

CE WITH MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS



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**ASSOCIATION WANTS BLACKLIST**  
The New Macau Gaming Staff Rights Association wants a blacklist of gamblers who illegally smoke

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**MACRON: EU MUST REFORM**  
French President Macron urged the European Union to reform itself to offer better protection for its citizens

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FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Goldenhuys EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho

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## WORLD BRIEFS



**MYANMAR** President Win Myint has granted amnesty to more than 8,500 prisoners, including at least three dozen political prisoners. The amnesty was granted to 8,490 Myanmar citizens and 51 foreigners. [More on p13](#)

**CHINA** announced plans to allow full foreign ownership of automakers in five years, ending restrictions that helped to fuel its escalating dispute with U.S. President Donald Trump and strained relations with other trading partners. [More on p10,11](#)

**JAPAN-US** The official visit of PM Shinzo Abe will begin today with a one-on-one meeting with Donald Trump followed by a small group discussion with top national security officials focused on the Kim summit. [More on p12](#)



**SYRIA** International inspectors entered the Syrian town where an alleged chemical attack was carried out earlier this month, following delays by Syrian and Russian authorities. [More on p14](#)

**UK** The nerve agent used on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia was delivered in liquid form, British officials said, as they revealed it will take months to clean up the toxic trail the poison left around the city of Salisbury.

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## TRANSPORT

# Group slams mutual license recognition . P7



# Steve Wynn and ex-wife Elaine settle six-year litigation . P2



## TSI rejects Moon Ocean appeal

The Court of Second Instance (TSI) has rejected an appeal filed by developer Moon Ocean requesting the voidance of an Official Gazette notice published in April 2013. The notice revoked Moon Ocean's right to use the land opposite Macau International Airport, where it was planning to build the residential project La Scala. It occurred after the Court of First Instance found Moon Ocean's major shareholder Joseph Lau guilty of bribing former Secretary Ao Man Long. TSI now ruled that the land grant was revoked "because the administrative acts preceding it are void."

## 844 mandatory disease declarations in March

The Health Bureau (SSM) registered 844 mandatory disease declarations in March 2018, according to a statement released on Monday. There have been evident changes in the number of some diseases, especially in cases of infection, with influenza (610 cases) and rotavirus gastroenteritis (32 cases), both increasing compared to the same period last year but recorded a decrease when compared to February. Fifty-two cases of chickenpox have been registered, which represents an increase both annually and monthly. Fifteen cases of tuberculosis were recorded, in addition to one case of AIDS and five cases of HIV.

## Highest SME confidence index recorded

The highest SME confidence index during the last eight quarters was recorded in the first quarter of 2018. The latest report from the Macao Chamber of Commerce on the confidence index of Macau's SMEs reflects that local SMEs continue to be optimistic about their future. The SMEs' confidence in the social environment shows the same rate of increase as the revenues from the Macau's gaming industry. The confidence of employees suggested a stable trend. The association further revealed that the index indicates that local SME employers are holding a cautious attitude concerning the expansion of their human resources.

# Lawsuit dropped between Elaine Wynn and ex's former company

Ken Ritter, Las Vegas

A six-year boardroom battle ended with a settlement involving the Las Vegas company founded by embattled former casino mogul Steve Wynn and his ex-wife.

A judge who was to begin seating a jury for a planned six-week trial in the town that Wynn helped build dismissed prospective jurors after teams of attorneys representing the company and the former couple declared the case ended with a payment pending from Steve Wynn to Elaine Wynn. They refused to disclose the amount.

Lawyers for all parties said details would be posted in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing.

The settlement ends the protracted court fight involving Wynn, a former business partner and his ex-wife, who joined the legal proceedings two years ago alleging she was wrongly ousted from the company's board.

It's the latest in a series of rapid developments following the airing in January by the Wall Street Journal of sexual misconduct allegations against Steve Wynn. The newspaper reported that several women said the billionaire harassed or assaulted them and that one case led to a USD7.5 million settlement in 2005 with a manicurist formerly employed by the company. Wynn denies the claims.

Wynn resigned as finance chairman of the Republican National Committee after the allegations were published, and he resigned Feb. 6 as chairman and chief executive of the casino-operating company that bears his name. He has since sold all his shares in the company.

The settlement followed testimony last month from Elaine Wynn that she told a top company lawyer in 2009 that she received information alleging her ex-husband had raped an employee in 2005. The corporate counsel, Kim Sinatra, denied receiving any such information.

Steve Wynn released a statement through spokeswoman Elizabeth Lampert on Mon-

AP PHOTO



Elaine Wynn, ex-wife of Steve Wynn, listens during a hearing in Las Vegas

day saying that "all outstanding legal issues" had been resolved with Elaine Wynn, and expressing "gratification that he was able to put all of the personal unpleasantness of the last few years between he and Ms. Wynn behind him."

**Mr Wynn expressed gratification that he was able to put all of the personal unpleasantness of the last few years between he and Ms Wynn behind him.**

STEVE WYNN'S STATEMENT

Elaine Wynn said through spokesman Devon Spurgeon that she was "pleased this litigation has now been resolved."

The couple divorced in 2010. Wynn Resorts said Elaine

Wynn had dropped claims against it and Sinatra, and that the company made no payment under the agreement.

The greater portion of the case was settled last month when Wynn Resorts agreed to pay \$2.4 billion to Tokyo casino game maker Universal Entertainment Corp., which once held an almost 20 percent stake in the Las Vegas-based company through its subsidiary Aruze USA Inc. That legal fight dated back to 2012, when Wynn Resorts forcibly took all the shares controlled by Universal's founder Kazuo Okada and issued a \$1.9 billion promissory note.

The company redeemed the shares after accusing Okada of making improper payments to overseas gambling regulators. He denied the allegations.

A week after the companies agreed to the settlement, another portion of the legal fight ended when a shareholders agreement that stipulated Steve Wynn and Elaine Wynn would vote jointly on company matters was deemed invalid by a state court judge. That agreement had prevented Elaine Wynn from controlling her stake in the company.

Clark County District Court Judge Elizabeth Gonzalez had ruled the jury in the trial

putting Steve Wynn against Elaine Wynn would be able to hear about the settlement and allegations of illegal gambling by two company executives.

The settlement doesn't end legal battles for Steve Wynn or the company's board of directors.

Groups of shareholders filed lawsuits after the sexual misconduct allegations came to light, alleging breach of fiduciary duties. Current and former employees also have filed lawsuits, and the company has drawn scrutiny from gambling regulators in Nevada and Massachusetts.

Regulators in Macau, the Chinese enclave where the company operates two casinos, are also inquiring about the sexual misconduct allegations.

Wynn, 76, has been major developer in Las Vegas for decades, dating to the reshaping of the downtown Golden Nugget. He built the Mirage, Treasure Island and Bellagio resorts on the Strip in the 1990s before selling his Mirage Resorts company in 2000.

Two years later, he founded Wynn Resorts, which now operates two posh casino-resorts in the city and is planning to build a lake and hotel development called Paradise Park on the site of a former golf course. **AP**

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A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

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## AL PLENARY

# Greater Bay Area still a big question mark policy for the CE

Renato Marques

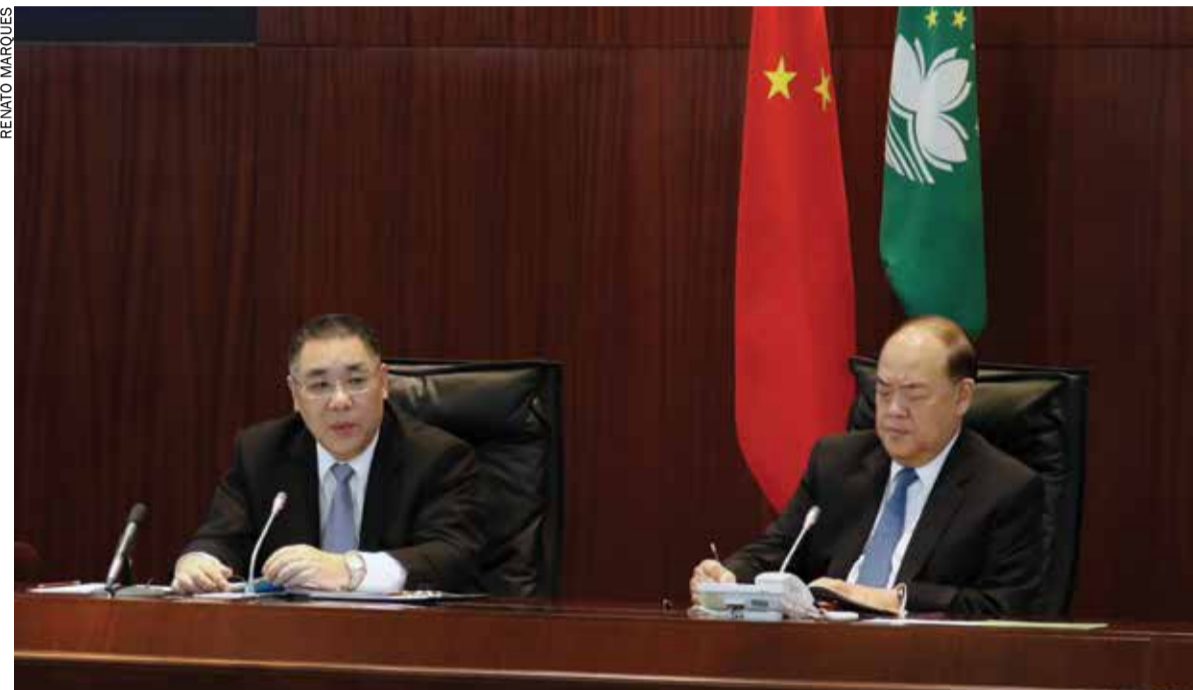
**Q**UESTIONS regarding the role of Macau and the influence of the Greater Bay Area's plan in the region dominated yesterday's debate between the Chief Executive (CE), Chui Sai On, and the lawmakers.

