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EDUCATION AND YOUTH BUREAU ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS TO PREPARE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

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Bangladesh At least 22 people died when a Bangladeshi passenger boat sank with more than 100 aboard, and the driver of a cargo vessel suspected of colliding with the boat was arrested, officials said Saturday. The boat sank Friday evening in a large body of water in the eastern district of Brahmanbari, 82 kilometers east of the capital, Dhaka. No passengers were believed missing after nearly 24 hours of search efforts.

Yemen A missile and drone attack on a key military base yesterday killed at least 30 troops, a Yemeni military spokesman said. It was one of the deadliest attacks in the country's civil war in recent years. Mohammed al-Naqib, spokesman for Yemen's southern forces, told The Associated Press the attack on Al-Anad Air Base in the province of Lahj wounded at least 65. He said the casualty toll could rise since rescue teams were still clearing the site.

Gaza Strip Hundreds of Hamas-backed activists on Saturday launched what they said was the first in a series of nighttime protests along the Israeli border, throwing explosives toward Israeli forces who responded with live fire. Organizers said the gatherings, which are to continue throughout the week, were meant to step up pressure on Israel to ease a crippling economic blockade on the Gaza Strip.

Iran's president yesterday appointed a new director of the country's nuclear department, state TV reported, replacing the nation's most prominent nuclear scientist with a minister who has no reported experience in nuclear energy but ties to the defense ministry. Iran's newly elected hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi chose Mohammad Eslami, a 64-year-old civil engineer who previously oversaw the country's road network, to lead Iran's civilian nuclear program and serve as one of several vice presidents.

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THE ORIGINS

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CENSUS REACHES 83% OF POPULATION

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MACAU GDP ON REBOUND

P2

CENSUS 2021 CONCLUDES WITH HIGH RESPONSE RATE; OVER 70% COMPLETED ONLINE

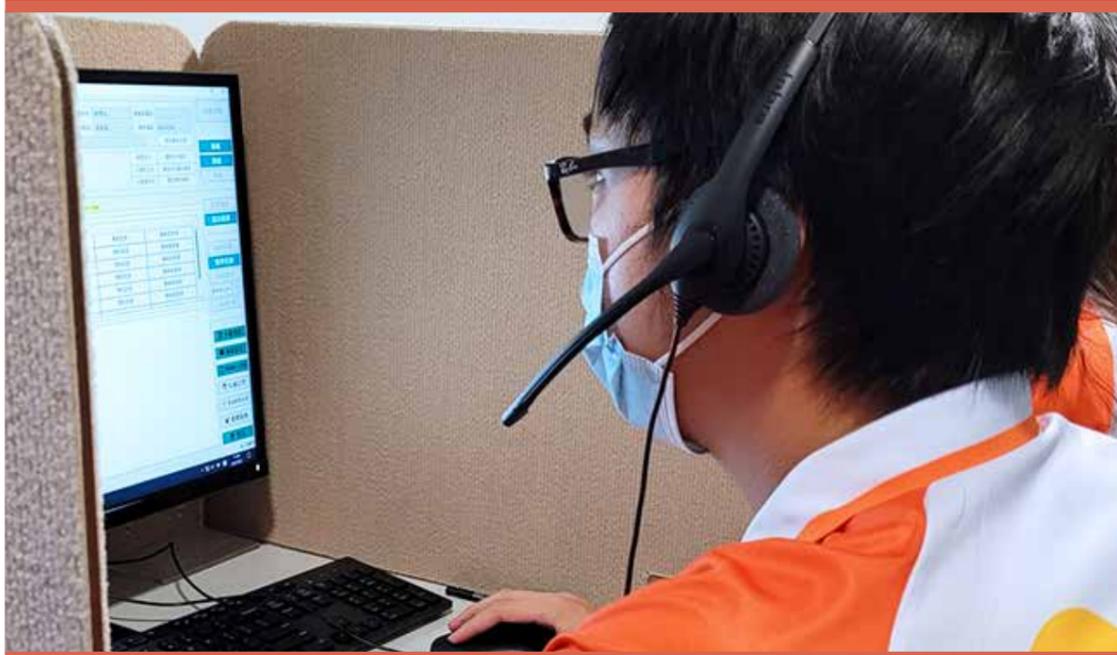
RENATO MARQUES

THE data collection for the 2021 Population Census concluded over the weekend with a preliminary overall response rate of 83.3%, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) announced in a statement.

According to the statement, the response rate was considered very positive and met the organizers' initial expectations for a special edition of the local Census held in the middle of the pandemic, with limitations on house visits and direct contact between Census staff and the public.

The DSEC also noted that, of the many households who completed and submitted the Census questionnaire, a total of 71% of them filled out and submitted the questionnaire online. The other households provided the same information through telephone interviews, by submitting paper forms or by verbal response to visiting Census officers.

The DSEC also observed that Census 2021 aimed to cover



99.3% of the population, thus organizers were pleased with the initial response rate of 83%.

They noted that, after the initial very positive response of many households who submitted forms online on the very first day, the responses slowed down after that. The government was

forced to extend the data collection period for an additional seven days, from 15 to 22 days.

The DSEC said that it will aim for a higher response rate and thus for more representative Census results, and to this end, DSEC will continue to follow up with households

who have activated their access to but not completed the online questionnaire, or those who have scheduled a telephone interview to assist them. This work is expected to be concluded by September 19.

At the same time, a Post Enumeration Survey (PES) is set to

begin on September 4 and run for another 15 days (until September 19), with the aim of ensuring the quality of the data collected previously.

This second round of questionnaires will include only 1,500 households, selected from those who completed the questionnaire previously.

FINAL RESULTS ONLY NEXT YEAR

DSEC also revealed that the final, detailed findings of Census 2021 will not be published until the second quarter (Q2) of next year, while the preliminary results should be released before the end of this year.

The preliminary data release — expected in December — will include information such as population size, gender, age structure, and distribution of the population by district.

After the completion of this phase, the data collected will undergo necessary checking, processing, and analysis that will be presented and published in detail next year, probably between April and June.

ECONOMY

GDP rebounds 69.5% in Q2

MACAU'S gross domestic product (GDP) rebounded by 69.5% year-on-year in real terms in the second quarter of 2021, the special administrative region's (SAR) statistics department said last week.

The latest report from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) showed that Macau's economy resumed positive growth on account of a relatively low base of comparison in the same quarter of last year when local economic activities were limited due to entry restrictions for visitors amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pick-up in external demand in the second quarter with the epidemic under control also contributed to the growth.

The implicit deflator of GDP, which measures the overall changes in prices, dropped by 0.3% in the second quarter, showed the report.

Exports of services ballooned by 555.6%, of which exports of gaming services and other tourism services rocketed by 1,089.7% and 1,328.3% respectively. Exports of goods surged by 606.9%.

Domestic demand maintained growth, rising by 3.7% year on year. Imports of goods swelled by 173.5% while imports of services rose by 54.2%.

Local economic activities of residents have basically recovered, with household final consumption expenditure in the domestic market increasing by 8.8%. Due to

the relatively low base of comparison in the same quarter last year, household final consumption expenditure abroad went up by 87.0%. The overall private consumption rose by 11.5%.

As the government allocated expenditure for epidemic prevention and implemented economic assistance measures, government final consumption expenditure grew steadily by 0.4% year-on-year, of which net purchases of goods and services went up by 0.4% and compensation of employees increased by 0.5%.

Gross fixed capital formation declined by 10.1%, of which construction investment decreased by 16.7% whereas



equipment investment rose by 25.0%.

The government continued to promote infrastructure projects, with public construction investment and equipment investment expanding by 37.0% and 37.3% respectively.

As to private invest-

ment, construction investment dropped by 27.7% owing to smaller investment in large-scale hotel projects compared to the same quarter last year and fewer private residential projects. However, equipment investment increased by 24.2%.

