



MACAU PAINTED, IN 'HOLI' COLORS

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POLICE TO AUTHORIZE DEMONSTRATIONS

The Executive Council agrees with a transfer of authorization for demonstrations to the police

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The prospect of Xi Jinping ruling for an unlimited number of terms looms over the annual meeting of the legislature

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WORLD BRIEFS



HONG KONG An Indian man sought in his home country for a long list of alleged offenses including terrorism appeared in a Hong Kong court on robbery charges.

THAILAND At least 42 prospective political parties have submitted registrations to Thailand's Election Commission after the military government that has run the country since 2014 allowed new parties to form ahead of polls supposed to be held by next February.



MALAYSIA The search for Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 by a U.S. company will likely end in June, a Malaysian official said, as families of passengers marked the fourth anniversary of the plane's disappearance on the weekend.

KOREA South Korea's president will send a delegation led by his national security director to North Korea this week for talks on how to ease nuclear tensions and help arrange the restart of dialogue between Pyongyang and Washington. *More on p13*

THE MALDIVES government has disputed claims by the Japanese foreign ministry that a Maldivian-flagged ship transferred goods to a North Korean-flagged tanker at sea in violation of a U.N. Security Council resolution.

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GOV'T TO APPEAL COURT DECISION

Chui insists LRT Taipa section ready next year

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Slain Filipina in freezer shows risks to overseas workers

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RENATO MARQUES



Macau painted in 'Holi' colors

Renato Marques

HOLI or the "Festival of the Colors" is an ancient Hindu tradition which is celebrated all across India and also in Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, among many other places, and announces the arrival of spring. As has become a tradition, this year, the Holi Festival was once again celebrated in Macau yesterday thanks to the initiative of the Indian Culture Association of Macau, which painted the Pousada de Coloane in Cheoc Van in all the "Holi" colors yesterday.

Participants at the festival have been growing in number since its founding in 2010, according to the head of the organizers, Victor Kumar, who spoke with the Times.

"It's getting bigger, more people every year... And more fun," said Kumar, noting that the number of participants during the first hour of the event exceeded 200. Questioned as to whether this fit the organizers' expectations, Kumar said, "it's good, I believe if the weather had given a little help we could have even reached 300 or more," referring to

the heavy rain that fell all morning on Sunday.

Nevertheless, the misty weather and some threats of showers did not discourage the crowd that did brave the weather, a crowd multicultural in character and filled with spirit.

Explaining the festival and its connections to the region, Kumar stayed away from the idea of the festival's background being rooted in Hindu mythology and the obvious link to Indian culture, instead commenting, "This is a festival to celebrate life, to celebrate passion and to celebrate all those who do things with their hearts," he said.

"[It's] more than to celebrate the Indian culture [and actually] is to celebrate all cultures, the interconnection between people from different cultures... And above

all, [the idea is] to be happy and to have fun."

Fun that did not seem to elude the crowd, which kept dancing the whole afternoon while smearing each other with the colorful powder, the essence of the celebration.

One participant, Carrie, was said to have come from Hong Kong for the event in Macau, as did several other participants.

"I hope to have some fun while having a few drinks with friends and that's it... it's all about having fun." The great majority of the group of friends was not at the event for the first time, having already participated in previous years.

The program, as promised by the organizers, included several activities and games, as well as presentations from other local groups such as the Macau Samba School. One feature was some cultural Brazilian samba drummers, an act which Kumar added a twist to, simultaneously adding some traditional Punjabi sounds.

Earlier on, the celebrations started with a special "colorful" yoga session.

In this commemoration of the "triumph of good over evil" represented in the festival's roots, colors filled the air to the rhythm of a DJ set and drums in the terrace of Pousada de Coloane. Kumar was thrilled with the venue, noting that it "is not easy to find places in Macau that can hold these kind of events."

As for next year, there is the definite promise of more Holi Festival activities in Macau.

Package tour visitors increase by 41 percent

THE number of visitors on package tours surged by 41.4 percent year-on-year to 755,000 in January 2018, according to information released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The number of mainland Chinese visitors coming on package tours increased by almost 50 percent.

Package tour visitors from South Korea (50,000) and Taiwan (47,000) grew by 13.5 percent and 41 percent respectively.

The number of guests staying in Macau's hotels and guesthouses in January 2018 rose by 12.9 percent year-on-year to 1.176 million. The average length of stay of guests held steady year-on-year at 1.4 nights.

Guests coming from mainland China (815,000) and South Korea (52,000) increased by 20 percent and 37.2 percent respectively year-on-year, while those from Hong Kong (102,000) and Taiwan (40,000) dropped 19.5 percent and 1.1 percent respectively.

There were 114 hotels and guesthouses operating at the end of January, an increase of seven year-on-year. Meanwhile, the number of guest rooms grew by 2.6 percent year-on-year to 37,000, with five-star hotel rooms rising by 2.2 percent to 22,000, accounting for about 60 percent of the rooms in Macau in total.

The average occupancy rate of hotels and guesthouses stood at 90.3 percent, up 8.7 percentage points year-on-year, with the rates of five-star hotels (93.5 percent) and four-star hotels (91.9 percent) rising 10 percentage points and 9.6 percentage points respectively.

In January, outbound residents using the services of travel agencies rose by 7.3 percent year-on-year to 122,000. Among them, residents traveling on package tours dropped by 4.7 percent to 44,000, with those going to mainland China decreasing by 15.8 percent to 26,000.

ASK THE VET

by Dr Ruan Du Toit Bester

HOW DOG TREATS CAN HELP DURING TRAINING

DOG treats can be an effective tool while training your dog. However, some owners can learn to rely too heavily on treats as it less complex than other training tools. The following information describes the right way to use treats in training your dog.

About Treat Training

Treat training can only be effective once you have actually taught your dog basic commands. Treats are typically used to reinforce positive learned behaviors. Whenever your dog follows a command, give him a treat. Once you feel that your dog understands the commands and responds well, gradually decrease the amount of treats you would normally give.

CHOOSING THE BEST DOG TREATS FOR TRAINING

Some dog treats work better than others for several reasons. Some dog treats taste better than others, some are more nutritious than others, and some are much smaller and easier to carry around than others. When choosing the best dog treats for training, you should choose:

Soft treats- Choose soft treats because they are easier to chew and quicker to consume. The trainer will have to keep the dog's attention, so it's best that the dog is not distracted for too long. Hard treats are much more labor intensive and time consuming.

Small treats- Small treats are also quick and easy to eat. This will also help to avoid overfeeding the pet during his training sessions. Even pea sized treats can pack a powerful punch, so don't count them out.

Bright colored treats- Most training floors are covered with black mats for hygiene purposes. This means, if you have dark colored treats, the dog may have a tough time finding them. Opting for brighter colored treats means one less distraction for dogs during training. They won't waste time and attention hunting for a dark colored treat on a black floor.



Strong tasting treats- Dogs are motivated by treats with a strong taste, but as a pet owner you should always feed your dog the most nutritious food items you can find. So try to buy gourmet, all natural, and/or organic treats if at all possible. Go for variety as well so your dog doesn't get bored with the same flavours.

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Chui Sai On convinced Light Rail will be operational in 2019

THE Chief Executive (CE), Chui Sai On, departed yesterday to Beijing, where he is expected to attend the opening of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) today.

Before departing, Chui spoke to reporters at the local airport, commenting on the consequences of last week's ruling by the Court of Second Instance, which has revoked the contract granted to China Construction Engineering to build the superstructure project of the Light Rail Transit (LRT) depot. The CE reported the government is convinced that the Taipa section of the LRT will commence operation next year. Though Chui said he respects the court's ruling, he added that the government intends to appeal.

The CE also commented upon the recent measures introduced to cool the real estate market and facility acquisitions by you-



ng local buyers. He said that there were no "market oscillations" during the process and pledged to meet the demand for new houses by speeding up approval processes and reclaiming unused land, among other measures.

During his visit to Beijing, from March 4 to 7, besides attending the NPC opening, Chui will also meet with officials of the National

Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Commerce, and the China Food and Drug Administration.

Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong is one of the other officials travelling with the CE on the visit. During Chui's absence, the Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, will be the Acting Chief Executive.

NON-RESIDENT DELIVERIES

Health Bureau says new prices just half market rate

THE proposed new charges for expectant mothers who hold non-resident status represent "just half the market price," according to the Health Bureau, though the supervising government department behind the proposal has not clarified how the "market price" was calculated.

The response comes after a backlash against the bureau's proposal to increase the charges for non-resident mothers giving birth at the Conde S. Januário Hospital. Under the proposal, delivery charges would be hiked ninefold from MOP975 to MOP8,775 for natural births and from MOP1,950 to MOP17,550 for caesarean sections.

A spokesperson for the Health Bureau said late last week that the charges had not been updated for nearly 20 years.

However, the spokesperson also mentioned that the ninefold increase is not expected to raise the hospital's financial revenues. That is because non-resident deliveries in Macau

account for just 8 percent of total births.

Nor was there any suggestion that the increased charges would allow the hospital to invest in new equipment. Instead, the Health Bureau said in a statement that the updates would "ensure provision of quality services for residents." The Bureau did not elaborate.

According to the terms of the new proposal, expectant mothers holding Macau resident identity cards or wives of Macau residents who are not themselves residents will not be subject to the new charges.

Meanwhile, tourists would have to pay approximately double the non-resident charges, regarded by the Health Bureau as market rates.

According to the bureau, there were a total of 3,371 babies born at the Conde S. Januário Hospital between 2015 and 2017. Of this number, 20 percent were born to mothers with tourist status, while 8 percent were born to mothers with non-resident status.

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MGTO: Hong Kong cooperating with Macau

Tourism agents in Hong Kong have been supporting Macau's tourism industry, according to Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) head Helena de Senna Fernandes, who spoke on Friday during a luncheon in Hong Kong. In 2017, Macau welcomed more than 32 million visitors, 6.1 million of which were Hong Kong residents. Talking about marketing strategies, Senna Fernandes said that the MGTO's representative in Hong Kong would launch brand-new promotional campaigns in the HKSAR.

Drill on class-suspension notification

The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau will be holding an interdepartmental class-suspension notification drill due to the issuance of a rainstorm warning signal on March 11. The one-hour drill will seek to "review the notification mechanism for class suspension due to inclement weather; to strengthen interdepartmental collaboration and to ensure that the work of class-suspension notification runs smoothly," according to a statement issued by the Bureau.

Power to authorize demonstrations to be transferred to police

Julie Zhu

THE Executive Council has proposed a transfer of authorization for demonstrations and assembly from the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) to the Public Security Police Force (PSP), according to Leong Heng Teng, spokesperson of the Executive Council, who made an announcement in a press conference held on Friday.

The proposal concerns the amendment of the law of demonstration and assembly rights.

Currently, parties who intend to organize demonstrations or assemblies are required to inform the IACM president in writing. The IACM president, after being supplied with the relevant activity applications, will inform the PSP director.

The change is intended to preserve public order, and also to take into consideration the practicality of the situation, where currently the IACM president needs to inform the PSP about an application.



