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**HOTEL SECTOR RECEIPTS PLUNGE 66% IN 2020 TO MOP13 BILLION, EMPLOYEES DOWN BY 9,000: OFFICIAL STATS**

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**UNITED NATIONS: WORLD LEADERS TO ATTEND GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND FACE MANY ESCALATING CRISES**

P8

**HO IAT SENG WILL ATTEND THE PAN-PEARL RIVER DELTA REGIONAL COOPERATION CHIEF EXECUTIVE JOINT CONFERENCE IN CHENGDU ON FRIDAY**

P4

AP PHOTO



**Afghanistan** The Taliban expanded their interim Cabinet by naming more ministers and deputies yesterday, but failed to appoint any women, doubling down on a hard-line course despite the international outcry that followed their initial presentation of an all-male government lineup earlier this month. The international community has said that it will judge the Taliban by their actions, and that recognition of a Taliban-led government would be linked to the treatment of women and minorities.

**Tunisia's** president has announced plans to draft a new electoral code and appoint a transitional leadership — and to hang on to the exceptional powers that he seized in July, throwing the country's young democracy into question. In a speech, President Kais Saied promised that the new initiatives would respect Tunisians' hard-fought rights and freedoms and democratic constitution. Saied's actions have sidelined Tunisia's long-governing Islamist party, which accuses him of a coup, and worried Islamist groups around the region.

AP PHOTO

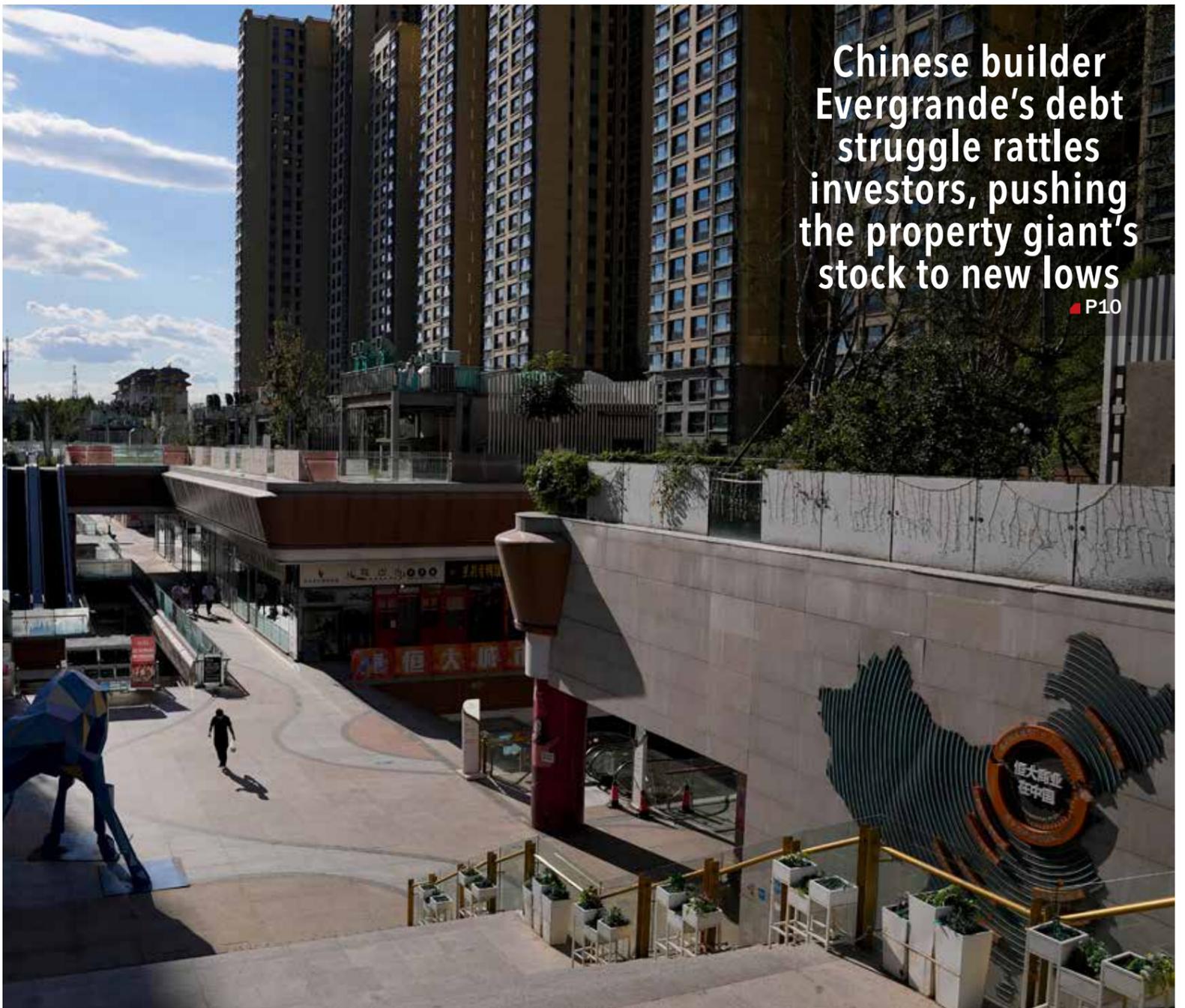


**Emirates** Energy officials from Qatar and Turkey, long-standing foes of the United Arab Emirates, descended on Dubai along with hundreds of other executives yesterday, flocking to the world's largest gas expo and the industry's first in-person conference since the pandemic began. In a scene that would have been unthinkable just a year ago, the Emirati oil minister held forth from a crowded conference room beside the Qatari minister of state for energy, the first such visit since the UAE and three other Arab states imposed an embargo on Qatar in 2017.

More on backpage

# GRANDE NEW LOWS

AP PHOTO



**Chinese builder Evergrande's debt struggle rattles investors, pushing the property giant's stock to new lows**

P10

**PERSONAL DATA SAFE  
GOV'T  
RELEASES  
E-CARD PACK,  
INCORPORATES  
28 CARDS**

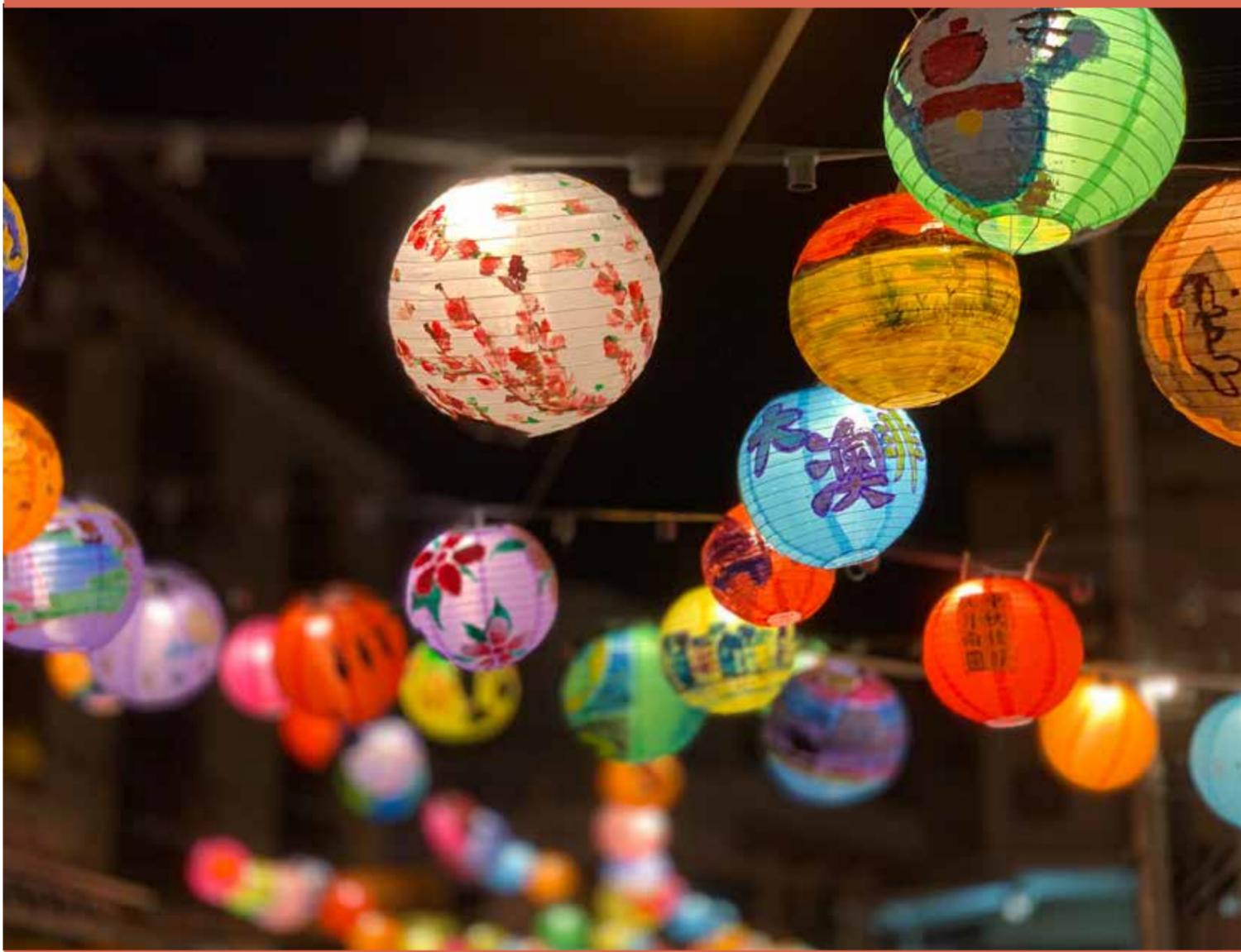
P3



**THE CONVERSATION**

# MOON FESTIVAL: THE IMMORTAL ABOVE

BILLY KWOK



She then chooses the moon as her immortal abode, to be close to her beloved husband.