The pick-up in total de-

mand drove up merchandise trade, with imports and exports of goods surging by 173.5% and 606.9% respectively.

The number of visitor arrivals to Macau leapt by 4,302.6% year-on-year and 25.9% quarter-to-quarter in the second quarter of 2021. MDT/AP

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Times
DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles SENIOR WRITER_Honey Tsang
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai
NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Albanjo Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS_Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua
SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION
ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com
OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com
ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84
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EMPLOYMENT

3,000 fewer workers in Macau between May and July

RENATO MARQUES

A recent survey from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) found that, in the three-month period of May to July this year, there was a registered drop of 3,000 workers in the total Macau labor force from the previous period (April to June).

According to DSEC, of the 3,000, 1,400 were resident workers who lost or quit their jobs within the period.

During the May-July period, the labor force living in Macau totaled 383,900, with a labor force participation rate of 67.9%, 2.6% less than in the previous quarter.

Total employment recorded was 372,900 workers, with residents accounting for 275,000 of the total.

Survey data analyzed by industry also revealed that employment levels in Hotels, Restaurants & Similar Activities and the Transport & Storage sector accounted for the drop, while a slight recovery was observable only in the Gaming & Junket Activities sector.

In this period, the general unemployment rate remained steady at 2.9%, while the unemployment among residents also held at 3.9%.

Both figures remain generally consistent with the previous period, as did the underemployment rate, which stands at 3.5%.

All indicators recorded a slight increase of 0.2% compared to the previous period.



The number of unemployed fell slightly by 100 from the previous period to 11,000. Among unemployed jobseekers, most were previously engaged in Gaming & Junket Activities or in the Construction sector.

Meanwhile, fresh graduates entering the labor market increased by 1.7%, representing 9.2% of the total unemployed at the end of July.

Subtle signs of recovery could be found only in the Gaming & Junket Activities and in the Construction sector, which saw the number of underemployed workers decreasing by 200 from the previous period to 13,400.

Nevertheless, the marginal difference does not greatly alter the general unemployment rate.

The DSEC Employment Survey covers all residential units in the Peninsula, Taipa, and Coloane, excluding collective living quarters such as dormitories and care homes for the elderly.

The survey excludes both the residents and non-resident workers working in Macau but living outside the region.

Based on the border movement records, an average of about 83,000 residents and non-resident workers worked in Macau but lived outside the territory during the period in question.

If included, these workers increase the total labor force to 466,900 between May and July, 4,400 less than the previous period.

DSAL CLAIMS REEMPLOYMENT OF 2,500

In a separate report, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) claimed to have helped around 2,500 residents find new jobs over the first eight months of this year.

According to data released by DSAL, 2,091 people have been hired through both regular and pandemic-specific measures that promoted job-matching sessions and contacts.

Regarding the regular employment services, in the period between January 1 and August 20, a total of 7,470 people were referred on by the DSAL and attended job interviews, of which 1,767 were hired.

Those hired were mainly people looking for jobs in the civil construction sector (793 people), security and cleaning services (249 people), and retail (153 people) — 68% of the total referrals.

Regarding the specific measures and services enforced due to the pandemic, 24 specific job matching sessions were organized for different sectors and professions. These sectors include: security and property management, restaurants, retail, and hotel industry, among others. A total of 619 people attended the interviews, of which over half (324 people) were hired. The sectors in which staff were successfully hired were retail (120 people), security and property administration (80 people), catering (72 people), hotel industry (49 people), and nursing (3 people).

MACAU POLITICS REACH PORTUGAL'S SOCIALIST PARTY CONGRESS

Sociologist Paulo Godinho warned yesterday at the 23rd Socialist Party (PS) congress that cases of violations of freedoms and breaches of the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration are multiplying in Macau and appealed to his fellow congressmen "not to ignore the abuses." Godinho, a Macau resident who lived here for decades, presented a motion to the congress that asks PS, the party which currently holds the power in Lisbon, to ensure compliance with the Portuguese-Chinese agreement, considering that it is not "minimally acceptable to turn a blind eye to [violations]." "This is not at all acceptable" and "PS cannot ignore what is happening in Macau, much less say that the joint declaration is respected when there are numerous examples [to the contrary]," both against the freedom of the press and against politicians that could be "less friendly to the established power," he said inferring the AL elections.

DUTERTE LIFTS CASINO BAN IN BORACAY

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has lifted a moratorium on casino operations in the country's top holiday island to generate taxes for its Covid-19 pandemic response, the presidential spokesperson said this weekend. The firebrand leader has had a longstanding opposition to gambling, halting the construction of new casinos in the Philippines. "The president has given his go signal allowing the operation of a casino in Boracay," presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in a statement. He did not specify if the lifting of the moratorium would be temporary or permanent. The move augurs well for provisional casino license holders like Alliance Global Group Inc. and the partnership of Leisure & Resorts World Corp and Macau's Galaxy Entertainment Group. Galaxy can start its operations focusing on foreign gamblers, Alfredo Lim, president of the gaming regulator, told Reuters.

DON DON DONKI TO OPEN FIRST STORE SEPT. 7

Japanese discount retail brand will open its first DON DON DONKI store in Macau on September 9, the group announced. The new store will be located at Rua Sul do Patane in Fai Chi Kei the north district of the Macau peninsula, covering more than 20,000 square feet and open 24 hours a day. Don Quijote Co., Ltd., or Don Don Donki, is a Japanese discount chain with stores over 160 locations throughout Japan, 10 in Singapore, six in Hong Kong, three in Hawaii, two in Bangkok, and one each in Taiwan and Malaysia. Don Don Donki shops are known for being open 24/7 and for their vast array of product offerings, from electronics, beauty products and toys, to Japanese fresh food products.

PROPERTY

Toi San residential estate entrances blocked by parked cars

ANTHONY LAM

SOME residents living in the Cidade Nova de Toi San have complained that the estate's management company have extortionately increased the number of parking spaces, some of which are now blocking main entrances.

The residents have repeatedly lodged protests on the matter to the management com-

pany, as well as to several government bureaus, such as the Fire Services Bureau (CB), the Housing Bureau (IH) and the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DS-SOPT).

None of the protests have yielded results that have satisfied residents. As such, the residents recently submitted a letter to the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC).

Located on Avenida de Artur Tamagnini Barbosa, the estate is a mixed development, consisting of private and government economic housing. The estate development was completed between 1990 and 1993. It has an elevated parking lot that serves as a platform connecting all blocks in the estate.

Taking an older design style, each block has a door connecting

directly to the parking lot without fences. Residents have criticized some companies for, on the one hand, adding excessive parking spaces, and on the other, placing parking spaces directly in front of building doorways.

The residents pointed out that there are nine parking spaces right outside the elevator lobby of Block 8 of the estate. When all of them are oc-

cupied, not even wheelchairs are able to pass through.

It was revealed that in the 1980's and 1990's a company bought several dozens of parking spaces at the estate none of which have been used. In the past couple of years, the company suddenly added a significant number of parking spaces to the estate. It even claimed that the registrations were completed before 1999.

Representing the residents, parliamentary election candidate Leong Sun Iok hoped the CCAC would investigate the case if it should involve any maladministration.

TOURISM INDUSTRY CONFIDENT ABOUT NATIONAL GAMES 2025

THE local tourism industry is eagerly awaiting the improvements to the city's image that will follow the National Games in 2025.

Last week, the Chinese government in Beijing announced that the National Games in four years will be co-organized by the two Special Administrative Regions (SARs) of Macau and Hong Kong, along with the Province of Guangdong.

