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electronics

GBA EXPERTS: ELECTRONIC PAYMENT MAY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN MACAU

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TRAVEL EXPO'S CLOUD SESSION SAW A TOTAL OF 39 CONTRACTS INKED DIGITALLY

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PFIZER SAYS IT PLANS TO MEET WITH TOP U.S. HEALTH OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS THE REQUEST FOR FEDERAL AUTHORIZATION OF A THIRD DOSE OF COVID-19 VACCINE

P8



Philippines Swarms of Chinese vessels have dumped human waste and wastewater for years in a disputed area of the South China Sea, causing algae blooms that have damaged coral reefs and threatened fish in an unfolding catastrophe, a U.S.-based expert said yesterday. Satellite images over the last five years show how human waste, sewage and wastewater have accumulated and caused algae in a cluster of reefs in the Spratlys region where hundreds of Chinese fishing ships have anchored in batches.



Indonesia yesterday ordered four foreign tourists to leave the resort island of Bali after violating health protocols as the country endures a devastating wave of Covid-19 illnesses and deaths. A Russian who tested positive for the coronavirus upon her arrival in Bali last week was recaptured that night after she escaped mandatory isolation at an appointed hotel, said Jamaruli Manihuruk, who heads the Bali regional office for the Justice and Human Rights Ministry.



India Lightning has killed at least 38 people across two Indian states over the past 24 hours, officials said yesterday. A majority of the deaths occurred in the western state of Rajasthan, where 11 people died after being struck by lightning near a watchtower at the 12th century Amber Fort, police said. Senior police officer Anand Srivastava said some of the victims were taking selfies near the watchtower when lightning struck.

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5,254 HOUSING UNITS

Applications for the 2021 economic housing will start tomorrow, which will also be the first project subject to new rules P2



RENATO MARQUES

ELECTIONS 2021
DISQUALIFIED DEMOCRATS INSIST ON RUNNING THE PARLIAMENT RACE

P4



RENATO MARQUES

GOV'T OPENS TENDER FOR NEW ECONOMIC HOUSING, FINAL LIST PRESENTED NEXT YEAR

RENATO MARQUES

YESTERDAY, the government announced the opening of the new tender for economic acquisition housing.

In a press conference held on July 12 by the Housing Bureau (IH), president Arnaldo Santos announced that following the publication of four new orders from the Chief Executive (CE) establishing the conditions and rules for the new tender, a new tender will be opened tomorrow, July 14, by the IH.

This tender aims to give ranked applicants the opportunity to acquire housing units which will be built on five plots of Zone A on the new landfills.

According to IH, the new tender will include a total of 5,254 housing units, from which the majority 4,478 (85%) are two-bedroom apartments and only around 5% (242) are one-bedroom apartments.

In his speech, Santos noted that given the new law for the economic housing coming into force, this will be the first tender subject to the new rules restricting housing units acquired under this scheme to remain classified as economic housing units, thus preventing the units from being resold on the private market.

"From this tender, all the economic housing will keep this classification and the listing of the candidates in a points list [according to their score] replaces the former lucky draw in the computer," Santos said. He added, "at the same time, the application procedures were simplified, with the candidates being exempted from delivering documents is-



sued by other public services," as this communication is now done internally.

According to Santos, due to the simplification of the application procedures and forms, and the option to deliver the application forms online, the IH expects to have a final order list ready during the first half (H1) of 2022.

"We expect to publish the final list in the first half of the next year," the president of IH said. He added, "in upcoming years, there will be several public projects that will initiate public tenders and construction processes to respond to the demands of the population."

Under the new rules, residents who acquire any of these housing units can only resell them to the IH. In that instance, the acquisition price of the units by the government will be the same as the initial price, but all the necessary costs for renovation works to return the unit to the original livability conditions will be deducted from this resale price.

ECONOMIC HOUSING PRICES TO BE CALCULATED CASE-BY-CASE

Questioned on the matter, IH representatives noted that the prices for the housing units to be tendered will be established at a later stage by an order of the CE. This order will take into account factors such as constructions costs, administrative costs, and the land plot premium – which depends upon the location of the land plot.

The tender, which opens on July 14, will run for four months until November 12, and will be only take into account the housing units included in the buildings to be constructed at the land plots A1, A2, A3, A4, and A12 in Zone A of the new landfills.

These units will include three different housing sizes (1- to 3-bedroom apartments) and a total of six different design options.

NEW SYSTEM TO BENEFIT DIFFERENT HOUSEHOLDS

In one of the CE orders published yesterday, the government updated the upper thresholds for

applicants and household income, as well as the value of assets.

Single-person applicants must now have a monthly income between 12,750 and 38,350 patacas. The maximum threshold of net assets has also been set at 1,254,900 patacas.

In the case of households with more than one person, the minimum ceiling increases according to the number of people within the household; the maximum ceiling has been set to 76,690 patacas. The same applies to the

net assets for households of two or more people, which is now 2,509,800 patacas.

The new point system benefits households with more permanent residents and those who have held this status for a longer period.

Households that include older members, people with disabilities, and underage children will also see their number of points grow, and consequently, will have a higher position on the final order list.

ONLINE SYSTEM CAN TAKE UP TO 3,000 APPLICATIONS PER HOUR

In response to media inquiries on the expected number of candidates that will apply for the economic housing acquisition tender, the president of the Housing Bureau (IH), Arnaldo Santos said that there were about 34,000 applicants the last time a tender of this kind was held. He additionally hinted that a

similar figure is expected now. As for the capacity of the new system to receive online application requests, Santos added that the new system can process up to 3,000 applications per hour. This leads him to believe that the process, under the new simplified rules, will be much quicker and easier.

Public housing on Zone A, Venceslau Morais to be ready in 2024

RENATO MARQUES

THE public housing developments on the Zone A of the new landfills and the Avenida de Venceslau de Morais (land of the former CEM power plant) will be ready in 2024, president of the Housing Bureau (IH), Arnaldo Santos, said

yesterday.

"It is estimated that the construction time is about four years [for the Zone A, Lots A1, A2, A3, A4, and A12]," Santos said in response to media questions following the press conference announcing the new economic acquisition housing tender.

Doing a brief evaluation on the status of the public housing projects, he added, "Regarding the 28,000 [public housing] units planned for the Zone A, we will build the 24,000 that are already planned in the first phase. We will do this gradually. [From these] 3,011 units are already being build and

another 5,200 are being tendered. After that, we will have around 4,000 units of economic rental houses and around another 10,000 of economic acquisition housing units."

"As for the [former] CEM [land plot], according to estimations, the construction will be concluded around

2024," he remarked.

Addressing the current situation of the Mong Tak Building, which is part of Mong-Há's economic rental housing, the IH president said, "It is already built and soon we will start to attribute the [housing] units. Next week we will unveil this process and also dis-

close the current status of the permanent tender [for economic rental housing]."

