



REVENUE MODEL RETHINK

Gaming operators and hotels need to learn strategies to manage and maximize revenue, according to Drew Rosser

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MONETARY AUTHORITY REVAMP TAKES EFFECT

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TOYS 'R' US SEEKS BANKRUPTCY

The once-dominant specialty retailer filed for bankruptcy thanks to a crushing debt load from a previous buyout

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS



US-N. KOREA

President Donald Trump, in a combative debut speech to the U.N. General Assembly, threatened the "total destruction" of North Korea if it does not abandon its drive toward nuclear weapons. Trump said "it is far past time for the nations of the world to confront" Kim Jong Un and said that Kim's "reckless pursuit of nuclear weapons" poses a threat to "the entire world with an unthinkable loss of human life."

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JAPAN Markets are suggesting that any snap election called by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe would take advantage of his opponents' weakness and see him retain power. Abe is expected to decide on the early ballot after returning from a trip to the U.S.



INDONESIA

A mob opposed to public discussion of Indonesia's 1965 massacre of communists tried to force its way into a Jakarta building where they believed communists were meeting, injuring five policemen.

PAKISTAN Police say an accidental explosion at a cement factory in the country's south has killed at least five people.

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Last British governor Patten warns against calls for HK independence

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Lynzy Valles

DESPITE the steady growth of the region's hotel occupancy rates, an expert has highlighted that local gaming operators and hotels still need to learn strategies to manage and maximize revenue.

Speaking at the Pata Asia Travel Association Travel Mart (PTM) Talks last week, Drew Rosser, vice president of Sales at SHR, said that the casino revenue model has changed, with younger "experience-centric" travelers playing a significant part in fueling this global trend.

While the shift has been seen already in the US gambling meccas, Rosser said that it has yet to be seen in Macau, highlighting that the city needs to maximize hotel revenues throughout an entire year.

Although the room-centric casino revenue model is here to stay, the expert noted that the region needs "new thinking," pointing out new solutions such as the use of the latest hotel distribution and booking technology.

Rosser also noticed local hotels' internet booking systems are "fairly simple" in terms of what they offer to consumers, compared to Las Vegas.

"If you look at hotel websites of hotels in Las Vegas, not just the website but internet booking engine, it's more complex in terms of rates [and services]," Rosser said, adding that it is a strategy Las Vegas has adopted for several years.

Meanwhile, the expert suggested that hotel operators have a different mindset when it comes to managing their revenues and rates, implying that these operators are even giving rooms as rewards.

"It's something that traditionally has not been done. Since they were effectively giving rooms away and not charging for the rooms, to have a revenue management strategy is a different way of running a hotel," he explained.

According to Rosser, they had meetings with hotel operators and only a few admitted that



Drew Rosser

TOURISM

Hotel operators need revenue management strategy

they are starting to think about revenue management strategy, as some still do not have revenue managers or staff.

The speaker proposed that hotel booking websites should provide add-on services for a small fee, which range from airport pick-up services to accepting commodity requests.

In Las Vegas' hotels, additional fees such as checking in and out late are also added, which according to the expert are the two biggest revenue generators.

Rosser also highlighted that Macau should mark itself as a destination for entertainment, rather than just gaming.

"From what we're seeing as we're talking to hotels, that is exactly what they're starting to do; trying to establish themselves

as a destination for entertainment and not just for gaming," he said.

"In Vegas, the entertainment side is much more in-your-face, there are huge signs, lights, advertisements, [and] they bring in very large entertainment," said Rosser.

Questioned whether the city still attracts Chinese gamblers, the speaker said that they have seen a decline not just in the flow of Chinese tourists but also their spending – which he supposed was due to the restrictions on money outflows.

PATA's forum and talks have stressed the importance of data collection and analysis to provide 'savvy travelers' more personalized offerings.

In targeting millennial travelers, Rosser stressed that they

are much more interested in experiences, concentrating on the city's entertainment scene rather than participating in gambling activities.

Although efforts still have to be made, hotels should also focus on data and business intelligence to collect information based on customer activity in hotels.

In Vegas, the entertainment side is much more in-your-face.

DREW ROSSER

In a separate talk, PATA's CEO Mario Hardy noted that businesses are experiencing shifting trends in a much faster way, stressing that service operators also have to adapt accordingly.

"It is changing and what [Macau] can do and is doing to a certain degree, and probably will do more in some areas, is that it's got all the facilities for organizing concerts and live shows," he said.

"The physical capacity here is much greater. If you look at Vegas, they constantly bring big celebrities and shows," Hardy added.

He also commented that Macau still has room for growth and can diversify its entertainment products and offerings, which would attract people to come for specific shows.

DSEC: Hotel industry recovers in 2016

REVENUES in the hotel sector increased by 9.3 percent year-on-year to MOP28.47 billion in 2016, recovering from the decline in 2015. According to Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) data released yesterday, the hotel

industry expenditure grew by 13.5 percent year-on-year to MOP26.61 billion, of which compensation of employees (MOP11.93 billion), operating expenses (MOP11.78 billion) and purchase of goods & commission paid (MOP2.89

billion) rose by 14.2 percent, 13.8 percent and 9.3 percent respectively.

In 2016, the number of operating hotels and guesthouses increased by 2 year-on-year to 109, including 77 hotels and 32 guesthouses. The number of persons

engaged in the sector grew by 9.6 percent to 49,628; among them, 27,204 were engaged in the eight hotels that have 1,500 workers or more, a growth of 19.8 percent year-on-year.

The total revenue of 5-star hotels grew by 2.2 percent

year-on-year to MOP21.92 billion, with room sales (MOP9.85 billion) being the major source of receipts, up by 1 percent.

The revenues of hotels from online business (including bookings of hotel rooms and tickets) total-

led to MOP1.18 billion. Meanwhile, expenditure of 5-star hotels (MOP 20.3 billion) increased by 6.1 percent year-on-year, according to DSEC.

Gross Value Added, which measures the sectoral contribution to the economy, rebounded from the decline in 2015 and rose by 7.6 percent year-on-year to MOP14.21 billion.

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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

13,000 SMEs applied for gov't short-term aid

A total of 13,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have filled applications in order to request aid, provided under a government plan to alleviate the effects of Typhoon Hato on such businesses. The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong aired the information on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony of the new president of the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) and the new coordinator of the Financial Intelligence Office.

According to Leong, the government has also received around 6,000 applications for medium and long-term support, concerning interest-free loans to a maximum amount of

MOP600,000.

Regarding the status of such requests, the Secretary noted the government has already processed a total of 43.1 percent of the requests (5,600), involving a sum of MOP280 million. For these requests, the government is offering a MOP50,000 grant.

As for the larger aid package, only 108 (1.8 pct) of the 6,000 applications have thus far been approved, reaching a total of MOP47.7 million.

The low ratio of these approvals was justified by Leong on the back of the administrative demand of a "great number of applications." He said that the number of applications in that 20-day period accounted for more than half the total num-

ber of requests made under the scheme since its creation in 2003. Leong added that the government is providing additional workers in the relevant services to handle the huge volume of work.

"The staff of the Macao Economic Services has been working overtime lately, and other services of the same kind have also had to mobilize more than 200 workers to face the workload and to accelerate the process of assessing the applications," Leong said. "The government is maintaining close cooperation with the Banks Association with the aim of accelerating the process of assessing interest-free credit applications."

The Economy and Finance lea-



Lionel Leong

der also noted that the AMCM is monitoring the work of insurance companies after the typhoon

catastrophe so that the victims can be compensated as soon as possible. **RM**



Benjamin Chan



Chu Un I

Benjamin Chan and Chu Un I become new heads of gov't financial sector

BENJAMIN Chan and Chu Un I were sworn in yesterday as the new president of the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) and the new coordinator of the Financial Intelligence Office (GIF) respectively.

The new financial sector heads took office yesterday at noon in an inauguration ceremony officiated by the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong.

In his speech, Chan, while thanking the chief executive and the secretary for the

trust they placed in him, said that after the period of adjustment over the past three years, the region is now faced with the new challenge of the "tighter monetary policies being placed in developed countries" that cause "fluctuations in the international financial environment."

For Macau, such fluctuations may indicate the "beginning of a cycle of rising interest rates."

Chan possesses wide experience in the field of finance and has previously occu-

pled several positions within AMCM. According to him, his goal is to maintain close cooperation with all AMCM staff in order to "articulate the area of financial supervision with the government's scientific action by implementing relevant missions that aim to guarantee the stability and security of the financial and monetary system of Macau SAR." In addition, he endeavors to contribute to efforts to "boosting the stable and healthy development of the local financial sector"

and "keeping and upvaluing the monetary assets [of the] MSAR."

After Chan concluded, Chu thanked the leaders for the opportunity to be elected as the new coordinator for GIF. In this position, Chu's main goal is to ensure the implementation and development of the Anti-money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Legislation and Regulations (AML/CFT regime).

Chu promised to lead the GIF in efforts to "continue to follow the latest trends in this [AML/CFT] area and keep close cooperation with foreign counterparts in order to strengthen the exchange of financial information."

Leong noted the extensive experience and academic qualifications of the new heads. In respect to the challenges expected to face AMCM, he hinted: "In view of the fact that the financial sector of the territory has entered a new phase of development, and in order to better guarantee the security of Macau's financial system, and to foster the development of the financial industry with its own characteristics, it is necessary for the AMCM to make a longer-term plan that matches the real needs of the territory." He noted that Chan is the right choice for such a task.

Similarly, Leong said Chu was the right person to continue the work by former coordinator Deborah Ng, who was recently praised by the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering.

Leong reaffirmed the need for continued efforts to match "the international community's efforts to combat money laundering and terrorist financing."

COOPERATION

Institutions discuss Sino-Portuguese platform development

REPRESENTATIVES from the Macau delegation of the Portugal-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCILC) recently met with the Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) to discuss and exchange ideas on the enhancement of Sino-Portuguese platform positioning.

The delegation, led by its president Bernie Leong, was received by the board of directors, president Jackson Chang and executive director Gloria Batalha Ung, according to a statement issued by the chamber.

According to Chang, Chinese enterprises are keen to enter the market of Portuguese-speaking countries to expand their business network.

The chamber can then utilize its own business network to promote the establishment of the platform, in order to further promote the role of a Sino-Portuguese platform to China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and establish closer economic and trade relations.

Ung hopes that the Macau delegation of

the CCILC would help to attract more professional business visitors to participate in the forthcoming 22nd Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF).

Meanwhile Leong said that the chamber, which has over 20 corporate members from different economic fields, including subsidiaries of Portuguese enterprises, has been fostering the economic and trade cooperation between members and regions.

He noted that in addition to the expansion of membership base being the main development strategy in 2018, the chamber would focus on the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area under the national strategic context of "Belt and Road Initiative."

The move is to attract more Chinese enterprises to join as members, so as to leverage their network and information advantages to assist China and Portuguese-speaking countries further develop business activities and establish an economic platform.

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CRIME

Woman scammed over 'moon cake' order

A local woman, aged 34, has filed a complaint to the Judiciary Police (PJ) claiming to have been swindled in the amount of RMB19,000, the PJ spokesperson revealed this week.

The incident started earlier this year, when using the mobile phone app WeChat, when she met a man who claimed to work in a hotel in Hong Kong.

According to the victim, she said the suspect had posted an advert in July, stating that he was accepting orders for the special moon cake served at the hotel, offered at a special price.

The woman decided to make a purchase, transferring a total of RMB19,000 to the man that claimed to be the only person in charge of supplying such seasonal delicacy.