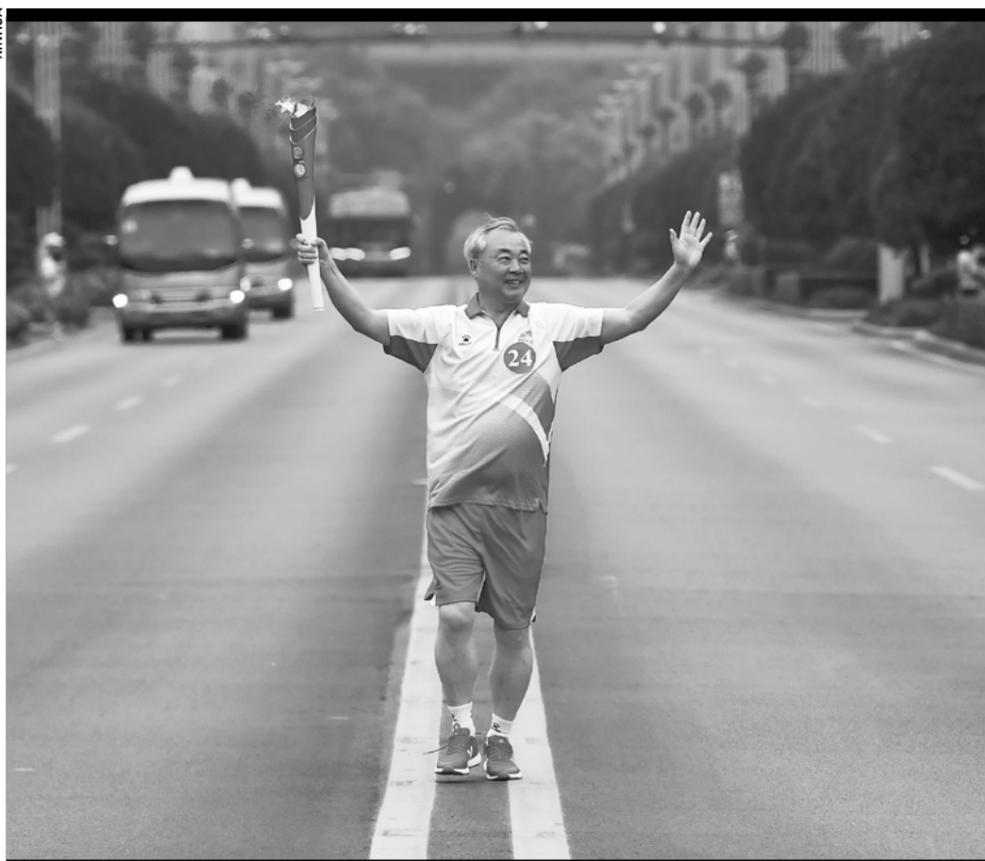
The National Games is a top-tier comprehensive sporting event in China.

In response to the announcement, the local tourism industry has unveiled its plans to begin compiling related products and services to help extend and enrich the experience of tourists.

Andy Wu Keng Kuong, Chairman of the Travel Industry Council of Macau, told local Chinese paper Macao Daily News that the promotion rollout for the Games is expected to begin a couple of years prior to the actual event. He expects that given the continuing pandemic, Mainland China will remain the chief source of tourists for the event. Therefore, the sporting event will effectively promote Macau's tourism image.

As for Macau's role, Wu proposed that Macau focus on packaged tours, such as attractive packages involving tickets, accommodation and dining, along with sporting events.

Further announcements about the division of responsibilities will help clarify the city's position, he added. **AL**



ELECTIONS

Two-week campaign period kicks off

ANTHONY LAM

THE two week-long campaign period for the upcoming parliamentary election commenced over the weekend, with an obviously inhibited energy level, in part due to the disease control measures.

Another possible reason for the event not generating as much excitement as in previous elections is that this year a total of 14 lists are running for 14 seats in the direct election constituency.

In addition, 21 candidates were disqualified before the start of the campaign due to accusations of failing to pledge allegiance to the city and not upholding the Basic Law.

September 12 has been set as the polling date for this election.

Tap Seac Square was cordoned off on Saturday for candidates to post their respective posters. Only a very limited number of people are allowed to enter the cordoned area.

The campaign period officially started at midnight on Saturday.

Only a small number of spectators were present at the perimeter of the cordoned off area, possibly because the Legislative



Members of the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission headed by Tong Hio Fong (center)

Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) had initially announced that no campaign commencement event would be held at all.

Although there were some members of the public, the people present were mostly supporting personnel from the candidate lists. Most held placards for promotional purposes.

Tap Seac Square is the first event for a number of campaigns, such as Civil Watch, Power of Synergy and New Hope, lists numbered 2, 6 and 14 respectively.

Meanwhile, some lists have chosen to avoid Tap Seac Square and unleashed their campaign in their main "ballot warehouse". For example,

List 8 - Promoting Union for Progress and List 11 - Union for Development have chosen to kick off their campaigns at the Border Gate. List 3 - Macau United Citizens Association has chosen to launch their campaign at the Iao Hon Garden.

Reviewing the campaign period commencement event, the CAEAL head Tong Hio Fong said that crowd control at the Tap Seac Square was well organized. He thanked the various lists for their coordination.

When asked about all of the reversals in policy that took place before the campaign period, and whether or not turnout will be lower than previous elections, Tong said it would be up to de-

terminations that voters need to make for themselves.

COLORS, NUMBERS, NAMES, MASKS

Tong reminded the public that on the cool-off day — the day before the polling day — and polling day itself, voters should be mindful of their attire and refrain from wearing any items that have colors resembling one or more particular candidate lists.

More importantly, clothing prints that show the numbers, names, acronyms or logos of any particular lists are considered to be in violation of the Election Law.

Voters wearing such items of clothing must cover the item before they can enter the polling station.

DSEDJ ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS TO PREPARE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

RENATO MARQUES

IN preparation for the start of the new school year, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) has issued a series of recommendations for parents, urging them to pay attention to pandemic updates, and noting other factors such as traffic and weather conditions.

In a statement, the DSEDJ noted that, while schools are already preparing for the new academic year and implementing measures aimed at epidemic prevention, parents should nonetheless pay attention to road traffic conditions, as there are usually jams at the beginning of the new academic year.

The DSEDJ also stated that it has maintained close communication with the Transport Bureau and other relevant departments, and asked schools to make appropriate arrangements for students who might be late due to unexpected traffic conditions.

Additionally, since it is now the season for frequent

rainstorms and typhoons in Macau, parents are advised to pay close attention to weather updates.

To ensure the safety of students, schools will keep their premises open when classes are suspended due to adverse weather, including when red or black rainstorm warnings are issued.

The bureau added that schools have a duty of care for students who have arrived at school and must arrange appropriate educational activities for them, so parents do not need to rush to pick them up from school.

Schools will continue operation as normal when the yellow rainstorm warning signals are issued.

Special advice was also issued for cross-border students, reminding them that the current requirements for border-crossing between Zhuhai and Macau include cross-border students and school staff undergo nucleic acid test (NAT) and retain a valid negative NAT result to cross the border.



RENATO MARQUES



Vice-Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu

CHINA LODGES SERIOUS PROTEST OVER REPORT

CHINA has made serious protests to the United States over the COVID-19 origins tracing report submitted by the US intelligence community to US President Joe Biden, according to Vice-Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu.

When delivering a statement issued on Saturday, the Chinese diplomat said the US has been obsessed in political manipulation and its intelligence-based origins tracing, and it disregards science and facts, he said.

The motive is "to scapegoat China and spread political virus", he said, adding that mobilizing the intelligence agencies to work on tracing itself is another ironclad proof the US is politicizing the tracing issue.

Washington's claim that China has not been transparent or cooperative in tracing is sheer fabrication, the Chinese official said.

