

THE QINGMAO PORT IS A KEY PROGRESSIVE PROJECT IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY NETWORK IN THE GBA: HO IAT SENG

P2

TWO CORPSES DISCOVERED, ONE SUSPECTED SUICIDE

P4

DICJ SWORE IN 14 NEW OFFICIALS IN A BID TO FINALIZE THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE WATCHDOG AHEAD OF THE NEW GAMING CONCESSIONS TENDER

P3

AP PHOTO



China-Vatican The Catholic diocese of Wuhan, China — where the coronavirus was first detected — has a new bishop who was nominated by the pope according to the Vatican's controversial accord with China, the Holy See said yesterday. Bishop Francis Cui Qingqi, a Franciscan, is the sixth bishop nominated and consecrated according to the 2018 deal on bishop nominations. Francis had named Cui bishop on June 23 and his consecration occurred yesterday.

AP PHOTO



Indonesia A massive fire raged through an overcrowded prison near Jakarta early yesterday, killing at least 41 inmates, two of them foreigners serving drug sentences, and injuring 80 others. Televised footage showed firefighters battling to extinguish orange flames while black smoke billowed from the compound. Indonesian Red Cross officials evacuated the victims to ambulances and dozens of bodies in orange bags were laid in a room of Tangerang prison. Most of the victims were drug convicts, including two men from South Africa and Portugal.

Afghanistan The United Nations is making an emergency appeal for \$606 million to help nearly 11 million people in Afghanistan for the rest of 2021. It says they face a humanitarian crisis exacerbated by drought, displacement, chronic poverty and the sharp increase in hostilities as the Taliban swept to power. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs already has a \$1.3 billion appeal for Afghanistan for the entire year of 2021, but it is only 39% funded — at just \$498 million. More on p8, 12

More on backpage

NATIONAL REJUVENATION

China's ruling Communist Party has jolted everyone from tech billionaires to school kids as President Xi calls for a 'more powerful, prosperous country' by reviving revolutionary ideals P6-7

AP PHOTO



GAMING

FITCH'S GGR FORECAST OF MOP102.4B OPTIMISTIC: ANALYSTS

P3

QINGMAO PORT

USERS FIND NEW BORDER CHECKPOINT CONVENIENT, BUT INVOLVES LONGER WALK

ANTHONY LAM

OFFICIALLY opened at 3 p.m. yesterday, the new Qingmao Border Checkpoint is convenient, although the internal walking distance is a little long, users of the facility said.

Lines of travelers started waiting outside the new facility at least half an hour before the official opening time. They said they were excited about being able to use another land border checkpoint.

Travelers, especially those residing in Fai Chi Kei, Toi San and Ilha Verde Districts, found the new facility more convenient than the Border Gate on the Macau side.

In contrast, travelers coming from the Zhuhai side found the Qingmao Border Checkpoint less convenient than the Border Gate.

A non-resident worker who used the new border checkpoint on his way to work in Macau told the Times that although he did not mind walking a little, it took him some time yesterday to find and walk to the Qingmao Border Checkpoint's Zhuhai side after alighting from the bus on the mainland side.

Nonetheless, he expected that he would use the Qingmao Border Checkpoint regularly in the future



because he lives near the facility on the Macau side.

The new border checkpoint connects Macau with the High-speed Zhuhai Railway Station, which is adjacent to the Gongbei/Border Gate Building.

However, comments did not fall only on one side. A tourist from Fujian Province named Ng commended the Qingmao Border Checkpoint for its convenience. He pointed out that there is easy access to transport

around the new facility.

The new immigration facility is the third in the city to operate with the collaborative ID check mode for immigration clearance. Travelers will pass through a single ID check to clear both immigration systems.

The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge and the Hengqin Border Checkpoint are the two other facilities operating with this mode of ID clearance.

The Qingmao Border Che-

ckpoint is open 24 hours every day. It only accommodates Macau residents, mainland residents and Hong Kong Permanent ID Card holders.

Its proximity to the High-speed Railway Zhuhai Station has positioned the Qingmao Border Checkpoint as a strategic project in the development of the Greater Bay Area. Theoretically, a traveler can journey from the Border Checkpoint building to Beijing on a rainy day without (or only briefly)

exposing themselves to the rain.

At the opening ceremony yesterday morning, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said that the new border checkpoint is "a key progressive project in the construction of the high-speed railway network in the Greater Bay Area."

"The opening of the Qingmao Border Checkpoint will further advance mutual connectivity of infrastructures and efficient and convenient human movement within the Greater Bay Area," the head of government said.

The older Border Gate Checkpoint at Gongbei, recorded in 2019 a daily average of 400,000 movements of people, said Ho.

The new Qingmao Checkpoint was just 800 metres away, would operate round-the-clock, and was designed for 200,000 movements of people per day. The Chief Executive said he believed the new checkpoint would offer overflow capacity in support of the Border Gate Checkpoint.

At the same occasion, Ma Xingrui, governor of Guangdong Province, echoed the CE's view. "The opening of the Qingmao Border Checkpoint will help further progress the national railway network of China," he said. "It will also inject new energy into the construction of the Greater Bay Area."

LYNZY VALLES

PATA GOLD AWARDS 2021

MGTO, gaming operators receive accolades

MACAU took home three Gold Awards and one Grand Award at the PATA Gold Awards 2021, organized by Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

The city's tourism industry received four of the eighteen Gold Awards plus two Grand Awards presented this year by PATA in a live online ceremony held yesterday.

One of the two top awards, the PATA Grand Award in Marketing, went to the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) representative office in the United States for the initiative "Dream Now and Travel Later."

Launched in response to the pandemic, the integra-

ted campaign harnessed the power of social media to provide a series of educational and dynamic content about Macau, inspiring consumers to "Dream Now and Travel Later" to the city.

Meanwhile, three Macau tourism operators received one PATA Gold Award each, for initiatives in the areas of marketing, sustainability and social responsibility.

Melco Resorts & Entertainment was awarded with a PATA Gold Award in the category of Climate Change Initiatives for the "Above & Beyond - Melco's Sustainability Strategy,"

aimed to help the tourism operator achieve carbon neutrality and zero waste across its resorts by 2030.

Galaxy Entertainment Group received a PATA Gold Award for Culture (Traditional Performance and Visual Arts) with its initiative "Promoting Cultural Tourism through our Foundation," emphasizing local arts and cultural development.

Meanwhile, "MGM Youth Empowerment and Engagement Initiative," set by MGM China to create learning opportunities for youth and young professionals in both the company and



"Dream Now and Travel Later" tapped into the power of social media to provide educational and dynamic contents about Macau

the community generally, received a PATA Gold Award in the category of Youth

Empowerment Initiative. PATA Gold Awards 2021 received a total of 114 en-

tries from 51 organizations and individuals worldwide, including 12 from Macau.

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GAMING

Analysts say new Fitch forecast 'optimistic'

LYNZY VALLES

FITCH Ratings forecasts that Macau's gross gaming revenues (GGR) in 2021 will be nearly 65% below 2019 levels, recovering to 35% below 2019 by 2022, and fully recovering in 2024.

So far, between January and August this year, Macau has generated a total of MOP61.9 billion in GGR, only about 21% of 2019 levels.

To analysts in the city, the prediction seems optimistic.

Speaking to the Times, economist Albano Martins noted that if such revenues were generated, it would mean that the GGR this year would be around 102.4 billion – still about MOP28 billion less than the government's estimated revenues for this year.

"It is possible if we have around MOP10.1 billion per month from September to December. [...] That is more possible than the Macau government's estimate," Martins said.

"My forecast is that the GGR will reach only MOP93.816 billion this year, which is 21.2% of 2019," he added.