On his part, Yi makes sacrifices to his departed wife that feature cakes and fruits. The local people sympathize with him and also start making the same offerings.

To this day, Chinese people continue this tradition, making offerings of mooncakes in commemoration of the goddess as they make wishes or pray for familial unity and harmony.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the agricultural society of premodern China, the Mid-Autumn Festival was linked with harvesting season celebrations.

The term "mid-autumn," which became the name of the festival, appears in "Zhou li" 周禮, or the Rites of Zhou. This is one of the early Confucian classics, the core texts that constitute the main canon of classical Confucianism. The earliest history of the festival is uncertain, but scholars have shown that its celebration already took place during the Tang era that lasted from 618-907 A.D., and increased in popularity during the later imperial period.

MARIO POCESKI,  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

WITH the arrival of September and hints of cooler temperatures also comes one of most important traditional festivals in the Chinese calendar, the Mid-Autumn Festival, or Zhongqiu jie 中秋節, also known as the Moon Festival.

At this time of the year, the Chinese store down the road from our home in Gainesville, Florida, is stocked with mooncakes, known in Chinese as yuebing 月餅. The same is true of Chinese stores in Macau and around the world. There is even the option these days of buying these desserts from online retailers such as Amazon.

These traditional delicacies are readied in anticipation of the festival, observed on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month. This is a time for family

and friends to gather, watch the full moon and eat mooncakes and other delicacies. Other festivity highlights include public lantern displays, dance parties, traditional performances and worship of the moon goddess and other deities.

Because of the central theme of family reunion, sometimes the festival evokes comparison to Thanksgiving in the U.S.

### MOONCAKES: TRADITION AND INNOVATION

The gifting and eating of mooncakes is arguably the most emblematic feature of the festival. The round shape of the mooncake is meant to evoke an image of the full moon. The roundness of the full moon, in turn, symbolizes wholeness; by extension, it conveys a sense of spiritual contentment, coming together and reunion.

Usually, mooncakes come with traditional fillings, such

as red bean or white lotus seed paste. There are many regional variations, some of which contain a preserved egg yolk in the middle. The yellow egg yolk adds another layer of symbolism, as it resembles the round moon in the sky.

Additionally, there are contemporary flavors such as chocolate, coffee or green tea. It is even possible to find ice cream mooncakes. These are created by commercial ice cream companies in order to tap into the lucrative mooncake market and cater to contemporary tastes.

### THE LEGENDS BEHIND THE FESTIVAL

As a scholar of Chinese religions, I am especially fascinated by the legends associated with the origins of the festival. These are notable elements of popular lore, rooted in China's long history

and rich cultural traditions.

Customarily, the Mid-Autumn Festival is associated with the popular legend about Chang'e 嫦娥, the goddess of the moon. The earliest versions of the story can be traced back to the Warring States, a significant historical period between 475-221 B.C., marked by recurrent warfare, bureaucratic reforms and political consolidation.

Chang'e is said to have stolen the elixir of immortality from her husband, Yi, the great archer and hero of Chinese mythology. She then escaped to the moon, where she was condemned to a lonely existence.

Later versions of the story, still told today, present a more flattering image of the goddess. She is described as a model of feminine beauty and elegance. She digests the elixir only in order to prevent it from falling in the hands of an evil person.

### CELEBRATIONS IN OTHER ASIAN NATIONS

The Mid-Autumn Festival is also celebrated in Asian countries beyond greater China, as well as among the Chinese diaspora in other parts of the world. This is especially the case with Southeast Asian countries with large ethnically Chinese populations, such as Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

It is also an important festival in Vietnam. Called Tết Trung Thu, it is primarily celebrated as the children's festival and is associated with unique Vietnamese legends.

Besides moon watching and the ubiquitous mooncakes, among its unique features are the performances of traditional dances and the lanterns carried by children, as they walk under the glow of the full moon with their light illuminating the path.

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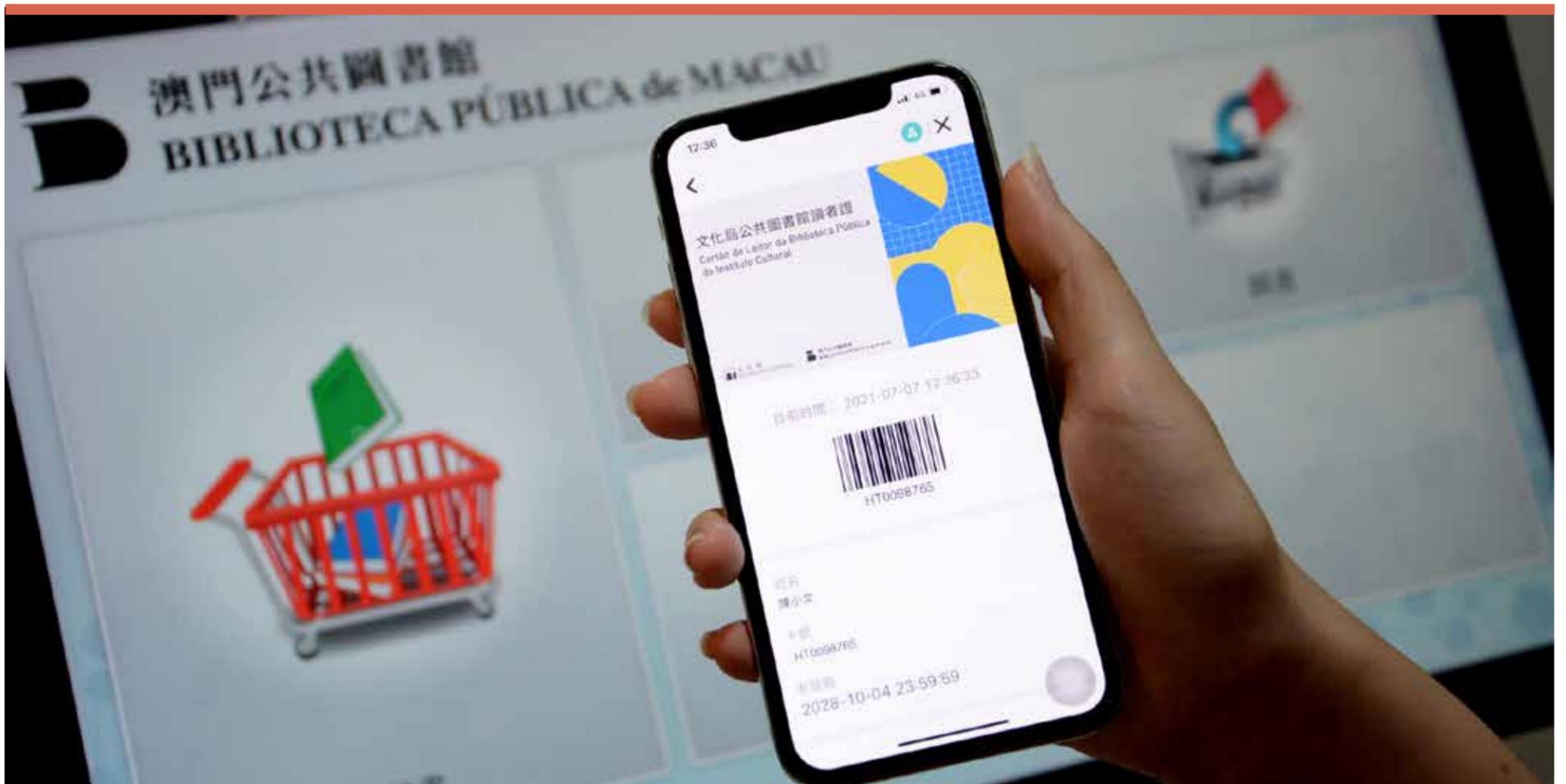
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# Gov't releases e-Card Pack, incorporates maximum 28 cards

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE e-Card Pack, a feature of the government-operated Gov.mo app, was launched yesterday with a maximum storage capacity of 28 cards issued by public organizations.

Thirteen government bureaus are included in the scheme, including the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), the Sports Bureau (ID), the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) and the Health Bureau (SSM).

Three higher education institutions, namely the University of Macau, the Macau Polytechnic Institute and the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies, have also taken steps to digitize some of their cards, such as Student IDs and Alumni Cards.

The government held a press conference yesterday afternoon to discuss the new feature and to familiarize the press with it. The feature was officially announced at 9 a.m. yesterday.

