



**TOP COURT HAS RULED IN FAVOR OF A LIFEGUARD SERVICE PROVIDER IN AN ALLEGED BREACH OF CONTRACT CASE CAUSED BY AN EMPLOYEE STRIKE ACTION**

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AP PHOTO



**Israel** Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said he would travel to the United Arab Emirates yesterday, the first visit by an Israeli premier, as part of a blitz of regional diplomacy against the backdrop of struggling nuclear talks with Iran. Israel has watched with concern as Iran has pushed a hard line against negotiators meeting in Vienna, at once demanding sanctions relief while accelerating its nuclear program. In recent weeks, Israel has dispatched its top diplomat and its defense and spy chiefs to meet allies in Europe, the U.S. and the Mideast to push for a firmer approach to Iran.

AP PHOTO



**India** Tens of thousands of jubilant Indian farmers on Saturday cleared protest sites on the capital's outskirts and began returning home, marking an end to their yearlong demonstrations against agricultural reforms that were repealed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in a rare retreat. Farmers dismantled their makeshift accommodations at multiple protest sites and started to vacate long stretches of highways ringing New Delhi where they have camped since November last year. Hundreds of them waved green and white flags and danced to celebrate their victory as they rode tractors, jeeps and cars.

AP PHOTO



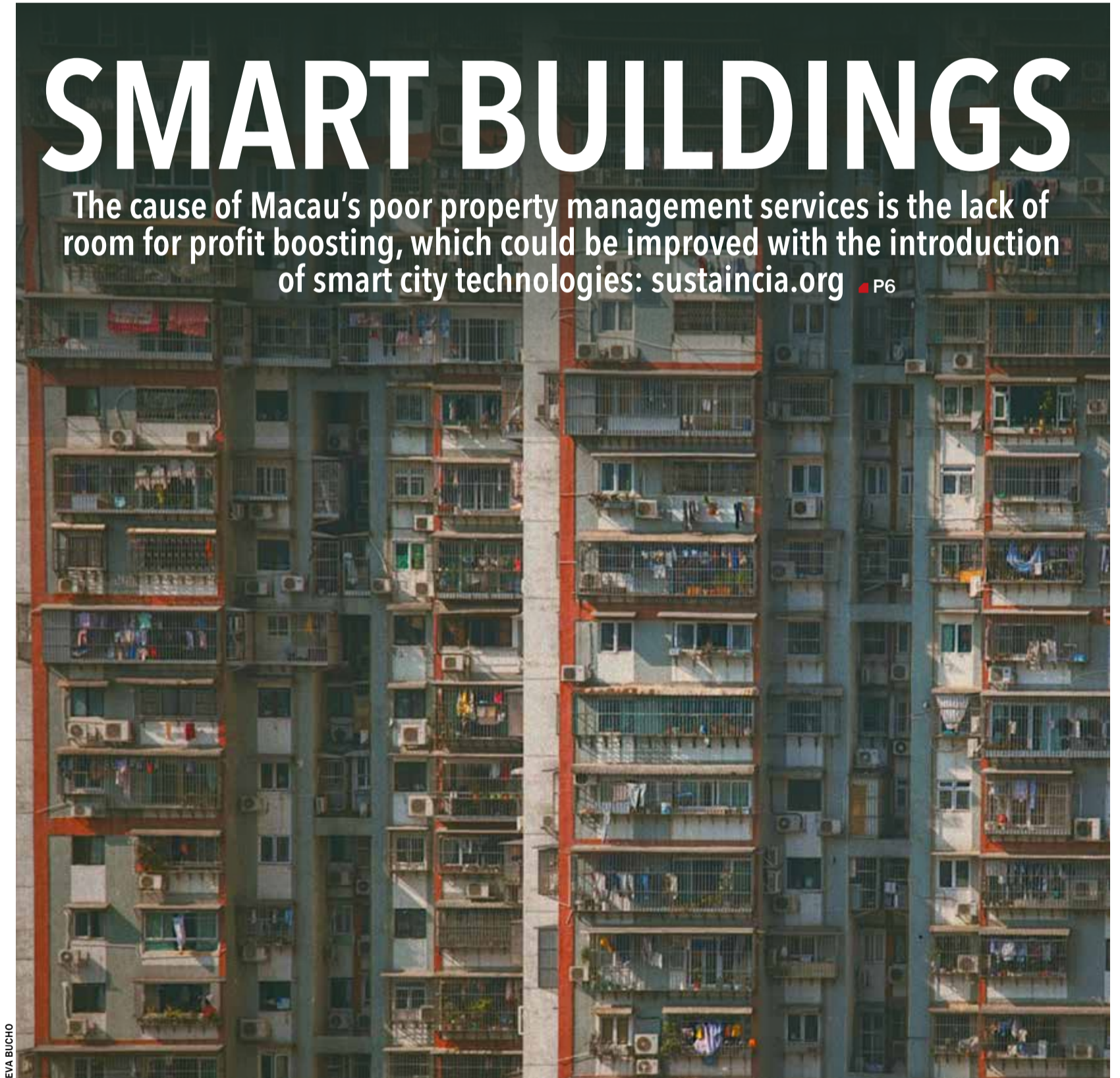
**Palestine** Palestinians took part in rare municipal elections across the occupied West Bank on Saturday, following months of simmering anger towards their government and the cancellation of promised parliamentary and presidential elections earlier this year. Some 400,000 Palestinians are eligible to vote in the election where they will select representatives for 154 village councils under the jurisdiction of the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority.

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GAME OVER

# SUNCITY OFFICIALLY CEASES ALL OPERATIONS, DSAL CREATES SPECIAL COUNTER

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Suncity Gaming Promotion Company has officially ceased all operations, the company announced in a notice to all employees.

In the notice, the company explained that operations ceased because of the suspension of cooperative relationships with the gaming concessionaires, as well as the need to cooperate with judicial procedures following the detention of the company's CEO, Alvin Chau.

Claiming force majeure, the company is said to be terminating all operations effective from last Friday, December 10.

The company also announced that it will work in cooperation with relevant government departments to ensure a smooth transition, noting that arrangements for staff will be communicated through department heads at a later stage.

Several experts, speaking to the Times when Chau was detained and accused of running a criminal organization as well as crimes related to money laundering, warned that the case would likely have broader implications for the sector and could lead to the end of operations for all gaming promoters in Macau,



MDT ARCHIVE/BLOOMBERG

also known as junkets.

Macau-based gaming expert Ben Lee told the Times that, in his opinion, the Suncity case would prompt a full restructure of junket licensing, as well as gaming concessions.

Gaming law expert Carlos Lobo expressed a similar opinion, saying that the reper-

cussions of this case on other junkets would be inevitable.

"We are at an extremely complex moment, [and] we will have to wait a while to understand the scale of the impact – but to me, this foreshadows the end of the junket system in Macau," Lobo said.

Also speaking to the Times, Steve Vickers, a specialist in

Political and Corporate Risk Consultancy and CEO of Steve Vickers and Associates, said he thought that the case would be a "game changer."

"The game has certainly changed, [but] this is not doomsday – as long as Macau is the only place in China where you can place a bet, and as long as Chinese people

love to bet, then Macau will always do well. It just won't be the only game in town," Vickers said.

## GOV'T ESTABLISHES EMERGENCY COUNTER

Just a few days after stating that staff members from recently closed casino VIP rooms should not be affected, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) and the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) have jointly announced the establishment of an emergency office to address the cases of workers dismissed from junket companies and casino VIP rooms.

In a joint press statement issued yesterday, the DSAL and the DICJ expressed concerns about "the impact of the Suncity incident on their employees' labor relations."

In this statement, the DSAL noted having received several inquiries and requests for help and so the bureau has decided to set up a special counter at the Tai Peng Industrial Building branch, in the surroundings of the border gate.

This counter opens from today to provide labor rights consultations and assist with registration for affected employees' government support services.

# Top court rules for Surf Hong in breach of contract lawsuit

**T**HE Court of Final Appeal has ruled in favor of a lifeguard service provider in an alleged breach of contract case caused by an employee strike action, but the judgement is still pending.

On August 17, 2018, service provider Surf Hong was subject to a strike by employees and did not have enough capacity to provide contracted services, causing the closure of several

public swimming pools in Taipa and Coloane.

Nearly four months later, the then Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture ordered a fine of MOP7.6 million levied on the company, on the grounds that its owner failed to provide services agreed as in a contract.

In an appeal to the middle court, the company owner's arguments were partially upheld

by the court. But both parties were unhappy with the ruling and filed separate appeals to the top court.

The top court noted that the then Secretary did not issue two warnings prior to ordering the fine, as was stipulated in the service contract. Furthermore, the court noted that the second warning, although issued, was made after the effective period used

in calculating the fine.

On these grounds, the court ruled against the arguments of the then Secretary.

The court considered it unreasonable that the service provider would be fined twice under two different clauses in the contract for the same matter. It also ruled that the cause of the pool closures was irrelevant in considering the issuance of the fine. **AL**



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DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF\_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
ASSISTANT EDITOR\_Lynzy Valles  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS\_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS\_Alban Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui  
DESIGNERS\_Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS\_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES\_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua  
SECRETARY\_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com  
OFFICE MANAGER\_Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com  
ADDRESS\_Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR  
Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84  
Advertisement\_advertising@macaudailytimes.com  
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RENATO MARQUES

# Mid-January regatta to kick off monthly sporting events in 2022

**T**HE government has announced the first event in a bid to hold a series of monthly sporting events next year, in line with the policy that was outlined for 2021 which saw one major tourism and sporting event scheduled in each month of the year.