The Legislative Assembly's (AL) plenary session was called to discuss matters related to this year's policy address. Many lawmakers expressed doubts regarding the influence and relevance of the Greater Bay Area plan. Most wanted more information on the Central Government's projects and expected policy outcomes involving Macau as well as nine cities from the neighboring regions.

Lawmaker Kou Hoi In was one of the first to address the topic in a direct manner, questioning the CE on the opportunities and missions created by the "Greater Bay" and on how Macau will adjust and integrate such a project in order to "catch that fast train," he asked.

In his reply, Chui noted for the first time that "we are still waiting for the plan of the 'Greater Bay area' [from the Central government]," a reply that was repeated many times afterwards within the questions of several other lawmakers.

Nevertheless, the CE explained that Macau has been "reinforcing the cooperation between the regions," and stated that two of the important beneficial factors for Macau from this "integration" are "a stable water and energy supply." Other topics included in the policy related to issues such as "the ease on the



Chui Sai On (left) and Ho Iat Seng

circulation of people and goods [in the area] and the ease on mutual investments which create opportunities for people from Macau to invest in the continent and, at the same time, opportunities also for the other regions to invest in Macau."

Trying to summarize the benefits, the CE said: "This will ease the lives of all people living in this area," noting that there are already several test-projects being held in different areas. "We need to be prepared to embrace this plan and to have an open mind [to receive it]," he said.

Lawmakers Ip Sio Kai, Zheng Anting, Si Ka Lon, Song Pek Kei, Iau Teng Pio and Vong Hin Fai were some of the other lawmakers who also wanted to know more about the challenges and opportunities offered

by the Greater Bay Area plan, from business to juridical perspectives, passing through health care, elderly support and the development of the "smart city."

Lawmaker Song mentioned briefly the situation of elderly parents who want their descendants to work and live in Macau. The Macau Federation of Family Reunion was one of the four groups demonstrating at the entrance of the AL while the session was being held inside.

The CE acknowledged that in some aspects, namely the juridical, there are some significant differences between the regions, but reaffirmed that Macau should continue to develop its role of becoming a world centre of tourism and leisure and a platform of connection between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries".

Regarding topics such as the development of a "Smart City," he added: "We are a little late on this matter. To keep up with the regional evolution we need to work more."

Regarding the juridical regimes, the CE noted that seven-

ral documents are currently in the legislative process, and are expected to be completed this year.

As for the questions related to the care of elderly people in the bay, Chui replied, "our policy always has been and continues to be [for the elderly people] to spend their old age in their own communities [families] but they choose to spend it in China which is also an option [that we are considering]."

**“We need to be prepared to embrace this plan and to have an open mind.”**

CHUI SAI ON

"We are currently studying the possibility of a regime of [health] insurance that [will cover health care expenses] independently of the city where the person chooses to spend their old age," Chui said, replying to Zheng, but noted that it is important to "first, get the insurance; and, second, check on the quality of the services provided in the hospitals of those nine cities [of the Pearl River Delta]."

**COUTINHO QUESTIONS CE ON FONG'S PUNISHMENT**

**LAWMAKER JOSÉ** Pereira Coutinho questioned the Chief Executive (CE) on the "unfair" punishment attributed to the former director of the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau Fong Soi Kun (four years without retirement pension), claiming that the government is making Fong a "scapegoat" to avoid investigating the responsibilities of other high officials during Typhoon Hato's response. The

CE, similar to last week's press conference at the government headquarters, did not want to comment on the penalty attributed, citing the fact that the case is now under appeal. Nevertheless, the CE reaffirmed that he has already given orders to the Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, to proceed to review the responsibilities of the government's high-ranked officials.

## Cultural and leisure facilities in Zone A of new landfills questioned



**T**HE space reserved for cultural, leisure and sports facilities in the new landfill areas, namely in Zone A, were a topic of concern for several lawmakers at yesterday's plenary session in the presence of Chief Executive, Chui Sai On.

Lawmakers Ma Chi Seng, Ella Lei and Agnes Lam highlighted the topic, asking the CE for a more "clear definition" of the plans for the new area.

In his reply, Chui noted that the plan for the area was drafted after three separate public consultations and that it will definitely include several pieces of social equipment.

Chui also promised in his reply that he will deliver all the documents with the detailed plans for Zone A to the Legislative Assembly, stating that it "includes the plans for the roads, the land plots, as well as the green areas and all the

others." Chui mentioned that several pieces of social equipment including a swimming pool, will be included, but did not divulge details as to whether it will include any temporary housing which was previously nominated as a solution for the renewal process of the old neighborhoods.

Ma also noted a recent report, ordered by the government, which showed that the number of sports facili-

ties has shrunk by about 4 percent.

The CE acknowledged the results, but noted that such figure comes mostly due the rapid increase in the population, noting that the government is "aware and working on that matter," and provided the example of the new Mong Ha sports pavilion that will have a total of five floors dedicated to sports which will replace a single floor building. Commenting on the sports facilities, and referring to the area now occupied by the Canidrome, Chui said, "I hope that the [public] services can expand those [sports] facilities rather than reduce it."

# DSEJ to organize big disaster prevention drills for first time

Julie Zhu

**I**N a first for Macau, the government is planning to organize a large-scale disaster prevention drill in the middle of 2018, head of the Department of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) Kong Ngai said this week.

The DSEJ, together with the police force, held an explanatory session on disaster prevention works in schools in the Escola Kao Yip, where it informed school representatives from all of the region's 77 non-tertiary schools, that a drill will take place in May or June, before the end of the 2017/18 academic year. All 77 schools will be included in the drill, according to Kong.

On the sidelines of the explanatory session, Kong said that the "DSEJ has always been working to establish emergency mechanisms with schools. This time, we are just continuing to enhance them based on Macau's tradi-



Kong Ngai

tional mechanisms. There will be several new types of disaster occurring [in the future]. In the future, the communication will be bidirectional. The schools will have to communicate with DSEJ."

"To the best of my knowledge, [regarding] such a big-scale, bidirectional communication mechanism, [in addition to the drills,] which will be organized twice every year, this is the first time [that

they are being organized]," Kong confirmed.

Following the first drill, the second is expected to take place in October or November. The program is planned to be continued annually.

According to DSEJ's explanation, the drills do not necessarily require participation by every single individual in each school.

All 77 schools must organize one drill per semester, and the drills should be

mainly related to wind prevention, flooding prevention and fire prevention.

After each drill, schools will have to write a drill evaluation report and deliver it to DSEJ.

The disaster prevention program covers six disaster categories: typhoons, flooding, fires, gas poisoning, nuclear radiation and earthquakes.

In addition to these two drills, the local government has also scheduled an extra 'pre drill' for April 28. All 77 schools will participate in it, to be held at the Ha Huan and Coloane district.

Besides the DSEJ, other governmental departments will also join the activity.

Regarding disaster supplies, Kong noted that the government "does not hope schools will store too much food, but that they can store more disaster related materials."

The drills are expected to allow the schools to be familiar with how to protect themselves in an emergency.



## Association wants to blacklist smoking gamblers

**T**HE New Macau Gaming Staff Rights Association is proposing that the government blacklist gamblers who illegally smoke in casinos – a similar system to that imposed upon trains in the mainland.

Yesterday, the local group presented their suggestions, calling on the government to impose stronger regulations for gamblers who practice illegal smoking in casinos.

Cloe Chao, president of the association, said that those who smoke in non-smoking areas are not intimidated by the maximum penalty of MOP200,000.

"We can learn from mainland China to enhance tobacco control law, [such as] listing some customers who violated the regulation into blacklist," Chao said.

"The Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau can list [violators] in a blacklist. [...] Their illegal smoking affects people's health. They think they are the boss because they have money, they completely disrespect the law enforcement officers," Chao added. **LV**

AD

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## MUSIC

# Macao Orchestra and Clara Jumi Kang present 'The Nordic Echoes'

**T**HE Macao Orchestra (OM) will present "The Nordic Echoes," a concert, on Friday at St. Dominic's Church. Under the baton of the orchestra's Music Director, Lu Jia, OM will join hands with young South Korean violinist Clara Jumi Kang to present the Violin Concerto in D minor by Sibelius.

Born in Germany, Clara Jumi Kang started studying violin from a very early age. At the age of five, she made her debut with the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra and at six she was featured on the cover of German magazine Die Zeit. At the age of seven, she received a full scholarship from the Juilliard School in the United States. By then, she had performed with numerous world-renowned orchestras, including the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kiel

Philharmonie, Nice Philharmonie, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2012, Clara was selected as one of the "100 most promising and influential people in Korea in future" by Korean newspaper Dong A Times. Clara Jumi Kang was honoured with the "Daewon Music Award" in 2012 and the "Kumho Musician of the Year Award" in 2014. Friday's concert will be her Macau debut.

Admission to "The Nordic Echoes" is free. Tickets will be distributed at St. Dominic's Church one hour prior to the performance, on a first-come, first-served basis and are limited to a maximum of two tickets per person. The concert will be broadcast live on an outdoor screen installed outside St. Dominic's Church, to allow more people to enjoy it.



Clara Jumi Kang

## MSAR, Vietnam sign agreement to prevent double taxation

**M**ACAU and Vietnam have signed a bilateral agreement in order to prevent double taxation and evasion of income tax. The agreement was signed on Monday in Macau by the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, and the Deputy Finance Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Do Hoang Anh Tuan.

The arrangement is aimed at preventing situations where the two governments simultaneously tax a single item of income belonging to people who are residents of the two places.

The Macau taxes covered by the agreement are professional tax, complementary tax, and property tax. The Vietnam taxes covered by the agreement are individual income tax and corporate income tax.

In addition, the agreement covers reciprocal arrangements on certain tax matters

relating to income from: immovable property; affiliated companies; dividends; interest; royalties; transfer of property; pensions; government services; and educational study and traineeships.

According to Leong's statement issued by the Government Information Bureau, the signing of the bilateral agreement on tax is of great importance in increasing transparency and preventing double taxation. According to the statement, it also consolidated conditions for the two sides to develop closer ties in economic and trade affairs.