At the press conference, government spokespersons reminded the press of the convenience of the e-Card Pack. Ng Wai Han, deputy director of the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP), stressed that 500,000 applications for reissuing of the SSM "Gold Card" were received last year. With the e-Card Pack, users need not fear losing and having to reapply for the card.

More importantly, Ng said, although it is rare for a single resident to own all 28 cards, carrying many public service user cards can be uncomfortable for many users. The e-Card Pack can help users lighten the physical card packs in their pockets.

To use the new feature, there is one small step that users are required to take. In the Gov.mo app, users should tap the three lines on the top right-hand corner and then choose eWallet on the drop-down menu.

For a new user of the e-Card Pack, there should be no e-cards yet. Card accounts must be linked to the app before cards can be used electronically. Tap the link on the top right-hand corner to view the page for linking cards.

Users may choose either to link a card on their own by tapping "link card manually," or automatically by choosing "link with one click." The former requires the user to select the cards they possess and then link them to the account. The latter will automatically connect cards to the account after matching them digitally.

Swiping the screen from left to right will open the e-Card Pack for quick access at service registration or library check-out, for example.

When using the e-Card Pack, there will be a clock showing the actual time. This is included to allow reception officers at public buildings to quickly verify that the card is displaying in real-time

instead of from a previous screen capture.

According to Ng, from the time the app was upgraded early this year until recently, the app recorded a total of 230,000 registered users, which the government described as an "obvious rise." Currently, the app is providing 90 public service functions.

Understandably, the rise was partly due to the app being made available to Macau residents un-

der age 18 for registration from June this year. However, the registration of minors must be conducted by their parents on their behalf.

With this feature introduced, the e-Card Pack allows parents to have access to their underage children's e-Card Packs on their own apps. This permission, however, will not deprive underage users' of the right to their own e-Card Pack.

## SAFP DENIES TRANSFER OF PERSONAL DATA OCCURS WHEN CARDS ARE LINKED

**I**NTERACTIONS between government databases can occur when cards are linked on the new e-Card Pack function of the Gov.mo app, but not the transfer of personal data, Ng Wai Han, deputy director of the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP), said yesterday.

At the press conference held to announce the new function, Ng was questioned by the Times as to whether any transfer of personal data takes place in order to facilitate the automatic card linkage procedure.

Ng stated that the Gov.mo app is a service based on identity verification. She confirmed that the data stored with the Identification Services Bureau (DSI) is not shared with the 13 public entities that are part of the new e-Card feature.

During the linkage process, the DSI data is compared with the data with the 13 participating public bureaus to identify whether the user possesses any de-facto membership cards. If so, the cards will appear in the e-Card Pack.

After all, she said, the Gov.mo app, besides inclu-

ding all the services and functions that it does, is a completely voluntary service. Users have complete discretion to decide whether to use the app or any of its features.

She hinted that tapping the "link" button and triggering the link process implies informed consent.

On the matter of familiarizing businesses with the e-Card Pack so that elderly residents can seamlessly use their e-Elderly Card, Kam Kit Leng, chief of the Senior Service Division of the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS), said that the Elderly Card was digitized in April this year. Businesses were notified back then.

With the introduction of the e-Card Pack, the IAS has once again notified cooperating businesses. Kam assured the public that senior residents would not face incompatibility problems when using their e-Elderly Card.

The Macau Polytechnic Institute announced that it has plans to facilitate the use of e-Student IDs in applying for student bus cards. **AL**

For example, children seeking healthcare services at government facilities, such as the Health Centers, can be registered by their parents using a linked e-Card Pack.

Although the Green Points Card, issued by the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) to record points for users who put waste in recycle bins, is included in the e-Card Pack, the interface for the card pack is not available in English.

On the other hand, considering some public libraries are popular among English speakers, the lack of an interface in English may prevent them from enjoying the new electronic function. The Taipa Library, for example, has an English publications section.

### IN'TL MUSIC FESTIVAL OFFERS SEVEN ACTIVITIES

The "Macau International Music Festival – Music October" will offer seven outreach activities in a total of 15 sessions, including master classes, workshops, pre-show talks, exhibitions, outdoor performances and charity fundraisers. All outreach activities incorporate "innovative ideas, offering the audience a new experience," according to a statement issued by the Cultural Affairs Bureau. The outdoor performance "Journey in Musical Corners" will allow participants to experience different musical styles, including Chinese, Western, a cappella and pop originals. The journey features two themed routes: the "Detective Dreamer" and "The Musical Fantasies of Keikei and Kwong," which take the public on tours of the Historic Centre of Macau and through the streets and lanes of Taipa with musical accompaniment.

### IFTM TO HOLD VIRTUAL OPEN DAY

As the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) celebrates its 26th anniversary this year, a series of activities will be held to celebrate the event. The Open Day will be organized online for the first time, and will be live-streamed on the Institute Instagram (@iftm\_macao) on September 25 at 3p.m. The audience will also be taken on an online tour of the layout and facilities of the Mong-Há and Taipa campuses, as well as the Educational Restaurant and Educational Hotel. The iRetail Lab, which will be officially opened soon, will also be revealed to the public for the first time at the online Open Day.

### OM'S FIRST CONCERT OF THE SEASON TONIGHT

The "2021-22 Season Opening Concert" by the Macao Orchestra, under the auspices of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, will be held online tonight at 8 p.m. Under the baton of the music director and principal conductor of the OM, Lu Jia, the orchestra will be joined by internationally renowned violinist Ning Feng to present two classical works by Mozart. The concert will be available online on various platforms. Titled "Inheritance of German and Austrian Classics," the opening concert invites acclaimed violinist Ning Feng, winner of the Paganini Competition and several other international awards, and current Artist-in-Residence at the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, to present Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major.

# HOTEL SECTOR RECEIPTS PLUNGE 66% IN 2020, EMPLOYEES DOWN BY 9,000

LYNZY VALLES

**R**ECEIPTS from the hotel sector plunged 66.2% year-on-year to MOP12.93 billion in 2020 on account of a decline of 62.2 percentage points in the average occupancy rate of guest rooms (28.6%) during the pandemic.

According to data provided by the Statistics and Census Service, expenditure in the sector dropped by 34.2% year-on-year to MOP22.22 billion.

With expenditure exceeding receipts, the sector recorded a deficit of MOP9.36 billion.

Gross Value Added, a measure of the sector's contribution to the economy, amounted to MOP 2.18 billion, a drop of 88.8% year-on-year. Meanwhile, Gross Fixed



Capital Formation for the sector dropped by 51% year-on-year to MOP3.34 billion, which may be attributed to a reduction in major repairs in 2020.

Meanwhile, the num-

ber of persons employed decreased by 9,149 to 42,407.

Receipts from the hotels tumbled by 66.3% year-on-year to MOP12.88 billion, with those from

rental of space (MOP4.27 billion), in-room sales and services (MOP4.06 billion) and provision of food and beverages (MOP2.76 billion) dropping by 48.9%, 77.2% and 68.1%

respectively.

Hotel expenditure went down by 34.2% year-on-year to MOP22.15 billion, of which compensation of employees (MOP11.52 billion), operating expenses (MOP9.30 billion) and purchase of goods and commission paid (MOP1.34 billion) decreased by 22.6%, 38.1% and 64.6% respectively.

Analyzed by classification, receipts of the 36 five-star hotels plummeted by 66.7% year-on-year to MOP10.03 billion, and expenditure dropped by 34.2% to MOP17.82 billion.

These hotels recorded a deficit of MOP7.85 billion in 2020. Hotels of other ratings registered year-on-year decreases in both receipts and expenditure, and posted deficits of varying degrees.

## Straw ban well-supported by trade: DSPA

**T**HE catering industry has expressed "positivity, acceptance and willingness" on the previously announced ban on single-use plastic straws, said Tam Wai Man, director of the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA), at the sidelines of a recent award ceremony.

The Executive Dispatch announcing the ban on straws issued last month. It also announced the ban on plastic

stirrers.

Tam stressed that this does not imply a ban on all plastic straws. Only non-biodegradable straws are concerned. He added that given the existence of substitutes in the market, the government finds it the right time to levy the ban.

As per the government's estimation, the city imports an average of 16 million straws and 2.9 million stirrers each year.

Although an increase in costs is expected, Tam foresees it to be limited. He added that in the long term, the costs may even decrease.

Tam disclosed that 15 plastic bottle collection machines will be added, bringing the total to 58 in the city, and collection of metal cans will also be introduced on these machines.

In October, the four Happy Environment Centers, which are DS-

PA-operated recyclables collection points, will start accepting used clothing pieces. The DSPA will work with charities to process the collected used clothes.

On the other hand, the DSPA held an award ceremony to highlight schools and supermarkets that had made efforts in helping with environmental protection. This year, 35 out of 51 schools and 33 in 118 supermarkets have won awards.

Escola Choi Nong Chi Tai, Escola Fong Chong da Taipa and Keang Peng Secondary School won the top Platinum Award this year for their five-year environmental protection education efforts.