In a press conference held by the Sports Bureau (ID) on Friday, it was announced that the first in this series will be the MGM Macao International Regatta, with gaming concessionaire MGM China Holdings Ltd as the title sponsor.

The event will take place between January 13 and 16 next year, with the participation of 37 teams from China and around the world competing in three different competitions: the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Cup Regatta, for vessels classified under the International Rating Certificate which allows different vessels to race together according to a performance handicap; the Macao Cup International Regatta, in which all competitors will be using Beneteau First 40.7 vessels; and the International Catamaran Invitational competition in which Hobie16 catamarans will be used.

The former two events, as major competitions, will invite 22 teams from China and other countries to be announced.

The competition will take place in the waters south of Hac Sa Beach in Coloane.

The International Catamaran Invitational will comprise 15 sailing teams who will compete in the waters south of the Inner Harbour Channel off the Macau Science Center.

According to the organizers, international referees registered with the world title have been invited to judge the competition and ensure that international standard regulations are followed.

A series of additional activities will also be held during the four-day event, including a fleet parade, a photo competition, a sailing boat demonstration and workshops for families.

Organizers said that the ancillary activities are intended to



provide residents with a deeper understanding of the regatta, increase interest in sailing and promote marine sports in Macau.

In addition, a special spectator activity will be held on the final day of the event (January 16), when a ferry departing from the Inner

Harbour Ferry Terminal will head out to sea off the Macau Science Center to provide prime viewing for the fleet parade, and the International Invitational Catamaran that follows at the same location.

The event will run for about three hours and details of ticket

distribution will be announced at a later date by the organizers.

A ceremony to recognize the title sponsor was also held at the press conference, with Kenneth Feng, president, chief strategic and financial officer of MGM, handing a check for MOP8 million to ID president Pun Weng Kun.

Following the Policy Address for 2021, the government announced its plan to host a series of 12 major sporting events over the course of the year, roughly one per month, in a bid to reinforce Macau's position as a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure.

As announced at the time, the events were to be sponsored by the six gaming operators, with two events per operator.

Due to difficulties related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of events was drastically reduced in 2021. The government now aims to pursue this goal from the start of 2022.

## Three Macau teams to compete in Asia-Pacific Huawei ICT Competition

**N**INE students, representing three teams who won the Huawei ICT Competition in Macau, will step up to compete with elite students from the Asia-Pacific region.

The Macau contest concluded over the weekend, with 72 students competing in the final showdown. Aiming to elevate elite skills in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT), the competition comprised two categories: the Cloud Track and the Internet Track. Three teams from each category were awarded prizes.

The teams from the University of Macau and the Macau Polytechnic Institute garnered two awards each, while those from the Macau University of Science and Technology and the City University of Macau each won a prize.

These students will now compete further with elite students in the region.

This year's event was

AP PHOTO



co-organized by the Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Center (CPTTM) and the Association for Promotion of Science and Technology of Macau.

Speaking at the Macau final, Li Yingjie, general manager of Huawei Enterprise BG - Macau, said that ICT has a key role to play in the development of a smart and digital future. He added that the development of the technology relies on the existence of talent.

Dr Shuen Ka Hung, director-general of the CP-TTM, said that the center has been encouraging local students to align themselves with regional and global standards by participating in various competitions.

The competition targets higher education students and aims to foster international-level competition and intellectual exchanges. Students are expected to grow their ICT knowledge, practices, and innovation. **AL**



## 1,280 EXHIBITORS IN ANNUAL MICE EVENTS

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE 26th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair, Macao Franchise Expo 2021, and the 2021 Portuguese Speaking Countries Products and Services Exhibition were held this weekend at the Venetian Expo Hall B.

The weekend event attracted a total of 1,280 online and offline exhibitors. The exhibitors were from mainland China, Brazil, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Portugal, Hong Kong, Macau and other regions, covering industries such

as big health, scientific and technological innovation, franchising, intellectual property (IP), featured products from Portuguese-speaking countries, and food and catering. There were more than 920 on-site exhibitors.

The franchise expo included the "One-stop" Business Support Centre and Brand Incubation Pavilion, where professionals provided advice on branding and design, legal matters and other services to assist potential local brands or franchises in upgrading their brand

presence through different channels and encourage enterprises to transform and upgrade, so as to expand their business in the Greater Bay Area.

The organizers arranged for participating traders to experience local culture and explore Macau's featured activities and world heritage sites on Friday, December 10. Another guided tour took place last night to assist in driving the community's economy and promoting the unique cultural image of Macau through MICE.

### CAR DEALER APPROPRIATES HKD400K FROM POTENTIAL CUSTOMER

A 71-year-old car dealer allegedly scammed a potential customer and appropriated HKD400,000 in the form of a down payment. The Judiciary Police (PJ) apprehended the suspect and charged him with abuse of trust. In March last year, the victim tried to purchase a HKD1.2-million seven-seater vehicle from the suspect, making a down payment. The suspect promised that the car would arrive in July of the same year. By February this year, the victim did not have the car and could not get the money returned, with the showroom having closed.

### SURVEY FINDS 85% OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCE EYE ALLERGY SYMPTOMS

A survey conducted by international sight-saving charity Orbis revealed that 85% of children experience different symptoms of eye allergies, such as itchy eyes and frequent blinking, and 60% of parents and caretakers are concerned that these symptoms will affect children's quality of life and the effectiveness of education. Dr. Un Sok Man, an ophthalmologist at Kiang Wu Hospital, advised parents to seek medical advice when they suspect a child is suffering from eye allergies or notice any abnormalities, while warning that the use of non-prescribed eye drops can potentially cause severe harm. Only 30% of respondents reported taking their children for an annual optical check-up.

### CRASH SENDS MOTORIST TO HOSPITAL

A motorcycle was hit by a concrete mixer truck in the reclaimed Zone A on Friday morning. The male motorist was not breathing and did not have a heartbeat when he was sent to the hospital, but later recovered after emergency treatment. The patient had scratches on his left fingers, with no other apparent injuries. According to Public Security Police, the truck driver allegedly did not give way to the motorcyclist, which led to the accident.

### KÁ HÓ TUNNEL OPENS

After 10 long-awaited years, the Ká Hó Tunnel officially opened on Friday morning. An opening ceremony was held where a police car led other drivers through the tunnel. Drivers who work nearby expressed the convenience of the tunnel as it cuts down on travel time. The Ká Hó Tunnel spans 500 meters with a four-lane-two-way road, and links Avenida do Aeroporto to Estrada de Nossa Senhora de Ká Hó, saving 10 minutes of travel time and optimizes traffic flow.

# TDM'S NEW DIRECTIVE ALLEGEDLY BANS JOURNALISTS PERFORMING ARTS

STAFF REPORTER

A planned performance from local band Concrete/Lotus at the Lusofonia Festival was cancelled this weekend because a lead vocalist's employer allegedly prevented her from participating in any public performances, according to an announcement from the band, *Hoje Macau* reported late last week.

The vocalist is a journalist at TDM, which considered that any participation in such activities would "belittle the company's image," the band said in a statement shared on Facebook.

The band apologized to their fans for the cancellation of the concert, and thanked the Cultural Affairs Bureau for supporting local artists, as well as the production team at the Lusofonia Festival, who "always made [the band] feel at home."

The announcement was made on Thursday, one day before the start of the Lusofonia Festival. Concrete/Lotus said the edict from the journalist's company came very suddenly, giving them no choice but to cancel the show. The band member has been prevented from participating in musical acts or any other such artis-



tic activities in the future because of claims that this would affect the image of the company.

Many friends of the band and singer herself commented on the post with their reactions to the reasons behind the cancellation. Some claimed it was "revolting," as well as questioning how the television and radio company could consider one of their employees "having different skills and talents as 'bad image.'"

The band thanked fans for their ongoing support, and said that "Concrete/Lotus hopes to return soon in the same format."

TDM Macau has yet to release any statement on the matter.

The Times has learned that the alleged directive includes other restrictions, for instance, prohibiting journalists to be engaged in the production or promotion of personal, independent vlogs (vi-

deo blogs) "of artistic" nature.

In August, Beijing's culture authority ordered China's entertainment industry to ban stars with "incorrect" political positions, who behave unethically, or have "effeminate" male styles.

The directive was aimed at promoting "revolutionary culture," as the leader called for "national rejuvenation," with tighter Communist Party control of business, education, culture and religion.

## New residential loans down 32% in October

STAFF REPORTER

NEW approvals of residential mortgage loans and commercial real estate loans both decreased in October, according to statistics from the Monetary Authority of Macao. Outstanding balances for residential loans dropped, whereas those for commercial loans increased.

New residential loans approved by Macau banks dropped by 32.2% to MOP2.33 billion, and the non-resident component also decreased to MOP1.6 million. The monthly average of new residential loans approved



between August and October was MOP3.1 billion, down by 16.2% from the previous period (July to September).

New residential loans collateralized by uncompleted units, such as equitable mortgages, fell by 47.6% to MOP204.4 million. On an annual basis, new equitable mortgage approvals dropped by 41.5%.

New commercial real estate loans fell by 36.6% to

MOP1.96 billion in October. Within this total, new commercial loans to residents, which comprised 99.1% of total loans, decreased by 33.8% to MOP1.95 billion. New commercial loans to non-residents also dropped to MOP16.9 million. The monthly average of new commercial loans approved between August and October was MOP3 billion, a decrease of 50.5% from the previous period.