After a couple of weeks of waiting, the order was delayed and she contacted the man to ask about it. At the time, he said it was delayed

due to typhoon-related issues, but as more time passed, the woman started to suspect that it was not the true reason.

After a heated discussion that allegedly involved other people and other WeChat accounts threatening her, she decided to file a complaint.

In a separate case reported by the same police force, a woman from mainland China claimed to have been deceived and robbed by a friend she met in a casino a day before.

The case occurred on September 17 when the victim, while playing at the tables with the suspect in a local casino, left her luggage under the suspect's guard. After a short while, the suspect disappeared. Later, with the help of the landlord of an illegal lodge where she was staying, the victim found out that the HKD30,000 in cash and HKD100,000 in gaming chips were missing from her bag.

Angela Leong purchases USD338 million London office

ANGELA Leong has bought a historic building in London's Aldwych district for about 250 million pounds (USD338 million), people with knowledge of the deal said.

The executive director of SJM Holding, who is married to casino magnate Stanley Ho, has completed the purchase of Aldwych House from Rowan Asset Management and GI Partners LLC, the people said, asking not to be identified because the deal is confidential. The 174,000 square-foot (16,200 square-meter) building near Covent Garden has been leased to tenants including WeWork Cos. and the ROKA restaurant after a recent modernization.

A spokesman for the vendors declined to comment. Representatives for Leong did not return calls and emails seeking comment.

Hong Kong investors have poured into London's commercial real estate market following the Brexit vote, lured by the cheap pound and lower values than their domestic



market. Chinese and Hong Kong buyers spent almost 4 billion pounds on London commercial property in the first half of the year, up from 2.7 billion pounds in the whole of 2016, according to data compiled by broker CBRE Group Inc.

Hong Kong-based LKK Health Products Group Ltd. agreed to buy the tower known as the Walkie Talkie for 1.28 billion pounds in July and Hong Kong real estate developer C C Land Holdings paid

1.15 billion pounds for the Cheese-grater tower in May. Cindat Capital Management is joining an acquisition of QHotels Group valuing the U.K. hospitality company at more than 500 million pounds (\$660 million), people with knowledge of the matter said earlier this month.

Leong, who has a net worth of \$3.7 billion according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, was reelected lawmaker on Sunday's legislative elections in Macau. **MDT/Bloomberg**

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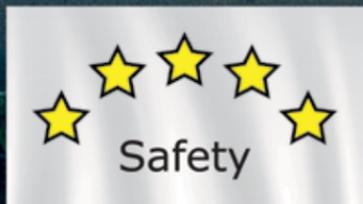

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Industrial revenue down 0.9 percent

THE total revenue of Macau's industrial establishments dropped slightly by 0.9 percent year-on-year to MOP10.41 billion in 2016, according to data released yesterday by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), while "intermediate consumption" decreased 7.4 percent to MOP5.53 billion.

As the decline in consumption outpaced the drop in revenue, the gross surplus of the industrial sector (MOP2.82 billion) grew by 8.9 percent year-on-year.

According to DSEC, a total of 883 establishment were operating in industrial production, a year-on-year decrease of 17, while the number

of people engaged in the sector increased by 1.2 percent to 12,062.

Attributable to a decrease in sales volume of cement and concrete, revenue of the manufacturing sector dropped by 3.7 percent year-on-year to MOP6.88 billion, with its share in terms of the industrial sector's revenue falling 1.9 percentage points to 66.1 percent.

Within the manufacturing sector, revenue of manufacture of food products and beverages grew by 8.4 percent year-on-year to MOP1.89 billion. On the other hand, due to the declining demand for cement and similar products in local construction projects, revenue

from the cement and concrete segment decreased by 21 percent year-on-year to MOP1.61 billion. The revenue of the publishing and printing sector increased last year by 4.7 percent to a total of MOP800 million.

As regards the electricity, gas and water supply sector, increased electricity consumption drove revenue up by 4.9 percent year-on-year to MOP3.53 billion.

Among the emerging industries, the manufacture of Chinese medicine showed continued growth, with revenue rising notably by 65.7 percent year-on-year to MOP48.7 million, representing the third consecutive year of increase.

CTT introduces online tool for authentication

THE Macau Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) has launched an 'eSignCloud Service' to provide a safe, reliable and user-friendly online signing tool.

The tool is capable of providing real-name authentication for government departments, business organizations and individual users.

CTT said in a statement that the 'eSignCloud Service' enables users to sign electronic documents on mobile devices while guaranteeing security, convenience and legal effectiveness.

Online applications can be also be integrated with the 'eSignCloud Service' and turned into online 'eSignable' services enabling real-name authentication of users' identities and to increase the legal effect of signing using the service.

The enhanced security and convenience of the 'eSignCloud Service' is intended to boost

public confidence regarding the security and legal effectiveness of online services and transactions.

The newly launched service will be used by the 'Online Request for Written Information in Electronic Format Service' of the Legal Affairs Bureau during the service's first phase.

CTT said that it will also introduce the service to government departments, business organizations and associations.

To apply for the 'eSignCloud Service', every user is required to create an 'eSignCloud Service' account with their own electronic certificate.

The 'eSignCloud Service' can be used in conjunction with the free 'eSignTrust Mobile One-Time Password' (eSignTrust MOTP) mobile application to enable two-factor authentication for stronger protection.

Power outage in Taipa

The power supply interruption that occurred in the Taipa district and surrounding regions yesterday at 5.50 p.m. was caused by damage to two sets of underground medium-voltage cables by the excavation work of a third-party construction company, utility company Companhia de Electricidade de Macau (CEM) has revealed. The power outage affected power supply to approximately 230 buildings and over 1,200 households in Taipa Old District, Jockey Club District and Central District. CEM said that repair works were carried out immediately and power was restored to most customers by 6.34 p.m. The remaining 100 customers or so were supplied by mobile generators, CEM said.

Liaison Office: AL will support gov't

The Liaison Office has congratulated the winners of the Legislative Assembly (AL) election, and said that it believes that not only will the new AL exercise its rights as stated by Macau's Basic Law, but will also support the Chief Executive and the SAR government in implementing policies according to the law. The office said that Macau residents "exercised their democratic rights and elected the majority of the lawmakers." It believes that the AL will push forward the successful practices concerning the 'One Country Two Systems' principle.

Final election results released

The Legislative Assembly Election Accounting Committee released the final results of the Elections for the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday afternoon, the Government Information Bureau informed in a statement. The chairman of the Accounting Committee, Kuok Kin Hong, said that another 39 votes on direct suffrage were declared valid after being initially considered null (5 cases), while 34 cases of list complaints were still pending decisions. Some 174,872 eligible voters cast their ballots, equivalent to 57.22 percent of total eligible voters, 2.2 percent higher than the last legislative election. In line with the Basic Law, the new legislature is composed of 33 seats including 14 directly-elected seats, 12 indirectly-elected seats, and seven others which will be appointed by the SAR's chief executive. The term of office for the sixth Legislative Assembly will begin in October this year.

FOOD & BEVERAGE

Bar offerings 'need to move with time'

Lynzy Valles

GRAND Lapa restobar Vasco has revamped its premises and menu, which will feature new signature cocktails when the venue reopens next month.

The company consulted celebrated Belgian mixologist Ulric Nijs to create eight signature cocktails, which tell a story of Vasco da Gama's exploration journey.

In a media preview this week, Nijs said that the entire cocktail menu was designed in only a week, noting that Vasco's bartenders also played a significant part in his decisions. The bar is aiming to cater to local taste in cocktails.

"A lot of those drinks are relatively approachable. They are easy drinks and you don't have to be a cocktail wizard to enjoy them," said the bartender.

"I think these drinks were assisted by the fact that [local bartender] taste is very good, and these were all approved by them," he added.

Although the mixologist found it challenging to adjust to the local taste, he was confident that the signature drinks would cater to guests' preferences.

The cocktail scene has evolved over the past several years, creating different opportunities for wine and spirit enthusiasts.

Questioned by the Times whether Vasco needed to

redevelop its cocktail choices, Nijs said "it needed to move with time" and added that it also needed to incorporate some more contemporary elements.

"When people travel in hotels, they will expect the drink to have a certain quality and character [and so] we need to add this into the equation," he explained.

The consultant stressed that since modern consumers are much more educated and aware of the wines and spirits they drink, it is vital for hotels to keep up with the demand.

"The alcohol that we drink today is better than what we drank 20 to 30 years ago," Nijs explained.

The bartender is also delighted that bartending is



Ulric Nijs

now seen as a legitimate profession, adding that the job was downplayed decades ago.

In his view, bartenders will continue to create new and unique cocktails,

drawing inspirations from current trends and demands.

"Nowadays, bartending is regarded as a trade and it's good; it's what we want," Nijs added.

MGM Resorts announces plans for new Connecticut casino

Dave Collins

MGM Resorts International revealed plans on Monday for a USD675 million waterfront casino in Connecticut's largest city, the latest salvo in a competition with two Native American tribes that run two of the world's largest casinos in the southeastern part of the state.

MGM is already building a nearly \$1 billion casino in Springfield, Massachusetts, that threatens to take revenue and jobs away from the Foxwoods Resort Casino and Mohegan Sun in Connecticut. The Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan tribes responded by proposing a casino less than 20 miles away from Springfield in northern Connecticut that was approved by Connecticut officials and awaits final approval by federal authorities.

The two tribes said in a statement Monday that the Bridgeport casino isn't anywhere near receiving required approval from the state legislature and Democratic Gov. Dannel P. Malloy. They also said approval of the resort would viola-



This image provided by MGM Resorts International shows an architectural rendering of a casino proposed for Bridgeport

te the gambling compact between the tribes and the state that gives the tribes exclusive casino development rights in Connecticut.

MGM and its partner on the Bridgeport casino, development company RCI Group, vowed to "work diligently" to obtain the needed approvals.

The Bridgeport casino would be located along Long Island Sound in Bridgeport's Steelpointe Harbor, the same area where President Donald Trump proposed a casino in the 1990s.

The new casino would include 2,000 slot machines, 160 table games, a 700-seat theater, a 300-room hotel, restaurants and retail shops, according to MGM. It would add more than 7,000 new jobs in the Bridgeport area, as well as provide \$50 million in license fees to the state this fiscal year, \$8 million in yearly payments to the city of Bridgeport and \$4.5 million in annual payments to surrounding communities, according to MGM.

James Murren, MGM's chair-

man and chief executive officer, said the casino "can help to turn the economic tide of this state." "We just need the political commitment to make it happen," said Murren, who is a Bridgeport native.

Malloy said later Monday that he hadn't reviewed the Bridgeport proposal. He said if the state violates the compact with the tribes, it could lose nearly \$500 million over the next two years in revenue from the tribes' two casinos. The state gets 25 percent of the slot

machine revenue from Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun under the compact.

