



THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONFIRMED THAT IT WILL EXPEDITE PLANS TO OVERHAUL THE LAND PLOT CONTAINING THE MACAU YAT YUEN CANIDROME

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LISBOETA TO PREMIER NEW ATTRACTIONS

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A GANG THAT FAKES HEALTH CODES TO ENABLE BORDER CROSSING BETWEEN MACAU AND ZHUHAI HAS RECENTLY BEEN APPREHENDED, THE JUDICIARY POLICE REPORTED

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AP PHOTO



China says the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan offers the country a new chance to take its destiny into its own hands, while calling for the resurgent Taliban to cut all ties with terrorist groups. Speaking Tuesday in Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the U.S. should reflect on its role in Afghanistan after its 20-year military involvement failed to bring peace.

AP PHOTO



Pakistan A bus carrying dozens of construction workers fell into a ravine yesterday in northwest Pakistan after a gas leak in the vehicle caused an explosion, killing at least 13 people including nine Chinese, Pakistani officials said. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the Chinese workers and accompanying Pakistani staff were proceeding to their workplace when the explosion happened and the vehicle careened off the road.

AP PHOTO



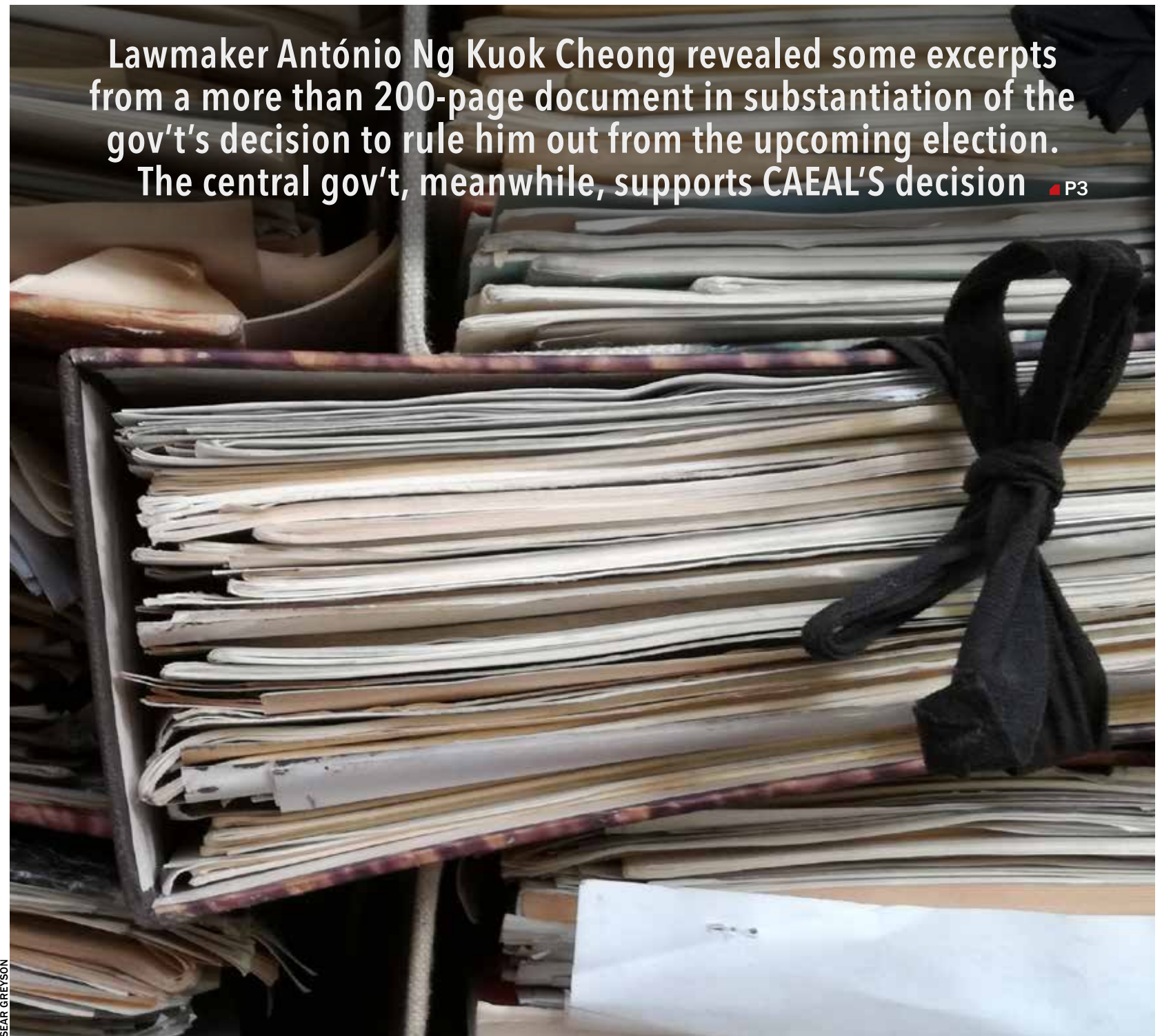
Iran's outgoing president yesterday warned his country could enrich uranium at weapons-grade levels of 90% if it chose, though it still wanted to save its tattered nuclear deal with world powers. President Hassan Rouhani's comments, carried by the state-run IRNA news agency, came as he also criticized Iran's wider theocracy for not allowing his government to reach a deal soon to restore the 2015 atomic accord.

More on backpage

EVIDENCE DOCUMENTED

Lawmaker António Ng Kuok Cheong revealed some excerpts from a more than 200-page document in substantiation of the gov't's decision to rule him out from the upcoming election. The central gov't, meanwhile, supports CAEAL'S decision

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SEAR GREYSON

GBA 3X3 BASKETBALL
**WYNN SPONSORS
UPCOMING
MEGA SPORT
EVENT**

P2



RENATO MARQUES



MACAU TO HOST GBA 3X3 BASKETBALL EVENT IN OCTOBER

RENATO MARQUES

IN October, Macau will see a large-scale basketball event added to the local annual calendar of major sports events, organizers announced at a press conference yesterday.

The FIBA 3x3 Macao Masters – Wynn Cup Greater Bay Area (GBA) Qualifying Tournament will take place in Macau between October 4 and 10. As the name states, the tournament will select one GBA team to proceed to the FIBA 3x3 Macao Masters: a major international event to be held at a subsequent date which has not been confirmed as yet.

As the president of Sports Bureau (ID), Pun Weng Kun, mentioned in his opening speech and also remarked on the sidelines of the press conference, the event aims to elevate the level of 3x3 basketball in Macau as well as to showcase and promote the sports exchange between the different GBA cities.

After the press conference, Pun said, “We are very happy that we have the sponsorship of Wynn so we can carry this event in Macau.” “This is a 3x3 tournament at a very high level and we are pleased that although we are still in a pandemic period, Ma-

cau can still organize events of this level and size. This means that we are doing a great job on controlling the epidemic,” he added.

Pun added that sports events are a great platform not only for showcasing the sport itself but also the local economy and tourism. “We hope that through the organization of this type of events, we can also disclose the local sports industry,” he added.

The event will be hosted in four different outdoor venues, where basketball courts will be constructed as well as the audience stands. The four venues are: the square in front of the A-Ma Temple, the Nam Van Nautical Center area, Tap Seac Square, and the lawn area outside of the Wynn Palace resort in Cotai.

Speaking on the choice of these locations, the ID president said, “We chose these places because they are points of attraction for people and tourists and we hope that people, when they visit Macau, can both attend the matches, and also travel around and know Macau and its monuments. In the future, we will continue to study to see if other outdoor areas can be adapted so we can use them for this kind of event”.

UP TO 250 TEAMS, MOP200,000 PRIZE MONEY

The tournament rules highlight that a maximum of 250 teams composed of three field players plus one substitute can participate in it.

At least one of the team members must possess an identification document of residency in one of the cities composing the GBA.

The competition is organized in groups that will play in a round-robin tournament system. After that, the two leading teams in each group will qualify for the elimination stage until the final stage where the four top teams will be determined.