"The government has been striving to advance cooperation in the exchange of tax information with other countries and regions, particularly Portuguese-speaking countries and those covered by the 'Belt and Road' initiative that have close cultural ties with Macau," the statement reads.

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# New Macau questions mutual recognition driving licenses

Lynzy Valles

**T**HE New Macau Association is calling on the Chief Executive (CE), Chui Sai On, to withdraw the Executive Order announced on Monday regarding the agreement to mutually recognize driving licenses between the city and mainland China.

Yesterday the suspended legislator, Sulu Sou, handed an interpellation outside the Legislative Assembly (AL) for the Chief Executive to recall the relevant dispatch, stressing that there was no public consultation and that it did not provide substantial justification to the public.

The Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, has been authorized by Chui Sai On to sign the agreement concerning mutual driving license recognition with the Ministry of Public Security of China, according to a dispatch published in Monday's Official Gazette.

According to the agreement, driver license holders in Macau will not be required to take an exam to apply for a mainland license. A similar policy will apply to driver license holders in the mainland when they drive for fewer than 14 days in the SAR.

Yesterday, the New Macau Association criticized the move, calling it "irresponsible governance." Sulu Sou stressed that



Sulu Sou hands an interpellation outside

the guidelines stipulate that policies of major significance should be consulted upon accordingly, and that principles such as "encouraging fair public participation" and "enhancing transparency of consultation and capacity of responsiveness" should be followed.

**We cannot accept this, it is an irresponsible action by the government.**

SULU SOU

"It's conflicting with the government's policy," said the young lawmaker. "The policy [of mutual recognition of driving licenses] raises questions but the government did not listen to any public opinion. We cannot accept this, it is an irresponsible action by the govern-

ment," Sou told the press.

Thus, Sou called on the CE, who was present at yesterday's AL session, to firstly, withdraw the dispatch of authorization, and secondly, to host a public consultation, allowing the community to deliberate and clarify the pros and cons within.

"I believe that this is a breach of principles of scientific decision-making and good governance," Sou emphasized.

## LAM, CHUI SEE NO RELATION TO ANY POLITICAL FACTORS

**AFTER OFFICIAL** Gazette notice was published, the director of Transport Bureau (DSAT), Lam Hin Sam, announced that a schedule has not been made yet concerning the signing of the agreement. Moreover, Lam claimed that the mutual recognition is absolutely unrelated to any political factors, and that the policy solely serves the purpose of aiding local residents when visiting mainland China. Questioned as to whether

Sou raised a question as to the reasons behind the Executive Branch's rejection of the statutory consultation, claiming that the mutual recognition of driving licenses is related to the direction and planning of the society – fitting into the definition of "policies of major significance" – stipulated by the Regulatory Guidelines on Public Consultations.

"We can predict that [there] is a big [political] power to push this policy. If it's not any political power to push this policy, the government should [have given] more detailed information and reference to support this policy," said Sou.

"There is a strong reason for the public to criticize and question [the matter]," he added.

the government will call for an end to the agreement in case the number of related traffic accidents increase after the policy comes into effect, Lam refused to comment. Asked to comment on the matter by lawmakers Au Kam San and Ng Kuok Cheong, Chui Sai On said yesterday that the mutual recognition is not a result of "political pressure." Inversely, he said, a study has been done before the measure was green-lighted.

## CRIME

# Croupier caught in scheme involving losses of over HKD800k to casino

**A** 28-year-old croupier, who was working in a casino located in the NAPE area, and his accomplice were caught on surveillance participating in a scam to misappropriate funds from the casino on April 14, the Judiciary Police (PJ) revealed in a press conference.

The scheme, which involved a mainland woman aged 45, was simple and in operation for a relatively long period of time. The croupier would exchange gaming chips to the woman (pretending to be a gambler) at a much higher value.

When both were caught, the croupier had just handed the woman five chips with the face value of HKD10,000 each in exchange for 10 chips with a value of HKD1,000 each, gaining a profit of HKD40,000.

After being caught and handed over to the PJ, the woman denied the crime but the man admitted it, saying that they had been performing it since May last year and have done it more than 10 instances since then.

According to the testimony of the croupier, the pair have earned around HKD400,000 each from the scams.

When they were arrested, the croupier had over HKD500,000 in cash in his locker and the woman had in her possession gaming chips and cash amounting to over HKD100,000.

Both were presented to the Public Prosecutions Office for the crime of embezzlement.

In a separate case, occurring on the same day, a man (38) from the mainland was caught in a hotel room in NAPE in the possession of HKD5.2 million that belonged to another man from mainland.

According to the report made by the victim, the suspect had suggested that he hand over his bankcard, pin code and China identification card so that the suspect could withdraw some money if needed.

While he was playing at a casino, the victim claims to have received a series of messages from the bank notifying him that cash withdrawals had been made at ATM machines as well as pawnshops amounting to a total of RMB4.9 million, after which he made the complaint against the suspect.

After being questioned by the police, the suspect admitted to the crime and was presented to the Public Prosecutions Office under the charges of swindling. **RM**

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# China may be set for rare property defaults, Neuberger says

**C**HINESE developers may be headed for rare defaults on their debts as rising interest rates make it harder to roll over record borrowings, according to one of the few foreign money managers selling local financial products to the nation's investors.

Smaller property firms might miss payments on bonds this year after the government's leverage curbs pushed up borrowing costs, according to Neuberger Berman, which started its first onshore private fund this month for qualified investors, with a focus on fixed income. There haven't yet been any defaults on publicly issued bonds from developers in China's local market.

"Smaller developers don't have sound cash flows and can't tolerate any halt in refinancing because of their high leverage," said Peter Ru, chief investment officer of China fixed income at Neuberger Berman Investment Management (Shanghai) Ltd., a unit of the New York-based firm. "Weaker developers may face even higher borrowing costs."

Some local real estate companies have been forced to swallow record rates to raise money, and a government crackdown on shadow banking has cut a major



cash lifeline for the weakest among them. The timing is bad as property firms face a record 110 billion yuan (USD17.52 billion) of onshore note maturities for the rest of this year. On top of that, investors also have options to sell 205 billion yuan of bonds back.

Real estate companies with total assets under 40 billion yuan and debt-to-asset ratios higher than 70 percent face high default risks this year as they don't have enough sources to tap for refinancing, according to Ru at Neuberger

Berman. The median total debt-to-asset ratio for 127 China-listed property developers was 31 percent as of Sept. 30, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

The average coupon rate for local property bonds rose to 6.41 percent in the first quarter from 5.32 percent a year earlier, according to Bloomberg-compiled data. Tianjin Real Estate Trust Group Co., a developer based in the northeastern port city of Tianjin, issued five-year bonds with a yield of 9.5 percent in March. That was the highest coupon

for the company and for real estate bonds with similar maturities, the data show.

In the offshore market, Guorui Properties Ltd. sold one-year dollar notes at 10.2 percent in the first quarter, a record for similar-maturity Chinese corporate bonds in the currency.

Neuberger Berman only buys bonds from developers in China that rank among the top 30 in terms of revenue, as such firms have a higher ratio of cash to maturing debt this year, according to Ru.

**Smaller developers don't have sound cash flows and can't tolerate any halt in refinancing because of their high leverage.**

PETER RU  
NEUBERGER BERMAN  
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

For onshore corporate bonds in general, Ru expects the government's financial deleveraging will increase the number of defaults and prefers higher-graded securities, with local ratings AA+ or above. He said he's the most concerned about credit risks of local government financing vehicle bonds. **Bloomberg**

# HK gets prominent back-seat driver in dollar peg defense

**F**EW managers appreciate having their predecessor chime in with tips on how to do their job. In the case of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, it's the agency's most famous former boss.

The city's de facto central bank said in a statement yesterday there's no need for it to adjust interest rates proactively because that would spur inflows, offsetting the impacts of higher borrowing costs and stoking concerns over the city's determination to defend its linked exchange rate.

Former HKMA Chief Executive Joseph Yam



apparently disagrees. In an interview with local media published Monday, he said there's room for the de facto central bank to adjust rates. One of the options is selling more exchange fund bills - a move that would tight-

en liquidity and boost borrowing costs. The benefit, he argued, was that Hong Kong property prices wouldn't be so high if the city tracked interest rate hikes in the U.S.

Yam's experience in managing the Hong

Kong dollar makes him hard to ignore. The 69-year-old was HKMA's first chief executive and he held the position for 16 years before retiring in October 2009. One of the most controversial episodes during his tenure was the decision to buy USD15 billion of stocks to defend the local currency during the Asian financial crisis - a move that was first criticized and then praised by former Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan.

Yam is now a member of the Hong Kong government's Executive Council, which assists Chief Executive Carrie Lam in policy making.

The current debate reflects the HKMA's dilemma in managing the currency: while it is obliged to prevent the Hong Kong dollar from sliding beyond HK\$7.85, it needs to make sure that interest rates don't surge so quickly that it triggers a sharp correction in property prices. Borrowing costs are starting to rise, with the three-month Hibor rate on the Hong Kong dollar climbing for a third day to the highest level since January.

The Hong Kong dollar traded at HKD7.8499 per greenback as of 3:30 p.m. local time. The HKMA bought \$2.4 billion of the local dollars since the currency sank to the weak end of its permitted trading range last week. **Bloomberg**

## opinion

### HK HAS WHIP HAND IN ANY HORSE RACE WITH HAINAN

Nisha Gopalan, Bloomberg

Hong Kong's government can breathe a small sigh of relief: Its gambling well isn't going to dry up just yet.

Chinese President Xi Jinping handed a long-awaited gift to Hainan province by announcing support for the development of horse racing and sports lotteries on the tropical island, according to a weekend statement by the Xinhua News Agency. That's a potential threat to the Hong Kong Jockey Club, which generated HKD33.9 billion (USD4.3 billion) of revenue in the year through June and has been called an ATM for the government for its tax and charitable contributions.

Hold on, though. This is a race that's heavily handicapped in Hong Kong's favor. Hainan faces a host of obstacles before it gets to the starting gate, and even if it does, there's no guarantee the island can meaningfully challenge the former British colony.

