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**WORLD BRIEFS**



**TAIWAN STRAIT**  
China's navy held live-fire exercises near Taiwan yesterday in a warning to the democratic, self-ruled island against what Beijing describes as "dangerous" remarks on independence. Few details about the drills in the Taiwan Strait have been released. More on p10



**TAIWAN** is emphasizing its ties with one of the few countries that grant it diplomatic recognition as President Tsai Ing-wen visits the tiny African kingdom of Swaziland. Tsai's first trip to the nation of 1.3 million people marks 50 years of official ties between the two countries, the king's 50th birthday and a half-century of independence.



**NORTH KOREA**  
President Donald Trump yesterday confirmed that his CIA chief secretly met with Kim Jong Un in North Korea and said "a good relationship was formed" heading into the adversaries' anticipated summit. Mike Pompeo's highly unusual talks took place "last week," Trump tweeted. More on p12

More on backpage

# Hainan to allow visa free stay for 1 month

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**TYPHOON HATO**

# Gov't called to return flooded cars' auction money and refund taxes

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## Casino bill to reach Japanese parliament on April 27

The coalition between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior partner, Komeito, will submit a plan for large-scale casino resorts to parliament on April 27, Reuters reported. The two parties are backing a total of three integrated resorts alongside the suggestion that each would be located in cities across the country. The latest draft of the plan shows that an upper limit on casino floor space will be set by the government. Komeito and the LDP together command a majority in both the upper and lower house of Japan's National Diet, its bicameral legislature.

## More DSI services available in Areia Preta

The Identification Services Bureau (DSI) will increase the number of service counters and provide all kinds of application and online appointment services at the Government Services Centre in Areia Preta starting from April 18. According to a statement issued this week, in addition to the different services associated with certificate application in the area of identification and modification of contact information that is currently provided at the Government Services Centre, all services that are related to the Resident Identity Card, travel documents and certificates will be provided in this location.

## Schools' Chinese policy highlights Cantonese

Wong Kin Mou, director of the Department of Research and Educational Resources of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, said that Macau's policy regarding Chinese subjects in schools prioritizes the comprehensive learning of Cantonese. According to a report by TDM, Wong declared that learning Mandarin is important, however, English and Portuguese are both equally part of the content local schools should balance when it implements its policies regarding the Chinese curriculum. Wong noted that Macau is a free and open society, where parents are able to choose what kind of school they want for their children in terms of language learning.

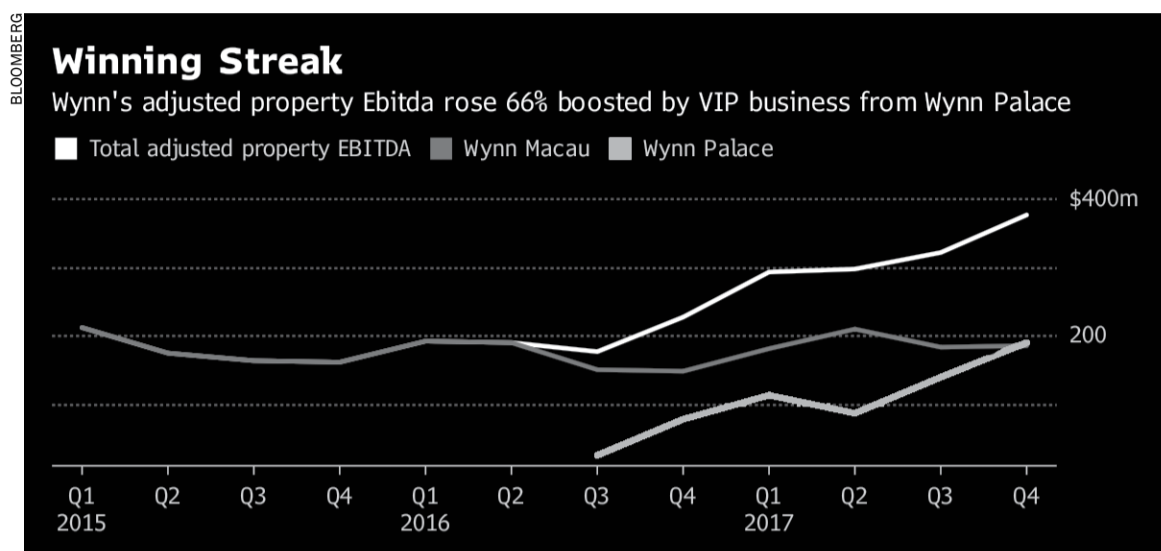
# Wynn Resorts to tighten loan safeguards on Macau casino boom

**T**HIS gaming company is dealing its existing lenders a good hand, in a rare example of a junk-rated corporate actually increasing safeguards on a loan.

## Wynn Macau is experiencing significant growth in cash flows as its Wynn Palace property is making outsized market share gains.

GRANT GOVERTSEN  
UNION GAMING SECURITIES ANALYST

Wynn Resorts (Macau) SA wants to tighten the financial conditions on a USD3.05 billion-equivalent facility, providing stronger protections to banks, according to people familiar with the matter, who aren't authorized to speak publicly and asked not to be identified. That's unlike some other borrowers, which have sought looser terms.



The casino company has had a tumultuous start to the year, with founder Steve Wynn stepping down in February as chairman and chief executive officer amid sexual-misconduct allegations that regulators are still investigating. That hasn't stopped a jump in revenues at its two flagship resorts in Macau, as the world's biggest gaming hub booms. Wynn Resorts will announce first-quarter earnings on April 24.

"Wynn Macau is experiencing significant growth in cash flows as its Wynn Palace property is making outsized market share gains," said Grant Govertsen, an analyst at Union Gaming Securities Asia in Macau. "Given the recent management turmoil at Wynn Resorts, this

move would go far to assure investors that operations remain strong."

Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. agreed to buy an almost 5 percent stake in Wynn last month. Analysts speculated the deal positions Galaxy as a potential suitor if Wynn were up for sale, and may put Wynn in a more favorable position when regulators consider renewing its casino license.

Combined gross gaming revenue at the Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace integrated resorts rose 21 percent in January and February from the year-earlier period. Macau casino revenues in March jumped 22.2 percent year-on-year, compared with estimates for a 17 percent gain.

Wynn Resorts is cutting the

maximum leverage ratio, a measure of total debt relative to earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, for the loan to four times from 2020 onwards, while seeking to extend the maturity, said the people. That's down from multiples of 4.75 in 2018 and 4.25 in 2019. The commitment deadline for the amendments is May 18.

To further sweeten the deal for lenders, the casino operator will also pay an extra 12.5 basis points to banks that lend more when other parties leave the loan, according to people familiar with the matter. The fee is in addition to the 25 basis points for accepting all the amendments, the people said.

MDT/Bloomberg

# Typhoon season for 2018 might be longer than normal

**T**HIS year's typhoon season will be comparatively longer than last year's, the Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) announced yesterday.

During a meeting which was attended by the city's civil protection structure, an SMG representative reported that there will be five to seven tropical cyclones this year, noting that the number is between "normal and above normal."



The first tropical cyclone of 2018 is expected to hit the city by the middle

of June or before, a date slightly earlier than normal. The final typhoon

is predicted to pass over the city somewhere in early October, a date said to be slightly later than normal. As such, SMG expects this year's typhoon season to last longer.

According to SMG, in the past 49 years, Macau has faced a season average of 5.9 No.1 typhoons, and an average of 1.24 No.8 typhoons.

In order to be prepared for the upcoming typhoon season, the city's security force has

planned a typhoon drill for April 28. During the drill, the government will test its most recent evacuation plan in lower-lying coastal areas during rainstorms.

Moreover, for the first time, the government's typhoon drill will invite associations to participate with the sole purpose of enhancing the communication and cooperation between the government civil protection force and residents.

The government said that it will announce information about typhoons through 90 TV channels and radio, and that it will open 16 shelter centers. **JZ**

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# Official says casino won't be built in Boracay

A tourism official said on Tuesday that Galaxy Entertainment Group will not build a casino in Boracay, as had previously been announced. "Galaxy has said that they are now looking for another venue," Tourism Assistant Secretary Frederick Alegre said in a press briefing in Boracay.

"And when they find [one], then they just have to go through the process of accreditation and securing, again a new Pagcor temporary or a provisional authority, and the whole process will have to repeat. But that's welcome news, that they're looking for another venue," Alegre added, as quoted by several media outlets in the Philippines.

However, the local partner of Galaxy Entertainment Group denied that they have abandoned plans to build an integrated casino and resort in Boracay.

Earlier this month, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said that he will establish Boracay as a land reform area once the six-month period of closure of the tourist destination concludes.

Last month, a license was awarded to partners Galaxy Entertainment Group and Philippine-based AB Leisure Exponent Inc. to develop a USD500-million integrated casino-resort. The president claimed to be unaware of such a concession and said, according to local media, that it would not benefit the Philippine people.

"There are no plans for a casino. Let's stop it because it's too much. There's a casino here, casino there," he said according to several sources. "Why would I give you a casino there? What will the Filipinos get out of it?"

# Hainan to offer visa-free access to tourists from 59 countries

CHINA will offer greater visa-free access for tourists from 59 countries to Hainan from May 1, in a move to support reform and opening up in the country's southernmost island province, the State Immigration Administration announced yesterday.

Under the new policy, group and individual tourists from 59 countries, including Russia, Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, can visit Hainan visa-free and stay there for up to 30 days on condition that they book their tour through travel agencies.

Hainan has offered a 15-day visa-free stay for group tourists from 21 countries since 2000, and added another five countries to the list in 2010. "By extending the policy to individuals and the stay to up to 30 days, the government aims to attract more international tourists, nurture the tourism industry and meet the needs of foreign individuals," said the administration's vice head Qu Yunhai.