PHOTO ARCHIVE

"In order to better carry out the related work, and better protect the order during assemblies and demonstrations, thus protecting the public security, as well as improving the [administration] efficiency, the SAR government suggests transferring IACM's respective functions [demonstrations and assemblies] to PSP," Leong announced.

Leong pointed out that other aspects concerning the public's right of holding demonstrations and assemblies will not

be affected by the changes.

"It does not involve changes related to other regulations of the right for demonstration or the right for assembly," explained Leong.

The Executive Council spokesperson further explained that "there is no problem regarding the shift from a civic to a non-civic matter [by transferring the rights from IACM to the PSP]."

He claimed that the change was made "only with the goal of preserving public order" and

that it "does not involve substantial modifications."

When asked whether Macau has been experiencing chaotic demonstrations, which could have led to the amendment of the law, Leong said that "this is not the problem."

Leong also expressed that Macau's demonstrations and assemblies have been conducted lawfully, and that the government has been implementing its functions according to the law.

According to Leong, the change has not been made in light of Macau's current demonstration and assembly situation; it was only made out of practical considerations.

Regarding why no previous public consultation was carried out for the proposal, given that is related to a human rights issue (freedom of speech), Leong noted that the change "does not weaken or reduce human rights [in Macau]."

According to Leong, IACM's functions have been continuously transferred to other departments in recent years.

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C Unit, Vai Fat, Taipa

(Ref: 17110659)
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(Ref: 18010668)
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Apartment B, Sakura Court, Ocean Garden

(Ref: 10020165)
3,700 sq.ft. HKD 35,000

Mid - floor, 4 bedroom apartment located in Taipa. Nice apartment for family. Unfurnished, but all appliances built-in. Large and bright living room with balcony with amazing seaview. Carpark included. Clubhouse facilities can be available gymnasium, outdoor pool, mini theatre, function rooms etc.



Cheoc Van House, Coloane

(Ref: 17060651)
6,222 sq.ft. HKD 79,800

Combining dazzling sea views, stylish interiors and cavernous comfort, this multi-storey property is a rare find in Macao. There are 3 bedrooms on the second floor for family and guests, and the top floor is reserved for a personal studio with a full-size closet and en suite bathroom.

FOR SALE



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Rate: HKD 4,798

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Rate: HKD 7,004

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Proper planning needed for 85sqkm sea area, experts say

Lynzy Valles

THE MSAR government has not fully revealed its plans for construction projects within the 85 square kilometer sea area near Macau, following Beijing's grant of rights to Macau to manage activities in that area.

Recently, authorities proposed that the area would not be used for any gaming activity. An expert has expressed hope that this prohibition will be honored.

Thomas Daniell, a professor at Kyoto University, and formerly the Head of Architecture and Design at the University of St. Joseph, was in the region this weekend to give a talk titled "Unbuilt Macau."

In the public talk, Daniell discussed the city's master plan prior to the handover of the city to China in 1999, as well as its history.

Speaking to the Times, Daniell expressed his hope that the MSAR will be true to its word regarding the exclusion of gaming activities in the area.

"That's great to be given the freedom to use that water but as a standard, it still requires approval from Beijing in terms of what's actually done there. So more freedom is always a good thing," he said.

"The history shows that [the MSAR] often say something like that and finally, of course casinos appear. But who knows? Perhaps now they will be true to their word and there will really be no new gaming developmen-



Eduardo Tavares da Silva (left) and Thomas Daniell (center)

ts," Daniell added.

Echoing the same sentiments was Eduardo Tavares da Silva, a civil engineer who was involved in several urban projects in the region in the early 1980s. Given the chance to comment, Tavares da Silva suggested that the densely populated city should already consider its plans for the 85 square kilometer area, emphasizing the importance of creating a space for schoolchildren.

"We can build a lot in the area. A new education town for instance. [...] These children need fresh air [and] playgrounds so let's make an education town where we all the schools [are placed]," he suggested.

Tavares da Silva hinted that

many schools in the region are concentrated in the center of town, sometimes even in the vicinity of old buildings – a precarious situation unsuitable for schoolchildren.

Meanwhile, when questioned by the Times as to whether the city is progressing only for the benefit of high-income level residents, the expert noted that the city could learn from other regions, including Singapore, when it comes to good public housing built for levels of all income.

"I think it's planning and population planning. What kind of population do we need? How can Macau cope with it?" Tavares da Silva questioned.

The veteran engineer also pro-

posed that proper planning for Area Preta is needed, as residential buildings in the area are already too old and crowded.

We can build a lot in the area. A new education town for instance.

EDUARDO TAVARES DA SILVA

He proposed temporarily rehousing one block of families in Seac Pai Van and rebuilding that block. This would allow

those families to move back into the same area so they do not break their family or friendship links.

"And with that, maybe we can create more space for another block and then the whole area would be rehoused in these two or three blocks," he explained.

Furthermore, Eduardo Tavares da Silva is an advocate of transforming Macau into a walkable city, dismissing the idea that it is currently walkable due to the immense foot and vehicle traffic in the city center.

"[The] San Ma Lo area needs to be carefully preserved [in] character because that's the old town. I myself proposed that cars should be [prohibited] in Almeida Ribeiro because when we did the planning for that the area, I took the cars away from the square because people in the square are being squeezed," he said.

The engineer also suggested that the city should have more 'walkalators' to provide a more attractive alternative to using private vehicles.

"So [if] we have so many rolling carpets [walkalators], we don't need so many cars, we don't need all the motorbikes coming to the center of town because they can come [walk] easily," he said. More specifically, on the peninsula, he envisages a route made of walkalators linking Area Preta to downtown Macau.

Although there are escalators leading to the public hospital and to the Taipa Houses Museum, the expert suggested that the city needs many more, particularly in Seac Pai Van area leading to A Ma Cultural Village and going downhill to the beach.

"Everything is possible. There is MOP500 billion cash waiting for all the possibilities," Tavares da Silva jested.

EXCO

Municipal Institution given green light

THE Executive Council (ExCo) has finished analyzing the law draft regarding the establishment of the non-political municipal organization, with the draft suggesting that all members of the management and advisory councils should be appointed by the Chief Executive.

According to the proposal, the future Municipal Institution will in effect succeed the functions which the IACM currently performs. Only a few of the IACM's current functions will be articulated and restructured through the general functions of the Macau government, while others are being optimized with other functions of dif-



ferent competent services.

Most of the IACM's present employees will be transferred to the new institution, with the remainder transferred to related governmental departments.

The proposal suggested that the Municipal Institution should establish two internal councils; namely, the Municipal Administration Council and the Municipal Consulta-

tion Council.

The first council will consist of eight members, including one chairman and one vice-chairman, and all members shall be nominated by the Chief Executive (CE).

The second council should comprise fewer than 25 members, who, it is suggested, will also be nominated by the CE.

It was further suggested that the two councils should elect the members of the CE election committee.

The CE council draft complies with the details of the proposal which was first presented to the public last year, when a public consultation was held

following the proposal's first announcement.

However, last Friday, a report on the results of the public consultation remained unavailable prior to the press conference.

The head of the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP), Kou Peng Kuan, speaking on the sidelines of the press conference, was heavily questioned by the media regarding the absence of a consultation results report.

Kou declared that the report had been published on Friday, which was in accordance with Macau's law concerning consultation reports.

In Kou's words, the consultation results indicate that "the opinions within the society generally agreed" that the establishment of the municipal body must comply with the Basic Law.

Kou strongly emphasized that the words "generally agreed" mean that "no opinions opposed" the establishment of the municipal body being compliant with the Basic Law.

According to Kou, the government received a total of over 1,600 opinions during the public consultation, with approximately 800 of them mentioning the advisory council.

However, the SAFP head could not give an exact number regarding the number of opinions which felt the council members should be elected through CE nomination. **JZ**

Two massage therapists accuse Steve Wynn of sexual misconduct

Brady McCombs

TWO massage therapists have claimed in new lawsuits that casino mogul Steve Wynn used his power to coerce them into sexual acts, making them the latest women to accuse the billionaire of sexual misconduct.

The unnamed 49-year-old woman and an unnamed 36-year-old woman made strikingly similar allegations in their separate lawsuits about what happened during their time as therapists working for Wynn Resorts.

Wynn forced the younger woman into sexual acts about 50 times over the course of about three years starting in 2006, she said in a lawsuit filed last week. She says Wynn gave her USD400 "tip" after each massage and told her to never to talk about it.

The older woman said Wynn forced her sexual acts about a dozen times in 2011-2012, giving her a \$1,000 "tip" after each massage and telling her to never to talk about it, according to her lawsuit filed Wednesday.

Both said the sessions took place in Wynn's office with the door locked and dogs outside guarding the room. The women said they declined some of his sexual requests, but said they thought they would be fired if they did not agree to do certain things.

Wynn's spokesman, Ralph Frammolino, did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment.

Wynn has denied the



AP PHOTO

The therapists are also suing Wynn Resorts' board of directors, accusing them of being liable

previous misconduct accusations and attributed them to a campaign led by his ex-wife. Her attorney has denied that she instigated a Wall Street Journal story in late January that reported a number of women said he harassed or assaulted them and that one case led to a \$7.5 million settlement.

Wynn resigned as chairman and CEO of Wynn Resorts on Feb. 6, less

than two weeks after the story broke.

The new lawsuits came after police reports were made public last week that showed two women made allegations against Wynn dating from the 1970s. One of the women told police she had a child with Wynn after he raped her, while another reported she was forced to resign from a Las Vegas job after she refused to have sex with him.

The massage therapists are also suing Wynn Resorts' board of directors, accusing them of being liable because they should have reasonably known that Steve Wynn was a "danger to female employees."

Wynn Resorts spokesman Michael Weaver said last week the company had no immediate comment because it had not reviewed the lawsuits.

The women say in the lawsuit that they were hired in 2005 by Wynn Resorts as a massage

therapist. Starting around 2006, Wynn began making regular appointments for the younger woman to give him massages in his office. He began doing the same with the older woman in 2011.

They both said the first massages were normal, but then Wynn began exposing himself to them after he learned that they

were each financially dependent on the job. The older woman told Wynn that she was going through a divorce and would soon become a single mother, she said in the lawsuit.

The final occurrence with the older woman came in 2012, but she continued to experience emotional distress and a hostile work environment until she left

the company last year, her attorneys Justin Watkins and Matthew Hoffmann said Thursday.

The women decided to file the lawsuits after seeing media reports and court filings that made them realize they weren't alone and that the Wynn Resorts' board of directors must have known, Watkins and Hoffman said.

The lawsuits add to a host of legal challenges facing Wynn and his former company since news report in January revealed sexual misconduct allegations against the billionaire.

Wynn Resorts is facing scrutiny by gambling regulators in Nevada and Massachusetts, where the company is building a roughly \$2.4 billion casino just outside Boston. Regulators in Macau, the Chinese enclave where the company operates two casinos, are also inquiring about the allegations.

In addition, groups of shareholders have filed lawsuits in state court in Las Vegas accusing Wynn and the board of directors of Wynn Resorts of breaching their fiduciary duties by ignoring what the lawsuits described as a longstanding pattern of sexual abuse and harassment by the company's founder. **AP**

Wynn, Elaine denied court approval to sell shares

STEVE Wynn can't drop a court fight with his ex-wife Elaine that's blocking both of them from selling their shares in Wynn Resorts Ltd., a judge said.