Gaming results saw a sharp downturn in August,



RENATO MARQUES

recording the lowest GGR this year due to the Delta cases discovered earlier that month.

GGR only totaled MOP6.54 billion, down 37.4% from the period's peak of MOP10.45 billion in the preceding month

Ben Lee, managing partner of IGamiX Management & Consulting, commented that the prediction seems hopeful, citing the effects of Delta variant in the city's travel restrictions.

"We now have the delta variant causing havoc with countries that were previously considered to have Covid under manageable control. Macau has a zero

Covid strategy so it's hard to see it opening up any time soon and our government

"You have to wonder if gambling is on that target list as well"

BEN LEE
MANAGING PARTNER OF IGAMIX
MANAGEMENT & CONSULTING

has said so quite clearly," said the expert.

On top of that, Lee recalled that "there is this new wind blowing from the north against video gaming, unwholesome entertainment celebrities [and] private gathering of data.

"You have to wonder if gambling is on that target

list as well," he said.

Deutsche Bank has also recently lowered its estimate of GGR in the city in 2021, following August's steep downturn in revenue.

The investment banking company has revised its forecasts to MOP97 billion for the whole year.

For Lee, optimistic predictions have fallen by the wayside over the past 18 months.

GOV'T TO ADJUST 2021 GGR FORECAST

LEI WAI NONG, Secretary for Economy and Finance, admitted that the gaming revenues this year will be adjusted, though no figures can yet be given. Initially, the government predicted MOP130 billion in revenue for 2021, hoping for a recovery following the downturn last year. Meanwhile, the official also

said that the consumption subsidy has expanded the use of mobile payment methods. As of September 7, MOP3.7 billion in spending, or 62% of the total budget, has been recorded in the consumption subsidy scheme. With privileges offered by banks included, the amount increases to MOP4.64 billion.

DICJ ready for gaming restructure, 14 new officials sworn in

THE Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) swore in 14 new officials yesterday in a bid to finalize the restructuring of the gaming industry watchdog ahead of the new gaming concessions tender.

A new deputy-director, two department chiefs, and twelve division heads have been installed "to cope with the new format of the gaming industry and changes in the regulatory model to promote a healthy development of the gaming industry in Macau," the bureau stated in a press release.

Director Adriano Marques Ho presided over

the ceremony, having expressed his desire that the new officials, chosen for their professional experience and abilities, will help the DICJ to fulfill its responsibilities, namely the inspection work and how it intersects with the application of information technology for inspection, human resource management, and adjustment of new gaming laws and regulations, among other aspects.

Ho also noted that this restructuring will give the DICJ additional work capacity and efficiency: benefits that will also come through future internal adjustments

in individual departments.

Back in June, the Executive Council (ExCo) completed draft administrative regulations concerning the structure and operation of the bureau, with a bid to strengthen the government's supervision of the gaming industry. To that end, the ExCo amended the Administrative Regulation No. 34/2003, which was promulgated in the early stages solely as the city's gaming license commenced. The ExCo said back then that it will ramp up the number of DICJ's supervisory employees from the current 192 to 459. **RM**

Master Plan of the Development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin



Mutual Discussion, Joint Construction, Joint Administration and Shared Benefits

Overview

Strategic Positioning:

1. A **new platform** for promoting Macao's adequate economic diversification
2. A **new space** for Macao residents to live and work
3. A **new enriched showcase** of implementation of "One country, two systems"
4. A **new high ground** for promoting development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

Development Goal:

- By 2024, the mechanism of **mutual discussion, joint construction, joint administration and shared benefits** between Guangdong and Macao will run smoothly, and the supportive functions for promoting Macao's adequate economic diversification will initially be seen.
- By 2029, the Cooperation Zone will **highly synergise with Macao's economy**, the system for **in-depth cohesion of regulations** will be comprehensively established, and the results in promoting Macao's **adequate economic diversification will be obviously achieved**.
- By 2035, the **economic strength and technological competitiveness of the Cooperation Zone will be greatly enhanced**, and the goal of promoting Macao's adequate economic diversification **will basically be realised**.



Master Plan (full version)



Corresponding Contents

AD

UM APPOINTS NEW VICE RECTOR

The University of Macau (UM) has appointed Dr Claudia Xu Jian as its new vice rector (administration) effective September 13, 2021, the university announced in a statement. Prior to joining UM, Dr Xu was the chief commercial officer of Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation. She holds a PhD from the National Polytechnic Institute of Toulouse. She was an energy specialist at McKinsey and the business development manager at Bechtel (Asia Pacific), Hong Kong. She also joined the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) in 2000.

TROPICAL CYCLONE CONSON TO ENTER SOUTH CHINA SEA TODAY

Tropical cyclone Conson will enter the South China Sea today. It is expected to reach within 800 km of Macau this afternoon or evening, and is moving in the general direction of Hainan Island, the weather bureau announced in a statement yesterday. Related rainbands will bring showers to Macau by tomorrow evening. Meanwhile, tropical cyclone Chanthu has developed into a super typhoon. It will move towards the Bashi Channel and Taiwan. The subsequent forecast path of the typhoon is still uncertain.

CRIME

JADE SCAMMER FINALLY CAUGHT

RENATO MARQUES

A man who has been considered a suspect in a case dating back to 2015 was finally caught by the Judiciary Police (PJ), the PJ revealed yesterday during the regular joint press conference of the police forces.

The 44-year-old suspect, a man from the mainland, was accused by a 50-year-old woman, also from the mainland, of defrauding her jade-selling business in which she claims to have lost pieces of jade valued at RMB2.35 million.

Reporting the alleged crime to the PJ, the victim said that she met this man on the mainland around October 2014, and he told her that he could help her to sell jade pieces in Macau.

She also said he subsequently did help her on one occasion to sell three jade pieces for which he received a sale commission.

Around the end of 2014, the man advised her that some wealthy Macau buyers habitually buy jade at the time of the Chinese New Year, and suggested that she come to Macau with a good quantity of jade pieces to sell to these clients.

The woman accepted the deal and came to Macau and stay at a hotel arranged for her by the suspect.

This time she brought six jade pieces to sell, valued at RMB2.35 million.

At his request, the woman gave the man the jade for him to show the supposed clients. However, the man never returned to the hotel, and she lost contact with him, prompting



her to report the theft to the PJ.

According to the PJ spokesperson, at this point the police had difficulties tracking the suspect since the man had entered and exited Macau illegally, without leaving any immigration record.

The same man was detained while trying to enter Macau at the Lotus Flower Border on September 4 this year, and was delivered to the PJ for questioning.

He admitted to having defrauded the woman, saying that there never were any clients wanting to buy the jade. He also said that he took the jade pieces back to the

mainland where he sold them for RMB700,000, since he was in urgent need of money.

He also admitted that he had already spent the entire sum.

The man was presented to the Public Prosecutions Office on September 6 (Monday) where he was charged with the crime of aggravated fraud.

MORE CASES OF STOLEN CREDIT CARD DATA

YESTERDAY, the PJ reported that it received another two cases related to the theft of credit card data for online purchases or payments. The fraud has continued for several months in Macau and has already affected a large number of people. This time, two people have reportedly lost a total of 11,376

patacas in two different transactions, reported separately on September 5 and 6. According to the PJ, this time it was not the victims themselves who noticed the transactions. Rather, the bank notified the victims that it considered the transactions to be suspect, since the clients had no history of overseas transactions.

Two corpses discovered, one suspected suicide

RENATO MARQUES

At around 2 p.m. yesterday, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported that while doing a regular coast patrol around 11 a.m., the Customs Service (SA) found the body of a woman floating close to shore near the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge.