## ONE WORKER DEAD IN COTAI CONSTRUCTION SITE ACCIDENT

RENATO MARQUES

AN accident at a construction site in Cotai has claimed the life of a 43-year-old non-resident worker from the mainland, the Judiciary Police announced in a short statement on Saturday.

The accident occurred at the Studio City Phase 2 construction site on Friday evening, when a group of workers was adjusting the position of a crane on the 39th floor of the building.

According to preliminary investigations, the crane moved unexpectedly during construction work, tilting to the front and causing the crane's metal bracket to crush the worker from behind.



In a separate statement, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) said that staff had been deployed to the site to investigate the cause of the accident.

Although the final report is not yet available, the DSAL noted that such machinery "must be operated by qualified personnel to ensure that the site where the crane is placed has sufficient resistance and stability and can support the weight of the crane

and the cargo load." The bureau added that "legal requirements and related safety rules must be carefully observed to prevent similar accidents from happening again."

The DSAL also noted that, if it is found during inspections that any situation constitutes a serious safety hazard, "it will immediately order the work to cease, and call on the contractors and staff to fix the problem." Only after that can work resume.



**S**ANDS China Ltd. has long strived to nurture and improve local talent, contributing to Macau's development as a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure.

As a leading developer of integrated resorts, the company has placed people at the heart of its strategy, making sure that it has nurtured, and will continue to nurture, the development of its team members alongside the growth of the company.

The longevity of team members' service testifies to the success of that strategy, as the number of team members that have reached their 10-year company anniversaries approaches 10,000.

The pandemic across the last two years significantly impacted the operations and mode of work; however, the company has actively assisted employees to cope with the effect of the virus by providing strong and consistent support.

Every cloud has a silver lining, and the company has taken the opportunity to innovate its team members' learning experience.

From developing more versatile talent and providing successful career paths to enhancing team members' quality of life – platforms to attain these goals are generously provided by the company.

As Dr. Wilfred Wong, Sands China's president, has pledged, "At Sands China, we spare no effort in talent development." "We care about team members' physical and mental health," he added, as the firm hopes to promote family harmony through its parenting education initiative, thereby propelling the development of the local community.

#### DIVERSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Along with the company's development over nearly two decades, Sands China has created more than 85,000 diverse local employment opportunities. While developing into the largest integrated resort operator in Macau, Sands China has created 1,300 new jobs for a wide range of non-gaming business areas,

## Sands China placing its people first

including MICE, entertainment planning, shopping malls and retail, food and beverage, and property management. In doing so, it has made continual and essential contributions to the rapid development of Macau's tourism and leisure industry.

To date, nearly 9,900 team members have served the company for more than 10 years, representing 40% of all team members. Over 3,700 of them have reached their 15-year milestones. More than 1,200 team members have remained with the company since helping launch Sands@Macao in 2004, representing one-third of that property's opening team. The 17 intervening years have witnessed a significant growth in the percentage of local residents among Sands China's management team members, soaring from 20% in 2004 to 91% in 2021.

"Our team members continue to be our most valuable asset. We have set deep roots in Macau for almost two decades, and long-serving team members have been essential to the continuous and steady development of the company," said Dr. Wong.

"The entire executive management team expresses its sincere and deep appreciation to our long-serving team members for their unwavering dedication to the company's growth. With all team members staying united, we are confident that we will always be ready to overcome any challenges as we continue to deliver extraordinary experiences for our guests and visitors," the president added.

In gratitude to some of those veterans of the company, Sands China recently honoured a group of more than 180 long-serving elderly team members in the company's popular Golden Age Programme at a Golden Age Navigation Ceremony at The Venetian Macao.

Introduced last year, the voluntary programme shows appreciation for elderly team members

who are ready to begin a new chapter of their lives, providing them with a wide range of post-career benefits.

"Our elderly team members have made tremendous contributions to the company's development, and some of them have served Sands China for as long as 10 or even 15 years during the prime of their lives," said Wong.

"With the Golden Age Programme, we hope to reward their devoted service as they move on with enthusiasm to the next phase of their lives. We are happy to know that they will continue to be members of the Sands China family, and I wish them a new set of successes in this fresh chapter of their journey," Wong added.

#### VACCINATION RATE ON THE RISE

As a company that cares about the health of its team members and the wider community, Sands China is actively encouraging team members to volunteer to get vaccinated. Besides offering vaccination sessions and hosting two seminars, Sands China's vaccination efforts include hosting more than 50 roadshows, showing promotional clips produced by the Health Bureau and by the company, and displaying promotional posters at its properties' back-of-house team member areas.

Sands China's staff has answered the call for voluntary vaccination. The vaccination rate among them has now reached 94%.

#### CHANNELS FOR E-LEARNING

Amid the pandemic crisis, Sands China launched a number of new smart learning platforms to encourage team members to strive for excellence and enhance their level of service during the pandemic, so that they can move forward in their career paths.

The company introduced new online learning platforms, such as LinkedIn Learning, to allow team members to self-study and improve their professional capabilities by accessing tutorial vi-

deos by industry experts without being restricted by time, language, or location.

Since offering LinkedIn Learning in February 2020, team members have completed a total of 9,200 training hours and 8,766 courses. Sands China was subsequently bestowed with the "2020 Learning Rising Star" award by LinkedIn.

To further encourage team members to develop the positive habit of self-study through e-learning platforms and multimedia resources in a comfortable and safe setting, the company launched Learning Lab, which has attracted nearly 700 team members.

As the company actively encourages personal development as a way to climb the career ladder, Sands China also uses WebEx and other platforms to transform traditional teaching into online interactive teaching. Examples of training which has benefitted from this shift include the Manager Competence Development Programme and Personal Effectiveness Training Series, tailor-made by the Sands China Academy for middle management.

Under this initiative, over 4,600 team members have been attracted to attend over 230 online interactive courses spanning over 8,800 training hours.

#### ENHANCING TEAM MEMBERS' QUALITY OF LIFE

Sands China undertakes various initiatives in order to promote team members' well-being, family harmony, and work-life balance, in line with the company's belief that its team members are its greatest asset.

So as part of the company's continued commitment to

enhancing team members' quality of life, Sands China Ltd. recently signed a letter of intent with the Education and Youth Bureau (DSEDJ) to collaborate on a Parenting Education Programme.

As one of the largest private corporations in Macau, the company considers it a duty to proactively promote parenting education among its team members, seeing it as something that will increase their happiness and help build social and family harmony.

#### EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR TEAM MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Sands China refers to its employees as team members not as a gimmick, but based on a sincere belief that each one of them is an essential component of operating the business. Expressing gratitude to team members for their essential contributions to the running of an effective team remains a priority for Sands China.

Notwithstanding the business challenges of the pandemic, the company held firm to its annual practice of distributing a discretionary allowance. Equivalent to one month's salary, the allowance is being awarded to more than 25,000 eligible non-senior management full-time team members on Jan. 17, 2022, in appreciation of their dedication and contributions in 2021. A total of 99% of Sands China's total employment is benefiting from either the discretionary allowance or other incentive schemes.



# SUSTAINABILITY GROUP HEAD: CITY'S BUILDINGS SHOULD DIGITIZE TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE cause of Macau's poor property management services is the lack of room for profit boosting, which could be improved with the introduction of smart city technologies, chairman of the sustaincia.org Terence Lee said.

Speaking as the head of a sustainable development association at a recent event of the British Chamber of Commerce, Lee highlighted during the early phase of his breakfast presentation that, according to data available to him, Macau residents have a lower price ceiling for property management fees, at around MOP1,000 per month.

In neighboring Hong Kong, residents are willing to pay three times as much as Macau residents in order to obtain property management services.

Lee identifies the low-price ceiling as the reason that property management services



have not thrived in Macau, and why their quality still has a lot of room for improvement.

To illustrate this, he cited data from the city's Statistics and Census Service, among other public entities. As of June 2019, there were nearly 5,200 buildings in the city that were at least 30 years old, roughly two-thirds of the total buildings in the city at that time.

However, as of the end-November this year, the city only had 229 licensed property management companies. He

found it unbelievable, if not ridiculous, that on average companies in Macau each handled 35 buildings.

Despite these figures, he pointed out that at the end of Q2 this year, the city saw 9.2% vacancy rate in the industry, even with a monthly salary nearing MOP13,000. He found it ridiculous still that each of the city's trained property management technicians were handling, on average, 13 structures as of October 23, 2020.

His view is that these fac-

tors combined have made it unappealing to operate a property management company or be a property manager, more commonly known as security guard or "property caretaker."

To right this "wrong," Lee recommends fresh technologies, and to "help those who needed help."

Internet of Things (IoT), in his opinion, could be one of the solutions to these problems.

He gave the example of air-conditioning units operating in empty rooms, and outlined how sensor systems can be used to solve this problem.

His team has upgraded these sensors in a project co-operated by the Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT) and the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) to collect daily-life data such as noise, air temperature and lighting levels.

When appropriately tuned, these sensors will help, for example, residents in older buildings spot leakage in their pipes.

Regarding concerns over cybersecurity, Lee has implemented a no-login strategy to ensure that minimum data is collected when the system is operating. As such, users should not be identified by their systems.

Users would still need to provide some information so as to allow property management services to oversee the service. He stressed, however, that the system developer has no way to identify a particular user.

The organization introduces itself on its website as being a "global association." It "is an unlimited duration non-profit organization whose mission is to use technology and social affairs to encourage sustainability development." The organization also describes how it provides an online management platform, and creates a community with opportunities for dialogue and the exchange of ideas, among other targets.