According to Santos, from the 2017 economic rental public tender applicants, there are still around 550 people on the list, while the number of candidates for the economic acquisition is around 3,400.

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E-payment critical to stimulate tourism development: GBA experts

HONEY TSANG

GIVEN the surging demand for cashless transactions, electronic payment is likely to significantly affect the development of the tourism industry in Macau, industry experts from the Greater Bay Area (GBA) predicted.

Last Friday, July 9, some big names from the e-payment and tourism sectors convened a meeting (held in a hybrid in-person and online format) to explore the development of e-payment and trends of regional integration.

During the event, the president of the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM), Fanny Vong, addressed the media and guests to note that tourism and electronic payment have had close ties with each other as consumption is a necessary and crucial aspect of the entire tourist journey.

Electronic payment can enhance a person's travel experience while they travel between locations in Macau, Vong added.



Vong stressed that considering that mainland holidaymakers, who are already well accustomed to mobile payment methods, are the largest source market for Macau, it is crucial for Macau to

develop an e-payment system on par with China's so as to meet the mobile payment needs of mainland tourists. She commented that Macau's digital payment scene is already quite advanced.

The IFTM president also unveiled the institution's plan to launch a graduate program focusing on the integration of tourism and technology aptitude in the academic year of 2022/2023, to

cultivate local talent in the field so they are able to stay abreast of travel trends.

Apart from mobile payment methods, the president stressed that Macau should develop other advanced tourism-related technologies, such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technology, to keep today's travelers excited and engaged.

The hybrid meeting was convened at The Venetian Macao on July 9 by the Alliance for Developing Macao into Guandong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Tourism Education and Training Base (Alliance).

The event attracted over 100 participants. They included authorities from the GBA governments, management of tourism, catering, retail, financial industries, and teachers and students of higher education institutions.

The organizers invited several key executives from the e-payment conglomerates in the region to deliver speeches, such as chief executive officer of Octopus Holdings Limited, Angus Lee, an executive of Tencent (Wechat Pay) and Benny Ho.

The Alliance was co-founded in 2018 by the then-Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, IFTM, Macao Government Tourism Office, Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, Higher Education Bureau and nine higher education institutions in Macau.

9TH MITE FARED SATISFACTORILY: MGTO

THE 9th Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo (MITE) concluded on July 11, and was a satisfactory event, according to the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO).

The high-profile event was held at The Venetian Macao from July 9 to 11, with the first two days registering over 15,000 attendees.

The Cloud session, which was one of the five exhibition focuses of this year's event, was particularly well executed, which saw a total of 39 contracts inked digitally.

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.

A total of 50 exhibitors and 160 buyers engaged in the cloud session, which had a total of 50 matching sessions, MGTO revealed.



In a separate meeting, some of Macau's industry leaders expressed their faith in the city's forthcoming tourism recovery. Member of the Macao Tourism Development Committee, Cheung Kin Chung, expressed the belief that the blow to Macau's tourism from the Covid-19 pandemic is only temporary.

He called on the local travel industry to continue to guard against the pandemic and innovate to create more enticing travel products to impress global travelers.

Cheung also urged the city to strengthen integration with Hengqin, which would allow tourism practitioners to develop new and unique travel projects. **HT**

NO PLAN YET FORMULATED TO CUT PLASTIC BOTTLES: DSPA

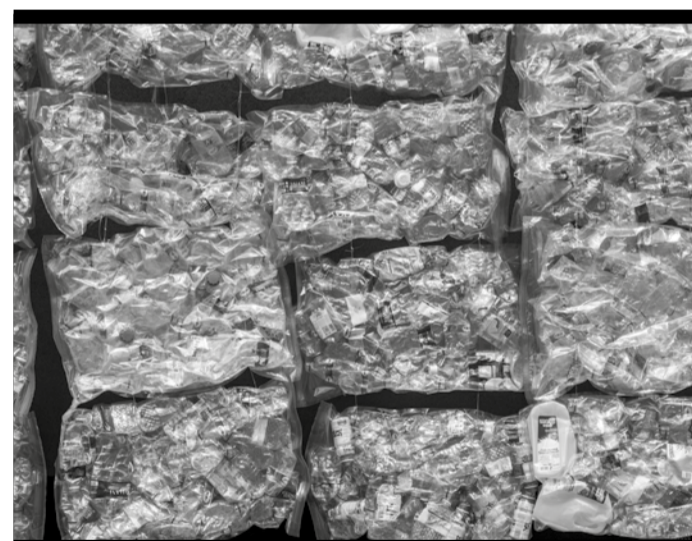
HONEY TSANG

IN 2020, discarded plastic bottles comprised approximately 6.33% of all plastics thrown away in Macau. Despite this significant amount, the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) asserted that it has not yet formulated any schemes to control the consumption of plastic bottles.

In a written reply to lawmaker Lei Cheng I, the DSAL added that the number of plastic bottles disposed of in 2019 was already 15 million less than that in 2018. This reduction was driven by the eco-friendly efforts of the city's hotel operators.

Lei had earlier questioned the DSAL as to whether the government had any plans to reduce the use of plastic bottles, after seeing that plastic waste made up over 20% of solid waste in Macau, the second largest category after food residues.

Despite this large amount of plastic waste, Lei acknowledged the government's previous eco-friendly initiatives, including, since 2019, im-



posing a levy on plastic bags, and, since January 2021, enforcing a ban on the import and transshipment of disposable styrofoam tableware.

Earlier this year, the DSPA also unveiled a plan to restrict the usage of disposable, non-degradable plastic straws and stirrers in 2022.

However, Lei stressed that measures to cut down the use of plastic bottles, which represent a larger portion of the city's plastic waste compared to straws and stirrers, have still not yet been addressed.

In neighboring city, Hong Kong, plastic waste contributed to around 21% of all waste in landfills. Within the total were 191 metric tons of plastic containers, of which 106 metric tons were bottles, according to the city's official data.

However, the Hong Kong government has announced a plan to launch a mandatory measure to make individuals accountable for the plastic bottles they throw away. The city will also likely offer rebates to encourage more people to recycle used plastic bottles.



FOUR OF SIX DISQUALIFIED CANDIDATE LISTS TO FILE JUDICIAL APPEAL

ANTHONY LAM

FOLLOWING last Friday's sudden announcement of their disqualification from the parliamentary election, four out of the six eliminated groups have pledged not to file changes to their lists of candidates and will instead file appeals to the court.

The four groups are: the Macau Democratic Prosperity Association, led by incumbent lawmaker António Ng Kuok Cheong and advocate Scott Chiang Meng Hin; the New Macau Progressives, which include incumbent lawmaker Sulu Sou Ka Hou; the New Macau Progressive Association, with former full-attendance lawmaker Paul Chan Wai Chi taking the lead; and the Macau Justice, led by labor rights advocate Lei Sio Kuan.