The eased visa-free access to Hainan is part of China's effort to build the province into "a free trade port with Chinese characteristics," as stated in the guidelines on supporting Hainan to deepen reform and opening up, released by central authorities Saturday.

The announcement comes as the province - often billed as "China's Hawaii" - is trying to manage a budget gap and the debt woes of HNA Group Co., its biggest conglomerate, which is facing pressure from creditors after a global acquisition spree.

Foreigners traveling in the rest of mainland China will generally need to arrange visas before arriving in the



This aerial photo taken shows the coastal scenery of Boao Town, Hainan

country. Hainan, which is roughly the size of Switzerland, received a package of economic policies paving the way for horse racing, sport lotteries, and expanded duty-free shopping after Chinese president Xi Jinping visited the area earlier this month. Analysts say this shift to China's approach toward gambling could end up threatening the USD33 billion casino industry in Macau.

Separately, Hainan's provincial finance department announced plans to establish an offshore duty-free shop in Boao, a town in the city of Qionghai. Wang Yalin, an official with the department, said Hainan's offshore duty-free shopping policy will cover all outbound tourists including ship passengers in the future.

Currently Hainan has two duty-free shops, with one in the provincial capital Haikou and the other in the resort city of Sanya on the southern tip of the island. They target outbound passengers who leave the island by flight or train. The State Council, China's cabinet, gave Hainan permission to run a pilot

offshore duty-free program in April 2011 in an effort to make the island a world-class tourist destination.

Hainan has become a famous tropical resort for overseas tourists in recent years, with the number of overseas tourists exceeding 1.1 million in 2017, up nearly 50 percent year on year. MDT/Agencies

### COUNTRIES WITH VISA-FREE ACCESS TO HAINAN

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News at hand



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# Wilfred Wong explains Londoner rebrand

Renato Marques

**T**HE rebranding of Sands Cotai Central (SCC) into the “Londoner” was the topic of yesterday’s British Business Association of Macao (BBAM) event, held at the St Regis Hotel.

The president and chief operating officer (COO) of Sands China Limited, Wilfred Wong, was invited to speak about the USD11 billion (MOP89b) rebranding project. He explained that the choice of London as a topic was influenced by two main factors: the vision of the chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of Las Vegas Sands Corporation, Sheldon Adelson, and the people’s demand. Wong noted that while choosing the ‘theme’ city for the project, the company conducted many surveys both online and in-person with visitors, as well as consulting many stakeholders, such as travel agencies and other tourism professionals.

Without unveiling many details of the project itself, Wong said: “It has to be authentic. Although it is a copy, it has to feel like [an] original,” noting that was the process used in both the Venetian and the Parisian, the other two theme-based developments by the company.

“It’s all design by scale, in some cases at a larger scale,” he said, noting also that this imitation needs to be brought to a higher level of realism in terms of the interior, exterior, staff wardrobe and also in the entertainment. Citing the example of The Parisian, Wong said, “In the process of creating The Parisian we also brought to Macau several brands that didn’t exist here before.” He noted that this sort of work, in addition to other works needs to be done

with The Londoner so that it can benefit from the experience gathered over the years at the other two developments.

Wong also stated that the idea of theme-based integrated resorts is not yet exhausted and that people must remember “many of our clients haven’t experienced Europe yet.” As such, these sorts of integrated resorts have a significant appeal.

**“We need to make people feel that they are almost there [in London]”**

WILFRED WONG

The president of Sands China also noted that studies and statistics show that “before travelling, and when choosing the hotel where they are going to stay and places they are going to visit, tourists will chose ‘iconic venues’ that are easier to remember,” outlining another advantage to the proposed transformation. He reiterated this by stating, “We need to make people feel that they are almost there [in London].”

Picking up once more on the statistics, Wong noted that from the top three most visited landmarks of Macau, “St Pauls ruins comes first and then Venetian comes second and Parisian (although being a new resort) comes third.” Furthermore “from the 33 million tourists that visited Macau last year, our properties received 60 plus million

visitors, [which] means that generally speaking, each tourist visited at least two of our properties. The Venetian alone registered over 30 million visitors.”

Wong hinted that The Londoner could include elements such as “the London eye,” “Big Ben” or the “Tower Bridge,” adding, “don’t be surprised if you are greeted by the beefeaters [Yeomen Warders], because we want people to feel that they are there.” In addition to its offerings, The Londoner is also creating “a lot of job opportunities for streetmosphere people,” he said.

As for the biggest challenges, the president of Sands China said, “it’s a real challenge for the local staff here having to coordinate all the work schedules in a very different type of job.” He noted, “we were used to building from the ground up but

now we must deal with ‘living buildings,’ and as such, changes will be experienced ‘bit by bit.’”

Wong also said that the project would have to follow the main pillars, which means that “the hotel must be a London hotel, the theatre must be a London Theatre, the shopping mall needs to be like the streets of London.” He said these points need to be addressed not only by the design team but also the marketing and sales teams.

During the upcoming two years, after which the company hopes to have the project ready to open, they will “modernize the shopping arcade and give it [a] façade that gives you an immediate recognition of London, and we will convert the Holiday Inn into The Londoner Hotel.” Part of the current St Regis will be transformed in the Londoner Apartments (of 2 and 3 bedrooms), dedicated to high-end

customers. Wong noted that this would be the “opening of a new aspect of Macau tourism,” referring to the tourism of families, who in many of the cases, he said, come with the “three generations together.”

Wong said that one can frequently see grandparents, parents and children, in which often the older generation is in charge of the younger one while the middle one goes to casino.

The development will progress in different stages, with a clear development schedule being outlined in the “next couple of months”, gaining shape “month by month” until its completion.

The London theme will also be extended to the casino and gaming facilities as well as to other entertainment venues that might include a “James Bond themed Casino” and a “Harry Potter themed entertainment [attraction].”

## Investment in The Londoner a sign of trust in concession renewal

**T**HE investment of around MOP89 billion by Sands China Ltd to rebrand the Sands Cotai Central into new development The Londoner is “a vote of confidence on our future and our commitment to Macau in the longer term,” Wilfred Wong said.

Questioned on the risks of such large investment in the project, which is expected to open in 2020, only two years before the expiration date of the concession, Wong replied, saying “Life is full of risks,” but that he “thinks the fact that we are committed to a USD11 billion investment just shows how confident we are in the future not just of ourselves but of Macau as well.”

Wong elaborated by saying “I think what we as concessionaires and operators have to do is to show our commitment, show our sincerity



and hopefully all these will count on the government’s retendering exercise and we make sure that the government understands what we are doing.”

# MGM GOES GREEN TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

## Being Awarded the Highest Ranking in China Green Building Design Label



As one of the largest integrated resort operators in Macau, MGM aspires to be a pioneer in contributing to the sustainable development of Macau. During the Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum & Exhibition (MIECF) 2018, MGM's newest property in Macau, MGM COTAI, has been awarded the Three-Star certification under the China Green Building Design Label by the China Green Building and Energy Saving (Macau) Association. This makes MGM COTAI the largest property and the first mega-size complex project in Macau to have achieved the Three-Star certification, which is the highest and most prestigious ranking in the Label, recognizing the Company's commitment to designing a property with environmental sustainability at its heart.

Mr. Albert Chuck, President of the China Green Building and Energy Saving (Macau) Association, congratulated MGM COTAI on its achievement, "As sustainability is a key subject in China, we are glad that more building owners and operators in Macau are committed into being green. MGM COTAI has been instrumental in the adoption of green design and measures as illustrated in its achievement in obtaining the Three-Star Label. We look forward to watching more private enterprises in Macau to follow and continue in contributing to the sustainable development of the city."

As a state-of-the-art green building, MGM COTAI integrated environmentally sustainable aspects into its initial design processes. From highly innovative heating and cooling systems, water efficiency measures, high standards for noise, light and air quality to the world's largest indoor garden with over 100,000 plants and 2,000 species, MGM COTAI takes significant steps to lead the sustainable development in the integrated resort industry by example.



### Go Green Campaign to Engage Stakeholders

MGM fully understands that its green achievements can only be maximized through collaboration and through inspiring its employees, guests, suppliers and the community to be part of the solution. In order to engage all of its stakeholders, the Company held its annual company-wide Go Green Campaign including a host of fun, educational and interactive initiatives to engage its team and beyond in environmental protection.



### Go Green Marketplace

In order to help its employees to Live Green, Eat Green and Shop Green, MGM held a Go Green Marketplace with the participation of two local businesses, Concept H and StuffBOX, for a special staff market including a selection of healthy foods and eco-friendly products such as collapsible cups and containers, metal straws, re-usable food bags and utensils. Alongside this, a barter market for kids' items was held for employees to bring pre-loved items their children no longer use or wear and exchange them for something useful from someone else. The overall aim is to raise awareness of the importance of rethinking waste and remembering that someone's waste is another person's treasure.

At the same time, MGM MACAU celebrated its first anniversary of Green Monday, the weekly event to support low carbon living that begin with eating habits. A special menu with plant-based burgers was served up by the Green Team in the employee dining room to mark the occasion.



### Green Tours of MGM COTAI

MGM has arranged special tours for its employees to learn about the sustainability highlights of both front and back of house at MGM COTAI. The tours aimed to give employees an understanding of the green features in the guest rooms, the company-wide recycling operations, the expansive array of biodiversity within the property, how the energy-efficient chiller plant works, as well as other elements that integrate sustainability into all departments, from food & beverage to procurement.



