



ANOTHER NUCLEAR POWER PLANT INCIDENT

An operational incident occurred at the Daya Bay nuclear power plant, the second to happen in Guangdong in one month

P2



INTERNET USERS GROWTH

The number of local households using the Internet in 2017 increased by 1,200 year-on-year to 168,800

P5



EX-FRENCH PRESIDENT SARKOZY ARRESTED

P15



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS

AP PHOTO



JAPAN Thirteen Japanese cult members may be sent to the gallows any day now for a deadly 1995 gas attack on the Tokyo subway system and other crimes. But when is uncertain. Such is the secrecy that surrounds Japan's death penalty system. More on p12

VIETNAM A court in Hanoi has begun a criminal trial of a former Politburo member accused of mismanagement at state oil giant PetroVietnam that cost millions of dollars.

AP PHOTO



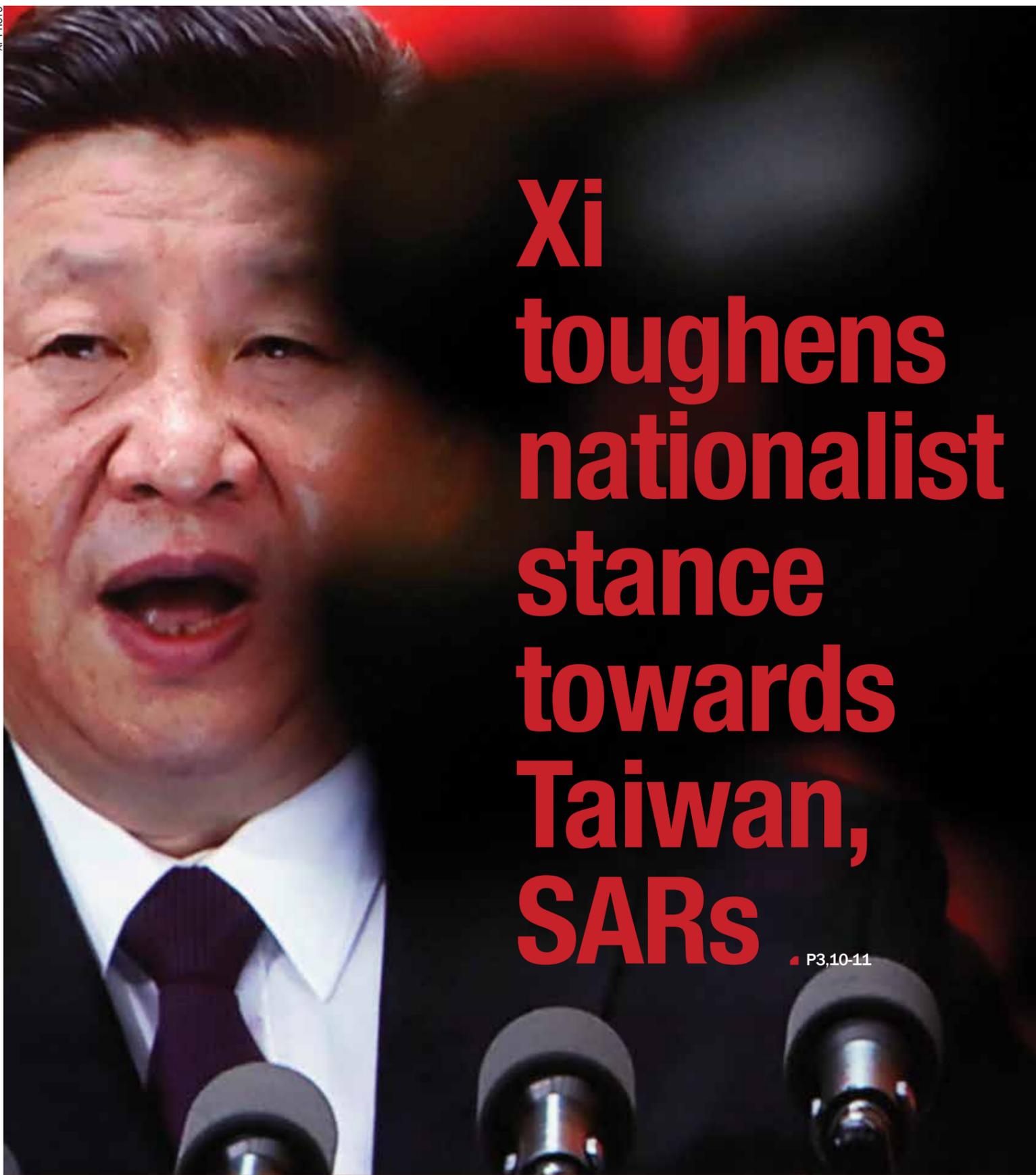
PHILIPPINES The Philippines' decision to leave the International Criminal Court will not derail an on-going preliminary probe into possible crimes committed during Manila's war on drugs, the court said yesterday in its first reaction to the Asian nation's withdrawal.

PAKISTAN is still mulling Afghanistan's recent overtures, including an invitation that Pakistani prime minister visit Kabul — an offer that analysts see as a good sign.

TURKEY has accused a senior U.N. official of lacking impartiality and collaborating with terrorists over a new report that called on the country to end a state of emergency imposed after a 2016 failed coup attempt.

More on backpage

AP PHOTO



Xi toughens nationalist stance towards Taiwan, SARs

P3,10-11

13-year-old Hong Kong student hired to sell drugs in Macau

P2 CRIME

AP PHOTO



Suspect Vietnamese Doan Thi Huong

KIM JONG NAM MURDER TRIAL

Lawyer says suspect thought smearing face was prank

A Vietnamese woman accused of killing the North Korean leader's estranged half brother told police she realized she had been used to murder him after she was detained, her lawyer said yesterday.

Doan Thi Huong and co-defendant Siti Aisyah from Indonesia were charged with murdering Kim Jong Nam at Kuala Lumpur's airport on Feb. 13 last year. The two are the only suspects

in custody, though prosecutors have said four North Koreans who fled the country were also involved.

The court heard earlier that Huong told police after she was detained last year that she was recruited by a Korean man known as Mr. Y in a Hanoi bar in December 2016. Mr. Y has been identified in court as Ri Ji Hyon, one of the four North Korean suspects who fled Malaysia.

Yesterday, the court heard that Huong thought she was playing a harmless prank for a hidden camera show and only knew Kim was dead after police told her. Her lawyer, Hisyam Teh Poh Teik, said Huong told police that Mr. Y put an oily substance on her hands and told her to rub her hands together before smearing it on Kim's face, but that she didn't know it was VX nerve agent.

Huong said she didn't think the substance was poisonous because it didn't burn her skin and she wasn't sickened by it, Teh said.

She told police Mr. Y didn't ask her to wash her hands or keep her hands away from her body but that she did so on her own because the substance was oily, smelly and felt uncomfortable, Teh said. She went to a restroom on another floor to wash her hands because Mr. Y had told

her to leave the scene immediately after the prank, he said.

The court heard that Huong was told by Mr. Y that the video on Feb. 13 would be important because it would be uploaded on YouTube. She told police she wasn't able to contact Mr. Y after that. She returned to the airport two days later to carry out another prank but there was no sign of Mr. Y and she was detained at the airport.

"He is liar. He used me to do video on 13/02/2017 for him," she said in her police statement, read out by Teh.

Huong told police she was given Johnson's baby cream for a similar prank at the airport two days before the attack on Kim, and didn't wash it off.

Teh was cross-examining chief police investigator Wan Azirul Nizam Che Wan Aziz, who disagreed with the lawyer's assertion that Huong was tricked into carrying out the killing and was a scapegoat. He agreed however that Huong, who entered Malaysia on Feb 4, could have fled the country and disposed of her VX-tainted clothing if she had known she was given VX to kill Kim.

Teh told the court that instead, Huong had a flight ticket to return to Hanoi on Feb 23.

Teh also presented a video clip obtained from Vietnamese police showing Huong playing a prank at Hanoi's airport on Feb. 2 last year and being paid USD100 for it. He told reporters that the target, a Vietnamese civil servant, was willing to come to Malaysia to testify if needed.

The trial is to resume today. AP

CRIME

13-year-old HK student hired to sell drugs in Macau

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) reported yesterday that a 13-year-old female student from Hong Kong was used to transport drugs to Macau, setting a new record for the youngest drug trafficking suspect in the MSAR since 2015.

Another two Hong Kong residents, aged 18 and 19 years old, have also been arrested. The 19-year-old is a student.

The PJ said it received a tip that a few Hong Kong residents were selling drugs in Macau. The investigative

police subsequently arrested an 18-year-old male Hong Kong resident near Rua dos Pescadores on Monday.

The police found cocaine in the suspect's underwear and in his hotel room at NAPE. They also discovered that the suspect, who is unemployed, was planning to sell the drugs to another two Hong Kong residents.

The PJ later detained the two other suspects at the Macau Ferry Terminal and discovered drugs underneath the 13-year-old girl's clothes.

During the operation, the PJ seized approximately 60 grams of cocaine, which is worth approximately MOP190,000 on the black market.

The 19-year-old male Hong Kong student said in his confession that the trio had been hired by criminal groups to bring drugs to Macau for sale.

The girl was paid MOP3,000 for selling the drugs, while the other two received MOP500 for supervising and accompanying her.

Guangdong reports new incident at nuclear power plant

THE Guangdong nuclear emergency committee issued a notice to the Unitary Police Service (SPU) about an operational incident at the Daya Bay nuclear power plant on Monday, according to a statement released by the SPU.

A unit short-circuited and automatically shut down when one of the plant's vapor generator protection sys-

tems was activated, it was reported.

According to the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale, which is measured over seven levels, the incident was classified as 'Below Scale', or 'Level 0'.

The 'Level 0' status indicates that there were no injuries, as well as no instances of environmental damage or safety violations.

Earlier this month, Guangdong issued a notice to Macau regarding another 'Level 0' incident at Yangjiang nuclear power plant Unit 1. During a planned maintenance session on March 6, staff accidentally triggered an alarm in the monitoring system while clearing a system blockage. The system was immediately overridden to prevent confusion.

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Xi vows to boost patriotism of HK and Macau residents

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping pledged to strengthen the national identity and patriotism of the people of Hong Kong and Macau during his closing speech for the National People's Congress' annual session.

In his 37-minute speech, the president also vowed to support the two SARs' integration into national development strategies for the Greater Bay Area project.

"We will comprehensively and accurately implement the principles of 'one country, two systems', 'Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong', 'Macau people governing Macau' and 'high degree of autonomy'," Xi said.

"[We will] strictly follow the constitution and the Basic Law, and support the SAR governments and chief executives in proactive governance in accordance with the law," he added.