Last Friday, the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) suddenly called a press conference in the late afternoon to announce the decision to disqualify 23 candidates from seven lists. In addition to the 21 across six lists whom the

CAEAL deemed to be in violation of the duty of being faithful to Macau, two candidates from a seventh list were disqualified because they are not yet registered voters, which is a key precondition for eligibility of candidacy.

The decision to disqualify the two on the grounds of non-registration is irrevocable. However, the six lists which include candidates deemed in violation of the duty to be faithful to Macau can either substitute the affected candidates with "clean" candidates or file an appeal to the court.

All of the candidates from the four lists that will file appeals believe that they have not violated the law governing the AL election. The law states that a candidate will be legally ineligible if evidence proves that they refuse to declare their allegiance to the Macau Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and that they will defend the Basic Law.

On this, Chan pointed out that the CAEAL should provide official documents to the candida-

tes as proof or explanation of the accusations. Chan's list has decided to give the CAEAL a deadline of July 14 to provide such materials or reconsider their decision. If the CAEAL decision remains unchanged, Chan's list will file a judicial appeal.

He stressed that the matter does not only affect them as candidates, but will ripple through the matter of rights of political participation and the Basic Law. He described it as a "deprivation of political rights." The group hopes to defend the Basic Law and the rights of Macau residents.

Chiang did not see any point in swapping candidates if this was indeed interference in the election.

He added that the letter handed to them by the CAEAL last week only pointed out which article of the law that they had allegedly breached and noted that the absence of evidence does not assist the candidates in defending their rights.

Yesterday, Chiang waited at the CAEAL's public reception counter at the Public Adminis-

tration Building for half a day to request the details of the decision.

He pointed out that the primary duty of the CAEAL is to ensure the rights to elect and to be elected. He also accused the CAEAL of not providing sufficient assistance to candidates because it did not provide sufficient evidence or explanation for the decision it made.

In contrast to Chan and Chiang, Lei stressed that the

candidates on his list love Macau and China, and that he personally stood for the National Security Legislation. He also recalled that he had participated in protests for China's sovereignty over the Diaoyu Island against Japan, citing news reports which prove this.

Chan, Chiang and Lei stressed that they were not aware of any "wrongdoings" that would constitute violation of the law in question.

If the disqualified candidates file a judicial appeal, the court is required by law to make a ruling between July 29 and August 2.

CAEAL EXPLAINS CRITERIA THREE DAYS LATER

Tong Hio Fong, president of the CAEAL, was asked several times last Friday on what grounds the CAEAL decided against the 21 candidates on their eligibility to run in the upcoming election.

In contrast to listing the criteria for decisions, the CAEAL head declined to give direct answer, citing various reasons such as defending the candidates' rights to fair judicial procedures.

However, the CAEAL did not even give the details to the candidates in the letter delivered to the latter.

Yesterday, the CAEAL finally held a press conference to explain the crucial information. When questioned about the delay, Tong said the clarification was necessary in response to online rumors which suspected that the candidates were disqualified on the grounds of criticizing the government.

Tong said that the evidence in the commission's hand has online materials.

CAEAL'S SEVEN CRITERIA

- **CANDIDATES** must safeguard the constitutional order established by the Constitution and the Basic Law
- Candidates must safeguard national unity and territorial integrity
- Prevention of collusion of candidates with foreign countries or foreign forces in infiltrating the power bodies of the Macau Special Administrative Region
- Candidates must respect the political system established by the Constitution and the Basic Law, and may not denigrate the People's

- Republic of China and the Macau Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China
- Candidates may not perform acts against the sovereignty and security of the State
- Candidates must respect the competences delegated by the Constitution and the Basic Law to the National People's Assembly of the People's Republic of China and its Standing Committee
- Candidates cannot play a role in contradicting the above points

Gov't saved MOP1.8 million per month in rent since Dec 2020

HONEY TSANG

AS of December 2020, the government has saved a total of MOP1.8 million per month in rent, thanks to the relocation of certain departments to a new government multi-purpose

building in Pac On.

This observation was made by the Financial Services Bureau (DSF) in a written reply to lawmaker Leong Sun Lok.

Lok previously submitted a query to the government in which

he criticized the authorities for spending over MOP800 million every year just for the lease of office buildings, warehouses and parking spaces.

He urged the government to better make use of public funds, espe-

cially during the pandemic.

In their reply, the DSF stated that the authorities had implemented a set of policies to better regulate leasing practices across several departments. For instance, departments are requi-

red to offer a clear rationale if they want to renew a property lease so as to avoid unnecessary renting.

If departments wish to rent a new property for expanded operations, they are now required to submit their reasoning

which will then be vetted by the DSF.

The DSF vows to do its best to designate public properties for public operations. Only if there is a lack of government property will the departments be allowed to rent private premises.



Transmac confirms death of another bus driver

STAFF REPORTER

BUS company Transmac announced on its website last week that a bus driver who joined the company in October last year recently passed away. The company added that it hopes the public will give them time and space to deal with the incident.

It is alleged that the deceased was a driver on the "4-4 shift" (a special shift covering eight hours of work plus a break within four

hours, starting at 6 a.m. and ending at 8 p.m.). The company did not mention this in the announcement, but they said the public should not speculate too much on the matter.

The announcement read that the deceased's work schedule included sufficient time off, and that the driver had a positive and conscientious work ethic, which was reflected in his high performance.

"It is with great sorrow and sadness that we heard the sad

news. We will continue to pay attention to the physical and mental health of other colleagues, provide timely psychological counseling support to them, and make appropriate work schedule arrangements based on their physical condition," the bus company said in the announcement.

In the middle of last month, a Transmac "4-4 shift" bus driver passed away, raising concerns about the adequacy of rest time for bus drivers.

CRIME

MAN ARRESTED FOR PROCURING SEX SERVICES

A tourist from Hubei was arrested on allegations of procuring sexual services, which he "planned" would be provided by two women from the same Chinese province, according to the Public Security Police Force (PSP).

The crime was only considered "planned" because the two women had not started business before being caught by the PSP in a regular anti-crime operation.

Surnamed He, the male procurer aged 37 years described himself as jobless. He bears mainland travel endorsement to Macau. The two sex workers, aged 18 and 35 years, were originally brought in to provide the service in a hotel room rented by

the man.

During the PSP anti-crime operation, the police officers intercepted the man on Cotai, and later discovered the two women in the hotel room.

The police conducted immediate inquiries. The two women confessed to the police that their real reason for travel to Macau was to provide sexual services. They pointed to He as the arranger of the services, saying that he would get half of the revenue.

According to the two women, it was planned that they charge each client between HKD1,000 and HKD1,500.

The police also seized nearly 800 contact cards from the room. **AL**



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COVID-19

TAIWANESE TECH COMPANIES ANNOUNCE VACCINE DONATION

TWO Taiwanese high-tech companies announced a donation yesterday of 10 million doses of anti-coronavirus vaccine made by Germany's BioNTech to the island's government, which faces political obstacles in fighting the pandemic.