For one thing, China has already experimented with horse racing elsewhere, with little success. That may have something to do with the fact that betting is banned, and it isn't yet clear how and whether the prohibition will be relaxed for Hainan. There are racetracks across the country, including in Inner Mongolia. Guangzhou opened a course in 1992, but it was closed within seven years after authorities found evidence of large-scale gambling, the South China Morning Post reported.

Moreover, the Hong Kong Jockey Club's experience, track record and infrastructure will be hard to beat. It has two racecourses with more than 100 off-track betting outlets, offers wagers on football matches and also runs a lottery. In recent years, the club has allowed "commingling" or betting from overseas, with Britons now able to wager on Hong Kong races through Ladbrokes Coral Group Plc.

Starting a horse racing industry isn't a matter of just building a track: It requires an entire ecosystem. Besides the horses, which alone can be a huge expense for a competitive operation, Hainan will need to attract trainers, jockeys, veterinarians and other experts. Founded in 1884, the Hong Kong Jockey Club has an accumulation of experience that won't be easy to replicate.

Granted, Macau's gambling operators are in an even stronger position to fend off any encroachment from Hainan. They at least can count on the Communist Party's antipathy to casinos located within mainland China. The experience of Japan and Singapore shows that the process of creating a casino hub is a multi-year affair, as Morgan Stanley analyst Praveen Choudhary notes.

At some point, Hainan will allow a form of betting on horse racing and football: Beijing's aim, after all, is to bring money Chinese consumers are spending abroad back home. It sees the island as a vehicle for that goal. Xi's package for Hainan included not just allowing racing and sports lotteries but also duty-free shopping.

Ultimately, Hong Kong may find itself challenged, especially once the city is subsumed within the Greater Bay Area envisioned by China's central planners. The Jockey Club may then have to find a way of becoming part of the mainland's gambling story, for example by seeking to be the operator of China's horse races and lotteries.

The city still has plenty of time to close the stable door before that horse bolts.



## Economic growth holds at 6.8pct steady amid trade dispute

CHINA'S economic growth held steady in the quarter ending in March amid a worsening trade dispute with U.S. President Donald Trump, buoyed by strong e-commerce and factory output.

The world's second-largest economy expanded by 6.8 percent over a year earlier, in line with the quarter ending in December and down slightly from 2017's full-year expansion of 6.9 percent, data showed yesterday. It was above the official 2018 target of "around 6.5 percent," which would be among the world's strongest if achieved.

A government spokesman expressed confidence China's \$12 trillion-a-year economy can withstand Trump's threatened tariff hikes on up on Chinese goods in a dispute over technology policy.

China has "room to maneuver" following efforts to develop more self-sustaining growth based on domestic consumption and reduce reliance on trade, said Xing Zhihong, spokesman for the National Bureau of Statistics.

"China is fully capable of responding to Sino-U.S. trade frictions, responding to challenges and maintaining sustained and healthy economic development," Xing said at a news conference.

Forecasters expect Chinese growth to cool this year as Beijing tries to rein in rising debt seen as the biggest threat to economic stability by tightening controls to cool a boom in real estate sales and bank lending.

Last year's expansion was unexpectedly strong but activity began to weaken in March.

"China's economy entered 2018 with solid growth momentum," Louis Kuijs of Oxford Economics said in a report. "But momentum slowed in March, compared to the first two months, pointing to slower growth ahead."

The statistics bureau said growth compared with the previous quarter, the standard used by other major economies, slowed to 1.4 percent from 1.6 percent in the final three months of 2017.

Beijing has begun to report such quarter-on-quarter figures in recent years but its headline number is measured against a year earlier, which makes Chinese growth seem smoother than that of other economies.

### China is fully capable of responding to Sino-U.S. trade frictions

XING ZHIHONG  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS

Europe and other trading partners also complain China is flooding global markets with unfairly low-priced steel, aluminum and other goods, threatening jobs abroad.

"We worry about the long-term implications but view a trade war with substantial short-term

growth impact as unlikely," Kuijs said.

The ruling Communist Party is trying to steer China to slower, more sustainable growth based on domestic consumption instead of trade and investment. But Beijing has repeatedly set that back by relying on infusions of bank lending to shore up the economy since the 2008 crisis, adding to rising debt.

In a positive sign for efforts to encourage consumer spending, retail sales rose 9.8 percent, accelerating from December's 9.4 percent growth, according to the statistics bureau. E-commerce sales surged 35.4 percent, up 3.3 percentage points from the previous quarter.

Factory output rose 6.8 percent over a year earlier.

"While we don't think China's economy is expanding as rapidly as the official figures claim, there is broader evidence to suggest that a recovery in industry did prevent growth from slipping too much last quarter," said Ju-

lian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics in a report.

Investment in factories, real estate and other fixed assets rose 7.5 percent, up from 2017's 7.2 percent growth.

"Outside of industry, activity looks to have cooled recently," Evans-Pritchard said. "Construction growth is slowing as local governments pare back infrastructure spending in order to control debt levels."

China's trade balance swung to a rare deficit in March as exports shrank 2.7 percent over a year earlier. Trade accounts for less of China's economic activity than in earlier years but still supports millions of jobs.

In a speech last week, President Xi Jinping promised to open China's markets wider, cut import duties on autos and ease restrictions on foreign ownership in the auto and finance industries. He gave no details and didn't directly address Trump's complaint that Beijing improperly pressures foreign companies to hand over technology.

The ruling party's annual development plan, announced last month, calls for further cuts in the bloated state-owned steel industry and a bigger role for market forces and entrepreneurs. AP

## US bars telecom giant ZTE from buying components

THE U.S. Commerce Department is blocking Chinese telecommunications giant ZTE Corp. from importing American components for seven years, accusing the company of misleading U.S. regulators after it settled charges of violating sanctions against North Korea and Iran.

Shenzhen-based ZTE agreed in March 2017

to plead guilty and pay USD1.19 billion for illegally shipping telecommunications equipment to North Korea and Iran. ZTE promised to discipline employees involved in the scheme.

But Commerce said Monday that ZTE paid full bonuses to several of those involved, then lied about it.

"ZTE misled the Department of Commerce. Instead of reprimanding ZTE staff and senior management, ZTE rewarded them," Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said. "This egregious behavior cannot be ignored."

Commerce officials said the sanctions were unrelated to ongoing disputes over China's aggressive at-

tempts to obtain U.S. technology and overproduction of steel and aluminum.

The ZTE news drove down stocks in companies that stood to lose business. In early afternoon trading, Acacia Communications shares were down nearly 35 percent, Oclaro Inc.'s nearly 13 percent and Lumentum Holdings' almost 7 percent. AP





# Beijing to allow full foreign ownership in auto industry

Joe McDonald, Beijing

**C**HINA announced plans yesterday to allow full foreign ownership of automakers in five years, ending restrictions that helped to fuel its escalating dispute with U.S. President Donald Trump and strained relations with other trading partners.

The change would scrap rules that require global automakers to work through local state-owned partners, an arrangement that forces them to share technology with potential competitors. It was unclear whether that might help to mollify Trump, who has threatened to hike tariffs on as much as USD150 billion of Chinese goods in response to complaints Beijing pressures foreign companies to hand over technology.

The development reflects growing official confidence that China's young but fast-growing automakers can compete with global brands and a desire to make the industry more flexi-

le as Beijing promotes development of electric cars.

The industry had been waiting for details since President Xi Jinping announced in a speech last week that ownership restrictions would be eased and auto import duties reduced.

Limits on foreign ownership of electric vehicle producers will be eliminated this year, the Cabinet's planning agency said. That will be followed by a similar repeal for makers of commercial vehicles in 2020 and passenger vehicles in 2022.

"Following a five-year transition period, all ownership restrictions will be lifted," said the announcement by the National Development and Reform Commission.

Until now, global automakers such as General Motors Co. and Volkswagen AG have been allowed to own no more than 50 percent of a joint venture with a Chinese partner and were limited to two ventures.

Automakers complied because they gained access to China's

populous market, which passed the United States in 2009 as the world's biggest by number of vehicles sold. Sales of sedans, SUVs and minivans last year totaled 24.8 million units, about 55 percent of which was American, European, Japanese and Korean brands.

Independent domestic brands such as Geely, which owns Sweden's Volvo Cars, SUV maker Great Wall and electric car brand BYD Auto are developing technology and increasing exports.

Geely has bought a nearly 10 percent stake in Daimler AG, becoming the German automaker's biggest shareholder and gaining leverage to push for technology sharing. State-owned Dongfeng Motor Group, which has joint ventures with Nissan Motor Co. and other brands, bought a 14 percent stake in France's PSA Peugeot Citroen in 2014.

"Chinese companies such as Geely and Great Wall have financial power and technology resources," said industry analyst John Zeng of LMC Automotive.

"It's not like 10 years ago, when foreign brands had a big technology advantage."

**The development reflects growing official confidence that China's young automakers can compete with global brands**

He said the latest shift is part of Beijing's effort to accelerate development of electric vehicles, which have a central role in the ruling Communist Party's industry plans.

China is the world's biggest electric vehicle market, with last

year's sales rising 53 percent over 2016 to 770,000 vehicles. Beijing is using sales quotas and fuel efficiency standards to press global automakers to help local suppliers develop battery technology.

A deputy industry minister said in September that Beijing was developing a timetable to join France and Britain in ending sales of gasoline cars.

BYD, which has a joint venture with Daimler's Mercedes unit, is the biggest global electric car producer by number of units sold and has a factory in California that produces electric buses.

"Foreign brands will not have as much of an advantage as they had with combustion engines," said Zeng. "More or less, Chinese brands already compete with them on a similar level in electric cars."

Beijing's restrictions led to clashes with Washington and other governments. The United States, Canada and Mexico won a World Trade Organization ruling in 2008 that China was improperly promoting local components suppliers by imposing import taxes on autos assembled in Chinese factories from foreign parts. But by then, automakers already had shifted to local suppliers and were transferring technology.

Trump complained Beijing was hampering trade by charging a 25 percent import duty on most cars while the United States charges less than 3 percent.