The Chinese president said the country would foster "greater patriotism" and a "stronger sense of national identity" among the people of Hong Kong and Macau, in line with his promises in the 19th congress.

"[We will] support Hong Kong and Macau [by] integrating [them] into the country's development strategies, strengthen the national identity and patriotism of compatriots [in the two cities], and maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and Macau."

In a press conference, Premier



Delegates of CPPCC cross a road in front of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing

Li Keqiang said that Beijing would observe the "one country, two systems" policy when implementing the Bay Area plan.

"There can be mutually beneficial cooperation and common development between us and other countries, not to mention among Hong Kong, Macau and

the mainland, which belong to the same country under the 'one country, two systems' principle."

Li said that the Greater Bay Area cannot become "world-class and be competitive internationally" unless Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau join forces and draw on each other's unique yet complementary

strengths.

"We have confidence that these three areas will draw upon each other's comparative strengths and work together in building a new and strong area of growth," he added.

The premier reiterated Xi's stance that the central government will respect the autonomy of Hong Kong and Macau.

Xi vowed to support the two SARs' integration into national development strategies

CHINA TO UNVEIL PLANS FOR GREATER BAY AREA

PREMIER LI Keqiang yesterday announced that China will soon unveil and implement a plan for building the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area to promote regional development. Details of the plan are currently being formulated

and will be announced in due course. Li said the plan will progressively grant Hong Kong and Macau residents equal access to housing, education and transportation while living and working in the mainland, especially while in Guangdong.

Chui downplays illegal occupation of Hac Sa land

CHIEF Executive Chui Sai On downplayed the illegal occupation of a land plot at Hac Sa, Coloane, when questioned by journalists at the local airport on Monday.

"I cannot agree [...] that the illegal land occupation issue in Coloane is serious," Chui said.

He confirmed that he had received reports about the issue and said that he would instruct the relevant department to work on the case, adding that the Secretary for Transport and Public Works would have the final word.

The illegal occupation and engineering



works on state-owned land near the Tai Wong Temple – including the reclamation of a nearby lake – was revealed in a news report by Macau Asia Satellite Television (MASTV) last month. Earlier this month,

lawmakers Ella Lei and Leong Sun Iok organized a press conference at the village to denounce the case.

Chui emphasized that the government would crack down on any illegal land occupation or

illegal use of state-owned lands.

Chui's office issued a statement late on Monday night that the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) has been making constant efforts to com-

bat illegal engineering works and illegal occupations of state-owned lands, and pledged to punish those who do not obey land law.

"Several processes were conducted regarding lake reclamation and the destruction of a green space in Hac Sa village," the statement reads.

The bureau said it was on record that the land had been occupied by construction machines, containers, and engineering debris.

However, an unlicensed project was found to be under development at the beginning of this year, with the land undergoing unauthorized expansion.

DSSOPT added that the parties involved would be required to leave and restore the land's original status. **JZ**

Ho: Visits during legislature meetings useless

LEGISLATIVE Assembly (AL) president Ho Iat Seng said that it was improper for local officials to meet their central government counterparts in Beijing during the annual sessions of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in March.

Ho was speaking on Monday on the sidelines of the annual legislature meetings in Beijing.

The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam, as well as several officials under his portfolio, went to Beijing on March 8 and 9. They visited a number of the central government's senior officials, including Education Minister Chen Baosheng and Culture Minister Luo Shugang.

When asked by the media as to what he thought about secretaries from Macau visiting Beijing during the NPC and CPPCC meetings, Ho expressed his doubts that Macau government officials could achieve anything "concrete" by meeting their counterparts in the central government during the "two sessions".

He said that senior officials working in the central government's ministries and commissions were busy attending or preparing for various events – such as meetings with delegations from provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, as well as the two SARs and Taiwan – apart from plenary meetings.

"Officials of ministries and commissions have been very busy lately. They [Macau officials] ended up visiting ministry and commission officials merely for the sake of doing so. The local government did not obtain concrete achievements from the visits [to the ministry and commissions]," Ho said, as quoted by Macau News.

Ho also claimed that the governors of provinces and the secretaries of the various provincial committees of the Communist Party of China (CPC) have been told not to visit ministries and commissions during the "two sessions" as "[the central government] doesn't want them to disturb ministry and commission officials, [thereby] preventing them from addressing and tackling issues raised by NPC deputies."

Reacting to Ho's comments, Alexis Tam has stated yesterday that he traveled to Beijing following an invitation by Central Government authorities.

Writer presents a short glimpse of Macau's piracy history

Julie Zhu

ROBERT Antony, a former history professor at the University of Macau and one of this year's speakers at the Macau Literary Festival, offered the audience a chance to learn about Macau's piracy history.

Robert Antony's talk last week at the Old Court Building included in a session titled "River Cities Crossing Borders: History & Strategies," which was curated by architect Maria José de Freitas, and, among other subjects, focused on Macau's piracy stories. The history professor remarked that Macau had an "intimate relationship with piracy."

According to the author, piracy in and around Macau a century ago was on a "small scale" and consisted of "small games."

"We can say that, although, very often, when we think of pirates, we think about gangs, instead of pirate skills. [...] The second thing is that most of the pirates were very poor, [...] they were mostly fishermen and often sailors, and often unemployed," Antony noted.



Robert Antony

Not only Chinese pirates existed in Macau, many foreigners also partook in piracy. The history professor noted that "Macau's founding by the Portuguese has something to do with the pirates."

According to Antony's explanation, the Portuguese came to Macau, "where supposedly, they took down the pirates in this area and were rewarded to some

extent. The Chinese government granted them access, allowing them to live there, in Macau."

"What is for certain is that pirates had an intimate relationship with Macau's history and with the development of Macau, as a river city, as a port city," Antony stated, elaborating that one of the major reasons for this was Macau's geography.

"We can think of this area

[Coloane, Hengqin, Taipa, and other islands] as a veritable maritime frontier, although the Chinese government claimed that many of these areas belonged to it. The Portuguese also had claims for some of these areas. The truth is that neither the Portuguese nor the Chinese government had really any control of these outer islands along the coast. In many areas, these

were no man's lands," explained Antony.

"There was also always an issue of sovereignty relating to these islands, such as Coloane," Antony pointed out, as it was unclear whether the islands belonged to the Chinese or the Portuguese.

Pirates had an intimate relationship with Macau's history.

ROBERT ANTONY

According to him, Macau's pirates were mostly young people in their 20s or 30s. The reality of their situations indeed is something from which the public today can learn.

"Macau has an interesting setting. It can harmonize the east and the west, but there is also, I would say, a dark side to Macau's history, and pirates represent the other side of Macau history when we read about Macau," Antony commented.

In the end, Antony remarked that "although piracy disappeared in this area, we can still see that they live in legends, stories, and in books."

ARTS

Swiss design featured in local exhibition

THE exhibition "Swiss Style Now", will be opened on Friday at 6.30 p.m. at the Tap Seac Gallery.

A statement issued yesterday by the Cultural Affairs Bureau stresses that Swiss design played a pioneering role in the field of graphic design from as early as the 1950s and 1960s, with its singular style which used innovative layouts and fonts, vivid colors and simple geometric lines, gradually becoming popular around the world.

Organized by three Swiss curators, the exhibition is divided in two sections, "Classic" and "Contemporary", and features a total of 250 works from different generations. It covers graphic designs of posters and book covers, among others, which systematically illustrate the development and evolution of the Swiss graphic design. In addition to the



originality of the design, the material and craftsmanship of the work fully demonstrate the ingenuity of the designers. The curators hope to present the audience with a new

spectrum of contemporary Swiss graphic design through the exhibition.

The exhibition "Swiss Style Now" will be held until 17 June. Admission is free.

Almost 30,000 students registered for school supplies subsidies

SINCE February 13, around 30,000 Macau students have registered to receive the annual subsidy granted by the government for the acquisition of school supplies, the Tertiary Education Services Office (GAES) has informed in a statement.

According to the statement, the proportion of registered local students in Macau has a bigger incidence compared to those studying abroad (14,775). Students who meet the necessary requirements and register by March 31 will be each granted MOP 3,000 by the GAES.

The office urges students who qualify for the grant to register as soon as possible. According to the data provided by the GAES, from the almost 15,000 studying abroad, almost half are studying in universities in mainland China (7,086), followed by institutions in Taiwan (4,370) and then Hong



Kong (1,472). The UK comes next on the preferences of Macau students with a total of 849 students registered. Australia and the USA have 537 and 506 students respectively, and there are 286 students from Macau studying in Portuguese universities. Most of the students, from both local and overseas universities who are registered currently (23,048), are in licentiate degrees, and there are 3,000 students studying Mas-

ters degrees registered. The GAES also reiterated that the subsidy would be attributed in one single installment issued by the Financial Services Bureau within 60 days from the application deadline. Students who have already registered, can check their application status at any time by entering their access code given at the time of registration on the website. In addition, GAES will inform the registered students, by e-mail and SMS, of the result of the application.

INTERNET

Survey reveals increase in broadband penetration

THE number of local households using the Internet in 2017 increased by 1,200 year-on-year to 168,800, accounting for 88.1 percent of all households.



BLOOMBERG

According to a survey on information technology usage conducted in the fourth quarter of 2017 and released yesterday by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), households using fiber optic broadband connections kept rising, up by 35.7 percent year-on-year to 105,700.

This made up 62.6 percent of all households using the Internet, and thus led to a 30.8 percent decline in the number of households

using fixed broadband connections (49,300).

Internet users aged 3 and above totaled 513,600, up by 2.7 percent year-on-year. The Internet penetration rate for members of the population aged 35 to 44 and 25 to 34 reached 97.6 percent and 97.4 percent, respectively, sixty percent of the population aged 55 and above

used the Internet, an increase of 9.8 percentage points. Regarding the frequency of Internet use, 94.4 percent of Internet users reported daily use, up by 5.6 percentage points year-on-year.

60pct of the population aged 55 and above use the Internet

Most of those surveyed reported that they use the Internet for communication (93.7 percent) and online entertainment (81.4 percent) purposes, up by 2.2 and 4.8 percentage points respectively year-on-year.

Regarding e-commerce, online shoppers rose by 16 percent to 87,900. Median spending on online shopping in the fourth quarter of 2017 held steady year-on-year at MOP1,000, of which median spending on Travel Services increased by 15 percent to MOP5,750.

Macanese community organizes carnival party

THE annual Macanese mask party will once again happen at the D. Jose da Costa Nunes Kindergarten old building on April 14.

A joint initiative between the Macanese Association (ADM) and the Confraria da Gastronomia Macaense (CGM), the organizers promise to combine great enthusiasm, great music and traditional food at the traditional masquerade ball.