Taiwan's health minister suggested in February that Beijing might have blocked an earlier purchase of the BioNTech vaccine by the island democracy, which the mainland's ruling Communist Party has never controlled but claims as part of its territory. A Chinese company, Fosun Pharma, owns BioNTech distribution rights for Greater China, which Beijing says includes Taiwan.

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. and Hon Hai Precision Electronics said they would buy the vaccine through Fosun Pharma. TSMC said doses would be shipped from a factory in Germany directly to Taiwan's anti-disease agency.

Taiwan has largely contained the pandemic with strict quarantines but has struggled to obtain vaccines for its 14 million people. It has reported 15,249 cases and 740 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 tracker.



AP PHOTO

TSMC is the biggest contract manufacturer of processor chips for smartphones and computers. Hon Hai is the biggest assembler of smartphones and other electronics for Apple and other brands. They said Hon Hai founder Terry Gou's Yongling Charity and Social Welfare Foundation also contributed.

Taiwan is excluded from the World Health Organization due to Chinese pressure.

Health Minister Chen Shih-chung said in a February radio interview that BioNTech called off a sale of 5 million doses at the last minute due to "political pressure," though he didn't mention the Chinese government by name. Chen said he had no

evidence of what happened.

Taiwan's government earlier signed contracts to obtain a total of 29 million doses of vaccines from foreign suppliers for its 14 million people. But due to supply delays and global shortages, it had only 700,000 on hand when case numbers surged in May.

Beijing offered to donate Chinese-made vaccines, but President Tsai Ing-wen's government rejected that as a political ploy.

Taiwan received 2.5 million doses of the Moderna vaccine from the U.S. government in June and 1.1 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine from the Japanese government this month. The island also bought 626,000 doses from AstraZeneca directly. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

POLICE ARREST FIVE MORE IN ALLEGED BOMB PLOT

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

HONG Kong's national security police yesterday arrested five more people in relation to an alleged bomb plot, as political tensions rise amid Beijing's tightening control over the city.

The five — four males and one female — were arrested on suspicion of conspiring to plan terrorist activities under a national security law imposed by Beijing a year ago as part of a crackdown on dissent in the former British colony.

Last week, police arrested nine people, including six students, accused of planning to manufacture and plant explosives around the city, including in courts, cross-harbor tunnels and trash cans.

Police said then that they found chemicals in

a makeshift laboratory for the manufacture of the explosive triacetone triperoxide, or TATP, which has been widely used in bombings in Europe and elsewhere.

Police yesterday said they did not rule out further arrests in relation to the case.

Hong Kong authorities have used the national security law, enacted in response to anti-government protests that rocked the city in 2019, to arrest many of the city's prominent pro-democracy activists. Others have fled abroad.

Since the 2019 protests, Hong Kong police have arrested several people in connection with alleged bomb plots and manufacture of TATP, including 17 detained that year in raids that also seized explosives and chemicals. **MDT/AP**

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MATTHEW LEE,
WASHINGTON

Biden backs Trump rejection of China's South China Sea claim

THE Biden administration on Sunday upheld a Trump-era rejection of nearly all of China's significant maritime claims in the South China Sea. The administration also warned China that any attack on the Philippines in the flashpoint region would draw a U.S. response under a mutual defense treaty.

The stern message from Secretary of State Antony Blinken came in a statement released ahead of this week's fifth anniversary of an international tribunal's ruling in favor of the Philippines, against China's maritime claims around the Spratly Islands and neighboring reefs and shoals. China rejects the ruling.

Ahead of the fourth anniversary of the ruling last year, the Trump administration came out in favor of the ruling but also said it regarded as illegitimate virtually all Chinese maritime claims in the South China Sea outside China's internationally recognized waters. Sunday's statement reaffirms that position, which had been laid out by Trump's secretary of state, Mike Pompeo.

"Nowhere is the rules-based maritime order under greater threat than in the South China Sea," Blinken said, using language similar to Pompeo's. He accused China of continuing "to coerce and intimidate Southeast Asian coastal states, threatening freedom of navigation in this critical global thoroughway."

"The United States reaffirms its July 13, 2020 policy regarding maritime claims in the South China Sea," he said, referring to Pompeo's original statement. "We also reaffirm

AP PHOTO



that an armed attack on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft in the South China Sea would invoke U.S. mutual defense commitments."

Article IV of the 1951 U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty obligates both countries to come to each other's aid in case of an attack.

Prior to Pompeo's statement, U.S. policy had been to insist that maritime disputes between China and its smaller

neighbors be resolved peacefully through U.N.-backed arbitration. The shift did not apply to disputes over land features that are above sea level, which are considered to be "territorial" in nature.

Although the U.S. continues to remain neutral in territorial disputes, it has effectively sided with the Philippines, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam, all of which oppose Chinese assertions of sovereignty over maritime areas surrou-

nding contested South China Sea islands, reefs and shoals.

China reacted angrily to the Trump administration's announcement and is likely to be similarly peeved by the Biden administration's decision to retain and reinforce it.

"We call on [China] to abide by its obligations under international law, cease its provocative behavior, and take steps to reassure the international community that it is committed to the rules-based mari-

time order that respects the rights of all countries, big and small," Blinken said in the statement.

China has rejected the tribunal's decision, which it has dismissed as a "sham," and has refused to participate in arbitration proceedings. It has continued to defy the decision with actions that have brought it into territorial spats with Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia in recent years.

As last year's statement did, Sunday's announcement came amid heightened tensions between the U.S. and China over numerous issues, including the coronavirus pandemic, human rights, Chinese policy in Hong Kong and Tibet and trade, that have sent relations plummeting.

China claims almost all of the South China Sea and routinely objects to any action by the U.S. military in the region. Five other governments claim all or part of the sea, through which approximately \$5 trillion in goods are shipped every year.

China has sought to shore up its claims to the sea by building military bases on coral atolls, leading the U.S. to sail its warships through the region on what it calls freedom of operation missions. The United States has no claims itself to the waters but has deployed warships and aircraft for decades to patrol and promote freedom of navigation and overflight in the busy waterway. **MDT/AP**

SPACE

China kicks off lunar sample study programs

CHINA yesterday delivered about 17 grams of lunar samples brought back by the Chang'e-5 probe to 13 institutions, which had applied for research programs to the Lunar Exploration and Space Program Center of the China National Space Administration.

Speaking at a ceremony to mark the delivery, Liu Jizhong, director of the center, said that this is the first batch of lunar samples delivered to research institutions. More samples will

be released and delivered in the future as planned.

Hoping that more and more research institutions will take part in the lunar sample study in the future, Liu said China is willing to promote international cooperation and invite foreign scientists for joint research on lunar samples.

He noted that China's Chang'e-6 probe will also bring back lunar samples and the sampling on Mars and asteroid has been included in the long-term plan.