### Go Green with the Wider Community

For the ninth consecutive year, MGM supported the Macau Green Week campaign by rallying together its team members to participate in the tree maintenance programs, How to Care for Trees and World Tree Planting Day, both organized by IACM. The activities provided great opportunities for its employees to help preserve Macau's green spaces under the guidance of IACM's tree specialists and build a greater appreciation for nature.

In response to the call of the Macau government for greener transport, MGM will add four electric buses to its fleet this summer, aiming to reduce emissions and protecting the environment. To further support the growth of green transport in Macau, four BMWi and four Tesla charging stations were recently installed in the parking area of MGM COTAI.



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## Dear patients and friends of Taivex Malo Hospital Dental Clinic/Macau MALO CLINIC,

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We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

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- A.** Go to one of our 18 Malo Clinic clinics in Mainland China, all of which, together with Macau MALO CLINIC, operate under MALO CLINIC China Management, following the exact standards and medical protocols as any international MALO CLINIC.

Macau MALO CLINIC will provide the transport to and from our clinics in Guangzhou or Shenzhen. Macau MALO CLINIC will manage the necessary bookings in all MALO CLINICS in China, as well as follow-up and medical records will be provided to our colleagues in China.

- B.** For all patients who will be in Portugal during this period, Macau MALO CLINIC will manage the necessary bookings, follow-up and patients' medical records to our colleagues in any MALO CLINIC in Portugal.

- C.** For those patients who are willing to wait for MALO CLINIC in Macau to proceed with the treatments, we are putting all our efforts in finding a partnering healthcare organization at the moment in order to continue our practice.

**If any urgent situation arises or if you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact us.**

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#### Email

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Once again, we would like to apologize for all the inconvenience this has put on you all.

Thank you all for your understanding and support. We hope to find solutions for everyone's cases as soon as possible so that we may keep providing quality dental service to you all.

Yours Sincerely.

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# Gov't called to return flooded cars' auction money and refund taxes

Julie Zhu

A group of approximately 200 residents is calling on the government to refund taxes pertaining to their vehicles which were damaged during last year's Typhoon Hato, in addition to returning the money it collected from the cars' auctions.

Accompanied by lawmaker Sulu Sou, representatives of the group held a press conference at the New Macau Association headquarters, calling on the government to refund the taxes even if car owners did not purchase a new car.

"Regardless if owners bought a new car or not, they should get a refund of the taxes they already paid for their flooded cars," said Chan, one of the representatives.

Chan then condemned the government's tax reduction proposal because it does not "completely accept the general opinion of the owners of flooded cars."

"We feel really pitiful and disappointed" said Chan.

"We have been only fighting

for taking back the taxes we already paid. We never had the intention of getting one more penny from the government," Chan noted.

Another representative, surnamed Chow, noted that they don't want all paid tax to be refunded, but only the part corresponding to the rest of car's lifespan if the cars were not flooded.

In addition to asking for a tax refund, the group also wants the government to improve the city's public parking lots.

A female representative, surnamed Ho, said that many of the 6,000 car owners who already canceled their car licenses, feel they have been "kidnapped" by the government because they are now facing the dilemma of having to accept the government's "current unreasonable plan".

"The government took our cars to a public auction, and also took the [auction] money into its pocket, but it did not publicize how much money the cars were auctioned for. We think it's not fair," complained Ho. "We request the government to return all the



money, excluding [the auction] administration fees, to the car owners, because the cars were ours," he added.

Today, the Legislative Assembly is expected to vote on the policy of the tax reduction on flooded or heavily damaged vehicles that were traded

in for new ones.

The tax reduction includes a refund and, in addition to the previously established maximum ceilings of MOP140,000 for cars and MOP5,500 for motorcycles, there will be MOP8,000 for cars and MOP2,000 for motorcycles.

The calculation of the final amount will also take into account the number of years the damaged vehicle was in operation. Each year of life will correspond to a depreciation rate of 10 percent per year after the first year of age to an age limit of 10 years old.

# Chef Elliot finds inspiration from local ingredients

Lynzy Valles

THE award-winning chef, restaurateur and television personality, Graham Elliot, is back in the city to visit Coast, his restaurant at MGM Cotai.

Speaking to the press yesterday at his restaurant, Elliot said that the restaurant has been busier than initial expectations, noting that it serves sets from breakfasts to dinners.

The American chef is fan of the city's wet markets, expressing his enthusiasm for the markets' offerings of live seafood.

"I love that food can be so fun and exciting. We went to the market and we saw frogs, fish, and eels. There's all kind of stuff. That, when I wake up in the morning, makes me happy to be a chef," he said.

Elliot has traveled to numerous regions and all fifty US states, and reiterated the different kinds of dishes he is



willing to continually explore.

"Because I travel a lot, I like to get inspired with the food, seasons, weather and restaurants. I've been able to go to a lot of different spots to try different things," he said.

According to him, his team in the city, comprised of different nationalities, assists him in discovering dishes that could be attractive to the local palate.

"All of that comes together and created a mel-

ting pot of food. If you have an open mind you can be inspired by anything," he said.

"I don't want to come to Macau and say this is how we eat in Chicago. I want to come here and move stuff around and

make everyone happy," the chef added.

Elliot also mentioned his invitation to the upcoming 12th annual Vegas Uncork'd event, a culinary event that features top chefs, master sommeliers and mixologists.

**I don't want to come to Macau and say this is how we eat in Chicago.**

GRAHAM ELLIOT

He revealed that he would be creating an octopus dish, which is traditionally a Portuguese element.

"It's a balance of how to make something on my own and pay respect," said the chef.

Meanwhile, the restau-

rateur expressed that he plans to visit the city at least four times a year in the future.

Elliot recalled how his partnership with MGM Cotai started, noting that Coast is his only restaurant outside the U.S.

"Being able to come and do a mix of my food, being able to do some stuff inspired by Macau and China, it just made sense [to do the partnership]. We were all on the same page," he explained.

In two weeks, Coast will introduce its new menu, adding more sandwiches, burgers and desserts.

Elliot expressed his plans to have a continual set of variations in the restaurant's menu to provide customers different offerings.

The chef noted he had learned that most of the customers go for shellfish, thus hinting that the restaurant would be putting more of that on the menu.

# Hong Kong interbank rate jumps as HKMA defense hits USD4.3b

**T**HE Hong Kong dollar's interbank borrowing costs rose to their highest level this year, as the city's de facto central bank bought more of the currency to defend its peg to the greenback.

The three-month interbank rate - known as Hibor - climbed for a fourth day to reach 1.32 percent, the highest since Dec. 27, as the Hong Kong Monetary Authority took its buying of the local dollar since last week to HKD33.7 billion (USD4.3 billion). More than half of the purchases have taken place within the past two days. The gap between Hibor and the interest rate on the greenback stayed around one percentage point, which still makes shorting the Hong Kong dollar attractive.

"The pace of Hong Kong dollar buying is not particularly aggressive relative to history," said Sue Trinh, head of Asia foreign-exchange strategy at Royal Bank of Canada in Hong Kong. "To defend the linked exchange rate system, the HKMA



could also sell extra exchange fund bills."

Traders are increasingly pricing in higher borrowing costs. One-year interest rate swaps climbed for a fifth day, hitting 1.94 percent, the highest since December 2008. The Hong Kong dollar was little changed at HKD7.8499 per greenback, next to the end of its permitted trading band, as of 6:12 p.m. local time. The city's aggregate balance of interbank liquidity will fall to HKD146.2 billion on April 19,

according to the HKMA.

"Around mid-2018, dividend payment flows, potential large initial public offerings, quarter-end effects and a possible June rate hike by the Federal Reserve may add more upward pressure to the Hibor," said Carrie Li, an economist at OCBC Wing Hang Bank in Hong Kong. She expects three-month Hibor to rise to 1.65 percent by the end of this year, slowing the buildup in short positions and helping the currency strengthen to HKD7.83. **Bloomberg**



## GERMANY

# Prosecutors carry out raids in Porsche diesel probe

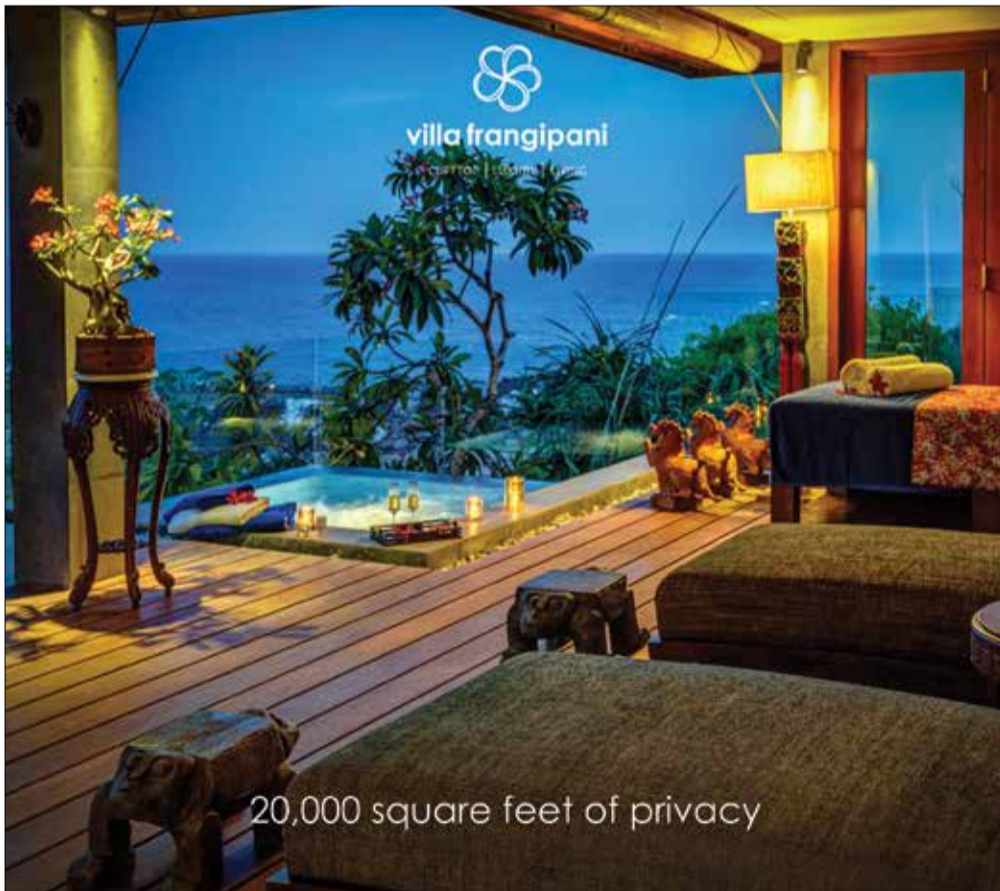
**P**ROSECUTORS have carried out raids at 10 locations in southern Germany in an investigation of current and former managers at automaker Porsche, a unit of Volkswagen, over the company's diesel emissions scandal.