Meanwhile, San Miu Supermarket (Trust Legend Branch) has won the Gold Award. All supermarket winners were awarded to highlight their work in lessening packaging, saving energy, among others. AL

## CE TO LEAD DELEGATION TO XI'AN AND CHENGDU

**F**ROM tomorrow until September 28, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng will lead a local government delegation to visit the cities of Chengdu in Sichuan Province, and Xi'an in Shaanxi Province.

Ho will attend the Pan-Pearl River Delta Regional Cooperation Chief Executive Joint Conference in Chengdu on Friday.

According to a statement issued by the Government Information Bureau, Ho is scheduled to meet with leading officials from the Pan-Pearl River Delta, and attend the

Sichuan-Macao Cooperation Conference as well as the opening ceremony of the "Macao Week in Sichuan-Chengdu" roadshow event, in addition to paying site visits to local projects.

Following the Sichuan visit, the CE will then visit Xi'an for the closing ceremony of the 14th National Games of China on September 27. Ho will take part in a ceremony with representatives from Guangdong and Hong Kong to receive the flag of the National Games, as the three co-host cities of

the next National Games in 2025.

Macau has sent a 154-strong delegation to Shaanxi for the Games, which are being held from September 15 to 27, and will take part in a total of 17 events. While in Xi'an, Ho will meet with provincial officials to exchange views on matters of mutual interest.

The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, will accompany the Chief Executive on the Sichuan visit. The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Ao Ieong U,



will join the delegation in Shaanxi.

The Secretary for Ad-

ministration and Justice, Andre Cheong will be the acting Chief Executive. LV

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



# Int'l marathon offers 12,000 slots

A total of 12,000 places are open in the upcoming 2021 Galaxy Entertainment Macao International Marathon to take place on December 5.

In a press conference held yesterday, organizers announced that the slots comprise 1,400 for the marathon, 4,800 for the half-marathon and 5,800 for the mini-marathon.

The marathon and half-marathon races will start at 6 a.m. and the mini-marathon race at

6:15 a.m. at the Olympic Sports Centre Stadium. The marathon and half-marathon courses will once again cross the Governor Nobre de Carvalho Bridge, pass by the World Heritage listed A-Ma Temple and cross the Sai Van Bridge.

In celebration of the marathon's 40th anniversary, a number of online and hands-on activities will be held to engage residents, tourists and runners in the marathon.

This year, the popular "Most

Creative Costume Award" will return again, and several other activities will also be held, including a special online activity series themed "Fab 40" and a marathon carnival.

Also, this year the winning Macau male and female athletes in the marathon and half-marathon will be awarded the "GEG Macau Cup" along with prizes awarded by the title sponsor.

Organizers announced that prospective participants must

have a personal online registration account with the Macao International Marathon.

Participants without an online account may create one via the official website.

## COVID-19 VACCINATION REQUIRED

In compliance with anti-pandemic measures, organizers stated that all participants must have received two doses of a Covid-19 vaccine at least 14 days before the race (i.e. on 21 November or earlier). Participants are also required to make their own arrangements for a Covid-19 test and to present proof of a valid negative test result (including the day of the race) before being permitted to take part.

Upon presentation of their registration receipt, identification document and proof of vaccination, participants who have successfully registered may collect their number bib, timing chip, identification wristband (for anti-pandemic purposes) and information document at M/F of Broadway Macau, between November 29 and December 4.

Jointly organized by the Sports Bureau and the General Association of Athletics of Macau, Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) will be title sponsor of the event for the 18th consecutive year. LV

# AUGUST VISITOR ARRIVALS PLUNGE

LYNZY VALLES

Visitor arrivals fell 48.2% month-on-month in August to 409,207 due to temporarily tightened entry and exit requirements after authorities discovered four Delta variant cases of the coronavirus, according to data from the Census and Statistics Service.

The number of same-day visitors (257,966) and overnight visitors (151,241) surged by 64.9% and 114.1% year-on-year, respectively.

As to the origin of visitors, the number of mainland visitors soared by 84.0% year-on-year to 369,467, with 74,049 travelling under the Individual Visit Scheme. Visitors from the nine Pearl River Delta cities in the Greater Bay Area totaled 226,453, of whom 65.0% came from Zhuhai. Additionally, there were 36,207 visitors from Hong Kong and 3,453 from Taiwan.

In the first eight months of 2021, visitor arrivals grew by 43.6% year-on-year to 5,126,443.

Authorities are seeing rosier numbers for September. Official figures show that visitor arrivals to Macau from September 10 to 16 reached 201,891.

The average daily visitor volume was 28,842, an increase by 19.9% compared to the average daily visitor arrivals (24,050) in the previous week. The average daily arrivals rose 118.5% from the August tally. With a significant increase from August, tourism authorities are predicting 35,000 tourist arrivals in the upcoming Golden Week – a busy month for the city's tourism sector given China's seven-day national holiday.

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# China keeps virus at bay at high cost ahead

JOE MCDONALD  
& HUIZHONG WU,  
BEIJING

**T**HE Beizhong International Travel Agency in the eastern city of Tianjin has had only one customer since coronavirus outbreaks that began in July prompted Chinese leaders to renew city lockdowns and travel controls.

Most of China is virus-free, but the abrupt, severe response to outbreaks has left would-be tourists jittery about traveling to places they might be barred from leaving. That has hit consumer spending, hindering efforts to keep the economic recovery on track.

China's "zero tolerance" strategy of trying to isolate every case and stop transmission has helped keep the country where the virus first was detected in late 2019 largely free of disease. But the public and

businesses are paying a steep price.

Foreign athletes are due to compete in the Winter Olympics that start Feb. 4 in Beijing and the nearby city of Zhangjiakou, but the government has yet to say whether restrictions that prevent most foreigners from entering China will be relaxed to allow spectators in.

"Two years ago, this was our busiest season," said the Beizhong agency manager, Wang Hui.

"Now, customers tend to postpone their plans because of the outbreaks," Wang said. "This year is worse than last year."

China is closed to most foreign visitors and discourages its own public from traveling.

The government has yet to give final details on anti-coronavirus measures for the Winter Games. Some 2,900 athletes are due to compete, plus 800 more in the Paralympic

Winter Games on March 4-13.

China has reported 4,636 deaths — and none since February — out of 95,577 cases since early 2020. Its total is smaller than one-day new infection figures in the United States, India and some other countries.

Since July, outbreaks blamed on travelers bringing the more contagious delta variant into the country have occurred in Nanjing west of Shanghai, Putian and Xiamen in the southeast and Yunnan province in the southwest. But cases number in the dozens, not the tens of thousands of new daily infections seen in other countries.

"The zero-tolerance policy has been highly effective in putting COVID under control, but the short-term cost is also extremely high," economists Larry Hu and Xinyu Ji of Macquarie said in a report.



AD

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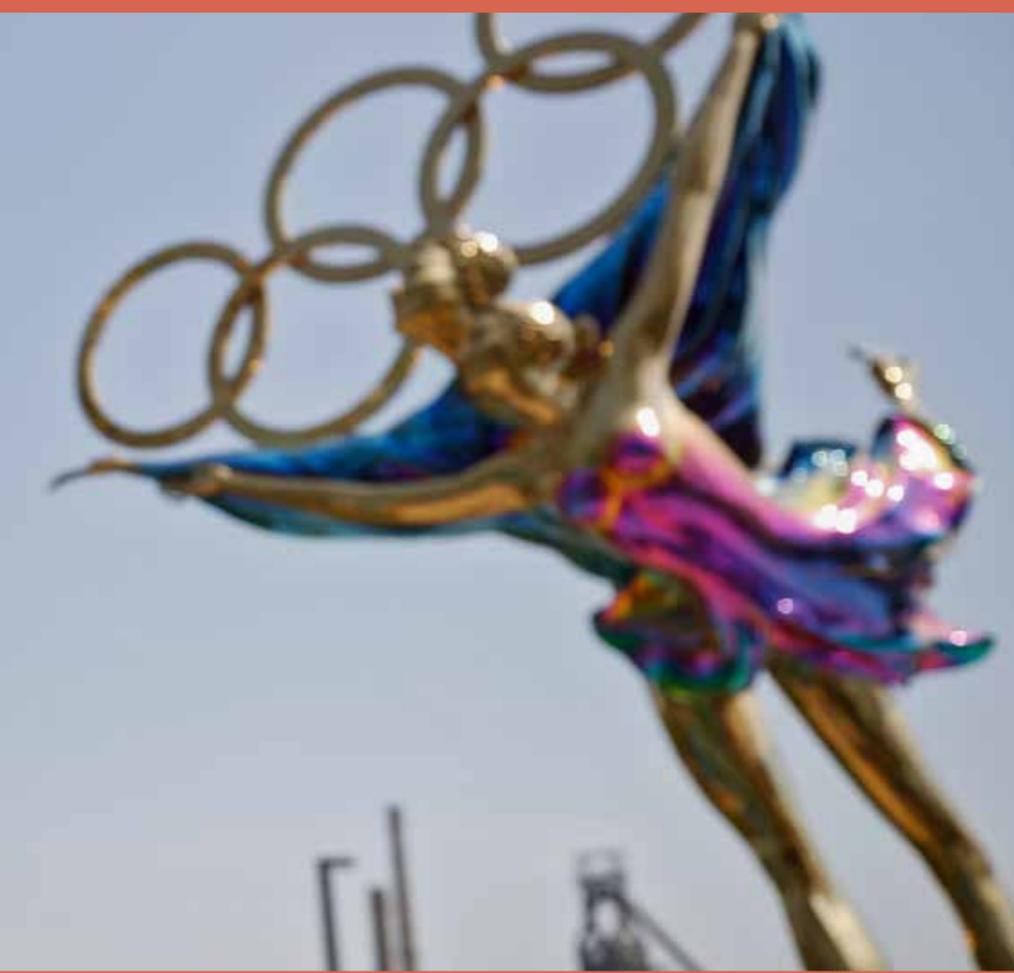
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# of Olympics



China was the only major economy to grow last year after the ruling party declared the virus under control in March and allowed factories, shops and offices to reopen. Output in the United States, Europe and Japan contracted.