The casino mogul argued that the dispute over the validity of an agreement locking up the divorced couple's stock was moot, but a Nevada judge didn't agree.

The ruling Friday leaves in place the six-year, three-way court battle among the casino mogul, his ex-wife and his former business partner Kazuo Okada. It preserves the status quo that has barred Elaine Wynn from controlling her USD1.6 billion stake in Wynn Resorts, and it may prevent Steve Wynn from divesting part of his stake should regulators require it because of the allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

Nevada District Court Judge Elizabeth Gonzalez in Las Vegas said she denied Steve Wynn's request because the validity of the stockholders agreement is too intertwined with other issues in the lawsuit, including the forced redemption of Okada's shares six years ago.

Lawyers for Aruze USA, Okada's former holding company, and Elaine Wynn opposed the request.

Wynn, 76, stepped down Feb. 6 as chairman and chief executive of his namesake company. Gaming regulators in Nevada, Macau and Massachusetts, where the company is building a \$2.4 billion casino, have said they're looking



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into the accusations, reported by the Wall Street Journal, that Wynn pressured employees at his Las Vegas resort over many years to have sex with him. He has denied the allegations.

Mark Ferrario, a lawyer for Elaine Wynn, said she wanted full and complete relief on all her claims, not just the ones Steve Wynn sought to dismiss.

"Because of his own conduct, he's now under scrutiny," Ferrario said at the hearing. "They are desperately trying to avoid a devastating consequence coming down from regulators."

After his resignation, Wynn conceded that the 2010 stockholders agreement, which prevented his ex-wife from selling her shares without his permission, wasn't enforceable. Elaine Wynn has sought a court ruling that the agreement was invalid.

Wynn, who owns 12 percent of the company's shares, has said he has no immediate plans to sell.

The case is Wynn Resorts Ltd. v. Okada, A-12-656710-B, Clark County, Nevada, District Court (Las Vegas). **Bloomberg**

AD

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TENCENT Holdings Ltd. Chairman Ma Huateng called on the Chinese government to introduce an ID system that would link multiple sets of travel documents with a mobile phone as part of a plan to boost regional trade between Hong Kong and mainland China.

China's second-richest man said new technology systems and laws could let Hong Kong residents make electronic payments and cross the border more easily. Ma was speaking at a press conference in Beijing, two days before the country's legislative council convenes in the capital to set the year's agenda.

"It's still very complicated and we'd need to make it work with the Customs systems but from a technology point of view we can do it," Ma said. "We have been talking to the chief executive in Hong Kong for quite some time about a number of these issues, including the electronic ID." Tencent, whose company is best known for the social-media phenomenon WeChat, is headquartered in Shenzhen, just over the border from Hong Kong.

While championing greater technology innovation and prosperity, the plan is also a lightning rod in Hong Kong - now an autonomous self-governing city - that's becoming increasingly wary of political meddling from Beijing.

Ma has advocated further integration in the Pearl River Delta region, saying Hong

Tencent CEO urges ID link for Hong Kong and Chinese citizens



Tencent Chairman Ma Huateng

Kong, Macau and Guangdong province can be more like the multi-city San Francisco Bay technology hub in the U.S. if it gets easier to move around. Hong Kong and Macau have retained their own immigration policies since the British and Portuguese handovers in 1997 and 1999, respectively, and have busy border crossings with the mainland.

Ma suggested in June that Hong Kong and mainland Chinese immigration and customs officials could share locations. Critics responded by saying the idea violated the "one-country, two-systems" framework.

Ma said some Hong Kong citizens fear an excessive flood of talent from mainland China, while other difficulties include

standardizing tax benefits. He said a worker swap system, where for example companies could only hire a tech worker if a local tech worker went abroad, could mitigate those concerns. He also proposes tax benefits to attract high-end talent to companies in two Pearl River Delta areas - Qianhai and Hengqin.

"It's a little bit difficult to sol-

ve these problems for the time being," he said through a translator. "If we were to look at tax incentives, questions would be asked: 'Why do only Guangdong people get this, why not others?'"

"And if migration from abroad increases too much, will that pressure the job market in Hong Kong? We're thinking about these issues."

Ma said some Hong Kong citizens fear an excessive flood of talent from mainland China

Ma also proposed policies to enhance security for online financial services. Companies should work more closely with regulators to crack down on illegal activities, he said Saturday.

He also advocated mechanisms that would protect underage people from the harms of the Internet and use games to teach important life lessons. Tencent has been criticized by state media for encouraging gaming addictions. **Bloomberg**

Casino-backed startup eyeing Alzheimer's cure worth USD2.5b

Joyce Koh, Livia Yap

IT hasn't found a cure for Alzheimer's disease and doesn't have any drugs on the market. Yet, TauRx Pharmaceuticals Ltd. says the company's worth about USD2.5 billion as it embarks on its latest trial funded by shareholders including ca-

sino operator Genting Bhd.

If the trial proves successful, the Singapore-based company plans to apply to European and U.S. regulators for conditional or accelerated approval of its drug, TauRx Deputy Chairman Tay Siew Choon said in an interview in the city-state last month. It will also

need to raise about \$150 million to conduct a more comprehensive phase III trial, though at that point, it would evaluate options including an initial public offering or sale.

TauRx is pressing ahead in a field that has seen many of the largest pharmaceutical players from Pfizer Inc. to

Axovant Sciences Ltd. exit or fail. Just last month, Merck & Co. said it will end a trial of its most advanced Alzheimer's drug while Biogen Inc.'s shares tumbled after saying it was making changes to its trial. TauRx disappointed investors in 2016 when it said its LMTX drug failed to meet a primary goal

of slowing the rate of disease progression when taken in combination with other Alzheimer's drugs.

"We have consistently seen that our theory works, and there's no reason to give it up," said Tay. "Shareholders' support and faith in us has not weakened."

On top of a \$71 million rights issue in October to fund the current trial, TauRx had already raised more than \$500 million since 2002, according to Tay. The last financing round in

2016 valued the company at about \$2.5 billion, he said. Billionaire Lim Kok Thay's Genting invested \$112 million in TauRx in 2012, becoming its biggest shareholder with about a 20 percent stake.

TauRx has been recruiting patients since November for the current trial, where it plans to test its drug on 200 patients with mild Alzheimer's disease who aren't taking any other medication. The results are expected in early 2019. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

HONGKONG JET ANNOUNCES UPGRADED MAINTENANCE FOR G550S



Hongkong Jet has announced the upgrade and expansion of its HKAR-145 maintenance capabilities to include the ability to certify the Gulf-

stream G550 to 144MOS/12C level.

The G550 aircraft type first entered into service in around 2003 and as aircraft age,

the checks required to keep them flying become more in-depth and complex.

Under the new approval upgrade, the entire Greater China fleet of 40 G550s are now covered under the company's Hong Kong 145 and Joint Maintenance Management approvals.

Diarmuid O'Shea, head of maintenance at Hongkong Jet said, "the biggest saving for any aircraft owner is to protect the residual value of the aircraft, so we are working to ensure we can continue to provide our world-class maintenance services for the entire fleet as it ages."

SIX PORTUGUESE EASTER DELICACIES ON OFFER AT FADO



Luís Américo, the executive chef at Hotel Royal's FADO restaurant, is unveiling six Portuguese delicacies for a limited Easter period, March 25 to April 2.

The six dishes are two appetizers, two main courses and two desserts.

The appetizers are "pan-fried scallops with mushrooms,

crispy puff shell and lobster cream sauce" and "Portuguese-style cod sashimi with cold tomato soup, olive oil and parsley."

Meanwhile, patrons can expect two new additions to the main courses menu; namely "charcoal-grilled octopus leg, red bell-pepper and black garlic mayonnaise with lightly-smoked artichokes" and "Easter lamb chops with corn textures and spinach stew."

The two desserts on offer are a selection of surprise Easter eggs with Portuguese crème brûlée or Portuguese Easter sponge cake with cinnamon and pumpkin jam.

Unlimited Xi presidency looms over China political gathering

THE prospect of Chinese President Xi Jinping ruling for an unlimited number of terms is dominating discussion as China's legislature opens its annual session today. The constitutional amendment to the two-term limit on the president underscores Xi's standing as China's most dominant political figure in decades.

That's aroused concerns about a return to the one-man rule of past dictators such as Mao Zedong and what that could mean for China's domestic politics and international standing, with some warning of the possibility of capricious policy making and greater political repression. The ruling Communist Party allows no public debate, although some have registered their opposition in social media posts.

A look at the term limits controversy and some of the major issues on the table at this year's meeting of the nearly 3,000-member National People's Congress:

A possible Xi presidency-for-life

The proposal to amend the constitution by lifting the limit of two consecutive terms for the president and vice president appeared without warning, even if few were surprised by the move. Though it's expected to pass with near-unanimous approval, it has aroused some complaints from independent political commentators and internet users posting online.

One of the most popular images was of Winnie the Pooh — to whom Xi is said to bear a resemblance — hugging a pot of honey accompanied by the quote, "Find the thing you love and stick with it." Xi had seemed to signal his intentions to stay on beyond the traditional limit of two five-year terms as president and party secretary by declining to appoint an obvious successor at last year's Communist Party congress.

Implications for China's political system

While seen as offering stability in the near term, the prospect of Xi as president-for-life has many worrying about his long-term intentions and a return to one-man rule in the style of the Chinese emperors or communist China's founder, Mao Zedong. Along with reviving fears of dictatorship, greater political repression and policy making on a whim, the move undermines a decades-long push for greater institutionalization of the levers of power and strengthened rule of law. It also throws up



questions about the future succession process and appears to scupper any chance for political liberalization to keep pace with China's increasingly individualistic society.

On Sunday, the spokesman for the congress, Zhang Yesui, defended the constitutional amendment as necessary to ensure the unity of Xi's three top positions as president, leader of the Communist Party and head of the Central Military Commission. The move is "conducive to uphold the authority of the [Communist Party] Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core," Zhang said.

Looking long term

By setting the stage to extend his rule by a decade or more, Xi seems to indicate that he believes he's the only one fit to see out his vision of turning China into a top innovative nation by 2035 and to realize his "China Dream" of a fully modern leading nation by mid-century. He's also eager to carry forward his campaigns to end corruption and abuse through the establishment of a National Supervisory Commission, to end poverty and continue turning the People's Liberation Army into the dominant military force in Asia.

Other longer-term goals and prospects include eclipsing the U.S. as the world's largest economy and pushing it out of the Asia-Pacific power sphere, ma-

naging Hong Kong until its 50 years of semi-autonomy run out in 2047 and engineering reunification with Taiwan — either peacefully or by force.

Turbulence ahead

China's embattled liberal intellectuals have universally panned the move. They've registered their opposition in brief postings on social media that have been heavily censored, comparing the situation to that of imperial China, North Korea or the Mao era. Though Xi, 64, has sidelined his opponents within the party elite, many rank-and-file members had come to believe in the institutionalized norms established during the era of reformist leader Deng Xiaoping and may find the possibility of Xi retaining a total monopoly on power for years or decades to come distasteful.