Stuttgart prosecutors said yesterday's raids, in the southern states of Baden-Wuerttemberg and Bavaria, are part of an investigation into suspicions of fraud and misleading

advertising. They said the investigation concerns a Porsche board member, another member of its upper management and a third person who is no longer employed by Porsche.

Prosecutors elsewhere in Germany are investigating alleged wrongdoing at Volkswagen and Audi, another of the German automaker's units, in cases related to the scandal over the manipulation of diesel emissions that broke in 2015. **AP**

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# Angola's economic growth revised upwards by IMF

**A**NGOLA'S economy is expected to grow by 2.2 percent this year and 2.4 percent in 2019, up by 0.6 percentage points and one percentage point than forecasts in the World Economic Outlook for October 2017, the International Monetary Fund announced on Tuesday in Washington.

The IMF, which is holding its Spring Meetings this week, said the upward review of real growth rates is based on rising oil prices, "which increase disposable income and improve economic sentiment."

Angola, whose economy posted real economic growth of 0.7 percent in 2017, is expected to register real growth of 4 percent in 2023, according to IMF forecasts.

Mozambique, for its part, is expected to have lower economic



Construction cranes stand among commercial buildings in the business district of Luanda

growth this year and 2019, with real rates of 3 percent and 2.5 percent, respectively, before accelerating to 9.9 percent in 2023, based on projections that natural gas exploration projects will already be generating significant revenues.

The estimate for the growth of the Mozambican economy

represents a downward review from the 5.3 percent expected by the IMF in October last year that Mozambique would post growth this year, as well as in 2023, with a drop from 14 percent to 9.9 percent.

Cape Verde's economy is expected to record a constant growth rate in the three years

under analysis – 4.3 percent this year and 4 percent in 2019 and 2023.

Economic growth in Sao Tome and Principe and Guinea-Bissau is expected to fluctuate between 5 percent and 5.5 percent, according to the World Economic Outlook for Spring. **MDT/Macauhub**



BRAZIL

## Embraer delivers 25 aircraft in first quarter

**B**RAZILIAN aeronautical company Empresa Brasileira de Aeronáutica (Embraer) delivered 25 jet aircraft during the first quarter of 2018, 14 of which were delivered to airlines in the United States, Europe and Asia-Pacific and the remaining 11 customers were from the executive aviation segment, according to a statement released this week.

The main highlight of the quarter was the triple certification of the E190-E2 jet, the first aircraft of the second generation commercial E-Jets, on 28 February, by the National Civil Aviation Agency of Brazil, United States Federal Aviation Administration and the European Aviation Safety Agency.

Embraer said in the statement that it was the first time an aircraft program with the level of complexity of the E2 had been simultaneously certified by three of the world's largest international certification authorities.

Prior to certification, Embraer announced the final results of the in-flight tests confirming the E2 as one of the most efficient single-aisle aircraft on the market, and in terms of fuel consumption, the E190-E2 proved to be 1.3 percent better than was originally expected, representing an improvement of 17.3 percent over the current generation E190.

Embraer Defesa & Segurança announced during the Singapore Air Festival the signing of a letter of intent with aviation services company SkyTech to buy up to six KC-390 multi-mission transport aircraft. **MDT/Macauhub**

# Mozambique has a role to play in Africa's 2nd railway revolution

**M**OZAMBIQUE may have a role to play in the second wave of railroad construction in Africa, according to an article just published in the China-Lusophone Brief (CL-Brief), an information service on China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

In the article entitled "Big investment, but uncertain strategy for Moatize coal," the author points out that most of the railways on the African continent were built during the

colonial period with a very clear objective – transporting raw materials as quickly as possible to the coast and to factories in other parts of the world.

The trade between these commodity-producing countries and even domestically was something that was given little attention, the article notes.

This continuing reality is, however, being overcome by a second wave of railway construction, which pays more attention to the

real needs of African countries, in the case of those being built to connect the ports of Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam, in the Indian Ocean, to landlocked countries in the Great Lakes region.

Mozambique could be one of the major players in this second railway revolution as, while its railways serve primarily to carry coal, they could also serve to support the growth of cross-border trade.

Railway lines carrying coal from South Africa

and Botswana for export may be used to transport other products and the lines that exist in the north-central region of the country may also be used to transport the products that the landlocked countries in the region, such as Malawi and Zimbabwe, need to export.

The Nacala line, on which Brazilian group Vale has spent billions of dollars, is already connected to the railways of Malawi as it heads from Moatize in

the province of Tete to the port of Nacala in the province of Nam-pula.

In addition to the Sena line linking Moatize to the port of Beira, in Sofala province, there is another line that was built in the colonial period linking the port to Zimbabwe, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which although it is in operation as far as Zimbabwe needs a massive investment in order to serve its original purpose. **MDT/Macauhub**

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## STRAIT DIPLOMACY

# China sends warning to Taiwan with naval drills near island

Gillian Wong, Beijing

CHINA'S navy held live-fire exercises near Taiwan yesterday in a warning to the democratic, self-ruled island against what Beijing describes as "dangerous" remarks on independence.

Few details about the drills in the Taiwan Strait have been released by the Chinese government. State broadcaster China Central Television reported that the exercises targeted advocates of formal independence for Taiwan, saying in a headline on its website, "Don't say you haven't been warned!"

Taiwan's Defense Ministry spokesman, Chen Chung-chi, sought to downplay the drill, saying China was exaggerating the scale of the activity to create anxiety among Taiwanese. "It is the Chinese Communist Party that has played this up with cheap verbal intimidation and saber rattling



Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen inspects on a Kidd-class destroyer during a navy exercise in the northeastern port of Su'ao in Taiwan earlier this month

through the state media, hoping to create panic and unease," Chen said.

Chen described the drill as "a regular artillery shooting exercise" and said China was hyping it up to sound like "a so-called military exercise in the Taiwan Strait."

China's Defense Ministry did not immediately respond to

questions. The maritime safety authority in the coastal province of Fujian announced the one-day drill last week, saying only that it would start at 8 a.m. and end at midnight.

Last week's announcement of the drill coincided with President Xi Jinping's attendance at what was the largest fleet review since the foun-

ding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. It comprised 48 ships, among them China's sole operating aircraft carrier, along with 76 helicopters, fighter jets and bombers, and more than 10,000 personnel.

The fleet review last week was held in the South China Sea, off the coast of Hainan province.

Chinese officials have also denounced the recent passage of a U.S. law encouraging more high-level contacts with Taiwan. China says the Taiwan Travel Act violates U.S. commitments not to restore formal exchanges severed when Washington switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979.

An agreement to provide Taiwan with submarine manufacturing technology and the appointment of hawkish National Security Adviser John Bolton have also hardened views among anti-American nationalists in China.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory and says the sides, which separated during the Chinese civil war in 1949, must eventually be united, by force if necessary. Despite a lack of formal ties, Washington is legally bound to respond to threats to Taiwan and is the island's main supplier of foreign military hardware.

Beijing has also repeatedly criticized Taiwanese officials and has lately singled out Premier William Lai after he told the Taiwanese parliament that he's a "Taiwanese independence worker," saying that Taiwan is a sovereign, independent nation.

Asked about Lai's comments, Liu Jieyi, director of China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said earlier this week, according to the Global Times newspaper, "He's precisely a Taiwanese independence advocate!"

Liu was also quoted as saying that China "has enough confidence and ability to stop any remarks and actions that attempt to separate any territory from the motherland."

A spokesman for the same office said earlier this month that Lai's comments on independence are "dangerous and presumptuous." AP

## US could sanction Chinese officials over Xinjiang abuses

A senior U.S. official says the United States would pursue sanctions on Chinese officials involved in a sweeping security crackdown in the western region of Xinjiang if they were deemed appropriate for designation under a law targeting human rights offenders.

Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Laura Stone said yesterday that the U.S. was deeply concerned about China's detention of at least "tens of thousands" of ethnic Uighurs and other Muslims and could take action under the 2016 Global Magnitsky Act.

Beijing has defended its crackdown as a "People's War on Terror" and a necessary move to purge separatist and religious extremist elements from Xinjiang, a vast region with more than 10 million Muslims. But an extrajudicial detention program has swept up many people, including relatives of American citizens, on ostensible offenses ranging from accessing foreign websites to contacting overseas relatives.

Speaking to reporters in Beijing, Stone said the U.S. was particularly concerned about the detained family members of six journalists — four U.S. citizens and two U.S. permanent residents who have reported on Xinjiang — working for Washington D.C.-based Radio Free Asia.