Economic output rose 1.3% over the previous quarter in the three months ending in June, better than 0.6% in January-March but among the past decade's weakest quarters.

The International Monetary Fund and private sector forecasters have lowered economic growth forecasts but still expect output to rise by as much as 8.5% this year, up sharply from last year's multi-decade low of 2.3% and well above the ruling party target of "more than 6%."

Exports in August rose 25.6% over a year earlier, but retail spending growth slowed to 2.5% from July's 8.5%.

"People are clearly worried that they could get trapped in tourist destinations if Covid cases emerge," economist Iris Pang of ING said in a report.

Authorities on Sept. 12 suspended most access to Putian, a city of 2.9 million people in Fujian province, after an outbreak that an official newspaper, Global Times, said might have begun with a resident who returned from Singapore. Cinemas, bars and other public facilities were closed. Supermarkets and restaurants were ordered to limit customer numbers.

Xiamen, a coastal business center in Fujian with 3.5 million people, closed off access to some neighborhoods after cases were detected there. Schools shut down.

An entrepreneur who sells shoes made in Putian online said the outbreak and anti-disease controls have shut down that local industry.

"Customers are urging us to deliver goods, but factories have stopped working," said the merchant, Su Ye. She said September and October usually are busy, but disruptions in production and delivery "will cause orders to drop a lot."

"Many orders were canceled because of our

slow delivery," Su said.

The Global Times said a man who returned from Singapore on Aug. 4 was suspected of spreading the virus to Putian.

The traveler, identified by the surname Lin, underwent a 14-day quarantine and nine nucleic acid and serologic tests, all of which were negative, the Global Times said. But he tested positive on Sept. 10.

Despite that, the screening and quarantine process is working properly, according to Yu Changping, a physician at the Department of Respiratory Medicine of People's Hospital of Wuhan University.

"There is no special change in the situation," said Yu. "There is no need to adopt measures different from the past."

Some experts suggest China might need to adopt more flexible tactics because "zero tolerance" is too disruptive and new variants might be impossible to eradicate.

"The bottom line is, I don't think they can keep the virus out, and they need to live with the reality," said Nicholas Thomas, a professor of health security at the City University of Hong Kong.

Chinese leaders have tried to squelch public discussion of such a possible change.

A prominent disease expert, Zhang Wenzhong, faced official criticism after he said on his widely read social media account the world needs to "learn to coexist with the virus."

A former health minister rejected Zhang's suggestion in a commentary published by the Communist Party newspaper People's Daily. The university that awarded Zhang's PhD in 2000 announced an investigation of accusations of plagiarism but concluded his work "met all the criteria" for the degree.

For now, tourist arrivals from abroad are shut down. That has devastated high-end hotels and resorts.

Some engineers and other employees who were abroad when the government shut down travel in early 2020 have been allowed to return,

but lawyers and others say they were turned away.

Authorities also are trying to keep Chinese from leaving the country. The government refuses to issue or renew passports without an important need to travel. Businesspeople have been told that doesn't include visiting customers or business partners.

The government announced last week it had vaccinated just over 1 billion people, or 71% of its population.

But while regulators have given emergency approval to nine coronavirus vaccines, most are made by local companies Sinopharm or Sinovac. China has yet to approve BioNTech, Moderna or other vaccines used abroad.

"As far as the vaccine strategy is, it's been very successful, the trouble is the Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines are not very efficacious against delta," Thomas said.

As is true elsewhere, online grocers and other e-commerce have reaped a windfall from shutdowns and lockdowns.

But a wave of bankruptcies has hit small shops, restaurants and other businesses.

China's populous domestic market means travel restrictions "do not impact it as much as countries such as Thailand that depend heavily on tourism," said Trinh Nguyen of Natixis, a French financial firm, in an email.

In another blow to tourism, the government told students and teachers to avoid travel during September's Mid-Autumn Festival and the Oct. 1-7 National Day break.

"There used to be a silver September and a golden October for travel, but now we have nothing," said Wang, the travel agency manager in Tianjin.

People suffering from cancer, heart disease and other chronic, potentially life-threatening conditions, meanwhile have struggled to get treatment as hospitals shut down other departments to focus on treating coronavirus patients or refused to accept cases deemed non-emergency. **MDT/AP**



FRANCE MACAU Chamber of Commerce  
法國澳門工商會

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Speaker: Prof. Glenn McCartney, Associate Dean, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Macau

FMCC Breakfast Meeting  
Wednesday, 29 September 2021



**Introduction:**  
The Macau gaming law revision is under a 45-day public consultation. The potential impact on gaming operators created worries that rippled through the markets. How much did we know? What is next? Join us and hear Prof. Glenn McCartney's comments and analysis on this gripping topic.

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**Date: Wednesday, 29 September, 2021**  
**Time: 9:00a.m. - 10:30a.m.**  
**Venue: Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16**  
Baccara Ballroom, 6th floor

- 2021 FMCC members join free-of-charge\*
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UNITED NATIONS

# World leaders to attend General Assembly and face many escalating crises

EDITH M. LEDERER,  
NEW YORK

**W**ORLD leaders will be back at the United Nations for the first time in two years today [Macau time] with a formidable agenda of escalating crises to tackle, including the still raging COVID-19 pandemic and a relentlessly warming planet.

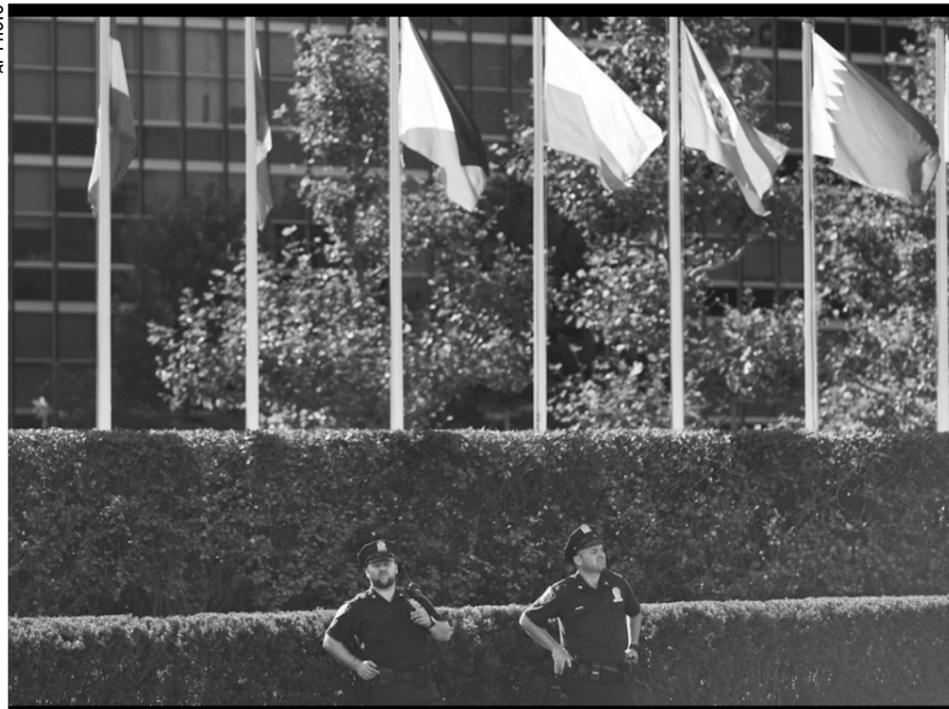
Other pressing issues are rising U.S.-China tensions, Afghanistan's unsettled future under its new Taliban rulers and ongoing conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region.

Last year, no leaders came to the U.N. because the coronavirus was sweeping the globe, so all their addresses were pre-recorded. This year, the General Assembly offered leaders a choice of coming to New York or remaining online, and more than 100 heads of state and government decided to appear in person in the General Assembly hall.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who opens the week-long event, "will pull no punches in expressing his concern about the state of the world, and he will lay out a vision to bridge the numerous divides that stand in the way of progress," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

By tradition, the first country to speak is Brazil, whose president, Jair Bolsonaro, isn't vaccinated. He reiterated last Thursday that he doesn't plan to get the shot any time soon, justifying his refusal by saying he had COVID-19 and therefore has a high level of antibodies.

A key issue ahead of the meetings has been COVID-19 entry requirements for leaders to the United States — and to the U.N. headquarters itself. The U.S. requires a vaccination or a recent COVID-19 test, and the U.N. will operate on an honor system whe-



reby anyone entering the complex attests that they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and have not tested positive in the last 10 days.