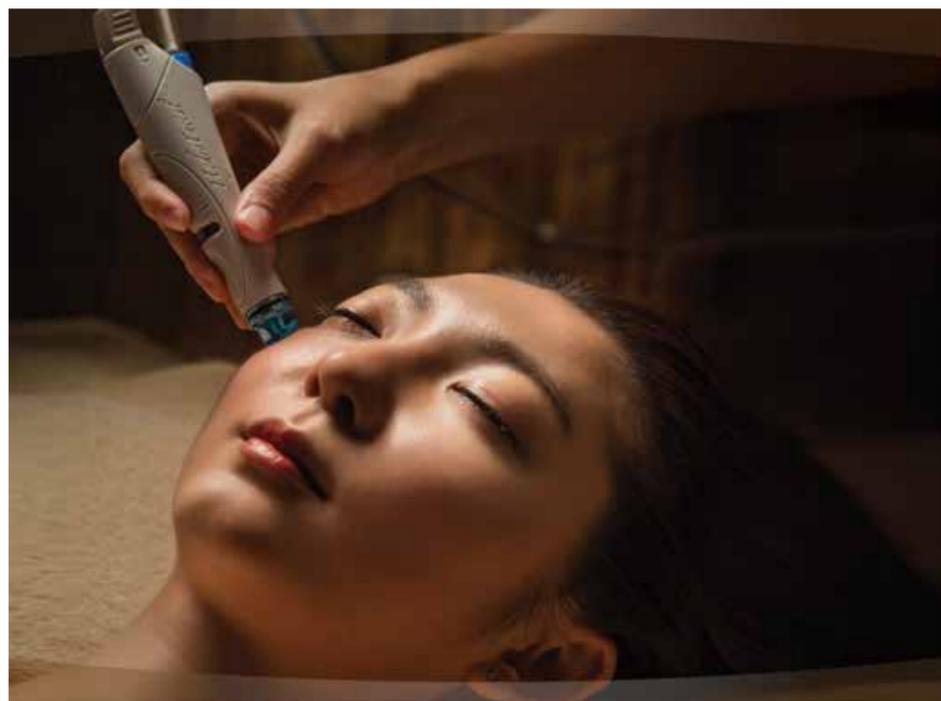
"I can't imagine any scenario in which the tribal nations would agree to open up the compact on those grounds," Malloy said. "I can't imagine entering into an agreement with any entity that would endanger our agreement with the tribal nations."

The new casino would include 2,000 slot machines, 160 table games, a 700-seat theater, a 300-room hotel

MGM sued Connecticut in 2015 over the process used by the state to approve the casino proposed by the two tribes in East Windsor, about a 20-minute drive from the Springfield casino site. MGM said it was put at a competitive disadvantage after Connecticut officials created a special pathway for the tribes to build a casino on non-tribal land.

A federal appeals court in June 2017 upheld a lower court judge's decision to dismiss the lawsuit. **AP**

AD



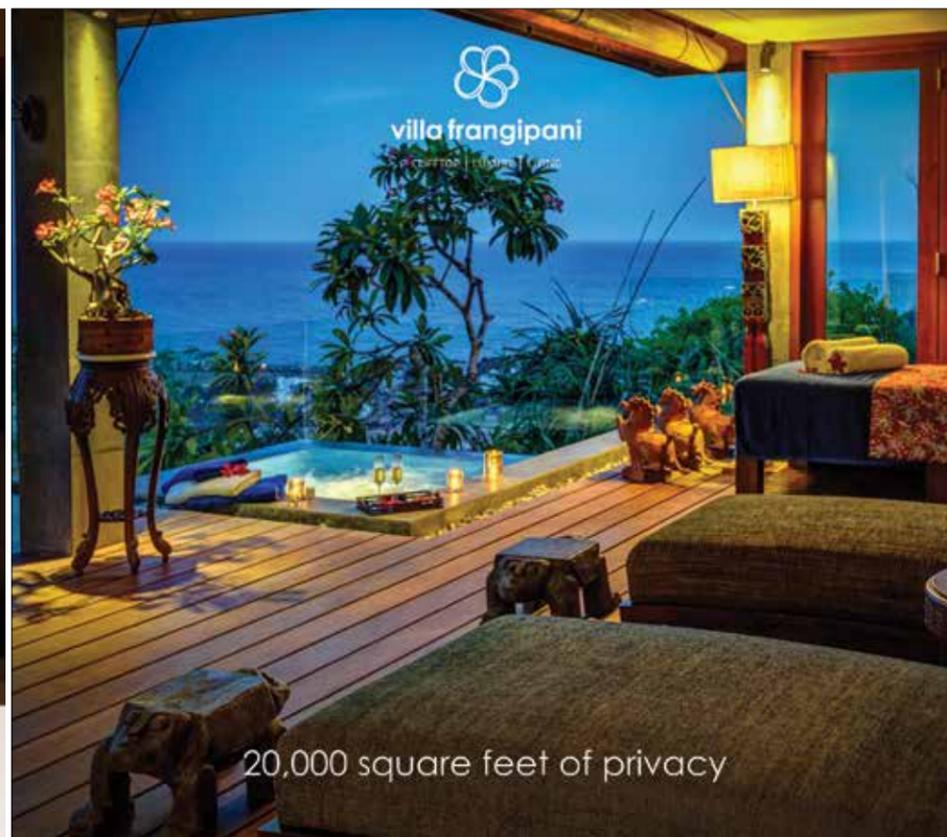
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TOYS "R" Us Inc., the once-dominant specialty retailer and ultimate toyland for a generation of post-war baby boomers, filed for bankruptcy thanks to a crushing debt load from a previous buyout and relentless competition from warehouse and on-line retailers.

The bankruptcy filing is the latest blow to a brick-and-mortar retail industry reeling from store closures, sluggish mall traffic and the gravitational pull of Amazon.com Inc., which has revolutionized the way people consume with affordable online offerings and global home delivery service.

The bankruptcy filing by the company also may have global implications, especially for Chinese toy manufacturers. Some 38 percent of the company's revenue came from overseas markets in the latest fiscal year.

The company listed debt and assets of more than USD1 billion each in Chapter 11 documents submitted Monday at the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Richmond, Virginia. Prior to filing, the chain secured more than \$3 billion in financing from lenders including a JPMorgan Chase & Co.-led bank syndicate and certain existing lenders to fund operations while it restructures, according to a company statement. The funding is subject to court approval.

The company didn't announce

Toys 'R' Us seeks bankruptcy, crushed by debt and online rivals

plans to close stores, and said its locations across the globe would continue normal operations. "Like any retailer, decisions about any future store closings – and openings – will continue to be made based on what makes the best sense for the business," Michael Freitag, a spokesman for Toys "R" Us, said in an email.

Much of the toy merchant's debt is the legacy of a \$7.5 billion leveraged buyout in 2005 in which Bain Capital, KKR & Co. and Vornado Realty Trust loaded the company with debt to take it private. Since then, the Wayne, New Jersey-based chain has struggled to dig itself out.

Chief Executive Officer David Brandon took over Toys "R" Us in 2015 and sought to make shopping there a more enjoyable experience. Last year, he set out a vision of kids "dragging their parents to our stores because they want to see what's going on."

The retailer introduced the "Hot Toy Finder," which tells customers exactly where in their local store to find the items featured on its "Holiday Hot Toy List." The



chain, which has provided the annual list of the 50 hottest toys for 20 years, also offered price matching and free layaway.

While Brandon made some progress reducing liabilities, he ultimately was unable to resuscitate the closely held chain's fortunes. The company reported a net loss of \$164 million in the quarter ended April 29, compared to \$126 million for the same period in the prior year. It hasn't shown an annual profit since 2013.

When reports surfaced recently that Toys "R" Us was weighing a bankruptcy filing, Chinese toy scooter maker Pinghu Mijia Child Product Co. put all of the retailer's orders on hold, fearing it wouldn't get paid, according to sales manager Justin Yu. The toy retailer represents about 10 to 20 percent of the Chinese supplier's sales.

"We were shocked to hear the news last week because their orders to us have been rising every year, so we did not know they

were in trouble," Yu said. "They're a major buyer and I would say that the majority of toy makers in China would have some contracts with them."

Li Jiewei, a spokesman with the China Toy and Juvenile Products Association, thinks demand for toys remains robust, regardless of the problems at Toys "R" Us. "Total toy exports from China have been growing every year and growth remains strong so we don't see it as an industry problem," he said.

Charles Lazarus opened Children's Bargain Town, a baby-furniture store, in Washington in 1948, according to the Toys "R" Us website. He added toys two years later and opened the first Toys "R" Us, modeled after self-service supermarkets, in 1957. Lazarus stepped down as chairman and CEO in 1994. Two years later, the first Babies "R" Us opened.

The company sells toy and baby merchandise in about 1,600 Toys "R" Us and Babies "R" Us locations worldwide and through websites including Toysrus.com and Babiesrus.com. **Bloomberg**

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ECONOMY

EU Chamber warns China: Open faster or risk backlash

Joe McDonald, Beijing

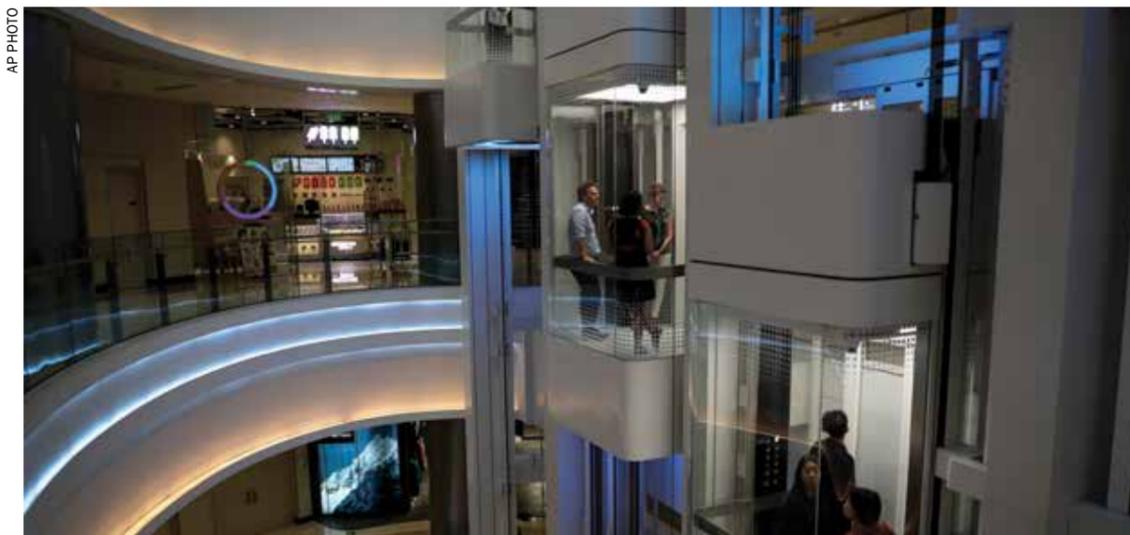
A business group urged China yesterday to carry out promises to open its economy and warned that inaction might fuel a backlash against free trade amid mounting U.S. and European criticism.

The European Union Chamber of Commerce said in a report that Beijing is backtracking in some areas, including by imposing new restrictions on food imports, express delivery and legal services. It proposed hundreds of possible changes to open the state-dominated economy wider or simplify rules in fields from cosmetics to medical devices.

"The current lack of reciprocity in market access is becoming politically unsustainable," the European chamber president, Mats Harborn, said at a news conference. "We are worried that if this is not quickly changed, there will be a backlash against economic globalization."

The chamber's American counterpart and other groups have issued similar appeals.

Beijing faces mounting complaints from Washington and the



Interiors of a newly opened up-scale shopping mall in Beijing

European Union about its trade surpluses and barriers to foreign acquisitions of Chinese assets while its own companies are buying foreign brands and technology.

Earlier this week, the U.S. trade representative, Robert Lighthizer, complained in a speech in Washington that Chinese efforts to create industrial champions and induce foreign companies to hand over technology threaten the world tra-

ding system.

President Xi Jinping, who took power in 2012, and other leaders have promised to give market forces a bigger role, treat foreign and Chinese companies equally and reduce the dominance of state industry. But reform advocates complain little has been done to carry out those pledges.

A foreign ministry spokesman, Lu Kang, defended Beijing's trade

record and said it has abided by its market-opening commitments under the World Trade Organization.