The winning team will receive 100,000 patacas prize money, while second, third and fourth will get 50,000, 30,000, and 20,000 patacas respectively.

Registration will be open from August 16 to September 4. The lucky draw deciding the tournament groups will be held on September 20.

To register, a team must first register an account on the website (play.fiba3x3.com).

THE 3X3 BASKETBALL

With roots in street basketball, a 3x3 basketball match is played on a half-court only, with

just one basket, and two teams of three players each.

According to the official rules established by the governing body of international basketball (FIBA), the games have a maximum duration of 10 minutes, but may end sooner if one of the teams reaches 21 points.

The point-counting system is also different from a full-court game with reduced points.

Any shot scored anywhere inside the “three-point arch” counts as one point (instead of two in the full-court) and a shot outside the “three-point line” counts as two points.

OLYMPIC DEBUT

At the press conference announcing the event, Alex Sanchez, the managing director of FIBA's 3x3 Tournaments presented a recorded message about the event in Macau.

In his message, Sanchez noted that 3x3 basketball will be played at the Olympics for the first time at the postponed 2020 Tokyo Olympics, which will be starting in less than 10 days.

Besides noting the importance of this moment for the sport, Sanchez noted that since the event will take place in October, there is a possibility that some of the teams will include Olympians or even medalists from the summer Olympics, noting that this fact would be an amazing boost for the Macau event.

FIA GT WORLD CUP RETURN PENDING SSM INSTRUCTIONS

THE possible return of the FIA GT World Cup to the Macau Grand Prix calendar this year would be welcomed, the Sports Bureau (ID) president, Pun Weng Kun said when questioned on the matter at the sidelines of the press conference announcing the FIBA 3x3 Macao Masters – Wynn Cup Greater Bay Area Qualifying Tournament. Pun, who is also the coordinator of the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC), added that this is the desire of all parties,

including the local organizers. However, he noted that the imposed condition for the easing of travel restrictions to Macau is beyond the control of the organizing committee. “The final decision depends on the situation of the [Covid-19] pandemic. We must follow the guidelines from the Health Bureau (SSM),” Pun said adding that the MGPOC will wait until the deadline of August 31 for advice from the SSM on the possibility of hosting the international event.

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ELECTIONS 2021

Several justifications for disqualification of candidates revealed

HONEY TSANG

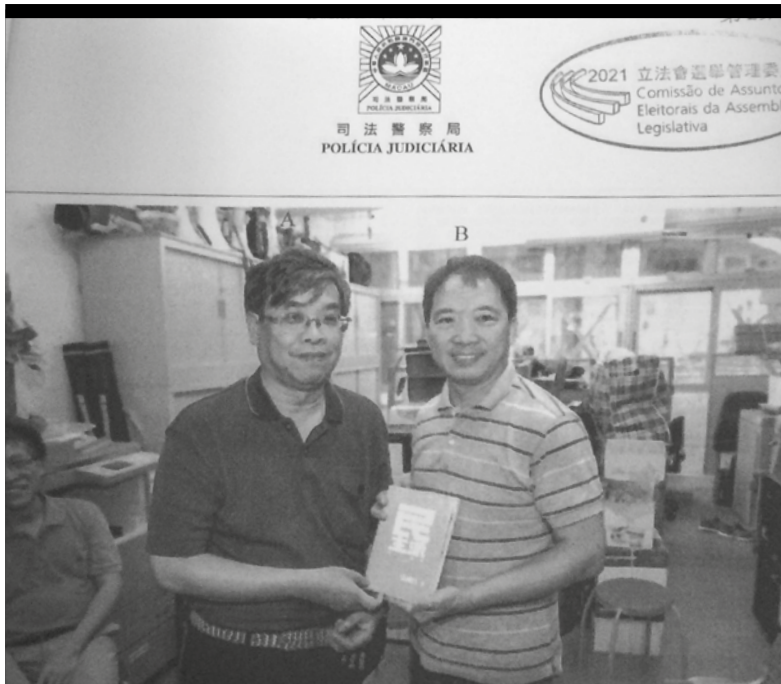
THE long-serving incumbent lawmaker, António Ng Kuok Cheong, who has been disqualified from running in the coming Legislative Assembly (AL) election, yesterday published on his social media account some excerpts from a more than 200-page “evidence document,” in substantiation of the government’s decision to rule him out from the election.

The document was compiled by the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL).

According to the CAEAL document, several proofs concern Ng’s previous social media posts supporting universal suffrage in the selection of the city’s Chief Executive (CE).

On a separate page, the CAEAL presented a photo of Ng and former chairman of Hong Kong’s Democratic Party Wu Chi Wai as an exhibit. The picture was captioned as showing Ng having a meeting with Wu who belonged to Hong Kong’s Democratic Party that “advocates ‘Hong Kong Independence.’”

Last Friday afternoon, CAEAL announced that 21 AL candidates in six groups were disqualified due to “factual evidence” proving that they neither pledge allegiance to Macau’s Basic Law nor the Macau SAR region. Such an evidential nature shall apply



CAEAL presents a photo of Ng and former chairman of Hong Kong’s Democratic Party Wu Chi Wai as an exhibit

to all exhibits in the “evidence document” against Ng.

Yesterday, the Democratic Party of Hong Kong released a statement on its Facebook page, proclaiming that “The Democratic Party and Wu Chi Wai have neither agreed on [nor] supported Hong Kong Independence.”

The Democratic Party of Hong Kong also declared its support for Hong Kong’s return to China and the implementation of “One Country, Two Systems.”

The Hong Kong political party regarded the accusations made by Macau’s government

as “serious misinterpretations,” for which it expressed “deep regret.” The party urges Macau’s government to make “clarifications and corrections as soon as possible.”

LINKS WITH HONG KONG

Since Macau’s return to China in 1999, it is unprecedented for direct AL candidates to be invalidated by the city’s government on the grounds that they do not uphold Macau’s Basic Law or are unfaithful to the SAR region.

Following his disqualification, lawmaker Ng said that he thought the recent political cli-

mate in Hong Kong had prompted the authorities in Macau to decide to rule them out.

Last night, lawmaker and also disqualified candidate Sulu Sou released an official statement refuting the allegations against him made by some media outlets. “I have never received any training for the secession of the country from any overseas entities, never contacted anyone to advocate splitting the country or opposed the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, and I have never participated in any overseas election campaigns or violent activities,” the statement said.

Sou’s clarifications came after several Hong Kong media outlets, such as Hong Kong Commercial Daily (HKCD), ran stories on July 12 explaining the reason for the disqualification of Sou and Scott Chiang using a “widespread online statement.” This statement claimed that both of them participated in the “color revolution” training organized by the U.S.’s Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Taiwan’s Military Intelligence Bureau.

The HKCD said that Sou was one of the key targets being trained by the external forces and he was appointed as chairman of the New Macau Association in July the same year, after he returned from the “training.” His position was then taken up by his successor Chiang a year later.

Yesterday, the Macao Daily also ran a similar story, saying that the purported “training” by the U.S. forces is intended to “cultivate anti-China people by advocating ‘Taiwan Independence’, ‘Hong Kong Independence’ and ‘Xinjiang Independence.’”

In his statement, Sou reaffirms his commitment to “supporting” the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China and Macau’s Basic Law and to being “loyal” both to the nation and Macau.

Following the announcement of their disqualification, four out of the six excluded groups have claimed they would not make any changes to their candidate lists. Furthermore, they vowed to file appeals against CAEAL’s decision in the courts.

These four groups include: the Macau Democratic Prosperity Association, led by incumbent lawmaker Ng and advocate Chiang; the New Macau Progressives, which includes incumbent lawmaker Sou; the New Macau Progressive Association, led by former full-attendance lawmaker Paul Chan Wai Chi; and the Macau Justice, led by labor rights advocate Lei Sio Kuan.

Apart from the 21 disqualified lawmakers, two extra candidates from a seventh list were disqualified because they were not registered voters: a precondition for candidacy.

ELECTIONS 2021

Central gov’t offices show support to CAEAL’s decision

ANTHONY LAM

THE Macau government and the two governmental offices of China in Macau have expressed their support for the disqualification of 21 candidates in the upcoming parliamentary election.

The Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) told a press conference that it stands firmly with the Macau Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL).

“The CAEAL’s decision was made in rigorous accordance with the One

country, two systems principle and the Macau Basic Law,” the Office stressed. “The practice is correct and to ensure the implementation of the Patriots Governing Macau Principle.”

Furthermore, the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government in the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) has also issued a statement supporting CAEAL’s decision.

The Liaison Office emphasized that qualification check is a crucial task of CAEAL pursuant to the Basic Law and the Election Law. “This decision implements the fundamental

principles of Patriots Governing Macau, upholds the authority and dignity of the Constitution and that Macau Basic Law, complies with the relevant provisions of the Macau Legislative Council election law, and is well-founded, legal and reasonable,” the statement noted.

Locally, the Macau government said in a statement that it resolutely supports CAEAL in disqualifying, in compliance with requirements under the Legislative Assembly Election Law, five candidate lists involving 20 individuals, from taking part in the upcoming election.

The decision of the commission, the statement explained, was based upon evidence discovered showing that the individuals had either not upheld the Basic Law of Macau or they had not met the re-

quirement of pledging allegiance to the Special Administrative Region of China.

The decision was made in line with Article 6 and Article 10 of the Legislative Assembly Election Law, the government added.

Upholding the Basic Law of the MSAR of the PRC and pledging allegiance to the MSAR of the PRC are essential prerequisites for membership of the Legislative Assembly of the MSAR.

TWO LISTS WITHDRAW FROM ELECTION

GAMING New Macau and Macau Victory have, following the disqualification decision made by the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL), withdrawn from this coming election.

The first two candidates from the gambling industry list, Cloee Chao and Lei Man Chao, have been suspended by the CAEAL over the allegations of violating the Basic Law and the MSAR.

Following this three others from the list have withdrawn from the election, leaving the list without enough candidates to meet the legal threshold of four candidates, and so the list has decided to withdraw.

Additionally, Lo Chun Seng from the Macau Victory list has told the press recently about his decision to withdraw the list from the election. Lo has previously revealed that his team has faced external pressure. **AL**

GOV'T TO FAST-TRACK YAT YUEN CANIDROME REDEVELOPMENT

HONEY TSANG

THE Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) has confirmed in a written reply that the authorities will expedite plans to overhaul the land plot containing the Macau Yat Yuen Canidrome — a former greyhound racing stadium — for public use.

The DSEDJ vows to act in accordance with the Urban Master Plan 2020-2040 to design “the planning for various public facilities.”

DSEDJ's remarks came in response to an earlier question from lawmaker Ella Lei, who urged the government to reinstate the original plan to transform the land into a site for educational institutions. This move would help resolve the long-standing predicament that most schools on the podiums of buildings have been facing, namely a shortage of space, she said.

In response, the DSEDJ stated that it has tried its best to improve



the environments in non-tertiary institutions. For instance, the authorities have constantly reached out to educational institutions to discuss “appropriate solutions” and undertake phases of improvement works.

Currently, there are 11 “podium schools” facing space shortages in Macau. One of which has already begun its expansion, slated to be completed by the end of this year.

Meanwhile, another “podium school” was granted a land con-

cession, with the construction of a new building underway.

Considering an increased birth rate from 2010 to 2014, Lei said that there is a pressing need for the government to plan for additional educational facilities to

accommodate the anticipated increase in student numbers.

On that count, the DSEDJ affirms that it has been constantly monitoring the annual birth rate in Macau and estimating student numbers in advance. It added that the authorities would not “blindly expand the education system” by taking advantage of public money and educational resources.

The Macau government reclaimed the field at the Macau Yat Yuen Canidrome in 2018. In August that year, the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSOPT) proposed to use the field for social, cultural, and recreational purposes, as well as for school construction.

At the end of 2018, the government stated that it would set aside 8,000 square meters of the field solely for education facilities, with four schools expected to relocate there.

However, authorities backpedaled on the plan in May 2020, saying that the proposed use of the land plot required further review after the Urban Master Plan 2020-2040 was officially launched.

However, Lei argued that the public consultation did not include many mentions of the Macau Yat Yuen Canidrome.

MUST Computer Science in the ESI's top 1%

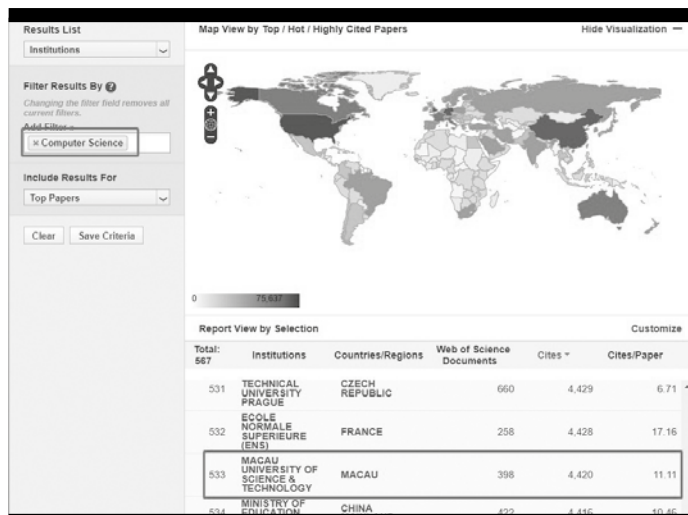
ANTHONY LAM

THE Macau University of Science Technology (MUST) has entered the top 1% with its computer science subject in the Essential Science Indicators (ESI) category, the university announced in a statement.

The latest edition of the indicator, which is an analytical tool that helps identify top-performing research in Web of Science Core Collection and is operated by Clarivate Analytics, released the result on July 8.

The MUST pointed out that this is the third subject to have entered the top 1% of the ESI this year after its molecular biology & genetics and pharmacology & toxicology units. To date, four disciplines of the university have entered the top 1% of the ESI, including engineering.

The university stated that it ascribes great importance to the design of its computer science discipline. By adhering to present-day national needs and what Macau has to offer in the field of information technology, the university seeks to train a new generation of experts in the



field, with an emphasis on providing a combination of reliable theoretical foundational training and practical training.

In addition to the Faculty of Information Technology, the Macao Institute of Systems Engineering, the Macao Institute of Smart City, and the International Institute of Next Generation Internet, the MUST has also successfully established several institutes in related fields. These include the Technology Innovation Center for Next Generation Internet, the Macao Laboratory for Artificial Intelligence and Systems Engineering, the Innovation

Center for Intelligent Robotics Technologies, and the Macao Center for Mathematical Sciences.

According to the university, these institutes are expected to consolidate the university's research position through the establishment of advanced knowledge and technical expertise. In doing so, the university aims to develop impactful research and strives to build IT talent and knowledge resource reserves, focusing on industrial innovation and thereby contributing to the development of broader technological momentum within the country and the Greater Bay Area.

TRIAL OF CROSS-BORDER TRADE SINGLE WINDOW STARTS TODAY

HONEY TSANG

THE Trade Single Window (TSW), which offers a more convenient platform designed to accelerate the customs clearance for goods by China's export enterprises and Macau's import enterprises, has begun its trial today.

According to the government's release, the TSW was co-founded by the Macau government and the municipal governments in Guangdong Province, and coordinated by the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China.

The TSW is an extended service and supplements China's (Guang-

dong) International Trade Single Window Cargo Declaration System and Macau's electronic customs declaration service platform.

With a better use of data and an automatic system, the new TSW manages to avoid repeated entry of customs declaration data, and thus shorten the time for cross-border customs declaration, the release stated.

By establishing the new system, information concerning goods exported to Macau from the mainland, after declarations are filed via China's (Guangdong) International Trade Single Window Cargo Declaration System, will be encrypted and incorporated onto

Macau's electronic customs declaration service platform.