The purpose of the event will be to revive the traditions of the Macanese community. This will be done by having the Micareme, a celebration that happens every year ahead of Easter.

In addition to the ball, there will be a masquerade competition to be held in three categories (Groups, Individuals and Children). The children category will be open to children from 4 to 16 years of age. Prizes

of MOP8,000, MOP5,000 and MOP3,000 will be awarded for first, second and third in the groups category respectively, MOP3,000, MOP2,000 and MOP1,000 for the individual category and MOP1,000 for the best three entries in the children's category.

The competition rules will be available at ADM and CGM, as well as on ADM's Facebook page.

The organizers have said they hope happiness will preside over the entire event, and that the values of artistic creativity, originality and humor, will be embraced by all participants in the contest in their costume choices.

Tickets for the event will cost MOP250 for adults and MOP150 for children, including food and drinks, and will be available at the headquarters of ADM and CGM, starting March 28.

90 PERCENT HAVE MOBILE PHONE

MOBILE PHONE users edged down by 0.1 percent year-on-year to 561,000; mobile phone penetration rate was 90.9 percent, down by 0.8 percentage points. The proportion of Internet users using a mobile phone to access the Internet (91.5 percent) decreased by 0.4 percentage

points year-on-year. The proportion of households with computer equipment fell by 2.1 percentage points year-on-year to 75.8 percent (145,100 households), which DSEC attributes to "the greater variety of functions available on mobile phones and other devices."

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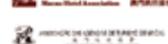
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15:30 – 17:00 (Food and Beverage industry)
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MACAU JOCKEY CLUB

Gov't unable to account for missing revenues in ledger

THE Government Spokesperson's Office has denied reports made by Radio Macau that the Macau Jockey Club (MJC) has not paid its rent for the concession since 2009, arguing that the horseracing company has been paying according to the expected timeframe.

However, the authorities were unable to answer queries as to why the official records show no such payments have been made.

Citing the Macau SAR Budget Execution Reports, which detail the expected and actual revenues collected by the government, Radio Macau reported on Sunday that the MJC has not been paying the rent for its concession.

However, according to the Government Spokesperson's Office, the Finance Bureau has confirmed that the company has not missed any of its payments.

The official records show that, in 2016, the Macau SAR Budget Execution Report makes no mention



– for the first time – of an expected collection of rent income from the concessionaire.

From 2012 to 2015, the budget reports note an expected revenue of MOP12.5 million per year from the MJC, however the actual revenue amounted to zero patacas in each year.

The government says it is also demanding "other fees due" and that the MJC has since 2015 been paying "annually a fixed amount." This could not be verified as, according to Radio Macau, the income is not recorded in public documents.

In a statement issued yesterday by the government, the Finance Bureau denied that the company was behind on its payments. It could not explain why the records show that no actual revenue was collected by the government and refused to comment further on the matter.

The government recently approved an extension of the horse racing concession until August 2042 on the basis of a commitment from the company to invest at least MOP1.5 billion on improving its facilities and developing non-gaming activities.

Restaurants, retailers saw poor business in January

THE proportion of interviewed restaurants and retailers showing year-on-year growth in revenue in January 2018 fell considerably compared to the year-on-year growth seen in the previous month, according to new information released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). This was attributed to the fact that the Chinese Lunar New Year fell in January in 2017 and in February this year.

According to DSEC, among the interviewed restaurants, 31 percent registered a year-on-year rise in revenue in January, which is down by 13 percentage points from those who noted a rise in December 2017. Moreover, the corresponding proportion among Chinese restaurants plunged by 50 percentage points to just 9 percent.

Worse still, the share of restaurants recording a year-on-year decline in revenue for January grew by 24 percentage points over the previous month to 56 percent.

The proportion of interviewed retail traders reporting a year-on-year sales increase in January fell by 13 percentage points from December to 48 percent.

Some 37 percent of the interviewed retailers registered a year-on-year sales decline, up by 14 percentage points from December 2017.

In January, establishments in the restaurant sector were more optimistic about their business prospects for the following month, February. Some 24 percent anticipated a year-on-year rise in revenue, up by 9 percentage points from January.

Meanwhile, 24 percent of the interviewed retailers anticipated a year-on-year sales decline, down by 4 percentage points from January.

The assessment is derived from a business climate survey that samples both the restaurant and retail sectors, with participants' revenue accounting for 53 percent and 70 percent of their respective industries.

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Ryanair buys Niki Lauda Airline in rare foray into dealmaking

Richard Weiss

RYANAIR Holdings Plc agreed to buy an Austrian airline from former Formula One motor-racing champion Niki Lauda, only the second acquisition in the Irish carrier's history.

The low-cost giant will pay Lauda less than 50 million euros (USD61.7 million) for a majority stake in LaudaMotion, which retook control of carrier Niki just two months ago following the insolvency of Air Berlin. The aviation entrepreneur paid about the same for the whole airline as Ryanair plans to spend on a 75 percent stake in the holding company.

The deal is Ryanair's first since it bought the U.K.'s Buzz from KLM in 2003, only to close the carrier down a year later. Since then it's tried and failed to take over fellow Irish airline Aer Lingus and last year was a potential bidder for Air Berlin, before pulling out of an auction it claimed was rigged in favor of Deutsche Lufthansa AG.



Lauda will become chairman of LaudaMotion and will oversee the rebuilding of Niki, Ryanair said in a statement yesterday. The Dublin-based company will provide an additional 50 million euros in funds to get the carrier up and running, alongside management support and six aircraft. The airline's fleet will grow to at least 30 and it should reach profitability by the third year of operations, Ryanair said.

Ryanair will initially buy almost

25 percent of LaudaMotion, with a plan to increase ownership to 75 percent over time. Taking control of a majority stake requires approval by the European Union.

An initial sale of Niki to British Airways' parent IAG SA late last year fell apart due to a conflict over court jurisdictions. IAG is instead planning to make Vienna a hub for Vueling Airlines SA, while Ryanair rival Wizz Air is also investing in the Austrian capital. **Bloomberg**

US

Leagues, casinos lobby states for cut of legal sports bets

WITH the Supreme Court poised to rule on a case that could end the federal ban on sports gambling, more than a third of U.S. states are considering legislation to get in on the action, and professional leagues and casino interests are lobbying against each other for the biggest cut of the winnings.

The push to legalize betting on sports has already led to fractures in an uneasy alliance that had developed between leagues and gambling legalization advocates before Supreme Court arguments last fall.

The NBA and Major League Baseball have been asking states to give them 1 percent of the total amount wagered on their games, calling it an "integrity fee" so they can protect their products and snuff out attempts at cheating and game-fixing.

"Now, let's be clear — that's just a euphemism for a cut of the action," Joe Asher, CEO of William Hill U.S., a sports

book operator, told New York state lawmakers in January. "There will be plenty of financial benefits to the leagues."

Gambling proponents say kicking back that much to the leagues would make sports books unprofitable and prevent a legal, regulated betting market from developing. They're seeking an arrangement similar to what exists in Nevada, where the state takes 6.75 percent of winnings on top of a federal tax of 0.25 percent of the amount wagered.

Casinos have a built-in edge when it comes to battling in statehouses. Casinos are legal in 40 states; the commercial companies and American Indian tribes that run them are well-versed in dealing with regulators and state lawmakers. The NBA and MLB, on the other hand, are new to lobbying states on gambling and have sometimes relied upon the bully pulpit of their commissioners to get their point across. **AP**

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China's largest construction group opens an office in Portugal

THE China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC), one of China's largest construction companies, has started preparing to open an office in Portugal.

According to weekly newspaper Macau Business, the CSCEC's objective is to create conditions to participate in infrastructure development projects in Portugal.

The Macau weekly reported that in Portugal the company will be named CSCEC-China Construction Portugal. At the end of this month a delegation from the Chinese company will go to Portugal to deal with the process of installing the office in Lisbon.

Macau Business said that the company's managers will be staff currently based in Macau and Hong Kong.

CSCEC built the Macau Tower, which was inaugurated in 2001, and is linked to a number of construction projects of the Macau government, namely the future light railway, and the private sector with the Galaxy, Wynn, MGM and City of Dreams casino groups and hotel complexes. CSCEC joins an already large group of Chinese companies present in Portugal.

China Three Gorges has a stake in Portuguese power company EDP, Fosun has a stake in the country's largest private bank BCP, insurer Fidelidade and healthcare provider Luz Saúde, State Grid has a stake in power grid company REN and the HNA group has a stake in national airline TAP. CEFC China Energy has expressed interest in mutual bank Montepio's insurance arm and in the purchase of Partex, the oil business of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. **MDT/Macauhub**



CSCEC built the Macau Tower, which was inaugurated in 2001

MOZAMBIQUE

Work at the port of Maputo will increase cargo handling capacity

THE cargo handled at the port of Maputo will increase by 1.5 million tons per year from December 2019, when work that is now underway to refurbish and modernize four docks is complete.

The Mozambican capital's port can handle 25 million tons of cargo per year, and in their current condition docks 7, 8 and 9 handle 1.8 million tons per year. Dock 6 is virtually inoperative, serving only to accommodate vessels in need of technical assistance.

The rehabilitation work was awarded to Portuguese construction company Mota-Engil by the port's concession holder the Maputo Port Development Company (MPDC) and will cost USD64 million.

Paulo Mata, the project manager, said that the work on dock number 9 will be

the first to be completed, in February 2019.

The project also involved dredging, with a view to increasing the depth of the dock from 12 to 15 meters, reinforcing the dock's piers, as well as demolishing a number of warehouses on that dock and the others covered by the project.

The work along the 536 meter length of docks 7, 8 and 9, will continue until December including increasing their depth from 12 to 16 meters, installing new stakes and improving the pavement.

At the end of 2017, the general dredging of the port's access channel was completed, which allowed a 22 percent increase in the volume of cargo handled, reaching 18.2 million tons in 2017 compared to 14.9 million tons in 2016. **MDT/Macauhub**

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11 sessões/sessions
início/starts: 11/04/2018
fim/finishes: 20/06/2018
propina/fee:
sócios/members MOP 330
não sócios/non members MOP530

Turma B
8 - 13 anos/years old
Sextas/Fridays
16h30 - 18h00
11 sessões/sessions
início/starts: 13/04/2018
fim/finishes: 22/06/2018
propina/fee:
sócios/members MOP 330
não sócios/non members MOP530

local/venue:
Anim'Arte Nam Van - Lagos Nam Van

língua/language:
Português e Inglês/Portuguese and English

número máximo de participantes/maximum number of participants:
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AP PHOTO

President Xi Jinping vowed to protect "every inch" of China's territory

Gillian Wong & Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping vowed to protect "every inch" of China's territory, improve the lives of its people and promote the resurgence of Chinese culture and creativity as he kicked off his second term,

poised to rule indefinitely.