"China stays committed to the opening up and reform and lets the market play a decisive role in the allocation of resources," Lu said at a regular briefing.

China is a key market for autos, aircraft, smartphones, cosmetics and other goods. But Beijing bars foreign companies from fields

including finance, telecoms and utilities. In others, companies are required to work through local partners that might become competitors.

The European chamber report noted the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development ranks China 59th out of 62 countries in terms of openness to foreign direct investment.

It appealed for changes in fields from aerospace to cosmetics, including opening more industry segments, easing limits on foreign ownership stakes in companies and simplifying regulation.

The president of the European Union's governing body last week announced plans to introduce a screening mechanism for foreign investments — a measure widely seen to be directed at Beijing.

"It seems like it is a well-balanced proposal so far, and we look forward to seeing the discussion," Harborn said.

Also last week, U.S. President Donald Trump blocked a Chinese-financed purchase of a U.S. semiconductor maker, prompting suggestions Washington might tighten scrutiny of future deals.

American authorities also are investigating whether Beijing should face penalties for pressuring companies to hand over technology in exchange for market access. A survey earlier by the U.S.-China Business Council found 20 percent of companies that responded said they were asked to transfer technology within the past three years. **AP**

CHINA is discussing a plan to allow foreign carmakers to set up wholly owned electric-vehicle businesses in its free-trade zones in a major revision of a fundamental principle governing the country's auto industry policy since the 1990s, according to company officials briefed on the matter.

The plan, which is subject to change as a final decision hasn't been made, could be put in place as early as next year, the people said, asking not to be identified as the deliberations are private. If the policy takes effect, it would be a landmark departure from the existing rules, which require foreign automakers to set up joint ventures with local counterparts.

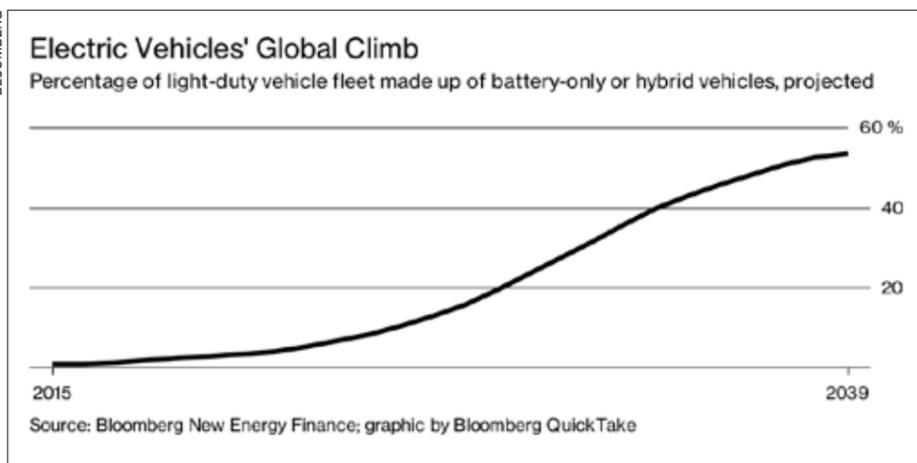
A relaxation of the joint venture rule would give companies like Tesla Inc. the opportunity to set up fully owned manufacturing operations in China, the world's biggest market for electric vehicles. Ford Motor Co. is exploring setting up a joint venture to produce electric vehicles in China with Anhui Zotye Automobile Co. while Volkswagen AG has partnered with Anhui Jianghuai Autom-

Beijing is said to weigh opening up to foreign electric carmakers

obile Group Corp. to make electric cars.

China's Ministry of Commerce, which is responsible for formulating policy governing foreign direct investments, said in an emailed response to Bloomberg News that it will "actively implement the opening up of the new-energy manufacturing sector to foreigners, together with other departments under the direction of the State Council."

The ministry also referred to a notice issued in August by the State Council, or cabinet, in which it directed government agencies to broaden foreign investor access to areas including new-ener-



gy vehicle manufacturing. China has been gradually opening up access to foreign auto manufacturers in free-trade zones.

■ **A relaxation of the 50-50 joint venture rule gives companies the opportunity to set up fully owned manufacturing operations in China**

Foreign companies were allowed to set up 100 percent owned motorcycle and battery manufacturing operations in China since July 2016. The so-called 50-50 rule for Sino-foreign joint ventures was introduced in 1994 to ensure that China's then-fledgling auto industry can benefit from technology transfer by jointly operating factories with global auto companies such as Volkswagen and General

Motors Co.

Xu Shaoshi, then-chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission, said in June 2016 that the government is looking into lifting the 50 percent ownership cap. The policy has been criticized in recent years for shielding state-owned companies from competition and reducing the drive to build their own brands. Its supporters say the rule gives China's automakers a chance to bui-

ld enough scale and develop technology to withstand global competition.

Billionaire Elon Musk's Tesla said in June that it's working with the Shanghai government to explore local production. Shanghai has one of the 11 free-trade zones in China. The others are in provinces including Fujian, Guangdong and Zhejiang.

Even as a rising wave of governments and automakers get behind plug-in electric vehicles, Toyota Motor Corp. President Akio Toyoda said yesterday that hybrid technology will remain central to his company's strategy.

"With hybrid technology at the center, Toyota will offer fuel-cell vehicles, plug-in hybrids, gasoline cars, and - although we're a little bit late - electric vehicles," Toyoda said. "We're not thinking about deciding that now it must be EVs, and we'll only do EVs."

Battery-powered cars and gas-electric plug-in hybrids are poised to grow so fast that, by 2040, they'll make up more than half of vehicles sold globally, according to Bloomberg New Energy Finance. **Bloomberg**

CHINA is racing to finish one of the biggest hydro-power projects in Pakistan ahead of schedule, yet its location in the long-contested region of Kashmir will draw ire from India.

Construction on the 720 megawatt Karot power station being built on Jhelum river began in December 2016 and looks set to finish nine months ahead of its December 2021 completion date, a first for a Pakistan hydro-project said Qin Guobin, chief executive officer of the state-owned China Three Gorges Corp. South Asia Investment Ltd. The company has put in place an aggressive strategy to cut the project's financing costs.

"For us, Pakistan is a strategic market," Qin said at the site. "If we managed to complete it earlier we can save financing costs and make it more competitive."

Pakistan's energy demand is expected to grow by 6 percent to 35,000 megawatts by 2024 as its population of more than 200 million people grows along with the economy. For more than a decade, it's been struggling to overcome daily power shortages that have left industry and residents in the dark.

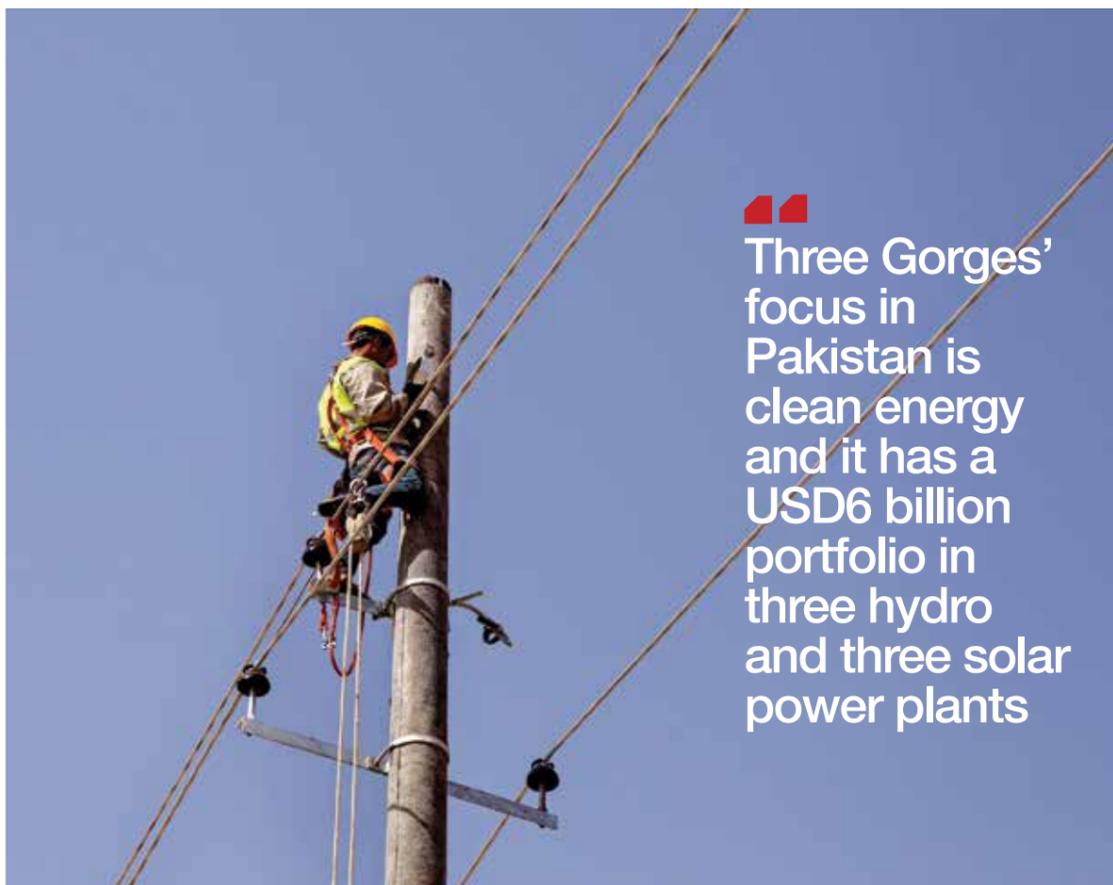
China has stepped in to meet some of those shortages, financing projects worth more than USD50 billion in an economic corridor that runs through Pakistan. The route is part of Chinese President Xi Jinping's 'Belt-And-Road' plan to connect Asia with Europe and Africa with a web of ports, railways and highways links for trade.

Three Gorges' focus in Pakistan is clean energy and it has a \$6 billion portfolio in three hydro and three solar power plants. The Karot hydro-power project is in the Pakistan-administered part of Kashmir, which India and Pakistan both claim and have fought two wars over

BELT & ROAD

China quickens work on Pakistan utility in area claimed by India

BLOOMBERG



“Three Gorges’ focus in Pakistan is clean energy and it has a USD6 billion portfolio in three hydro and three solar power plants”

since independence in 1947.

India's foreign ministry said its views on "Pakistan's illegal occupation" of Kashmir is "a matter of record."

"We have objected, they have proceeded nevertheless," said G. Parthasarathy, a former Indian high commissioner to Pakistan. "This has been going on since the 1960s and 1970s, when they built the Karakoram highway" that links Pakistan with China through the disputed territory, he said.

China has a neutral stance on the Kashmir dispute, said Zhao Gancheng, director of the Center for South Asia Studies at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies. "The Belt and Road initiative cannot be delayed or sidetracked by the territorial disputes."

Relations between China and India hit a recent low during a dispute between a three-way junction between Bhutan, China's Tibet and India's Sikkim, which was resolved with both

sides standing down in August.

More broadly, New Delhi is wary of Chinese investments in neighboring countries such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka, while Beijing is irked by India's lack of support for its infrastructure and trade initiative.

India's concern doesn't bother Qin. "It's a political issue and not the concern of a private investor," he said.

Pakistan considers the hydro power site a national security priority. It's dotted with army

pickets and plain-cloth security officials. None of the Chinese staff can leave the camp office without registering his or her name at the main gate. Out of the total 2,070 workers, 750 are Chinese.