The three most closely watched speakers this morning are expected to be U.S. President Joe Biden, appearing at the U.N. for the first time since his defeat of Donald Trump in the November election, China's President Xi Jinping, who in a surprise move will deliver a video address, and Iran's recently elected hardline President Ebrahim Raisi.

Ahead of the opening of the General Assembly's annual General Debate, Guterres issued a dire warning that the world could be plunged into a new and probably more dangerous Cold War unless the United States and China repair their "totally dysfunctional" relationship.

The U.N. chief said in an interview this weekend with The Associated Press that Washington and Beijing should be cooperating on the climate crisis and negotiating on trade and technology, but "unfortunately, today we only have confrontation" including over human rights and geostrategic problems mainly in the South China Sea.

Speaking last week about Biden's speech, Richard Gowan, U.N. director of the International Crisis Group, said "the really significant question is exactly how he frames relations with China." He predicted that Biden "won't be as forthright in criticism of China as Trump was, especially in 2019 and 2020," but rather will "try and cast China as a country that is challenging the rules-based world order and a country that should not be trusted with leadership of the international system."

On the latest speakers list released earlier this month, China's speech was supposed to be delivered on Friday by a deputy prime minister. But the U.N. confirmed yesterday [Macau time] that Xi will give the country's video address instead.

His speech and any comments about the U.S. rivalry are certain to be closely watched and analyzed.

Other leaders scheduled to speak in person during the meeting, which ends Sept. 27, include King Abdullah II of Jordan, the president of Venezuela, and the prime ministers of Japan, India and the United Kingdom along with Israel's new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Palestinian President Mahmoud

Abbas.

Leaders delivering pre-recorded statements this year include the presidents of Egypt, Indonesia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. French President Emmanuel Macron was supposed to deliver a pre-recorded statement, but the government said Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian will now deliver the country's address virtually on the final day.

France and China have reacted angrily to the surprise announcement by Biden, alongside the leaders of Australia and Britain, of a deal to provide Australia with at least eight nuclear-powered submarines. Australia had signed a contract worth at least \$66 billion for a dozen French conventional diesel-electric submarines and their construction was already under way.

Le Drian told a news conference that there is a "crisis of trust" between the United States and its oldest ally, France, as well as Europe, which has been excluded from the new US-UK-Australia alliance focused on the Indo-Pacific and aimed at confrontation with China. He said Europeans "should not be left behind," and need to define their own strategic interests. MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 2001 SIMPSON SMUGGLED INTO AFGHANISTAN



The BBC's world affairs editor has become the only television reporter to broadcast from Taliban-held Afghanistan as the country prepares for an American attack.

John Simpson and a cameraman were smuggled into the Nangarhar Province, near the border with Pakistan, by heavily armed smugglers.

On the advice of their escorts, the two men donned burqas - the traditional full-length garment compulsory for all women living in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.

The United States is targeting Osama Bin Laden and other al-Qaeda members present in Afghanistan after blaming them for the 11 September attacks.

Mr Simpson, who has reported from many of the world's trouble spots over the past 20 years, said the disguises worked "superbly", despite both of them being more than six feet tall.

"Merely putting on the burqa, I found, has an extraordinary effect - it seems to make you disappear," he said.

"Behind their burqa, women have become an invisible sex in Afghanistan."

The BBC duo spent several hours in Afghanistan before being taken back over the border into Pakistan.

Mr Simpson reported a heavy Taliban presence along large stretches of the frontier, but said there was still an "eerie emptiness" in the province they visited.

He said people appeared to have either fled their homes in anticipation of an American attack or were keeping their heads down.

The BBC correspondent also noted talk in Afghanistan of a "gradual defection" from the Taliban as their popularity declined.

"The militias and smaller contingents which joined them back in 1996 when they were plainly winning [are beginning] to have second thoughts now," he said.

"People say they are starting to be corrupted by power."

The Taliban have controlled large areas of Afghanistan for the past five years. The mission of leader Mullah Mohammed Omah and his fighters was to make the country the world's purest Islamic state.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The US attack began on 7 October, with air strikes targeting the airports of Kandahar and Kabul, and terrorist training camps near Jalalabad.

The offensive was the first retaliatory response to the 11 September 2001 terror attacks in which nearly 3,000 people died. Within three months the Taliban were effectively ousted.

Osama Bin Laden has so far eluded capture - though other members of al-Qaeda have been hunted down by coalition forces and the Pakistani military.

Nato's International Security Assistance Force began peace-keeping duties in 2002 and maintains a heavy presence in Afghanistan.

Infighting between local commanders over power and territory became a feature of the post-Taliban period. The authorities in Kabul have been able to exert little control beyond the capital and militant violence has continued.

In September 2006 there were 5,500 British troops deployed in the country as part of an international force. That figure rises to 5,800 in October 2006. Of those already in Afghanistan, 1,300 are in Kabul and 4,200 are in the southern province of Helmand.

John Simpson went on to report from northern Iraq when the US and Britain attacked the country in 2003.

In April 2003 he was injured in a "friendly fire" attack by a US Navy jet which killed his Iraqi translator.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS



### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

The sun moves forward into romantic Libra today, shining its guiding light onto the world of your interpersonal relationships. No matter your status, partnership matters take on major importance.



### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

It's been critical that you let yourself embrace life's pleasures in recent weeks, Taurus. Romance, creativity, and a desire for play have refreshed your sense of spirit.



### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

As a Gemini, you tend to be constantly on the go. Yet, the last few weeks have encouraged you to stay put and reevaluate the familial roots beneath your feet.



### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

The sun moves forward into peace-seeking Libra this morning, focusing your energy on reconnecting to your roots, family matters, and exploring ancient subconscious material.



### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You're ready to burst forth and be seen once more, Leo! The past few weeks have seen you focusing on your finances and keeping your nose to the grindstone with work.



### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Are you ready to blossom into the vision you hold for yourself, Virgo? After a few weeks of hard focus on your identity and individuality, you're ready to take your self-expansion to the next level.



### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

This is your time to shine, Libra! You're emerging from the introspective, dark, and emotional cavern you've been hiding out in mentally today as the sun moves forward into your sign.



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Today's skies herald an energetic shift as the sun moves forward into peace-seeking Libra, creating a need to rest, restore, and explore what needs pruning in your mental landscape.



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

The sun moves forward into balance-keeping Libra this morning, propelling you forward into a new focus around community, friends, and the goals you currently hold.



### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Today's cosmic landscape works to help you break up any stagnant issues around your long-term goals, Capricorn. In that process, you have to be willing to relinquish some level of control.



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Today's skies witness the sun's entrance into socially-active Libra, pushing your mental focus onward to education, travel, and expansion of your world.



### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Intimate partnerships have absorbed your focus in recent weeks, Pisces. You've learned a lot about your own expectations and projections in love. Now, it's time to go one step deeper.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



## SUDOKU

### EASY

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

### EASY+

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

### MEDIUM

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

### HARD

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

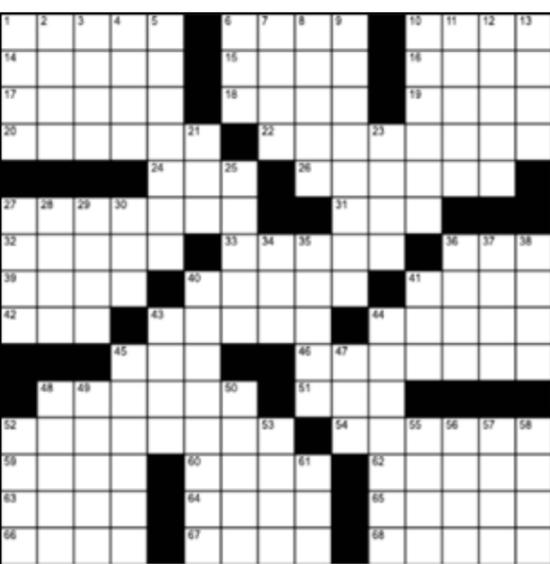
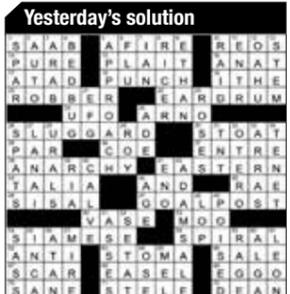
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	14	27	fine
Harbin	13	17	rain
Tianjin	20	33	fine
Urumqi	22	29	cloudy
Xi'an	21	34	fine
Lhasa	18	25	fine
Chengdu	25	33	thunderstorms
Chongqing	25	34	cloudy
Kunming	24	35	cloudy
Nanjing	17	28	cloudy
Shanghai	25	31	thunderstorms
Wuhan	20	33	fine
Hangzhou	13	17	showers
Taipei	19	33	fine
Guangzhou	10	26	fine
Hong Kong	19	30	fine
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	6	8	rain
Frankfurt	7	21	overcast
Paris	9	22	overcast
London	12	22	overcast
New York	22	27	rain