Cheng Li and Ryan McElveen of the Brookings Institution wrote that some may see the removal of term restraints as "heralding a return to an era of vicious power struggles — a zero-sum game in which they will also ruthlessly engage in the years to come." Concerns have also been raised over the high-handed manner in which the amendment is being forced through, with little sign of a firm consensus in favor. There have been rumors of opposition from within the party even before its Feb. 25 announcement, which,

in a highly unorthodox move, was first made in English on a Sunday afternoon.

Installing key ally Wang Qishan as vice president

Xi appears intent on making the bold move on term limits with his trusted ally Wang Qishan alongside as vice president. Wang has been Xi's main enforcer in his trademark campaign against corruption, now well into its sixth year, and has helped take down potential rivals both retired and in office.

Though Wang, 69, is past standard retirement age and stepped down from the all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee last year, he retained his seat as a member of the National People's Congress and stands to transform the traditionally ceremonial role of vice president.

That will further consolidate Xi's authority against Premier Li Keqiang and allies of former leaders Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin, and shake up the status quo by which real power at the center derives almost exclusively from the Standing Committee.

New cabinet to handle slowing economy, other challenges

Along with the vice president, the congress will appoint a slew of Cabinet ministers and other top officials to oversee the running of the world's most populous nation and second-largest economy. Among their key challenges is an economy whose growth slowed to 6.8 percent last year, the loss of some 2 million jobs in the public sector, widespread environmental degradation and trade frictions with key partners the U.S. and EU.

Having launched bold initiatives such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Belt and Road initiative, China is now charged with maintaining that momentum in the face of doubts from the West and some reluctance on the part of participants.

Trump, North Korea pose foreign policy challenges

Along with China's growing international status, foreign relations weigh ever more heavily on proceedings at the congress. China's fraught relations with North Korea, its dispute with South Korea over missile defense and perennial sparring with the U.S. over trade and regional security are among the hot-button issues likely to be raised at the foreign minister's news conference held over the course of the congress.

Beijing has also been put on the defensive over accusations that it is meddling in the affairs of other nations to squelch critical views of China and control the affairs of overseas Chinese communities. Xi's intention to rule indefinitely will "enhance fear of the 'China threat,'" Chinese law expert Gerome Cohen wrote in a blog posting for the Council for Foreign Relations. Xi's "ever greater repression will make people think of Stalin's decades-long centralization of power," Cohen wrote. AP

TRUMP: XI 'PRESIDENT FOR LIFE' AT FUNDRAISER

U.S. PRESIDENT Donald Trump appeared to praise Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping's efforts to extend his tenure in a speech to donors, according to a recording released by CNN. "Don't forget China's great and Xi is a great gentleman. He's now president for life," Trump told Republican backers. The crowd erupted in laughter in response to the remarks made Saturday at his Mar-a-Lago estate. "And look, he was able to do that,"

Trump said. "I think it's great. Maybe we'll give that a shot some day," he said, prompting more laughter. The comments could add another source of tension between the world's two largest economies days after Trump pledged to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, fanning fears of a trade war. The plan to repeal term limits has prompted unusually open expressions of dissent in China.

AP PHOTO



Zhang Yesui, a spokesman for the National People's Congress, arrives for a press conference on the eve of the annual legislature opening session

Gov't says military no threat, but refuses to reveal budget

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

CHINA has no desire to overturn the existing international order and its increasingly powerful military does not constitute a threat to others, the spokesman for the country's ceremonial legislature said yesterday.

However, in a break with recent practice, Zhang Yesui refused to provide a figure for the rate of growth in the national defense budget. That move follows complaints that China isn't open enough about how it funds its military or what the goals of its massive campaign of expansion and modernization are.

Zhang sought to strike a reassuring tone in remarks at a news conference on the eve of the opening of the National People's Congress' annual two-week session.

He said China defended and contributed to the current United Nations-centered global order, but also said some reforms were necessary.

"China's development is conducive to world peace, stability and prosperity," Zhang said, pointing especially to global economic growth, trade and poverty reduction.

"As to the international order, we have no intention of overthrowing everything for starting over again," Zhang said. Reforms should focus on "international rules that have fallen behind the times and no longer align with the shared aspirations of all nations."

China's secretive military had begun to open up a crack in recent years, and the National People's Congress spokesman in recent years has made a tradition of responding to a question on the defense budget by announcing the percentage increase over the past years, at least in rough terms.

Zhang, however, did not address the question of numbers, saying instead that past increases by a "modest margin" had gone to equipment upgrades, training and improving welfare and living conditions for troops.

China's defense spending as a share of GDP and the budget also remains lower than that of other major nations, he said.

"China proceeds from a defense policy that is defensive in nature. China's development will not pose a threat to other countries," Zhang said.

The finance ministry last year said the defense budget would top 1 trillion yuan (USD145 billion) for the first time, after the exact figure was initially kept out of public documents released at the start of the annual legislative sessions.

That marked about a 7 percent increase, continuing a trend of lowered growth amid a slowing economy, despite regional tensions over the South China Sea and other issues.

Years of double-digit percentage growth have given China the world's second-largest defense budget after the United States, which is in a class of its own with a proposed budget of \$716 billion for next year.

However, China's publicly announced defense spending has never been entirely accurate since it fails to omit a significant amount of "off book" expenditures on defense equipment projects, said Peter Jennings, executive director of the nonpartisan Australian Strategic Policy Institute think tank.

"What's alarming is not the non-reporting of largely fictitious defense spending figures so much as the Chinese leadership is shedding even the pretense of being open about its military plans," Jennings said in an email to The Associated Press.

Combined with President Xi Jinping's plans to eliminate term limits on his rule and his consolidation of control over the military, the lack of public information about defense spending and military planning "pushes China toward a more authoritarian and militarized leadership," Jennings said.

"These trends should be deeply concerning to the Asia-Pacific region and beyond," he said. **AP**

AD

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Sharing care and kindness during Chinese New Year

In spirit of the Chinese tradition to spring clean the home before CNY as a symbol of good luck and fortune, MGM teamed up with Centro de Dia "Brilho da Vida" to help in the festive activity. On February 9, MGM's 180 Volunteer Team members rolled up their sleeves to help 220 households at the Fai Chi Kei housing unit for senior citizens to get their homes ready for the New Year. At the end of

each spring clean, the traditional Fai Chun red banners were placed on doorways and windows and specially-designed New Year goodie bags were given to wish households a healthy and prosperous Year of the Dog. A further 1,200 gift sets were distributed to 13 local community associations, including Caritas Macau, Fuhong Society of Macau, Macau Special Olympics, Macau Association of Support for the Disabled, General Union of Neighborhood Associations of Macau, The Women's General Association of Macau, and more.

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For another CNY tradition, to be at our best for the coming of a New Year - from January 31 to February 6, MGM's 11 Volunteer Haircut Team members, who took part in a two-month professional hair dressing training course, provided complimentary haircuts to a total of 80 senior citizens at two local elderly centers, Centro de Dia Brilho da Vida and Complexo de Apoio à Família e de Serviço Co-munitário de Seac Pai Van da UGAMM.

During CNY from January 28-30, we also treated our guests to a tasty and meaningful gift. All in-room guests were surprised with CNY fortune pockets, consisting of brightly-colored, hand-stitched bags containing festive cookies and mini cupcakes, all of which were prepared by people with learning disabilities in association with Fuhong Society of Macau and Sem Meng Chi Restaurant.

Our care and attention also extends to how we can lower our environmental impacts during the festive season. Every year around Chinese New Year, thousands of trees are cut down to help make our Lai see (red-pockets). This year we can give back to the environment by recycling these pockets so it can be made into paper to be used once again. As part of our environmental commitments to reduce waste, we have supported the "Lai See Packets Recycling Campaign 2018" initiated by the Macau Environment Protection Bureau which is carrying out throughout the CNY season.

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Slain Filipina in freezer shows risks to overseas workers

Jim Gomez, Manila

WHEN Joanna Demafelis' indebted family needed money to fix their typhoon-battered home, she followed in the footsteps of millions of other Filipinos and left to find work overseas. And like far too many Filipinos, her journey ended in tragedy.

Demafelis' mutilated body was found last month inside a freezer in an abandoned apartment in Kuwait, where she worked as a housemaid for a Lebanese man and his Syrian wife. She had likely been dead for more than a year.

Demafelis' flower-draped coffin sat Friday in her family home in rural Sara town in central Iloilo province, where relatives, who had alerted authorities in 2016 that she was missing, honored her memory and called for justice.

"We'll miss her. She was so kind to all of us," her brother Joejet Demafelis said, adding hundreds of relatives and friends came on the eve of her burial.

Her slaying is the latest tragedy to befall an overseas worker from the Philippines, where about a tenth of the nation's 100 million people toil in more than 200 countries worldwide to provide for families back home. Last year, those workers sent home more than \$31 billion, accounting for 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Officials warn Demafelis' death won't be the last. They say a dangerous mix of poverty, spotty enforcement of labor laws, difficult conditions especially in Arab nations, and the logistical nightmare of watching over huge numbers of workers abroad means other tragedies are inevitable.

"You gnash your teeth and ask 'Why is this happening?'" Sen. Franklin Drilon, a former labor secretary, said in an interview, adding that laws meant to protect workers needed to be enforced. "Certainly, it can happen again."

President Rodrigo Duterte has responded to Demafelis' death by banning the deployment of Filipino workers to Kuwait, though that won't affect the more than 250,000 Filipinos still working in the oil-rich nation. The Philippine senate, meanwhile, has opened an inquiry into what went wrong.

The president, who is prone at making public outbursts, also lashed out at Middle East nations.

"The Filipino is no slave to anyone, anywhere and



Relatives of Joanna Demafelis, whose corpse was found in a freezer in Kuwait, react as her casket arrives at the airport in Manila

everywhere," an enraged Duterte said shortly after Demafelis' body was found. "We send to you a Filipino worker, hale and hearty [...] do not give us back a battered worker or a mutilated corpse."

But deaths among the army of Filipino workers abroad aren't new. Nearly 200 Filipino workers died in Kuwait over the last two years, mostly due to health reasons, but 22 cases were suicides or fatal criminal attacks, said Hans Cacdac, head of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration in Manila.

Nearly 200 Filipino workers died in Kuwait over the last two years, mostly due to health reasons

Cacdac said 45,000 to 50,000 "distress cases" are reported each year, many of them in Arab countries.

The sixth of nine children of a poor farmer, Demafelis did not go to college and flew to Kuwait in 2014. She had wanted to earn money to repair the family house, which was battered by Typhoon Haiyan the year before, reacquire a

small piece of farmland that had been mortgaged, and help pay tuition for a sibling to finish a criminology course.

"Those were her dreams that prompted her to leave," her elder brother Joejet Demafelis told The Associated Press.

For more than a century Filipinos have been doing the same. Under American colonial rule in the early 1900s, Filipinos traveled to work on pineapple plantations in Hawaii and later in fish canneries in Alaska and elsewhere on the mainland until entry restrictions eased the exodus.

In the 1970s, a construction boom in the Middle East lured more workers out of the Philippines, which had heightened political and economic uncertainties under then President Ferdinand Marcos. The Philippines labor export policy at the time addressed unemployment at home and generated badly needed foreign exchange to bolster the economy.