The body was taken to the Outer Harbour Terminal and the SA called the PJ to take charge of the case.

PJ investigators found that the body was of a woman about 1.65 meters tall, aged 30 to 40 years, and had no documents

that could help identify the deceased.

A preliminary inspection of the body also did not find any obvious injuries or marks to indicate any violent crime.

Following normal procedure, the case has been temporarily classified as a case of a discovery of a dead body with the cause of death to be determined by a forensic examination.

Meanwhile the PJ was notified in the early hours of yesterday of the discovery of another body. This time the report came from the Fire Services (CB) who were called to attend a case of alleged suicide.

On the evening of September 7, a 36-year-old woman, a resident from Hong Kong, was found dead by hanging in a room of an apartment located in a high-rise building on Coloane island where she lived with her boyfriend.

Testimony collected by PJ investigators noted that she had left for work around 7:30 a.m. as usual, but that in the early afternoon she stopped replying to contacts and messages.

Later, relatives and friends came to look for her at the apartment, discovered the body, and called the emergency services for help.

After a preliminary investigation, the PJ said that no suspicious wounds were found on the body, and a suicide note was found at the scene and collected as evidence.

The cause of death is yet to be determined through a forensic examination.

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) encourages residents to be conscious of their psychological and emotional state as well as that of their relatives and friends. If in need, residents can call Caritas' Life Hope hotline (28525222) or IAS' counseling hotline (28261126).



ANTHONY LAM

A recent survey has highlighted that nearly 33% of local youths interviewed believed that they did not have sufficient opportunities to achieve vertical mobility, 10% more than in 2019, the Macao New Chinese Youth Association announced.

The group conducted the survey on May 15 and 16 this year, in the form of a face-to-face questionnaire. It targeted Macau residents aged between 18 and 34 who had work experience.

A total of 863 questionnaires were returned, of which 824 were valid, achieving a 95.5% validity rate. The group noted that the sampling error is within plus or minus 3.41%.

The survey also discovered that less than one-fifth of respondents rated advancement opportunities as sufficient, in contrast to 24% in 2019. The group thinks this is a reflection of the obstructions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Moreover, only about 37% of young people interviewed thought their careers had advanced in the past five years. Nearly 50% considered that they had not advanced. Further analyses showed that the latter group were more likely to experience economic



Survey finds 33% youths lack career opportunities

regression during the pandemic.

The group added that those who had moved up the ladder even during the pandemic were "better educated."

For the future, nearly 47% of respondents expect up-flow within five years and only 30.5% expect the same within 10 years. During the pandemic, 37% of

youths were satisfied with their job.

Based on the findings, the group made three recommendations. First, Macau should acce-

lerate its economic diversification by investing in areas such as big health, modern finance, high and innovative technologies, the meetings industry, and trading, as well as culture and sports. It will also inject extra dynamics into the city's economic development, which in turn converts to wider employment prospects.

Second, suitable employment support should be provided to stabilize youth employment rates. The group pointed out that with two cohorts of recent graduates competing in the market due to the pandemic, the market should provide more preparation and training to young people, as well as establish an integrated employment information platform. Internship extensions and expansions may also be considered to secure support for young people.

Third, the group recommends that the government compile a list of industries or techniques that should be developed in Macau, and then invest in the relevant education and training. It should also encourage residents to obtain different types of accreditations or certifications. Meanwhile, the government can issue scholarships or establish educational plans in subjects related to key developing industries.

AD

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HONG KONG

Police arrest defiant
Tiananmen vigil leaders

HONG Kong police yesterday arrested four leaders of the group that organized the city's annual Tiananmen Square commemorations after they refused to cooperate in a national security investigation, the group said.

The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China had openly challenged the enforcement of a 14-month-old national security law, saying police were arbitrarily labeling pro-democracy organizations as foreign agents.

Chow Hang-tung, one of the four arrested and a vice-chair of the alliance, began a series of posts on Facebook shortly before 7 a.m., starting with two Facebook livestreams during which she says that some people have been ringing the doorbell. Chow, a lawyer, appears to be in her office, and muffled shouting could be heard in the background.

"The worst thing about being arrested is that I've not changed into a new set of clothes or brushed my teeth, will my breath overwhelm the national security police?" she wrote in one post.

The alliance is best known for organizing candlelight vigils in Hong Kong on the anniversary of China's bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. The event was attended annually by massive crowds, and was the only large-scale public commemoration of the June 4 crackdown on Chinese soil.

Authorities have banned the vigils for the past two years, citing public health risks due to the pandemic, although critics believe the ban is part of an ongoing crackdown on dissent in the city following months of anti-government protests in 2019.

Alliance leaders delivered a letter to police Tuesday rejecting a request for details of the group's operations and finances. Police earlier warned that failure to comply could result in a fine of up to 100,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$12,900) and six months in jail.

Police yesterday confirmed that they arrested three men and one woman aged between 36 and 57 for failing to provide information in accordance with the national security law. Police did not identify them.

Dozens of pro-democracy activists have been arrested since the implementation of the national security law, which outlaws secession, subversion, terrorism and foreign collusion.

Critics say the law completes the rolling back of freedoms not found on the mainland that Hong Kong was promised it could keep for 50

years after being handed over from Britain, such as freedom of speech and assembly.

Many pro-democracy organizations have disbanded due to safety concerns, such as the Civil Human Rights Front, known for organizing mass protests on July 1, the day in 1997 that the former British colony was handed over to China. Other groups that have disbanded include the Professional Teachers' Union, a pro-democracy trade union for teachers.

The Hong Kong Alliance is one of the few outspoken pro-democracy groups in the city that has yet to officially announce its dissolution.

Chow had been scheduled to represent pro-democracy activist Gwyneth Ho in court for a bail hearing, and wrote on Facebook that it's regrettable she won't be able to attend. She also posted a photo of the waterfront view outside her office, saying she's taking a look at it for the last time.

Chow also asked if anyone had any parting words for her. In less than three hours, supporters left more than 500 comments telling her to take care and thanking her for her work at the alliance.

The three others arrested are Leung Kam-wai, Chan Dor-wai and Tang Ngok-kwan, the group said. The three, together with Chow, are members of the alliance's standing committee.

The leaders said Tuesday that the police do not have a right to request information from the group because it is not a foreign agent and that authorities did not provide sufficient justification in their request.

"This association believes that the issuance of the letter has no legal basis, so we will not provide any information requested in the letter," the committee said.

Police are investigating the alliance for allegedly working for foreign interests.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said Tuesday that law enforcement agents may request information from suspected foreign agents or foreign political organizations in accordance with the law.

"If someone openly says that they will flout the law, they can't call themselves a civic society group," Lam said.

Several of the alliance's leaders, including lawyer Albert Ho and activist Lee Cheuk-yan, are already behind bars after being convicted for their roles in unauthorized assemblies.

Members of the alliance were meant to meet on Sept. 25 to discuss and vote on whether or not to disband in a general meeting. The alliance said yesterday that the meeting will proceed. **MDT/AP**

China chases
'rejuvenation'
with control of
tycoons, society

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

AN avalanche of changes launched by China's ruling Communist Party has jolted everyone from tech billionaires to school kids. Behind them: President Xi Jinping's vision of making a more powerful, prosperous country by reviving revolutionary ideals, with more economic equality and tighter party control over society and entrepreneurs.

Since taking power in 2012, Xi has called for the party to return to its "original mission" as China's economic, social and cultural leader and carry out the "rejuvenation of the great Chinese nation."

The party has spent the decade since then silencing dissent and tightening political control. Now, after 40 years of growth that transformed China into the world's factory but left a gulf between a wealthy elite and the poor majority, the party is promising to spread prosperity more evenly and is pressing private companies to pay for social welfare and back Beijing's ambition to become a global technology competitor.