AD

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# MGM Awakening Lion - a traditional revived

Chinese culture spans millennia and continues to inspire. Among its rich tapestry, the Lingnan culture stands out with its distinctive geographic and historical heritage that blends east and west, and fuses tradition and innovation. Time changes everything, but tradition endures.

The lion dance is a hallmark of the Lingnan heritage. In its early phase, the lion dance has two main styles: Southern Lion and Northern Lion. In modern times, there has been a combination of the two types of lion dance -Southern Lion Northern Dance, applying Northern lion dance footwork to the Southern lion dance form. The Southern Lion, highlighting the element of "Awakening", adopts kung fu moves and postures, using the waist as an axis and the coordination of the upper and lower limbs.

Horse Stance (Mabu), Bow Stance (Gongbu), Butterfly Stance (Dandiebu), Double Butterfly Stance (Shuangdiebu), Bow Stance and Probe Claw, XFJ450°(Xuanfengjiao), these signature techniques of Southern Fist (Nanquan) are increasingly shown in many films and have long been regarded as an important element of Chinese culture. Nowadays, Nanquan is not just a martial art for improving physical health, also has a high degree of artistic and ornamental value.

"MGM Awakening Lion", is a large-scale Chinese dance drama that the bold beauty of the lion dance, and Nanquan is complemented by the gentle, elegant dance piece. It strikes a delicate balance between the flux and the fixed, the new and the old, utilizing the world's largest permanent indoor LED screen and other advanced stage equipment of MGM Theater, to break all boundaries between arena and act. The result is a visual-stimulating extravaganza that defines and redefines the past and the future.

"Wherever there is Chinese, there is Lion Dance." The must-see techno-cultural dance drama is about connecting all the Chinese people around the world. Let's expect the continuous shine of Lingnan culture to release the unique charms with the creative transformation! Book your tickets now at [mgm.mo](http://mgm.mo).



GRACE YU



**D**ESPITE being just a stone's throw away, most Macau residents are not clear about Hengqin. How will Hengqin's policies benefit Macau? What is the investment prospect? How are the projects and corporations going in Hengqin?

On September 5, the master plan for building the cooperation zone in Hengqin, issued by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, was made public.

Through this plan, Hengqin has been brought into the spotlight again, despite years of attempts, trials, and errors.

Organized by the Macau Liaison Office, a delegation of Macau's Portuguese and English

### HENGQIN COOPERATION ZONE

# Seeing Macau from across the river

press paid a two-day-visit to Hengqin, which has been reframed and upgraded as part of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone, according to the plan announced in September.

Four focus areas were mentioned to assist with Macau's economic diversification. Sci-tech research and development and high-end manufacturing will be grown in the area along with traditional Chinese medicine and other traditional industries of Ma-

cau, such as tourism and culture, conventions, and exhibitions.

During the briefing session, iconic representatives were included in those key areas.

#### FIRST INDUSTRY-EDUCATION-RESEARCH DEMONSTRATION BASE IN THE GBA

The Zhuhai UM Science & Technology Research Institute (ZUMRI) is an exemplary case of sci-tech research.

In 2019, the University of Macau (UM) established ZUMRI in

Hengqin, Zhuhai, which is its first industry-education-research demonstration base in the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

With research being the forte of UM's three state laboratories and its preponderant disciplines, there are five research centers and one business training center in the ZUMRI. They are Microelectronics Research Center, Traditional Chinese Medicine Research Center, Smart City Research Center, Medical Research Center, Advanced Materials Research Center and

Executive Training Center, the Institute's representatives said during the briefing session.

As of September 2021, ZUMRI is funded by the government and has 105 projects, among which 64 projects are funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC).

#### FIRST JOINT VENTURE LAW FIRM

ZLF Law Office (ZLF) is the first joint venture law firm in China which comprises of law

GRACE YU







the feasibility of applying Macau laws, as an option, in Hengqin and the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone, regardless of whether the two parties are Macau or Mainland residents.

Both ZUMRI and ZLF Law Office are located in the Innovative Valley, which provides good working environment for young entrepreneurs. To encourage more Macau enterprises to enter, the valley also provides favorable policies towards Macau companies and entrepreneurs.

#### FIRST PROJECT BETWEEN GUANGDONG AND MACAU

As the first project was implemented under the Framework Agreement on Coope-

ration between Guangdong and Macau, the Traditional Chinese Medicine Science and Technology Industrial Park of Co-operation between Guangdong and Macau, known as GMTCM Park, was officially launched in Hengqin in April 2011.

Since the completion of the development of GMTCM Park at the end of 2018, a total of 216 enterprises have been registered in the park, among which 52, or 24%, are Macau enterprises fostered through the GMTCM Park.

Authenmole, a Macau company that features molecular plants, proposed and produced traditional Chinese medicine for dietetic therapy. It has an unmanned factory production line.

#### NEW HOME FOR MACAU RESIDENTS TO LIVE AND WORK IN

The master plan also prioritizes people's livelihood by starting a set of concrete measures to build Hengqin into a new home for Macau residents to live and work in.

Zhuhai Resort of Guangzhou Chimelong should be one of the most familiar spots even for those who have not visited Hengqin. Until now, Chimelong Zhuhai owns the Ocean Resorts, the Circus City and five hotels. The Chimelong Marine Science Hotel is the latest hotel which opened this year.

Secondly, Sumlodol is a relatively young resort that fea-

tures recreational vehicle (RV) camping. It is the first "China RV Camping Tourism Demonstration Base" in China and has been a new and popular spot for families.

Thirdly, the 13.6km (8.5 miles) Hengqin Flower Corridor stretching from the Hengqin Bridge to Gang'ao Avenue is a newly built spot for leisure. The flower corridor blooms with distinctive ornamental floss silk trees (*ceiba speciosa*), which have exotic white, pink, or red flowers. A sightseeing bus will be operating between Gongbei Checkpoint and Hengqin Flower Corridor from December 11 to January 3, according to official notice.  
**GRACE YU, MDT, HENGQIN**



# CHINESE LEADERS PROMISE MORE ECONOMIC SUPPORT AFTER SLOWDOWN

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

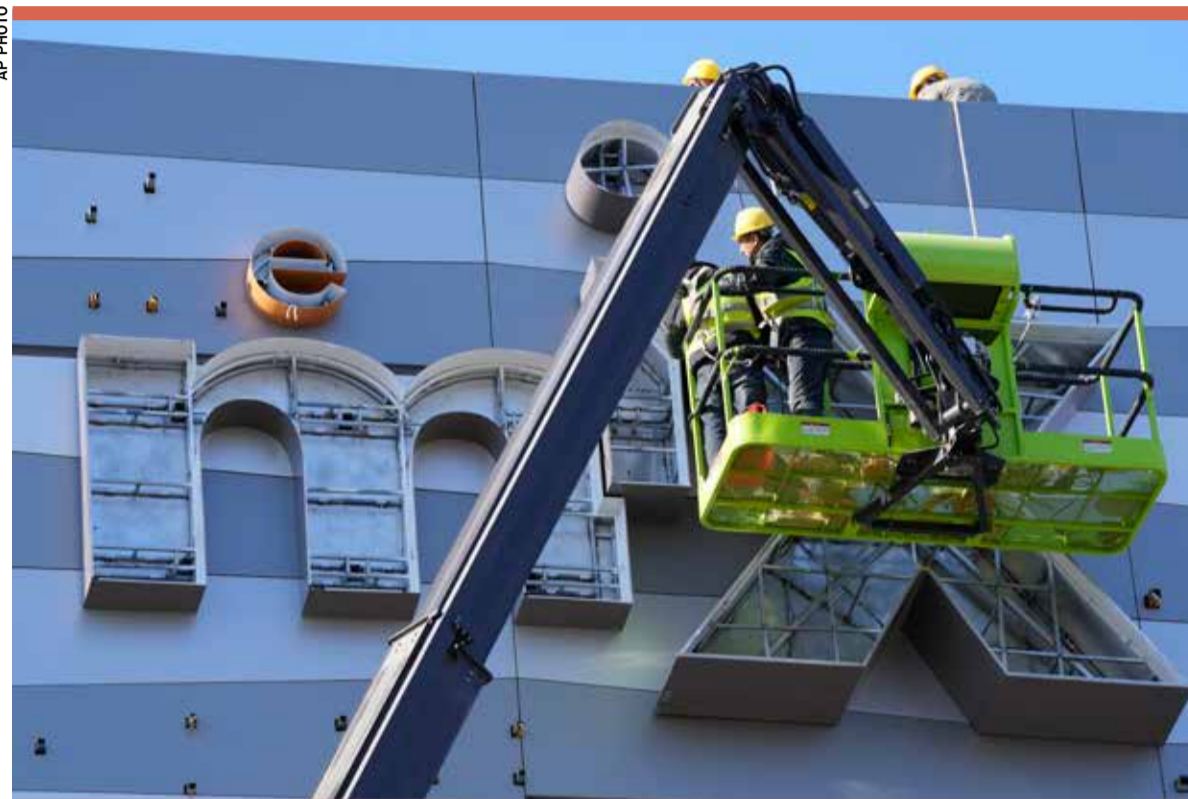
**C**HINESE leaders on Friday promised tax cuts and support for entrepreneurs to shore up slumping economic growth after a campaign to rein in surging corporate debt caused bankruptcies and defaults among real estate developers.