The impact on companies such as GM, VW, Nissan Motors Co. and Ford Motor Co. that have joint ventures with Chinese partners is likely to be limited at first.

Their contracts with Chinese partners extend for up to 30 years. They have developed supply and factory networks, research centers and other joint activities that would be costly and difficult to unwind.

GM also has a venture with state-owned Shanghai Automotive Industries Corp. to produce and market vehicles in India.

The change could be a boon to U.S. electric brand Tesla, which has avoided a joint venture that would require it to share battery technology. The company imports its cars from California, which adds import taxes to the sticker price. **AP**

# China rules US sorghum was dumped as trade tensions mount

**C**HINA yesterday ordered importers of U.S. sorghum to pay deposits for possible higher tariffs in an anti-dumping investigation, adding to growing trade conflict with Washington.

A preliminary ruling by the Commerce Ministry said U.S. sorghum was being sold at improperly low prices, hurting Chinese farmers. It said importers must post bonds of 178.6 percent of the

value of their goods to cover possible anti-dumping duties while the probe is completed.

Beijing launched the sorghum investigation on Feb. 4 in what some businesspeople saw as a

warning shot after President Donald Trump hiked tariffs on Chinese-made washing machines and solar modules.

Since then, Trump has threatened to raise duties on up to USD150 billion

of Chinese goods in a dispute over technology policy. Beijing has responded with its own list of U.S. goods for possible retaliation.

The measures on sorghum, a grain used in animal feed and for making the fiery traditional Chinese liquor baijiu, target farm areas that voted for Trump in 2016. China is one of the biggest foreign markets for

U.S. sorghum growers.

Investigators concluded dumping of U.S. sorghum "substantially damaged" Chinese competitors, the Commerce Ministry said.

It said prices of U.S. sorghum fell 13 percent from 2013 to 2017, while shipments increased 14-fold.

The ministry said results of a parallel anti-subsidy investigation of U.S. sorghum would be released later. **AP**

AP PHOTO

■ This time, Abe's visit comes weeks after Trump took him by surprise when he announced he had accepted an invitation to sit down with Kim



In this February file photo, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (left) walks with U.S. President Donald Trump for a news conference at the White House

## JAPAN-US

# Trump to host Abe amid strain over North Korea, tariffs

Jill Colvin & Matthew Pennington, West Palm Beach (Fla.)

**P**RESIDENT Donald Trump will play host to Japan's Shinzo Abe at Mar-a-Lago this week amid growing strain between the two countries over the president's planned meeting with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un and his push for new tariffs.

The visit will be an opportunity for the two leaders to discuss Trump's upcoming summit with North Korea, which Japan eyes warily. It will also serve as a test of whether the fond personal relationship the two leaders have forged on the golf course and over meetings and phone calls has chilled over Trump's recent moves, including his failure to exempt Japan from new steel and aluminum tariffs.

"We expect it to be very positive," White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said of Abe's visit. "Obviously, the president has got a great relationship there, and it's going to be centered primarily on preparation for talks with North Korea as well as a lot of trade discussion is expected to come up."

The official visit will begin today [Macau time] with a one-on-one meeting followed by a small group discussion with top national security officials focused on the Kim summit. In the evening, the president and first lady Melania Trump will have dinner with the Japanese prime minister and his wife.

Tomorrow, the topic will broaden to other issues affecting the Indo-Pacific region, including trade and energy. Trump and Abe will also hold a joint press conference before the president and first lady host the Japanese delegations for dinner. Abe will return to Japan on Thursday morning.

Golf is not on the official schedule, but senior administration officials didn't rule it out completely. Trump and Abe played together during Abe's last trip to Florida a year ago and during Trump's maiden trip to Japan late last year.

When Trump hosted Abe at his private Mar-a-Lago club just weeks after his inauguration, North Korea launched its first missile test of Trump's administration, and the two delivered a joint statement denouncing the launch.

This time, Abe's visit comes weeks after Trump took him — and the region — by surprise when he announced he had accepted an invitation to sit down with Kim following months of increasingly heated rhetoric over the North's nuclear weapons program.

Among the major powers in Northeast Asia, Japan has been left out of the recent flurry of diplomacy with North Korea. Abe will be seeking reassurance from Trump that security threats to Japan won't be overlooked in the U.S.-North Korea summit, slated for May or early June.

Mike Pompeo, Trump's pick for secretary of state, said the goal of the summit is to get North Korea to "step away from its efforts to hold America at risk with nuclear weapons."

Abe has voiced fears that short- and medium-range missiles that pose a threat to Japan might not be part of the U.S. negotiations and has said he worries Trump may "end up accepting North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons."

James Schoff, a former Pentagon adviser on East Asia policy and now a senior associate for

the Asia program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said the North Korea summit will be front and center of the visit.

"Abe will want to know what Trump's trying to get out of the meeting and what he's willing to offer," Schoff said. "Abe will want to reinforce the idea that maximum pressure must continue until we get complete denuclearization."

Abe is also expected to push for exemptions on new U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum imports that have been granted to several key U.S. allies.

Takehiro Shimada, a spokesman for the Embassy of Japan, said the country can't accept Trump's decision on the tariffs and will be pushing Trump to reconsider.

"That's what we really wanted to ask the America side is, 'Why?'" he said.

Japan could also express support for a U.S. return to the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal that Trump abandoned on taking office. Trump opened the possibility of rejoining last week amid a trade dispute with China.

Both sides insist that Trump

and Abe remain close. U.S. officials stressed that Trump has met with Abe more than any other world leader and say they've been in "constant contact" since Trump accepted Kim's invitation.

Abe is also expected to push the issue of Japanese abductees, one of his top policy priorities. Pyongyang has acknowledging abducting 13 Japanese, while Tokyo maintains North Korea abducted 17. Five have been returned to Japan. North Korea says eight others died and denies the remaining four entered its territory. Japan has not been satisfied with North Korea's explanation and has demanded further investigation.

Shimada said Abe would make the case to Trump that releasing the abductees could help North Korea prove they can be trusted to negotiate in good faith after years of deception.

The U.S. itself is pushing for the release of three Americans.

After five years in office, Abe is one of Japan's longest-serving, post-World War II prime ministers but has suffered plummeting poll ratings over allegations that a school linked to his wife got preferential government treatment in a land sale.

That has sparked mass protests demanding Abe's resignation and imperils his chances of winning another term as ruling party leader in September and staying on as premier, despite a handy national election victory last year. **AP**

# Vietnam, Indonesia vow to settle fishing violations

**V**IENTNAM and Indonesia have pledged to work together to resolve fishing violations in the South China Sea as the two countries seek to boost their bilateral trade.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, speaking to reporters yesterday at a joint briefing with his Vietnamese counterpart, said the two countries would strengthen their partnership, cooperating particularly on fishing and other maritime issues.

"In maritime and fishing cooperation, we agreed on how to conclude the ongoing issues in this regard," she said via a translator. "We have also agreed to try together to complete the demarcation of the exclusive economic zone, because the demarcation of the EEZ between our two countries can enhance the interests of our two peoples as well as ensure security between our two countries."

Since 2014, Indonesia has destroyed several hundred fishing vessels, most of them from Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia



Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi (left) with her Vietnamese counterpart Pham Binh Minh before heading for talks in Hanoi yesterday

and Thailand, for violating its waters. The government of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo has taken a hard-line stance against illegal fishing, partly driven by the need to show its neighbors that it is in control of its vast territory of 17,000 islands.

Vietnamese Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh said the two sides agreed to establish a mechanism to handle fishing violations

in line with both countries' laws.

"On our part, Vietnam will continue to strengthen education and information so as to raise awareness of our fishermen not to violate other countries' waters," he said.

Marsudi said trade and investment between the two countries have seen positive developments, especially after the establishment of the strategic partnership in 2013. **AP**

## MYANMAR

# President grants amnesty to over 8,500 prisoners

**M**YANMAR President Win Myint has granted amnesty to more than 8,500 prisoners, reportedly including at least three dozen political prisoners.

The amnesty, announced yesterday, coincided with Myanmar's traditional New Year. It was granted to 8,490 Myanmar citizens and 51 foreigners. A statement from presidential spokesman Zaw Thay said those released included the aged, people in ill health and drug offenders. None was individually named.

It also said 36 of those freed had been listed as political prisoners by the independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

The releases were to take place at prisons nationwide. Relatives and friends of those held waited outside the gates at Insein Prison, in the northern outskirts of Yangon, where it



was expected that more than 300 prisoners, including eight political detainees, would be released.

As they came through the gate, the released prisoners looked excited, though many were reluctant to be interviewed.

One of those freed was Saw War Lay, a member of the Karen ethnic minority who was arrested in 2006 and is serving a life sentence for his connection with the Karen National Union ethnic rebel group.

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## SYRIA

# Chemical weapons team kept from alleged attack site

Bassem Mroue, Douma

**S**YRIAN and Russian authorities prevented independent investigators from going to the scene of a suspected chemical attack, the head of the chemical watchdog group said Monday, blocking international efforts to establish what happened and who was to blame.

The U.S. and France say they have evidence that poison gas was used in the April 7 attack in the opposition-held town of Douma, killing dozens of people, and that Syrian President Bashar Assad's military was behind it.

But they have made none of that evidence public, even after they, along with Britain, bombarded sites they said were linked to Syria's chemical weapons program.

Syria and its ally Russia deny any chemical attack took place, and Russian officials went even further, accusing Britain of staging a "fake" chemical attack. British Prime Minister Theresa May accused the two countries — whose forces now control the town east of Damascus — of trying to cover up evidence.

The lack of access to Douma by inspectors from the watchdog group, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, has left unanswered questions about the attack.

OPCW Director-General Ahmet Uzumcu said Syrian and Russian officials cited "pending security issues" in keeping its inspectors from reaching Douma.

"The team has not yet deployed to Douma," Uzumcu told an executive council meeting of the OPCW in The Hague.

Instead, Syrian authorities offered them 22 people to interview as witnesses, he said, adding that he hoped "all necessary arrangements will be made [...] to allow the team to deploy to Douma as soon as possible."