He noted China has twice invited experts from the World Health Organization to visit China and embark on origins tracing studies.

In contrast, Washington has displayed its lack of transparency, its absence of a collaborative gesture and its irresponsible attitude toward the tracing issue, Ma said.

So far, Washington has failed to respond to global concerns and urges a complete investigation of over 200 US biolabs located across the globe, he said.

By doing so, the US "attempts to cover up facts and shirk away from its responsibilities", and it should "face up to the global community with a clear response", he added.

The US campaign for politicizing the tracing issue has been unpopular and has drawn widespread criticism around the world, he added.

"Justice will prevail, and injustice is doomed to fail," Ma said, adding Washington should "immediately cease to poison the atmosphere for global cooperation on tracing, stop undermining the global joint COVID-19 response", and get back to science-based tracing and cooperation-driven COVID-19 response. **CHINA DAILY**

COVID-19

US intelligence still divided on origins of coronavirus



U.S. intelligence agencies remain divided on the origins of the coronavirus but believe China's leaders did not know about the virus before the start of the global pandemic, according to results released last week of a review ordered by President Joe Biden.

According to an unclassified summary, four members of the U.S. intelligence community say with low confidence that the virus was initially transmitted from an animal to a human. A fifth intelligence agency believes with moderate confidence that the first human infection was linked to a lab. Analysts do not believe the virus was developed as a bioweapon and most agencies believe the virus was not genetically engineered.

The cause of the coronavirus remains an urgent public health and security concern worldwide.

The scientific consensus remains that the virus most likely migrated from animals in what's known as a zoonotic transmission. So-called "spillover events" occur in nature, and there are at least two coronaviruses that evolved in bats and caused human epidemics, SARS1 and MERS.

In a statement, Biden said China had obstructed efforts to investigate the virus "from the beginning."

China's embassy in Washington hit back with a lengthy statement saying the U.S. had "fabricated" the report and invoking mis-

taken American intelligence about weapons of mass destruction prior to the Iraq War.

"The report by the intelligence community is ba-

sed on presumption of guilt on the part of China, and it is only for scapegoating China," the embassy said. "Such a practice will only disturb and sabotage in-

ternational cooperation on origin-tracing and on fighting the pandemic, and has been widely opposed by the international community." **MDT/AP**

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CHINA'S defense ministry protested this weekend the passage of a U.S. Navy warship and Coast Guard cutter through the waters between China and Taiwan, a self-governing island claimed by China.

A statement posted on the ministry's website called the move provocative and said it shows that the United States is the biggest threat to peace and stability and creator of security risks in the 160-kilometer wide Taiwan Strait.

"We express firm opposition and strong condemnation," the statement said.

The USS Kidd guided-missile destroyer and Coast Guard cutter Munro sailed through the strait Friday in international waters, the U.S. Navy said. Such exercises are seen as a warning to China, which recently conducted drills near Taiwan and has not renounced the use of force if needed to bring the island under its control.

"The ships' lawful transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," a statement from the Navy's Japan-based 7th Fleet said.

Taiwan, home to 23.6 million people, split from China during a civil war that led to the Communist Party taking control of the mainland in 1949. The U.S. does not have

CHINA PROTESTS US NAVY, COAST GUARD SHIPS IN TAIWAN STRAIT

formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan but maintains a representative office in the capital, Taipei, and is its biggest supplier of military equipment for its defense.

The U.S. Coast Guard has been stepping up its presence in Asia, as the Chinese coast guard patrols near disputed islands that both China and other governments claim in the South and East China Seas.

The 418-foot long Munro, which is based in Alameda, California, arrived in the region in mid-August for what the U.S. Coast Guard said would be a monthlong deployment. It trained with a Japanese coast guard ship, the Aso, in the East China Sea for two days earlier this week.

The U.S. and Taiwan coast guards held talks this month after the two signed a cooperation agreement in March. China has denounced the agreement.

Saturday's defense ministry statement said that "Taiwan is an inalienable part of China," and that China would not tolerate any interference in what it called its internal affairs. **MDT/AP**



Chinese regulators to exercise more control over algorithms

CHINESE regulators will exercise greater control over the algorithms used by Chinese technology firms to personalize and recommend content, the latest move in a regulation spree across the internet sector.

China's internet watchdog, the Cyberspace Administration of China, last week released a draft proposal of "algorithm recommendation management regulations" aimed at managing how technology companies use algorithms when providing services to consumers.

The move expands the crackdown on the internet sector in China, as regulators seek to strengthen data privacy and consumer rights and curtail anti-competitive practices in order to curb the outsized influence of technology companies.

Under the draft regulations, companies must disclose the basic principles, purpose and operation mechanism of its algorithm recom-



mendation services, and must include convenient options for users to turn off the recommendation service.

Algorithms should also not be used in ways that may cause addictive behaviors in users, or induce them to spend excessively. It was not immediately clear how that would be enforced.

Companies who use algorithms in ways that could influence public opinion must also sub-

mit their algorithms for approval, or risk having their service terminated and a fine of up to 30,000 yuan (\$4,630).

The draft algorithm management regulations could affect companies like ByteDance, which owns short video platforms Douyin and TikTok, as well as e-commerce firm Alibaba.

Bytedance uses recommendation algorithms to push videos to users, while Alibaba's al-

gorithms tailor product recommendations to each user on its e-commerce platform Taobao based on their browsing and purchasing history.

China's largest technology firms, such as Alibaba and Tencent, have experienced breakneck growth in the last decade as hundreds of millions of Chinese internet users rapidly adopted smartphones.

These companies offer everything from payments, games, entertainment and e-commerce. Algorithms and data collected from users became valuable assets as companies could mine data for important trends or recommend more personalized content to users.

However, a lack of regulation in this sector also saw an uptick in excessive collection of user data, online fraud and unfair consumer practices across the technology sector. In some cases, algorithms were also used in differential pricing for consumers. **MDT/AP**

COVID-19

ABU DHABI MANDATES BOOSTER SHOT FOR SINOPHARM RECIPIENTS

THE capital of the United Arab Emirates yesterday ordered all residents who received the Chinese state-backed Sinopharm coronavirus vaccine over six months ago to get a booster shot by September 20, adding that recipients of other vaccines do not need the third dose.

The UAE became the first country worldwide to formally offer the booster regimen earlier this year, following reports of Sinopharm recipients seeking the third shot amid concerns about an insufficient antibody response.

Abu Dhabi, which imposed some of the region's most stringent vaccine restrictions this summer, hardened its stance yesterday, saying that those who received two doses of Sinopharm will no longer be able to access places like malls, schools and gyms without a third booster shot.

The new rule adds to growing questions over the coronavirus protection offered by China's Sinopharm vaccine. Aside from basic

efficacy numbers, the Chinese manufacturer has released very little public data about its vaccine, prompting criticism for its lack of transparency. Nonetheless, the shot is at the heart of China's own mass immunization campaign and became the linchpin of the UAE's rollout, among the world's fastest per capita.

At first, Abu Dhabi exclusively used Sinopharm for its rollout, but in recent months started to offer Pfizer-BioNTech as well. Across the country, the majority of low-paid workers from Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East who power the UAE's economy received the Sinopharm vaccine as the nation raced toward a swift reopening.

Infections in the UAE have gradually declined from peaks reached in January but daily counts of new cases still hover at around 1,000 a day, far above last year's levels, even as over 75% of the country's population has received both vaccine doses. **MDT/AP**

Asian tourism sees ups, downs in second year of pandemic

FROM the Great Wall to the picturesque Kashmir valley, Asia's tourist destinations are looking to get domestic visitors to get them through the COVID-19 pandemic's second year.

With international travel heavily restricted, foreign tourists can't enter many countries and locals can't get out. In the metropolis of Hong Kong, glamping and staycations have replaced trips abroad for at least some of its 7.4 million residents.