A statement issued after an annual planning meeting led by President Xi Jinping called for "maintaining stability," reflecting anxiety about rising risks after economic growth sagged to an unexpectedly low 4.9% over a year earlier in the quarter ending in September.

"Our country's economic development is facing the triple pressure of demand shrinking, supply shocks and weakening expectations," the statement said.

The ruling Communist Party is trying to keep the world's second-largest economy on track while forcing real estate developers and other companies to cut debt that it worries is dangerously high and threatens financial stability and long-term growth.

"Policymakers are clearly concerned about the economy," Larry Hu and Xinyu Ji of Macquarie said in a report this week. "Priority is shifting from regulatory tightening to



supporting economic growth." China was the first major economy to rebound from the coronavirus pandemic, but that recovery quickly leveled off. The economy expanded by 7.9% over a year earlier in the second quarter of 2021 but declined after tighter limits imposed last year on borrowing by real estate developers caused a slump in construction and sales.

The planning meeting, the Central Economic Work Con-

ference, lays out the broad strokes of the party's economic agenda for the coming year. Officials usually start to announce details at the annual meeting of the ceremonial legislature in March.

The leadership promised tax cuts and to "strengthen support" for private enterprise that generates China's new wealth and jobs, but gave no details. It said Beijing will invest in infrastructure but gave no indication of large-scale

spending to stimulate the economy.

Investors are waiting to see what happens to Evergrande Group, a developer that financial analysts say looks increasingly likely to default on \$310 billion of debt. Smaller developers have defaulted on millions of dollars of debt or gone bankrupt.

The government has tried to assure the public and investors the economy can be shielded from Evergrande's financial

fallout. The central bank governor, Yi Gang, said Thursday that financial markets can cope with Evergrande, indicating Beijing has ruled out a bailout.

Friday's statement also promised more anti-monopoly and other enforcement that it said would "boost the confidence of market players."

A crackdown on what regulators say is improper behavior by Chinese tech giants including Alibaba Group, the world's biggest e-commerce platform, has prompted jittery investors to knock more than \$1 trillion off their share prices abroad.

Chinese leaders say, however, that enforcement will allow new competitors to flourish and make the state-dominated economy more productive.

The statement gave no indication that the ruling party is relenting in its campaign to reduce debts. It repeated a party catchphrase, "housing is for living in, not for speculation," indicating Beijing will try to keep a lid on prices.

The statement promised to ensure supplies of coal, oil, gas and power after shortages led to blackouts and rationing in some major cities. Factories in major manufacturing areas also were ordered to shut down temporarily in September to meet official energy efficiency targets. **MDT/AP**

HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

**T**AIWAN lost Nicaragua as a diplomatic ally after the Central American country said it would officially recognize only China, which claims self-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory.

"There is only one China," the Nicaraguan government said in a statement Thursday announcing the change.

"The People's Republic of China is the only legitimate government that represents all China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of the Chinese territory."

"As of today, Nicaragua breaks its diplomatic relations with Taiwan and ceases to have any official contact or relationship," it added.

The move increases Taiwan's diplomatic isolation on the international stage, even as the self-governed island steps up official exchanges with countries such as Lithuania

## Taiwan loses diplomatic ally Nicaragua to China

and Slovakia, which do not formally recognize Taiwan as a country. Now, Taiwan has 14 diplomatic allies remaining.

"What is most important to Taiwan is the number of countries with which it maintains diplomatic relations," Jason Marczak, director of the Atlantic Council's Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center, said in an email. "In Central America, Nicaragua is now the third country that has switched recognition from Taiwan to China in the last four years. I wouldn't be surprised if more are to come."

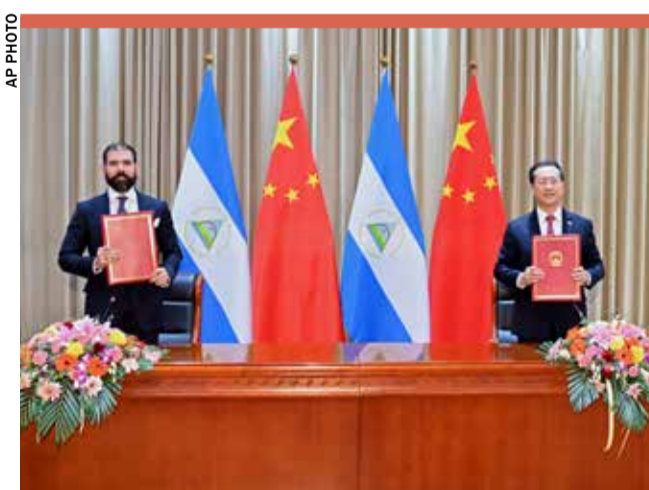
Taiwan's government expressed "sadness and regret" and said it would immediately recall its diplomatic staff.

"The more successful Taiwan's democracy, and the greater the international support, then the

greater the pressure from the authoritarian camp," Taiwanese leader Tsai Ing-wen said Friday in response. "Whether it's diplomatic pressure or military intimidation, we will not change our determination to adhere to democracy and freedom, to go on the international stage and participate."

The Nicaraguan government signed an official communique to reestablish diplomatic ties with China in Tianjin on Friday, according to Chinese state broadcaster CCTV. Under the agreement, Nicaragua promises not to have any official contact with Taiwan going forward.

"The resumption of diplomatic ties between China and Nicaragua is a policy decision, and definitely not a trading of bargaining chips," China's Ministry of



Representatives Laureano Ortega Murillo, son of and advisor to Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, left, and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu

Foreign Affairs spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a daily briefing Friday. He denied that there were any "economic preconditions" to establishing ties.

Some experts say the switch is not necessarily a significant loss for Taiwan and may only have been a

matter of time. Taiwan has been increasing its exchanges with Western countries and has emphasized the sharing of democratic values and working with "like-minded" nations.

"Everyone could see early on that this diplomatic relationship couldn't

be kept," said Antonio C. Hsiang, a professor at La Academia Nacional de Estudios Y Estrategicos in Chile and an expert on Taiwan's relations in Latin America.

Taiwan's emphasis on democratic values stands in contrast to many of its diplomatic allies, such as Nicaragua or Honduras.

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega was reelected in November in what the White House called a "pantomime election."

"The arbitrary imprisonment of nearly 40 opposition figures since May, including seven potential presidential candidates, and the blocking of political parties from participation rigged the outcome well before election day," U.S. President Joe Biden said in a statement in November in response to Ortega's election. **MDT/AP**

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

# Nationwide 'silent strike' in Myanmar protests military rule

**O**PPONENTS of military rule in Myanmar on Friday held one of their biggest nationally coordinated protests in months, successfully calling on people across the country to shut their businesses and stay at home on International Human Rights Day.

The "silent strike" was staged in cities and towns from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and came at a time of increasing violence in the political crisis triggered by the army's seizure of power in February and ouster of the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

On Tuesday, there was a widely reported massacre in the country's northwestern Sagaing region in which soldiers were accused of rounding up and killing 11 civilians whose charred bodies were later discovered by fellow villagers. The military-installed government has denied its soldiers were involved, but it is staging an offensive in northwestern Myanmar against persistent resistance from anti-military militias.

In Yangon, the country's largest city, and elsewhere, photos on social media showed normally busy streets empty of traffic on Friday. Usually crowded markets and plazas were quiet hours before the official start of the strike, which reaffirmed the widespread opposition to the army's rule and



AP PHOTO

its disregard for human rights.

Min Han Htet, co-founder and spokesperson of the Alliance of Student Unions Yangon, said the strike by itself might not make a significant difference.

"But by showing their unity, the strike is a success for the people who are waging psychological warfare against the military dictatorship," he said.

Solidarity appeared strong among operators of even the smallest shops in Yangon, but at least a few apparently paid a price for their defiance, as photos posted on social media showed fittings such as tables and chairs confiscated by security forces from some.

Since Thursday, authorities had announced in some nei-

ghborhoods that action would be taken against shops which close without an acceptable reason.

A shopkeeper from the market in Muse in northern Shan state said the official Township Development Committee threatened over a loudspeaker on Friday morning that it would take action against closed shops.

"They announced in the town

that they would shut down our shops for a month if we went ahead and closed the shops and markets without any reason. But we don't care. It is the time to show our unity," said the vendor, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of retribution from the authorities.

Protesters wearing black attire, as suggested by strike organizers, marched silently in Shwebo in Sagaing region. People at home, also dressed in black, posted selfies showing them holding small handmade posters.

"We own our town. Our city, our rules. Staying silent or active is our choice. Never be allowed to rule," was written on one. "Take back our human rights by revolution," read another.

People also held up three fingers, the resistance salute adopted from "The Hunger Games" movie series.

There was at least one pro-military march in Yangon, according to photos on social media that showed about 100 demonstrators holding small flags and posters reading "Counter-Terrorism and Support the Military." **MDT/AP**

## OBITUARY

# Nintendo game console pioneer Uemura dies at 78

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

**M**ASAYUKI Uemura, a Japanese home computer game pioneer whose Nintendo consoles sold millions of units worldwide, has died, according to the university in Kyoto where he taught. He was 78.

Uemura, the lead architect behind Nintendo Co.'s trailblazing home game consoles, died Monday, Ritsumeikan University said in a statement. The cause of his death was not released.

Born in Tokyo in 1943, Uemura studied electronic engineering at the Chiba Institute of Technology and joined Nintendo in 1971.

Uemura was tasked by then-president Hiroshi

AP PHOTO



Yamauchi in 1981 with developing a home console for games like Donkey Kong, which was a huge hit in the United States at the time but only available for arcade use.