Russian military police were ready to help protect the OPCW experts on their visit to Douma, said Maj. Gen. Yuri Yevtushenko of the Russian military's Reconciliation Center in Syria. Igor Kirillov, a Russian chemical weapons protection expert in The Hague, said the team is set to visit the site today.

Earlier this week, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said the inspectors could not go to the site because they needed approval from the U.N. Department for Safety and Security. He denied that Russia was hampering the mission and suggested the approval was



Russian military police officers check a weapons factory left behind by members of the Army of Islam group, in the town of Douma

held up because of the Western airstrikes.

"As far as I understand, what is hampering a speedy resolution of this problem is the consequences of the illegal, unlawful military action that Great Britain and other countries conducted on Saturday," he said.

## Russian military police were ready to help protect the experts on their visit to Douma, said Maj. Gen. Yevtushenko

However, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the United Nations has "provided the necessary clearances for the OPCW team to go about its work in Douma. We have not denied the team any request for it to go to Douma."

Yesterday, the government-run Central Military media reported a missile attack on the Shayrat air base in Homs province. It said Syrian air defenses shot down most of the six missiles fired at the base. It also reported a separate airstrike on the Dumayr air base near Damascus.

It did not elaborate or say who carried out the airstrikes. A Pentagon spokeswoman said there was no U.S. military activity in the area.

Earlier this month, four Iranian military personnel were killed in an airstrike on Syria's T4 air base in Homs. Syria and its allies blamed Israel for that attack. Israel did not confirm or deny mounting the raid.

In Douma, at least 40 people are believed to have died in the suspected chemical attack on April 7. Until Saturday, the city was the last rebel-held town near the capital and the target of a government offensive in February and March that killed hundreds and displaced tens of thousands. Hours after the alleged chemical attack, the rebel faction that controlled the town, the Army of Islam, relented and was evacuated along with thousands of residents.

The Associated Press, during a government-organized visit to Douma, spoke to survivors and witnesses who described being hit by gas. Several said a strange smell started spreading and people screamed, "It's chlorine! It's chlorine!"

The AP visited a two-room underground shelter where Khaled Mahmoud Nuseir said 47 people were killed, including his pregnant wife and two daughters, 18-month-old Qamar and 2 1/2-year-old Nour. A strange smell lingered, nine days after the attack.

Nuseir, 25, said he ran from the shelter to a nearby clinic and fainted. After he was revived, he returned to the shelter and found his wife and daughters dead, with foam coming from their mouths.

He and two other residents accused the rebel Army of Islam of carrying out the attack. As they spoke, government troops were not far away but out of earshot. Nuseir said a gas cylinder was found leaking the poison gas, adding that he didn't think it was dropped from the air because it still looked intact.

Separately, the AP spoke to a medic who was among those who later were evacuated to northern Syria. Ahmed Abed al-Nafaa said helicopters were flying before the attack and when he reached the site, people were screaming "chlorine." He said he tried to enter the shelter but was overcome by a strong smell of chlorine and his comrades pulled him out.

The accounts contradict what the Syrian government and Russia have reported: that there was no gas attack in Douma.

On Sunday, Syria's state-run Al-Ikhbariya TV broadcast interviews with nearly a dozen doctors and medics who said they found no trace of poison gas in Douma. One medic said he heard someone scream "Chemical!" but saw no patients with symptoms. Others said that dust can seep into underground shelters, causing

choking and other symptoms associated with chemical attacks.

The Russian military said last week its officers in Douma found no evidence to support reports of a gas attack. The Russian military taskforce in Syria said it visited the hospital in Douma and talked to staff who said they did not confirm reports of such an assault.

Both Russia and the Syrian government have welcomed the OPCW mission. The team arrived in Syria on Saturday. The OPCW team does not have a mandate to assign blame for the attack.

Syria's Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad has said his country is "fully ready" to cooperate with the OPCW mission. He said government officials met with the delegation several times to discuss cooperation.

Government forces and Russian troops have been deployed in Douma, which is now controlled by the Syrian government. Opposition activists have said the troops might have removed any evidence of chemical weapons' use.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov denied that Russia interfered with any evidence.

"I can guarantee that Russia has not tampered with the site," Lavrov told the BBC on Monday.

Alexander Shulgin, the Russian envoy at the OPCW in The Hague, said allegations that Russia might destroy evidence reflected Washington's effort to justify Saturday's strikes.

"It's a clumsy effort to find an explanation if the claim of the chemical weapons use in Syria fails to get confirmation," Shulgin said at a briefing. "Our American partners are clearly getting nervous. They are frantically looking for some justification if their claims that served as the reason for the strike don't receive confirmation."

In London, British Prime Minister Theresa May accused Syria and Russia of trying to cover up evidence. She said Syrian officials have been searching evacuees from Douma to ensure samples are not smuggled out.

"A wider operation to conceal the facts of the attack is underway, supported by the Russians," she told lawmakers.

The weekend's airstrikes have increased international tension, as the U.S. and Russia exchanged threats of retaliation.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday warned that if the strikes continue, "it will inevitably entail chaos in international relations."

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the strikes were a "clear message" to Assad, Russia and Iran that chemical weapons use is not acceptable and that the allies would not stand idle. He spoke in an interview with Turkey's NTV television. **AP**



## what's ON



## LA PARISIENNE – CABARET FRANCAISE

TIME: 8pm (Tuesdays to Fridays)  
2pm & 8pm (Saturdays)  
2pm & 5pm (Sundays)

VENUE: Parisian Theatre, Parisian Macau  
ADMISSION: MOP188, MOP388, MOP488  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 8818 / 2855 5555

## DISCOVER MACAU: MUSEUM OF TAIPA AND COLOANE HISTORY

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Mondays)

ADDRESS: Rua Correia da Silva, Taipa  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

## “MY CHINESE ZODIAC” – EXHIBITION BY RAQUEL GRALHEIRO

TIME: 3pm-8pm (Mondays)  
12pm-8pm (Tuesdays to Sundays)

UNTIL: May 13, 2018  
VENUE: A2 Gallery, Albergue SCM  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2550

## PINACOTROCA - PAINTING AND ILLUSTRATION BY RODRIGO DE MATOS

TIME: 2pm-7pm (closed on Sundays)  
UNTIL: April 21, 2018

VENUE: G/F Macau Cultural Centre Building  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2875 3282

## THE EXHIBITION “SWISS STYLE NOW”

TIME: 10am-9pm  
UNTIL: June 17, 2018

VENUE: Tap Seac Gallery, located at No. 95, Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

## MODERN PAINTING FROM THE MAM COLLECTION

TIME: 10am-7pm (last admission 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: April 29, 2018  
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

## Offbeat

## EGYPT'S MUFTI ISSUES FATWA AGAINST BUYING FACEBOOK 'LIKES'

Egypt's top mufti has issued a fatwa, or a religious decree, saying that buying Facebook “likes” is prohibited under Islam because it's a form of fraud and deception.

Grand Mufti Shawki Allam regularly issues all sorts of fatwas, usually in response to questions by Muslims seeking religious guidance in matters related to even the most trivial issues.

The questions are asked of the Dar al-Ifta, the Sunni Muslim institution in charge of religious rulings, mainly based on the Muslim holy book of Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

The mufti posted on the institution's Facebook page earlier this week that it is “religiously prohibited” to pay someone to click a “like” on a promotion.

Allam says “it's deceptive,” citing Muhammad's saying, “He who deceives is not of us.”

## 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	EPM 20th Anniversary Program
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:55	RTPi Live

## cinema



## CINETEATRO

12 - 18 APR



## RAMPAGE

ROOM 1  
2:30, 4:30, 07:30, 9:30pm

Director: Brad Peyton

Starring: Dwayne Johnson, Naomie Harris, Malin Akerman

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 107min



## SECRET SUPERSTAR

ROOM 2  
2:30, 5:30, 08:30pm

Director: Advait Chandan

Starring: Aamir Khan, Zaira Wasim

Language: Hindi (English &amp; Chinese)

Duration: 150min

## TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY

ROOM 3

2:15, 5:45pm

Director: Nick Park

Starring: Eddie Redmayne, Tom Hiddleston

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 91min



## READY PLAYER ONE

ROOM 3

9:15pm

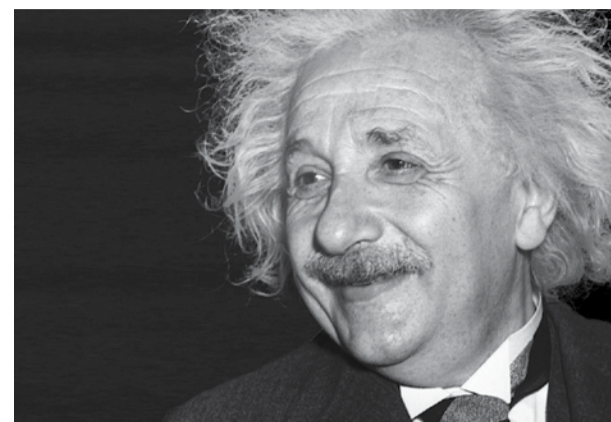
Director: Steven Spielberg

Starring: Tye Sheridan, Olivia Cooke, Ben Mendelsohn

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 140min

## this day in history



## 1955 ALBERT EINSTEIN DIES

Albert Einstein has died in hospital in Princeton, New Jersey, aged 76.

The eminent scientist and originator of the theory of relativity was admitted to hospital three days ago with an internal complaint.

In recent years Dr Einstein had lived a secluded life although he was still a member of staff at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University.

In a statement issued following the scientist's death, US President Dwight Eisenhower said: “No other man contributed so much to the vast expansion of the 20th century knowledge.

“Yet no other man was more modest in the possession of the power that is knowledge, more sure that power without wisdom is deadly.

“To all who live in the nuclear age, Albert Einstein exemplified the mighty creative ability of the individual in a free society.”

Albert Einstein was born on 14 March 1879 to Jewish parents at Ulm, Wurttemberg in Germany.

Soon afterwards the family moved to Munich where the young Einstein began his education at the Luitpold Gymnasium.