Across the Asia-Pacific region, international tourist arrivals were down 95% in the first five months of the year, compared to the same period before the pandemic in 2019, according to the U.N. World Tourism Organization.

New variants of the virus loom — a constant threat to any recovery in even domestic tourism. Warnings of a possible third wave in India worry Imraan Ali, whose houseboat on Kashmir's Dal Lake is his only source of income.

"Since we are expecting a good influx of tourists, we don't want that to be affected," he said.

INDIA CAUTIOUS AS OUTBREAK RECEDES

Tourists are returning to the valleys and mountains in Indian-controlled Kashmir, as infections in the Himalayan region and nationwide come down after a deadly second wave earlier this year.

The "shikaras," or traditional Kashmiri houseboats, are back on the calm waters of Dal Lake as Indians travel at home. India is reporting about 30,000 new co-

AP PHOTO



ronavirus cases a day, down from a peak of 400,000 in May but still enough for many countries to restrict travelers from India.

Nihaarika Rishabh said she and her husband were relieved to finally get away from their home in the city of Agra for their honeymoon, after their wedding was postponed during the second wave. The vacation in Kashmir has helped calm their nerves after months of the pandemic, she said.

Ali, the houseboat owner, is happy that the number of visitors has gone up. "We have been suffering from past two years," he said. "Our livelihood depends on tourism."

But mountainous areas like Kashmir have seen an uptick in infections as the number of visitors rises, fueling worries about a third wave.

BANGKOK'S BUSTLE GOES QUIET

Erawan Shrine in the center of Bangkok once bustled with foreign tourists and locals making offerings day and night. Today, it is eerily quiet. Only a handful of people buy incense or flowers from the vendors who set up stalls outside.

"We are still here because we don't know what else to do," said one, Ruedewan Thapjul.

As Thailand battles a punishing COVID-19 surge with nearly 20,000 new cases every day, people who depend on tourism struggle in what was one of the most-visited cities in the world, with 20 million visitors in the year before the pandemic.

Suthipong Pheunphiphop, the president of the Thai Travel Agents Association, urged the government to commit to its plan to reopen the country to foreign tou-

rists in October.

Currently, the streets are all but empty in Bangkok's Siam Square shopping district.

Passavee Kraidejudompaisarn, the third-generation owner of a popular noodle shop, wiped away tears as she talked about her fears of losing the family business.

Previously, the 60-year-old restaurant would be filled with locals and foreign tourists, bringing in about \$2,000 a day. Now, she said, she earns a little more than \$2 on some days.

CHINESE STAY IN CHINA

Strict virus control measures have allowed China to return to relatively normal life. The number of tourists visiting Beijing in June and July tripled compared to the same period last year, while revenue quadrupled, according to Trip.com, China's largest online

travel booking platform.

"I personally feel very safe," Olaya Ezuidazu, a Spanish national living in Beijing, said on a recent visit to the Great Wall.

But even China is not immune to the delta variant. Outbreaks in July and August prompted authorities to suspend flights and trains to affected cities. Parks and museums reduced the number of visitors to 60% of capacity, down from 75% previously.

Phil Ma felt the resulting dent on tourism at his café in a traditional "hutong" neighborhood, steps away from Tiananmen Square in central Beijing. "It is obvious during the three or four days from the weekend to today that the number of guests has decreased a lot," he said.

The alley outside his café was quiet, in contrast to the line that formed for a cup of coffee during a major holiday in May.

GLAMPING IN HONG KONG

The difficulty of traveling abroad has made glamping — or glamorous camping — popular in Hong Kong.

Berina Tam and Vincy Lee went with We Camp, a campsite located in Yuen Long, a rural area in the north of Hong Kong.

"It's actually a good opportunity for us to really, to try to explore Hong Kong a bit more," Tam said.

Many glamping sites provide clean beds, showering facilities and barbecue sites for campers to grill kebabs and chicken wings. The typical charge is \$65 per person a night.

Bill Lau, the founder of Hong Kong travel platform Holimood, said that glamping offers an alternative for those who find camping too primitive.

"Families and couples need to find somewhere to go during weekends," he said. "If we are trying to recreate the experience of traveling, it must be an overnight experience." MDT/AP

THAILAND

Protest on wheels in Bangkok seeks government's ouster

Along line of cars, trucks and motorbikes wended its way yesterday through the Thai capital Bangkok in a mobile protest against the government of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha. The protesters on wheels hope their nonviolent action, dubbed a "car mob," can help force the ouster of Prayuth, whom they accuse of botching the campaign against the coronavirus.

"There is only one message from this car mob, which is 'Prayuth get out!'" Sombat Boonngamanong, a veteran social activist who helped originate such protests in

July, said ahead of the protest. "He has had a chance to run the country for seven years. He has proved that he is incapable of being the country's leader, so we cannot let him continue."

The car mob tactic has visibly been attracting more and more participants, although its mobile nature makes it hard to estimate its size. Some onlookers along the route displayed supportive banners and flashed the opposition's three-finger salute as the lengthy parade of vehicles passed.

Prayuth initially took power in 2014, when as

army commander he launched a successful coup against an elected government. He continued to hold power when he was named prime minister as head of a coalition government after a 2019 general election.

Organizers say the protest on wheels evades legal limitations on gatherings that are aimed at enforcing social distancing in order to fight the spread of the coronavirus. Keeping things moving also makes it more difficult for police to box demonstrators in, and lowers the possibility of violent clashes, they believe.

"They impose the law to prevent the spreading of COVID-19, while a car mob is designed with the same concept," said Sombat. "If we use a bus, that can violate the law. But we use our own cars, each of which carries fewer than five people. So how could that break the law?"

Prayuth has shown his concern about the safety of both protesters and the authorities, as each protest could become a new COVID-19 cluster, government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana said last week. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



AFGHANISTAN

Taliban executes folk singer in restive province; 180 die in airport massacre

KATHY GANNON, KABUL

A Taliban fighter shot dead an Afghan folk singer in a restive mountain province under unclear circumstances, his family said yesterday. The killing reignited concerns among activists that the insurgents would return to their oppressive rule in the country after their military blitz toppled the government.

The slaying of Fawad Andarabi comes as the United States winds down a historic airlift that saw tens of thousands evacuated from Kabul's international airport, the scene of much of the chaos that engulfed the Afghan capital since the Taliban took over two weeks ago. After an Islamic State affiliate's suicide attack that killed over 180 people, the Taliban increased its security around the airfield as Britain ended its evacuation flights Saturday.

U.S. military cargo planes continued their runs into the airport yesterday, ahead of a Tuesday deadline earlier set by President Joe Biden to withdraw all troops from America's longest war.

The shooting Friday of the folk singer came in the Andarabi Valley for which he was named, an area of Baghlan province some 100 kilometers north of Kabul. The



AP PHOTO

valley had seen upheaval since the Taliban takeover, with some districts in the area coming under the control of militia fighters opposed to the Taliban rule. The Taliban say they have since retaken those areas, though neighboring Panjshir in the Hindu Kush mountains remains the only one of Afghanistan's 34 provinces not under its control.

The Taliban previously came out to Andarabi's home and searched it, even drinking tea with the musician, his son Jawad Andarabi told The Associated Press. But something changed Friday.

"He was innocent, a singer

who only was entertaining people," his son said. "They shot him in the head on the farm."

His son said he wanted justice and that a local Taliban council promised to punish his father's killer.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told the AP that the insurgents would investigate the incident, but had no other details on the killing.

Andarabi played the ghichak, a bowed lute, and sang traditional songs about his birthplace, his people and Afghanistan as a whole. A video online showed him at one performance, sitting on a rug with the mountains of home

surrounding him as he sang.