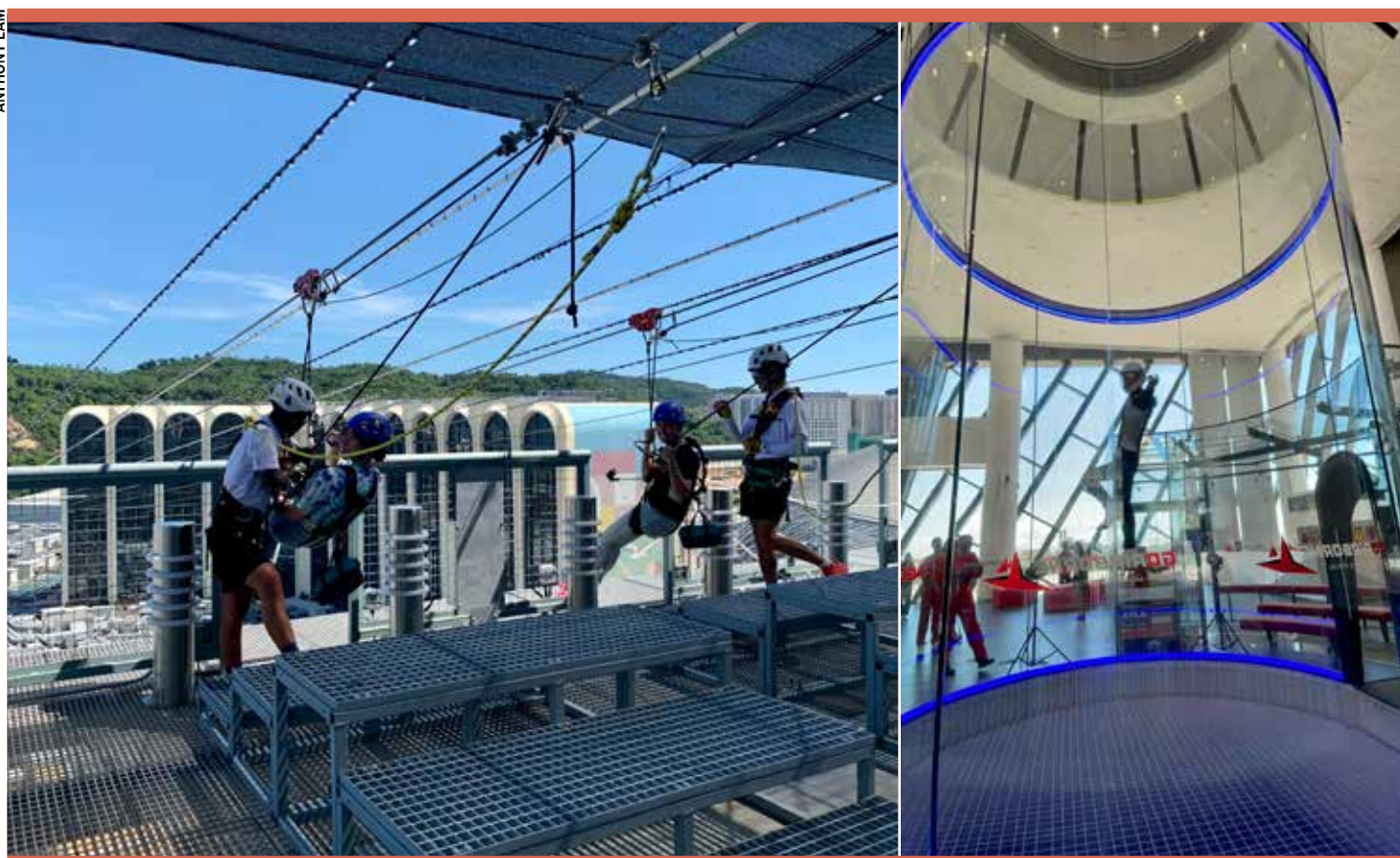
Macau's importers can obtain relevant information on Mainland exported goods through the platform, and generate local import declarations.

To ensure the security of the shared data, Macau's platform users must log in to the system with a one-time password to confirm their identity.

The TSW has been a common trend in the development of international trade. It not only helps lower trading costs, but also expedites clearance processes and facilitates customs clearance in the region.



ANTHONY LAM



Lisboeta to premiere two new attractions in the city

ANTHONY LAM

THE Lisboeta Macau will open part of its development, which will include two ideas completely new to Macau, to cater to both local residents and tourists this coming Saturday.

This coming weekend, the resort will open three attractions, GoAirborne, ZIPCITY Macau and the Night Market @ Lisboeta, the first two of which are new concepts in Macau.

GoAirborne is the first indoor skydiving facility in Macau, housing a fully frameless glass tunnel spanning over four meters in diameter and standing 15 meters tall in order to si-

mulate an authentic visual experience of flight: the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific.

It has been designed to take first-time flyers and those as young as four years old. Experienced skydivers can also participate. Both groups will be allowed to do various maneuvers in the gigantic glass tube.

ZIPCITY Macau is the world's first audio-visual zip-line attraction and the Asia-Pacific's first urban zip-line. Dressed in harness, riders will be able to fly from one end of the resort to the other. While flying, they will have a view of the entire resort and part of Cotai.

Day and night flights will be priced differently. The

latter will have lighting and music to accompany the experience.

From Saturday to the end of August, local ID holders, including non-resident workers, will be able to enjoy the flight at the price of MOP350, which will include a solo flight with a photo and video.

Night Market @ Lisboeta, located in front of the replica of the Macau Palace, otherwise known as "the floating casino", is a place to enjoy food along with nostalgic attractions. It will offer snacks such as fish balls, barbecued meat, egg waffles and Hong Kong-style waffles, as well as popcorn. A stage is also set up for performances of magic tricks

and old-time songs.

Although the opening date has not yet been set, the hotels at the Lisboeta received the green light when the project was announced in 2018. When the hotels open, the resort will boast two debuts for having the world's first Maison L'Occitane Hotel and also the first Line Friends - Casa de Amigo.

The remaining hotel, the Lisboeta Hotel, will feature a retrospective design that celebrates the Hotel Estoril.

Lisboeta's shopping mall, though not yet open, takes the concept of transition from the past to the future, which is conveyed in the contrast between vintage and futuristic design.

Police bust Health Code fraud syndicate

ANTHONY LAM

A gang that fakes Health Codes to enable border crossing between Macau and Zhuhai has recently been apprehended, the Judiciary Police (PJ) announced yesterday.

According to the police, this is the first time that this type of crime has been discovered. The police revealed that the syndicate collected the personal details of non-resident workers who frequently enter and exit Macau. These details were then used to make Macau and Guangdong Health Codes for profit.

The police arrested two individuals: a local man named Fu, aged 49 years, and a Mainland woman named Cao, aged 33 years. The police have pressed charges against them, including computerized fraudulence and breaching disease control measures, among others.

The pair were accidentally discovered by the security team at the Border Gate. At 2:30 p.m. on July 13, Cao was hurrying from Macau to Zhuhai in the hopes of catching a flight from Jinwan Airport in Zhuhai.

Fu started a conversation with her, saying that he could provide assistance. Therefore, the two tried to pass through immigration together. At the border checkpoint, Cao presented to the security guard a paper-form negative Covid-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test result issued on July 4, but she could not pass through because the result had expired.

About half an hour later, the pair re-appeared at the Border Gate. This time, Cao showed a Macau Health Code with a valid negative PCR test result to the security guard. Considering the short period of time, the guard asked the woman to stay for further clarification by the Health Bureau.

The bureau later discovered that the name, ID number and birthdate on the Health Code did not match Cao's. Cao confessed to the police that she paid HKD800 for a Macau Health Code and a Guangdong Health Code. Fu confessed that he received HKD200 on each occasion, and the rest went to accomplices in the mainland.

AD

GOV'T SLAMS YELLEN'S CALL FOR US-EUROPEAN 'UNIFIED FRONT'

CHINA on Tuesday denounced an appeal by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen for a U.S.-European "unified front" against Chinese "unfair economic practices" and human rights abuses.

"China strongly deplores and rejects Treasury Secretary Yellen's remarks," said a Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian.

Yellen issued the appeal Tuesday during a meeting with European Union officials in Brussels. President Joe Biden is trying to revive traditional alliances following the "America First" policies of his predecessor, Donald Trump.