The so-called Famicom game system hit the Japanese market in 1983 as Nin-

tendo's first cartridge-based console, allowing users to play popular games that came in cassette formats. The upgraded Super Famicom was released in Japan in 1990.

The Nintendo Entertainment System, as it was known, hit the United States in 1985 and eventually be-

came a global sensation with more than 60 million consoles sold worldwide, bringing international recognition to a company that previously made traditional Japanese card games, other playing cards and toys.

After retiring from Nintendo, Uemura taught game studies starting in 2004 at Ritsumeikan University in the ancient Japanese capital, which is also home to Nintendo.

"We offer our heartfelt appreciation for Mr. Uemura's huge contributions to the development of the game industry by introducing a variety of video game consoles including family computers," Ritsumeikan University said in a statement. "May he rest in peace." **MDT/AP**

## US ENVOY CONVEYS CONCERNS TO CAMBODIA ABOUT MYANMAR, CHINA

SOPHENG CHEANG, PHNOM PENH

**A**U.S. State Department envoy conveyed concerns to top Cambodian officials on Friday about bilateral and regional issues, including the crisis in Myanmar and the construction of Chinese military facilities at a Cambodian naval base.

The visit by Counselor Derek Chollet to Phnom Penh came days after the United States ordered an arms embargo on Cambodia, citing deepening Chinese military influence, corruption and human rights abuses in the Southeast Asian country.

Chollet told journalists his discussions with Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn involved issues related to Myanmar and China, as well as the role Cambodia intends to play as the new chair of the Association of Southeast

AP PHOTO



Counselor of the U.S. Department of State Derek Chollet

Asian Nations, whose efforts to mediate peace in Myanmar have fallen short.

Myanmar has become increasingly unstable since its army seized power in February, ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The military has sought to forcefully crush popular opposition to its takeover, which could end up plunging the country into civil war, U.N. experts have said.

Washington takes a hard line against

Myanmar's military-installed government, and has applied targeted diplomatic and economic sanctions against the ruling generals. ASEAN prefers soft measures when dealing with one of its members, and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said this week he plans to travel to Myanmar next month for talks with its leaders.

Chollet said his talks with Prak Sokhonn and other officials were open, workmanlike and constructive. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



# UK seeks unity at G7 meeting over Russia's 'malign behavior'

JILL LAWLESS & MATTHEW LEE, LIVERPOOL

**T**OP diplomats from the Group of Seven industrialized nations met Saturday in Liverpool for talks dominated by Russia's buildup of troops near Ukraine's border and what host country Britain called Moscow's "malign behavior" around the world.

The U.K. called for "a show of unity against global aggressors" as it welcomed U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other G-7 foreign ministers amid the Russia-Ukraine crisis and tensions with China and Iran.

"We need to defend ourselves against the growing threats from hostile actors," British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said as she opened the meeting of foreign ministers from the U.K., the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. "And we need to come together strongly to stand up to aggressors who are seeking to limit the bounds of freedom and democracy."

The U.S. and its NATO allies are concerned that the movement of Russian troops and weapons to the border region with Ukraine may be a prelude to an invasion and have said they would inflict heavy sanctions on Russia's economy if that happens.

Moscow denies having any plans to attack Ukraine and accuses Kyiv of its own allegedly aggressive designs.

A senior U.S. official

who participated in Saturday's discussions said the G-7 ministers were united in their "extreme concern" about developments on the Russia-Ukraine border. The official said the ministers agreed that any Russian invasion of Ukraine would be met with a response that would bring "massive consequences and severe costs" from the G-7.

The official would not elaborate on what those consequences might be but said they would be implemented "very, very fast" if Russia did not heed warnings to back down.

The U.S. and its allies have played down talk of a military response to defend Ukraine, with efforts focusing on tough sanctions that would hit the Russian economy, rather than just individuals.

In the U.S., reporters asked President Joe Biden on Saturday about the possibility of sending combat troops to Ukraine, and he said that idea was never considered. "Are you ready to send American troops into war and go into Ukraine to fight Russians on the battlefield," he said.

Biden said he has made it clear to Putin that in the event of an invasion, "the economic consequences for his economy are going to be devastating. Devastating."

European Union foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell, who is also attending the two-day conference, said the ministers were determined "to make Russia understand that anything that could represent an at-

tack to Ukraine would have a high price."

Getting a unified response from the G-7, a group of countries with disparate interests, has often proved tough. Germany plans on getting gas from Russia soon through the contentious Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which bypasses Ukraine. Britain, which is not dependent on Russian gas, generally takes a tougher line on the pipeline — but faces tough questions about London's financial district and property market, both hubs for Russian money.

Truss said she wanted to work with other countries "to make sure that free democratic nations are able to have an alternative to Russian gas supplies." She met on the sidelines of the gathering with Germany's new foreign minister, Annalena Baerbock, a politician from the environmentalist Greens who previously opposed Nord Stream 2.

Alongside efforts to agree on tough sanctions should Russia invade, efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the Russia-Ukraine crisis appear to be accelerating. The State Department announced Saturday that the top American diplomat for Europe, Karen Donfried, will visit both Kyiv and Moscow next week "to reinforce the United States' commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity" and to seek a resolution. Donfried will go later to Brussels to talk with NATO and European Union allies.

China's muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region and the ailing Iran nuclear deal were also on the agenda for the weekend meeting at the dockside Museum of Liverpool.

The gathering is taking place as negotiators meet in Vienna to try to revive an international deal to limit Iran's nuclear ambitions. Blinken met German, French and British diplomats in Liverpool to discuss next steps over Iran, and the Biden administration's special envoy on Iran, Robert Malley, also stopped in the city on his way to Vienna.

Truss warned this week that the Vienna talks are "the last chance for Iran to sign up" again to the deal, which was meant to rein in Tehran's nuclear program in return for loosened economic sanctions.

Truss also invited ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to the Liverpool meeting, though many were joining remotely because of the pandemic. Delegates and journalists face daily virus tests and mask mandates at the conference, as Britain records more cases of the omicron virus variant, which scientists say will become the dominant strain in the U.K. in the next week or so.

Britain is keen to work more closely with Asian nations as part of an "Indo-Pacific tilt" following the U.K.'s departure from the 27-nation European Union last year — both to boost U.K. trade and as a counterweight to China's dominance. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 2001 SUICIDE ATTACK ON INDIAN PARLIAMENT



A group of gunmen has broken through tight security to attack the parliament building in the Indian capital, New Delhi.

At least 12 people have been killed and 22 injured in the attack.

There were about 100 members of parliament in the building at the time, although none is believed to have been hurt.

The gunmen are thought to have used a fake identity sticker to get through tight security surrounding the parliament complex.

Wearing military-style fatigues, they burst into the area in front of the parliament just before noon local time (0630 GMT).

Witnesses said one was wearing explosives strapped to his body and blew himself up soon after the men broke in.

A gun battle began between the attackers and police, in a dramatic hour-long standoff broadcast live on television.

Indian government officials said the remaining four gunmen were killed in the fighting, along with six police officers and a gardener.

Parliamentarian Kharbala Sain was in the building when the attack began.

"I heard a cracker-like sound near the entrance, then I saw people running helter-skelter," he said.

"I saw many people firing at the same time. I couldn't make out who was who. I couldn't understand who the terrorists were and who the police were. My mind went blank."

The Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, made a televised address to the nation shortly after the attacks, and was quick to denounce the militants.

"This was not just an attack on the building, it was a warning to the entire nation," he said. "We accept the challenge."

No group has admitted carrying out the attack, which comes just two months after a similar assault on the Kashmir state assembly in Srinagar, in which 38 people died.

Many have suggested that Kashmiri militants may also be behind today's attack.

Some politicians have called for action against Pakistan, suspected in some quarters of arming and training the militants.

The two countries have fought two wars over the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir since independence in 1947, and came to the brink of a third war in 1999.

But Pakistan has condemned the attack and denied any involvement. It says it will act on any credible proof of the involvement of militant groups based on their soil.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Three men, suspected Kashmiri militants Mohammed Afzal and Shaukat Hussain Guru, and college professor SAR Geelani, were convicted and sentenced to death in December 2002 for supporting and helping to plan the attack on parliament.

The High Court later overturned the conviction against Mr Geelani, who had spent two years in prison, and also freed Navjot Sandhu, Hussain's wife, sentenced to five years in prison for withholding information from police. The acquittals have been challenged by Delhi police.

In early 2004, the Supreme Court delayed the execution of the two remaining men pending appeals.

The five were the first to be sentenced under India's new draconian anti-terrorist laws, which were being debated at the time of the attack.

Relations between India and Pakistan deteriorated badly after the attack. A massive build-up of troops along their common border during 2002 led to international concern about a possible war.

Relations have since thawed again, however, and in January 2004 the two sides renewed their peace talks over Kashmir.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES** Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
 Today's astrology is packed with cosmic shifts, as both Mercury and Mars move into a new sign. With Mars as your ruling planet, you'll feel especially impacted by its move into fiery Sagittarius.

**TAURUS** Apr. 20-May. 20  
 With the Aries Moon shining brightly in the sector of your chart that rules the subconscious, today will have you analyzing your emotions, thoughts, and behavioral patterns.

**GEMINI** May. 21-Jun. 21  
 Your ruling planet, Mercury, moves into Capricorn, putting you in the headspace to set boundaries while getting serious about what is and isn't working for you.