Pei Zhaoyu, vice director of the center and director of Lunar Sample Management Office, informed the press that the center had received 85 applications from 37 applicants working with 23 research institutions including China's Ministry of Education, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

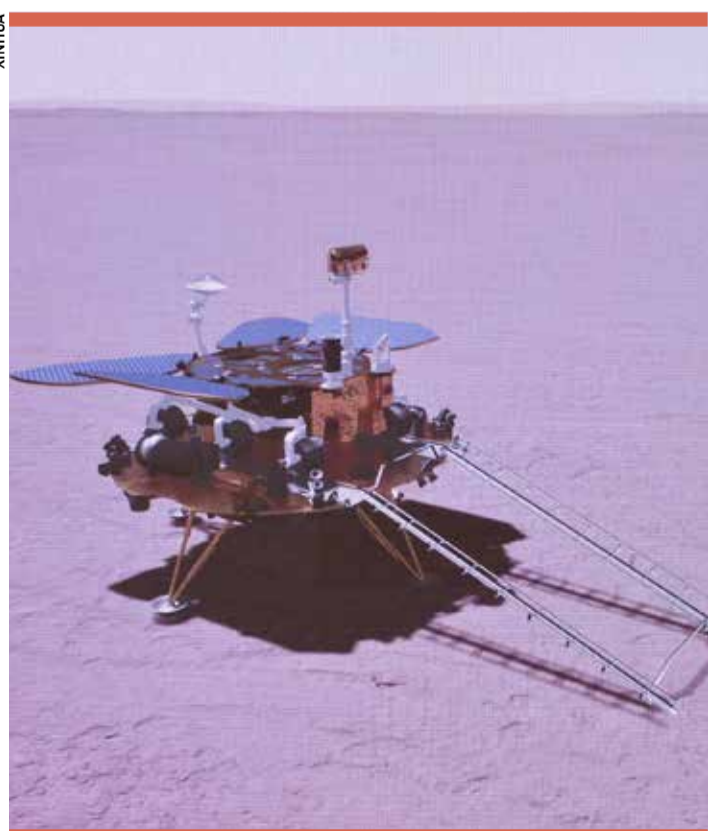
After evaluation, 31 applications from 13 research institutions have

been granted approval to study the first batch of lunar samples, Pei said, adding that the next round of application evaluation has been scheduled for September this year.

The lunar samples were given to institutions including those from the CAS, China University of Geosciences (Beijing), China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), and Sun Yat-sen University.

The Chang'e-5 probe, comprising an orbiter, a lander, an ascender, and a returner, was launched on Nov. 24, 2020. The return capsule landed in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on Dec. 17, retrieving about 1,731 grams of moon samples. **MDT/XINHUA**

XINHUA



AP PHOTO



Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

Pfizer to discuss COVID-19 vaccine booster with US officials

HOPE YEN, WASHINGTON

PFIZER says it plans to meet with top U.S. health officials yesterday to discuss the drugmaker's request for federal authorization of a third dose of its COVID-19 vaccine as President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser acknowledged that "it is entirely conceivable, maybe likely" that booster shots will be needed.

The company said it was scheduled to have the meeting with the Food and Drug Administration and other officials yesterday, days after Pfizer asserted that booster shots would be needed within 12 months.

Pfizer's Dr. Mikael Dolsten told The Associated Press last week that early data from the company's booster study suggests people's antibody levels jump five- to 10-fold after a third dose, compared to their second dose months earlier — evidence it believes supports the need for a booster.

On Sunday, Dr. Anthony Fauci didn't rule out the possibility but said it was too soon for the government to recommend another shot. He said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the FDA did the right thing last week by pushing back against Pfizer's assertion with their state-

ment that they did not view booster shots as necessary "at this time."

Fauci said clinical studies and laboratory data have yet to fully bear out the need for a booster to the current two-shot Pfizer and Moderna vaccines or the one-shot Johnson & Johnson regimen.

"Right now, given the data and the information we have, we do not need to give people a third shot," he said. "That doesn't mean we stop there. [...] There are studies being done now ongoing as we speak about looking at the feasibility about if and when we should be boosting people."

It was quite possible in the coming months "as data evolves" that the government may urge a booster

He said it was quite possible in the coming months "as data evolves" that the government may urge a booster based on such factors as age and underlying medical conditions. "Certainly it is entirely conceivable, maybe likely at some time, we will need a boost," Fauci said.

Yesterday's planned meeting between Pfizer and U.S.

health officials was first reported by The Washington Post.

Currently only about 48% of the U.S. population is fully vaccinated. Some parts of the country have far lower immunization rates, and in those places the delta variant is surging. Last week, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the CDC director, said that's leading to "two truths" — highly immunized swaths of America are getting back to normal while hospitalizations are rising in other places.

Fauci said it was inexplicable that some Americans are so resistant to getting a vaccine when scientific data

show how effective it is in staving off COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations, and he was dismayed by efforts to block making vaccinations more accessible, such as Biden's suggestion of door-to-door outreach.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson, R-Ark., agreed Sunday that there is a vaccine resistance in Southern and rural

states like his because "you have that more conservative approach, skepticism about government."

Describing his efforts to boost vaccinations in his state, which is seeing rising infections, Hutchinson said "no one wants an agent knocking on a door," but "we do want those that do not have access otherwise to make sure they know about it."

The grassroots component of the federal vaccination campaign has been in operation since April, when supplies of shots began outpacing demand. It was outlined and funded by Congress in the \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill passed in March and overwhelmingly is carried out by local officials and private sector workers and volunteers.

Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., blasted opposition to vaccination efforts from some GOP lawmakers as "absolute insanity." He said House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy of California and others in the party need to speak out against "these absolute clown politicians playing on your vaccine fears for their own selfish gain."

Fauci appeared on CNN's "State of the Union," ABC's "This Week" and CBS' "Face the Nation"; Hutchinson spoke on ABC, and Kinzinger was on CNN. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1993 GREEN LIGHT FOR MANCHESTER OLYMPICS



Officials in Manchester bidding to hold the 2000 Olympic Games have been told their chances are "very, very high".

The President of the International Olympic Committee, Juan Antonio Samaranch, was speaking after a series of presentations in the city's Town Hall.

He has been touring the north-west on the day after the IOC published its report on the technical suitability of the cities competing to host the 2000 Games.

The report puts Sydney as clear favourite, but gives credit to the British bid and raises doubts over Beijing. Brasilia fell well below the standard and many expect it to be dismissed from the contest.

Chairman of the Manchester 2000 Olympic team Bob Scott said: "We've been striving for technical excellence and the report shows this has been delivered. The report shows that Manchester has a very strong bid."

Mr Samaranch and his entourage were shown the new facilities built and construction underway since their visit three years ago when Manchester was trying for the 1996 Games.

They travelled on the Metrolink tram system, went by helicopter to the equestrian centre at Haydock Park and saw the north Manchester velodrome, due for completion next year.

Earlier in the day the IOC visitors soaked up the community support at Sandilands Infant School in Sale and the Captain of Manchester United, Steve Bruce, showed off the club's silverware to remind them of the city's rich sporting traditions.