"Together, we need to counter threats to the principles of openness, fair competition, transparency and accountability," Yellen said, according to a text released by her department.

"These challenges include China's unfair economic practices, malign behavior and human rights abuses," Yellen said. "The more we confront these threats with a unified front, the more successful we

AP PHOTO

Zhao rejected the criticism, saying Beijing "always firmly supported" the multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization

will be."

Zhao rejected the criticism, saying Beijing "always firmly supported" the multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization.

The ruling Communist Par-

ty denies accusations that it steals or pressures U.S., European and other foreign companies to hand over technology and shields its fledgling technology and other industries from competition in violation

of its WTO commitments.

European governments also are frustrated that their companies are barred from acquiring most assets in China while Chinese companies, sometimes financed by state banks,

have spent billions of dollars to acquire foreign technology and brands.

Beijing also rejects accusations of abuses against predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang region in China's northwest. The Biden administration renewed genocide allegations Monday against China in an annual State Department report to Congress.

"The U.S. is obsessed with playing up and churning out Xinjiang-related lies," Zhao said. He added that "the U.S. is in no position to judge the human rights situation in other countries" and should "make more effort in solving its own human rights problems."

Washington and the European Union have imposed travel and financial sanctions on Chinese officials blamed for human rights abuses.

"We do not bully and impose sanctions at every turn, nor do we exercise long-arm jurisdiction against other countries' enterprises," Zhao said, referring to U.S. sanctions.

Biden has said he wants better relations with Beijing but has yet to say whether he will roll back tariff hikes on Chinese goods and other sanctions imposed by Trump in a fight with Beijing over its technology ambitions and trade surplus. **MDT/AP**



AD

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COVID-19

Xi says China to keep boosting vaccine, medical cooperation with Barbados

CHINA will continue to strengthen vaccine, medical cooperation with Barbados and help the country win the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic at an early date, Chinese President Xi Jinping said Tuesday.

"At present, the COVID-19 pandemic is still spreading across the world. We feel a duty bound to extend a helping hand whenever our friends need one," Xi said in a phone conversation with Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Mottley.

Xi said that Barbados is China's good friend and partner in the eastern Caribbean, adding that since the two countries established diplomatic ties 44 years ago, the two sides have seen sustained high-level exchanges and fruitful cooperation.

He also said that since the outbreak of COVID-19, China and Barbados have pulled together and jointly overcome the difficulties of the moment.

Noting that both countries adhere to putting the people first, Xi said China stands ready to strengthen exchanges of experience in national governance with Barbados, expand practical cooperation in infrastructure and other fields, and keep promoting China-Barbados relations to new levels.

China is willing to continue providing help for Barbados in economic and social development to the best of its ability, Xi said, adding that the two sides

AP PHOTO



should reinforce coordination and cooperation in international affairs and safeguard the common interests of developing countries.

The Belt and Road Initiative has created more opportunities for common development, Xi noted, saying that China is ready to work with Barbados and other Caribbean countries to promote the joint construction of the Belt and Road.

Xi also said that he hopes that Barbados can make positive contributions to advancing cooperation on the China-Caribbean community with a shared future and to boosting China-Latin America relations.

For her part, Mottley extended her sincere congratulation on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Under Xi's far-sighted and

strong leadership, China has successfully realized its first centenary goal and eliminated absolute poverty, she said.

Mottley added that her country is ready to work with China to strengthen bilateral practical cooperation and multilateral communication and coordination, jointly build the Belt and Road, and promote Barbados-China ties as well as Latin America-China ties for greater development.

Mottley thanked China for offering precious help to Barbados in fighting against the pandemic, saying that her country opposes politicizing the origin tracing of the virus, appreciates China for its positive contributions to promoting the fair distribution of vaccines among developing countries, and hopes to strengthen vaccine cooperation with China. **MDT/XINHUA**

TECH

Gov't tightens control over cybersecurity in data crackdown

JOE MCDONALD,
BEIJING

TECH experts in China who find a weakness in computer security would be required to tell the government and couldn't sell that knowledge under rules further tightening the Communist Party's control over information.

The rules would ban private sector experts who find "zero day," or previously unknown security weaknesses, and sell the information to police, spy agencies or companies. Such vulnerabilities have been a feature of major hacking attacks inclu-

ding one this month blamed on a Russian-linked group that infected thousands of companies in at least 17 countries.

Beijing is increasingly sensitive about control over information about its people and economy. Companies are barred from storing data about Chinese customers outside China. Companies including ride-hailing service Didi Global Inc., which recently made its U.S. stock market debut, have been publicly warned to tighten data security.

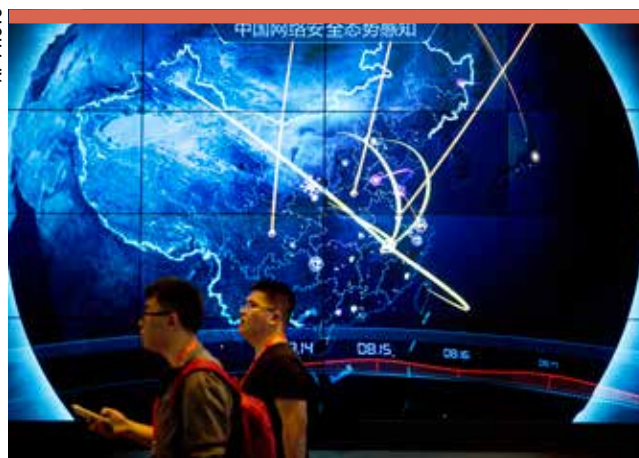
Under the new rules, anyone in China who finds a vulnerability must tell the government, which

will decide what repairs to make. No information can be given to "overseas organizations or individuals" other than the product's manufacturer.

No one may "collect, sell or publish information on network product security vulnerabilities," say the rules issued by the Cyberspace Administration of China and the police and industry ministries. They take effect Sept. 1.

The ruling party's military wing, the People's Liberation Army, is a leader along with the United States and Russia in cyber warfare technology. PLA

AP PHOTO



officers have been charged by U.S. prosecutors with hacking American companies to steal technology and trade secrets.

Consultants that find "zero day" weaknesses say their work is legitimate

because they serve police or intelligence agencies. Some have been accused of aiding governments accused of human rights abuses or groups that spy on activists.

There is no indication

such private sector researchers work in China, but the decision to ban the field suggests Beijing sees it as a potential threat.

China has steadily tightened control over information and computer security over the past two decades.

Banks and other entities that are deemed sensitive are required to use only Chinese-made security products wherever possible. Foreign vendors that sell routers and some other network products in China are required to disclose to regulators how any encryption features work. **MDT/AP**



US

Covid-19 cases rising again, doubling over three weeks

HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH & JOSH FUNK

THE COVID-19 curve in the U.S. is rising again after months of decline, with the number of new cases per day doubling over the past three weeks, driven by the fast-spreading delta variant, lagging vaccination rates and Fourth of July gatherings.

Confirmed infections climbed to an average of about 23,600 a day on Monday, up from 11,300 on June 23, according to Johns Hopkins University data. And all but two states — Maine and South Dakota — reported that case numbers have gone up over the past two weeks.

“It is certainly no coincidence that we are looking at exactly the time that we would expect cases to be occurring after the July Fourth weekend,” said Dr. Bill Powderly, co-director of the infectious-disease division at Washington University’s School of Medicine in St. Louis.

At the same time, parts of the country are running up against deep vaccine resistance, while the highly contagious mutant

version of the coronavirus that was first detected in India is accounting for an ever-larger share of infections.

Nationally, 55.6% of all Americans have received at least one COVID-19 shot, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The five states with the biggest two-week jump in cases per capita all had lower vaccination rates: Missouri, 45.9%; Arkansas, 43%; Nevada, 50.9%; Louisiana, 39.2%; and Utah, 49.5%.

Even with the latest surge, cases in the U.S. are nowhere near their peak of a quarter-million per day in January. And deaths are running at under 260 per day on average after topping out at more than 3,400 over the winter — a testament to how effectively the vaccine can prevent serious illness and death in those who happen to become infected.