"The information we have, including about detention centers, paints a disturbing picture," Stone said. "We will continue to raise our concerns with the Chinese government and call for legal due process in the detention of any citizens."

Xinjiang authorities have established a network of detention centers operating seemingly without legal basis. Rights groups estimate such centers are holding at least tens of thousands of people who receive so-called political education for indefinite periods. It is just one element in a far-reaching security regime credited to Chen Quanguo, the Communist Party official previously placed in charge of Tibet. Other aspects

of the campaign include all-encompassing digital surveillance, mass deployment of police and severe regulations against religious customs and dress.

U.S. lawmakers raised the possibility of Magnitsky Act sanctions this month, signaling growing concern in Washington over alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang. Republican leaders of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida and Rep. Christopher H. Smith of New Jersey, asked the U.S. ambassador to Beijing, Terry Branstad, to visit the region and collect information on Xinjiang officials responsible for the mass detention policy.

The Global Magnitsky Act allows the U.S. government to place travel and financial restrictions on individuals anywhere in the world given credible proof of their role in human rights violations or corruption. For the first time in December, U.S. authorities designated 52 people under the act, including a Myanmar gene-

ral allegedly involved in the deadly crackdown on Rohingya Muslims and a Chinese police official who oversaw the Beijing detention center that held Cao

Shunli, a human rights activist who died in custody.

Under the sanctions, which empower the Treasury Department to target officials anywhere for human rights violations and corruption, the U.S. assets of listed individuals will be frozen and they will not be allowed to do business with U.S. banks.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying yesterday warned the U.S. against "interference in any form and groundless accusation on China's internal affairs."

Members of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang "live and work in peace and enjoy development and tranquility," Hua said. AP

### ONE SHOT NEWS



Pope Francis meets a group of faithful from China at the end of his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square, at the Vatican, yesterday. Speculation has been mounting on a possible deal aimed at normalizing relations between Beijing and the Holy See. The Vatican would be given a say in the appointment of future bishops in China, while Beijing would have more control over the country's churches loyal to Rome.

## BELT &amp; ROAD

# Researchers: Massive infrastructure projects give China strategic benefit

Kelvin Chan, Hong Kong

A massive Chinese infrastructure program that Beijing says is aimed at promoting global trade and economic growth is actually intended to expand the country's political influence and military presence, according to a report issued this week.

The report by the U.S.-based research group C4ADS questions China's portrayal of the trillion-dollar program, called the "Belt and Road Initiative," as strictly meant to promote economic development.

President Xi Jinping's signature foreign policy program, it is working to reinforce China's links to Southeast Asia, Europe and Africa through networks of roads, ports, railways, power plants and other infrastructure projects.

C4ADS, a nonprofit research institute that specializes in data analysis and security, examined official Chinese policy documents and unofficial reports by Chinese analysts to analyze the intentions of Beijing's ambitious economic development program, which seeks to connect 65 percent of the world's population in more than 60 countries.

Chinese officials say the initiative, also known as a modern "Silk Road" harkening back to maritime and land-based trade routes of centuries past, is driven by commercial considerations. They have rejected assertions that it is also meant to expand Beijing's global influence.

The report analyzed 15 Chinese-funded port projects in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Australia, Oman, Malaysia,

Bangladesh, Indonesia, Djibouti and elsewhere in the Indo-Pacific region. It concluded that projects aren't driven by "win-win" economic development for the individual host countries, as Beijing claims.

"Rather, the investments appear to generate political influence, stealthily expand China's military presence and create an advantageous strategic environment in the region," it said.

China's Foreign Ministry rejected the findings, saying in a statement that Belt and Road is "essentially an economic cooperation initiative" promoting common development through infrastructure.

"China is not playing a geopolitical game," it said.

While there's no official policy document linking Belt and Road to China's national security interests, Chinese analysts have written that developing the program and pursuing Chinese se-

**You're going to have economic influence and we all know that economic influence easily translates into political leverage and power.**

PETER CAI  
AUSTRALIA'S LOWY INSTITUTE

AP PHOTO



Chinese President Xi Jinping speaking last May at the opening of the Belt and Road Forum is displayed on a big screen near decorations depicting Chinese Admiral Zheng He

curity are "intimately linked," the report said. The analysts don't represent official thinking but the authors believe what they say could influence decision-makers promoting the Belt and Road Initiative.

"Many of these observers recognize that a network of maritime logistics hubs throughout the Indo-Pacific, including ports, has the potential to change the region's strategic landscape, and several explicitly describe the role of infrastructure investment in Chinese grand strategy," the report said.

The projects shared characteristics that, taken together, pointed to China's security intent, the report said. These include being in strategic locations such as entrances to the contested South China Sea, in an apparent effort by Beijing to ease its worries about energy imports and potential blockades.

The port projects involve dual civilian-military use, Communist Party influence through the involvement of Chinese state-owned companies and control through equity stakes or long-term leases and a lack of transparency and expected profitability, it said.

Peter Cai, a fellow at Australia's Lowy Institute think tank who has studied Belt and Road, said he was somewhat skeptical about claims China was using port projects to advance military goals, given the difficulty of coordinating so many different investments, some of which might involve "independent actors."

However, he said it's clear China's political influence would expand over countries it connects with.

The new links will increase economic activity, which means "you're going to have economic influence and we all know that

economic influence easily translates into political leverage and power," Cai said.

One of the most controversial projects is in Sri Lanka, where the government signed a 99-year lease agreement for the unprofitable Hambantota Port, located along a busy Indian Ocean shipping lane, along with land to develop a free-trade zone, to a Chinese-controlled company, in a deal opposed by neighboring residents and monks.

"China appears to have established financial leverage over Sri Lanka through investment in alleged vanity projects" worth billions of dollars signed as Beijing courted the country's previous president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, the report said. Debt levels for those projects prevented his successor from extricating the country from the deals and pivoting Sri Lanka away from China's influence, it said. AP

## Mahathir says he would halt, review Beijing loans

AP PHOTO



Mahathir Mohamad

**FORMER** Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad says Malaysia will stop borrowing from China and review Chinese investments if his opposition grouping is elected in May 9 polls.

Mahathir warned in an interview with The Associated Press yesterday that Malaysia has borrowed a large amount of money from China and may not be able to repay it. He noted that Sri Lanka had to give China ownership of a port and other projects in

return for debt relief.

"We feel that we will stop borrowing. We will try to renegotiate the terms of the borrowing. In the case of projects, we may have to study whether we would continue or we would slow down or we would renegotiate the terms," he added.

Chinese investment in Malaysia includes the East Coast Rail Link project with an estimated cost of 55 billion ringgit (USD14.1 billion), and a massive real estate project in southern Johor state.

Former Malaysian strongman Mahathir Mohamad says a wave of change is evident among rural ethnic Malays and a 30 percent swing from the bloc's traditional support for the government would be enough to secure the opposition victory in next month's elections.

Mahathir told The Associated Press in an interview Wednesday that Malay support for the opposition has made an obvious increase, citing huge turnout at rallies.

The nonagenarian Mahathir led Malaysia for 22 years before stepping down in 2003 and is now leading a four-party opposition coalition to oust scandal-tainted Prime Minister Najib Razak in May 9 polls.

Still, Mahathir predicted only a 50/50 chance of victory for the opposition "because of the government tendency to cheat, to threaten people, to use money, to even block the election process." MDT/AP



CIA Director Mike Pompeo

## KOREAN CRISIS

# Ahead of summit, CIA chief secretly meets with Kim

Matthew Lee  
& Zeke Miller, Washington

CIA Director Mike Pompeo recently traveled to North Korea to meet with leader Kim Jong Un, a highly unusual, secret visit undertaken as the enemy nations prepared for a meeting between President Donald Trump and Kim within the next few months.

Two officials confirmed the trip to The Associated Press yesterday. The officials were not authorized to discuss the visit publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Washington Post, which first reported Pompeo's meeting with Kim, said it took place over Easter weekend — just over two weeks ago, shortly after the CIA chief was nominated to become secretary of state.

Trump, who was hosting Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at his Florida estate, said the U.S. and North Korea were holding direct talks at "extremely high levels" in preparation for a possible summit with Kim. He said five locations were under consideration for the meeting, which was slated to take place by early June.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump and Kim had not spoken directly.

Kim's offer for a summit was initially conveyed to Trump by South Korea last month, and the president shocked many by accepting it. U.S. officials indicated over the past two weeks that North Korea's government had communicated directly with Washington that it was ready to discuss its nuclear weapons program.

It would be the first-ever summit between U.S. and North Korea during more than six dec-

ades of hostility since the Korean War. North Korea's nuclear weapons and its capability to deliver them by ballistic missile pose a growing threat to the U.S. mainland.

The U.S. and North Korea do not have formal diplomatic relations, complicating the arrangements for contacts between the two governments. It is not unprecedented for U.S. intelligence officials to serve as a conduit for communication with Pyongyang.

In 2014, then-Director of National Intelligence James Clapper secretly visited North

Korea to bring back two American detainees.

China, North Korea's closest ally, said it welcomes direct contact and talks between the U.S. and North Korea after news emerged of Pompeo's meeting with Kim.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a regular briefing yesterday that Beijing also hopes the two sides will work on a political resolution of tensions on the Korean Peninsula and set up a peace mechanism. The peninsula is technically still in a state of war after fighting in the 1950-53 Korean War ended with a ceasefire, not a peace treaty.

At his confirmation hearing last week to become secretary of state, Pompeo played down expectations for a breakthrough deal on ending North Korea's nuclear weapons at the planned Trump-Kim summit, but he said it could lay the groundwork for a comprehensive agreement on denuclearization.