His early academic career was notable only for the fact he was asked to leave his school for “disruptive” behaviour.

But he had always excelled at mathematics - a subject which would later make him the most renowned scientist in the world.

In 1896 Einstein entered the Swiss Federal Polytechnic School in Zurich to train as a physics and maths teacher.

But he struggled to get a job, largely due to the fact he was German, so, in 1902, he accepted a job as a technical assistant in the Swiss Patent Office.

It was during his seven years at the Patent Office that, in his spare time, he worked on his mathematical theories which would eventually take the world by storm.

The Special Theory of Relativity, which describes the motion of particles moving close to the speed of light, was published in 1905.

In the years that followed, Einstein took up senior academic posts in Berne and Zurich. In 1911 he became Professor of Theoretical Physics in Prague but returned to Zurich a year later.

However, well-known German physicists, Walter Nernst and Professor Planck, were eager for Einstein to return to Berlin.

In 1913 they persuaded him to take up the position of director of the projected research institute for physics in the University of Berlin and become a member of the Royal Prussian Academy of Science.

Einstein's General Theory of Relativity was published in 1916. In 1921 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics.

He kept the positions in Berlin until 1933, when he accepted a part-time post at Princeton University in America.

His plan was to divide his time between Germany and America but in the same year the Nazis came to power and Einstein, being a Jew, never returned to his birthland.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Albert Einstein's work laid the groundwork for many modern technologies including nuclear weapons and cosmic science.

After his death, Einstein's brain was removed and preserved for scientific research by Canadian scientists.

It was found that the part of Einstein's brain responsible for mathematical thought and the ability to think in terms of space and movement was 15% wider than average.

It also lacked a groove which normally runs through this region suggesting that the neurons were able to communicate.

In 1999 Albert Einstein was named “person of the century” by Time magazine.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You woke up this morning feeling like your old self again: impetuous, impulsive and oh, so assertive. How should you celebrate? How about reconnecting with your friends?

Taurus April 20-May 20 Some problems aren't really problems at all. It depends on how you look at them. For instance, you could get yourself into a bit of trouble if you're not careful now.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You might be right. Your current gang is about to ask - no, beg - that you become more involved in a project that's near and dear to all your hearts. Does this mean it won't be fun...

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 As per usual, finding playmates to go along with you won't be a problem. You may need to attend to family members who've been complaining - okay, whining - about not seeing you.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 After working and tending to the needs of others for days, you're in the mood to let loose and have some serious fun. Of course, your reputation for knowing exactly how to do just that precedes you.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 When you least expect it, you may have company - and you're not famously fond of unexpected visitors. Of course, since your place is always neat and tidy.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 This will be a day to remember - for all the right reasons. The heavens will put you in the mood for romance - of the fiery, impulsive type - just as soon as you wake up.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You're so ready to relax that it's not funny. What is funny is that you're actually feeling torn between whom to relax with - usually not a problem for you. Should you spend another evening with a friend.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 For days, it's been all about them - everyone but you, that is. Enough. Enough with the care-taking, the sympathizing and the listening to sob stories. It's time for you to indulge in some much-needed playtime.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Ready to let loose and have some fun? Some real fun? Great - because the heavens are in the mood to arrange quite the evening for you. How about having the whole crew over to your place for munchies.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 One of the groups you keep company with - the one that just so happens to be the most assertive, aggressive and unafraid of taking risks - is about to invite you to spend some time with them.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 It is now officially time to get over yourself. Stop dwelling on the past. It's gone, and it won't be back. Put some distance between you and whomever or whatever makes you even the slightest bit unhappy.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle.

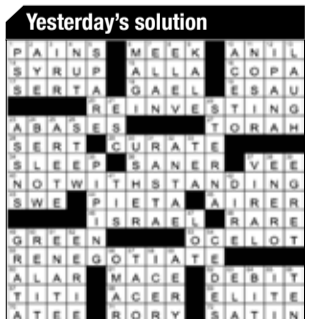
WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Slope; 6- \_\_\_ want for Christmas...; 10- Still; 14- Spanish Mister; 15- Mai \_\_\_; 16- Voice of America org.; 17- In spite of; 20- \_\_\_ Gang; 21- Glass marble; 22- Muscat's land; 26- Big blaze; 30- Northern lights; 34- Shorthand pros; 35- Craggy hill; 36- Doze; 38- Private student; 39- Hasty escape; 40- Jack Sprat could \_\_\_ fat; 42- \_\_\_ Paulo; 43- Teenage lout, to a Brit; 44- Recently; 45- First appearance of an influential phrase or idea; 49- Most gruesome; 50- Give it \_\_\_; 51- Bit of wisdom; 54- Frat party staple; 56- Direct; 64- Bad mood; 65- Buck follower; 66- Hawk's home; 67- Story; 68- Dirty look; 69- Legumes;

DOWN: 1- Taxpayer's ID; 2- Sign of summer; 3- Hill insect; 4- Immediately; 5- Small jazz combo; 6- Pulsating; 7- Part of UNLV; 8- Three sheets to the wind; 9- This \_\_\_ test; 10- Club; 11- China's continent; 12- Bits of thread; 13- Merlin, e.g.; 18- Big brass; 19- Japan's first capital; 22- Brewery kilns; 23- Reciprocal; 24- "Am not!" rejoinder; 25- What the fourth little piggy had; 27- Remarkable; 28- Gift tag word; 29- Comparative suffix; 31- Future fish; 32- Whole; 33- Persian musical instrument; 37- Flowery verse; 39- Sites; 40- Abysmal grades; 41- Inter \_\_\_; 43- Designer's monogram; 44- Bony prefix; 46- Prepare an exhibition; 47- Wrinkly fruit; 48- Request; 51- Hey, over here!; 52- Sicilian spouter; 53- Seed covering; 55- Snatch; 57- Guy's date; 58- Charlemagne's realm; 59- Digit of the foot; 60- Itty-bitty; 61- The Altar; 62- \_\_\_ Tin Tin; 63- \_\_\_ Moines;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' sections with property details for various units in Macau and Taipa.



A bear performs before a Russian Second League soccer match between Angusht Nazran and Mashuk-KMV in Pyatigorsk, Russia

veling circus which approached the club suggesting that the bear perform before the game. Dudov said the Russian Football Union approved the performance.

FAN RACISM

FIFA charged World Cup host Russia with fan racism yesterday, less than two months before the tournament begins.

Monkey chants were aimed at black French players, including Paul Pogba, during France's 3-1 friendly win over Russia in St. Petersburg last month.

"Disciplinary proceedings have been opened against the Russian Football Union for this incident," FIFA said.

The RFU said it is cooperating with the FIFA investigation.

"A request has been made to the Interior Ministry to identify several persons who were involved in these incidents," RFU anti-discrimination officer Alexei Smertin was quoted as saying Monday by the Tass news agency. "If these people's guilt is proven, then there's a high likelihood they won't be allowed to attend World Cup and Russian league games."

Russia was previously charged with racist behavior by its fans at the last two European Championships. On both occasions, the RFU paid a fine.

It's the third racism case this season at St. Petersburg Stadium, which will host a World Cup semifinal match. MDT/AP

FOOTBALL

# Animal rights groups slam bear use at Russian match

ANIMAL rights groups have condemned the use of a bear that performed before a Russian soccer match.

The routine happened before a third-tier match Saturday in the city of Pyatigorsk. TV footage from the game showed the

animal being led to the Mashuk-KMV Pyatigorsk club's stadium, clapping at spectators. The bear, named Tima, also held the ball before handing it over to the referee.

The stadium's announcer claimed that the bear will take part

in the World Cup's opening ceremony in Moscow in June, but World Cup organizers say that is not true. The club's manager says it was borrowed from a circus.

The New York-based World Animal Protection group condemned the stunt, saying that it's

clear from the footage that "cruel training methods have been used" on the bear.

Rustam Dudov, manager of the Mashuk club which arranged for the bear to perform, told the Sport Express newspaper Monday that the bear was borrowed from a tra-

AD

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EXCLUSIVE

# Morocco World Cup 2026 bid masks homosexuality ban

Rob Harris

**A** FIFA task force arrived in Morocco yesterday [Macau time] to inspect a World Cup bid that obscures one potential impediment to hosting the 2026 soccer showpiece: Homosexuality is a criminal offense in the north African country.

An Associated Press review of 483 pages of documents submitted to FIFA found Morocco failed to declare its anti-LGBT law as a risk factor and provide a remedy, appearing to flout stringent new bidding requirements.

"Morocco's human rights report presented to the FIFA is an intentional silence on an issue that Morocco knows too well is a crime on its soil," Ahmed El Hajj, president of the Moroccan Association for Human Rights, told the AP.

"It is evident that if Morocco was to host the World Cup, LGBT people coming to watch the games will face a lot of discrimination. The state will not be able to protect them nor will it be able to commit in preventing measures that could be taken against them by both the state and society."

Under Article 489 of the Moroccan penal code, sexual acts between people of the same sex are punishable by six months to three years in prison.

While World Cup hosts could previously largely shake off concerns from activists, FIFA has demonstrated a growing awareness in recent years of how rights abuses can impact its events.

World Cups must be in envi-

ronments free of "discrimination based on sexual orientation," FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura wrote to activists last year discussing the forthcoming tournament in Russia. Samoura's letter reflected a policy incorporated into world soccer statutes in 2013 as scrutiny of human rights mounted in Russia and 2022 World Cup host Qatar.

"Under the new nondiscrimination requirements under FIFA's statutes and under the Human Rights Policy, one of the red lines is anti-gay activity, laws or policies," Human Rights Watch director of global initiatives Minky Worden told the AP.

"Morocco, if they're serious about winning, would need to be prepared to repeal the article of the penal code which punishes people for being gay," she added.

Unlike when Russia and Qatar emerged victorious in the 2018-2022 FIFA bidding contest eight years ago, prospective hosts for the 2026 tournament were mandated to commission independent human rights reports and provide frank risk assessments that form part of the task force's evaluation. A bid that scores too low based on technical criteria or fails to meet the tournament requirements can be disqualified by the FIFA Council before soccer nations vote on the 2026 host on June 13.