Still, amid the rise, health authorities in places such as Los Angeles County and St. Louis are begging even immunized people to resume wearing masks in public. And Chicago officials announced Tuesday that unvaccinated travelers from Missouri and Arkansas must either quarantine for 10

days or have a negative COVID-19 test.

Meanwhile, the Health Department in Mississippi, which ranks dead last nationally for vaccinations, began blocking posts about COVID-19 on its Facebook page because of a “rise of misinformation” about the virus and the vaccine.

Mississippi officials are also recommending that people 65 and older and those with chronic underlying conditions stay away from large indoor gatherings because of a 150% rise in hospitalizations over the past three weeks.

In Louisiana, which also has one of the nation’s lowest vaccination rates, officials in the city of New Orleans said Tuesday that they are likely to extend until fall virus-mitigation efforts currently in place at large sporting and entertainment gatherings, including mask mandates or requirements that attendees be vaccinated or have a negative COVID-19 test. State health officials said cases of the coronavirus are surging, largely among nonvaccinated people.

But the political will may not be there in many states fatigued by months of restrictions.

In Michigan, Democra-

tic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is facing a drive to repeal a law that she used to set major restrictions during the early stages of the pandemic.

And Republican Gov. Kay Ivey of Alabama pushed back against the idea that the state might need to reimpose preventive measures as vaccinations lag and hospitalizations rise.

“Alabama is OPEN for business. Vaccines are readily available, and I encourage folks to get one. The state of emergency and health orders have expired. We are moving forward,” she said on social media.

Dr. James Lawler, a leader of the Global Center for Health Security at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, said bringing back masks and limiting gatherings would help. But he acknowledged that most of the places seeing higher rates of the virus “are exactly the areas of the country that don’t want to do any of these things.”

Lawler warned that what is happening in Britain is a preview of what’s to come in the U.S.

“The descriptions from regions of the world where the delta variant has taken hold and become the predominant virus are pictures of ICUs full of 30-year-olds. That’s what the critical care doctors describe and that’s what’s coming to the U.S.,” he said.

He added: “I think people have no clue what’s about to hit us.”

President Joe Biden is putting a dose of star power behind the administration’s efforts to get young people vaccinated. Eighteen-year-old actress, singer and songwriter Olivia Rodrigo will meet with Biden and Dr. Anthony Fauci today [Macau Time].

While the administration has had success vaccinating older Americans, young adults have shown less urgency to get the shots.

Some, at least, are heeding the call in Missouri after weeks of begging, said Erik Frederick, chief administrative officer of Mercy Hospital Springfield. He tweeted that the number of people getting immunized at its vaccine clinic has jumped from 150 to 250 daily.

“That gives me hope,” he said. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1997 VERSACE MURDERED ON HIS DOORSTEP



Italian fashion designer Gianni Versace has been shot dead on the steps of his Miami mansion.

The incident happened shortly before 0900 local time (1400 GMT) as the 50-year-old designer returned from the fashionable News Café where he bought breakfast and Italian newspapers.

Witnesses described a white man in his mid-twenties taking a gun from a backpack and shooting Versace twice in the back of the head as he unlocked the gates to his Ocean Drive home.

A gun was found with discarded clothes in a red Chevrolet pick-up truck abandoned in a car park.

Police have traced the weapon to Andrew Cunanan, 27, a gay prostitute with an “affluent clientele”.

He is already on the FBI’s most wanted list in connection with four other murders — all of the victims were, like Versace, homosexual.

Miami police chief Richard Barreto described Cunanan as the sole suspect, but he did not know if he had any relationship with Versace.

Hundreds of people have gathered opposite Versace’s three-storey, Mediterranean style home, the only residential building in the art deco section of Ocean Drive.

Police have sealed off the area round the blood-stained steps to the house — Casa Casuarina — where Versace lived most of the time with his friend Antonio D’Amico.

Around the world Versace’s stores have been closing as they received news of the tragedy.

Tributes are pouring in from the many rich and famous friends who enjoyed wearing Versace’s flamboyant designs.

Amongst them Princess Diana has issued a statement saying she was “devastated at the loss of a great and talented man”.

Versace had just released his new winter collection and a glamorous television launch planned for the Spanish Steps in Rome has been cancelled.

With the help of his sister Donatella and his brother Santo, Versace transformed the family firm into a multimillion-dollar fashion empire.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Following America’s biggest manhunt, detectives traced Andrew Cunanan to a houseboat three miles from the murder scene on 25 July 1997. After a five-hour siege a SWAT team stormed the boat and found Cunanan dead. He had shot himself in the head with the gun he used to kill Versace. His motive and any clues to his links with organised crime went with him to the grave. There were some press reports which suggested he had been diagnosed HIV-positive, but a post mortem examination showed this was not the case. Versace was his fifth victim, at the end of a killing spree which began in April 1997. Versace launched his fashion label in 1978 and the year before his death made pre-tax profits of £60m from a global turnover of £300m. The label has continued under the direction of Donatella and Santo Versace.

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

As an Aries, you're here to develop a deep sense of your own independence. However, that doesn't mean you have to go through life without anyone else's support.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

The moon slips from sensual Virgo into balance-seeking Libra today, sending your attention towards anything waiting to be crossed off on your agenda.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Luna's square with your ruler, mental Mercury, can create a divide between rational logic and heart-centered desire. Aim to strike a balance without going to extremes.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

The illuminating sun locks into a heated staring match with truth-seeking Pluto, bringing unexpressed frustrations or hidden secrets out into the open around relationship matters.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You're likely to be on the move today, Leo. Lace up your shoes and charge your phone, as errands need accomplishing and conversations seek completion.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

At the same time, the first quarter moon in Libra arrives. This highlights the divide between your aspirations and the raw skills you have to achieve them.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

As a Libra, you give so much of your energy to other people. Today's skies work to reconnect you with your own needs and desires, as the nourishing moon dances forward into your sign.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

The moon departs from overworked Virgo and slides into peace-seeking Libra, turning your attention towards any emotional baggage that needs releasing.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You're not typically one for messy, emotional displays. Brace yourself for some intense revelations to emerge today - ones that are critical to your growth but may not be so gently delivered.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

The moon slips into balance-seeking today, helping you dial into your current career trajectory. What needs adjusting on that path? Luna's square to Mercury may rope in tough, but essential, relationship chats.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

When's the last time you learned something new, Aquarius? The universe is pushing you to get out of your comfort zone and seek an education today, however informal!



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You're no stranger to the boundless depths beckoned by true intimacy. Let yourself drift off into a private headspace that allows for vulnerable, therapeutic conversations on the relationship front.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	33	cloudy
Harbin	25	29	thunderstorms
Tianjin	28	37	fine
Urumqi	25	33	showers
Xi'an	27	37	cloudy
Lhasa	22	27	rain
Chengdu	27	36	cloudy
Chongqing	26	35	thunderstorms
Kunming	28	36	cloudy
Nanjing	22	30	cloudy
Shanghai	26	34	thunderstorms
Wuhan	27	37	fine
Hangzhou	25	31	thunderstorms
Taipei	27	34	fine
Guangzhou	21	36	cloudy
Hong Kong	26	35	thunderstorms

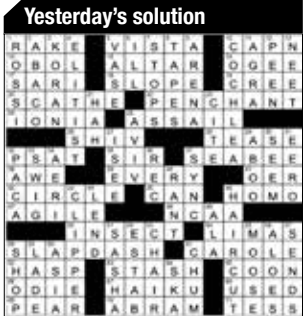
WORLD

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
Moscow	22	34	overcast
Frankfurt	16	22	rainy
Paris	16	19	rainy
London	15	23	overcast
New York	21	26	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Deities; 5- Steinbeck; East of ____; 9- Back muscle, briefly; 12- Molecular component; 13- Unit just above a yard; 15- Arizona river; 16- Peru's capital; 17- Raucous sound; 18- Lounge; 19- Cherrylike fruit; 21- Like sea life; 23- Low card; 24- Part of UNLV; 25- Prize; 28- Fifth day of the week; 33- Mall frequenters; 34- Scraps; 35- Indian exercise method; 36- Actor Holbrook; 37- Hackneyed; 38- Pouch; 39- "Hard ____" (sailor's yell); 41- Cry; 42- First letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 44- A house away; 46- Fix beforehand; 47- Barracks bed; 48- Domain; 49- City SE of Los Angeles; 53- Distribute the wrong cards; 57- Unhurried gait; 58- ____, I'm Adam; 60- Dies ____; 61- Toronto paper; 62- Journalist Pyle; 63- Director Ephron; 64- ____ the land of the free...; 65- Quartz grains; 66- Departs;