Xi, China's most powerful leader in decades, sounded a stark warning clearly directed at the government of self-ruled Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its territory, and advocates of independence in Hong Kong.

"Every inch of our great motherland absolutely cannot and abso-

lutely will not be separated from China," Xi declared in his speech before the nearly 3,000 members of the National People's Congress.

"All acts and tricks to split the motherland are doomed to failure and will be condemned by the people and punished by history!" he said.

Xi is set to shape the country's fu-

NPC

Emboldened Xi lay

ture for the coming decades after the historic legislative session that closed yesterday abolished presidential term limits to allow him to rule for as long as he wants.

As an indication of what is to come, Xi stressed the absolute leadership of the ruling Communist Party — of which he is head — in all aspects of Chinese life. That authority is central to Xi's vision of a confident, rising China with him at the helm to tackle thorny challenges that include slowing growth, risky excessive borrowing, a possible trade war, tensions with rival Taiwan and other challenges.

Xi said the mainland would continue to promote "peaceful unification" with Taiwan. The island's 23 million residents are strongly in favor of maintaining their de-facto independent status but Xi has previously warned a Taiwanese envoy that the issue of unification cannot be put off indefinitely.

Now that he has made it possible to be president-for-life, Xi seems determined to bring Taiwan under Beijing's control during his time in office, something that would place

him in the history books alongside Mao Zedong, said Willy Lam, an expert in Chinese politics at the Chinese University in Hong Kong.

That increases the potential for provocative, dangerous actions, he said, possibly drawing in the U.S. which is legally bound to respond to threats against Taiwan.

"Xi is consumed by hubris," he said. "Now that he's made himself emperor-for-life, he might be feeling impregnable on the foreign policy front and this is very dangerous."

Xi's hard line remarks might have been prompted by President Donald Trump's signing of a law on Friday that encourages expanded contacts between officials from Washington and Taiwan, Lam added. China has officially protested the law, saying it violates U.S. commitments not to restore direct official contacts with Taiwan that were severed when Washington switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979.

China's longer-than-usual, 16-day legislative session had earlier

NPC IMAGERY

China governed from the shadows and silhouettes

CHINESE politics in the main is carried out in the shadows, shielded from public scrutiny and producing pre-determined outcomes through a process termed democracy according to socialism with Chinese characteristics.

China's rubber-stamp legislature, the National People's Congress, is no different, with the nearly 3,000 delegates unflinchingly voting according to the program handed down to them by the Communist Party leadership.

This year's session saw the approval of constitutional amendments allowing President Xi Jinping to continue in office for an unlimited number of terms and reappointing him as head of state by a margin of 2,970 to none.

More than ever, the rank and file of the one-party authoritarian state appear as faceless cogs and silhouettes in the wheel of governance, devoid of personal views that might clash with the leadership's and content to serve a regime that has delivered relative prosperity and political stability to China for four decades. AP

AP PHOTO



Xi's out vision for China, warning for Taiwan

approved a range of new appointments, including that of key Xi ally Wang Qishan as vice president. New ministers were also appointed and a law passed establishing a powerful new anti-corruption body to oversee the party and civil service.

In his address, Xi said China would promote "high-quality" development that values innovation over the speed of growth.

Xi also invoked China's historical achievements in governance and culture and stressed the importance of national unity in working to reduce poverty.

Xi pledged to expand the Belt and Road, his signature foreign policy initiative of building ports, bridges and railways connecting Europe with Asia — but in an apparent response to the project's critics, said China wasn't seeking hegemony.

"Only those who habitually threaten others will look at everyone else as threats," he added.

This year's session has been dominated by the rubber-stamp body's historic move on March 11 to

scrap a constitutional two-term limit on the presidency dating from 1982, enabling Xi to rule indefinitely.

While delegates overwhelmingly supported the move, critics and some analysts say it raises concerns about a return to one-man-rule — and greater political repression.

"There is a distinct danger now that there may well be a return

All acts and tricks to split the motherland are doomed to failure and will be condemned by the people and punished by history!

XI JINPING

to the Maoist style of leadership symbolized by the dissolution of collective responsibility and the concentration of power under one person," said Joseph Cheng, a long-time observer of Chinese politics now retired from the City University of Hong Kong.

The broad strokes of what Xi plans to do with these expanded powers were laid down over the weekend as he moved to appoint his trusted allies into key positions that appear, in part, set to further sideline Li, officially China's No. 2 leader.

One of them is Wang, reportedly an early acquaintance of Xi's and former anti-corruption czar who is expected to play a key role in managing trade tensions with the United States. The vice presidency is normally a ceremonial post but Wang's real standing can be seen in official events in which he is seated in eighth place in hierarchical order after the seven-man, all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee.

Another is longtime Xi adviser Liu He, who was appointed as one

of four vice premiers and is expected to oversee a broad range of economic and financial issues.

Premier Li Keqiang, in a briefing with reporters, promised to fully open manufacturing industries to foreign competitors and said China doesn't want to see a "trade war" with the United States. He made no mention of a possible Chinese response to any increase in U.S. import controls.

Beijing faces mounting pressure from Trump over complaints it hampers access to its markets, pressures foreign companies to

hand over technology and is flooding foreign markets with unfairly low-priced steel and other goods.

Chief among Xi's priorities is controlling financial risk without derailing the economy. Regulators have been warning about ballooning debt that caused international ratings agencies to cut China's credit rating last year.

"He knows that if there's a financial crisis it will damage his credibility and legitimacy very much because he has no one else to blame," Cheng said. "People will blame him." AP

TAIWAN WON'T BE AFFECTED BY BEIJING INTERFERENCE

A TAIWANESE official rejects comments by Chinese President Xi Jinping about Taiwan's future and welcomed a U.S. law encouraging more official exchanges between Washington and Taipei. Foreign ministry spokesman Andrew Lee said yesterday that Taiwan will continue to play an important role in regional peace and won't

be affected by interference from Beijing. Lee said, "We further hope to act even more actively in peaceful regional development and stability as well as prosperity." Lee said the signing of the Taiwan Travel Act is a proof of Washington's strong determination to strengthen its relations with Taiwan.

NPC

Premier appeals to US to 'act rationally' over trade

Joe McDonald, Beijing

CHINESE Premier Li Keqiang appealed to Washington to "act rationally" and avoid disrupting trade over steel, technology and other disputes. He promised Beijing will "open even wider" to imports and investment.

"No one will emerge a winner from a trade war," said Li, the No. 2 Chinese leader, at a news conference held during the meeting of China's ceremonial legislature.

Li made no mention of a possible Chinese response in the event U.S. President Donald Trump raises import barriers over trade complaints against Beijing, but other officials say President Xi Jinping's government is ready to act.

Trump's government already has raised import duties on Chinese-made washing machines and other goods to offset what it says are improper subsidies and is investigating whether Beijing pressures foreign companies to hand over technology, which might lead to trade penalties. That has prompted fears of Chinese retaliation.

"What we hope is for us to act rationally rather than being led by emotions," said Li. "We don't want to see a trade war."

Commerce Minister Zhong Shan said on March 11 that China will "resolutely defend" its interests. He gave no details but business groups say Beijing might target U.S. exports of jetliners, soybeans and other goods for which China is a major market.

Asked whether Beijing might use its large holdings of U.S. government debt as leverage, the premier said its investments are based on market principles and "China will remain a responsible long-term investor."

Li promised more market-opening and other reforms as Xi's government tries to make its cooling, state-dominated economy more productive. He said Beijing will make it easier to start a business and will open more industries to foreign and private competition.

The ruling Communist Party promised in 2013 to give a bigger role to market forces and entrepreneurs who generate most of China's new jobs and wealth.

Reform advocates complain they are moving too slowly, but hope Xi, who took power in 2012, might accelerate changes after focusing during his first five-year term as party leader on cementing his status as China's most dominant figure since at least the 1980s.

"If there is one thing that will be different from the past, that will be that China will open even wider," said Li.

Beijing plans to "further bring down overall tariffs," with "zero tariffs for drugs, especially much-needed anti-cancer drugs," the premier said.

Li repeated a promise he made March 5 at the opening of the legislature to "fully open the manufacturing sector" to foreign competitors.

"We will also fully open the manufacturing sector," the premier said. "There will be no mandatory requirement for



AP PHOTO

technology transfers and intellectual property rights will be better protected."

The government has yet to say how that might change conditions for auto-makers and other manufacturers that are required to work through Chinese partners, which requires them to give technology to potential competitors.

In a sign of Li's reduced status as President Xi Jinping amasses power, the premier was flanked by eight newly promoted economic officials, in contrast to previous years when he appeared alone at the annual news conference.

They included Liu He, a Harvard-trained Xi adviser who was named a vice premier Monday and has told foreign businesspeople he will oversee economic reform. Neither Liu nor any of the other officials spoke at the event.

The premier traditionally is China's top economic official but Xi has stripped Li of his most prominent duties by appointing himself to lead ruling party bodies that oversee economic reform and finance policy. AP

JAPAN

Cult members could be hanged any day for subway attack

Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo

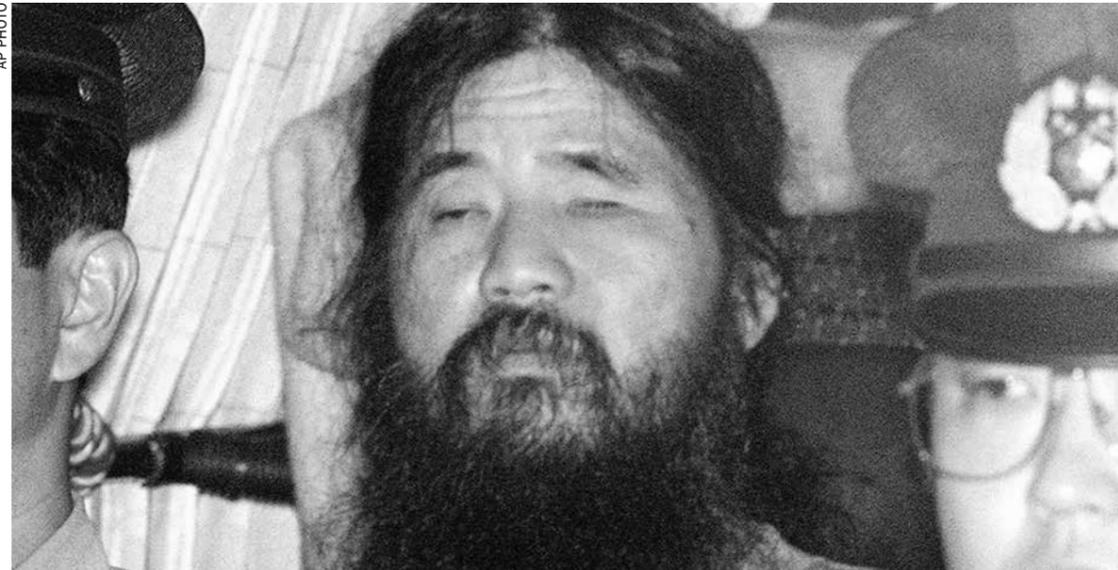
THIRTEEN Japanese cult members may be sent to the gallows any day now for a deadly 1995 gas attack on the Tokyo subway system and other crimes. But when is uncertain. Such is the secrecy that surrounds Japan's death penalty system.