As the number of workers climbed, so did incidents that strained Philippine ties with host countries, such as abuse of Filipinos at the hands of employers or Filipinos committing crimes.

A 1995 case in which a Filipina housemaid was convicted of murder and executed in Singapore despite her pleas of innocence, prompted outrage in Manila and fresh legislation meant to set a higher

standard of protection for workers, their families and Filipinos in distress. Countries of destination needed to be able to guarantee the rights of workers by having signed agreements with the Philippines.

The law also set a policy that the country would "as soon as practicable" allow only skilled workers to be deployed overseas and would try to wean the country off of dependence on the earnings of migrant workers.

The law has clearly had mixed results and officials acknowledge that Demafelis fell through the cracks in its safety nets.

Demafelis' calls to her family were brief and scant and she did not mention any problem, according to her sister Joyce

Demafelis. When she stopped calling in 2016, her family started to get worried and notified authorities in December that year, Joejet Demafelis said.

He said authorities did not take adequate steps to find out what happened.

Inquiries about Demafelis were passed on to a Filipino labor officer in Kuwait but the officer was too overwhelmed with complaints, Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III said.

"I asked why no action was taken and I was told it was humanly impossible to attend to them [...] there was too much work," Bello said, adding he did not accept that excuse and recalled the Kuwait-based officer and two others.

Demafelis' employers have reportedly been arrested, though few details surrounding her slaying are known, including when and how she was killed.

Unlike professionals who work in offices, housemaids are particularly vulnerable to abuse given that they work in the privacy of homes out of sight of authorities, said Bernard Olalia, who heads the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, which regulates the deployment of Filipinos abroad.

In some countries, such as Kuwait, employers often keep the passports and cellphones of their maids to prevent them from fleeing, but it also cuts them off from their families and other support systems, Olalia said.

An option the government is considering is to ban Filipina maids from being deployed but continue allowing professionals to seek jobs abroad, Olalia said.

Amid the outrage over Demafelis' death, Philippine labor officials have pledged to shoulder the repair of her family's house, where relatives were preparing for her funeral Saturday. The government will also send her sibling through college and finance the reacquisition of her family's farmland.

"We wish all of these would have happened," Joejet Demafelis said. "But never at the cost of her life." AP



A woman passes help wanted signs outside a recruitment agency for jobs abroad, in Manila

KOREA

Moon to send envoys to Pyongyang

Kanga Kong

SOUTH Korean President Moon Jae-in will send his top national-security adviser as well as his chief spy as special envoys to Pyongyang today in a bid to persuade Kim Jong Un to open talks with Washington, in the latest bid to avoid a potential conflict over the country's nuclear program.

The 10-member group will be led by Chung Eui-yong, national-security adviser, and Suh Hoon, the chief of the National Intelligence Service. They will meet with North Korean officials on the two-day trip, Moon's top communication officer Yoon Young-chan said at a briefing. They will discuss the possibility of U.S. and North Korea talks "aimed at denuclearization" and inter-Korean relations, he said.

The envoys will then travel to Washington to discuss the result of the meeting, Yoon said, adding that South Korea will closely coordinate with Japan and China.

Moon's intention to dispatch his top aides, revealed after a 30-minute phone conversation with U.S. Presi-



BLOOMBERG

dent Donald Trump on Thursday, came less than a month after Kim invited Moon to visit Pyongyang. The U.S. and North Korea exchanged war threats last year as Kim detonated his most powerful nuclear device and test fired intercontinental ballistic missiles.

While both the U.S. and the North say they're open to talks and South Korea is eager to broker an agreement, how much each party will concede in talks is unclear.

The White House's statement following the Trump-Moon phone conversation said the two leaders "noted their firm position that any dialogue with North Korea must be conducted with the explicit and

unwavering goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization."

Moon also wants to rid North Korea of nuclear weapons, but his own road map for North Korea's denuclearization consists of two steps: freeze first and complete disarmament second.

North Korea's spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the state-run Korean Central News Agency late Saturday that it won't accept U.S. preconditions.

"We have intention to resolve issues in a diplomatic and peaceful way through dialogue and negotiation, but we will neither beg for dialogue nor evade the military option claimed by the U.S.," it said. **Bloomberg**



INDIA

Nationalist party notches win in key Indian state

INDIAN Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party ended 25 years of uninterrupted communist party rule in a northeastern state and consolidated its position in two other states in key provincial elections.

Saturday's impressive win is expected to boost the prospects of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party when it seeks a second term in national elections next year. The BJP has been riding a wave of rising Hindu nationalism in the country.

As his supporters beat drums and danced with joy, Modi tweeted that the people of India were reposing their faith in the positive and development-oriented agenda of his party.

"People do not have the time or respect for negative, disruptive and disconnected politics of any kind," he said.

With results announced for all 59 seats in Tripura's state legislature, the BJP had won a big majority to form a government on its own in the state, replacing the Communist Party of India (Marxist), or CPI (M). It also looked like it could win a majority with support from other groups in Meghalaya and Nagaland states. **AP**

ALBERGUE SCM
 人婆仔屋文創空間

8·3 · 13·5 · 2018

第一屆
 國際
 女藝術家
 澳門
 雙年展

3.8 **B** **artfem**

MULHERES
 ARTISTAS
 1ª BIENAL
 INTER
 NACIONAL
 DE
 MACAU

38

WOMEN
 ARTISTS
 1st INTER
 NATIONAL
 BIENNIAL
 OF
 MACAO

MACAO MUSEUM OF ART
 Av. Xian Xing Hai, Macao
 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (No admission after 6:30 p.m.)
 Closed on Mondays. Free admission.
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 Website: www.MAM.gov.mo E-mail: MAM@icm.gov.mo

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Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR

Italians head to polls as populists challenge mainstream

ITALIANS voted yesterday after a campaign that featured the surprise comeback of media magnate and former premier Silvio Berlusconi and a challenge to mainstream parties by the populist Five Star Movement.

The outcome may not produce a clear winner as polls published before a Feb. 17 blackout showed a hung parliament as the most likely scenario. Voting stations are open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., when the first exit polls will be released.

Long lines were reported in voting locations from Milan in the north to Palermo in Sicily, where several stations opened later because several thousand ballots had to be reprinted because of errors. Voter turnout was about 19 percent at noon, according to the Interior Ministry. Three-quarters of the electorate voted in the previous national election in 2013.

Five Star may emerge as the biggest single party - according to surveys before the polling restrictions - though only Berlusconi's center-right coalition was seen within reach of an outright majority. The 81-year-old owner of Italy's biggest media group has engineered a shock return to the political limelight, but only by joining forces with another populist group, the euroskeptical League, which is challenging his dominance of the Italian right.

A hung parliament would trigger an extended period of horse-trading among the parties. Five Star leader Luigi Di Maio, 31, has vowed not to seek a coalition deal,



Italian former premier and leader of Forza Italia (Go Italy) party Silvio Berlusconi (left) arrives at a polling station as a bare-breasted woman protests in background

but appealed to rivals to back him if his party wins the most votes.

"Five Star Movement is transforming the political landscape," said Roberto D'Alimonte, a political science professor at Rome's Luiss University. "If the center-right doesn't get a majority, a lot will depend on whether Five Star opens up to the idea of a coalition."

Last year French President Emmanuel Macron and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte held off the challenge of euroskeptical populists in national elections and Chancellor Angela Merkel's party remained the biggest force in the German parliament despite the rise of the anti-immigrant AfD. Italy's establishment parties are struggling to match that performance following years of lackluster growth and widespread concern about immigration.

Italy has lived with political instability since World War II, with

65 governments ruling since that conflict. Paolo Gentiloni of the Democratic Party has been a caretaker prime minister since Matteo Renzi resigned after his referen-

Italy has lived with political instability since World War II

dum to reform the Senate failed in December 2016.

For a guide to why the Italian election matters, click here

President Sergio Mattarella is due to begin formal discussions with party leaders from early April before picking a candidate he believes can command a majority. The next prime minister will have to win votes of confidence in both houses of parliament.

A government built around either Berlusconi's alliance or Five Star would risk unsettling financial markets, with concerns over their impact on state finances in a country with huge public debt. Berlusconi and his allies clashed repeatedly during the campaign over who should be premier and over policies from tax cuts to pension reform and the euro.

Still, Italy's benchmark stock index is the best performer of major European markets so far this year. The yield premium on Italy's 10-year debt over German bunds could fall to a two-year low of 100 basis points in coming months with a market-friendly result, according to Fabrizio Fiorini, the chief investment officer at UBI Pramerica SGR.

These 10 charts will show you why Italy is in such a mess

Berlusconi is banned from holding public office until next year because of a 2013 tax fraud conviction. But he says he could play a key role from the sidelines and has flagged European Parliament head Antonio Tajani as his candidate for the premiership.

It's fundamental that the next government "have a premier that has solid relationships in Europe because Italy must regain the influence it's lost in the European Union," Berlusconi told Italian daily *Il Messaggero* in an interview published on Saturday.

A topless Femen activist disrupted Berlusconi when he was casting his ballot at a Milan polling

station yesterday morning. The protester jumped on top of a table and shouted "Berlusconi, you've expired" before police officers intervened.

Di Maio has unveiled a team of would-be ministers with no government experience and pledged to boost spending on the poor, lower taxes and reduce the public debt -- while also overhauling European Union treaties to ease spending rules. He's backtracked on earlier plans to ditch the single currency, telling Radio 24 on Friday that "euro-exit is not under discussion."

Although both Di Maio and League leader Matteo Salvini ruled out an alliance during the campaign, the stance could change once the results are in. Salvini said in October that if his coalition with Berlusconi didn't win a majority, he'd call Five Star co-founder Beppe Grillo.

Grillo joined Di Maio at a closing rally Friday in Rome's Piazza del Popolo. Di Maio said Five Star was ready to govern. "The era of opposition has ended."

The governing Democratic Party has seen its support slide over the course of the campaign and its leader, Renzi, told newspaper *La Repubblica* Italy risks "an extremist government" of Five Star, the League and the far-right Brothers of Italy unless his party comes first.

"Di Maio could change strategy and give up some ministers' jobs but that would be risky for him because many of his voters don't want deals with other parties," said Fabio Bordignon, a political science professor at the University of Urbino who has studied the party's rise. "If he doesn't get a chance to try to form a government, he'll exploit that by saying the system is united against Five Star." AP

GERMANY

SPD backs joining Merkel in coalition to end impasse

GERMANY'S Social Democrats voted to join Chancellor Angela Merkel's next government, clearing the last hurdle to her fourth term and restoring a sense of political stability in Europe's biggest economy.

SPD members approved the coalition pact by a wider-than-expected margin, which may make it easier for the party to effectively govern with Merkel's Christian Democrat-led bloc. The result, unsealed yesterday morning, was 66 percent in favor to 34 percent against. Before the vote, SPD leaders had said they hoped for 60 percent support.

The chancellor can expect to be re-inaugurated by mid-March, allowing her to move ahead with

priorities such as working with Emmanuel Macron to strengthen the euro zone and coordinating on a united European front against Chinese encroachment.

"We now have clarity," interim Social Democratic chairman Olaf Scholz told reporters. "The SPD will join the next government."