DOWN: 1- Big bash; 2- Auricular; 3- Cupola; 4- Improve in appearance; 5- Symbol; 6- Postpone; 7- Greek vowel; 8- Emperor of Rome 54-68; 9- Hero; 10- ____ want for Christmas...; 11- Apply powder to oneself; 14- Person who lives in seclusion; 15- Like expressionless eyes; 20- Minerals; 22- Corn unit; 25- One of the Allens; 26- Bobby of the Black Panthers; 27- Old-style fax; 28- Judge, e.g.; 29- URL starter; 30- Prescribed amounts; 31- Slack-jawed; 32- Cruising vessel; 34- Black-and-white cookie; 37- Double-cross; 40- One engraving; 42- Ancient Athens's Temple of ____; 43- Directing; 45- Forest female; 46- Charged; 48- At full speed; 49- Likewise; 50- Short letter; 51- On ____ with; 52- Roman god of war; 54- Switch back?; 55- Swiss river; 56- Meadows; 59- It's in the genes;



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

AP PHOTO



EU TO UNVEIL TOUGH CLIMATE RULES, WITH TAX ON FOREIGN FIRMS

THE European Union yesterday unveiled sweeping new legislation to help meet its pledge to cut emissions of the gases that cause global warming by 55% over this decade, including a controversial plan to tax foreign companies for the pollution they cause.

The proposals by the European Commission, which is the EU's executive branch, will cover everything from tougher caps on car pollution to new national limits on gases from buildings. It will see a revamp of the bloc's emissions trading scheme under which companies pay for the gases they send into the air.

The new legislation will involve around a dozen ma-

ior proposals — most of them building on laws already in place to meet the EU's old goal of a 40% cut in gas emissions by 2030, compared to 1990 levels — and must be endorsed by the 27 member countries and EU lawmakers.

World leaders agreed six years ago in Paris to keep the global warming increase to below 2 degrees Celsius, and ideally no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. Scientists say both goals will be missed by a wide margin unless drastic steps are taken to begin cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

The European Commission wants to exploit the public mood for change pro-

voked by the COVID-19 pandemic. It's already channeling more than a third of a massive recovery package aimed at reviving European economies ravaged by coronavirus restrictions into climate-oriented goals.

The aim of the "Fit for 55" legislation, commission officials say, is to wean the continent off fossil fuels and take better care of the environment by policy design, rather than be forced into desperate measures at some future climatic tipping point, when it's all but too late.

Given the implications, the proposals are certain to be subject to intense lobbying from industry and environ-

mental groups as they pass through the legislative process over at least the next year. They'll also be met with resistance because of the very different energy mixes in member countries, ranging from coal-reliant Poland to nuclear-dependent France.

Among the most controversial elements is a plan for a "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism." It will impose duties on foreign companies, and so increase the price of certain goods, notably steel products. The aim is to ease pressure on European producers that cut emissions but struggle to compete with importers that don't have the same environmental restrictions.

The question is how the EU — known for its staunch defense of open trade — will ensure that the carbon tax will comply with World Trade Organization rules and not be considered a protectionist measure. **MDT/AP**

AVIATION

American Airlines forecasts better-than-expected 2Q results

American Airlines said Tuesday it expects to report roughly break-even results for the second quarter thanks to \$1.4 billion in special items, mostly federal pandemic aid that covered most of the airline's payroll costs.

Without the federal relief, however, the airline said it will post an adjusted loss of up to \$1.2 billion for the April-through-June period. That will be its smallest adjusted loss since the pandemic started, reflecting rising passenger traffic and revenue.

American said that second-quarter revenue will be about 37.5% lower than during the same period of 2019, slightly better than the airline had previously forecast.

"We are clearly moving in the right direction," CEO Doug Parker and President Robert Isom said in a note to employees. "Our revenue and expense performance in the quarter came in better than expectations, and this was achieved while bringing the operation back up to full capacity and safely transporting a record number of travelers."

American said in a regulatory filing that it expects to report something between a loss of \$35 million and a profit of \$25 million for the second quarter. That includes the taxpayer-funded pandemic aid.

Companies and analysts usually strip out unusual gains and expenses to arrive at an adjusted profit or loss per share. American said its adjusted loss will be between \$1.67 and \$1.76 per share, which is much better than the adjusted loss of \$2.45 per share that Wall Street expects, according to a FactSet survey of 18 analysts.

Shares of Fort Worth-based American fell nearly 4% during the regular session Tuesday but rose nearly 2% in extended trading after the regulatory filing.

It is due to report its second-quarter results on July 22. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

MGM and Macau Hotel Association organize talent development symposium



MGM recently joined hands with Macau Hotel Association (MHA) to host the "Talent Development of Hotel Industry in Greater

Bay Area" symposium at the 9th Macao International Travel Expo (MITE).

Scholars and industry leaders from Macau and

the GBA were invited to share their insights on the talent development situations and trends of the hotel industry in the region, the gaming operator announced in a statement.

With over 120 participants, scholars introduced the resources currently available for hotel talent development and growth in the GBA.

In the future, MGM said that it will continue to boost the integration between academia and the industry, as well as having more interactions and exchanges with other industry peers to contribute in hotel talent development for both Macau and the GBA.

Sands China enhances disaster and pandemic prevention efforts



Sands China Ltd. is strengthening its disaster and pandemic prevention programme in collaboration with Macau Red Cross in light of the particularly

severe typhoons that have hit Macau in recent years and the ongoing global Covid-19 pandemic.

The company initiative con-

sists of packing and distributing sanitisation and emergency typhoon response kits and offering a free community seminar on typhoon preparedness and epidemic prevention, according to a statement issued by the gaming operator.

"With typhoon season upon us, it is essential that Macau is well prepared, and it is our responsibility as a company and member of this community to help those who may need extra assistance and attention," said Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

Around 800 sanitisation and emergency typhoon response kits being distributed to local households through the Association of Returned Overseas Chinese Macau until the end of July.

Manny Pacquiao announces Aug. 21 fight with Errol Spence Jr

MANNY Pacquiao and Errol Spence Jr. formally announced Sunday that they will fight Aug. 21 in a bout pitting an eight-division world champion against one of the sport's most dominant current champions.

Pacquiao (62-7-2, 39 KOs) and Spence (27-0, 21 KOs) will fight for Spence's WBC and IBF welterweight titles when they meet at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas.

The 42-year-old Pacquiao is a senator in his native Philippines. He hasn't fought since July 2019, when he beat Keith Thurman by split decision for his third consecutive victory.

At a news conference in Los Angeles, Pacquiao admitted he is taking a significant risk in returning against one of the top active fighters in boxing. Pacquiao said he could have picked "a much easier fight compared to Errol Spence" for his comeback bout, but chose to take on the unbeaten 147-pound



champion "because I want to give a good fight to the fans. I want a real fight."

The 31-year-old Spence will be in the ring for only the second time since October 2019, when he survived a single-car crash in which he was ejected from his Ferrari 488 Spider. He

returned last December in his native Dallas area with a unanimous decision over Danny Garcia.

Pacquiao has been stopped just once since 1999, but Spence said he won't enter the ring looking for a highlight-reel knockout. Spence is 3 1/2 inches

taller than Pacquiao, and his frame was significantly larger during their ceremonial faceoff.

"I definitely have the ability to finish him," Spence said. "But for me, it's about winning the fight."

The pay-per-view event will be telecast by Fox Sports. **MDT/AP**

CHINA SENDING MORE THAN 400 ATHLETES TO TOKYO OLYMPICS

CHINA will send 431 athletes to the Tokyo Games as part of a 777-member delegation, its largest at an Olympics outside China, the official Xinhua News Agency said Wednesday.