To support its plans, Xi's government is trying to create what it deems a more wholesome society by reducing children's access to online games and banning "sissy men" who are deemed insufficiently masculine from TV.

Chinese leaders want to "direct the constructive energies of all people in one laser-focused direction selected by the party," Andrew Nathan, a Chinese politics specialist at Columbia University, said in an email.

Beijing has launched anti-monopoly and data security crackdowns to tighten its control over internet giants, including e-commerce platform Alibaba Group and games and social media operator Tencent Holdings Ltd., that looked too big and potentially independent.

In response, their billionaire founders have scrambled to show loyalty by promising to share their wealth under Xi's vaguely defined "common prosperity" initiative to narrow the income gap in a country with more billionaires than the United States.

Xi has yet to give details, but

in a society where every political term is scrutinized for significance, the name revives a 1950s propaganda slogan under Mao Zedong, the founder of the communist government.

Xi is reviving the "utopian ideal" of early communist leaders, said Willy Lam of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. "But of course, huge question marks have arisen, because this will hurt the most creative and lucrative parts of the economy."

Alibaba, Tencent and others have pledged tens of billions of dollars for job creation and social welfare initiatives. They say they will invest in developing processor chips and other technologies cited by Beijing as priorities.

The party's anti-monopoly enforcement and crackdown on how companies handle information about customers are similar to Western regulation. But the abrupt, heavy-handed way changes have been imposed is prompting warnings that Beijing is threatening innovation and economic growth, which already is declining. Jittery foreign investors have knocked more than \$300 billion off Tencent's stock market value and billions more off other companies.

"I expect that over the next year or two we are likely to see a very rocky relationship develop between the political elite and the business elite," Michael Pettis, a finance professor at Peking University's Guanghua School of Business, said in a report.

Chinese officials say the public, consumers and entrepreneurs will benefit from higher incomes and more regulatory oversight of corporate giants. Parents welcome curbs announced last month that limit children under 18 to three hours of online games a week and only on weekends and Friday night.

"I feel this is a good rule," said Li Zhanguo, the father of an 8-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl in the central city of Zhengzhou. "Games still have some addictive mechanisms. We can't count on children's self-control."

The crackdowns reflect party efforts to control a rapidly evolving society of 1.4 billion people.

Some 1 million members of mostly Muslim ethnic groups have been forced into detention



Chow Hang-tung, one of the four arrested

AP PHOTO



President Xi Jinping is seen leading other top officials pledging their vows to the party on screen during a gala show ahead of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing, in late July

tum,” said June Teufel Dreyer, a Chinese politics specialist at the University of Miami.

Party members who worry reforms might weaken political control appear to have decided China’s rise is permanent and liberalization is no longer needed, said Edward Friedman, a political scientist at the University of Wisconsin.

That means “anti-totalitarian elements of the reform agenda could be rolled back,” Friedman said in an email. “That is what Xi is doing, as manifest in his attack on purportedly gay and girlie culture as a supposed threat to a so-called virile militarism.”

An Aug. 29 commentary by an obscure writer, Li Guangman, described “common prosperity” as a “profound revolution.” Writing on the WeChat message service, Li said financial markets would “no longer be a paradise for capitalists to get rich overnight” and said the party’s next targets might include high housing and health care costs.

The commentary was reposted on prominent state media websites including the ruling party newspaper People’s Daily. That prompted questions about whether Beijing might veer into an ideological campaign with echoes of the violent 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, when millions were killed.

Hu Xijin, the editor of the Global Times, a newspaper published by People’s Daily that is known for its nationalist tone, responded by criticizing Li’s commentary. Hu warned in a blog post against a return to radicalism.

“The Cultural Revolution was a period of chaos, purposely unleashed by Mao because he felt comfortable in chaos,” Nathan said.

“This is almost the exact opposite,” he said. “It is an effort to create tightly structured orderliness.” **MDT/AP**

camps in the northwest. Officials deny accusations of abuses including forced abortions and say the camps are for job training and to combat extremism.

A surveillance initiative dubbed Social Credit aims to track every person and company in China and punish violations ranging from dealing with business partners that violate environmental rules to littering.

“Our responsibility is to unite and lead the entire party and people of all ethnic groups, take the baton of history and to work hard to achieve the great

rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” Xi said when he and the six other members of the new party Standing Committee appeared in public for the first time in November 2012.

The party Central Committee shifted its economic emphasis “from efficiency to fairness” in late 2020, a researcher at a Beijing think tank wrote in August in Caixin, China’s most prominent business magazine.

The party moved from “early prosperity for some to ‘common prosperity’” and “from capital to labor,” wrote Luo Zhiheng of Yuekai Securities Research Ins-

titute. He said leaders are emphasizing science, technology and manufacturing over finance and real estate.

Prominent economists have tried to reassure entrepreneurs.

“It is impossible to achieve common prosperity through ‘robbing the rich and helping the poor,’” the dean of the school of economics at Shanghai’s Fudan University, Zhang Jun, told the news outlet The Paper on Aug. 4.

The 1979 launch of market-style economic reform under then-leader Deng Xiaoping prompted predictions abroad

that China would evolve into a more open, possibly even democratic society.

The Communist Party allowed freer movement and encourages internet use for business and education. But leaders reject changes to a one-party rule that copied its political structure from the Soviet Union and watch entrepreneurs closely. Beijing controls all media and tries to limit what China’s public sees online.

As the previous decade’s economic boom fades, “Xi sees himself as the only person capable of recreating the momen-

BROADCASTERS URGED TO CANCEL PLANS TO COVER BEIJING OLYMPICS

SOME of the world’s largest broadcasters including American network NBC are being asked by human rights groups to cancel plans to cover next year’s Winter Olympics in Beijing. The Winter Games are scheduled to open on Feb. 4.

The request comes in an open letter from rights groups representing minorities in China, including Uyghurs, Tibetans, Hong Kong residents and others.

The letter, obtained by the Associated Press, was sent yesterday [Macau time] to NBC Universal

chief executive officer Jeff Shell and other international broadcast executives. NBC is paying \$7.75 billion for the rights to the next six Olympics and works closely as a partner with the Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee.

Those payments are estimated to account for up to 40% of the IOC’s total income. The letter says the broadcasters risk “being complicit” in the “worsening human rights abuses” in China.

The letter comes just days after the delayed Summer Olympics and

Paralympics wrapped up in Tokyo, putting the focus on the IOC and its choice of Beijing.

The IOC has repeatedly said it is only a sports body and its president Thomas Bach has declined to address or condemn the treatment of Uyghurs or other minorities in China. The IOC is also facing calls for a boycott, pressure on some of its 15 top sponsors, and some athletes speaking of the difficult situation they face.

China’s foreign ministry has repeatedly criticized what it calls the “politi-

zation of sports” and has said any Olympic boycott is “doomed to failure.” It has also denied committing genocide against the Uyghur people, describing the charges as the “lie of the century.”

The Beijing Olympics are likely to be held with few fans, and media are likely to be segregated from athletes with little possibility of free movement. The rationale will be the ongoing pandemic.

The IOC has declined several recent calls to move the Olympics out of Beijing. China is accused by some foreign gover-

naments and researchers of imposing forced labor, systematic forced birth control and torture upon Uyghurs, a largely Muslim ethnic group Xinjiang, a region in the country’s west.

The IOC included human rights requirements several years ago in the host city contract for the 2024 Paris Olympics, but it did not include those guidelines — the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights — for Beijing.

Paris is the first Olympics to contain the standards, long pushed for by

human rights groups.