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Elevator stop; 6- Meager; 10- Opaque gemstone; 14- TV producer Michaels; 15- Assistant; 16- Actress Downey; 17- Brightly colored lizard; 18- Planetary revolution; 19- Gusto; 20- Holy city?; 22- Twelve pence; 24- Joan of \_\_\_\_ French heroine; 26- Potemkin setting; 27- Cleansing preparation; 31- "\_\_\_\_ had it!"; 32- Adjust to zero; 33- Obscure road; 36- Agnus \_\_\_\_; 39- 1982 Disney film; 40- Skater Boitano; 41- Cattle group; 42- Comics bark; 43- Snares; 44- Short crowbar; 45- Stutz contemporary; 46- Reclusive; 48- Penetrate; 51- Endeavor; 52- Hot and humid; 54- Light up; 59- Caucus state; 60- Double curve; 62- Backing for an exhibit; 63- Author Hunter; 64- Optical device; 65- Beam; 66- Convey; 67- Camaro model; 68- Sudden outpouring;

DOWN: 1- Planar; 2- Trademark; 3- Word that can precede hygiene, tradition and agreement; 4- Treater's words; 5- Adjust again; 6- For example; 7- Untruths, tells falsehoods; 8- Boise's state; 9- Longitude; 10- Ultimatum words; 11- Ancient Greek city-state; 12- Maytag brand; 13- Singer k.d.; 21- Acapulco gold; 23- Tax; 25- Snake charmer's snake; 27- Lady of Sp.; 28- German Mister; 29- Starting; 30- Chess pieces; 34- Peke squeak; 35- Attended; 36- Moore of "G.I. Jane"; 37- Writer Bombeck; 38- Pastoral poem; 40- Green flower vegetable; 41- Sot's sound; 43- Polo of "Meet the Parents"; 44- Unhappy; 45- Having a wavy margin; 47- Hindu title; 48- Establish as the truth; 49- Herbert Hoover, for one; 50- Enthusiastic; 52- Connections; 53- Jester Jay; 55- Light source; 56- Voice of America org.; 57- Hot sandwich; 58- Gen. Robert \_\_\_\_; 61- Computer key;



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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**Rain Dance Property**

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AD

AP PHOTO

EXPLAINER

# EVERGRANDE'S DEBT STRUGGLE RATTLES INVESTORS

A map in Beijing showing Evergrande development projects in China

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

**G**LOBAL investors are watching nervously as one of China's biggest real estate developers struggles to avoid defaulting on tens of billions of dollars of debt, fueling fears of possible wider shock waves for the financial system.

Chinese regulators have yet to say what they might do about Evergrande Group. Economists expect Beijing to intervene if Evergrande and lenders can't agree on how to handle its debts. But any official resolution is expected to involve losses for banks and bondholders.

The government "doesn't want to be seen as engineering a bail out" but is likely to organize a debt restructuring to "reduce systemic risk and contain economic disruption," Tommy Wu of Oxford Economics said in a report.

Evergrande is the biggest casualty yet from the ruling Communist Party's effort to rein in surging debt levels Beijing sees as a possible threat to the economy.

Investors are watching how the developer headquartered in the southern city of Shenzhen near Hong Kong handles an interest payment due Thursday on one of its bonds.

A look at Evergrande and anxiety about its debt troubles:

## WHAT IS EVERGRANDE?

Evergrande Group, founded in 1996, is one of China's biggest builders of apartments, office towers and shopping malls and one of its biggest private sector conglomerates.

The company says it has more than 200,000 employees and supports 3.8 million jobs in construction and other industries. Evergrande says it has 1,300 projects in 280 cities and assets worth 2.3 trillion yuan (\$350 billion).

Evergrande's founder, Xu Jiayin, was China's richest entrepreneur in 2017 with a net worth of \$43 billion, according to the Hurun Report, which follows China's wealthy. He has tumbled down the list as internet industries boomed but still ranked as China's richest real estate developer last year. He also topped Hurun's 2020 list of philanthropists, giving away an estimated 2.8 billion yuan (\$420 million).

Evergrande has branched out into electric vehicles, theme park development, health clinics, mineral water and other businesses.

## WHAT'S THE IMPACT SO FAR?

Evergrande's Hong Kong-traded shares have fallen 85% since early 2021. Its bonds are trading at

an equally deep discount.

Xu built Evergrande on borrowed money, possibly even more so than rivals in an industry that depends on debt. As of June 30, Evergrande reported 2 trillion yuan (\$310 billion) of outstanding debts to bondholders, banks, construction contractors and other creditors.

Of that debt, 240 billion yuan (\$37.3 billion) was due within a year, down 28.5% from the end of 2020 but nearly triple Evergrande's 86.8 billion yuan (\$13.5 billion) in cash holdings, according to a company financial report.

In early 2021, Evergrande forecast its total annual transaction volume would surpass 2 trillion yuan (\$310 billion). It reported a \$1.4 billion first-half profit but says sales are weakening because news of its cash crunch is making would-be buyers nervous.

## WHY NOW?

Evergrande was caught out by new limits regulators imposed on real estate-related borrowing as part of the Communist Party's marathon campaign to reduce reliance on debt.

Economists have been warning China's rising debt is a potential

threat for more than a decade. The ruling party has made reducing such financial risks a priority since 2018. But total corporate, government and household borrowing rose to nearly 300% of economic output last year from 270% in 2018. That's unusually high for a middle-income country.

News reports indicate Evergrande borrowed everywhere it could, including by requiring employees of its construction contractors to buy its debt.

In 2017, state-owned China Citic Bank in Shenzhen agreed to lend 40 billion yuan (\$6.2 billion) for an Evergrande project only after its executives agreed to invest at least 3 million yuan (\$465,000) each, according to the business news magazine Caixin.

## WHAT ABOUT OTHER DEVELOPERS?

Other major developers such as Vanke Co., state-owned Poly Group and Wanda Group have not reported similar problems. But hundreds of smaller developers have shut down since regulators in 2017 started tightening control over fundraising tactics such as selling apartments before construction begins.

Chinese residential real estate is regarded as posing little risk to the financial system, however, because most apartments are paid for with cash, not mortgages. That makes a wave of defaults like those in the United States after the 2008 crisis unlikely and easier for banks to manage.

"Given how bloated China's property developers are, there could be a whole wave of defaults around the corner," but Beijing has resources "to prevent a full-blown Chinese credit crunch," Simon MacAdam of Capital Economics said in a report. "For all its flaws, this is one advantage of having a tightly controlled financial system versus a more free-market system."

## IS THERE RISK OUTSIDE CHINA?

Some commentators suggest Evergrande might become China's "Lehman moment," referring

to the failure of Wall Street bank Lehman Brothers, a forerunner to the 2008 crisis. But economists say the risk of wider financial market contagion is low.

"A managed default or even messy collapse of Evergrande would have little global impact beyond some market turbulence," said MacAdam of Capital Economics.

Evergrande has \$18 billion of outstanding foreign-currency bonds, but much of that is held by Chinese banks and other institutions. Unlike Lehman, whose assets were financial instruments whose prices can swing wildly, Evergrande has 1.4 trillion yuan (\$215 billion) of land and partially completed projects with relatively stable prices.

In the unlikely event of an outright default, China's banking system has an annual profit of 1.9 trillion yuan and reserves of 5.4 trillion yuan against bad loans, "which could easily absorb the loss," Larry Hu and Xinyu Ji of Macquarie Group said in a report.

## WHAT NEXT?

Investors are waiting to see what Chinese regulators might do, but analysts say they appear to be focused on protecting home buyers by ensuring apartments already paid for are completed.

The government has injected money into other insolvent Chinese companies, but economists say Beijing appears determined to avoid doing that with Evergrande.

In August, Huarong Asset Management Co., Ltd., the biggest of a group of companies created to help resolve bad loans held by state banks, was bailed out by a capital injection from state-owned companies after it lost 102.9 billion yuan (\$15.9 billion) last year.

In a letter yesterday to employees, Xu expressed confidence the company will survive.

"Evergrande will surely get out of the darkest moment as soon as possible," Xu said in the letter marking the traditional Mid-Autumn Festival. **MDT/AP**

## CORPORATE BITS

### Sands Cares celebrates Mid-Autumn Festival with elderly



Sands Cares Ambassadors celebrated an early Mid-Autumn Festival with members of the public last week, hosting over 100 elderly persons with dementia and their caregivers from Lar de Cuida-

dos "Sol Nascente" da Areia Preta for activities at The Londoner Macao.

From Tuesday through Thursday last week, groups of Sands Cares Ambassadors treated the elderly

guests and their caregivers to lunch at the Crystal Jade La Mian Xiao Long Bao restaurant at The Londoner Macao.

The center's elderly residents haven't been able to go for outings over the last few months because of the pandemic; and due to the challenges associated with dementia, some haven't ventured out for two years.

"Caring for the elderly is a virtue that our community treasures, and it is also an important part of what we like to express [at] Sands Cares," said Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

### GEG hosts movie session in celebration of Mid-Autumn Festival



With the approach of the Mid-Autumn Festival, Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) invited members and clients of local organizations to the "Mid-Autumn Fun - Zero to Hero" Movie Screening and Sharing Session.

During the event, GEG also gave the participants specially designed cookies and traditional mooncakes.