The concern is being taken seriously by both sides. Pakistan has created a special force of 15,000 troops to defend the Chinese projects and that number may be double, according to people with direct knowledge of the plans, who asked not to be identified as they aren't authorized to speak to the media. Yet risks remain after two Chinese nationals were killed in southwestern Balochistan in June. Islamic State claimed their murders.

The stakes are high for Pakistan, with the planned power generation projects potentially adding \$13 billion to its economy in the next seven years, according to an International Monetary Fund report published in July.

Pakistan's hydro-power generation potential is an estimated 40,000 megawatts, but the existing installed capacity was only 7,116 megawatts in the 2015-16 fiscal year, according to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority's latest report.

Three Gorge's now eyeing the contract for the construction of a 4,500 megawatt Diamir-Bhasha power project in northern Gilgit-Baltistan and northwestern Chillas district.

"Pakistan total installed capacity is equal to one big city of China like Shanghai," Qin said. "That's not enough." **Bloomberg**

HONG KONG

Patten warns against calls for former British colony independence

HONG Kong's last British governor, Chris Patten, said yesterday that calls for the city's independence from China dilute support for democracy, and residents should engage in dialogue and not hate speech.

Patten, who presided over the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, spoke at a luncheon at The Foreign Correspondents' Club in Hong Kong.

A debate on freedom of speech has raged at universities in Hong Kong

“Hong Kong has to have a grown-up discussion about civil disobedience and how much is allowable.”

CHRIS PATTEN

over the appearance of independence slogans on campus. Patten expressed his disapproval of calls for Hong Kong independence, saying it would never happen, is provocative

and dilutes support for democracy.

"Hong Kong has to have a grown-up discussion about civil disobedience and how much is allowable. But I certainly don't

think that it makes sense for people to shout at one another from the opposite sides of the barricades," he said.

Hong Kong maintains civil liberties unseen on mainland China, including freedom of speech, but many residents fear Beijing is tightening its grip.

Some young activists started promoting the once-unthinkable notion of independence from mainland China after massive pro-democracy protests

AP PHOTO



ended without resolution in 2014. There's almost no chance of success but their ideas have alarmed China's Communist leaders

in Beijing.

Hong Kong's Beijing-backed government has clamped down on such sentiment. **AP**



State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi delivers a televised speech to the nation yesterday

MYANMAR

Under fire over Rohingya, Suu Kyi defends actions

WITH a mass exodus of Rohingya Muslims sparking accusations of ethnic cleansing from the United Nations and others, Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday said her country does not fear international scrutiny and invited diplomats to see some areas for themselves.

Though an estimated 421,000 Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh in less than a month as their villages burned and hundreds were killed, Suu Kyi said the “great majority” of Muslims within the conflict zone stayed and that “more than 50 percent of their villages were intact.”

The Nobel Peace laureate’s global image has been damaged by violence since Rohingya insurgents attacked Myanmar security forces on Aug. 25. Rohingya fled their villages in the military crackdown that followed, and many of their villages have been burned. The government has blamed the Rohingya themselves, but members of the persecuted minority have said soldiers and Buddhist mobs attacked them.

Suu Kyi’s first address to the nation since the violence erupted came days after she canceled plans to attend the U.N. General Assembly, a decision widely seen as a response to international criticism.

Suu Kyi said anyone found to have broken the law would

be punished. “Human rights violations and all other acts that impair stability and harmony and undermine the rule of law will be addressed in accordance with strict laws and justice,” she said.

The Rohingya, who live mainly in northern Rakhine state near the Bangladesh border, have had a long and troubled history in this predominantly Buddhist nation of 60 million.

Though members of the long-persecuted religious minority first arrived in the western state of Rakhine generations ago, most people in Myanmar consider them to have migrated illegally from Bangladesh. Denied citizenship, they are effectively stateless. They cannot travel freely, practice their religion, or work as teachers or doctors, and they have little access to medical care, food or education.

The attacks on Rohingya villages in the last month appear to many to have been a systematic effort to drive them out. U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres has described it as ethnic cleansing.

Satellite imagery released by Human Rights Watch yesterday shows massive swaths of scorched landscape and the near total destruction of 214 villages. Also yesterday, a group that focuses on Rohingya rights said the attacks drove nearly all Rohingya out

of one of the three northern Rakhine townships where the ethnic group is concentrated in Myanmar.

The Arakan Project found that almost every tract of villages in Maungdaw township suffered some burning. Most Rohingya villages in Rathedaung township also were targeted, but relatively few were hit in Buthidaung township.

■ Suu Kyi said the ‘great majority’ of Muslims within the conflict zone stayed [in Myanmar] and that over half of their villages ‘were intact’

Suu Kyi sought to assure foreign diplomats gathered for her speech in Naypyitaw, the capital, that those who fled to Bangladesh would be allowed to return if they passed a “verification” process. She also said the government was working to restore normalcy in the area.

Though fires have continued to flare in recent days in northern Rakhine state, she said

“there have been no armed clashes and there have been no clearance operations” for the past two weeks.

“Nevertheless we are concerned to hear that numbers of Muslims are fleeing across the border to Bangladesh,” she said. “We want to understand why this exodus is happening. We would like to talk to those who have fled as well as those who have stayed.”

She said she it would be helpful to understand why conflict did not break out everywhere. She invited the diplomats with visit villages that weren’t affected so they could learn along with the government “why are they not at each other’s throats in these particular areas.”

Rohingya now in camps in Bangladesh were angered by the implication that Rohingya who were driven from their villages were themselves responsible, or that some members of the ethnic group are safe.

In the Kutupalong refugee camp, Abdul Hafiz said Rohingya once trusted Suu Kyi more than the military that not only ruled for half a century before, but also held her under house arrest for many years. Now Hafiz calls Suu Kyi a “liar” and says Rohingya are suffering more than ever.

He said Suu Kyi should give international journalists more access to their des-

troyed villages. If Rohingya are proven wrong that they were attacked, he said, “we will not mind if the world decides to kill us all by pushing us into the sea.”

Chris Lewa, founder of the Arakan Project, said the government rules for verifying Rohingya as citizens are too strict, requiring documents dating back decades. “Many people would have lost their documents in the fires, and many children were already unregistered,” she said.

Those fires, she added, have destroyed thousands of homes. “So where are they going to go?” I hope not in segregated camps, as in Sittwe,” a Rakhine state city where tens of thousands of Rohingya have been confined since another round of ethnic violence five years ago.

Some observers who attended the speech said it was progress for Suu Kyi to invite diplomats to at least some Rohingya villages.

“Today’s welcoming of the international community to travel to Rakhine and see for ourselves what the situation is, I think that is a positive statement,” said Andrew Kirkwood of the United Nations’ Office for Project Services.

W. Patrick Murphy, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southeast Asia, left the event without commenting.

Russian and Chinese diplomats praised the speech. “The message is quite clear that Myanmar is ready to cooperate with the international community,” said the Russian ambassador to Myanmar, Dr. Nikolay Listopadov.

Rights groups were far more critical. Amnesty International regional director James Gomez accused Suu Kyi of “a mix of untruths and victim-blaming.”

“There is overwhelming evidence that security forces are engaged in a campaign of ethnic cleansing,” Gomez said. “While it was positive to hear Aung San Suu Kyi condemn human rights violations in Rakhine state, she is still silent about the role of the security forces in this.”

The exodus continues to grow. The U.N.’s migration agency raised its estimate of the number of refugees in Bangladesh to 421,000, and UNICEF says more than a quarter-million of those are children. Hundreds of thousands more Rohingya were already in Bangladesh from waves of violence years earlier.

Spokesman Joel Millman of the International Organization for Migration says an estimated 20,000 people are flowing across Myanmar’s border into Bangladesh every day. **AP**

Jonathan Lemire & Darlene Superville, United Nations

UNITED NATIONS

Trump threatens 'total destruction' of North Korea

PRESIDENT Donald Trump, in a combative debut speech to the U.N. General Assembly, threatened the "total destruction" of North Korea if it does not abandon its drive toward nuclear weapons.

Trump, who has ramped up his rhetoric throughout the escalating crisis with North Korea, told the murmuring crowd at the U.N. that "it is far past time for the nations of the world to confront" Kim Jong Un and said that Kim's "reckless pursuit of nuclear weapons" poses a threat to "the entire world with an unthinkable loss of human life."

"Rocket man is on a suicide mission for himself and his regime," Trump said about the North Korean leader. He said of the U.S.: "If it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea."

Trump, who has previously warned of "fire and fury" if Pyongyang does not back down, claimed that "no one has shown more contempt for other nations and for the wellbeing of their own people than the depraved regime in North Korea." And he scolded nations that he

said have enabled and traded with North Korea, seeming to slight China, though he did not mention it by name.

Elected on the nationalist slogan "America First," Trump argued that individual nations should act in their own self-interest, yet rally together when faced with a common threat. In addition to North Korea, Trump urged nations to join together to stop Iran's nuclear program — he declared the Iran nuclear deal an "embarrassment" for the United States — and defeat the "loser terrorists" who have struck violence across the globe.

Addressing the General Assembly is a milestone moment for any president, but one particularly significant for Trump, a relative newcomer to foreign policy who has at times rattled the international community with his unpredictability. He has pulled the United States out of multinational agreements,



considered shrinking the U.S. military footprint in the world and deployed bombastic language on North Korea that has been criticized by other world leaders.

Trump frequently belittled the U.N. as a candidate and some

within his White House believe the U.N. acts as a global bureaucracy that infringes on the sovereignty of individual countries. But the president stood before world leaders and a global audience and declared that U.N. members, acting as a collec-

tion of self-interested nations, should unite to confront global dangers.

"I will always put American first. Just like you, the leaders of your countries, should and always put your countries first," said Trump, who assured the U.N. that the United States would not abdicate its leadership position in the world but needed other countries to contribute more.

"It's a tremendous opportunity because the world wants to work with the United States if there's any way to do so," said Jon Alterman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "He has an opportunity to show surprising openness."

Trump tipped his hand as he riffed on his campaign slogan when asked to preview his central message to the General Assembly: "I think the main message is 'make the United Nations great' — not 'again.' 'Make the United Nations great.'" **AP**

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UNITED NATIONS

French envoy: Discord at highest level since Cold War

Edith M. Lederer, United Nations

DISSENSION and conflict are at their highest levels since the Cold War and cooperation among nations has become more difficult in a world that is more interdependent than ever, France's top diplomat said as global leaders gathered at the United Nations.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told a news conference that heads of state and government were coming together for their annual meeting at the General Assembly at "a critical moment" that is witnessing "a worrying degradation of the international environment."

What is worse, he said, is that some countries are increasingly questioning the role of working together, "and with a temptation of withdrawal out of fear or selfishness." He gave no examples but appeared to be pointing to growing nationalism in the United States and some European countries.

The ministerial session starts today [Macau time] with a state of the world speech by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. U.S. President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron, both making their debuts at the global gathering, will address the 193-member world body soon after.

Le Drian cited the increasing number of global crises: fighting terrorism; resolving conflicts from the Middle East to Africa; tackling North Korea's escalating nuclear program; and addressing the flight of more than 400,000 Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar to Bangladesh.

France's priority is to work on concrete solutions because these crises affect European security and "jeopardize the international order," he said.

"In view of this degraded situation, France has a specific responsibility because it has the means, and because its voice is heard, and because France is perceived as a balancing power," he added.

Fighting the Islamic State extremist group and finding the political conditions to ensure Syria's stability are essential, Le Drian said.

What's been tried since 2011 hasn't worked, he added, and France has proposed the establishment of a contact group including the five permanent veto-wielding members of the U.N. Security Council — the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France — and key players and affected countries.

One stumbling block has been whether Iran should be included.