"I'm optimistic that the United States government can set the conditions for that appropriately so that the president and the North Korean leader can have that conversation and will set us down the course of achieving a diplomatic outcome that America and the world so desperately need," Pompeo told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

After a year of escalating tensions, when North Korea conducted nuclear and long-range missile tests that drew world condemnation, Kim has pivoted to international outreach.

The young leader met China's President Xi Jinping in Beijing in late March, Kim's first trip abroad since taking power six years ago. He is set to meet South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the demilitarized zone between the rival Koreas on April 27. AP

## Korean leaders can discuss peace, but can't end Korean War

PRESIDENT Donald Trump has given his "blessing" for North and South Korea to discuss the end of the Korean War amid a diplomatic push to end the North Korean nuclear standoff. One problem: There can be no real talks without the involvement of the other countries that fought the 1950-53 war, and especially the United States.

The reason is that South Korea wasn't a direct signatory to the armistice that stopped the fighting but left the Korean Peninsula still technically in a state of war.

There's widespread inte-

rest in what South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un plan will talk about during their summit on April 27, which would only be the third such meeting between the countries' leaders. A separate meeting between Kim and Trump is anticipated in May or June.

**The reason is that South Korea wasn't a direct signatory to the armistice**

Trump revealed Tuesday that the U.S. and North Korea had been holding direct talks at "extremely high levels" in preparation for their summit. Trump also said that North and South Korea are negotiating an end to hostilities before next week's summit.

"They do have my blessing to discuss the end of the war," Trump said.

A senior South Korean presidential official said yesterday that the Koreans plan to use their summit to discuss ending military hostilities, but it wasn't clear if they'd discuss the end of the war.

"We don't know yet whether a specific expression

like 'end of the war' will be used during the inter-Korean summit, but we do wish for an agreement at ending hostilities between the South and North," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, citing office rules.

North Korea has long sought a peace treaty with the United States to formally end the war. Some South Koreans fear that the North could use such a treaty as a pretext for demanding the withdrawal of the 28,500 American troops currently stationed in the South. Some worry that potential discussions to formally end the war may distract from already



A TV screen showing file footage of CIA Director Mike Pompeo (left) and Kim Jong Un

difficult efforts to rid the North of nuclear weapons and apply robust verification of that process.

The armistice was signed by the U.S.-led United Nations Command, North Korea and China. South Korea was a member of the U.N. Command but was not a direct signatory.

In their previous summit in 2007, the Koreas declared a commitment toward ending the war and vowed to pursue discussions with others. But the efforts faltered and the relations between the rivals worsened after a conservative government took office in Seoul in February 2008. AP



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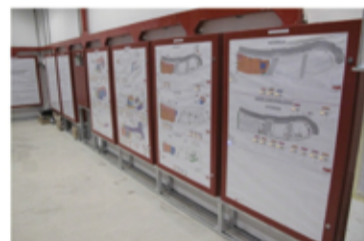
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## ISRAEL AT 70

# Satisfaction and grim disquiet share the stage

**I**s Israel a success as it turns 70? As Israelis commemorate the milestone this week, satisfaction and a grim disquiet share the stage.

It has a standard of living that rivals Western Europe, without the natural resources. It can boast of scientific achievements and military and technological clout beyond its modest size. It controls most of biblical Israel, and despite widespread criticism of its policies toward the Palestinians, it has cultivated good diplomatic ties with most of the world.

But it's also a country that is weary from decades of conflict with the Palestinians. It is riven by religious, ethnic and economic divisions. It is still seeking recognition in a region that has not fully come to terms with the presence of a Jewish state.

Its founding declaration offers it as a "light unto the nations," but it still is regularly accused of war crimes against Palestinians, millions of whom it has controlled for decades without the right to vote.

The grand peace hopes of the 1990s have mostly evaporated. Israel still feels endangered, with well-armed adversaries calling for its destruction and no permanent borders. Israelis are fretting over the possibility of war with arch-enemy Iran, which has a military presence in neighboring Syria.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, despite winning three elections since 2009, is reviled by many and faces corruption scandals.

A look at Israel at 70:

## WEALTH AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

Fueled by a vibrant high-tech sector, Israel's per capita GDP of almost USD40,000 ranks with Italy and South Korea, and is within reach of Britain and France.

But it also suffers from one of the highest levels of inequality in the developed world, and poverty is especially prevalent among its Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews.

These two sectors, at nearly a third of the population and growing, risk dragging down the rest of the economy.

AP PHOTO



## PUNCHING ABOVE ITS WEIGHT

For a country of just under 9 million, Israel has enjoyed surprising success. It counts eight living Nobel winners among its citizens and has helped give the world instant messaging, Intel chips and smart, autonomous vehicles. High-tech units in the military have made Israel a global cybersecurity powerhouse.

It is in a small club of nations to have launched a satellite, and is widely believed to be among an even smaller group with nuclear weapons, although the government won't confirm it. Israel has one of the world's strongest air forces.

It has won European basketball championships and song contests, and hit shows like "Homeland," "In Treatment" and "Fauda" are Israeli creations. Last year's blockbuster "Wonder Woman" — the highest-grossing live-action movie directed by a woman — starred Israeli actress Gal Gadot.

## FORGING A NATIONAL IDENTITY

Despite decades of development, Israel is still working at forging a national identity.

Over a century ago, Zionists in Europe saw the Jews as a nation, not just a religion. Persecution in Europe, culminating in the Holocaust, sent European Jews pouring into the Holy Land.

Soon after Israel's establishment in 1948, they were joined by immigrants from countries like Morocco, Yemen, Iraq and Iran.

These Middle Eastern, or Mizrahi, Jews had little in common with their European counterparts. They were poorer, more religious and often targets of discrimination. Three generations of integration and intermarriage have blurred the distinctions, but gaps remain.

Arrivals from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia have made Israel even more diverse, yet the different communities still often keep to themselves.

The entire arrangement can seem an affront to the founding idea of the Jews as a nation — yet it is also a rare feat that all of these have been forged into a Hebrew-speaking population with considerable national pride.

Still, antipathy exists along cultural lines: Many Europeans, still said to account for perhaps half the Jews in Israel, cannot stand the popular Arabic-style "Mizrahi music" that in earlier days was suppressed; Moroccan-descended Culture Minister Miri Regev once boasted she does not read Chekhov.

Meanwhile, nationalist lawmakers push legislation that would define Israel as the Jewish nation-state. These initiatives

have faltered so far amid criticism that they would discriminate against the Arab minority of about one in five citizens.

## DISAGREEMENTS OVER JUDAISM

After 70 years, the place of Judaism in the Jewish state is unclear.

Most Israelis are either secular or mildly religious. Yet the devout ultra-Orthodox, about 10 percent of the population, wield disproportionate influence because right-wing coalitions never have been able to muster a majority without them.

They have used their political power to shut down much of the country on Saturdays, the Jewish day of rest; obtain exemptions from compulsory military service; and gain a monopoly overseeing rituals like weddings and funerals. Their strict rules have upset the secular majority, but attempts at change frequently result in violent protests.

The issue of religion has also affected relations with U.S. Jews — the largest Jewish community outside Israel and a key base of support. Israel's Orthodox establishment repeatedly has sought to prevent inroads made by the liberal streams of Judaism popular in the U.S. Last year, it blocked plans to allow egalitarian prayer at Jerusalem's Western Wall.

Such moves have created a sense that liberal American Jews are unwelcome. They also have been disenchanted by Israeli policies toward the Palestinians. American Jews tend to be liberal and support the Democratic Party, while Netanyahu boasts close ties with President Donald Trump.

## RELATIONS WITH ARAB WORLD

After Israel declared independence, its Arab neighbors attacked it. And even after the watershed 1967 Mideast war, in which Israel captured parts of Syria, Jordan and Egypt, the Arab world refused to engage.

That began to change with the 1979 peace agreement with Egypt, Israel's first with an Arab country. Jordan followed in 1994, after Israel reached an interim peace deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Meanwhile, Netanyahu strengthened ties with countries like India, China and Russia.

He often boasts of covert ties with moderate Arab countries — presumably Saudi Arabia and other Gulf nations that share Israel's concerns about Iran. Saudi Arabia now allows flights between Israel and India to use its airspace. But without resolution of the Palestinian issue, formal relations remain elusive.

## PALESTINIAN ENTANGLEMENT

The euphoria that accompanied the interim peace accords of the mid-1990s was short-lived.

The sides established an autonomous "Palestinian Authority" with limited powers on islands of territory but were never able to complete a final deal, due to deep disagreements and repeated violence that killed thousands. Israel's relations with the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank are poor; its relations with Gaza's militant Hamas rulers, who seized the territory from the Palestinian Authority in 2007, are hostile.

Israel has faced heavy criticism and war crimes allegations for high civilian casualties in Gaza — most recently with the deaths of over two dozen Palestinians in border protests. Israel and Hamas have fought three wars. Hamas, which is committed to Israel's destruction, has repeatedly fired rockets at Israel, with Israel accusing its leaders of using civilians as cover for attacks.

Despite the autonomy arrangement, Israel has effective control in the West Bank over 2.5 million Palestinians who are left without voting rights, while it has expanded Jewish settlements in the same territory. That has drawn international condemnation and comparisons to apartheid in South Africa.

For years, it seemed that Israel would agree to a Palestinian state next door in order to preserve its status as a democracy with a Jewish majority. But after failed talks, Israel's current hard-line government opposes the very idea of negotiations. Opponents consider this a suicidal path.