**CANCER** Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
 With the Aries moon blazing through the sector of your chart that rules career, you'll feel energized and motivated to take on the new workweek by storm.

**LEO** Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
 This planetary placement will activate the sector of your chart that rules fun and personal expression, permitting you to let loose while getting artsy over the next several weeks.

**VIRGO** Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
 You'll experience a major shift within your priorities today, dear Virgo, as Mars moves into fun-loving Sagittarius, and Mercury finds its way into serious Capricorn.

**LIBRA** Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
 Use the energy from this planetary placement to pursue your goals, as these vibes are perfect for putting action behind your ideas. Mercury enters Capricorn today as well, asking you to get organized at home.

**SCORPIO** Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
 There's potential to see significant growth within your finances over the next several weeks, but you'll need to take a proactive approach toward your monetary goals.

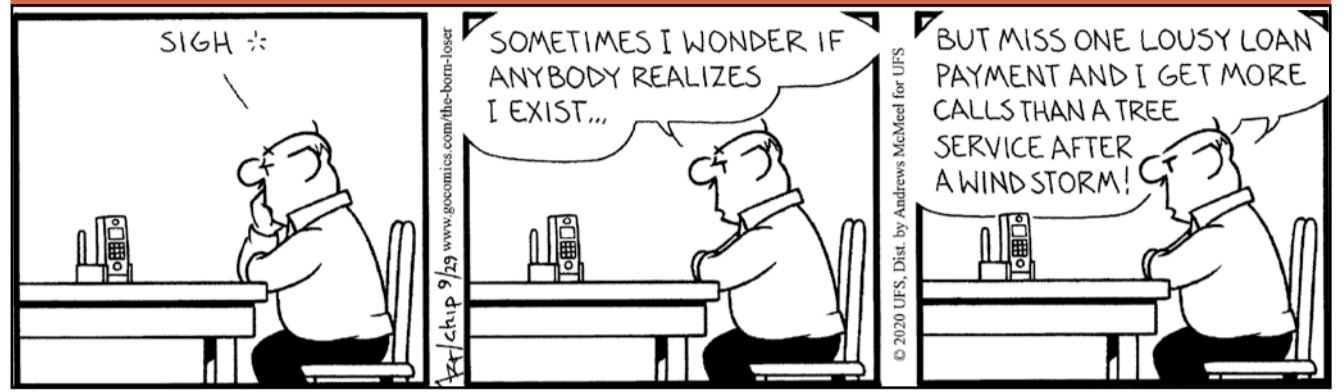
**SAGITTARIUS** Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
 Don't feel bad about strutting your stuff and letting your ego out to play today, as the Aries moon illuminates the sector of your chart that rules personal expression.

**CAPRICORN** Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
 Pay attention to your behaviors over the next several weeks, and try to be mindful that you're not repeating unhealthy patterns simply because it's what you're used to.

**AQUARIUS** Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
 Your mind will be in an introspective place in the coming weeks, but you can count on the fact that anything you need to say right now comes from a deep place.

**PISCES** Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
 It's okay if you want to treat yourself today, dear Pisces, as the Aries moon burns a hole in your pocket while activating the sector of your chart that rules money.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

EASY					EASY+				
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6	7	4	1		4				
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7		1	8	9	9	1		8	
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MEDIUM					HARD					
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8	9			3			4			1

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-4	2	clear
Harbin	-16	-9	clear
Tianjin	-2	2	clear
Urumqi	-14	-9	foggy
Xi'an	-1	6	overcast
Lhasa	-2	10	cloudy
Chengdu	6	9	overcast
Chongqing	9	11	drizzle
Kunming	7	17	cloudy
Nanjing	6	9	drizzle
Shanghai	9	13	cloudy
Wuhan	5	11	cloudy
Hangzhou	8	12	overcast
Taipei	19	22	moderate rain
Guangzhou	12	23	clear
Hong Kong	17	23	clear
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-7	-5	clear
Frankfurt	1	4	sleet
Paris	1	4	overcast
London	3	5	overcast
New York	2	4	cloudy

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Chop off; 4- Deadens; 9- Celestial body; 14- Gibbon, e.g.; 15- Fuming; 16- Maytag brand; 17- Silky; 19- Senate attendants; 20- Long-billed sandpiper; 21- Future oak; 23- 1952 Winter Olympics setting; 24- Accumulation of fluids; 27- Whistle blowers; 30- Floating mass; 32- Drunkard; 33- Underground cemetery; 37- Emerge; 39- Begin, e.g.; 40- Free of lice; 42- \_\_\_ is human...; 43- Savior; 44- Bambi's aunt; 45- East African nation; 48- Denomination; 50- On the up-and-up; 51- Payment for travel; 55- Accord maker; 57- Fathers; 58- Devoutness; 60- Perilous; 64- Gillette razors; 65- Bendable twig, usually of a willow tree; 66- Compass dir.; 67- Elegance; 68- Pier; 69- Still, in poetry;

**DOWN:** 1- Cowboy's tool; 2- Unfolds; 3- Danger; 4- Pleasing; 5- Suffix with fail; 6- Long March leader; 7- Heat meas.; 8- Opening word; 9- Mob boss; 10- Astrologer Sydney; 11- Silver-white metallic element; 12- Hydrocarbon suffix; 13- \_\_\_ in turkey; 18- Wall St. debut; 22- Horseless carriage; 24- Earth Day subj.; 25- Moore of "G.I. Jane"; 26- Flow back; 28- "Damn Yankees" choreographer; 29- Range rover; 30- Champagne buckets; 31- Hood-shaped anatomical part; 33- Quotes; 34- Together; 35- Treason; 36- Swiss river; 38- Caviar; 40- Sandwich shop; 41- Prepare for publication; 43- Piece of cloth, tabloid newspaper; 46- Advanced in years; 47- Lea; 49- Bottom line; 51- Evergreen tree; 52- "\_\_\_ by any other name..."; 53- Employ again; 54- Ruhr city; 56- Wall St. letters; 57- Slave; 58- \_\_\_ de deux (ballet dance); 59- "The Addams Family" cousin; 61- Tough wood; 62- Actress Peeples; 63- Lux. neighbor;

**Friday's solution**

SICK	SCARE	NERD
TISAN	ALLAT	ELIE
GETA	ROUGH	BATE
NEOPLASM	RULED	
SANE	HEEL	
ANEAR	RARAAVIS	
TOSCAR	METAL	IDO
RISK	GRAVES	AREA
ARE	BITES	ONTAP
SENTINE	ITALY	
EDGY	BACNE	
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ODIN	CAIRO	ONER
TES	ALLOT	OTRO
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**Eida Lemos**  
(853) 6226 8566  
eida@jmlproperty.com



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



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



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



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

Property of the Week



**FOR SALE**

**Manhattan D unit, Mid floor**  
**HKD 15,750,000** 2,305 ft<sup>2</sup> 4 2

Lovely four bedroom apartment in the luxury complex of The Manhattan in central Taipa. High end finishes throughout the complex, with resort style facilities. This unit is on a mid floor, currently tenanted. Viewings can be arranged by appointment.

Viewings can be arranged by appointment.  
Find out more on [www.jmlproperty.com](http://www.jmlproperty.com)



Ref: 2005 6001

Property Hotlist



**FOR SALE**

**Wa Bao**  
**HKD 7,888,000**

1,131 ft<sup>2</sup>  
2   
2



Ref: 2111 6004



**FOR RENT**

**One Central**  
**HKD 16,500/mth**

1,269 ft<sup>2</sup>  
2   
2



Ref: 2005 1002



**FOR RENT**

**Old Taipa studio**  
**HKD 7,200/mth**

376 ft<sup>2</sup>  
1



Ref: 2110 1002

More Listings

For Sale

- [Taipa] Retail 833 ft<sup>2</sup> **HKD 12,980,000** Ref: 2111 6001
- [Macau] Lakeview Tower 3 2 1,344 ft<sup>2</sup> **HKD 11,680,000** Ref: 1912 6001
- [Taipa] Triumph Court 4 2 1,756 ft<sup>2</sup> **HKD 11,380,000** Ref: 2104 6002
- [Taipa] Family Home 4 3 2,073 ft<sup>2</sup> **HKD 9,988,000** Ref: 2111 6002
- [Coloane] Hellene Garden 3 2 1,137 ft<sup>2</sup> **HKD 7,980,000** Ref: 2109 6001

For Rent

- [Taipa] Va Fat 1 1 740 ft<sup>2</sup> **HKD 9,500/mth** Ref: 1910 1006
- [Coloane] One Oasis 2 2 1,185 ft<sup>2</sup> **HKD 11,200/mth** Ref: 2109 1001
- [Coloane] One Oasis 2 2 1,033 ft<sup>2</sup> **HKD 11,900/mth** Ref: 2107 6003
- [Coloane] One Oasis 2 2 1,112 ft<sup>2</sup> **HKD 13,900/mth** Ref: 2102 1004
- [Taipa] Kingsville 3 2 1,510 ft<sup>2</sup> **HKD 14,900/mth** Ref: 2108 1002

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



**FOR SALE**

**Hellene Gardens**  
**HKD 7,980,000**

1,663 ft<sup>2</sup>  
3   
2   
1



Ref: 2109 6001

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# Beijing Games relying on charters, temporary flights

**A**LREADY roiled by the pandemic and a partial diplomatic boycott, the Beijing Winter Olympics face another challenge in finding airplane seats for all of the athletes and officials.

