone. He flicked the golden medal around his neck and shouted "I won, I won!"

The next challenge is to win the World Cup in Qatar next year, which



would be the first since Maradona took the team to the title in 1986.

Until yesterday, Messi's titles with Argentina were only the U-20 World Cup title in 2005 and a gold medal at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

His first frustration at the senior-team level started at age 19

in the World Cup quarterfinals elimination against Germany in 2006. One year later, he saw Brazil beat Argentina 3-0 in the Copa America final.

His next major shot at winning with Argentina came in the 2014 World Cup final against Germany. The 1-0 defeat at the Maracana Stadium in Rio frustrated the star,

who was voted the best player of the tournament, though his form was not as impressive as it was at his club.

Chile would crush Messi's hopes in two Copa America finals, in 2015 and 2016, both on penalties.

After the second defeat to Chile, Messi told journalists that the national team was over for him.

"It is not for me. I tried, I think that is it," he said.

But he returned for South American World Cup qualifiers in which Argentina struggled. He took the team to Russia, but the round-of-16 defeat against France came at a turbulent time for the team.

Messi became more aggressive in the 2019 Copa America, much to the pleasure of Argentinian fans who considered him to be too cold, too European. Under a coach with little experience, Lionel Scaloni, he was surrounded by young players who got the best of him.

Yesterday Messi kissed the Copa America trophy and lifted it at age 34. The biggest gap in his decorated career is now closed.

His first public words after the title showed how thrilled and relieved he felt.

"What a beautiful madness!" Messi said in an Instagram post showing him shirtless holding the Copa America trophy at the Maracana's dressing room. "This is unbelievable! Thank you, God! We are the champions!"

Goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, one of Argentina's key players in the tournament, said Messi "is the one who most deserved" to win the South American title.

Later at a news conference Messi said his happiness was "unexplainable."

"I was sad before, but I knew that at some point it was going to happen," he said. "I feel that God was saving this moment for me, against Brazil in a final and in their country." **MDT/AP**

Osaka returns to spotlight on red carpet at The ESPYS

NAOMI Osaka returned to the spotlight for the first time since withdrawing from the French Open in May and skipping Wimbledon, posing on the red carpet at The ESPYS yesterday.

The world's highest-paid female athlete faced a slew of photographers in New York, with one being heard urging her, "Nice smile" as cameras clicked furiously. Osaka offered a faint closed-mouth smile in response.

Osaka won trophies as the best athlete in women's sports and best women's tennis player at the annual show honoring the year's top athletes and sports moments. It was moved from Los Angeles to New York for an outdoor, socially distanced show this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Tom Brady won best men's athlete and his Tampa Bay Buccaneers were named best team. The quarterback, who turns 44 next



month, won his seventh Super Bowl title this year in his first season with the Bucs.

Osaka, who has won four Grand Slam titles, pulled out of the French Open before the second round, saying she has "huge waves of anxiety" before speaking to the media and that she has "suffered long bouts of depression." She also sat out Wimbledon. She'll re-

turn for the Tokyo Olympics, representing her native Japan.

She high-fived boyfriend-rapper Cordae from YBN Collective before taking the stage.

"I just really want to not say a long speech because I'm a bit nervous," Osaka said. "This year has been a really, it hasn't even finished, but it's been really

tough for a lot of us. For me, I just want to say I really love you guys."

Charlotte Hornets rookie LaMelo Ball won as best breakthrough athlete. The best game award was Gonzaga's 93-90 win over UCLA in the semifinals of the men's NCAA Tournament. DeVonta Smith, who won the Heisman Trophy at Alabama and now plays for the

Philadelphia Eagles, won as best men's college athlete.

UConn freshman basketball sensation Paige Bueckers won as women's college athlete. She urged greater media coverage for Black female athletes.

Shohei Ohtani, the Los Angeles Angels' two-way sensation, won as best MLB player. The Los Angeles Dodgers' World Series victory was named best championship moment.

Sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson attended the show in her first public appearance since testing positive for marijuana at the U.S. Olympic track trials and losing her spot on the team for Tokyo.