While the impasse in Berlin hasn't dented Germany's economic boom, it's held back policy making since Merkel won a national election in September with her bloc's worst result since 1949. That weakness, and the arrival of a far-right party in parliament, reflect a changing political landscape that almost derailed Merkel's bid to extend her 12 years in office.

"Let's get to work - Germany and Europe," Peter Altmaier, Merkel's chief of staff, tweeted seconds after the announcement. Merkel welcomes the "clear result" and looks forward to working with the SPD again, her Christian Democratic Union said on Twitter.

With a resumption of the "grand coalition" government now assured, the SPD's pick for finance minister will be among the most-watched decisions ahead. Scholz, the mayor of Hamburg and a centrist Social Democrat, is viewed as the front-runner for a post the party wrested from Merkel in the coalition deal sealed in February. The Social Democrats plan to un-

veil their cabinet nominations on March 12.

Fending off a youthful grass-roots revolt against staying in government allows the Social Democrats to serve as Merkel's junior partner for the third time in the grand coalition of Germany's two biggest parties. It's a sign that the political center, while diminished, is holding after the longest coalition-building talks since World War II.

Merkel, reduced to acting chancellor for months, has said she'll serve a full term until the next scheduled election in 2021. Even so, she's begun preparing the CDU for her eventual departure.

Last week, Merkel named an ideological ally and suc-



cessful state election campaigner, Annegret Krampr-Karrenbauer, to a senior party post. Responding to conservative critics who blame the chancellor for the party's electoral decline, Merkel also nominated a crop of younger leaders for cabinet positions.

The Social Democrat ballot was both the final hurdle and the last option for a Merkel-led majority government after the pro-market Free Democrats, a CDU ally in the past, scuttled a first set of coalition talks. That breakdown, and turmoil in the SPD after its worst pos-

twor election result, made it unusually difficult to build a government alliance.

Polls suggest Merkel retains a solid power base, with 52 percent of the general public and 85 percent of her bloc's supporters saying they favor her serving another term, according to an FG Wahlen poll for broadcaster ZDF published last week.

Though some her most outspoken critics view Merkel as too liberal, only 35 percent of her bloc's backers say they want the CDU to shift to the right, according to the poll. **Bloomberg**

POLAND

At Auschwitz, history's lessons mangled by Holocaust Law

Wojciech Moskwa

AT the most potent symbol of Nazi terror, the caretakers of Auschwitz-Birkenau have a new job: defending history.

The museum at the former German death camp in southern Poland said it's fighting off a rapidly escalating number of false claims. In a country where a nationalist agenda has come to dominate politics, some newspapers and reports on social media have suggested the guardians of the site ignore the wartime suffering of Poles.

There was an accusation that singing the Polish national anthem is banned. "The museum only requests that silence is maintained in the courtyard of Block 11, the place of executions," it responded. The curators rebuffed another one that only the Israeli flag was allowed to fly.

Another was particularly poignant. The museum, which displays the victims' cut hair, eye glasses, suitcases and clothes, corrected the assertion that Poles weren't invited to the 73rd anniversary of the camp's liberation on Jan. 27.

"There have been more false reports over the past several weeks than at any other time," said Bartosz Bartyzel, a historian and museum spokesman who grew up in Oswiecim, the town next to Auschwitz, and started out as a guide at the camp about 20 years ago. "Our only instrument in this battle is education - teaching and re-teaching our history."

But these are different times in Poland. Emotions are on



edge as a law came into force this week that criminalizes implications that the nation was in any way responsible for the mass murder of Jews during World War II. The legislation introduced by the Law & Justice government triggered outrage in Israel and alarm among other allies.

While the leadership in Warsaw says it won't tolerate any signs of racial hatred and seeks to maintain good relations with Israel, decades of Polish-Jewish reconciliation have crumbled within weeks and a number of Holocaust-linked

groups have warned about rising antisemitism.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has vowed to protect the nation's honor and halt a rising tide of "anti-Polonism" that he says is turning Poles from Nazi victims into collaborators through the lens of history.

The Nazis systematically murdered 1.1 million people, mostly Jews, at the former German camp located some 70 kilometers west of the city of Krakow.

On a sunny winter day this week when the temperature dropped to minus 10 Celsius,

groups of visitors huddled together before going through the Auschwitz I camp's gate with the infamous proclamation "Arbeit Macht Frei," or "Work Will Set You Free."

Three kilometers down the road, stands the much larger Auschwitz II-Birkenau complex where the Nazis managed to destroy more evidence of the Holocaust. There were 50 German camps in this region, Bartyzel said.

Once inside the camp, which remains surrounded by barbed wire, visitors walk quickly through a maze of barra-

cks. Some visitors stop by the gallows, where prisoners caught trying to escape or suspected of planning to were hanged during daily roll calls.

Other groups, some speaking Hebrew and others Spanish, spent quiet minutes standing outside a building which once stored the gas chamber and still has the ovens used as a crematorium. On a clearing several meters behind the death block, stands a wooden scaffolding with a rusty metal hook where Rudolf Hoess, the Nazi camp commander, was hanged on April 18, 1947.

Last month, a government-appointed curator for Auschwitz said that only Polish nationals should be licensed to guide visitors around the death camp because otherwise Jews will learn its history with an anti-Polish bias. The Education Ministry shot down the idea.

"As a museum, we don't want to get involved in politics, and we'd also like politicians to stay clear from us," said Piotr Cywinski, the director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. "It's deeply unethical to argue like this over a mass grave."

During the commemoration of the 73rd anniversary of liberation, a woman holding a flag was asked to move back because it was put up in a section reserved for former prisoners and blocked their views, according to the museum. She responded by saying the inmates weren't "true Poles," it said.

The incident was reported as organizers preventing the woman from displaying her Polish flag, the museum said.

False accusations about Auschwitz used to be "isolated incidents," either accidentally or deliberately aimed at heating up the atmosphere around the memorial, said Cywinski. "This phenomenon has now spilled over. And it will probably take a long time to calm things again." **Bloomberg**

USD275k going to family of each person slain in Vegas shooting

A USD31.5 million victims' fund that started as a GoFundMe effort announced plans Friday to pay \$275,000 to the families of each of the 58 people killed in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

The Las Vegas Victims Fund said the maximum \$275,000 also will be paid to 10 other people who were paralyzed or suffered permanent brain damage in the Oct. 1 shooting on the Las Vegas Strip.

The nonprofit posted a

chart projecting payments on a scale to a total of 532 people, including more than \$10 million divided among 147 people who were hospitalized.

"In no way can it replace someone's life," said Al Etcheber, the brother-in-law of Stacey Etcheber, who died when a gunman fired from a high-rise casino hotel into a country music festival below. "Still, it is a real nice way to help families who lost someone they loved."

Stacey Etcheber was

married to Al's brother, San Francisco Police Officer Vincent Etcheber. The 50-year-old mother of two children worked as a hairdresser in Novato, California.

Victims fund spokesman Howard Stutz said the nonprofit expects to pay 100 percent of the funds raised, with payouts beginning Monday.

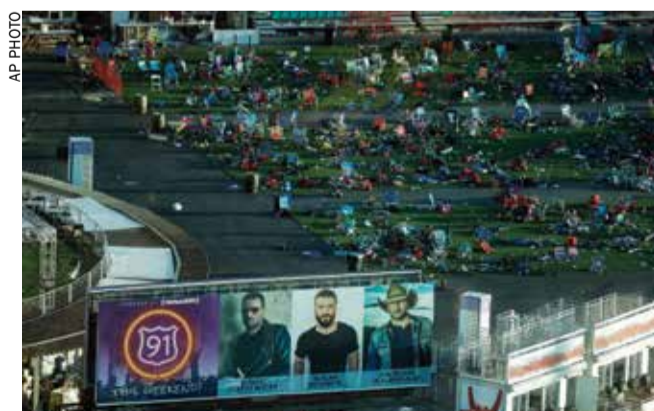
Police say 851 people were hurt by gunfire or other injuries while fleeing.

The fund grew into a nonprofit corporation that

reported receiving more than 90,000 donations, with nearly 40 percent coming from southern Nevada gambling, tourism and entertainment companies.

Students, faculty and staff at a high school in suburban Henderson raised more than \$66,000 through T-shirt sales, and a Vegas Strong benefit concert that raised nearly \$700,000.

Disbursements were determined by a committee of victim advocates, mental health and medical pro-



In this Oct. 3, 2017, file photo, personal belongings and debris litters the Route 91 Harvest festival grounds across the street from the Mandalay Bay resort and casino in Las Vegas

fessionals, lawyers, donors and others. The committee held two town hall meetings to hear from victims and their families.

The committee reported reviewing more than 1,600

email and written comments, with advice from national experts, including victim compensation expert Kenneth Feinberg and the National Center for Victims of Crime. **AP**

what's ON



MACAU NARRATIVE BY IU-PUI CHAN
TIME: 11am-7pm
UNTIL: March 31, 2018
VENUE: Macau Tower T1 Art Gallery
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 8330

SOMEWHERE – PHOTOS BY FRANCISCO RICARTE
TIME: 2pm-7pm (closed on Sundays)
UNTIL: March 17, 2018
VENUE: G/F, Macau Cultural Centre Building
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2875 3282

TREASURE OF SACRED ART OF ST. JOSEPH'S SEMINARY
TIME: 10am-5pm daily (closed on Wednesdays, open on public holidays)
VENUE: St. Joseph's Seminary and Church, Rua do Seminário
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

MANDARIN'S HOUSE
TIME: 10am-6pm daily (last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Wednesdays, open on public holidays)
ADDRESS: No. 10, Travessa de António da Silva
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 8820

MONKEY KING
TIME: 4pm & 8pm daily (except on Thursdays)
VENUE: Sands Cotai Theatre
ADMISSION: MOP380, MOP480, MOP680, MOP980, MOP1280
COTAI TICKETING: (853) 2882 8818
KONG SENG TICKETING: (853) 2855 5555

DOCUMENTING IMPERMANENCE: AN EXHIBITION OF REPORTAGE PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALICE KOK AND STUDENTS
TIME: 9am-10pm
UNTIL: March 31, 2018
VENUE: Team Building, Institute for Tourism Studies
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2856 1252

Offbeat

DRUNK MAN TAKES USD1,600 UBER FROM WEST VIRGINIA TO NEW JERSEY

A New Jersey man who got drunk in West Virginia and mistakenly ordered a USD1,635 Uber ride back to his home state says the experience was "crazy."

NJ.com reported last week that Kenny Bachman thought he was taking an Uber to where he was staying, near the West Virginia University campus.

But when his driver woke him up two hours into the more than 300-mile journey to New Jersey, Bachman says he didn't know what was happening or who the driver was.

The trip was made more expensive because Bachman gave the driver money for tolls and ordered an UberXL, which can hold up to six passengers.

He says he unsuccessfully challenged the fare with Uber, which confirmed that the ride occurred.