The event was held at Galaxy Cinemas in Galaxy Macau, with the participation of over 160 members and their fami-

lies from the four social service associations and GEG team members.

These associations included Macao Special Olympics (MSO), the Richmond Fellowship of Macau, Macau IC2 Association, Concordia School for Special Education, as well as team members from the GEG Runner's Club and the Volunteer Team.

Upholding its philosophy of "what is taken from the community is to be used for the good of the community," GEG said that it has held different community events during various festive seasons in order to spread love and care in the community.

**RUGBY**

# South Africa beats Kenya, trashes Spain for Vancouver sevens title

**SOUTH AFRICA 38, KENYA 5**

**W**INGER Angelo Davids two tries in the opening five minutes to lead South Africa to a 38-5 win over Kenya and the Vancouver Sevens men's title.

The pair of tries in the final were among 10 that Davids, who has also played 15-a-side Super Rugby with South Africa's Stormers, scored in six matches in the two-day sevens tournament.

Calum Randle scored a pair of first-half tries as Britain beat Ireland 24-14 for third place.

The tournament was missing many of its top-ranked teams. Despite the



Spain's Enrique Bolinches runs past pyrotechnics before an HSBC Canada Sevens rugby match against Canada in Vancouver

series recommencing after an 18-month layoff, Tokyo 2020 Olympic gold medalists Fiji, silver medalists

New Zealand, Australia and Samoa did not play due to COVID-19 quarantine and travel restrictions.

In the match for fifth place, Matai Leuta scored tries in the eighth and 12th minutes as the U.S. beat Canada 26-7.

In quarterfinals completed Sunday, Ireland beat Hong Kong 12-7, Kenya defeated the United States 19-14, Britain beat Canada 31-5 and South Africa overwhelmed Spain 54-5.

In the women's Fast Four, Britain beat the U.S. 34-12 in the gold medal match and Canada defeated Mexico 48-0 for third place in the four-team event. Jasmine Joyce scored twice in the opening two minutes and added a third try in the eighth to lead Britain.

The sevens series moves to Edmonton, Alberta next weekend. MDT/AP

**FOOTBALL**

# AUSTRALIAN REF TO BECOME FIRST OVERSEAS OFFICIAL IN EPL GAME

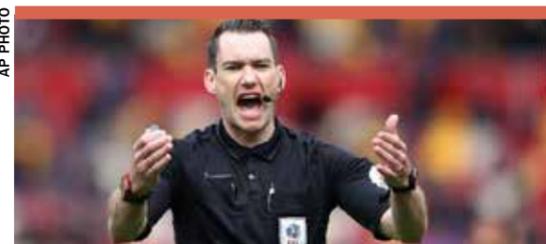
**A**USTRALIAN referee Jarred Gillett will become the first overseas official to take charge of a game in the English Premier League on Saturday.

Gillett will referee the match between Watford and Newcastle, the league said yesterday [Macau time].

Gillett, 34, was promoted to the highest Select Group of referees by Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL) ahead of the current 2021/22 season in June.

He spent nine years in his native country officiating in the A-League, Australia's highest professional men's soccer league, before moving to England more than two years ago to referee in the EFL. Gillett has been officiating in English soccer's lower leagues since April 2019.

He was promoted to a panel of Premier League referees ahead of this season and has already worked as a video assistant referee. MDT/AP



Australian referee Jarred Gillett

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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**CLIMATE CHANGE IS  
 A BURNING ISSUE  
 ON WHICH CHINA,  
 US CAN COOPERATE**

With the opening of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly today [Macau time], hopes are high that concrete measures will be forthcoming to address such pressing global issues as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

Yet the lingering tensions between China and the United States have raised worries that the collective efforts needed to address these common challenges could be compromised. How things will unfold depends largely on how much international cooperation and collaboration can be forged, especially in the form of constructive engagement between the world's two largest economies.

This has prompted UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to call for the end to confrontations and reestablishing of "a functional relationship" between the two countries. "We need to avoid at all cost a Cold War that would be different from the past one, and probably more dangerous and more difficult to manage," Guterres said in an interview at the weekend.

Sino-US ties, the most important among all international relations, are experiencing a historical low mainly due to the strategic misjudgment and geopolitical miscalculation of some US politicians who see China as a threat that must be contained at all costs. If there is a new Cold War looming on the horizon, it is one that will be started by the US, not by China.

China will never waiver in shouldering its international responsibility to work in collaboration with other countries, including the US, to tackle global challenges such as the pandemic and climate change.

Climate change is widely viewed as the issue on which China and the US can find the most common ground, and thus the one that will enable them to rebuild mutual trust.

Certainly, the climate crisis is a clear and present danger not only to themselves but the whole world.

Yet the international consensus reached in Paris on actively responding to climate change based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and jointly promoting the transition to green and low-carbon development seems to be faltering, even though a UN analysis of country pledges under the Paris Agreement showed global emissions will be 16 percent higher in 2030 than they were in 2010 — instead of the 45 percent reduction by 2030 that scientists say is needed to prevent disastrous climate change.

China and the US, as the world's top carbon emitters, share a common responsibility to pursue practical cooperation and take the lead in tackling climate change.

It would be for their own good and the interests of the world if the two countries strived to strengthen their engagement and dialogue to advance coordination and cooperation on climate change. (See p7)

Pakistan's foreign minister says Afghanistan's new Taliban rulers should understand that if they want recognition and assistance in rebuilding the war-battered country "they have to be more sensitive and more receptive to international opinion and norms."

Shah Mahmood Qureshi said yesterday that countries are watching to see how things evolve in Afghanistan before considering recognition. He says, "I don't think anyone is in a rush to recognize at this stage."

The Pakistani minister says his country's objective is peace and stability in Afghanistan and to achieve that "we would suggest to

Afghans that they should have an inclusive government." He says their initial statements indicate they aren't averse to the idea, so "let's see."

Qureshi expresses hope the Taliban live up to their promise "that girls and women would be allowed to go to school, college and university."

Qureshi strongly urges the United States and other countries that have frozen money from the former Afghan government to release it because "that's Afghan money that should be spent on Afghan people."

**THAILAND URGED NOT TO  
 DEPORT TRANS WOMAN  
 CHARGED IN MALAYSIA**

A human rights group urged Thailand not to deport a transgender businesswoman to her home country of Malaysia, where she is charged under Islamic laws for insulting Islam by cross-dressing.

Malaysian police are seeking to extradite Nur Sajat, 36, who left the country after she was charged in an Islamic court in January for bringing contempt to Islam by dressing in feminine clothing at a religious event in 2018. Sajat, who runs a cosmetics business, faces up to three years in jail for the offense.

Sajat failed to appear for a February court hearing and reportedly received death threats after she mulled renouncing Islam in a video on social media that has now been removed.

Malaysian police said in a statement late Monday that Sajat was detained by Thai authorities on Sept 8 for having an invalid passport. She was charged with immigration offenses and released on bail. The statement didn't say why her passport was canceled. Police said she is wanted in Malaysia for other offenses,



Nur Sajat

including obstructing authorities in carrying out their duties.

Phil Robertson, Human Rights Watch deputy Asia director, said the U.N. Refugee Agency has granted Sajat refugee status and that she shouldn't be sent back under any circumstances.

"She needs to be sent to a country that will offer rights protections, not persecuted for being #LGBT which is what will happen if she is sent to Malaysia," he tweeted late Monday. Local media reported that Sajat plans to seek refuge

in Australia.

The UNHCR agency couldn't be reached for comment yesterday.

Malaysia has a dual-track legal system. Shariah laws govern Muslims, who account for two-thirds of Malaysia's 32 million people, in family, marriage and personal issues. Ethnic Chinese, Indian and other minorities are covered by civil laws.

Rights activists say the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community has faced increasing harassment with the rise of conservative Islam. MDT/AP



**Kosovo-Serbia** border yesterday remained blocked by ethnic Kosovo Serbs protesting a move by Kosovo authorities to start removing Serbian license plates from cars entering the country. Trucks have blocked the road to the Jarinje and Brnjak border crossing where small groups of Serbs spent the night in tents. An Associated Press photographer wasn't let onto the road. Other people crossed the border on foot.



**British** police said yesterday they are charging a third Russian suspect in the 2018 nerve agent attack on a former Russian agent in England. Scotland Yard said prosecutors believe there is sufficient evidence to charge Denis Sergeev, who went by the alias "Sergey Fedotov," with conspiracy to murder, attempted murder, possessing and using a chemical weapon, and causing grievous bodily harm.



**Netherlands** The Dutch king outlined a pared-back government plan for the coming year yesterday in his traditional speech opening the new parliamentary term that came amid drawn-out negotiations to form a new ruling coalition. With the government of Prime Minister Mark Rutte in caretaker mode since a March general election and no simple path to a new administration, no major plans were unveiled in the king's speech that is written by the government.

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

AP Photo/Vincent Yu



People visit and watch decorations during the Mid-Autumn Festival at Victoria park in Hong Kong. The festival falls on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month of the Chinese calendar and is marked by Chinese families and friends gathering to eat Chinese mooncakes and pomelos together.

**HOLIDAY TIMES**

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Friday, September 24. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times. Happy Mid-Autumn Fest.