Yesterday marked 23 years since members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult punctured plastic bags to release sarin nerve gas inside subway cars, killing 13 people and sickening thousands. Cult leader Shoko Asahara and a dozen followers were sentenced to death for that and other crimes that killed 27 in all. Their sentences date back as far as 20 years.

At 8 a.m. — around the time of the attack — uniformed subway employees lowered their heads in silence at Kasumigaseki station, a main target of the cult. Shizue Takahashi, the 71-year-old widow of an assistant stationmaster who died in the attack, and the current station master placed flowers on a temporary altar set up for offerings.

"It seems the [legal] process has entered a next stage," Takahashi told reporters. "I hope [executions] are carried out in accordance with the law."

The relocation of seven of the cult members to five detention centers outside of Tokyo last week has sparked speculation that executions could be immi-



In this Sept. 1995 file photo, cult leader Shoko Asahara sits in a police van following an interrogation in Tokyo

nent. In Japan, accomplices in a crime are customarily hanged on the same day. Ten of those on death row were convicted for the subway attack, a number beyond the Tokyo detention center's daily capacity.

As with all executions in Japan, when and where they will be killed isn't being released, even to family members and lawyers. The executions won't be announced until they have already happened.

Takahashi recently asked the Justice Ministry for a chance to meet the convicts and witness their executions. "I want to follow through to the very end," Takahashi said at a re-

cent news conference.

Her wish is unlikely to be granted.

Some survivors oppose the executions because [it] would eliminate hopes for a fuller explanation of the crimes

Even prisoners sent to the gallows are not notified until guards come to their cells in the morning. After a chat with a chaplain, a last bite or a smoke, the prisoner is taken to the gallows.

If all 10 subway attack convicts are hanged, it would be the second-largest number executed on a single day in Japan's modern history. On Jan. 24, 1911, Japan hanged 11 political prisoners who allegedly plotted to assassinate the emperor.

Some survivors of the cult's crimes oppose the executions because that would eliminate hopes for a fuller explanation of the crimes.

Asahara talked incoherently,

occasionally babbling in broken English, during his eight-year trial and never acknowledged his responsibility or offered meaningful explanations.

Born Chizuo Matsumoto, he has been on death row for nearly 14 years. His family says he is a broken man, constantly wetting and soiling the floor in his cell and not communicating with his family or lawyers.

His 34-year-old daughter, Rika Matsumoto, said he doesn't understand his punishment and needs treatment so he can recover and talk. "I just want to hear my father explain in his own words," she tweeted recently.

Some of the condemned have expressed regret and contributed to anti-terrorism measures. Shoko Egawa, a journalist who has covered the cult's crimes from early on, has proposed keeping them alive so they can provide lessons to a world facing the growing threat of extremism.

Experts on the cult also warn that if they are executed, the members would be glorified as martyrs by cult remnants, likely bolstering their worship of Asahara.

Founded in 1984, the group attracted many young people, even graduates of top universities, whom Asahara hand-picked as close aides.

The cult amassed an arsenal of chemical, biological and conventional weapons to carry out Asahara's escalating criminal orders in anticipation of an apocalyptic showdown with the government.

The cult claimed 10,000 members in Japan and 30,000 in Russia. It has disbanded, though nearly 2,000 people follow its rituals in three splinter groups, monitored by authorities. **AP**

Iraq recovers bodies of 38 Indians abducted by IS in 2014

Sinan Salaheddin, Baghdad

IRAQI authorities have discovered a mass grave with the bodies of 38 Indian construction workers abducted when Islamic State militants overran the northern city of Mosul in 2014, officials said yesterday.

The bodies were found buried near the village of Badush, northwest of Mosul, in an area that Iraqi forces recaptured last July.

The killing was a "heinous crime carried out by Daesh terrorist gangs," Iraqi official Najih Abdul-Amir al-Shimari told reporters. Daesh is the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

The people killed were

"citizens of the friendly Indian state. Their dignity was supposed to be protected, but the forces of evil wanted to defame the principles of Islam," said Najih, the head of Iraq's Martyrs Establishment, a government body dealing with people killed in the fight against the Islamic State group.

The abducted workers, most from northern India, had been employed by a construction company operating near Mosul when militants captured wide swaths of northern Iraq in the summer of 2014.

Relatives said they received panicked phone calls from some of the workers five days after Mosul was

captured, asking for help.

Around 10,000 Indians worked and lived in Iraq at that time.

Dozens of mass graves have been discovered in territory once held by the Islamic State group, though Iraq's government has only been able to examine a handful of them. Iraqi officials say they lack the resources and trained personnel to properly exhume so many sites.

At the height of their power, IS controlled nearly a third of the country.

After Iraq recaptured the area around Mosul, search operations led to a mound of dirt near Badush, where local residents said bodies had been buried by the IS, Indian foreign minis-

ter Sushma Swaraj said in Parliament.

Iraqi authorities used radar to verify that the mound was a mass grave, she said, and then exhumed the bodies. Indian authorities then sent DNA samples from relatives of the missing workers.

Forty Indians were captured by the militants, though one man managed to escape. Iraqi authorities said the mass grave held 39 bodies, but only 38 have been positively identified through DNA analysis. Analysis on the last body has not yet been completed, Swaraj said.

"It is indeed a moment of deep grief and sadness for us," India's ambassador to Iraq, Pradeep Singh Ra-



Relatives mourn holding a portrait of Gurcharan Singh, one of the 38 Indian workers whose bodies were found buried northwest of Mosul

jpurohit, told reporters in Baghdad. "India strongly condemns terrorism in all forms and manifestations and stands in solidarity with the government and the people of Iraq in their fight against terrorism."

He said the bodies will be sent back to India "in a couple of weeks or so."

Harjit Masih, the only Indian survivor, has long

said that the rest of the group had been killed. He said they had all been held for a number of days, then taken outside and ordered to kneel. Then the militants opened fire.

"They were killed in front of my eyes," he told reporters yesterday in his north Indian home village. He was shot in the thigh but managed to escape. **AP**



INDIA

Wildlife sanctuary sees jump in one-horned rhinos

A tiny wildlife sanctuary in northeastern India has reported a jump in the number of one-horned rhinoceroses.

All of the world's five rhino species are under threat from poachers who sell their horns on black markets, often in countries where rhino horn is believed to increase male potency.

A survey carried out Sunday at the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary showed 102 one-horned rhinos now living in the park, up from 93 during the last count, in 2012, said Pradipta Baruah, a forestry officer

who supervised the census.

"Our efforts at conserving the rhino have paid off," Baruah said by phone.

The reserve, which is just 38 square kilometers, is outside of the Assam state capital, Gauhati. India's Kaziranga National Park, also in Assam, is the main home of the one-horned rhino, with more than 2,000.

More than 20 rangers were involved in the count, traversing the park's forests, grasslands and wetlands on seven domesticated Asiatic elephants. AP

S. Korea K-Pop singers to perform in North

SOUTH Korea said yesterday it will send a 160-member artistic group to North Korea, including about 10 celebrated K-Pop singers, for rare concerts there.

The South Korean musical artists will visit Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, from March 31 to April 3 and give two performances, according to a joint statement issued after the two Koreas met at a border village.

The development comes during a thaw in the North Korean nuclear crisis. A North Korean band performed in South Korea during the recently ended Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

The South Korean delegation will include some of the country's pop legends, including Cho Yong-pil, Lee Sunhee and Cho Jin Hee, who performed in Pyongyang during a previous era of detente. Popular girl band Red Velvet is also among the South Korean groups, the statement said.

South Korea last sent a pop



singer to North Korea in 2005, according to Seoul's Unification Ministry.

During yesterday's talks, the two Koreas were unable to agree on which songs the South Korean singers will sing in Pyongyang, a potentially sensitive issue in a

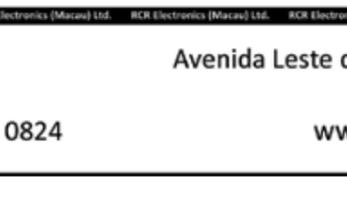
country where most citizens are blocked from accessing outside information. But South Korean delegates said they are optimistic an agreement can be reached, saying they will exchange letters via a cross-border communication channel. AP

AD



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RUSSIA-US

Trump hasn't called Putin and that's fine, Kremlin says. Really

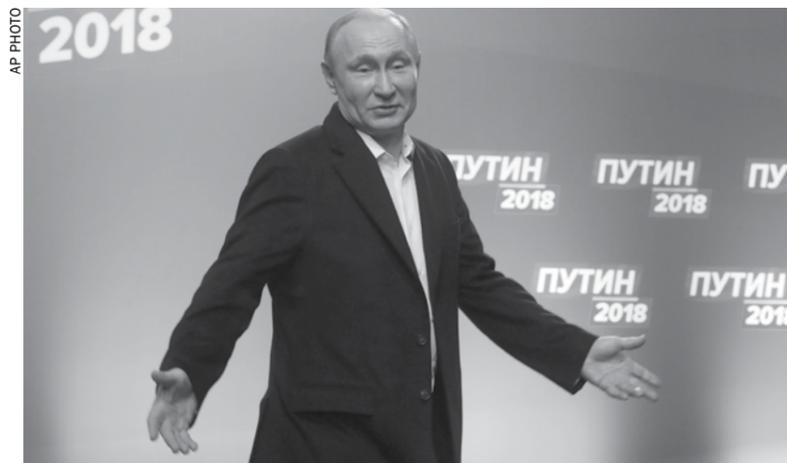
Ilya Arkhipov & Andrey Biryukov

VLADIMIR Putin isn't concerned that U.S. President Donald Trump hasn't called to congratulate him on his record victory in Russia's presidential elections, the Kremlin said.