Bachman says he gave the driver five stars.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
15:40	Miscellaneous
16:35	Zig Zag
17:55	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
18:45	Non-daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:50	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sports
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Champions League 2017/2018 Magazine
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

01 - 07 MAR



MONSTER HUT 2

ROOM 1
2:30, 7:30pm

Director: Raman Hui

Starring: Tony Leung Chiu-wai, Bai Baihe, Jing Boran

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 110 min

AGENT MR CHAN

ROOM 1
4:30, 9:30pm

Director: Cheung Ka Kit

Starring: Dayo Wong Tze Wah, Charmaine Sheh Sze Man

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)



BLACK PANTHER

ROOM 2
02:15, 04:45, 9:45pm

Director: Ryan Coogler

Starring: Chadwick Boseman, Lupita Nyong'o

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 134min



CONCERTO OF THE BULLY

ROOM 3
2:15, 4:00, 9:30pm

Director: Fung Chi-Chiang

Starring: Ronald Cheng, Cherry Ngan, Jacky Cai

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

IS THE ORDER A RABBIT? DEAR MY SISTER

ROOM 3
5:45, 7:00, 9:15pm

Director: Hiroyuki Hashimoto

Starring: Ayane Sakura, Inori Minase, Risa Taneda

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 60min

this day in history



1953 SOVIET LEADER 'ON BRINK OF DEATH'

Rumours are circulating in Moscow that Joseph Stalin, the long-time leader of the Soviet Union, is near death.

The first official news of Mr Stalin's illness came in a statement on Wednesday.

It said the Soviet leader, who came to power in 1928, had suffered a cerebral haemorrhage on Wednesday night.

An update issued earlier today mentioned "sharp disturbances of the heart functions".

There is speculation that the 73-year-old, born Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili, in the Soviet republic of Georgia, is now in the final stages of an illness he has been suffering some time.

Soviet newspapers today are clearly preparing their readers for the worst.

Their front pages carry the bulletins on Mr Stalin's health as well as sombre leading articles.

On the inside pages, feature articles praise the Soviet leader both as a man and politician.

World leaders have expressed concern for Mr Stalin's health.

A statement issued by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said his private secretary, John Colville, had yesterday called on the Soviet ambassador.

Mr Colville had passed on the prime minister's regret at the news of Mr Stalin's ill-health and asked to be kept informed of his progress, the statement said.

US President Truman also expressed sympathy for Mr Stalin.

"I am sorry just as I would be if such a thing happened to any other acquaintance of mine," Mr Truman said.

If Mr Stalin's death is confirmed, he will be most remembered for instigating political purges in which tens of thousands were killed.

He was also behind the introduction of farming collectives which led to a famine and the death of up to 10 million people.

His death is expected to provoke a power struggle within the ruling Politburo.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The death of Joseph Stalin was officially announced at just after 0100 GMT on 6 March.

The statement said he had died at 2150 local time on 5 March. Hundreds of thousands of people queued to see Joseph Stalin's body lying-in-state.

He was embalmed and put on display alongside the first Soviet leader, Vladimir Illyich Lenin, in his mausoleum in Red Square in Moscow.

But Nikita Khrushchev, who became Soviet leader after a power struggle, led a move to denounce Stalin as a tyrant who caused millions of deaths.

In 1961 Stalin's body was removed from its place in the honoured Lenin's Tomb.

It was reburied near the Kremlin wall along with other minor figures from the Bolshevik Revolution.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 There's nothing you love more than some friendly competition...

Taurus April 20-May 20 Some intriguing developments early on in the day sweep aside lingering pessimism...

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Very strong astrological influences are helping you make important connections...

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 It's not enough to want to do something -- the trick is getting yourself to take some action...

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 It's the time of your life -- are you ready? Whether you've been expecting it or not...

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 The stars spark your creative juices, but on the flip side, this immersion into your imagination may also make you a touch curt...

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Break from routine. The stars' adventurous energy encourages you to go out on a limb...

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 At last, you finally get what you want, but a crucial player might not be exactly who you expected.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You have a unique talent that can help you achieve a permanent goal -- like starting a freelance career...

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Relationships are on the verge of changing significantly. Weak friendships will naturally fade...

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Surprise! You're about to find out that someone loves you very much -- and just in time, too.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 It might not be possible to understand that certain someone who affected every aspect of your life.

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 forecasts for various cities in CHINA and the WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1-Thanksgiving tuber; 4- Property claims; 9- Golfer Calvin; 14- Guido's high note; 15- Playground retort; 16- Apply, as pressure; 17- Swiss river; 18- Fishing net; 19- Skyliit lobbies; 20- Foosball and billiards place?; 23- "___ Tu": 1974 hit; 24- The works; 25- Of the backbone; 28- Congress, e.g.; 30- Opposite of NNW; 33- Ready ___; 34- French actor Jacques; 35- Somewhat; 36- In spite of; 39- Singer Stefan; 40- Consumes; 41- Major artery; 42- Camera type, briefly; 43- Ballet bend; 44- Officer of a university; 45- Actor Kilmer; 46- Fill to surfeit; 47- Distinguishing feature; 54- ___ luck; 55- Living in flowing water; 56- Blond shade; 57- Made a choice; 58- Heartburn; 59- "Michael Collins" actor; 60- Pass into disuse; 61- Discussion group; 62- Energy; DOWN: 1- Age unit; 2- Caesar's wings; 3- Artist Chagall; 4- Clerisy; 5- Sharon's land; 6- Les ___-Unis; 7- ___ lay me...; 8- Go it alone; 9- Like heaven's gates; 10- Sing the praises of; 11- Eliel Saarinen's son; 12- Barbershop request; 13- JFK listing; 21- Fame; 22- Gymnast Comaneci; 25- Pop pieces; 26- Go about stealthily; 27- Lay to rest; 28- Moistened while cooking; 29- Ed and Mel of baseball; 30- Agitates; 31- Vixen's master; 32- Mystery writer's award; 34- Bangkok tongue; 35- Idolizes; 37- I cannot ___ lie; 38- Pertaining to ships; 43- Procession; 44- Mineral used as a weighting agent; 45- Urns; 46- Take hold; 47- Nightclub of song; 48- Web address starter; 49- Give it up for a performer?; 50- Garment of ancient Rome; 51- Diamond cover; 52- Psychiatrist's response; 53- Fellow; 54- Chat room chuckle;

Friday's solution crossword grid with filled-in letters.

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



Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' sections with details for various properties like Grande Plaza, 1st Floor Car Park, Apartment B, Va Fat, Kinqlight, Carnation Court, Apartment C, Nam Long, and Apartment C, Vai Fat.



AP PHOTO

Communications to the crowd has to be better. People in the crowd aren't sure what is happening.

MARTIN GLENN
CEO OF ENGLAND'S FOOTBALL
ASSOCIATION



Fifa's president, Gianni Infantino, speaks during the press conference

FOOTBALL

FIFA panel adds video review to football laws ahead of WCup

Graham Dunbar, Zurich

IN one of the most fundamental changes ever to football's 155-year-old rules, FIFA approved video review on Saturday and cleared the way to use it at the World Cup in June.

World football's panel overseeing the laws of the game voted to add video assistant referees (VAR) despite mixed results from trials in top-level games.

The panel, known as IFAB, voted unanimously to begin updating the game's written rules to include VAR and let competition organizers ask to adopt it — with FIFA next in line this month.

The decision "represents a new era for football with video assistance for referees helping to increase integrity and fairness in the

game," IFAB said in a statement.

FIFA must take a further decision on using VAR at the World Cup in Russia, which kicks off June 14.

That should be on March 16 when the FIFA Council chaired by President Gianni Infantino meets in Bogota, Colombia.

Infantino has long said World Cup referees must get high-tech help to review key decisions at the 64-game tournament.

Video review can overturn "clear and obvious errors" and "serious missed incidents" by match officials involving goals, penalty awards, red cards, and mistaken identity.

Still, Infantino also acknowledged on Saturday the VAR system "is not perfect." In 18 months of trials worldwide, reviews have

been slower than promised and communication is often unclear in the stadium.

"VAR at the World Cup will certainly help to have a fairer World Cup," Infantino said at a news conference after the IFAB meeting. "If there is a big mistake, it will be corrected."

Infantino said FIFA must have "the ambition to get close to perfection" even if some coaches, players and fans were not yet convinced by video review.

VAR has often created confusion in the first full season of live trials which now include more than 1,000 games worldwide. Top-tier competitions which opted to use it include Germany's Bundesliga and Italy's Serie A.

Several games at the 2017 Confederations Cup, FIFA's World Cup

warm-up tournament in Russia, also left many in the stadium unsure what match officials were doing. Communication was unclear during reviews lasting minutes instead of a handful of seconds, which was the target suggested in 2016 when the protocol for using VAR was shaped and trials began.

"We have to speed up reviews," the CEO of England's Football Association, Martin Glenn, acknowledged after taking part in the decision. "Communications to the crowd has to be better. People in the crowd aren't sure what is happening."

UEFA has already ruled out using VAR in the Champions League next season, and the English Premier League is also waiting to see if the system can prove itself essential.

Still, the International Football Association Board's approval was expected on Saturday because FIFA controls four of the eight votes. The four British football associations, which created IFAB in 1886, have one vote each, and six are needed to approve an idea.

FIFA's historical reluctance to embrace technological help for referees changed at the 2010 World Cup, after an England goal was not given despite Frank Lampard's shot clearly crossing the German goal-line. Germany went on to win the last 16 game 4-1.

At the 2014 World Cup, FIFA deployed goal-line technology. Referees were alerted with a simple yes-no signal to their watches after multiple camera angles judged if the ball crossed the line. Goal-line systems are used at UEFA's European Championship and in the Premier League.

The potential use of video review was first announced on the eve of the World Cup in Brazil.

FIFA's then-president, Sepp Blatter, surprised IFAB officials in Sao Paulo by suggesting coaches could call on video replays to challenge some refereeing decisions.

The landmark decision leaves much yet to be finalized, such as wording for the amended rules and an exact protocol for operating the system including how to communicate to fans using giant screens inside stadiums.

FIFA must also choose technology providers with around 15 involved in trials and workshops at Zurich. It is also seeking a sponsor for video review at the World Cup.

In Russia, FIFA plans to use a central command center for VAR teams working away from stadiums to communicate with referees — a system adopted by American professional sports leagues.

Also on Saturday, the IFAB panel used evidence from two years of trials to approve teams using a fourth substitute during the 30 minutes of extra time in knockout games. Teams can even use all four replacements in the extra periods if no changes were made in regulation time. **AP**

Dutch midfielder Sneijder retires from national team

Mike Corder, The Hague

MIDFIELDER Wesley Sneijder is retiring from international football after 15 years and a record 133 appearances for the Netherlands, the Dutch football association announced yesterday, clearing the way for new coach Ronald Koeman to rebuild the ailing national team.

Sneijder made his decision after Koeman visited the 33-year-old in Qatar, where he plays for Al Gharafa.

In an article on the Dutch association's supporters

website, Sneijder said he knew his choice to play in Qatar could affect his international career.

"Above all, I understand that Koeman wants to make a fresh start with younger players," he said.

Sneijder has long been a key to Dutch successes. He was one of the best players and joint top scorer with five goals at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, where the Netherlands lost to Spain in the final.

A creative midfielder with an eye for incisive passes, Sneijder's illustrious career say him play at top clubs including

Ajax, Real Madrid and Inter Milan.