If things continue this way, a fateful decision awaits: Give Palestinians citizenship in a single state, and end Israel's status as a Jewish-majority country; or maintain a two-tiered system, with a disenfranchised Palestinian population that could no longer credibly claim to be a democracy. **AP**

AP PHOTO



In this May 14, 1948 file photo, an official shows the signed document which proclaims the establishment of the new Jewish state of Israel declared by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in Tel Aviv

**S**AUDI Arabia is to hold a private screening of the Hollywood blockbuster "Black Panther" to herald the launch of movie theaters in the kingdom that are expected to open to the public as early as next month.

Authorities are planning an invitation-only screening of the movie in a concert hall converted into a cinema complex in the capital, Riyadh. The screening, to be attended by both men and women, will be followed by a rush to build movie theaters in major cities.

The Saudi government has dubbed the event as "the showing of the first commercial film in the kingdom after more than 35 years."

"This is a landmark moment in the transformation of Saudi Arabia into a more vibrant economy and society," Saudi Minister of Culture and Information Awwad Alawwad said in statement ahead of the screening.

It's a stark reversal for a county where public movie screenings were banned in the 1980's during a wave of ultraconservatism that swept Saudi Arabia. Many Saudi clerics view Western movies and even Arabic films made in Egypt and Lebanon as sinful.

Despite decades of ultraconservative dogma, Crown Prin-

SAUDI ARABIA

# Authorities to show 'Black Panther' to mark cinema opening

ce Mohammed bin Salman has sought to ram through a number of major social reforms with support from his father, King Salman.

The crown prince is behind measures such as lifting a ban on women driving that will go into effect this summer, and bringing back concerts and other forms of entertainment to satiate the desires of the country's majority young population. The social push by the 32-year-old heir to the throne is part of his so-called Vision 2030, a blueprint for the country that aims to boost local spending and create jobs amid

sustained lower oil prices.

The Saudi government projects that the opening of movie theatres will contribute more than 90 billion riyals (USD24 billion) to the economy and create more than 30,000 jobs by 2030. The kingdom says there will be 300 cinemas with around 2,000 screens built by 2030.

Over the past several years, Saudi Arabia has gradually been loosening restrictions on movie screenings, with local film festivals and screenings in makeshift theaters. For the most part, though, Saudis who wanted to watch a film in a movie theater would have to drive to nearby Bahrain or the United Arab Emirates for weekend trips to the cinema.

In the 1970s, there were informal movie screenings but the experience could be interrupted by the country's religious police, whose powers have since been curbed. AP

AP PHOTO



■ The screening will be followed by a rush to build movie theaters in major cities

AD

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**Charisma and Executive Presence**  
**How are YOU doing?**  
Speaker: **Mr. Oliver Williams**, Executive Coach, RBP Group  
**FMCC Breakfast Meeting**

**Introduction:** Be able to project gravitas and poise under pressure: Mr. Oliver Williams will provide a glimpse into the discipline of professional actors and celebrities, and explain concepts and teach practical skills to develop and enhance charisma and executive presence.

**Date:** Wednesday, 25 April 2018  
**Time:** 9:00 - 10:30am (Reception: 8:45am)  
**Venue:** Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16  
Promenade Meeting Room (6th floor)

**RSVP before 2 pm on April 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
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## what's ON



## 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

## MONKEY KING

TIME: 4pm &amp; 8pm daily (except on Thursdays)

VENUE: Sands Cotai Theatre

ADMISSION: MOP380, MOP480, MOP680, MOP980, MOP1280

COTAI TICKETING: (853) 2882 8818

Kong Seng Ticketing: (853) 2855 5555

## MANDARIN'S HOUSE

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Wednesdays, open on public holidays)

ADDRESS: No. 10, Travessa de António da Silva

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 8820

## MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (Except on Thursdays; open on public holidays)

VENUE: Macau Science Center

ADMISSION: MOP25 (Exhibition Centre)

MOP60 (Planetarium 2D dome or 2D

sky shows)

MOP80 (Planetarium 3D dome or 3D

sky shows)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0822

## "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

## Offbeat

## HEADLESS DOLL TRIGGERS MAJOR POLICE OPERATION IN GERMANY



An apparent headless body that prompted a major police operation in southern Germany has turned out to be a doll.

Police in Baden-Wuerttemberg state say a passer-by spotted what appeared to be a clothed but headless corpse covered in blood lying by a stream in Remstal, near Stuttgart, this week.

Officers cordoned off the suspected crime scene and firefighters were called to retrieve the body, which was lying in an inaccessible place.

In a statement, police said that only once firefighters reached the site were they able to determine that it was, in fact, a doll.

## TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
15:40	Zig Zag
17:50	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
18:40	EPM 20th Anniversary (Repeated)
19:30	Miscellaneous
19:50	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Miscellaneous
21:35	Non-daily Portuguese News
21:40	Portuguese Serie
22:15	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Documentary
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

## cinema



## CINETEATRO

19 - 24 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

## COLOR ME TRUE

ROOM 2

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

Director: Takeuchi Hideki

Starring: Ayase Haruka, Sakaguchi Kentarou

Language: Japanese (Chinese &amp; English)



## SECRET SUPERSTAR

ROOM 2

07:00pm

Director: Advait Chandan

Starring: Aamir Khan, Zaira Wasim

Language: Hindi (English &amp; Chinese)

Duration: 150min



## ISLE OF DOGS

ROOM 3

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

Director: Wes Anderson

Starring: Bryan Cranston, Koyu Rankin, Edward Norton

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 101min

## TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY

ROOM 3

7:30pm

Director: Nick Park

Starring: Eddie Redmayne, Tom Hiddleston

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 91min

## this day in history



## 2005 RATZINGER IS ELECTED AS NEW POPE

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has been elected as the Pope - the head of the world's 1.1 billion Roman Catholics.

Taking the name Pope Benedict XVI, the 78-year-old German appeared on the balcony of St Peter's Basilica.

His arrival was greeted by loud cheers from the many thousands of pilgrims who had packed St Peter's Square as news of his election spread across Rome.

He was chosen on the third round of votes by the 115 cardinals meeting to select Pope John Paul II's successor.

The name Benedict comes from the Latin for "blessing" and the last Pope bearing the name, Benedict XV, reigned during World War I.

Giving a short address in Italian to the crowds gathered below the new Pope paid homage to his predecessor, and great friend, Pope John Paul II.

"Dear brothers and sisters after the great Pope, John Paul II, the cardinals have elected me, a simple and humble worker in the Lord's vineyard," he said.

"The fact that the Lord can work and act even with insufficient means consoles me, and above all I entrust myself to your prayers.

"In the joy of the resurrected Lord, we go on with His help. He is going to help us and Mary will be on our side. Thank you," he added.

Clad in white papal vestments and a short red cape, he then delivered the traditional "Urbi et Orbi" [to the City and the World] blessing to the city of Rome and the world.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said Pope Benedict XVI would dine with Roman Catholic cardinals later on Tuesday and celebrate a Mass with them in the Sistine Chapel on Wednesday morning at 0900 (0700 GMT).

He will be inaugurated as the 265th pope on Sunday, the Vatican has announced.

The new Pope had been one of the front runners in the papal election, which began on Monday when the 115 voting cardinals were sequestered in the Sistine Chapel for their secret conclave.

Pope Benedict XVI, who is the oldest pope for more than a century, was born in 1927 into a traditional farming family in Bavaria, Germany, although his father was a policeman.

The future pope's studies at seminary were interrupted by World War II and his supporters say that his experiences under the Nazi regime convinced him that the Church had to stand up for truth and freedom.

He is the first German Pope since the 11th Century.

The BBC's Ray Furlong in Berlin says Cardinal Ratzinger's election as Pope will generate amazement and enthusiasm in Germany as well as concern among those who had hoped for a more liberal pontiff.

A close friend and confidante of Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI is also known as a fellow conservative.

For more than 20 years he was head of the congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith in the Vatican - the Vatican's guardian of orthodoxy.

The BBC's William Horsley in Rome says his papacy is sure to continue John Paul II's strongly traditional interpretation of the Catholic faith, including opposition to abortion, homosexuality, priestly marriage and women priests.

Our correspondent says that the homily he made at the Mass before the start of the Conclave in which he denounced all deviations from traditional church teachings as trickery and error, may have been decisive in winning him the title of Pope.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Pope Benedict XVI is the eighth German pontiff and was the clear favourite to fill the role.

He was one of Pope John Paul II's closest friends and, like his predecessor, firmly opposes to birth control, supports the celibacy of the priesthood, and is against the ordination of women.

He has also spoken out against homosexuality and once denounced rock music as "the vehicle of anti-religion".

He was succeeded by Pope Francis.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You've played your cards close to your chest for a while now, taking care to maintain your privacy. Better keep that up, because the heavens have arranged an opportunity for you to take a risk.