Even the rain did not dampen Mr Samaranch's familiar diplomacy: "When I find rain in a country I think always that is a very lucky country," he said.

The President and his team meet the British Prime Minister tomorrow.

The final decision about who will host the millennium Olympic Games will be made by the 90 members of the IOC in Monte Carlo on 23 September.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Manchester failed to win the competition in September and the Games went to Sydney. In 1998 there were reports that IOC members were bribed to elect Sydney as hosts, but an investigation found the Sydney bid team were guilty of "breaking the rules" rather than corruption. The Sydney Olympics was the biggest games to date with 10,651 athletes competing in 300 events. The games were held in Athens in 2004 and will be staged in Beijing in 2008. On 6 July 2005 London was named as the host nation for the 2012 Olympic games after beating off tough competition from Paris.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Luna's presence here encourages you to sharpen your organizational skills, tackle looming errands, and reconnect with your body in a more mindful way.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 Let yourself lean into a more playful pace under today's skies, Taurus. Luna slides into down-to-earth Virgo, helping you send your attention towards creative pursuits and romantic relations.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 As a Gemini, you often live up in your mental world. Today's skies ground you back down and reacquaint you with your roots, as the moon drifts into earthy Virgo.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 You've got a story to tell, Cancer. Why keep it to yourself? Luna slides into poignant Virgo, sending your focus towards your mental health and clarity of self-expression.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 It's easy to kick it into high gear today, Leo. The moon careens into sharp-minded Virgo, helping you devote focus towards honing your skills and cranking out productive work.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 You're breaking out of solitude today, Virgo. The moon prances into your sign this morning, helping you tune into your body and unexpressed individual needs.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 As a Libra, you tend to thrust yourself into a never-ending string of social situations. Let the universe guide you into a restorative, solitude-seeking headspace today.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 The moon meanders into down-to-earth Virgo, sending your focus towards your sense of community. Spend a little time patching up missed connections or sharing your recent circumstances among friends.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 The moon's presence in capable Virgo and link up with mentally sharp Mercury makes it easy to devote energy towards getting ahead or pondering your next move.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 It's an ideal day for a quick, adventurous get away - but if you can't totally slip away from the demands of real life, work to plan a future trip or explore new modes of education.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Today's skies are ideal for therapeutic endeavors or for intimate relationship deep-dives. Luna's supportive connection with communicative Mercury makes it easy to transform your approach to your workload.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Luna's smooth connection with expressive Mercury makes it an ideal day for discussing future plans if committed or testing the waters with a flirty text if single.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY			EASY+		
		1 8 7		7 4 3	
5 3		7 2		3	8 2
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MEDIUM			HARD			
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		8 9		3	7	
7		5 4				5

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


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

Yesterday's solution

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

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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FOR RENT

 Taipa Village HKD 10,900/mth
 Ref: 1910 1006 740 ft² 1 1

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

 Traditional apartment HKD 2,680,000
 Ref: 2103 6001 788 ft² 2 1

AD

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

MUSK UNDER FIRE AGAIN: CEO TO TESTIFY OVER TESLA ACQUISITION

TOM KRISHER

In the runup to Tesla Inc.'s 2016 acquisition of a company called SolarCity, Elon Musk hailed the deal as a "no brainer" — a purchase that would combine the leading maker of electric vehicles with a manufacturer of solar panels that can recharge EVs.

It didn't exactly work out that way.

Yesterday in the Delaware Court of Chancery, the Tesla CEO will testify about the \$2.5 billion deal in a shareholder lawsuit that alleges that Tesla's acquisition was rife with conflicts of interest, overlooked SolarCity's fundamental weaknesses and unsurprisingly failed to produce the profits Musk had promised.

Questioned under oath, Musk plans to defend the purchase as a justifiable acquisition.

At the time of the all-stock purchase, Musk was SolarCity's largest stakeholder and its chairman. Seven shareholder lawsuits, consolidated into one, alleged that Tesla directors breached their fiduciary duties in bowing to



Musk's wishes and agreeing to buy the struggling company. In what the plaintiffs call a clear conflict of interest, SolarCity had been founded by Musk and two of his cousins, Lyndon and Peter Rive.

Last August, a judge approved a \$60 million settlement that resolved claims made against all the directors on Tesla's board except Musk without any admission of fault. That left Musk, who refused to settle, as the sole remaining defendant. The trial that began

yesterday had been scheduled for March of last year but was postponed because of the viral pandemic.

Daniel Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, called the acquisition a "clear black eye" for Musk and Tesla, in large part because SolarCity has failed to turn a profit.

"It basically was putting good money after bad," Ives said. "For all the successes and all of the unimaginable heights Musk has

achieved, this is one of the lowlights."

Most investors, Ives said, place no value on the company's solar business.

"I just think Musk and Tesla underestimated the challenges and the hurdles that the business brings," he said.

That said, Ives said he thought Tesla's energy business could still become "modestly successful."

Tesla, which has disbanded its media relations department, did not answer a message Friday seeking comment about the lawsuit. In its 2020 annual report, the company argued that the lawsuit was without merit and that Tesla would vigorously defend itself.

"We are unable to estimate the possible loss or range of loss, if any, associated with these claims," the company report said.

Tesla's energy generation and storage business generated \$1.9 billion in revenue last year — 24% more than it did the previous year. Much of that revenue came from selling battery storage units. Tesla doesn't specify whether the business made a profit, and it also has

debt and expenses.

The lawsuit filed by the plaintiffs contends that Musk drove the decision to acquire SolarCity despite his clear-cut conflict of interest.

Musk has a history of fighting government agencies and lawsuits. He was forced to pay a \$20 million fine to the Securities and Exchange Commission for making statements on Twitter about having the money to take the company private when he didn't. But he won a defamation lawsuit that was filed by a British diver involved in the rescue of a Thai soccer team that was trapped in a flooded cave. Musk had called the man "pedo guy" on Twitter.

Even if the trial ends with Musk having to pay personally for the whole SolarCity deal, \$2.5 billion won't much hurt the world's third-wealthiest person. Forbes magazine has estimated that Musk is worth roughly \$163 billion.

Ives suggested that while any such payment wouldn't seriously affect Musk's wealth, it would damage his reputation for choosing acquisitions.

Musk is fighting the lawsuit after others have settled "because that's what Musk does," Ives said. "I think Elon believes this was the right deal and still does." MDT/AP

Unopened Super Mario 64 game from 1996 sells for USD1.56M

An unopened copy of Nintendo's Super Mario 64 has sold at auction for \$1.56 million.

Heritage Auctions in Dallas said that the 1996 game sold Sunday, breaking its previous record price for the sale of a single video game.

A spokesman did not immediately respond to an inquiry about who purchased the game.

Super Mario 64 was the best-selling game on the Nintendo 64 and the first to feature the Mario character in 3D, the auction house

said in a statement.