Actor Anthony Mackie hosted the show from The Rooftop at Pier 17 at the Seaport. He singled out Scripps National Spelling Bee winner Zaila Avant-garde during his monologue. The 14-year-old from Louisiana is a

basketball prodigy.

"This kid can do anything," Mackie said. "She can hit a stepback like Luka Doncic and then spell Luka Doncic right the first time."

Former WNBA MVP Maya Moore received the Arthur Ashe Courage Award for her work on criminal justice reform. She was honored on the same day that the late tennis champion would have turned 78.

Chris Nikic was honored with the Jimmy V Award for Perseverance. Last year, he became the first person with Down syndrome to finish an Ironman triathlon. Nikic also won best male athlete with a disability.

"I don't do excuses," Nikic said. "I don't quit."

Manchester United star Marcus Rashford received the Pat Tillman Award for Service. The 23-year-old Brit helped raise millions of dollars for children in England during the COVID-19 pandemic. **MDT/AP**

OPINION

China Daily
 Chu Zhaohui, China Daily

WILL SUMMER VACATION BE CRAM SCHOOLS' WINTER?

Summer vacation has started, but cram schools may be feeling the chill because since last month, 15 cram schools have been fined for issuing misleading advertisements, manipulating prices and using deceptive clauses in their documents. And on Friday, the Ministry of Education issued an official document encouraging public schools to take care of children during summer vacation, which apparently would further cool down the market for cram schools.

The measures taken by the authorities reflect China's resolve to prevent the inflow of hot money into the cram school sector, especially those "catering" to kindergarten, primary school and junior high school students. One of the prime goals of such a move is to ease the academic pressure on students, particularly because the incidence of myopia and obesity, due to academic pressure and lack of physical activity, is very high among Chinese students. Not to mention the lack of sleep has severely damaged many students' mental and physical health.

For years, the government has been taking measures to ease the academic pressure on students. For instance, the government has banned homework for children below the third grade and directed teachers to not assign homework to junior high school students which they need more than 90 minutes to complete.

Yet the academic pressure on students did not ease, because they were still forced by parents to attend cram schools. To ensure their children perform well in the college entrance exam, or gaokao, many parents get them admitted to one or more cram schools for which they pay huge amounts of money. And to take advantage of some parents' anxieties, cram schools have mushroomed across the country. Worse, many of them even offer "special" coaching for kids seeking admission to a kindergarten, in order to expand their business and make more profits.

"Involution", of late, has become a buzzword in China. Opposite to "evolution", the term was first used by anthropologists to describe an agrarian society that becomes more complex in character without undergoing any significant changes on the technology or political front, forcing people to work harder to get even a fair amount of return on their labor or capital.

The term mirrors some of the problems plaguing basic education in China. With an increasing number of students attending cram schools, the average test score increased, prompting the education authorities to raise the difficulty level of the questions in the exams, in order to limit the number of qualifiers because of the limited number of seats in universities.

This led to the formation of a vicious circle: the questions becoming more difficult and an increasing number of students joining cram schools to ensure they can answer those questions and pass the exams.

Undoubtedly, it's an important move to regulate cram schools and reduce the academic burden on students. But it should be noted that given the exam-focused education system, the demand exists. Students may seek other kinds of special classes or training.

Therefore, it is also necessary to improve the quality of basic education.

Syrian President Bashar Assad issued a decree yesterday giving hundreds of thousands of civil servants and military members a 50% salary increase amid a harsh economic and financial crisis and price increases for vital products.

Assad's decision came a day after the state doubled the price of bread, the country's main staple, and increased by 180% the price of diesel fuel.

The Syrian economy has been hard hit by a decade of war, Western sanctions, widespread corruption and most recently a severe economic and financial crisis in neighboring Lebanon.

The last salary increase was announced in November 2019.

The decree released by Assad's office put the minimum monthly income at 71,515 Syrian pounds (\$22). It also granted military and civilian pension holders an increase of 40% in the retirement pension.

The U.S. dollar is trading at about 3,200 pounds on the black market while the official rate is 2,500 pounds.