"We should not consider this an unfriendly step" and Putin remains open to normalization of relations with the U.S. where it's in Russian interests, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call yesterday. "There's no need to exaggerate anything."

Hinting that there's still time for a telegram or call from the White House, Peskov added: "Tomorrow's another day." Many foreign leaders have already congratulated Putin since he won 77 percent of the vote in Sunday's election, while others couldn't call because they were too busy "or for other reasons," he said.

The White House said that Putin's re-election to a fourth term was unsurprising and that there



were no plans for Trump to make a congratulatory call.

There's been a mixed response from other world leaders.

The U.K. criticized the conduct of the election amid rising tensions after it blamed a nerve-agent attack on Russia, which denies involvement. While German Chancellor Angela Merkel did offer congratulations, French President Emmanuel Macron pointedly wished

success "to Russia and the Russian people" in a phone call with Putin, according to a statement from the Elysee Palace.

Putin received congratulations from Chinese President Xi Jinping, Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Japanese Premier Shinzo Abe and the leaders of most former Soviet republics, according to the Kremlin's website. **Bloomberg**

COLOMBIA

ISIS-linked suspect arrested in Bogota showed hate online

SPANISH police say the man suspected of plotting an ISIS-inspired attack in Colombia appeared on their radar for hate-filled messages online toward the United States, a country where he had lived and was allegedly trying to get to.

A Colombian judge jailed Raul Gutierrez last week on terrorism and conspiracy charges after the 45-year-old Cuban man had allegedly discussed his plans to attack a cafeteria in central Bogota popular with U.S. diplomats using homemade explosives.

On Telegram, an app for mobile and desktop computers that encrypts online exchanges, Gutierrez said that he would commit a suicide attack in the name of God and the Islamic state, police said.

The attack was initially planned for March 6 but was later rescheduled for March 13, according to two Spanish agents who

identified the alleged plot.

In order to carry out the plan, Gutierrez had sought work as a dishwasher in a coffee shop located in Bogota's "pink district," they said.

Gutierrez was arrested on March 12 by the Colombian police. The FBI was also part of the joint operation that, according to Spain's police, "successfully neutralized a real and imminent threat against civilians."

The investigators, who requested anonymity for security reasons, monitor online extremist activities in the general information office of the Spanish National Police.

They told The Associated Press that Gutierrez's animosity for the U.S. caught their attention during an intercepted conversation with other suspects.

"We tried to see where the seeds of that hate were rooted and to discover if those disparaging remarks disguised any other ide-



Police escort Cuban suspect Raul Gutierrez to court in Bogota

ology," one of the investigators told the AP. "That's when we came across his radicalization in an extreme form of Islam."

In over one month of communications, Gutierrez revealed himself as "highly radicalized," one of the agents said, adding that he allegedly adopted clothing and styles similar to militants in radical groups. Police said that he also added the word "jihadist" to his social media handle.

Because the case is open

and more arrests could be in the pipeline, the investigators said they couldn't confirm additional reports. But they suspected that Gutierrez's connections could extend all the way to territories in the Middle East controlled by the so-called Islamic State.

At a hearing last week in the western Colombian city of Pereira, the suspect said he had lived in the U.S. but is now fighting against American dominance in the "new world order" because "they are thieves and conquerors and killers."

Gutierrez, who had been expelled from Colombia twice before and was allegedly attempting to return to the U.S., also told reporters that despite his arrest the "seed has been planted."

"He meant that he might not be free to carry out an attack but others are," one of the Spanish investigators said. "That's why we need to be vigilant." **AP**



World's last male northern white rhino, Sudan, dies

The world's last male northern white rhino, Sudan, has died after "age-related complications," researchers announced yesterday, saying he "stole the heart of many with his dignity and strength."

A statement from the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya said the 45-year-old rhino was euthanized on Monday after his condition "worsened significantly" and he was no longer able to stand. His muscles and bones had degenerated and his skin had extensive wounds, with a deep infection on his back right leg.

The rhino had been part of an ambitious effort to save the subspecies from extinction after decades of decimation by poachers, with the help of the two surviving females. One is his daughter, Najin, and the other is her daughter, Fatu.

His death won't have an impact on the efforts to save the subspecies, as the focus turns to in vitro fertilization techniques using eggs from the two remaining females.

"He was a great ambassador for his species and will be remembered for the work he did to raise awareness globally of the plight facing not only rhinos, but also the many thousands of other species facing extinction as a result of unsustainable human activity," said the conservancy's CEO, Richard Vigne.

Sudan was something of a celebrity, attracting thousands of visitors. Last year he was listed as "The Most Eligible Bachelor in the World" on the Tinder dating app in a fundraising effort.

The last male northern white rhino had been born in Sudan, the last of his kind to be born in the wild.

He was taken to a Czech zoo and then transferred to Kenya in 2009 with the three other remaining fertile northern white rhinos at the time. They were placed under 24-hour armed guard and fed a special diet. "However, despite the fact that they were seen

mating, there were no successful pregnancies," the conservancy said.

Rangers caring for Sudan described him as gentle and, as his condition worsened in recent weeks, expressed sadness over his imminent death.

The rhino "significantly contributed to survival of his species as he sired two females," the conservancy said. "Additionally, his genetic material was collected yesterday and provides a hope for future attempts at reproduction of northern white rhinos through advanced cellular technologies."

The only hope for preserving the subspecies "now lies in developing in vitro fertilization techniques using eggs from the two remaining females, stored northern white rhino semen from males and surrogate southern white rhino females," the statement said.

Sudan's death "is a cruel symbol of human disregard for nature and it saddened everyone who knew him. But we should not give up," said Jan Stejskal, director of international projects at Dvur Kralove Zoo in the Czech Republic. "It may sound unbelievable, but thanks to the newly developed techniques even Sudan could still have an offspring."

Northern white rhinos once roamed parts of Chad, Sudan, Uganda, Congo and Central African Republic, and were particularly vulnerable because of the armed conflicts that have swept the region over decades.

Other rhinos, the southern white rhino and another species, the black rhino, are under heavy pressure from poachers who kill them for their horns to supply illegal markets in parts of Asia.

Roughly 20,000 southern white rhinos remain in Africa. Their numbers dipped below 100 around a century ago, but an intense effort initiated by South African conservationist Ian Player in the mid-20th century turned things around. **AP**

Samuel Petrequin, Paris

FRANCE

Ex-president Sarkozy held on Gadhafi claims

IN the latest judicial setback for the former French president, Nicolas Sarkozy was placed in custody yesterday as part of an investigation that he received millions of euros in illegal campaign financing from the regime of the late Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

A judicial source with direct knowledge of the case told The Associated Press that Sarkozy was being held at the Nanterre police station, north-west of Paris. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Sarkozy has vehemently and repeatedly denied wrongdoing in the case, which involves funding for his winning 2007 presidential campaign.

Though an investigation has been underway since 2013, the case gained traction some three years later when French-Lebanese businessman Ziad Takieddine told the online investigative site, Mediapart, that he delivered suitcases from Libya containing 5 million euros (USD6.2 million) in cash to Sarkozy and his former chief of staff Claude Gueant.

A lawyer for the 63-year-old Sarkozy did not immediately res-

pond to a message from the AP seeking comment.

Investigators are examining claims that Gadhafi's regime secretly gave Sarkozy 50 million euros overall for the 2007 campaign. Such a sum would be more than double the legal campaign funding limit at the time of 21 million euros. In addition, the alleged payments would violate French rules against foreign financing and declaring the source of campaign funds.

A former top aide of Sarkozy, former minister Brice Hortefeux, was reportedly questioned on Tuesday but was not detained. Sarkozy can be held up to 48 hours and could be placed under formal investigation after his hearing.

In the Mediapart interview published in November 2016, Takieddine said he was given 5 million euros in Tripoli by Gadhafi's intelligence chief on trips in late 2006 and 2007 and that he gave the money in suitcases full of cash to

Sarkozy and Gueant on three occasions. He said the handovers took place in the Interior Ministry, while Sarkozy was interior minister.

Takieddine has for years been embroiled in his own problems with French justice, centering mainly on allegations he provided illegal funds to the campaign of conservative politician Edouard Balladur for his 1995 presidential election campaign — via commissions from the sale of French submarines to Pakistan.

Takieddine made his accusations at a time when Sarkozy was taking part in the presidential elections' primary to be the candidate of the right-wing party The Republicans. Sarkozy lost in the first round, ending third behind Francois Fillon and Alain Juppe.

Fillon's own campaign was destroyed by corruption allegations. The former front-runner in the presidential race was charged over the allegations and he suffered a



In this 2007 file photo, Nicolas Sarkozy (left) greets Libyan leader Col. Moammar Gadhafi in Paris

big loss in a vote won by Emmanuel Macron.

According to Le Monde newspaper, investigators have recently handed to magistrates a report in which they detailed how cash circulated within Sarkozy's campaign team.

In January, a French businessman suspected of playing a role in

the financing scheme, Alexandre Djouhri, was arrested in London on a warrant issued by France "for offenses of fraud and money laundering." Le Monde said French investigators are also in possession of several documents seized at his home in Switzerland.

Sarkozy was president from 2007-12. AP

AD

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what's ON



11TH MACAU DESIGN BIENNIAL (HGM)

TIME: 10am-7pm, last admission at 6:30pm (closed on Mondays, open on public holidays)

UNTIL: March 31, 2018

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, NAPE

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

THE DINOSAUR HUNT

TIME: Round the clock ("Dino Escape" green-screen experience only available from 12pm-8pm)

UNTIL: April 15, 2018

VENUE: Studio City Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8868 6767

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF MACAU – EXHIBITION

TIME: 10:30am-5:30pm (closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: March 31, 2018

VENUE: Gallery of Carmo Post Office in Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2837 8138

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

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

Offbeat

YOUTUBERS KSI, LOGAN PAUL AGREE TO BOX IN UK, US

YouTube stars KSI and Logan Paul are taking their acts into the boxing ring.

They've agreed to a two-fight deal, with the first bout in the Manchester, England, on August 25th and a rematch in the United States.

KSI, whose real name is Olajide William Olatunji, was training with boxers Floyd Mayweather Sr. and Badou Jack in Los Angeles.

The 24-year-old English comedian and actor beat YouTuber Joe Weller in the ring in London last month.

YouTube removed Paul's channels earlier this year after he posted images of what appeared to be a suicide victim online. Paul later apologized. YouTube also temporarily suspended advertising on the 22-year-old's channels in February due to an odd "pattern of behavior."