The sale follows an unopened copy of Nintendo's The Legend of Zelda selling at auction Friday for \$870,000. Valarie McLeckie, Heritage's video game specialist, said the auction house was shocked to see a game sell for

more than a \$1 million two days after the Zelda game broke its past record.

In April, the auction house sold an unopened copy of Nintendo's Super Mario Bros. that was bought in 1986 and forgotten about in a desk drawer for \$660,000. MDT/AP



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

CORPORATE BITS

Over 10,000 team members of Sands China vaccinated



Sands China recently held its second round of group vaccination sessions July 5-8 at The Venetian Macao.

To date, a total of 10,070 team members have either gotten vaccinated or have

registered to get vaccinated; more than half have done so via the company sessions.

Among them is Sands China Ltd. president Wilfred Wong who said: "We

each have a responsibility to support efforts to achieve herd immunity via community-wide vaccination, and I'm very proud that Sands China is doing its part to help make that happen."

A total of two seminars, titled "Covid-19 Vaccine: Path to End the Pandemic" was also held and has attracted more than 600 participants.

As a token of gratitude, team members who get at least one vaccine dose by the end of July are eligible to enter a lucky draw for a chance to win prizes, and can also enjoy a complimentary one-night hotel stay at one of Sands China's properties this summer.

MGM ranked top 10 in business sustainability index



MGM has added two honors from The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Business School's "2020 Business Sustainability Indices" program, recognizing its pursuit in sus-

tainable development. The company was named a top 10 performer in the Greater China Hotel Business Sustainability Index (Hotel BSI) and among the top 20 in the Greater Bay Area Bu-

siness Sustainability Index (GBASI).

Kenneth Feng, president, Chief Strategic & Financial officer of MGM, said, "MGM's ethos of 'Create a Better Tomorrow Today' forms the bedrock of our vision for sustainability. The company will continue to adopt green management and promote green living to show our commitment."

CUHK Business School's Centre for Business Sustainability (CBS) recently announced its Business Sustainability Indices, a range of programs to motivate enterprises in Hong Kong and the Greater China to fulfil their social responsibility.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Italy wins Euro 2020, beats England 3-2 in penalty shootout

ITALIAN soccer's redemption story is complete. England's painful half-century wait for a major title goes on.

And it just had to be because of a penalty shootout.

Italy won the European Championship for the second time by beating England 3-2 on penalties yesterday [Macau time]. The match finished 1-1 after extra time at Wembley Stadium, which was filled mostly with English fans hoping to celebrate the team's first international trophy since the 1966 World Cup.

"It's coming to Rome. It's coming to Rome," Italy defender Leonardo Bonucci shouted into a TV camera amid the celebrations, mocking the famous lyric "it's coming home" from the England team's anthem.

For England, it was utter dejection again — they know the feeling so well when it comes to penalties — after Gianluigi Donnarumma, Italy's imposing goalkeeper, dived to his left and saved the decisive spot kick by 19-year-old Londoner Bukayo Saka, one of the youngest players in England's squad.

That was England's third straight failure from the penalty spot in the shootout, with Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho — players brought on late in extra time seemingly as specialist penalty-takers — also missing.

As Saka and Sancho cried, Donnarumma was mobbed by his teammates as they sprinted toward him from the halfway line at the end of the second penalty shootout in a European Championship final.

Then Italy's jubilant players headed to the other end of the field and ran as one, diving to the ground in front of the Italian fans who have witnessed a rebirth of their national team.

It was less than four years ago that Italy plunged to the lowest moment of its soccer history by failing to qualify for the World Cup for the first time in six decades. Now, they are the best team in Europe and on a national-record 34-match unbeaten run under Roberto Mancini, their suave



coach who has won an international trophy in his first attempt to add to the country's other European title — in 1968 — and its four World Cups.

Mancini joined his players on the podium as Italy captain Giorgio Chiellini lifted the Henri Delaunay trophy to the backdrop of fireworks and tickertape.

"It was impossible even to just consider this at one stage," Mancini said, "but the guys were just amazing. I have no words for them."

For England, it's the latest heartache in shootouts at major tournaments, after defeats in 1990, 1996, 1998, 2004, 2006 and 2012. They ended that losing streak by beating Colombia on penalties in the round of 16 at the 2018 World Cup, but the pain has quickly returned.

"The boys couldn't have given more," England captain Harry Kane said. "Penalties are the worst feeling in the world when you lose. It's been a fantastic tournament — we should be proud, hold our heads up high. It's going to hurt now, it's going to hurt for a while."

England's first major final in 55 years had all started so well, too, with Luke Shaw scoring the fastest goal in a European Championship final by meeting a cross from opposite wing

back Kieran Trippier with a half-volley that went in off the post in the second minute.

It was Shaw's first goal for England and it prompted a fist-pump between David Beckham and Tom Cruise in the VIP box amid an explosion of joy around Wembley, which had at least 67,000 fans inside. Maybe more, given dozens of ticketless England fans managed to barge their way past stewards and police and into the stadium in unsettling scenes before kickoff.

That was the only time Italy's famously robust defense was really opened up in the entire 120 minutes.

Indeed, after Shaw's goal, England barely saw the ball for the rest of the game.

Italy's midfielders dominated possession, as widely predicted before the match, and England simply resorted to dropping deep and getting nine or even all 10 outfield players behind the ball. It was reminiscent of the 2018 World Cup semi-finals, when England also scored early against Croatia then spent most of the game chasing its opponent's midfield before losing in extra time.

Italy's equalizer was merited and Bonucci was the unlikely scorer. He put the ball in from close range af-

ter a right-wing corner was flicked on to Marco Verratti, whose stooping header

was tipped onto the post by goalkeeper Jordan Pickford. England managed to

hold on for extra time — the way three of the last six European finals went — and actually had the better of the final stages.

Just not the shootout, again.

After the misses of Rashford — he stuttered up to the ball and then hit the post — and Sancho, whose shot was saved by Donnarumma again down to his left, Jorginho had the chance to win it for Italy.

Incredibly, the midfielder who converted the decisive penalty in a shootout win over Spain in the semi-finals also failed to score as Pickford tipped the effort off the post.

It was Donnarumma who then made the crucial saves and within minutes he had also been named player of the tournament, the first goalkeeper to be so honored.

So instead of coming home, the trophy is headed to Rome.

"We'd heard it day in, day out from Wednesday night — we heard it would be coming home to London," Bonucci said. "I'm sorry for them, but the cup will be taking a nice flight, making its way to Rome so Italians all over the world can savor this." MDT/AP

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OPINION

China Daily

Li Min, China Daily

AI GIANTS CAN BENEFIT OTHER NATIONS

In the race to become the leader in artificial intelligence, China and the United States are way ahead of the rest of the world. What does that mean for the other countries? Will these two global technology giants soak up the AI economic dividend all for themselves?

The answer is "no". There is a huge opportunity for smaller, agile economies in Asia to borrow from Isaac Newton to stand on the shoulders of the two giants in order to reap the benefits of AI application in their own industries.