While the United States-Canada-Mexico bid chose to publish its human rights documents, Morocco repeatedly refused requests from the AP to match the disclosure. The Morocco bid's international communications

team also declined to provide any LGBT policy or how the criminalization of same-sex relations would be addressed during a potential World Cup.

The AP was provided with the human rights annexes to Morocco's bid book by FIFA only after highlighting the north African nation's lack of transparency to the soccer world and the up to 207 member nations who will vote in Moscow.

**Morocco, if they're serious about winning [the bid], would need to repeal the article of the penal code which punishes people for being gay.**

MINKY WORDEN  
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

There is a solitary passing reference to LGBT rights in the main 381-page bid book: A narrowly worded pledge by the Moroccan soccer federation to "work to combat all forms of discrimination" including "sexual orientation," signed by its president, Fouzi Lekjaa.

There is no mention of homosexuality being a criminal offen-

se in the bid book, nor in the 27-page executive page executive summary.

Significantly, it is also omitted from the 33-page human rights strategy in which bids were told by FIFA to own up to "adverse impacts" and provide mechanisms to address them. The equivalent 90-page document from the rival North American bid features 20 mentions of "LGBTQI+" and eight references to "sexual orientation," pledging to use their leverage to reduce the risk of discrimination and harassment in Mexico and the U.S. in particular.

"It trips you up in a bid like this because then you are submitting documents that don't accurately reflect the human rights situation in your own country," Worden said. "And you have missed an opportunity to engage the stakeholders who will come back to criticize you if you don't uphold international human rights."

Morocco's only acknowledgement that homosexuality is outlawed comes within one sentence in a 42-page — nominally independent — "study on the human rights situation."

Even then, the reference is ambiguous and implies the law might no longer be in place.

The study cites the United Nations Human Rights Council's "Universal Periodic Review" of the country, stating "Morocco took note of forty-four recommendations," including "the decriminalization of homosexual relations."

How Morocco responded to the recommendation is not pro-

vided to FIFA. That could be because Morocco told the UN in August 2017 it "completely rejects" proposals to decriminalize same-sex relations and violence against people based on their sexual orientation.

"Article 1 of the Constitution highlights the special framework of the federative constants of the Moroccan nation, namely, the moderate Muslim religion, national unity with its multiple components, constitutional monarchy and the democratic choice," Morocco said in a response to the UN last year. "Thus, the Kingdom does not accept these recommendations since they are in contradiction with the above-mentioned federative constants."

Amnesty International said it was "regrettable" Morocco has yet to repeal the articles in the penal code prohibiting same-sex sexual relations, pointing to cases last year when at least two men were sentenced to six months imprisonment.

"This contravenes the international and regional human rights treaties which Morocco has signed and ratified, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights," Amnesty told the AP.

The independence of Morocco's independent human rights study is debatable since it was co-authored by the country's National Human Rights Council, whose president was appointed by the king and is on the bid's human rights committee. The equivalent from the North American bid was produced by London-based Ergon Associates.

"It's very clear from reading these bids against each other that the united bid of the U.S., Canada, and Mexico are taking this process quite seriously both in the scope and the scale and have admitted to human rights problems that they have that they will need to address," Worden said. "And there are very serious concerns both on the LGBT discrimination front and on women's rights (in Morocco). None of those things are mentioned or acknowledged in the bid."

But one of the members of the bid's human rights board maintained Morocco is a "friendly and tolerant" country.

"I don't think that (ban on homosexuality) will be an issue because organizing a World Cup is mainly about infrastructure, being passionate about football, and the ability to organize a safe World Cup," said Jamal El Amrani, who represents the Junior Chamber International organization in Morocco representing people aged 18 to 40.

"We have our laws and we have our values and maybe FIFA also have their values. ... We may have some differences but we just need to have the ability to respect the differences and to be tolerant." **AP**

opinion

**Animal Farm**

Albano Martins



**AS TIME GOES BY**

Nine years ago, I wrote about the election of Chui Sai On as Chief Executive in which I said that it was necessary to “continue, improve, simplify, anticipate and innovate, with a new and fresh government.”

Today I realize that the vast majority of the questions that I raised so long ago remain stubbornly current. Due to space considerations, I condense my piece to the essentials, but I keep what was written *ipsis verbis*.

(...) The economy began, with the opening of the gaming industry, increasingly centered around that industry, and diversification is today, as it was thirty years ago, an activity that should not depend on the government, as who brings it to reality are the entrepreneurs and investors. Although, the government is duty bound to encourage it and more (...).

The only big [industry] cluster in Macau is gaming. However, there is potential for other [sectors] to appear, especially due to Macau’s peculiar location in China. Today low taxation and the climate of high fiscal tolerance (...) constitutes not only an incentive supporting businesses but also for the emergence of new industries and foreign investors. This competitive advantage must be further encouraged.

At the perimeter, Chui Sai On will have to head in the direction of minimizing non-gaming revenue as has been outlined previously (...).

Now it is necessary to minimize bureaucracy and speed up the decision-making processes for new entrepreneurs and investors and the highly qualified workforce that moves to Macau.

As Man Long’s case has hampered much of the Administration’s activity (...). A climate of fear to make decisions or of indecision driven by deliberately increasing bureaucratic processes (...) has constituted a huge bottleneck in the implementation of the strategies outlined by the Government (...).

Today, after the opening of the gaming sector and the economic boom (...), Macau is facing economic and social problems with a worsening income inequality (...), and greater demands for participation in political life (...).

Macau must aspire to move with the flow of modernity and the government should create a climate of greater harmony and stability that will allow economic and social development (...), political development (...). [These are] the great challenges of Chui Sai On, at all levels (...)! He will have to be attentive and prepare himself to face them and especially anticipate them. The lack of a generalized pension system [for instance] is a time bomb. (...) Prosperity has given us options (...) not always guided by the rules of sound management of public funds.

No one doubts the added value of continuing to make Macau the platform between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries, (...) the benefits of CEPA and further integration into the Great Pearl River Delta, if we solve the issues that are affecting us today.

But growth, and above all development, presuppose the availability of resources, one of which is labor.

Its scarcity is now an enormous factor obstructing sustained growth. Chui Sai On will have to be brave enough to wage a battle against cheap and ignorant populism (...). The use of imported labor is essential should the alternatives, if any, of local labor (...) be exhausted, of course. Today, efficiency suggests this process of recruitment should be easier, faster and more flexible (...). The civil servant machinery must be a leading facilitator in the growth and modernity of the economy and not a hindrance (...). In a strictly economic sense, Chui Sai On will therefore have to look closely at the developments of his industrial queen, gaming, in countries that may rise as potential competition, and audaciously anticipate problems (...). Outside gaming or against gaming, Macau has no chance of surviving.”

As time goes by!

**THE BUZZ** TRADE FEARS WEIGH ON OUTLOOK IN EXPORT CHAMP GERMANY

Fears about international trade disputes and the conflict in Syria have sent the economic outlook lower among investment professionals in Germany, the largest economy in the 19-country euro currency union.

It’s only the latest sign that looming trade conflict between the U.S. and China is weighing on the outlook in Europe, after several other economic indicators dropped recently.

The ZEW research institute index released

yesterday fell in April by 13.3 points to minus 8.2 points, the second sharp monthly drop in a row. The index, is based on a survey of investment analysts about their outlook for the coming months, is now well below its long-term average of 23.5 points.

U.S. President Donald Trump has announced tariffs on steel and aluminum imports as well as on a range of Chinese goods, sparking concerns about retaliation and an escalating trade war.

WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS

**Two targeted in deadly shooting casino picnic**

**P**OLICE were searching yesterday [Macau time] for a man accused of opening fire on a picnic for a group of employees of a Las Vegas Strip casino-resort, killing a woman and critically injuring a man this weekend in what investigators called workplace violence.

Authorities say Anthony

**A woman in her 50s was killed, and a man, also in his 50s, was being treated for critical wounds**

Wrobel walked up to a table in the gazebo area of a park Sunday evening and shot an executive and a fellow employee of The Venetian at close range. Police said Wrobel, 42, has been described as a disgruntled employee of the casino-resort, where he has worked for 14 years.

A woman in her 50s was killed, and a man, also in his 50s, was being treated for critical wounds. It wasn’t immediately clear which victim was the executive.

“This appears to be an iso-



This undated photo provided by the Las Vegas Metro Police Department shows Anthony Wrobel, the alleged shooter

lated event of workplace violence and detectives believe the victims were specifically targeted,” police said in a statement. A motive for the shooting is unclear.

Employees of one department at the casino-resort had gathered at the park near McCarran International Airport.

Police said Wrobel fled after the shooting and his vehicle was found a short time later in the parking garage at the airport. Police are asking

people with information about Wrobel’s whereabouts to contact authorities.

No attorney or publicly listed phone number was immediately available for Wrobel.

Las Vegas Sands Corp. operates the luxury casino-resort on the Strip. Spokesman Ron Reese said the company is cooperating with authorities and not commenting further because of the ongoing investigation. **AP**

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon



In light of Buddha. Workers adjust lanterns for upcoming celebration of Buddha’s birthday on May 22 at Jogye temple in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	35-55 Good
High Density Residential Area	35-55 Good
Ambient	35-55 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

**WORLD BRIEFS**



**ARMENIA**’s former president has been elected prime minister amid large-scale protests. The Armenian parliament voted overwhelmingly to confirm Serzh Sargsyan as the new prime minister.



**MOROCCO** A FIFA task force arrived in Morocco yesterday to inspect a World Cup bid that obscures one potential impediment to hosting the 2026 soccer showpiece: Homosexuality is a criminal offense in the north African country. **More on p19**



**USA** Inmates armed with homemade knives fought each other for about seven hours over territory and money, leaving at least 7 of them dead in the worst U.S. prison riot in a quarter-century. At least 17 prisoners were injured at Lee Correctional Institution, South Carolina.



**USA** A closely watched medicine made from the marijuana plant reduces seizures in children with severe forms of epilepsy and warrants approval in the United States, health officials.