Sneijder's retirement comes just months after winger Arjen Robben also hung up his boots. Together with striker Robin van Persie, they made up an influential trio around which successive Dutch coaches could build successful teams. Van Persie has not retired, but has rarely played for the Netherlands in recent years and is now largely used as a substitute at Feyenoord.

The fading influence of the three stars as they grew older coincided with a spectacular fall in fortune

of the Dutch national team. After its final spot at the 2010 World Cup, the Netherlands reached the semifinals four years later in Brazil but since then has failed to qualify for the 2016 European Championship in France and this year's World Cup in Russia.

Koeman paid tribute to Sneijder, calling him as one of his country's best players of recent times.

"A great player with a great charisma," Koeman said. "But I have to make new selection choices, build a new Oranje and so have to make choices." **AP**



Wesley Sneijder

FOOTBALL

Fiorentina captain Davide Astori dies aged 31

FIORENTINA captain Davide Astori, a defender who has also been capped by Italy 14 times, has died, the club announced. He was 31.

Astori was found in the early hours of Sunday morning in his hotel room in Udine, where the team was staying ahead of an Italian league match.

He died in his sleep and was discovered by teammates when he failed to show up for breakfast. "Fiorentina is profoundly shaken that it finds itself forced to announce that its captain Davide Astori has died, hit by a sudden illness," said a brief statement.

"For this terrible and delicate situation, and above all out of respect for his family, we appeal to the sensitivity of everyone."

Fiorentina's match against Udinese was immediately called off, swiftly followed by Genoa vs. Cagliari, which was scheduled to kick off shortly after the news emerged.

The rest of yesterday's Serie A



fixtures were also postponed a short time later.

The players in Genoa were warming up on the pitch when they were told of Astori's death and several walked off in tears. When the match was officially called off a photo of Davide Astori was shown on the giant screen and the fans broke out into a spontaneous standing ovation.

Astori's body has been taken to the Santa Maria della Misericordia Hospital for an autopsy.

Astori leaves behind a wife and two-year-old daughter. Tributes from players and clubs have been flooding in on social media.

Astori started out in the Milan youth academy but never played a senior match for the Rossoneri, making his Serie A debut with Cagliari in 2008.

He spent six years at the Sardinian club before loan spells at Roma and Fiorentina, where he was signed on a permanent basis in 2016. AP

MOTORSPORTS

NASCAR drivers studying Vegas to prepare for playoff return

NASCAR's annual early-season trip to Las Vegas Motor Speedway is an understandable favorite for many teams and drivers. This year's event, however, is about getting much more than a few hands of blackjack and the checkered flag.

For the first time, everybody is coming back to Vegas in six months for the opening race of the playoffs.

Each turn in today's [Macau time] Monster Energy Cup Series race should provide experience and data to the drivers hoping to dominate the postseason this fall.

"There is definitely some added importance to this race with [Las Vegas] being in the playoffs," said Kyle Larson, who excelled in practice this week at the track where he finished second to eventual Cup champion Martin Truex Jr. last year.

"Hopefully we have a strong race, and if not, you know what you need to go back and work on to be better when you come back later in the year to benefit your playoff run," Larson added. "Not that this race when it was just a stand-alone event wasn't important, but anytime you can race at a track that you



Kyle Busch celebrates after winning the NASCAR Truck Series auto race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway

are going to come back at in the final 10, it's got some added importance to it."

While other tracks have downsized their NASCAR ambitions when faced with smaller crowds in recent years, Las Vegas has been eager to host a second race for several years, confident in its local fan base and the visiting fans who plan a vacation weekend around the March race.

The track finally got a second date last year when New Hampshire's second race was given to Vegas, which was backed by sponsorship deals with the local Convention and Visitors Authority and with the South Point hotel-casino, owned by former race team owner Michael Gaughan. AP

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opinion

Rear Window
 Severo Portela



POLISHING THE JUDICIARY

Everyone saw it coming! The Secretary for Administration and Justice's candid confirmation that the proposal to amend the MSAR judiciary law will or would prevent foreign judges from hearing or ruling on matters of national security has sent a strong and alarming signal across the Pearl River Delta to our 'sister' Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong. We should notice that Macau is taking the lead in an obviously thorny matter that surfaced not within but in Hong Kong. We recognize that the verbal abuse against foreign judges in Hong Kong was restricted, as far as we know, to a mere duo of court rulings occurring in a politically charged environment of pro-democracy driven by scholarship, localists and the like. We believe it was not enough to erode the overall confidence in the judicial system given the particular poisoned circumstances of the day, but it was a serious warning card and not the first one in Hong Kong aimed at the common law legal community.

Who would think that if Macau was to take the step to turn away foreign, non-Chinese judges that it would so easily be said that it was to prevent Portuguese judges from hearing cases of national security on grounds of being less patriotically suitable?! Besides being a move that more than one local legal luminary take as roughly unconstitutional, the proposal to prevent non-Chinese judges from ruling on special matters of national security - and we can establish a motive or conceive of the pervading rationale - can be read as chauvinism and other unpronounceable nouns. It is difficult to support and give it enough credibility.

Worse than this is the very wording with which Secretary Sonia Chan smooths the proposal. She denies being the one aiming to discriminate against non-Chinese... and the wording is SMOOTH! To make the operations of the judiciary smoother! And to expedite the trial proceedings!

So, two types of questions arise from the smooth wording above: first, a general one as to what is a smooth operation (?); secondly, a more particular and detailed one of what to do when normal/current civil or commercial court cases are designated to have elements of national security (?). As to the second proposition regarding the trial expedition, it will be crucial to know how those special cases are to arrive and depart through the faster lane of trial proceedings.

All parties concerned ought to consider legal scholar Simon Young's opinion (MDT on Feb. 22) on the eventual violation of the 83rd article of the Basic Law (interference with the exercise of independent judiciary) - in Hong Kong the 85th - "any move towards excluding foreign judges from hearing cases, which they would otherwise be entitled to hear, may lead people to think that their government does not trust foreign judges." This would be a very wrong message to send and would dent the confidence in one of the most successful aspects of the Hong Kong and Macau judiciaries. This and other matters, including the interface between local pro-democracy movements and the constitutional zeitgeist in Beijing, are to be subject to a review, if not a complete reset.

While the MSAR is waiting for the polishing of its judiciary, tourism is booming, gross gaming revenue is roaring in line with an ideal balancing of mass market and premium to high-rolling VIPs, new properties are opening to business, i.e. the amazing USD 3.4 billion MGM Cotai - do forgive the awe - and Wynn Resorts is moving forward in the aftermath of the departure of its signature founder. The thing is, pragmatism this side of the PRD commands each and every particular step towards the end of the actual gaming licenses, or concessions, as if there was an enigmatic rewards' program. Meanwhile the city is awash with fanfare and fireworks!

This is resilience Macau style: serious playing, and people hired to provide entertainment.

THE HONG KONG DOLLAR DROPS TO LOWEST SINCE BAND IMPLEMENTED IN 2005

Hong Kong's currency depreciated to the weakest level since the government widened a trading band against the greenback in 2005, putting pressure on the monetary authorities to slow its downward trajectory.

The exchange rate dropped to HKD7.8315 per dollar on Friday, approaching the weak end of its trading band. The Hong Kong dollar has slumped 0.9 percent over the past 12 months as low lending costs in the city make it lucrative

to borrow the currency to buy the U.S. dollar.

The slump is a test for the city's de-facto central bank, which will be compelled to intervene should the currency weaken to 7.85 per U.S. dollar. While additional bill sales last year helped support the currency, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority said in December it had no plans to take such a move. Interbank lending rates in Hong Kong are the lowest since 2008 versus those in America.

Australia urges Indonesia against showing cleric leniency

Niniek Karmini, Jakarta

AUSTRALIA on Saturday urged Indonesia against any leniency toward the ideological leader of the Bali bombers as the government considers house arrest or other forms of clemency for the ailing radical cleric who is now in prison.

Wiranto, Indonesia's top security minister, said Friday that a meeting of security ministers and police will make a recommendation on Abu Bakar Bashir's treatment to President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo.

"Clemency, pardon, house arrest or just hospital treatment. It will be discussed in the near future and will be reported to the president," said Wiranto, who uses a single name.

Bashir, who turns 80 in August, was treated in a Jakarta hospital on Thursday for pooling of blood in the legs, a common condition in the elderly known as chronic venous insufficiency, and later returned to prison.

Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu said on Thursday that the government plans to place Bashir under house arrest so he can be cared for by his family or transfer him to a prison near his hometown, Solo in Central Java, according to local media.



Ailing radical cleric Abu Bakar Bashir (center) arrives for medical treatment at an hospital in Jakarta

His numerous sympathizers hope Jokowi will grant him a permanent release due to his poor health, a move that would help mend fences between hard-line Muslims and Jokowi ahead of a presidential election in 2019 but alarm allies such as the United States and Australia. Jokowi's approval ratings remain high with the broader Indonesian public.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop's office on Saturday described Bashir as the mastermind behind the 2002 Bali bombings that killed 202 people, mostly foreigners including 88 Australians.

Bishop's office said in a statement that Australians expected justice to continue to be served to "the full extent that Indonesian law allows."

"Abu Bakar Bashir should never be allowed to incite others to carry other future attacks against innocent civilians," the statement added.

Bashir was sentenced to 15

years in prison in 2011 for supporting a military-style training camp for Islamic militants.

The firebrand cleric was arrested almost immediately after the Bali bombing. But prosecutors were unable to prove a string of terrorism-related allegations. He was instead sentenced to 18 months in prison for immigration violations.

Jokowi's spokesman, Johan Budi, said the president will review the case, and house arrest is "possible under the law."

He said a suggestion to pardon Bashir came from Indonesian Ulema Council chairman Ma'ruf Amin and would require Bashir to apply for clemency.

That appears unlikely as it would involve Bashir recognizing secular authority. After being sentenced in 2011, he said he rejected the conviction because it was based on "infidel" law. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Ng Han Guan



An ethnic minority delegate leaves from the Great Hall of the People on the eve of the annual legislature's opening session in Beijing.

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	15-35 Good	
High Density Residential Area	20-40 Good	
Ambient	25-45 Good	

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



INDIA Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party ended 25 years of uninterrupted communist party rule in a northeastern state and consolidated its position in two other states in key provincial elections. More on p13



SYRIA Troops and allied militias have captured a number of villages and towns in a rebel-held region near the capital, in the largest advance since a wide-scale offensive began last month, state media and activists reported yesterday.

SLOVAKIA Authorities have renewed their investigation into threats by a businessman against an investigative journalist who was shot dead last week with his fiancée, the country's prosecutor general said yesterday.

GERMANY Chancellor Angela Merkel cleared the last major hurdle on her path to a fourth term yesterday, after members of the center-left Social Democrats voted in favor of continuing their governing coalition with her conservative bloc. More on p14



VENEZUELA's government has agreed to delay presidential elections by a month as part of a last-minute deal with a few of the political parties seeking to unseat President Nicolas Maduro.

US Local governments are suing a U.S. agency demanding a fix to a decades-old problem of sewage flowing downhill from Mexico and spilling onto U.S. wetlands and beaches.