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
15:40	Zig Zag
17:30	Miscellaneous
18:25	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
19:15	TDM Interview (Repeated)
19:50	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Miscellaneous
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:50	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

15 - 21 MAR



TOMB RAIDER

ROOM 1

2:30, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30pm

Director: Roar Uthaug

Starring: Alicia Vikander, Daniel Wu, Dominic West

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 118 min



7 DAYS IN ENTEBBE

ROOM 2

2:30, 7:30, 9:30pm

Director: Jose Padilha

Starring: Rosamund Pike, Daniel Brühl, Eddie Marsan

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 106 min

TURN AROUND

ROOM 2

04:30pm

ROOM 3

07:30pm

Director: Ta-pu Chen

Starring: Jay Shih, Yu-chiao Hsia, Allen Chao, Lu Yi-ching

Language: Chinese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 108min



THE HURRICANE HEIST

ROOM 3

2:30, 4:30, 9:30pm

Director: Rob Cohen

Starring: Toby Kebbell, Maggie Grace, Ryan Kwanten

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 103min

this day in history



1960 SCORES DIE IN SHARPEVILLE SHOOT-OUT

More than 50 black people were killed when police opened fire on a "peaceful" protest in the South African township of Sharpeville.

Eye-witnesses said men, women and children fled 'like rabbits' as up to 300 officers began randomly shooting into a 5,000-strong crowd outside the municipal offices in Sharpeville.

Scores of injured have been taken to Baragwanath hospital near Johannesburg suffering gun-shot wounds.

It is not yet clear why the police, in armoured vehicles, opened fire at approximately 1315 local time today, although it is understood some protesters had been stone-throwing.

Between 5,000 and 7,000 people had gathered at Sharpeville police station to protest against the pass laws, which they claim are designed by an apartheid government to seriously restrict their movement in white areas.

The laws, which require all black men and women to carry reference books containing their personal details including name, tax code and employer details, have this year been extended to all black women as well as men.

The law states that anyone found in a public place without their book will be arrested and detained for up to 30 days.

PAC leader, Robert Subukwe, said today's march was intended to be the first of a five-day, non-violent campaign by black Africans to persuade the government to abolish the laws.

The aim was for all black Africans to leave their pass books at home and present themselves at police stations for arrest.

This, said Mr Subukwe, would cause prisons to become overcrowded, labour to dry up and the economy to grind to a halt.

But three hours after it began, the 'peaceful' gathering had turned into a blood-bath.

It is understood police attempted to disperse the crowd with a squadron of low-flying aircraft before drafting in extra reinforcements.

Police Commander D H Pienaar said: "It started when hordes of natives surrounding the police station.

"If they do these things, they must learn their lessons the hard way."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Following the Sharpeville massacre, as it came to be known, the death toll rose to 69 and the number of injuries to 180. In the following days 77 Africans, many of whom were still in hospital, were arrested for questioning - most were later released.

On 24 March the government banned all public meetings in 24 magisterial districts of South Africa and on April 8 the PAC and the African National Congress (ANC) were banned and a state of emergency was declared in the country.

The following September 224 people lodged civil claims against the government but the government responded by introducing the Indemnity Act which relieved all officials of any responsibility for the Sharpeville atrocities.

No police officer involved in the massacre was ever convicted.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 In a gaggle of geese, you're a swan. In a clutch of hens, you're the head bird. In a flock of nightingales, you've got the sweetest and most powerful voice. Yep, you're kind of a natural leader type.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You are deep in navel-gazing country. So get out your pith helmet and your sunblock and your mosquito net and your warm sleeping tent and your camera and your notebook. Now, start gazing.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 If there is a problem at your workplace - and there very well could be - you are the go-to person. You don't mince words or waste time. No, you make mincemeat out of time-wasting procedures.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Take a long hard look at your emotional resources. You could be surprised to see how numerous and how solid they are. This could come as quite a relief, especially if you've been feeling a little insecure lately.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You could have something that feels and looks and even tastes a lot like a revelation. And this revelation is very likely to come in the arena of love. Hmm, what are you going to realize?

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 That's a great approach. But if the problem involves one of those more 'let's consider what it might all say about the human condition before we go changing anything' types, you could get frustrated.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Take a step back and look at how much you've accomplished. You can't always be pushing forward, you know - everybody needs a little break here and there, now and again, to reconsider and regroup.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You have a natural, healthy, go-getter-ness that helps you achieve whatever it is you want to achieve. It's called assertiveness, and it's going to be important to let that assertiveness out. Why?

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 If it's remotely possible, work from home. And use your extra-long lunch break to get out into the great out-of-doors. It's very clear that nature is calling you. Answer it, and you'll find yourself refreshed.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Whether you help your elderly neighbor carry groceries or you volunteer to paint the local grade school, you always feel best if you're giving of yourself. There are thousands of opportunities to volunteer.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You're not a passive person, as a rule. If you want something, you take it. Or you pay for it first, then take it. Or you ask for it first, then take it. What you don't do is stand aside saying nothing.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 No, you react by acting. You want to do something about it, and chances are you'll succeed at making some important changes. It'll be tough going for a while, though, so don't be discouraged.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Eye-related; 6- Make ___ for oneself; 11- Tit for ___; 14- Interlace; 15- Athenian lawgiver; 16- Before, to Byron; 17- Stand used by painters; 18- Bony prefix; 19- Blemish; 20- The ___ Ranger rode a horse called Silver; 22- ___ lazuli; 24- Ear ornament; 28- Chuckle; 30- Comfortable; 31- Goatlike antelope; 32- Bowling alley button; 33- Person who arrives before others; 37- Illuminated; 38- Numskull; 39- Society page word; 40- Bewitch; 43- Little; 45- Hammer parts; 46- Small upright piano; 47- Becomes visible; 50- Goals; 51- Circular; 52- Arizona native; 53- Always; 54- Recording of acoustic signals; 57- In the buff; 62- Sault ___ Marie; 63- Enamel; 64- Ridiculous; 65- Half a fly; 66- Fidelity; 67- Tickle pink; DOWN: 1- Have debts; 2- Shade of green; 3- Univ. aides; 4- "___ had it!"; 5- Yo-Yo Ma, e.g.; 6- For ___ (cheap); 7- Sniffer; 8- High-pitched; 9- "The Simpsons" bartender; 10- Science of winemaking; 11- Lure; 12- Thin as ___; 13- Curt; 21- Half and half; 23- Riyadh resident; 24- Steve of country music; 25- Had dinner at home; 26- Reposes; 27- Arctic explorer John; 28- Christmas song; 29- Sword handle; 31- Leaves port; 33- Parades; 34- Absurd; 35- Sublease; 36- Shoulder muscles, briefly; 38- Cake decorator; 41- Ready for business; 42- Adjust again; 43- Snare; 44- Russian fighter; 46- Tree syrup; 47- Give it ___!; 48- Writers of verse; 49- Blender setting; 50- Fang, e.g.; 52- Clue; 55- Nasser's org.; 56- God, in Italy; 58- Popular ISP; 59- Hawaiian acacia; 60- Baby newt; 61- Coloring material;

Yesterday's solution crossword grid with filled-in words.

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 listings for 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' with details on properties like Grande Plaza, Kinqlight, and various apartments.

JML Property logo and contact information, including 'since 1994' and '卓雅物業'.

FOOTBALL

England weak in key areas as World Cup approaches

Steve Douglas

WITH less than three months to go, at least half of England's starting lineup for its opening match of the World Cup remains uncertain.

It makes the upcoming friendlies against Netherlands and Italy pivotal for England coach Gareth Southgate — and also for a slew of players who might otherwise have viewed the matches as a distraction amid a crucial stage of the season at club level.

Gone are the days when the England team was filled with Premier League superstars and the lineup often picked itself.

The starting XI for its most recent match — a friendly against Brazil on Nov. 14 — contained only five players who would be considered regular starters for their clubs.

GOALKEEPER - Maybe England's biggest area of concern. Joe Hart has been England's



Stoke City goalkeeper Jack Butland

No. 1 for most of this decade but has struggled for confidence since being let go by Pep Guardiola at Manchester City in August 2016.

Of the possible replacements for Hart, Jack Butland (Stoke) and Jordan Pickford (Everton) have made errors in recent Premier League games and also play for teams who have

been in poor form in the last few months.

CENTER BACK - It would help whoever is selected in goal to have an experienced center back partnership ahead of him. That won't be case, however.

Of the five players in Southgate's latest squad who can play

in central defense, there are just 27 international appearances — and John Stones has 23 of them.

However, Stones is currently fourth-choice center back at Manchester City. Joe Gomez is the subject of rotation at Liverpool, where he plays at right back, while James Tarkowski (Burnley) and Alfie Mawson (Swansea) are newcomers to the squad. Maguire is the other option and is looking increasingly like a World Cup starter, with Chris Smalling and the experienced Gary Cahill not currently in Southgate's thoughts.

CENTRAL MIDFIELD - This was once a position of strength for England — remember when Steven Gerrard, Frank Lampard, Paul Scholes and Michael Carrick were competing for starting spots? — but it is now a sea of mediocrity, at least when compared to the world's biggest soccer nations.

Southgate experimented with a five-man defense in England's friendlies against Germany and Brazil in November, meaning he fielded two deep-lying center midfielders in Dier and Jake Livermore. There is also competition from Jordan Henderson, Jack Wilshere and newcomer Lewis Cook, but this department appears to be another area of weakness for England.

The options for the attacking playmaker role look slightly stronger, with Dele Alli and Jesse Lingard now probably ahead of Adam Lallana after his injury-hit season at Liverpool.

BACK-UP STRIKER - With Harry Kane out because of an ankle injury, the upcoming games will offer clues about who Southgate regards as his leading backup striker heading to the World Cup.

Marcus Rashford is among the striker options but has barely played in that position all season, instead featuring sporadically as a winger at Manchester United.

Injury-prone Danny Welbeck is a fringe player at Arsenal these days, so Jamie Vardy looks to be best-placed to benefit from Kane's absence in the short term. **AP**

AD



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AP PHOTO



GOLF

Winning makes McIlroy as good as he already was

Doug Ferguson, Austin

RORY McIlroy had his first Arnold Palmer moment before the tournament even started.

He had just finished his pro-am round at Bay Hill and was about to walk out of the tunnel leading from the 18th green when a man asked him for a picture. McIlroy obliged, because he usually does. But this was different.

The man handed him a black bolero hat and told McIlroy it was from his squadron when he served in Vietnam. He didn't want a selfie with McIlroy. He wanted a picture of McIlroy wearing the hat that meant so much to him. The hat looked awkward on him with golfing attire, but McIlroy didn't mind.

It's all about giving the fans what they want.

Then the 28-year-old from Northern Ireland gave them something even better with what McIlroy described as a "perfect round of golf," certainly the closing stretch. He birdied five of

the last six holes, capping it off with a 25-foot putt on the 18th hole to win the Arnold Palmer Invitational.