"There is no country in the world like my homeland, a proud nation," he sang. "Our beautiful valley, our great-grandparents' homeland."

Karima Bennoune, the United Nations special rapporteur on cultural rights, wrote on Twitter that she had "grave concern" over Andarabi's killing.

"We call on governments to demand the Taliban respect the #humanrights of #artists," she wrote.

Agnes Callamard, the secretary-general of Amnesty International, similarly decried the killing.

"There is mounting evidence that the Taliban of 2021 is the same as the intolerant, violent, repressive Taliban of 2001," she wrote on Twitter. "20 years later. Nothing has changed on that front."

Meanwhile on Sunday, private banks across Afghanistan resumed their operations. However, they limited withdrawals to no more than the equivalent of \$200 a day.

While some complained of still being unable to access their money, government employees say they haven't been paid over the last four months. The Afghani traded around 90.5 to \$1, continuing its depreciation as billions of dollars in the country's reserves remain frozen overseas. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1976 NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL ENDS IN RIOT



More than 100 police officers had to be taken to hospital after clashes at the Notting Hill Carnival in west London.

Most were released after treatment but at least 26 have been detained overnight for observation or further treatment.

Around 60 carnival-goers also needed hospital treatment after the clashes which led to the arrest of at least 66 people.

The trouble is believed to have started after police tried to arrest a pickpocket near Portobello Road on the main carnival route.

Several black youths went to the pickpocket's aid and within minutes the disturbance escalated.

The police were attacked with stones and other missiles.

They armed themselves with dustbin lids, milk crates and wire fencing and charged the rioters.

At one stage a group of black youths were seen moving up Westbourne Park road smashing windows.

Gangs of white youths were also said to have been involved in the violence.

One witness, Raymond Hunter, who lives in Westbourne Park Road said he saw a police van set alight.

"The two policemen managed to get out of the van and fled. The gang then turned the van over and set fire to it," Mr Hunter said.

The disturbances effectively put an end to the annual celebration of Caribbean culture.

Police sealed off roads and closed pubs in the area as well as shutting down Ladbroke Grove underground station in an attempt to contain the violence.

In the past, the carnival - now in its 10th year - has been largely peaceful in spite of tensions with police.

A member of the Notting Hill Carnival Development Committee, Selwyn Baptiste, said they had been optimistic after the first day of the festival passed off peacefully.

"We had no reason to suppose it would be any different today. This was supposed to be about fun and love - not violence," Mr Baptiste said.

Courtesy BBC News

BIDEN TO PAY RESPECTS TO US TROOPS KILLED IN KABUL

PRESIDENT Joe Biden is embarking on a solemn journey to honor and mourn the 13 U.S. troops killed in the suicide attack near the Kabul airport as their remains return to U.S. soil from Afghanistan.

Biden was traveling to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware for a "dignified transfer" movement, a military ritual of receiving the remains of fallen troops killed in foreign combat.

The dead ranged in age from 20 to 31, and came from California and Massachusetts and states in between. They include a 20-year-old Marine

from Wyoming who had been expecting his first child in three weeks and a 22-year-old Navy corpsman who in his last FaceTime conversation with his mother assured her that he would stay safe because "my guys got me."

Five were just 20, born not long before the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, that spurred the United States to invade Afghanistan in order to topple al-Qaida and dismantle their Taliban hosts who ruled the country.

At their deaths, the 13 young service members were on the ground for the U.S. coda to its longest war, assisting a

chaotic evacuation of Americans and of Afghans who helped the U.S. war effort and are now fleeing the Taliban after their return to power.

"The 13 service members that we lost were heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice in service of our highest American ideals and while saving the lives of others," Biden said in a statement Saturday. "Their bravery and selflessness has enabled more than 117,000 people at risk to reach safety thus far."

Family members of the fallen often travel to Dover to be present as flag-draped

transfer cases are taken off the transport plane that returns them to American soil.

Aside from the quiet commands of honor guards who carry the transfer cases, the short prayers of the chaplain typically are the only words spoken during the ritual.

Like his three most recent predecessors as presidents, who all attended dignified transfers for troops killed in the nearly 20-year-old Afghanistan war, Biden is expected to meet with the families of the fallen before returning to Washington. **MDT/AP**

IN CONTEXT

This was the third of the 'Cod Wars' that took place between Britain and Iceland over their fishing rights in the Atlantic. The first was in 1958 and the second ran from 1972 to 1973.

Britain deployed a total of 22 frigates against 16 Icelandic vessels. There were numerous skirmishes and Iceland threatened to close the Nato base at Keflavik. The US offered to mediate but it was Nato that negotiated an agreement on 6th June 1976.

Under this treaty Britain was limited to using 24 trawlers within a 200 mile zone at any one time for an annual catch of up to 50,000 tonnes. Iceland claimed that it was economically dependent on fishing, but fish from the Atlantic were worth £23.1m to the UK and the new restrictions caused 8000 jobs to be lost.

The number of cod has continued to decline and there have been calls for a total ban on cod fishing in the North Sea.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You may have ignored or neglected your mate lately. You could expand your circle of friends if you get involved in unusual activities. Do things you enjoy instead of being a chameleon.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 Enlist coworkers in order to get the job done on time. You may have been trying to do too much, leaving yourself exhausted and open to colds and infections. Sudden romance could end just as quickly.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 Don't be afraid to lay your cards on the table. Take a look at your legal position. Don't be too confident that coworkers are on your side. Recognition will be yours if you meet your deadline.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Your personal life is going through a state of confusion. You must use discretion when talking to others. Gambling should not be an option. You may be overreacting to personal problems.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Residential moves will also be advantageous for all concerned. Older family members may try to put unreasonable demands on you. You will have difficulties spreading yourself between your work and your home.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 You are best not to retaliate if members of your household are trying to pick a fight. Disappointments regarding partners will be subject to the way you react to their personal comments.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Listen to the complaints of others. Tie up your personal papers or push to have legal settlements completed. Friends from your past may come back into your life.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Direct your energy wisely. Today will be hectic. There'll be difficulties if you spend too much. Moneymaking opportunities will surface.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Pleasure trips will be a form of healing for your emotional state of mind. Finish projects that have been hanging over your head. Things are looking up.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 You may have to take a short trip to visit someone who hasn't been well. You may find that your mate is well aware of the circumstances.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Get out and about. You may want to tell someone how you really feel. If you are in the midst of a financial deal, this is your lucky day.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Your partner will be emotionally unable to cope. Don't let your jealous imagination play games with you. You need to get out if you want to meet potential partners.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	20	29	cloudy
Harbin	14	25	fine
Tianjin	26	36	fine
Urumqi	20	27	overcast
Xi'an	21	32	cloudy
Lhasa	21	26	cloudy
Chengdu	26	34	cloudy
Chongqing	25	34	cloudy
Kunming	26	34	cloudy
Nanjing	20	28	cloudy
Shanghai	26	31	thunderstorms
Wuhan	25	36	cloudy
Hangzhou	12	21	cloudy
Taipei	24	33	cloudy
Guangzhou	13	26	cloudy
Hong Kong	20	24	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	16	24	overcast
Frankfurt	12	21	rain
Paris	14	23	overcast
London	13	21	overcast
New York	23	31	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Adjust to zero; 6- Girder type; 10- Small batteries; 14- Relative by marriage; 15- Volcano shape; 16- Navel buildup; 17- Maker of Pong; 18- The wolf ___ the door; 19- Single; 20- After taxes; 21- Impressive; 24- Tab grabber; 26- Halogen element; 27- Person whose religion is Judaism; 28- Paddled boat; 30- Hitching post?; 33- What girls will be; 34- Hot time in Paris; 37- Burrow; 38- Measured with a watch; 39- Natural blue dye; 40- Paranormal letters; 41- Ancient physician; 42- Like non-oyster months; 43- Constructed; 44- Genealogy word; 45- Horrify; 48- Bread-like item made of Quaker product?; 52- Pathfinder; 55- It's in the genes; 56- Trent of the Senate; 57- Vintner's prefix; 58- Aconcagua's range; 60- Busy as ___; 61- High time?; 62- Begrimed; 63- Dispatch; 64- Feminizing suffix; 65- Iota preceder;