AP PHOTO



Antonio Guterres

Le Drian wouldn't answer, saying this issue and others would be discussed yesterday at a closed ministerial meeting on Syria.

He stressed that the fragmentation of Syria, which could spawn "other forms of terrorism," must be avoided, and there must be humanitarian access throughout the country. He added that France remains committed to bringing those behind chemical weapons attacks to justice.

On another hotspot, Macron has taken the lead in trying to bring the rival governments in Libya together, and Le Drian said the country cannot be left "in such a state of instability," which affects its neighbors and all of Europe.

■ The ministerial session starts with a state of the world speech by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

"That's why we're supporting the Libyan people to face the challenges they have to face — eradicate terrorism on its own territory, control migratory flows, thwart all kinds of trafficking and restore the political unity of the country for security and stability," he said.

All these issues will be discussed at a meeting chaired by Guterres on Wednesday.

On North Korea's escalating nuclear and ballistic missile program, Le Drian strongly opposed military action when asked about Trump's threats.

"France's determination is to make sure that we bring North Korea to the table of negotiations," he said. "It's the only possible way

of going about it, to pressure North Korea through sanctions and to bring it to negotiations."

As for the plight of the Rohingya Muslims, Le Drian said there must be "a collective response by the international community" and "a system to try to ensure their protection."

He said leaders are also wait-

ing for Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi "to give a strong answer" and support "a real dialogue."

France is one of the six parties to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran and Le Drian said the government will try to convince Trump not to pull out of the agreement.

"Today, there is nothing that allows us to believe that the agreement is not abided by nor implemented," he said. "It's essential to maintain this agreement alive to avoid spiraling proliferation and to encourage the hard-liners in Iran to try and acquire nuclear weapons."

Trump has said the United States is pulling out of the Paris climate agreement to combat global warming.

Le Drian said there are over 145 ratifications of the 2015 agreement and the focus now must be on implementation.

"There is no way back and there is no Plan B," he said. "There cannot be any unilateral or solitary solutions. What affects some of us today will affect all of us in the

future, and everybody will suffer from global warming."

As for Trump, Le Drian said, "we can only hope to convince him in the long run — but in order to convince him we need to have strong international support and pressure."

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told a hastily called meeting on the impact of Hurricane Irma that this year's hurricane season is already the most violent on record, with four major Atlantic hurricanes in the past month.

"The season fits a pattern: Changes to our climate are making extreme weather events more severe and frequent, pushing communities into a vicious cycle of shock and recovery," he said.

Guterres said extreme weather linked to climate change is having an impact all over the world and he urged people everywhere to reduce carbon emissions and scale up efforts to reduce risks and vulnerabilities to weather events.

Two-time Oscar-winning actor Robert De Niro made a plea for international help to rebuild the island of Barbuda, where Irma damaged or destroyed an estimated 90 percent of the structures and the entire population of about 1,400 had to be evacuated to nearby Antigua.

De Niro, who co-owns a resort on Barbuda, implored all countries and agencies to ensure that Barbudans can go home — and that "paradise is not lost." AP

Trump's speech for reform began busy week of diplomacy

THE U.S. president praised in his speech Secretary-General Guterres, who said he shared Trump's vision for a less-wasteful U.N. that will "live up to its full potential." The U.S. has asked member nations to sign a declaration on U.N. reforms, and more than 120 have done so.

True to form, the president also managed to work into his speech a reference to the Trump-branded apartment tower across First Avenue from the U.N.

His speech began a busy week of diplomacy for Trump, who is scheduled to meet separately with more than a dozen world leaders along the sidelines of the U.N. In his first bilateral meeting, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump declared that they "are giving it an absolute go" on Middle East peace talks.

Trump is to meet with the head of the Palestinian Authority later in the week, but the White House has played down prospects for a breakthrough.

The threat posed by North Korea was expected to dominate the week's proceedings. Though Chinese President Xi Jinping did not travel to New York, he and Trump spoke by phone about the need to use a

AP PHOTO



recent U.N. Security Council resolution to pressure North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions.

Trump arrived at the U.N. a few months after announcing that he was withdrawing the U.S. from an international climate agreement — negotiated during the Obama administration and signed by nearly 200 countries — and amid speculation that he might be softening his position. But Gary Cohn, one of Trump's top economic advisers, reiterated during a meeting with energy ministers that Trump will proceed with the withdrawal.

Major European powers that support the pact have said it cannot be renegotiated. Trump's meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron included discussion of the agreement, with the U.S. president insisting the original pact

was not fair to the United States — though he said he shared the goals of wanting clean air and water.

During his discussion with Macron, Trump also mused about ordering up a military parade down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington to rival the one he witnessed in Paris on Bastille Day. Trump planned had dinner with Latin American leaders.

The United States is the largest contributor to the U.N. budget, reflecting its position as the world's largest economy. It pays 25 percent of the U.N.'s regular operating budget and over 28 percent of the separate peacekeeping budget — a level of spending that Trump has complained is unfair. The U.S. has yet to make its payment this year, leading some in the U.N. to be fearful that it may slash its contribution. MDT/AP

Sarah El Deeb, Beirut

SYRIA

Al-Qaida-led fighters on the offensive against regular troops

INSURGENTS led by an al-Qaida-linked group in Syria launched a wide offensive yesterday against Syrian pro-government troops, moving south of their stronghold in the western province of Idlib.

The push, believed to involve thousands of fighters, was met with intensive aerial bombing and a shelling campaign by the government that hit, among other targets, four medical centers in Idlib. At least one civilian was killed and two hospitals were rendered non-operational, activists said.

The offensive comes days after Russia and Iran, supporters of Syria's President Bashar Assad, and Turkey announced they were working on a plan to establish and observe a "de-escalation zone" in Idlib — the last of four such areas. The zones already established have greatly reduced violence around Syria.

The "de-escalation zones" near Damascus, central Homs and southern Syria have also freed the Syrian troops and allied militias to push their offensive against Islamic State militants in the eastern Deir el-Zour province and south of Hama.

Tuesday's developments come

AP PHOTO



This undated photo released yesterday by the al-Qaida-affiliated Ibaa News Agency shows smoke rising over buildings that were hit by the government forces bombardment, in Khan Sheikhoun, in the northern province of Idlib

as pro-government troops seek to consolidate their hold on the city of Deir el-Zour in the east, where they are battling remaining pockets of IS militants.

The Syrian forces also crossed to the eastern bank of the Euphrates, bringing them on the same side of the river as the U.S-backed Syrian fighters who

are waging a separate offensive against IS.

The Syrian government-affiliated Central Military Media outlet said troops and allied militias pushed back against the offensive that started Tuesday in northeastern rural Hama province, on the border with Idlib, killing a number of insurgents. The Media center said intensive air raids targeted the insurgents in Atshan, Skeik, Morek and Kfar Zeita, north and northeast Hama.

Rami Abdurrahman, the head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said airstrikes pummeled the area of the fighting, but also targeted southern Idlib, hitting at least four medical centers.

Abdurrahman said one old woman was killed near a hospital in Alteh, south of Idlib. The opposition-operated Qasioun News Agency said two hospitals were knocked out of service because of the strikes, and coun-

ted at least 30 airstrikes in northern Hama and southern Idlib since yesterday.

The Observatory chief said the offensive is the widest so far by the al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and its allies, including Chinese fighters of the Turkistan Islamic Party.

Abdurrahman said thousands of fighters are involved and that the target is to reach the government-controlled city of Hama. He said the insurgents seized two villages and used car bombs to attack pro-government forces.

The insurgents have repeatedly aimed for Hama, a city which sits on a highway linking the capital, Damascus, with the northern provinces and also borders the vital coastal region that is an Assad stronghold. Their last offensive was in March, and was followed by a government chemical attack on Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib that killed over 80 civilians. AP

AD

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Wednesday, 27/09/2017

The Booming FinTech Industry: How it is Transforming the Face of Business
Speaker: **Mr. Andrew Work**, Head Content Strategist (Asia Pacific), NexChange

FMBA Breakfast Meeting

Introduction: What's all the buzz about FinTech? FinTech expert **Mr. Andrew Work** will tell us about this emerging financial services sector and how it's reshaping the financial industry around the world.

Date: Wednesday, 27 September 2017
Time: 9:00 - 10:30am (Reception: 8:45am)
Venue: Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16
Promenade Meeting Room (6th floor)

RSVP before 2 pm on September 25th
info@francemacau.com or Tel: 8798 9699

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what's ON



THE SUPER 8: ASIA'S PREMIER BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT IN MACAU
GROUP STAGE: 3pm, 5pm 7:30pm and 9:30pm (September 20-22)
ADMISSION: MOP180, MOP380, MOP580, MOP780 (Group Stage)
SEMI-FINALS: 7:30pm and 9:30pm (September 23)
FINAL: 7:30pm and 9:30pm (September 24)
ADMISSION: MOP280, MOP480, MOP680, MOP880 (Semi-Finals & Final)
VENUE: Studio City Event Center
TICKETING: (853) 8865 3333; 800 906 282 (Hong Kong toll free number)

BALLADE – ANIMAMIX CONTEMPORARY ART
TIME: 10am-7pm, last admission at 6:30pm (Closed on Mondays, open on public holidays)
UNTIL: October 15, 2017
VENUE: Macao Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, NAPE
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

THE BEGINNER'S MIND - AFA FOUNDER EXHIBITION
TIME: 11am-7pm (Closed on Mondays and mandatory holidays)
UNTIL: September 27, 2017
VENUE: 4th Floor, Macao Art Garden, No. 265, Av. Dr. Rodrigo Rodrigues
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6064

JAO TSUNG-I ACADEMY
TIME: 10am-6pm, last admission at 5:30pm (Closed on Mondays, open on public holidays)
ADDRESS: No. 95 C-D, Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2523 & 8399 6699

MACAU ILLUSTRATED - EXHIBITION OF CITY PLANS AND ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS FROM THE MACAU ARCHIVES' COLLECTION
TIME: 10am-6pm (Closed on Mondays)
UNTIL: December 3, 2017
VENUE: Archives of Macau
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2859 2919

A SCULPTURE - YANG XIAO HUA REPRESENTING WOMEN THROUGH MAM COLLECTION – 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY
TIME: 10am-7pm, last admission at 6:30pm (Closed on Mondays, open on public holidays)
UNTIL: December 31, 2017
VENUE: Macao Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, NAPE
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

Offbeat

MAN JUMPS ON ALLIGATOR NEAR CAMPSITE TO AID POLICE CAPTURE

Authorities in Rhode Island have captured an alligator hanging out near a campground. WJAR-TV (bit.ly/2y8pvob) reports that motorists spotted the 4-foot-long alligator near the Holiday Acres Campground in Gloucester on Saturday. Police, animal control and the state Department of Environmental Management responded to the scene after receiving calls. Police caught the wayward reptile with the help of a man who jumped on top of it. Authorities say no one was hurt during the capture. Environmental management officials took the alligator away. Investigators say it's unclear how the alligator ended up in Gloucester.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
18:50	The Cariocas (Repeated)
19:15	TDM Interview (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-daily Portuguese News
21:40	Miscellaneous
22:10	The Cariocas - Final
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:40	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:15	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

14 SEP - 20 SEP



IT
ROOM 1
2:15, 4:45, 7:15 9:45pm
Director: Andres Muschietti
Starring: Bill Skarsgård, Jaeden Lieberher, Finn Wolfhard
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 135min



WOLF WARRIOR II
ROOM 2
2:15, 4:45, 7:15 9:45pm
Director: Jason Wu
Starring: Jason Wu, Qian Yu, Nan Yu
Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)
Duration: 126min



DANGAL
ROOM 3
2:30, 6:00, 9:00pm
Director: Nitesh Tiwari
Starring: Aamir Khan, Sakshi Tanwar, Fatima Sana Shaikh
Language: Hindi (Chinese & English)
Duration: 164min

this day in history

**1999 UN FORCE ARRIVES IN EAST TIMOR**

A multinational peacekeeping force has landed in East Timor in an attempt to restore law and order to the territory.