Beijing was the IOC’s choice for the 2022 Winter Olympics, a decision made in 2015 after European bids including Oslo and Stockholm pulled out for financial or political reasons. The IOC was left with only two candidates: Beijing and Almaty, Kazakhstan. IOC members chose Beijing in a 44-40 vote.

Beijing also held the 2008 Summer Olympics, promising at the time that the Games would improve the human rights situation in the country. **MDT/AP**



Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid speaks during a press conference in Kabul

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban form all-male government of old guard members

KATHY GANNON, KABUL

THE Taliban yesterday [Macau time] announced an all-male interim government for Afghanistan stacked with veterans of their hard-line rule from the 1990s and the 20-year battle against the U.S.-led coalition, a move that seems unlikely to win the international support the new leaders desperately need to avoid an economic meltdown.

Appointed to the key post of interior minister was Sirajuddin Haqqani, who is on the FBI's most-wanted list with a \$5 million bounty on his head and is believed to still be holding at least one American hostage. He headed the feared Haqqani network that is blamed for many deadly attacks and kidnappings.

The announcement came hours after Taliban fired their guns into the air to disperse protesters in the capital of Kabul and arrested several journalists, the second time in less than a week that heavy-handed tactics were used to break up a demonstration.

Drawn mostly from Afghanistan's dominant Pashtun ethnic group, the Cabinet's lack of representation from other ethnic groups also seems certain to hobble its support from abroad.

As much as 80% of Afghanistan's budget comes from the international community, and a long-running economic crisis has worsened in recent months. Near daily flights from Qatar bring in humanitarian aid, but the needs are massive, and the Taliban can hardly afford isolation.

In announcing the Cabinet, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid emphasized that the appointments were temporary. He did not say how long they would serve and what would be the catalyst for a change.

Since taking over Afghanistan in mid-August after U.S. troops withdrew, the Taliban have shown no indications they will hold elections.

The U.S. State Department in a statement expressed concern that the Cabinet included only Taliban, no women and personalities with a troubling track record, but said the new administration would be judged by its actions. The carefully worded statement noted the Cabinet was interim, but said the Taliban would be held to their promise to give safe passage to both foreign nationals and Afghans, with proper travel documents, and ensure Afghan soil would not be used as to harm another.

"The world is watching

closely," the statement said.

The interim prime minister, Mullah Hasan Akhund, also headed the Taliban government in Kabul during the last years of its rule. Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who had led talks with the U.S. and signed the deal that led to the withdrawal, will be one of two deputies to Akhund.

A policy statement accompanying the Cabinet announcement sought to allay fears of Afghanistan's neighbors and the rest of the world, but was unlikely to calm the fears of women, who didn't get a single post.

"Our message to our neighbors, the region and the world is that Afghanistan's soil will not be used against the security of any other country," the statement said.

It urged foreign diplomats, embassies, consulates and humanitarian organizations to return to Afghanistan. "Their presence is the need of our country," it said.

The statement spoke of protecting the rights of minorities and the underprivileged, and it promised education "to all countrymen within the framework of Sharia." Women were not mentioned in the three-page statement.

Abdul Salam Hanafi, an ethnic Uzbek, was named

as second deputy to Hasan Akhund. A long-time Taliban member, he is unlikely to satisfy demands for inclusivity and minority representation.

Besides Haqqani as head of the police, the other top security post of defense minister went to Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, the son of Taliban founder and near mythic figure Mullah Mohammad Omar.

The Haqqani network, which dominates most of eastern Afghanistan, has been blamed for dramatic attacks in Kabul in the past two decades and for orchestrating kidnappings, often of Americans. Washington believes it still holds Mark Frerichs, a civilian contractor, who was abducted in January 2020 and hasn't been heard from since.

The new foreign minister will be Amir Khan Muttaqi, another prominent figure from the Taliban's last time in power. He faces a difficult task, given the Cabinet's lack of diversity.

The Cabinet selection defied the many voices that had urged inclusivity and moderation. Instead, it seemed to be a bow to the Taliban's tens of thousands of fighters, who would have struggled to accept figures from previous governments that they see as corrupt and that they believe they were called upon to oust.

"The fighters made the sacrifices. [...] They are the decision makers, not the politicians," said analyst and author Fazlminallah Qazizai, who has written extensively about the Taliban.

Yet even with a Cabinet dominated by ethnic Pashtuns, the Taliban's fighting force would appear to have already attained some diversity, with their ranks bolstered considerably by ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks. That may have helped hand the Taliban a surprising win in the mostly Tajik province of Badakhshan, which they overran with hardly a fight. When they last ruled, the province was the only one they failed to control.

Yesterday, a demonstration that was broken up by gunfire, protesters had gathered outside the Pakistani Embassy to accuse Islamabad of aiding the Taliban's assault on northern Panjshir province. The Taliban said Monday they seized the province — the last one not in their control — after their lightning advance through Afghanistan last month. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1976 CHAIRMAN MAO ZEDONG DIES



The chief architect of the Chinese revolution, Chairman Mao Zedong, has died at the age of 82.

His death - at 10 minutes past midnight - was announced by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the State Council, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the party's Military Affairs Commission.

Chairman Mao had been in poor health for several years and had declined visibly in recent months. He had not seen any foreign visitors for some time.

It is not clear yet who will replace him. There is no designated heir to the leadership of China's 800 million citizens.

News of Chairman Mao's death has spread quickly through the Chinese capital. Many people are wearing black armbands. Groups have paid tribute opposite a huge portrait of Chairman Mao at the main entrance to the Forbidden City.

His body will now lie in state at the Great Hall of the People. A memorial service will be held in Tiananmen Square on 18 September. Everyone except those performing essential tasks will be expected to maintain a three minute silence.

The official Chinese obituary paid tribute to Chairman Mao's important struggles against "enemies" within the Chinese Communist Party, which he co-founded in 1921.

He rose to prominence as the man who led the communist forces on the epic 6,000 mile (9,656 km) "long march" to Shenyang in northern China to flee attacks from the nationalist Kuomintang party in the mid-1930s.

In 1949 he became chairman of the newly established People's Republic of China.

During the 1950s, Chairman Mao launched the Great Leap Forward, a campaign to increase industrial production by mobilising China's enormous manpower into rural peoples' communes.

Even after he retired as chairman of the republic he continued to influence policy as chairman of the Communist Party.

The Cultural Revolution was launched in 1966. Schools and colleges were closed and the students joined the Red Guards in an ideological crusade which led to many officials losing their jobs, being tortured and killed.

He was credited for encouraging President Richard Nixon's visit to China in February 1972, the first by an American leader. Other countries opened embassies in Beijing and China was finally granted a seat at the United Nations in 1971.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Mao Zedong was the founder of modern China and is still regarded by the Chinese as one of their great leaders. His death left a power vacuum in China. The "gang of four" - leading radicals, including Mao's widow, responsible for the Cultural Revolution - attempted to take control but were arrested by Mao's successor Hua Guofeng and convicted of crimes against the state. Deng Xiaoping emerged as China's new leader in 1978. He liberalised academic debate and introduced economic reforms. There was also a move away from the collective idea in the countryside which meant the power of the Communist Party was weakened. In 1989 he ordered troops to break up the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstration. Hundreds, possibly more, were killed provoking international outrage and sanctions. He continued to dominate China's government until his death in 1997.