DOWN 1- Cheerful; 2- Computer key; 3- Roofing stone; 4- Van Gogh had one later in life; 5- Tornado; 6- More remote; 7- Winter pear; 8- Med school subj.; 9- Kept; 10- Refer indirectly; 11- Garlic sauce; 12- Kofi of the U.N.; 13- One cubic meter; 22- Sunday seat; 23- Masked critter; 25- Slightly open; 28- Celestial body; 29- Traditional prayer ending; 30- Pub preference; 31- ___ Cruces, NM; 32- Apex; 33- Volition; 34- Chemical ending; 35- ___ the season...; 36- Overhead trains; 38- Coccyx; 39- One of the Baldwins; 41- Aquatic bird; 42- Withdraw; 43- Teased; 44- Not for a Scot; 45- Collection of maps; 46- Investigation; 47- Communion plate; 48- Form of oxygen; 49- Discombobulate; 50- Prepared to pray; 51- Gut course; 53- Boxer Spinks; 54- Presently; 59- Yokohama drama;

Friday's solution

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

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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Elda Lemos
(853) 6226 8566
elda@jmlproperty.com



Windy Lam
(853) 6881 1007
windy@jmlproperty.com



Adriana Lam
(853) 6684 1718
adriana@jmlproperty.com



Sam Lee
(853) 6611 0975
sam@jmlproperty.com



Kitty Lou
(853) 6630 0730
kitty@jmlproperty.com



Juliet Risdon
(853) 6680 9804
juliet@jmlproperty.com

Property of the Week



FOR SALE

NEW

Centro Internacional
HKD 4,200,000 800 ft² 2 1

The owner renovated the apartment in 2018 and turned it into a welcoming European-Style two-bedroom unit. The open kitchen is equipped with brand new appliances including stove, hidden washing machine and fridge.

The open space creates a warm and welcoming glow and has a lot of soft light features, making the rooms inviting and practical. Both bedrooms are able to fit double beds.

Viewings by appointment.
Find out more on www.jmlproperty.com



Ref: 2108 6003

Property Hotlist



FOR SALE

Chun U Villa
HKD 12,380,000

1,979 ft²
4
3



Ref: 2104 6001



FOR RENT

REDUCED

One Central
HKD 16,500/mth

1,292 ft²
2
2



Ref: 2106 1001



FOR RENT

Old Taipa studio
HKD 7,800/mth

470 ft²
1



Ref: 2106 1004

More Listings

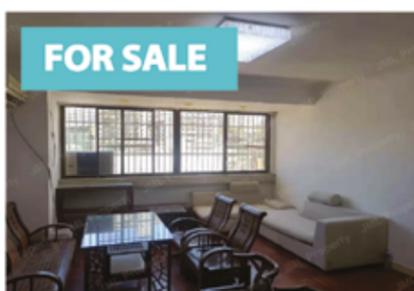
For Sale

- [Taipa] Nam Long 1 1 590 ft² **HKD 3,480,000** Ref: 2108 6002
- [Taipa] Taipa Village 4 2 1,404 ft² **HKD 8,380,000** Ref: 1909 6006
- [Macau] Basement style 2 2 2,200 ft² **HKD 9,990,000** Ref: 1511 5464
- [Taipa] Buckingham 2 2 1,439 ft² **HKD 11,770,000** Ref: 1904 5004
- [Taipa] Manhattan 4 2 2,305 ft² **HKD 17,980,000** Ref: 1807 5558

For Rent

- [Macau] Tai Nin 1 1 720 ft² **HKD 8,600/mth** Ref: 1909 1002
- [Taipa] Va Fat 1 1 740 ft² **HKD 10,900/mth** Ref: 1910 1006
- [Taipa] Jardin Lamerias 2 2 747 ft² **HKD 11,200/mth** Ref: 2106 1003
- [Taipa] Manhattan 3 2 1,720 ft² **HKD 16,900/mth** Ref: 2106 1002
- [Cotai] One Oasis 3 2 2,100 ft² **HKD 28,000/mth** Ref: 2011 1002

Rain Dance Property "WE DANCE UNTIL IT'S SOLD!"



FOR SALE

Traditional apartment
HKD 2,680,000

788 ft²
2
1



Ref: 2103 6001

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AP PHOTO

FOOTBALL

Ronaldo makes sensational return to Man United



STEVE DOUGLAS

CRISTIANO Ronaldo is heading back to Manchester United, the team that turned him into a global superstar.

In a fast-moving deal that stunned the world of soccer, Ronaldo secured a return to Old Trafford on Friday — a day after telling Juventus he no longer wanted to play for the Italian club.

“Welcome back, Cristiano,” read a tweet posted by United. Within minutes, the club’s official website had crashed.

Ronaldo is 36 years old, a completely different player to the skinny, outrageously skillful 17-year-old winger who first arrived at United from Sporting Lisbon in 2003 with a box of tricks but little end product. In the following six years, he scored 118 goals in 292 appearances and swiftly became one of the most fearsome strikers in the world, winning the first of his five FIFA world player of the year awards.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, the current Man United manager, knows that all too well. He was once a teammate of Ronaldo.

“He is the greatest player of all time, definitely,” Solskjaer said Friday after Ronaldo’s return was sealed.

Ronaldo will join for a fee of \$17.7 million, with \$9.4 million in add-ons. The transfer is subject to agreement of personal terms, visa and a medical examination.

It is the latest blockbuster move of the transfer window, coming barely two weeks after Lionel Messi — Ronaldo’s long-time rival — joined Paris Saint-Germain after his contract at Barcelona expired. PSG forward Kylian Mbappe is also the subject of a bid of about \$188 million from Real Madrid.

Yet Ronaldo returning to United was not long in the making.

Indeed, the team did not expect him to leave Juventus in this transfer window and only made a move when it became clear he would be available.

On Thursday, Ronaldo met with Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri and told him he wanted to leave the club where he had spent the last three years after joining from Madrid. He had one year left on his contract.

By Friday, Ronaldo was boarding a private jet from Turin to Lisbon, in his native Portugal, and saying the world would soon be made aware of his next move.

By then, United was the clear front-runner after fierce rival Manches-

ter City pulled out of the running for his signature.

“Everyone at the club looks forward to welcoming Cristiano back to Manchester,” United said in a brief statement.

Ronaldo soon took to Instagram, saying he gave his “heart and soul for Juventus.”

“I’ll always love the city of Turin until my final days,” he wrote.

He never won the Champions League with Juventus, like he did with United in 2008 and four times with Madrid, but was the top scorer in Serie A for the last two seasons and scored 101 goals in 134 appearances.

“In the end,” Ronaldo said, “we can all look back and realize that we achieved great things, not all that we wanted, but still, we wrote a pretty beautiful story together.”

Solskjaer had already dropped hints that United would be trying to sign its former star when speaking at a news conference on Friday, revealing that its playmaker from Portugal, Bruno Fernandes, had been talking to Ronaldo.

“Agent Bruno,” Fernandes later tweeted with a laughing emoji.

Before playing his first game back at United, Ronaldo will feature for Portugal in World Cup quali-

fiers and has the chance to become the leading scorer in men’s international soccer. He has 109 goals for his

national team, tied with former Iran striker Ali Daei.

The landscape in English soccer has changed in the 12 years Ronaldo has been away. United and Chelsea were the top teams in the Premier League when he left, but Man City has been the dominant force over the past decade, winning the title five times from 2012.