That ended his longest drought without a victory in eight years, and it cast him in a new light with the Masters approaching.

■ McIlroy had fallen to No. 13 in the world when he missed the cut at the Valspar Championship

McIlroy had fallen to No. 13 in the world when he missed the cut the previous week at the Valspar Championship, his second missed cut in four PGA Tour events this year. He had not been that low in the ranking since April 25, 2010.

It's not that he was forgotten; rather, attention was shifting

to so many others that it was easy to feel overlooked. All it took was one victory for the conversation to include his bid for a green jacket to complete the career Grand Slam.

"It's huge for my confidence going into the next few weeks," McIlroy said. "I kept saying I didn't need a win going into Augusta to feel like I had a chance. I just wanted to see signs of good golf. And thankfully, I've been able to get both."

Just don't get the idea his confidence was lagging.

McIlroy always says that when he's playing well, it's hard to remember ever playing poorly. And when he's playing poorly, it's hard to remember what it was like to play well. But he has a history of going through spurts of mediocrity, and coming out of it strong without notice. Most memorable was in 2012 when he missed the cut four times in five tournaments. Two months later, he won the PGA Championship and consecutive FedEx Cup playoff events.

Three times in his career, McIlroy has won in his next

start after missing the cut. Five other times, he won after finishing out of the top 30.

That's why he wasn't the least bit concerned after missing the cut at the Valspar Championship.

"It's such a fine line out here, and I might have sounded crazy the last few weeks when I was telling everyone it actually feels pretty close and I'm not that far away, and I'm putting up 72s and 73s," he said. "And all of a sudden, it all clicks into place and I end up winning a golf tournament by three shots and shooting 8 under on the last day. So it's fine lines out here. I think you have to play the game to really appreciate that. It's not as black and white as some people make it out to be."

He could think of only one time he was genuinely worried about his game.

McIlroy was 19 and in his first full year as a pro in 2008. He had only two top 10s all year on the European Tour. He wasn't eligible for any of the majors. He had missed three straight

cuts in Sweden, Holland and Scotland. He was concerned he might lose his card. And then he lost in a playoff in Switzerland, lost in another playoff in Hong Kong and won his first pro event early in the next year. "And I was off and running," he said.

McIlroy reached No. 50 with that playoff loss in Hong Kong, and he hasn't fallen out since then. He's had a few dips, sure, "but it's not as if I've had to panic."

Palmer and McIlroy share one other connection, at least for now. They are one leg short of the Grand Slam. Palmer never won the PGA Championship. McIlroy needs the Masters. When they had dinner at Bay Hill in 2015 — right before McIlroy's first crack at the fourth leg of the slam — the topic never came up.

"It's amazing to think, all that Arnold did in the game, he never won that Grand Slam," McIlroy said.

McIlroy at the Masters, Phil Mickelson at the U.S. Open and Jordan Spieth at the PGA Championship each have a chance at the career slam this year.

"I'm glad to be part of that conversation, get the first shot at it in a few weeks," McIlroy said. "So we'll see how we go."

His game is never far away, even if it doesn't look like it at times. **AP**

opinion

World Views

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CHINA'S BORN-AGAIN FREE TRADERS FIND A FRIEND IN TRUMP

Presume not that China is the thing it was. That's certainly the message Premier Li Keqiang intends to convey with his promise yesterday to cut levies on imports. Almost simultaneously, Bloomberg News reported that the Trump administration will impose tariffs on as much as USD60 billion of Chinese products as soon as this week. Have the world's great protectionist and its leading free trader switched sides?

It wouldn't be so surprising if they did. The U.S. was an ardent protectionist for most of the 19th century, never really coming around to the idea of free trade until the 1940s, when the Bretton Woods conference laid the foundations of the global postwar economy. Having raised barriers to strengthen its industrial might, it backed off only when the dawn of the consumer era made them more of a hindrance than a help.

That history tracks closely with the way China perceives its changing economic destiny. President Xi Jinping's abolition of term limits is being discussed as an opportunity to complete the shift from industrial activity and toward mass consumption, which was kicked off, then aborted, during his first term.

The People's Republic has already become the world's largest exporter and manufacturer, and the biggest economy in purchasing-power parity terms. It's likely to overtake the U.S. even in nominal terms around the time Xi completes a third term.

In November, the country's Ministry of Commerce will stage its first international import expo in a bid to present the country to trading partners not as a locus for production lines but as a huge consumer pool to be targeted.

In a country where Jiangling Motors Corp. is still marketing its Landwind X7, a blatant knock-off of the Land Rover Evoque, it's reasonable to scoff.

At the same time, it would be naive to assume Beijing won't follow through, at least in part. As Gadfly has argued, the most sophisticated response to President Donald Trump's anti-trade actions could be to do nothing, even with a product like soybeans where China may have some leverage.

China's formal tariff barriers are already some of the lowest in the Group of 20 leading economies, and several long-protected industries, including financial services and automotive joint ventures, are on a glacial path toward reform. Other contentious areas, such as technology transfers, will probably be used less as China's own research and development spending overtakes that of many developed nations.

That will still leave swathes of the economy closed to the outside world in a way that will belie Li's attempts to present China's government as a born-again free trader.

There's no hint Beijing is any closer to opening up its tech sector to foreign competition, let alone industries like media that butt against its restrictions on free speech. It's hard to believe China would let the rule of law prevail in disputes between local heroes and offshore rivals, or stop putting its thumb on the scale in favor of state-owned and well-connected enterprises.

Still, that's not the primary objective. The long game is the one Xi himself outlined at the Communist Party's national congress last year - that China should attain global leadership by 2050. Prising apart the transatlantic alliance by posing as the defender of the global order against an increasingly isolationist America fits that agenda perfectly. That Washington should now be assisting this makeover must count as an unexpected bonus.

THE G-20 MEETING IN ARGENTINA ECLIPSED BY POTENTIAL TRADE WAR

Finance ministers and central bankers from the 20 leading industrial and developing countries are meeting in Argentina at a summit that has been eclipsed by growing concerns over the potential of a global trade war following U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to slap import tariffs on steel and aluminum.

Trump's tariffs — of 25 percent on imported steel and 10 percent on aluminum imports — enter into force this week.

The issue had not been addressed officially

at the two-day summit that began yesterday in Buenos Aires. But some G-20 officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly, said that Trump's measures have been a major talking point in private sessions.

Argentina's Treasury Minister Nicolas Dujovne asked U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin to exempt the South American country from the tariffs. Trump is temporarily exempting Canada and Mexico.

Xi starts Voice of China broadcaster to boost global image

CHINA has approved the creation of one of the world's largest propaganda machines as it looks to improve its global image, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The new broadcaster will be called "Voice of China," the person said, mimicking the U.S. government-funded Voice of America that started up during World War II to advance American interests. Bloomberg News had previously reported the new entity would be created through merging China Central Television, China Radio International and China National Radio.

The combined group was designed to strengthen the party's ability to shape public opinion and would serve as a key vehicle for China to project its image to the world, said the person, who asked not to be identified because the changes haven't been publicly announced.

The effort to boost China's propaganda reach comes at a time of increased sensitivity in the West to Russian efforts to influence their political discourse with outlets such as RT, the network formerly known as Russia Today. CCTV currently has more than 70 bureaus overseas,



while China Radio International broadcasts in more than 60 languages.

The change is part of President Xi Jinping's sweeping government overhaul to give the party greater control over everything from financial services to manufacturing to entertainment. The State Council Information Office, which represents the central government, said yesterday it didn't have information related to the issue.

China is seeking to contain tensions arising from plans to back hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure projects in Xi's signature Belt-and-Road Initiative. Politicians from the U.S. to Germany to Australia have warned about China's intentions as it bolsters its military and invests more overseas.

China has spent billions of dollars on propaganda as part of a decade-old soft power

push, including building cultural centers at foreign universities. Still, the majority of people in countries like Japan, Germany and Italy view China negatively, according to a 2017 survey by the Pew Research Center.

Since taking power in 2012, Xi has tightened controls over freedom of expression and sought to reshape China's state-run media organizations. "The media run by the party and the government are the propaganda fronts and must have the party as their family name," he said while visiting state-run broadcasters in 2016.

The new broadcaster would be one of the world's biggest. CCTV has at least 10,000 employees, while China National Radio has more than 2,100 staff members and China Radio International has another 2,000, according to official accounts. **Bloomberg**

Investigators suspect FedEx bomb tied to Austin, Texas bombings



Investigators work at the scene of a bomb explosion on Dawn Song Drive in Austin, Texas

A package bomb that authorities believe is linked to the recent string of Austin bombings exploded yesterday inside of a FedEx distribution center near San Antonio, possibly leaving one person with minor injuries.

The explosion happened at around 1 a.m. at a FedEx facility in Schertz, which is just northeast of San Antonio, FBI Special Agent Michelle Lee said. She said early indications were that no one was injured, but the Schertz Police Department issued a statement saying one person was treated at the scene and released.

Lee said that although it is still early in the investigation, "it would be silly for us not to admit that we suspect it's

related" to the four Austin bombings that have killed two people and injured four others since March 2. The latest bombing injured two men Sunday in southwest Austin's quiet Travis Country neighborhood.

Lee didn't have details about the size, weight or description of the package.

The blast follows a Sunday night blast that was triggered along a street by a nearly invisible tripwire, suggesting a "higher level of sophistication" than agents saw in three early package bombs left on doorsteps. It means the carnage by a suspected serial bomber that has terrorized Austin for weeks is now random, rather than targeted at someone in particular. **AP**

Station	Air quality
Roadside	50-70 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	45-65 Moderate
Ambient	45-65 Moderate

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



EGYPT There is no question the general-turned-president Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi will win a second four-year term. But the March 26-28 election will likely be remembered as the event that signaled Egypt's break with the little pretense it had left of democratic rule.

MOLDOVA Two people died yesterday in an explosion in a grocery shop in the Moldovan capital, Chisinau, police said.



ITALY Milan and Turin are in discussions with the Italian Olympic Committee about a possible bid for the 2026 Winter Games.



UK A British parliamentary committee yesterday summoned Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg to answer questions on fake news as authorities step up efforts to determine whether data has been improperly used to influence elections.

SPAIN Police say the man suspected of plotting an ISIS-inspired attack in Colombia appeared on their radar for hate-filled messages online toward the United States, a country where he had lived and was allegedly trying to get to. **More on p14**



VENEZUELA-BRAZIL Hungry and destitute, tens of thousands of victims of Venezuela's unrelenting political and economic crisis are trying their luck in Brazil — a country where they do not speak the language, conditions are often poor and there are few border towns to receive them.