The UN force has been sent to the island to end the violence that has beset the region since its people voted overwhelmingly for independence from Indonesia.

Pro-Jakarta militias are thought to have killed thousands of people since the election on 4 September. They have been apparently backed by the Indonesian military (TNI), but members of the UN International Force for East Timor (Interfet) said the army was now cooperating fully with the peacekeepers.

The operation began at 0640 local time (0140 BST) when a transport plane carrying British Royal Marines and Australian troops touched down at Komoro airport in the capital, Dili.

Throughout the day a total of 1,190 soldiers - mostly from Australia and New Zealand - landed on the war-torn island.

Fires from recent attacks were still burning, but the troops met little resistance from Indonesian forces or the armed bands that have been terrorising the population.

"The TNI have been quite helpful - we have not seen any militia," said British Brigadier Mark Evans.

Another 1,110 peacekeepers will arrive in East Timor tomorrow and within the next seven days the international force will eventually grow to 8,000 soldiers - drawn from more than 20 countries.

UK Armed Forces Minister John Spellar told the BBC the primary objective of Interfet was to take the militias off the streets.

The next stage would be to re-establish supply lines of food, water and electricity in a capital mostly abandoned by its inhabitants.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 when Portugal withdrew after occupying the island for 450 years. 78.5% of the country voted for independence in the September 1999 elections. In August 2001 an 88-member Constituent Assembly was elected. The former rebel leader Xanana Gusmao was voted East Timor's first president on 14 April 2002, and on 20 May 2002 the country became fully independent.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Your mouth is going to get away from you again, in a very big way. No, this isn't really becoming a habit: You're just totally out of control on a verbal level lately.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You're not quite sure who the person on the phone is. Whether it's a lover, a dear friend or a younger person who's contacted you, you'll probably ask them at least a dozen times if they're all right.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Remember, last week, when you were saying something about being bored to tears? Well, that'll teach you, won't it? Obviously, the heavens were listening - because that certainly won't be the case today.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You probably had a list to work on today, and as usual, you were planning to go through it one item at a time, crossing each off as you finished it. But a call, email or visit could quite easily have wreaked havoc on that list.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Here we go again - off to the races, so to speak. You're going to be a salesperson's delight. If it's unusual, odd or vaguely resembles something that no one else has, you'll be irresistibly attracted to it.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 When the phone rings today, you'll feel the urgency of its ring - don't even bother questioning your instincts. You're right, and you know you're right. Your antennae don't ever let you down, now do they?

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 A sudden change may be on the agenda, and you're already in a highly emotional state of mind - and mood - but you'll definitely get through it. You might even surprise yourself at just how easily you manage it.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 With any luck, you're rested and relaxed, because that probably won't be the case today. A most electric, unconventional day awaits you - which might sound good to some folks but not to you.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You may have a very intense kind of day - the kind that leaves you wondering just who you really are and what you're doing here. Well, you can stop wondering for now, anyway.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Your plans for the day may change early this morning, but it won't bother you much. Of course, you're nothing if not versatile. What's really going to surprise you is how little it will also bother those you're canceling with.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 A message from afar is due to reach you soon and it's going to contain quite unsettling news. This doesn't mean the news will be bad - only that it will be startling.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Desperate people do desperate things, while bored, rash people provoke impulsive actions. Don't be roped in if you don't want to be. Sit tight unless you're actually craving some melodrama.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

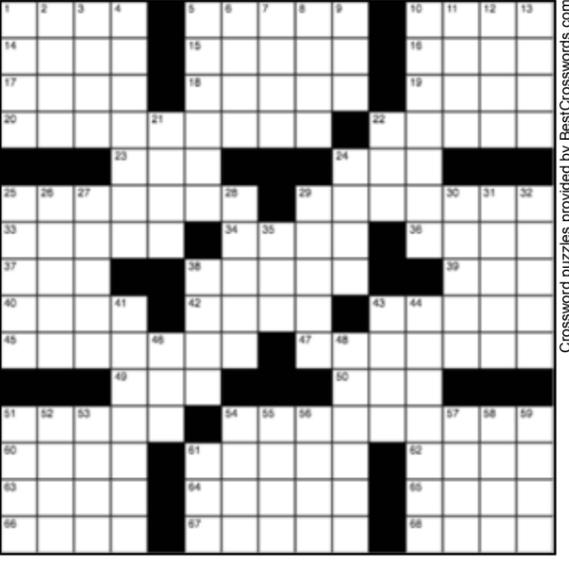
Sudoku puzzles categorized by difficulty: Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each category contains a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION. It lists weather for various cities in CHINA and the WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Tsp. and tbsp.; 5- Minneapolis suburb; 10- ___-bitsy; 14- "The King and I" setting; 15- Brand name for a copying machine; 16- ___ mater; 17- Folk singer Guthrie; 18- German poet Heinrich; 19- Romance lang.; 20- Mattress of straw; 22- Shake awake; 23- "Runaway" singer Shannon; 24- Ran into; 25- Prophecy; 29- Natural environment; 33- Lulus; 34- "Dilbert" intern; 36- Remedy; 37- ___ Francisco; 38- Minute Maid Park player; 39- Chop off; 40- Pro or con; 42- Eye piece; 43- Spring up; 45- Weapons supply; 47- Fugitive; 49- Feel sorry about; 50- Scot's topper; 51- Fess up; 54- Softbound; 60- At liberty; 61- Silk fabric; 62- Like some excuses; 63- Makes brown; 64- Projecting window; 65- Switch ending; 66- Porn; 67- ___ France; 68- Chamber workers; Abbr.;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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Yokohama tyres back for Macau GP

Yokohama tyres are set to return to Macau's Grand Prix event between November 16 and 19, after being sidelined in last year's race in favor of competitor firm Pirelli. The announcement of the return of Yokohama tyres was made on the FIA website yesterday. According to the announcement, "the use of a unique FIA F3 World Cup specification tyre will offer a fairer competition around the challenging Guia Circuit." Each racing competitor will be allocated seven front and seven rear dry tyres and six front and six rear wet tyres for the entire event. To further increase parity between competitors, the FIA statement noted, the team will only receive the tyre specification at the start of the event. Last year's change marked the first time since the Macau race adopted F3 regulations back in 1983, that racers did not use tyres from the Japanese giant. The announcement of the change took Yokohama by surprise, as it was allegedly already in production for the Macau event and was close to shipment when notified.

CYCLING

Giro start in Israel to go from Jerusalem to Red Sea

Winding its way around the walls of Jerusalem's Old City, through modern Tel Aviv then the Negev desert down to the Red Sea, the start of next year's Giro d'Italia will highlight Israel's history, culture and varied topography.

Details of the 2018 race, which will mark the first time a cycling Grand Tour is held outside of Europe, were unveiled by organizers in Jerusalem on Monday.

After a 10.1-kilometer opening time trial in Jerusalem, the 167-kilometer (104-mile) second stage will go down the Mediterranean coast from Haifa to Tel Aviv.

Stage 3 will follow a lengthy 226-kilometer route from Beer-sheba in the Negev desert down to Israel's southern tip of Eilat along the Red Sea.

Flanked by Italian and Israeli ministers and former cycling greats Alberto Contador and Ivan Basso, Giro director Mauro Vegni said that Israel was selected to host the race because of its "history and uniqueness."

"Every year the Giro tells the sto-



In this May 28, 2017 file photo, Tom Dumoulin, of the Netherlands, holds up the trophy after winning the Giro d'Italia

ries of places of great interest," he said. "The territories crossed by the stages in Israel will show to the world tradition, culture and beautiful landscape."

More than 175 of the world's best cyclists will arrive in Israel to kick off the race on May 4.

The Giro is one of cycling's top three stage races along with the Tour de France and the Spanish Vuelta. It's being labeled as the biggest and most prestigious sporting event ever held in Israel and is expected to draw tens of thousands of

tourists and cycling enthusiasts.

In its 101-year history, the Giro has previously opened a dozen times outside Italy but never outside Europe. Its arrival in Israel is the result of the lobbying efforts of Sylvan Adams, a Canadian-Israeli cycling enthusiast who conjured the idea to coincide with Israel's marking 70 years of independence.

"While a bicycle race will be taking place, this historic big start of the 101st edition of the Giro is about showcasing our country to

hundreds of millions of TV and live spectators, our beautiful outdoor scenery, sharing our history and our culture and most of all, our people," Adams said.

In recent years, Israel has been promoting itself as an elite sporting event destination. It recently hosted one of the opening rounds of the Eurobasket tournament and is set to host the European judo championships and the lacrosse world championships next year.

Tourism Minister Yariv Levin said this was part of a "revolution in marketing Israel as a destination for leisure and tourism."

Italian Sport Minister Luca Lotti said the "start from Jerusalem is a metaphorical bridge between our two lands, made up of history, culture and traditions."

Contador arrived in Israel after ending his career in front of his home crowd at the Vuelta. Considered one of Spain's greatest riders, the 34-year-old Contador won that event three times, along with the Tour de France twice and the Giro d'Italia twice. He was stripped of a third Tour victory for doping.

Italian racer Ivan Basso, a two-time Giro winner, also attended the announcement.

"Every year the Giro introduces new things, which makes it unique. Next year, starting from the world's most spiritual city will make the Giro even more special," Basso said. AP

AD

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Andrew Dampf, Rome

FOOTBALL

Sweet 16: Genoa teenager performing far beyond his years

THE 16-year-old sensation of Serie A wouldn't mind taking advantage of his sudden stardom among classmates. The problem is, he's being home-schooled.

"I can't even be the cool guy at school," Pietro Pellegri lamented after scoring twice for Genoa in a 3-2 loss to Lazio on Sunday that made him the youngest player in Italian league history to record a brace.

At 16 years, 112 days, Pellegri easily beat previous record-holder Silvio Piola, who was 17 years, 104 days in 1931 when he set the mark.

Piola went on to numerous records and with 274 goals still tops the all-time career list in Serie A.

While the expectations are soaring for Pellegri — who doesn't look 16 when he stands at 1.96 meters and 78 kilograms — he's keeping things in perspective.

"I'm keeping quiet and I'm not expecting more playing time," Pellegri said. "With the two goals at Marassi, under the northern end [where Genoa's hard-core "ultra" fans sit], I've fulfilled a dream.

"One goal I'm dedicating to the fans, because I'm Genovese like them. And one for my dad."

While he grew up admiring Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Pellegri wears No. 64 on his shirt in honor of his father, Marco, who never made it out of Genoa's youth system as a player but was hired as the club's team manager in April.



Genoa's Pietro Pellegri celebrates after scoring during the Serie A soccer match between Genoa and Lazio

Upon his son's second goal, Marco cried in joy on Genoa's bench.

It's been quite a year for Pietro, who last December matched the record for the youngest player to debut in the top division — at 15 years, 280 days. That equaled Amedeo Amadei's mark in 1937 set at Roma.

Pellegri celebrated his first start on the final day of last season by giving Genoa an early lead over Roma, nearly spoiling the final match of Roma captain Francesco Totti's career.

Now Pellegri has three goals in four Serie A appearances in a total of 131 minutes, capitalizing on all three of his shots on goal.