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Thankfully, the moon moves onto a supportive meet-up with faith-instilling Jupiter and bond-sweetening Venus, imbuing the evening with ideal, romantic date night energy.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Is the big picture vision of your life at odds with your current reality, Taurus? Thursday's skies work to bridge the gap, but the process will likely involve hard truth-telling and discomfort.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Your desire to keep your love life light and playful will likely be at odds with a deeper story stirring around intimacy and commitment as the partnership-oriented Libra moon squares off with heavy Pluto.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

The universe has been doing a number on your experience of partnerships. You're likely to find yourself tapping back into that story today as the romance-loving Libra moon squares off with brooding Pluto.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You're likely to be tapping into the tension brewing between your day job and your need for mental downtime as the balance-craving Libra moon squares off with transformation-demanding Pluto.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You've been under serious pressure when it comes to your creative life, Virgo. It's been critical for you to restructure your approach to your passions and how you share your heart with others.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

What's been changing from deep within and down below? Today's skies highlight this ongoing story around your shifting foundations as the moon's presence in your sign squares off with transformative Pluto.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Mental and communication-based tensions are likely to be running high today, Scorpio. Make room for yourself to speak your truth rather than bury your real feelings down below.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

The cosmos has actively been pushing you to break down old confidence blockages, Sagittarius. Are you letting yourself embrace the healing work that's required to do that?



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

What can you adjust to make space for yourself? Later on, Luna's sweet alignment with optimistic Jupiter and magnetic Venus brings beneficial opportunities for advancement.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Lean into activities that encourage release and renewal. The atmosphere lightens considerably on the mental front, later on, when the moon swirls with lover Venus and big-hearted Jupiter.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Examine your goals and the concrete plans you're making to get there. The moon's supportive connection with lover Venus and optimistic Jupiter, later on, makes for a sensual, warm atmosphere intimacy-wise.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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EASY+

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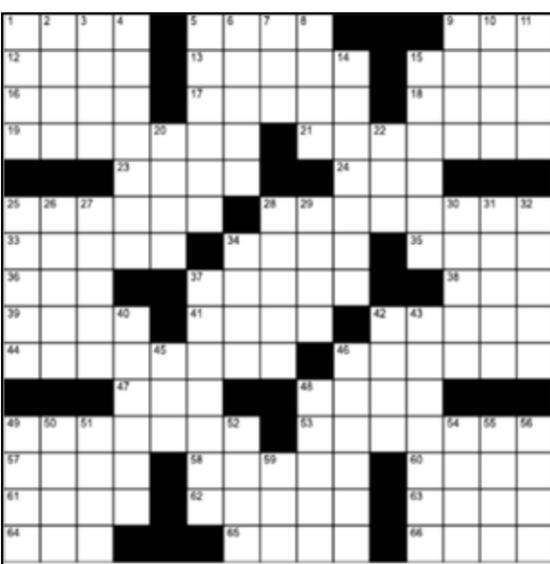
WEATHER

| | MIN | MAX | CONDITION |
|--------------|-----|-----|---------------|
| CHINA | | | |
| Beijing | 19 | 27 | thunderstorms |
| Harbin | 15 | 22 | thunderstorms |
| Tianjin | 21 | 29 | thunderstorms |
| Urumqi | 21 | 31 | fine |
| Xi'an | 16 | 31 | fine |
| Lhasa | 10 | 20 | rain |
| Chengdu | 19 | 28 | fine |
| Chongqing | 21 | 29 | cloudy |
| Kunming | 17 | 23 | showers |
| Nanjing | 23 | 30 | thunderstorms |
| Shanghai | 24 | 27 | rain |
| Wuhan | 22 | 32 | fine |
| Hangzhou | 24 | 31 | rain |
| Taipei | 25 | 31 | cloudy |
| Guangzhou | 26 | 34 | cloudy |
| Hong Kong | 28 | 34 | fine |
| WORLD | | | |
| Moscow | 19 | 14 | cloudy |
| Frankfurt | 28 | 14 | bright |
| Paris | 30 | 16 | hail |
| London | 29 | 20 | fine |
| New York | 27 | 18 | thunderstorms |

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Stated; 5- Repeat; 9- Night spot; 12- Finito; 13- Orchard; 15- Arrived; 16- Tender; 17- Like most movies; 18- The doctor ____; 19- Ragtime dance; 21- Convent; 23- Poses; 24- Runner Sebastian; 25- Assails; 28- Frightening; 33- Best; 34- Leave in, to an editor; 35- Calculus calculation; 36- Bauxite, e.g.; 37- Photo finish; 38- Old spy org.; 39- Sector; 41- Coloured part of the eye; 42- Small change; 44- Recondite; 46- Stylish; 47- Tax pro; 48- Scorch; 49- Companion of Daniel; 53- Indigenous inhabitants; 57- Out of work; 58- Adored; 60- Vittles; 61- Cordelia's father; 62- Backing for an exhibit; 63- Strip of wood; 64- Dutch carrier; 65- Actor Calhoun; 66- Actress Harper;

DOWN: 1- Indifferent; 2- Shakespeare's river; 3- Able was ____; 4- Clad; 5- Wading birds; 6- Dice game; 7- Sexy; 8- Baking chamber; 9- Loyal voting bloc; 10- Islamic ruler; 11- Repudiate; 14- Send to school; 15- Picture theater; 20- Bandleader Puente; 22- ____ gloom of night...; 25- Alcoholic drink; 26- Continental cash; 27- Shorthand taker; 28- Room at the top; 29- Permits; 30- Golf clubs; 31- Bird homes; 32- Bombastic; 34- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 37- Extraordinary occurrence; 40- One engraving; 42- Pluto's tail?; 43- Most strange; 45- Clean air org.; 46- Lethal; 48- Twisted expression?; 49- Dairy product; 50- Pulitzer-winning biographer Leon; 51- Close with force; 52- Rime; 54- Low-lying area; 55- JFK postings; 56- Fast fliers; 59- Brandy letters;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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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FOR RENT
Kingsville **HKD 14,900/mth**
Ref: 2108 1002 1,510 ft² 3 2 1

Rain Dance Property
"We dance until it's SOLD!"
Traditional apartment **HKD 2,680,000**
Ref: 2103 6001 788 ft² 2 1 1

RETAIL

FESTIVAL AIMS TO REKINDLE HONG KONG'S PASSION FOR SHOPPING

WANG YUKE, HONG KONG

THE inaugural Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Shopping Festival will not only help rekindle Hong Kong consumers' passion for shopping, but also provide opportunities for retailers hoping to establish wider markets through e-commerce, experts said.

The online festival, which began on Sept. 2 and runs for three weeks, comes as Hong Kong recovers from the heavy economic blow of the COVID-19 pandemic. Retail sales in Hong Kong totaled \$42.11 billion in 2020, a drop of 24.3% on the previous year, according to official statistics.

The grim situation is not only associated with a sharp decline in the number of big-spending tourists, but also the dampened enthusiasm of Hong Kong shoppers.

"With preferential policies, including free delivery and 2,000 self-pickup spots in Hong Kong, the festival can in some way overcome the long-lasting logistics obstacles due to border checkpoints' closures," said Bruce Pang, head of macro and strategy research of China Renaissance Securities (Hong Kong).

"It allows mainland people, who would have traveled to Hong Kong for a shopping spree, to do it online. Hong Kong residents can also lay their hands on bargains from mainland merchants without worrying about hassles in delivery."

If the mechanism designed for the festival yields desirable outco-

MDT ARCHIVE



mes, it can become a fixture that serves consumers on both sides of the border in the future, Pang said. The 298,000 brands available in the shopping festival are hand-picked and well-established.

"Through the festival, Hong Kong consumers will be able to learn more about premium homegrown brands," which they might have missed out on in the past, said Terence Chong Tai-leung, executive director of the Lau Chor Tak Institute of Global Economics and Finance at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Chong said the festival may inspire Hong Kong retailers and independent shop owners to see mainland e-commerce platforms as a sound alternative to the bricks-and-mortar retail model. "It will enlarge their market, increase their brand recognition and drive up their sales," he said.