The team includes 298 female athletes, more than twice the 133 male competitors. They range in age from 14-year-old female diver Quan Hongchan to 52-year-old male equestrian rider Li Zhenqiang, Xinhua said.

"This is the largest ever Olympic delegation China has sent overseas," Gao Zhidan, deputy director of China's State General Administration of Sport, was quoted as saying.

The delegation to the Beijing Games in 2008 was larger, with 1,099 people including 639 athletes.

China expects to win gold medals in table tennis, badminton, gymnastics, weightlifting, shooting and diving, Xinhua said.

The Tokyo Olympics, delayed by one year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, open in nine days on July 23. **MDT/AP**

AD



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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

**SEPARATISM SEEDS
WON'T BE SOWN
IN HK SCHOOLS**

There can be no doubt that the anti-China forces in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, as well as their foreign patrons and bankrollers, have succeeded in brainwashing numerous young minds in the region through decades of inculcation with toxic ideologies. Teachers and teaching staff who have an animus against China's political system have prioritized their anti-China crusade over professional ethics and morality to carry out the dirty campaign.

This was evidenced once again by two appalling episodes that unfurled over the past week. As of Monday, 14 suspects had been arrested after Hong Kong police busted a well-organized separatist group that was in the final stages of launching a series of terrorist attacks using triacetone triperoxide (TATP) improvised explosive devices targeting courts, cross-harbor tunnels and railway facilities. While thankful that terrible bloodshed and loss of life have been avoided, Hong Kong residents have been shocked by the fact that nine of the arrested are high school students led and bankrolled by a staff member of a local university and an employee of a local high school.

In another episode that speaks volumes of how the anti-establishment forces have poisoned the minds of the Hong Kong youth, a group of University of Hong Kong students on Thursday observed a minute's silence in remembrance of the lone attacker who stabbed a police officer in the back in a busy street in Hong Kong and then fatally stabbed himself on July 1. They then proceeded to adopt a motion to "express deep sympathy" at the assailant's death and "appreciate his sacrifice to Hong Kong".

Such an open display of contempt for human decency and morality, which is intolerable in any civilized society, is a direct result of decades of inculcation by politically-motivated educators. Notably, Benny Tai Yiu-ting, a former associate professor of law at the University of Hong Kong, who relentlessly preached "achieving justice by breaking the law" among other toxic notions and ideas. Many members of the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, a staunch member of the region's opposition camp, have also done their best to incite hatred against their own country by vilifying its political system and the ruling party, as well as misrepresenting "one country, two systems".

Previous efforts of the HK government to promote patriotic and national education aimed at countering such toxic inculcation have been vilified, undermined and derailed by those anti-China and anti-establishment forces, particularly some members of the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union who were leading Hong Kong's youth astray under the guise of academic freedom or freedom of expression.

Fortunately, the promulgation of the National Security Law for the SAR has cleared the way for effective patriotic/national education, which should be promoted vigorously without further delay with concerted efforts by the SAR government, community and parents. After all, so many things are at stake, not least the futures of Hong Kong's younger generations.

**RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS
PROTEST IN UKRAINE'S CAPITAL**

A crowd of retired police officers tried to storm Ukraine's parliament yesterday and blocked several streets in the capital, Kyiv, during a protest demanding higher pensions.

Former police officers rammed through a metal barrier fencing off the parliament and tried to access the building's entrances. Officers used tear gas to deter the protesters.

The demonstrators later blocked two streets near the parliament and the government buildings in the center of Kyiv, paralyzing traffic.

The demonstration of about a thousand people took place the day after Ukraine's longtime interior minister, Arsen Avakov, submitted

his resignation without disclosing the reasons behind the decision to step down. The interior minister is responsible for law enforcement in Ukraine.

Avakov, 57, has been widely viewed as one of the most influential Cabinet members in Ukraine. He has served as interior minister in four different governments and under two presidents, holding on to the post despite frequent government reshuffles and numerous corruption allegations.

Parliament must accept his resignation for it to take effect, and lawmakers may consider it in the coming days.

AP PHOTO



**HONG KONG BOOK FAIR
SEES SELF-CENSORSHIP
AND FEWER BOOKS**

**KATIE TAM,
HONG KONG**

BOOKSELLERS at Hong Kong's annual book fair are offering a reduced selection of books deemed politically sensitive, as they try to avoid violating a sweeping national security law imposed on the city last year.

The book fair was postponed twice last year due to the coronavirus pandemic. It usually draws hundreds of thousands of people looking for everything from the latest bestsellers to works by political figures.

This year, far fewer politically sensitive books are on display. Vendors are curating their books carefully to avoid violating the national security law.

Beijing imposed the law on Hong Kong in June 2020. Authorities have used it to crack down on dissent, arresting more than 100 pro-democracy supporters in the city.

Jimmy Pang, a local publisher who used to sell books about 2014 pro-democracy demonstrations that became known as the Umbrella Movement, said many books critical of the government have disappeared.

"Every vendor will read through the books that they are bringing to the book fair to see if there

is any content that might cause trouble," said Pang, who is president of the Subculture publishing house.

"We don't want to get into trouble that will affect the operation of the book fair, so we self-censor a lot this time. We read through every single book and every single word before we bring it here," he said.

Some books published by Subculture were pulled from the shelves of Hong Kong's public libraries earlier this year. Those books are not available at the fair.

Now that authorities have used the national security law to quash dissent, publishers, distributors and even importers and exporters have become wary about the risks of publishing or dealing with potentially sensitive books, said Hui Ching, research director of the Hong Kong Zhi Ming Institute, a private, independent think tank.

Political author Johnny Lau, author of a book about the Chinese Communist Party and Hong Kong in the last century, said his book is not allowed at the fair this year — not because of government interference but because of political pressure from government policies.

"That's why we can

only see publications which are (in) favor to the government in the book fair," he said.

Benjamin Chau, deputy executive director of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, which organizes the book fair, told reporters earlier this week that books written by pro-democracy authors can still be sold as long as they don't break the law.

Some visitors, such as Alex Chan, lamented the lack of such books in the fair this year.

"Is the book fair still a place we can buy any kinds of books? Is Hong Kong still a place with freedom of speech or freedom to publish?" he said.

Some publishers have gone ahead and displayed for sale books about the 2014 protests and other politically sensitive topics.

"When we publish a book, we put a lot of effort into ensuring the content is legal, that's why we don't think there's a big problem and would still bring them to the book fair," said Raymond Yeu-ning, a spokesman for publisher Hillway Culture Co.

"We hope this will be an encouragement to our fellow publishers, to show that there's still some people publishing books like this," he said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Lebanon A day after angry protests decrying the handling of the investigation into the massive explosion at Beirut's port last August, Lebanon's president said yesterday there will be no political cover for anyone accused in the case. The blast on Aug. 4 was caused by the ignition of hundreds of tons of ammonium nitrate at the port for years. The highly explosive fertilizer was stored there with the knowledge of top government officials.

Belarus Authorities yesterday raided offices and homes of dozens of human rights activists and journalists in a crackdown that comes just a day after the country's authoritarian president promised to "deal with" non-governmental organizations he accuses of fomenting unrest. Law enforcement officers raided the homes of several advocates at the prominent Viasna human rights center, as well as offices of other Belarusian NGOs and homes of activists and journalists in various regions of the ex-Soviet state.

AP PHOTO



Germany Storms caused heavy flooding across parts of western and central Europe overnight, with one man missing after being swept away by a raging stream in eastern Germany. Firefighters resumed their search for the man in Joehstadt, in Saxony state, on yesterday morning. German news agency dpa reported that he had been trying to secure his property from rising waters when he disappeared.

Vatican Pope Francis was discharged from a Rome hospital and returned home to the Vatican yesterday, 10 days after undergoing surgery to remove half his colon. Francis, 84, gave thanks for the success of the operation and offered prayers for others during a visit en route home to Rome's Santa Maria Maggiore basilica, the Vatican said. The pope always visits the basilica after returning from a foreign trip to pray before a beloved icon of the Virgin Mary.