So it's not surprising that clubs like Manchester United, Juventus, and Inter Milan have reportedly made offers for Pellegri.

"We're not letting him go. We're enjoying him," Genoa coach Ivan Juric said after admiring Pellegri's performance against Lazio.

For his first goal, Pellegri quickly finished off a counterattack before

four defenders could catch him. His second was a volley worthy of a much more experienced center forward.

"We've been working with him for some time. He was very raw," Juric added. "He's got plenty of power but before he never attacked the area and he always wanted to play with his back to the goal.

"Now he's changed completely. He's improving with his left [off] foot and he's still got an incredible amount of room for improvement. He could have a great career."

Up next for Pellegri and Genoa is another home game against Chievo Verona on Wednesday.

In the meantime the closest Pellegri has come to showing off with schoolmates was a short walk around town with his teammate and role model Raffaele Palladino.

"I've been rooting for you for a while dear golden boy," Palladino wrote on Instagram. "Now keep your feet firmly on the ground and keep your eyes focused on the future." AP

F1 | ANALYSIS

Vettel loses huge ground in title race after Singapore blip

Jerome Pugmire, Singapore

IN the space of three races, Sebastian Vettel has dropped twice as far behind Lewis Hamilton as he was ahead of him. After winning the Hungarian Grand Prix in late July, Vettel led by 14 points, with both drivers on four wins heading into the summer break.

But after crashing out on the first lap in Sunday's Singapore GP, the Ferrari driver trails Hamilton by 28.

"That was very disappointing and it was definitely not the result we were expecting," Ferrari team principal Maurizio Arrivabene said. "But it doesn't mean that the battle is all over, just that it has become more difficult."

Yet it might seem to Mercedes that, for all of his experience, Vettel is throwing away the Formula One title.

"Clearly we would not feel comfortable in Ferrari's shoes," Mercedes head of motorsport Toto Wolff

said. "But this is not the time for cheering."

Hamilton has won all three races relatively comfortably since the championship resumed in August, and with only six GPs remaining Vettel faces a huge task to stop Hamilton. "We guarantee that we will be fighting right to the final corner of the very last Grand Prix of the year," Arrivabene said.

Mercedes is still expecting a challenge. "This result doesn't change a thing in the big picture," Wolff said. "If anything, it's a stark reminder that there are six more opportunities for the luck to go against us this season, just as it happened to Ferrari."

But it will be abundantly harder now for Vettel because, unlike last season, Hamilton has so far not retired from any races. Although he has failed to finish on the podium four times for Mercedes this season, that is the same

number as Vettel's finishes outside the top three.

After winning three of the first six races, Vettel's grip has loosened with only one win in the past eight. Points have been thrown away, too.

At the British GP in July, Vettel looked at least assured of a podium finish until an unexpected tire problem at the end of the race bumped him down to seventh.

On Sunday, he had a great chance to win starting from pole position on a hard-braking track much more suited to Ferrari than Mercedes. A few seconds later, he was out of the race.

Vettel made a hasty error of judgment trying to cut off Max Verstappen heading into the first turn and ultimately caused a crash that also took out Ferrari teammate Kimi Raikkonen — who had made a blistering start — Verstappen and Fernando Alonso.

Vettel apologized to his Ferrari team afterward.

With both Ferraris out, Mercedes had a clear path as Hamilton won his 60th career race and teammate Valtteri Bottas took third.

Mercedes faced a similar scenario at the Spanish GP last year, when Hamilton and then-teammate Nico Rosberg collided on lap 1 and both went out. Mercedes was livid with both drivers that day, and came perilously close to imposing team orders on them.

"You kind of feel for Ferrari. I have been in the situation of losing both cars," Wolff said. "I know how bitter this is."

The difference was that Hamilton and Rosberg were fighting each other for the title and, with no main rival from another team, it effectively cost them nothing.

Within Mercedes, Hamilton's title charge is now the priority.

Although team orders are very unlikely to be imposed, it is clear — unofficially



Kimi Raikkonen (right) collides with teammate Sebastian Vettel at the start of the Singapore Formula One Grand Prix

at least — that Bottas will be racing to help Hamilton equal Vettel on four world titles.

Wolff confirmed as much when he inadvertently referred to Bottas as "our second driver" in his post-race debriefing on Sunday, before quickly correcting himself to say "ah, other driver."

Bottas has had a fine first season since joining as an emergency late replacement for Rosberg, who retired days after winning the 2016 title. Bottas has even exceeded expectations with 10 podiums in 14 races, including two wins, and sits in third place overall.

With a new contract for next year already signed, the Finnish driver has no need to impress Mercedes management and can play an ideal support role to Hamilton in the closing part of the campaign.

Still, he has a little bit of ambition left.

"There are plenty of races to come and plenty of opportunities," said Bottas, who is 23 points behind Vettel. "Definitely Sebastian is the next target."

With Hamilton ahead and Bottas closing behind, Vettel is under pressure to deliver at the Malaysian GP in two weeks' time. AP

opinion

World Views
 The Editors, Bloomberg

WHAT GERMANY WANTS IS FAR FROM WHAT EUROPE NEEDS

If polls are correct, Angela Merkel is on track to win a record fourth term as German chancellor on Sept. 24. The temptation, after such a long run of electoral success, is to keep the formula unchanged and carry on giving the voters what they want. The trouble is, what makes sense for Germany and its people isn't quite what's needed by the European Union as a whole.

Germans want stability and prosperity, and they have both. But the German model, combined with the economic rigidity of Europe's single-currency system, isn't conducive to the success of the rest of the EU.

There's no disputing Germany's success. Its economy, Europe's biggest, has shrugged off the recession and is growing well; exports are up despite the strong euro; and the government's budget is in surplus. But in a single-currency area, Germany's very success is a problem for many other EU countries. If they were to emulate German economic policy in every respect, they could do as well - but that is asking a lot. Wholesale reform of labor markets, fiscal policy and other economic institutions won't come easily - and in the meantime, differences in competitiveness cannot be regulated through currency realignment.

As a result, sound economic policy for the EU as a whole requires Germany to bear some of the adjustment burden. Recalling the enormous benefit that the euro has conferred on its own export-centric economy only underlines the point. Closer integration and larger fiscal transfers are part of the answer. Yet Germany's voters aren't willing to accept these costs of economic leadership.

Merkel needs to change their minds. She has backed the idea of a European Monetary Fund to provide financial assistance during crises, but she has resisted more ambitious plans, advanced by French President Emmanuel Macron, for a common euro-zone budget and other forms of closer economic integration. Merkel was unlikely to speak up for such measures before the election; afterward is a different matter. Germany shouldn't claim it wants a unified, growth-oriented and economically stable Europe and then shirk its essential role in bringing this about.

To be sure, the burdens of leadership aren't confined to economics. Germany and Europe face the biggest foreign policy challenges since the Cold War. Donald Trump is testing relations with the U.S. to destruction; the U.K. is leaving the union; the EU's friendship with Turkey is breaking down; Russia looks more threatening than it has been for years; and populist, euroskeptic governments flouting EU rules pose yet another threat to European stability. German leadership will be indispensable on each and every front.

If it wants to lead, Germany can no longer be content with success at home. That success, in any case, rests on Europe's long-term vitality. Merkel needs to take ownership of Europe's prospects. That's the ambition Germany embraced through its commitment to ever closer union - and then made real by adopting the single currency.

If the chancellor is returned to power, she needs to broaden Germany's idea of its place in the world and be willing to make the hard choices that follow.

THE OIL RISES ABOVE USD50 AS IRAQ RAISES PROSPECT OF MORE OPEC ACTION

Oil extended gains above USD50 a barrel in New York as Iraq raised the prospect of OPEC taking further steps to clear a global supply glut. Iraq said there's support in the OPEC to deepen output curbs by about 1 percent. Still, Iraq has failed to deliver the supply cuts it committed to under the current agreement. U.S. refiners are delaying scheduled maintenance as they resume operations after Hurricane Har-

vey, supporting demand for crude.

While oil has rebounded in two weeks, prices have struggled to hold above \$50 a barrel this year as rising U.S. output stifles supply curbs led by OPEC members and allies such as Russia. Caribbean islands still recovering from Irma are bracing for a third hurricane strike in two weeks, as Maria tracks toward the U.S. coast.

Hurricane Maria smashes Dominica, now menaces other islands

HURRICANE Maria smashed into Dominica with 160 mph winds, ripping the roof off even the prime minister's residence and causing what he called "mind-boggling" devastation yesterday as it plunged into a Caribbean region already ravaged by Hurricane Irma.

The storm was on a track to wallop Puerto Rico today "with a force and violence that we haven't seen for several generations," the territory's governor said.

Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrett said on his Facebook page that "initial reports are of widespread devastation" and said he feared there would be deaths due to rain-fed landslides.

He said even his own house had lost its roof, adding "I am at the complete mercy of the hurricane. House is flooding." Seven minutes later, he reported he had been rescued.

Maria's eye roared over the island late Monday night. The storm briefly dipped to Category 4 strength early Tuesday before regaining Category 5 status.

Fierce winds and rain lashed mountainous Dominica for hours. A police official on the island, Inspector Pellam Jno Baptiste, said late Monday night that there were no immediate reports of casualties but it was too dan-



gerous for officers to check conditions.

"Where we are, we can't move," he said in a brief phone interview while hunkered down against the region's second Category 5 hurricane this month.

"The winds are merciless! We shall survive by the grace of God," Skerrett wrote at the start of a series of increasingly harrowing posts on Facebook.

A few minutes later, he messaged he could hear the sound of galvanized steel roofs tearing off houses on the small rugged island.

He then wrote that he thought his home had been damaged, and added: "Rough! Rough! Rough!"

On the nearby island of Martinique, officials said about 25,000 households

were without electricity and two small towns without water after Maria roared past.

The head of French civil security, Jacques Witkowski, told reporters that it was too soon to say whether the French department of Guadeloupe had fared as well.

Prefect Eric Maire, the highest French official of Guadeloupe, said in a video on Twitter that some roads and homes were flooded and heavy rain expected to continue. He told the population to "remain inside."

Authorities in the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico, which faced the possibility of a direct hit, warned that people in wooden or flimsy homes should find safe shelter before the storm's expected arrival there today. AP

Station	Air quality	Icon
Roadside	55-75 Moderate	☹️
High Density Residential Area	55-75 Moderate	☹️
Ambient	65-95 Moderate	☹️

WORLD BRIEFS



IRAQ'S ethnically-mixed and contested city of Kirkuk was on a nighttime curfew yesterday after clashes erupted there the previous night between Kurds and Turkmen amid preparations for the controversial Kurdish independence referendum next week, a local Turkmen official said.

POLAND'S justice minister has called on the parents of a baby girl born last week to come forward and show that their infant is all right. In a widely debated case, Polish police are seeking the couple who fled a hospital in northwestern Poland with their newborn baby on Friday after a court limited their parental powers.

NORWAY'S sovereign wealth fund, the world's largest of its kind, has hit a milestone value of USD1 trillion, beating all expectations since its creation over 20 years ago.



NETHERLANDS The Dutch economy is forecast to grow by a robust 3.3 percent this year, the Dutch king said yesterday in a speech - written by the government - to open the parliamentary year. The speech contained no major policy announcements as the two-party government has been in caretaker mode since elections in March.

BRAZIL'S new attorney general has taken office amid questions about how aggressively she will pursue the country's massive corruption probe.

US The Dallas Cowboys are the top-valued team in the world. According to Forbes magazine, their worth increased 14 percent in the last year, reaching USD4.8 billion.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein



Chinese honor guard members let out a yell during yesterday's welcome ceremony for Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.