The festival also serves as a touchstone for merchants to assess the quality of their products and consumers' preferences said Mark Lee, research director at Asia Pacific Institute for Strategy. "By comparing their own produc-

ts and services with the brands featured in the festival, they can identify their shortcomings and adapt accordingly to consumers' tastes," Lee said.

He said that mainland consumers today are more discerning and tasteful. "To make their commodities popular with mainland consumers, Hong Kong merchants have to improve their products and refine their service to stand out," Lee said.

Pang said the festival is a new foray into the bay area's regional economy and explores how to

achieve "dual circulation", which allows domestic and overseas markets to reinforce each other, with the domestic market as the mainstay.

The vision for dual circulation in the bay area is stressed in the Plan for Comprehensive Deepening Reform and Opening Up of the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone, which was promulgated by the central government on Monday.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor welcomed the plan as a vehicle to foster Hong Kong-Shenzhen cooperation at a higher level, under which the two cities can serve as "dual engines" to drive development in the bay area.

The bay area occupies less than 1% of China's land area but contributes 12% of the country's GDP.

Its year-on-year GDP growth rate was 4.4% in 2019, overtaking the San Francisco Bay Area (4%) and the Tokyo Bay Area (1.4%), which speaks volumes for the region's purchasing demand and capacity, Pang said.

"Guangdong province, hailed as China's 'world factory', has the potential to become China's 'world market'," Pang said.

Hong Kong, an integral part of the bay area, can tap into the region's advantages in dual circulation and capitalize on the mainland's well-developed e-commerce industry to increase the presence and influence of Hong Kong brands, Pang said.

However, both Chong and Lee said that a one-off event cannot dramatically reshape Hong Kong consumers' spending habits on its own. While, it could help locals recover the thrill of the shopping, the effect is likely to be temporary, they said, adding that it should become an annual event. **XINHUA**

FASHION

Christian Siriano kicks off New York Fashion Week in color

WITH Katie Holmes and Lil' Kim on his front row and singer Marina on the mic high above his runway, Christian Siriano helped kicked off New York Fashion Week's first big pandemic round of in-person shows yesterday [Macau time] with a flurry of neon and lace inspired in part by all the Italian women in his life.

From ornate Gotham Hall, beneath a stained glass skylight 70 feet up, Siriano's commitment to size inclusivity was never stronger as he opened and closed the show with plus-size breakout model Precious Lee. She first walked in a stunning yellow trouser suit

with wide loose pants and an asymmetrical jacket, a matching crossover bralette underneath.

His crowd pared down to 300 from his usual 800 guests due to the pandemic, Siriano told The Associated Press he wanted to bring the glamour in today's dark times. He harkened back in some looks to old photographs of his paternal grandmother on vacation in Positano on Italy's Amalfi Coast during the 1960s and '70s. He put vintage sunglasses on some of his models as they strutted in bright yellows, sunset oranges and emerald green gowns and dresses with huge ru-

ffles for sleeves and bulbous skirts.

"Fashion Week is back. It's such a good feeling. New York is feeling great," Siriano said, with Kristin Chenoweth, Alicia Silverstone and muse Coco Rocha also on his front row.

The pandemic, he said, has brought on bouts of nostalgia for many, including himself. He recalled an apricot dress with polka-dots among his grandmother's favorites.

"She's still alive at 101," Siriano said. "I was just feeling that and it has the glamour that I love. I was surrounded by women who got dressed every day. It was lipstick. It was hair

AP PHOTO



and makeup every day." He wanted this spring-summer collection to be "very strong and powerful," but sexy, too.

There were looks in ba-

rely there black lace, tiny bra tops paired with trousers and full skirts, and body hugging slinky dresses with cut outs from neck to calf. As Marina sang from

a platform at the end of the runway, models of all sizes also walked in classic evening looks in black and white, including one-shoulder dresses with a single long sleeve and a slice of bared midriff. Other looks were adorned with vertical rows of feathers.

"I love that. I miss that," he said of his touch of drama and old-world glam. "I think that's what people miss about fashion, too. We have friends that are going to, like, a birthday party and they want a gown. It's so interesting to see what we were missing."

Fashion, Siriano said, "is in a really hard place" at the moment. **MDT/AP**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

AUSTRALIA edged Vietnam 1-0 in Hanoi to make it two wins out of two in Group B of Asia World Cup qualifying, but China's campaign was teetering after a second consecutive defeat.

In Group A, South Korea defeated Lebanon 1-0 at Suwon World Cup Stadium to pick up its first win of the stage, after 0-0 against Iraq five days earlier.

Rhyan Grant ran to the far post to steer in a header after 43 minutes in an empty My Dinh Stadium. His first international goal kept the Socceroos on track for a fifth successive World Cup appearance.

Vietnam is making its first appearance at this stage of qualifying but had chances, including a VAR review for a possible penalty against Grant's handball before the visitors took the lead.

In humid conditions and on a difficult playing surface, Vietnam pushed for a point but couldn't find a way past Mat Ryan in the Australia goal. Mitchell Duke looked to have sealed the win with a low shot four minutes from the end but the goal was ruled offside.

It was Australia's 10th win in a row and Football Australia said in a statement that the Socceroos became the first country in the Asian Football Confederation to achieve such a winning streak in

AP PHOTO



Japan's Wataru Endo shoots by China's Lei Wu during a FIFA World Cup qualifying soccer match

FOOTBALL | WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

Australia, South Korea, Japan complete 1-0 wins

one qualification campaign.

It said Australia had shared the mark of nine with Uzbekistan and South Korea, both countries while qualifying for the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Also in Group B, Japan bounced back from a shock defeat at

home to Oman with a comfortable 1-0 win over China, which failed to record a shot on target.

Yuya Osako shot home from close range just before halftime to send China to a second successive defeat, leaving its chances of reaching the World Cup for the second

time in its history looking slim.

Saudi Arabia picked up a second win, defeating Oman 1-0 in Muscat to move level with Australia on six points. Saleh Al-Shehri settled the game three minutes before the break.

In Group A, South Korea reco-

vered from the late withdrawal of Son Heung-min to defeat Lebanon 1-0. The Tottenham Hotspur star injured a calf in training on Monday and was deemed unfit to play.

Without Son, South Korea struggled against Lebanon goalkeeper Mostafa Matar. The deadlock was broken only on the hour, when Kwon Chang-hoon shot past Matar from close range to keep Korea on track for a 10th successive World Cup appearance.

Iran tops the group with six points after a 3-0 win over Iraq. Alireza Jahanbakhsh opened the scoring with a header in the second minute, FC Porto striker Mehdi Taremi added a second with 19 minutes remaining and Ali Gholizadeh sealed the victory in added time.

United Arab Emirates drew 1-1 with Syria with Ali Mabkhout scoring after 11 minutes. The striker's 77th international goal moves him above Lionel Messi to become the second highest active goal scorer behind Cristiano Ronaldo. Mahmoud Al-Baher earned a first point for Syria with a goal just after the hour.

The top two from both six-team groups qualify automatically for the World Cup next year in Qatar. The third-place teams meet in a playoff and the winner faces an opponent from another confederation. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION
WORLD VIEWS

Ali A. Olomi, Penn State
MDT/The Conversation



WHO IS MULLAH HASAN AKHUND?

Mullah Akhund is a fascinating but relatively enigmatic figure in the Taliban. He has been an influential figure in Afghanistan since the inception of the militant group in the 1990s.

But unlike other Taliban leaders from that period, he was not involved in the Soviet-Afghan war of the 1980s. While Taliban founder Mullah Mohammad Omar and his deputies fought with the mujahedeen – a loose network of anti-Soviet Afghan fighters – Akhund did not.