Ensuring the smooth arrival of participants has "become everyone's concern" because of a reduction in regular passenger flights because of COVID-19, Zhang Liang, director of the organizing committee's Arrival and Departure Center, said Friday.

The committee and civilian aviation authorities have "established the principle that chartered and temporary flights will be the main means, supplemented by commercial flights," Zhang said at a media briefing.

He said 17 domestic and foreign carriers have signed on to provide temporary flights, adding 15 inbound flights departing from more than a dozen worldwide hubs every day, along with 13 outbound flights.

"The flight plans have been confirmed and the flight schedules have been released," Zhang said.

While China has largely controlled widespread virus infections since the pandemic began in the central city of Wuhan in late 2019, it has maintained a strict "zero-tolerance" approach on

AP PHOTO



pandemic restrictions.

Zhang said participants should be fully vaccinated at least two weeks before their departure for Beijing and monitor their health daily. They also need to take two

nucleic acid tests with 96 hours of boarding their flights and receive a green health code issued by the Chinese government showing they are virus-free. Another test will be administered when they

arrive in Beijing, Zhang said.

After that, the athletes, officials and journalists will enter a closed-loop bubble for the duration of the Feb. 4-20 Games, which will take place at three far-flung lo-

cations in downtown Beijing, its suburb of Yanqing, and neighboring Hebei province. No spectators from outside China are being allowed.

The U.S., Britain, Canada and others have announced a diplomatic boycott under which they will not send government officials to the Games in protest over China's alleged treatment of Turkic Muslim Uyghurs and other minority groups, along with civil society and human rights activists. China has dismissed that as a futile gesture that violates the Olympic spirit, but has also vowed to retaliate.

Politicians, the WTA and leading tennis players have also raised concerns about the safety of three-time Olympian and former top-ranked doubles player Peng, who publicly accused Zhang Gao-li, a former member of the party's Politburo Standing Committee of coercing her into sex three years ago. The WTA has suspended all of next year's events in China and Hong Kong in response. **MDT/AP**

AD



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OPINION

China Daily  
Editorial, China Daily

CHINA DID THE RIGHT  
THING TO CONTAIN  
COVID-19

Whether to choose to live with the novel coronavirus or to prevent it from infecting people by completely cutting the channels of its transmission? On this, China's practice differs from that of most developed countries. This is also why those countries that have chosen the way of herd immunity have long sought to cast doubts on the way China controlled the virus.

Some countries, considering the virus to be just another kind of flu, decided to lift all control and prevention measures months ago. The Omicron variant of the virus has taught them a lesson about how transmissible and devastating it can be.

Hundreds of thousands of new cases on a daily basis have once again turned the societies of many countries into a mess, and the governments of these countries have had to tighten control and prevention measures, mandating social distancing and the wearing of a mask.

The total number of infections in the United States alone has surpassed 50 million and the death toll has reached more than 800,000, with nearly 2,000 new deaths on a daily basis.

The situation in China is in sharp contrast with that in those countries.

Putting people's lives and health before everything, China has adopted strict control and prevention measures, which has won the cooperation of its people. Everyone is required to wear a mask in any public place and big data technology has been adopted to screen close contacts of the infected. Wherever a case is identified, the measures necessary to quarantine those close contacts and monitor those indirect contacts to cut off all channels for the transmission of the virus are immediately adopted.

As a result, China has generally kept the virus at bay and become the only major country in the world which has kept its economy operating as normal in the past two years. The entire Chinese society is running as it was before the pandemic.

It is no surprise that the country was the only major economy to register positive growth in 2020. The country's economy will continue to perform in a healthy and stable manner no matter what havoc the pandemic creates in the rest of the world.

This is because the Chinese government has adopted the right approach. It is also because the country's political system and institutions have made it possible for all the control and prevention measures to be implemented smoothly from the top to the grassroots.

China's excellent export performance has protruded how its success in responding to the pandemic has facilitated the development of its economy and has also brought to prominence how the failure of some major economies in their control of the pandemic has plagued their economic performance.

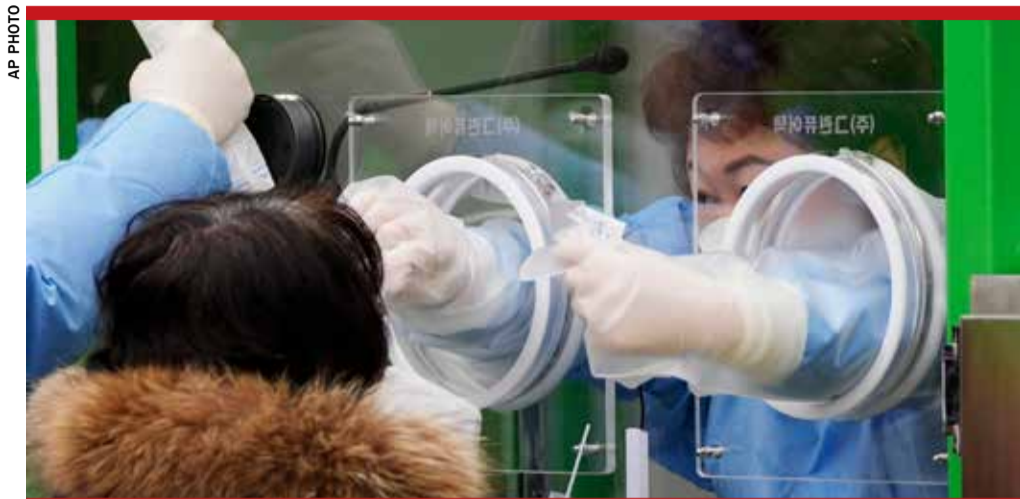
It is obvious that China is injecting vitality into the global economy with its success in containing the pandemic.

Taiwan has recorded its first case of the omicron variant in a passenger who recently traveled to the southern African country of Eswatini, health officials said Saturday.

The passenger, a Taiwanese woman in her 30s who returned on Dec. 8, is now in quarantine in hospital, according to the Central Epidemic Command Center, which is in charge of the island's pandemic response. Passengers who sat near her on the plane have tested negative so far.

Taiwan reported 10 new coronavirus cases on Saturday, all of which were identified in travelers entering from abroad.

The island has a strict two-week quarantine on arrival and has sealed its borders off to all but residents and citizens, with few exceptions. There is little community transmission within its borders of the disease and there has been few restrictions on movement internally in recent months.



COVID-19

SOUTH KOREA REPORTS  
ITS WORST VIRUS SURGE  
SINCE PANDEMIC

KIM TONG-HYUNG,  
SEOUL

NEW coronavirus infections in South Korea exceeded 7,000 for the third consecutive day on Friday, as the worst surge since the start of the pandemic overwhelmed hospitals and depleted health care workforce.

Critics have blamed the spread on complacency by the government, which dramatically lowered social distancing rules at the start of November in what officials described as the first step toward restoring pre-pandemic normalcy.

Even as cases began to soar in recent weeks, officials were initially hesitant to tighten social distancing, citing exhaustion and frustration by the public with restrictions and their impact on livelihoods. But as the contagious delta variant reduced

the effectiveness of vaccines and most people in their 60s or older are still waiting for their booster shoots, and the first cases of omicron were discovered, the sense of urgency became apparent.

Prime Minister Kim Boon-kyum, the No. 2 behind President Moon Jae-in, said during a virus meeting that the country could be forced to take further "extraordinary" measures if it fails to slow the spread of the virus soon.

Officials issued administrative orders requiring hospitals around the country to designate 2,000 more beds combined for COVID-19 treatment.

The increased capacity will be used to ease the crush on hospitals in Seoul and the nearby metropolitan region, where around 90% of intensive care units are already occupied. Offi-

cials said more than 1,200 virus patients in the greater capital area who required hospitalization were being forced to wait at home as of Friday morning because of bed shortages.

Kim said the government will also speed up the administration of booster shots by shortening the interval between the second and third vaccine injections from the current four or five months to three months starting next week.

South Korea has reported a daily average of more than 5,800 infections while adding more than 41,000 cases in the past seven days alone, pushing the national case-load to 503,000

Around 41.5 million people, or 81% of the population of over 51 million, have been fully vaccinated, but only 10% have received booster shots. MDT/AP



UK British police say a man was shot dead during a confrontation with firearms officers on Saturday near the Kensington Palace royal residence in London. The Metropolitan Police force said officers were called to reports that a man with a firearm had entered a bank and bookmakers in the Kensington area of west London. He fled in a vehicle, which was stopped by officers nearby in a wealthy area that is home to several embassies and the palace, which is the official London residence of Prince William, his wife Kate and their three children. It is also home to several other members of the royal family.



Russia's uniform for the Beijing Winter Olympics was unveiled on Friday without Russia's name, flag or coat of arms on it — as the uniform was at the Tokyo Games. Some clothing, however, will feature Russia's national colors. Russian Olympic Committee president Stanislav Pozdnyakov said at the presentation "our athletes will be the most beautiful and stylish at the upcoming games."



Brazil Supreme Court justice ruled Saturday that all travelers arriving in Brazil must present a vaccine passport documenting they have been vaccinated against the coronavirus. The decision from Luis Roberto Barroso challenges a more lenient rule announced by the government of President Jair Bolsonaro, who has opposed mandatory immunization against the virus that can cause COVID-19. Barroso's ruling must be reviewed by all 11 judges of the Supreme Court next week.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Kin Cheung



Hong Kong's winter swim. More than a thousand men and women plunged into the cool water of Hong Kong's Victoria Bay yesterday morning, competing to see who could swim the fastest across the harbor in open water.