Nearly 80% of Syrians live in poverty, and 60% are food insecure — the worst food security situation ever seen in Syria, according to the United Nations.



AP PHOTO

TOKYO OLYMPICS

SPECTATORS ALSO BARRED FROM OUTLYING VENUES

STEPHEN WADE, TOKYO

Two more prefectures outside the immediate Tokyo area have decided to bar fans from attending Olympic events because of rising coronavirus infections, Tokyo Olympic organizers confirmed on Saturday with the pandemic-delayed games opening in just under two weeks.

Tokyo organizers and the IOC earlier in the week barred all fans from venues in Tokyo and three neighboring prefectures. They make up the overwhelming majority of Olympic venues, although a smattering of outlying areas were allowed initially to have limited attendance.

All fans from abroad were banned months ago. Now, two prefectures that were permitted to have fans have backed out of those plans.

Fukushima prefecture in northeastern Japan has decided to hold its baseball and softball events without spectators. It has been joined by the northern prefecture of Hokkaido, which will hold soccer games without fans at the Sapporo Dome.

"Many people including children have been looking forward to the games, and I'm very sorry to take away their chance of watching baseball and softball at the stadium," Fukushima Governor Masao Uchibori said Saturday. "It was a very tough decision to make."

Organizers [...] barred all fans from venues in Tokyo and three neighboring prefectures. They make up the overwhelming majority of Olympic venues

Fukushima was the early focus of the Olympics, trying to shine a light on recovery efforts in an area devastated in 2011 by an earthquake, tsunami, and the subsequent meltdown of three nuclear reactors.

Uchibori said the move by Hokkaido on Friday encouraged him to follow suit. He said it was important to have consistency among prefectures.

A few other events being held in the outlying prefectures of Miyagi, Shizuoka and Ibaraki will

go ahead with limited spectators, organizers said Saturday.

IOC President Thomas Bach probably didn't notice, but on Saturday about 40 people staged a small anti-Olympic protest outside the five-star hotel where he is self-isolating after arriving in Tokyo on Thursday.

"He (Bach) seems not to have thought anything about our critical situation and suffering, which makes me more angry," protester Ayako Yoshida said.

Polls have shown between 50-80% of Japanese oppose holding the Olympics, depending on

how the question is phrased. But opponents have failed to martial large turnouts in the streets.

Protesters carried a sign in English that read "Cancel the Tokyo Olympics" and one that had a red line drawn through the face of Bach and was captioned: "You Are Not Welcome."

Tokyo registered 950 new infections on Saturday, the 21st straight day that infections were higher than a week previous. It was the highest since 1,010 were reported on May 13. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

Bangladesh Police have arrested eight people Saturday on murder charges in connection with a factory fire that killed at least 52 people, many of whom were trapped inside by an illegally locked door, a senior police official said. The blaze began Thursday night at the five-story Hashem Foods Ltd. factory in Rupganj, just outside the capital Dhaka, sending huge clouds of black smoke billowing into the sky. Police discovered piles of bodies Friday afternoon after the fire was extinguished.

Iran's railroad system came under cyberattack on Friday, a semi-official news agency reported, with hackers posting fake messages about train delays or cancellations on display boards at stations across the country. The hackers posted messages such as "long delayed because of cyberattack" or "canceled" on the boards. They also urged passengers to call for information, listing the phone number of the office of the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Israel's Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for same-sex couples to have children through surrogate mothers, a move hailed by lawmakers and activists as a victory for LGBTQ rights. The court ruled in 2020 that a surrogacy law, which had expanded access to single women but excluded gay couples, "disproportionately harmed the right to equality and the right to parenthood" and was unlawful.



AP PHOTO

Haiti's interim government has asked the U.S. and U.N. to deploy troops to protect key infrastructure as it tries to stabilize the country and prepare for elections in the aftermath of President Jovenel Moise's assassination. The stunning request for U.S. military support recalled the tumult following Haiti's last presidential assassination, in 1915, when an angry mob dragged President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam out of the French Embassy and beat him to death.