City had been considering an option to buy Ronaldo after its top target, Harry Kane, said Wednesday he was staying at Tottenham for now. It would have been a controversial move, considering Ronaldo’s past links with United, but City manager Pep Guardiola was downplaying the prospect on Friday — about the same time Solskjaer was sounding positive about United’s hopes.

It is not the first time United has beaten City to a player that both clubs apparently wanted. Alexis Sanchez joined United in 2018 after appearing to be close to moving to City, while United was prepared to pay \$97 million to sign Harry Maguire from Leicester in 2019 — a sum City didn’t try to match.

United, which hasn’t

won the Premier League since 2013, has also signed England winger Jadon Sancho and France center back Raphael Varane for a combined cost of about \$150 million.

With Ronaldo also now joining the squad, there will be an expectation on Solskjaer to deliver a first trophy of his tenure that began in 2018.

Ronaldo’s work rate and pressing might be questionable in the twilight of his career but he remains a reliable and proven scorer. With his five goals and one assist, he won the Golden Boot at this year’s European Championship despite only playing four games.

He is likely to share striker duties with another veteran player, 34-year-old Uruguay international Edinson Cavani, with exciting prospect Mason Greenwood — at 19, nearly half Ronaldo’s age — set to revert to playing as a wide forward in competition with Marcus Rashford and Sancho.

It is a short-term move by United, no doubt. But one that will shake up the Premier League and generate excitement inside the club’s vast fan base. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**PARTY STANDS FIRM
 IN ITS IDEALS AND
 CONVICTIONS**

As some Western powers spare no effort to smear the Communist Party of China for their narrow ends, the publication the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee issued on Thursday comes at exactly the right time to set the record straight.

"The CPC: Its Mission and Contributions" summarizes all the struggles, sacrifices and achievements the Party has made in seeking happiness for the Chinese people and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation since its founding in 1921.

These are its aspiration and mission, and the CPC, which has never represented any interest group, unlike the parties in developed countries that represent the interests of certain groups, has united and led the Chinese people to realize the most extensive and profound social changes in the history of the Chinese nation.

By applying the guiding theories of Marxism and the principle of seeking truth from facts to address the practical needs of the country, the Party has made a series of innovations in theory and practice that have enabled China to catch up with the times.

Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a virtuous circle of theoretical breakthroughs, tried and tested and applied. This has enabled the Party to raise the living standards of the Chinese people from bare subsistence to an overall level of moderate prosperity, and to transform the country into the world's second-largest economy.

This process has also helped to maintain the vitality of the Party, as it has never ceased in its efforts to improve itself. And this has enabled it to overcome one test after another, and stay true to its original aspiration and mission.

As such, the difficulties it has faced and overcome, instead of weakening it, have strengthened it. That is true today, as its adaptability, governance capacity and leadership capabilities continue to be enhanced in the face of the current challenges.

It is no accident that the Party has developed from a small political organization with just a few dozen members to become the largest ruling party in the world with more than 95 million members.

The great development achievements the country has made have driven home the point that the Party, which was chosen by history and the people, was and is the right choice for the country.

To realize national rejuvenation and a better life for the Chinese people, the Party has remained true to what General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee Xi Jinping has succinctly described as "its great struggle, great project, great cause, and great dream". No matter how the world changes, the Party will always uphold and act on the values shared by all human beings — peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom.

The Party will carry forward the spirit of internationalism, and always stand on the right side of history, and work to build a new type of international relations to realize a global community with a shared future.

Hurricane Ida rapidly grew in strength yesterday, becoming a dangerous Category 4 hurricane just hours before hitting the Louisiana coast as emergency officials in the region grappled with opening shelters for displaced evacuees despite the risk of spreading the coronavirus.

As Ida moved through some of the warmest ocean water in the world in the northern Gulf of Mexico, its top winds grew by 45 mph to 150 mph in five hours. The system was expected to make

landfall early today [Macau time] on the exact date Hurricane Katrina ravaged Louisiana and Mississippi 16 years earlier.

The hurricane center said Ida is forecast to hit at 155 mph, just 1 mph shy of a Category 5 hurricane. Only four Category 5 hurricanes have made landfall in the United States: Michael in 2018, Andrew in 1992, Camille in 1969 and the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935. Both Michael and Andrew were upgraded to category 5 long after the storm hit with further review of damage.



**MICROSOFT FIXES CLOUD
 PLATFORM VULNERABILITY
 AFTER WARNING**

MICROSOFT says it has fixed a flaw in its cloud computing platform that cybersecurity researchers warned could have enabled hackers to take over a cloud-based database product used by many big companies.

The company said last week there's no evidence the potential opening was exploited by malicious actors or that any customer data was exposed.

The cybersecurity firm Wiz, led by former Microsoft employees, said it discovered what it called an "unprecedented critical vulnerability" in Microsoft's Azure cloud platform and notified the tech giant earlier in August. Microsoft paid the firm a bounty for the discovery and said it immediately

fixed the problem.

If exploited, the flaw could have affected "thousands of organizations, including numerous Fortune 500 companies," according to a blog post from Wiz, which is based in Israel and California. Microsoft said it affected only a subset of customers using the product.

Microsoft has already been in the hot seat over the hack of its Exchange email servers disclosed in March and blamed on Chinese spies. Its code was also abused to rifle through the emails of U.S. officials in an earlier hack pinned on Russian intelligence agents and more commonly associated with the software company SolarWinds.

The cloud platform vulnerability disclosed this

week, while apparently causing no harm, raised concerns about the security of cloud services provided by the tech industry, which businesses and governments increasingly rely on.

After a White House cybersecurity summit Thursday, Microsoft pledged it would invest \$20 billion in cybersecurity over the next five years and make available \$150 million in technical services to help local governments upgrade their defenses.

Federal lawmakers earlier in the year insisted that Microsoft swiftly upgrade security to what they say it should have provided in the first place, and without fleeing taxpayers. **MDT/AP**

Iran and Syria vowed yesterday to take "mighty steps" to confront U.S. sanctions imposed on the two regional allies, saying their relations will strengthen under Iran's new leadership. The announcement was made by Iran's new Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who received at the airport a visit to Damascus by his Syrian counterpart, Faisal Mekdad.



Belarus has ordered the closure of the country's largest independent journalists' organization, the latest move by authorities to suppress critical reporting in a yearlong crackdown on dissent. Friday's order by the country's supreme court to liquidate the Belarusian Association of Journalists follows the jailing of some 30 journalists, raids on newspaper offices, blocking the websites of major independent media and closing the PEN Center writers' organization that was headed by Nobel literature laureate Svetlana Alexievich.



Germany Protesters filled the capital again on Saturday to demonstrate against the government's coronavirus measures, despite bans against several gatherings. Police had banned nine planned demonstrations for Saturday, including one from the Stuttgart-based Querdenker movement, the most visible anti-lockdown movement in Germany, which united a disparate mix of those opposing vaccinations, coronavirus deniers and right-wing extremists. A court ruled in favor of allowing one event, planned for 500 people.

US military aircraft are now ferrying food, tarps and other material into southern Haiti amid a shift in the international relief effort to focus on helping people in the areas hardest hit by the recent earthquake to make it through the hurricane season. Aircraft flying out of the capital, Port-au-Prince, arrived throughout the day Saturday in the mostly rural, mountainous southern peninsula that was the epicenter of the Aug. 14 earthquake.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Matias Delacroix



Younaika rests next to her mother Jertha Ylet, who was injured in the earthquake one week prior, at the Immaculate Conception Hospital in Haiti. The 7.2 magnitude quake brought down their house in Camp-Perrin, killing Ylet's father and two other relatives and seriously injuring her brother.