Of course, it's right to recognize the supremacy of the US and China. The AI research infrastructure they have built has translated into an unassailable advantage over other competing countries in Europe, North America and Asia. This is due to a number of factors: the depth of their capital markets, the richness of their skills bases, the dominant position of their cash-rich technology companies, and the data generation capacity of their vast populations.

However, the economic dividends from AI are not reserved for the researchers. The majority of the economic value promised by the AI revolution will be captured through innovation and application of AI technologies in industry. Enterprises and policymakers the world over should recognize that the AI dividend is theirs for the taking.

AI is a fundamentally open science. It is fierce, open competition in academia that drives global research forward. The relatively open borders to data flows and digital services mean the latest technological breakthroughs in one part of the world are quite quickly made available, and adaptable, to businesses everywhere else.

When it comes to AI application in industry, ambitious economies can learn from China's achievements. China has managed to establish a culture of technology adoption and data sharing in consumer interactions and business practices that give it a distinct edge.

There are three factors behind this. The first is Chinese businesses' openness toward technological trial and error. Chinese enterprises have demonstrated a fundamentally positive and flexible attitude to digital solutions over the past two decades, which served to accelerate AI integration and innovation. International executive surveys, such as the World Economic Forum Future of Jobs report, consistently rank China No 1 in the world or close to it for its people's attitude toward AI adoption.

Second, technology uptake is helped by China's robust and ambitious policy framework. The country's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) crystallizes the national goal of "deep integration" of the internet, big data, and AI into various industries. And the Chinese government has recently begun to tighten regulation on AI development and internet companies, but the repercussions of China's broadly positive policy footing can be seen in the rate of investment taking place.

The publicly funded, \$2.1 billion AI-focused technology research park on the outskirts of Beijing is one example. More broadly, China accounts for almost 40 percent of new industrial robot installations globally, over three times more than second-placed Japan.

And third, China has established a world-class skills base to not only develop AI solutions but integrate them into industries too. The rapid expansion of China's pool of computer science and engineering graduates in recent years has been a core pillar of economic planning. China ranks third in the world for "AI skills penetration", according to Stanford University's AI Index report. Which means AI skills are 1.4 times more likely to be required in Chinese occupations than the global average.

These three factors have created a virtuous cycle in China.

Rapidly growing Chinese companies are bringing AI products to the market and competing to pursue AI solutions that are customized to fit into Chinese scenarios.

[Abridged]

TRUMP LAWYERS MIGHT BE PENALIZED OVER MICHIGAN ELECTION CASE

THE BUZZ

A federal judge is considering whether to order financial penalties or other sanctions against some of former President Donald Trump's lawyers who signed onto a lawsuit last year challenging Michigan's election results.

The lawsuit alleging widespread fraud was voluntarily dropped after a judge in December found nothing but "speculation and conjecture" that votes for Trump somehow were destroyed or switched to votes for Joe Biden, who won Michigan by 2.8 percentage points.

Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the city of Detroit now

want the plaintiffs and a raft of attorneys, including Trump allies Sidney Powell and L. Lin Wood, to face the consequences of pursuing what they call frivolous claims.

"It was never about winning on the merits of the claims, but rather (the) purpose was to undermine the integrity of the election results and the people's trust in the electoral process and in government," the attorney general's office said in a court filing.

U.S. District Judge Linda Parker in Detroit is holding a hearing by video conference today [Macau time].

There is no evidence of widespread fraud in the 2020 election.



AP PHOTO

BILLIONAIRE RICHARD BRANSON REACHES SPACE IN HIS OWN SHIP

SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN & MARCIA DUNN, TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

Swashbuckling billionaire Richard Branson hurtled into space aboard his own winged rocket ship yesterday [Macau time], bringing astro-tourism a step closer to reality and beating out his exceedingly richer rival Jeff Bezos.

The nearly 71-year-old Branson and five crewmates from his Virgin Galactic space-tourism company reached an altitude of 53.5 miles over the New Mexico desert — enough to experience three to four minutes of weightlessness and witness the curvature of the Earth — and then glided back home to a runway landing.

"The whole thing, it was just magical," a jubilant Branson said on his return aboard the gleaming white space plane, named Unity.

The brief, up-and-down flight — the space plane's portion took

only about 15 minutes, or about as long as Alan Shepard's first U.S. spaceflight in 1961 — was a splashy and unabashedly commercial plug for Virgin Galactic, which plans to start taking paying customers on joyrides next year.

Branson became the first person to blast off in his own spaceship, beating Bezos, the richest person on the planet, by nine days. He also became the second septuagenarian to go into space. Astronaut John Glenn flew on the shuttle at age 77 in 1998.

Bezos sent his congratulations, adding: "Can't wait to join the club!" — though he also took to Twitter a couple of days earlier to enumerate the ways in which he believes his company's tourist rides will be better.

With about 500 people watching, including Branson's family, Unity was carried aloft underneath a twin-fuselage aircraft. Then, at an altitude of about 8 1/2 miles, Unity detached from the

mother ship and fired its engine, reaching more than Mach 3, or three times the speed of sound, as it pierced the edge of space.

Spectators cheered, jumped into the air and embraced as the rocket plane touched down on Earth. Branson pumped his fists as he stepped out onto the runway and ran toward his family, bear-hugging his wife and children and scooping up his grandchildren in his arms.

Mike Moses, a top executive at Virgin Galactic, said that apart from some problems with the transmission of video images from inside the cabin, the flight was perfect, and the ship looked pristine.

"That was an amazing accomplishment," former Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, a one-time commander of the International Space Station, said from the sidelines. "I'm just so delighted at what this open door is going to lead to now. It's a great moment." **MDT/AP**



Afghanistan The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan is to hand over his command at a ceremony in the capital of Kabul, as America winds down its 20-year military presence and Taliban insurgents continue to gain territory across the country. Gen. Scott Miller was poised to transfer authority to Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the head of U.S. Central Command.



European Union has put on hold work on plans for a digital levy for the moment to concentrate on finalizing the historic tax decision endorsed by the Group of 20 nations over the weekend, officials said yesterday. In the face of U.S. criticism, the European Commission said that its work on the levy that would hit American technology companies would go on ice to allow for smooth cooperation on the political and technical hurdles that still need to be addressed on the G-20 tax decision before the end of October.



UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to confirm that all remaining lockdown restrictions in England will be lifted in a week's time while urging people to remain cautious amid a resurgence of the coronavirus. Johnson is expected to say at a news conference that legal rules on social distancing and mask-wearing will be lifted in England on July 19.



Haiti The head of Haiti's national police announced that officers arrested a Haitian man accused of flying into the country on a private jet and working with the masterminds and alleged assassins behind the killing of President Jovenel Moïse. Police Chief Léon Charles identified the suspect as Christian Emmanuel Sanon, without giving any personal information about him, though it appears he has been living in Florida.