Instead, he is seen much more as a religious influence in the Taliban. He served on the Taliban's shura councils, the traditional decision-making body made up of religious scholars and mullahs – an honorific given to those trained in Islamic theology.

Akhund is probably best known as one of the architects of the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, the giant cliff statues destroyed by the Taliban in 2001.

Initially, Omar had no intention of destroying the statues. But the Taliban founder was angered at seeing conservation money being made available for the UNESCO world heritage site while failing to secure humanitarian aid from the United Nations for Afghanistan. As such, Omar sought out the advice of his shura, and Akhund was part of the council that ordered the destruction of the sixth-century statues.

Akhund held a political role in the Taliban government of the 1990s, serving as foreign minister; however, his importance lies more in the development of the group's religious identity. He, like Mullah Omar, was schooled in a brand of strict Islamist ideology, known as Deobandism.

After the Taliban was ousted from Afghanistan in 2001, Akhund remained an influential presence, operating mostly from exile in Pakistan.

Today, there are broadly two factions in the Taliban – a military wing that carries out the day-to-day campaigns, and a conservative religious elite grounded in Deobandism that acts as its political wing. Mullah Akhund aligns very much with the religious faction of the Taliban.

There appears to be a power struggle behind Akhund's appointment. Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who served as deputy to Omar during the early years of the Taliban before assuming the position of de facto leader after Omar's death, had been seen by many experts on Afghanistan as a potential head of state. But there is political tension between Baradar and the powerful Haqqani network – a family-based Islamist group that has become the Taliban's de facto diplomatic arm in recent years and has been successful in gaining support for the group among other local groups.

The Haqqanis are among the most militant factions of the Taliban. And recent conciliatory language from Baradar on issues such as women's rights, working with the international community and amnesty for members of the former government runs counter to the ideology of the Haqqani network.

Akhund seems to be a compromise candidate between supporters of Baradar and the Haqqani network.

Despite the conciliatory language of the Taliban of late, I believe it is likely that we might see a return to some of the rules in place when the Taliban previously held power, including a ban on women's education.

We have already seen on Sept. 5 the Taliban order female university students to wear the abaya. The abaya is similar to a burka, but it differs in that the coverings are nearly always black. The abaya is not Afghan, but a style of dress more common in the Gulf states of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

With this order, I see the Taliban signaling its intention to place Afghanistan within a wider Islamist movement. In the 1990s, the Taliban were very much an insular, nationalist group with the aim of bringing its brand of Islamist rule to Afghanistan. Now, Akhund seems to be looking to position the Taliban alongside international partners – an ambition that can also be seen in the Taliban's recent diplomatic outreach with the governments of Qatar, the UAE and Pakistan.

[Abridged]

Former Irish president Mary Robinson, who heads the group of prominent former leaders founded by Nelson Mandela, called on China and Russia especially to tell the Taliban that participation of women in Afghan society and the education of girls are “non-negotiable and must be respected.”

Robinson recalled visiting Afghanistan in March 2002 as U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and being with the then minister of women's affairs and other Afghan women who had been active before the Taliban ruled from 1996-2001 when they drafted a charter of women's rights.

Now chair of The Elders, Robinson told the U.N. Security Council yesterday [Macau time] this was “an important reminder that women's rights are not Western rights — they are fundamental human rights that these Afghan women had reclaimed in accordance with their cultural values.”

Over the past nearly 20 years, she said, “hard-won gains in gender equality and women's rights have been secured through constitutional, legislative and policy changes.”

“We cannot allow the women and girls of Afghanistan to be deprived of these rights, including the right to leave the country,” Robinson said. **More on p8**

AP PHOTO



Japan's former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida announces his economic policy for the governing Liberal Democratic Party's presidential race

LIBERAL CANDIDATE IN JAPAN RACE CALLS FOR NEW CAPITALISM, RECOVERY

MARI YAMAGUCHI,
TOKYO

ONE of the main candidates to be Japan's next prime minister said yesterday the country needs a new type of capitalism to address income and social gaps caused by the pandemic.

Former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida is the only announced candidate so far in the race to lead the governing Liberal Democratic Party and succeed outgoing Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga. Whoever wins the Sept. 29 party vote is almost certain to be the next government leader.

Kishida focused on his economic policy, which he described as a shift from the neo-liberalism and deregulation started by a reformist former leader Junichiro Koizumi in the early 2000s that Japan has since adopted.

While deregulation and structural reforms have strengthened Japan's economy and promoted growth, they also “created a gap between the rich and the poor, and those who possess and others who don't,” Kishida said. The coronavirus pandemic has worsened the disparity, he said, noting tourism industry workers, contract workers and women are among the worst-hit.

“We have to turn around

the economy in this situation, and if we just do the same thing, the gaps will only grow and there will be no positive cycle,” he said. “We will make a change.”

Kishida also proposed an economic recovery package and a university package to promote vaccine development, biomedicine and other cutting-edge science. He also said he will promote clean energy technology to turn climate change measures into growth as Japan aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Suga's decision to not run in the LDP race was important to give his party a fresh leader ahead of a general election that must be held by late November. The new party leader almost certainly will become Japan's next prime minister because of the parliamentary majority held by the party and its coalition partner.

Other potential candidates include Taro Kono, now minister in charge of vaccinations, as well as ultra-conservative former Internal Affairs Minister Sanae Takaichi, an protégé of former leader Shinzo Abe.

Takaichi, 60, is seeking a chance to be Japan's first female leader, though she has ranked low in media popularity surveys.

Takaichi shares Abe's revisionist views on wartime history and hawkish stance on national security. In her

recent appearances on television talk shows, Takaichi said she will succeed some of Abe's unfinished work, including turning around the economy.

Takaichi is known for her support of traditional gender roles and paternalistic family values following the example of the imperial family, which only allows male-line succession. She also opposes a legal change to family registration law to allow married couples to keep separate surnames, her stance seen as reluctant to promote women's advancement.

Takaichi became the first female internal affairs minister in the second Abe administration in 2014.

A member of the party's most conservative wing, she often visits the Yasukuni Shrine, a memorial to Japan's war dead. Such visits by Japanese leaders infuriate old wartime foes such as China and South Korea.

A telephone survey conducted on Sept. 4-5 and released Monday by Kyodo News agency showed nearly 32% of the 1,071 respondents said they preferred Kono as the next prime minister, with former Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba trailing with 27%. Former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, the only person who has announced their candidacy, was third with 19%. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Iran has continued to increase its stockpile of highly enriched uranium that could be used to make nuclear weapons in contravention of a 2015 accord with world powers that was meant to contain Tehran's nuclear program, the U.N. atomic watchdog said. The International Atomic Energy Agency also told member states in its confidential quarterly report that its verification and monitoring activities have been “seriously undermined” since February by Iran's refusal to let inspectors access IAEA monitoring equipment.

AP PHOTO



France In a custom-built secure complex embedded within a 13th-century courthouse, France yesterday opened the trial of 20 men accused in the Islamic State group's 2015 attacks in Paris that left 130 people dead and hundreds injured. Nine gunmen and suicide bombers struck within minutes of each other at the national soccer stadium, the Bataclan concert hall and Paris restaurants and cafes on Nov. 13, 2015.

AP PHOTO



Bulgaria Standing outside the rundown public hospital in Bulgaria's northern town of Veliko Tarnovo, the vaccination unit's chief nurse Yordanka Minekova (pictured) voices a sad reality about her fellow citizens: “They don't believe in vaccines.” Bulgaria has one of the highest coronavirus death rates in the 27-nation European Union and is facing a new, rapid surge of infections due to the more infectious delta variant.