Taurus April 20-May 20 According to most astrologers, your sign is known as a money magnet. That doesn't mean that money just shows up, though. You attract it, sure, but only because you're not afraid to go after it the 'old-fashioned' way.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Someone who loves you is working on a surprise for you right now, and even though you know you can figure it out if you really want to, don't. You'll only spoil it. Let them have their fun.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 If anyone is a homebody, it's you. Your nest is cozy and comfy, and you love spending time in it. Needless to say, talking you into leaving home isn't easy, even if it's just for a weekend.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You're feeling pretty darned restless, aren't you? Like something is about to happen? Well, you're right, but you can't push it along to make it happen any faster, and you can't drag your heels and make it stop.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 No one has ever accused you of being lazy or of not taking care of business. You have, however, been called a workaholic every now and then, usually by someone who's jealous of your work.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 At the moment, you'll need to leave those skills right where they are and keep quiet. No one says you'll have to do it permanently, but for now, 'mum' should definitely be the word.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 There's just no doubt about it - you've been an especially good person lately. So when 'the one you thought had gotten away' suddenly turns up, think of it as a lovely surprise - a second shot at the title.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 It's time to let go and let the universe have its way with you. First of all, there's no other way for things to go right now - and anything is possible at the moment - especially if it's something from the past.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Among the many admirable qualities on your list, you're famous for your integrity and your never-ending sense of responsibility. That goes especially for people from the past.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Every now and then, the universe tosses us a day that's just not destined to turn out the way we thought it would. You're due for a few of those now, especially in the financial department.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You're due to cross paths with someone who's equally enthusiastic about all the subjects you simply adore. The catch is that it's probably going to be someone you've known for a long time.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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Easy+

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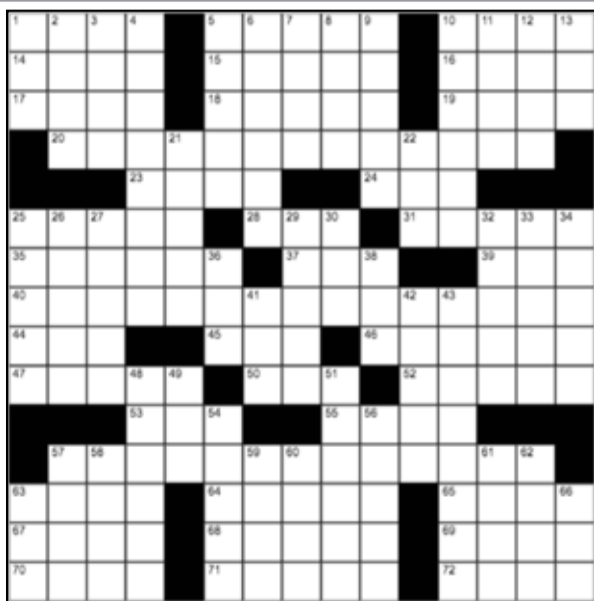
WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Rows include CHINA (Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, etc.).

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Gone by; 5- Joe of "Hill Street Blues"; 10- Flat sound; 14- Langston Hughes poem; 15- Kitchen gadget; 16- Shred; 17- Former name of Thailand; 18- Web-footed mammal; 19- Indian princess; 20- Defer action; 23- Talk wildly; 24- After taxes; 25- Line of cliffs; 28- Half and half; 31- Hospital rooms; 35- Mistakes; 37- Swiss river; 39- Abu Dhabi's fed.; 40- In spite of; 44- \_\_\_-wop; 45- Motorists' org.; 46- Medium setting; 47- Night noise; 50- Antiquity, in antiquity; 52- Goose genus; 53- Long, thin snake-like fish; 55- Cornerstone abbr.; 57- North indicated by a magnetic compass; 63- Capital of Italy; 64- Cognizant; 65- Takes advantage of; 67- Biblical garden; 68- Gunpowder ingredient; 69- Payment for travel; 70- Chipper; 71- War horse; 72- Gratis;

DOWN: 1- Greek letters; 2- Take \_\_\_ from me...; 3- Fly; 4- The day following today; 5- Disdain; 6- Edible tuber; 7- Humanities; 8- Nair rival; 9- Hatch on the Hill; 10- Layers; 11- Usher's offering; 12- Rational; 13- \_\_\_ Lanka; 21- Island in the Bay of Naples; 22- Of recent origin; 25- Dispatches; 26- Sing like Bing; 27- Threepio's pal; 29- Twangy, as a voice; 30- Consume; 32- Debris; 33- Move rhythmically; 34- Rocker Bob; 36- RR stop; 38- \_\_\_ Tafari (Haile Selassie); 41- Possess, to Burns; 42- Swell!; 43- Scall; 48- Governor; 49- Dusk, to Donne; 51- Formal order; 54- Inclines; 56- Bergen dummy; 57- Fashion; 58- From the U.S.; 59- Ninny; 60- Must've been something \_\_\_; 61- Russian ruler; 62- Roll call call; 63- Agent; 66- Witness;



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**M**ANNY Pacquiao hasn't entirely turned his back on a 16-year working relationship with trainer Freddie Roach.

The eight-division world champion said he will be trained by Restituto "Buboy" Fernandez and Raides "Nonoy" Neri for his fight against Lucas Matthisse (39-4, 36 KOs) for the World Boxing Association welterweight title in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on July 15, but that it was on an experimental basis.

## ■ Pacquiao credited Roach for his evolution from a raw Filipino puncher into an 8-division world champion

"I am still not closing the door for Freddie," Pacquiao said yesterday. "We just want to try and experience that Buboy will handle this one fight and after that go back to Freddie — I mean if I will make a decision, but right now I didn't make a final decision yet."

Pacquiao disclosed his decision for this fight last week in the final sentence of a news release.

Roach said he didn't officially learn about the split until Pacquiao's announcement, and the veteran trainer issued a bitter-

### BOXING

# Pacquiao clarifies his split with trainer Roach is not final



Philippine senator and boxing hero Manny Pacquiao (left) and Argentine WBA welterweight champion Lucas Matthisse pose for photographers during a press conference in Manila yesterday

sweet statement heralding the end of one of the most durable partnerships in a notoriously fickle sport. Roach had been in Pacquiao's corner for 34 consecutive fights since his U.S. debut in 2001.

Pacquiao, in his first news conference since then, said he wanted to clarify the situation.

"Freddie and I are like a family. We're like a close family and I didn't make up any decision yet about Freddie Roach," he said.

Pacquiao frequently credited Roach for his evolution from a raw Filipino puncher into an eight-division world champion during countless hours of work in Roach's Wild Card Gym in Hollywood.

But the 39-year-old Pacquiao (59-7-2, 38 KOs) has had four losses in his last nine bouts and has had a noticeable decrease in the hand speed that made him an incredible fighter. He lost a decision to Floyd Mayweather in 2015, and he lost another to unheralded Australian Jeff Horn in his final bout with Roach last July.

Pacquiao, who is also a senator in the Philippines, is determined to extend his career and has opted for a change this time.

"My time is not done yet," he said. "That's what I am trying to prove July 15 — that Manny Pacquiao is not done yet in boxing." AP

### BASEBALL

## Belt's check-swing ruins Corbin's no-no, Dbacks 1-hit Giants

**P**ATRICK Corbin had hitters chasing sliders in the dirt and made up a 65 mph pitch on the fly. Arizona's defense had a pair of spectacular plays behind him, the kind that end up in the highlight reel when history is made.

A buzz filled Chase Field as the left-hander inched closer to the Arizona Diamondbacks' third no-hitter.

One check swing ended Corbin's bid. No history, but one awfully dominant performance.

Corbin lost his no-hit bid on a checked-swing infield single with two outs in the eighth inning but finished a one-hitter to lift the Diamondbacks over the San Francisco Giants 1-0 yesterday [Macau time].

"It was really great stuff from him all night," Arizona manager Torey Lovullo



Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Patrick Corbin

said. "It was a fun night to be a baseball fan, a special night."

Corbin (3-0) walked one but otherwise was cruising toward joining Edwin Jackson and Randy Johnson in Arizona's no-hit club. Brandon Belt ended it with

a softly hit ball to the left side of Arizona's shifted infield, beating shortstop Nick Ahmed's throw by a step to send a groan across Chase Field.

"I hit one earlier in the game, they took it away from me with a good di-

ving play," Belt said. "It just happens sometimes. The shift takes a lot of hits away, but every now and then you will get one back."

Corbin shook off the squib hit to finish his first complete-game shutout, throwing 100 pitches and

striking out eight. It was the first home shutout by an Arizona left-hander since Johnson in 2003 against the Colorado Rockies.

The Diamondbacks have tied the best start in franchise history (with 2000, 2008) at 12-4.

"That was fun," said Corbin, whose previous longest no-hit bid was 5 1/3 innings against Florida in 2013. "I feel like I'd feel the same if I had a no-hitter. To come away with a win was huge."

Corbin locked into a pitching duel with San Francisco's Johnny Cueto, who struck out 11 and allowed two hits in seven innings after being reinstated from the DL.

The Diamondbacks struck when the San Francisco right-hander exited.

Tony Watson (1-1) walked Jarrod Dyson with one out in the eighth and Corbin moved him over with a sacrifice bunt. David Peralta then lined a single up the middle to score Dyson for the game's only run.

"He was really good, too," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said of Cueto. "This is what makes it even tougher."

Corbin struck out at least eight his first three starts of the season — a first in his career — but did not factor in the decision his last time out, allowing three runs in 5 1/3 innings of Arizona's 5-4 loss to the Giants.

Corbin walked Joe Panik in the fourth inning and kept the Giants off-balance until Belt's single.

He had some help. Diamondbacks third baseman Daniel Descalso made a diving stop from the right side of second base to rob Belt of a hit in the third inning. Center fielder A.J. Pollock saved another hit in the seventh, spinning around to making a diving catch on Buster Posey's deep ball over his head.

"It seems like anytime there's a no-hitter, there's a play like that," Corbin said.

He didn't get it, but it was special nonetheless. AP

opinion

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 Jenny Lao-Phillips



**REMINISCENCE OF 90s POP**

Macao and Hong Kong share a similar culture. Aside from the tradition and customs, one thing seems to be exactly the same – our pop-songs culture. A few non-local friends have asked me about pop-culture in Macao, or what songs I listened to growing up. After thinking for a short while, I answer that Macao does not have our own music industry, so we grow up listening to Hong Kong's pop songs. Therefore, pop stars in Hong Kong are that the ones who we "worship" too, growing up in Macao. That reminds me of the height of Hong Kong's pop music industry in the 90s and early 2000s.

There are not many popstars nowadays because there are too many young singers. In the 90s, though there were many entertainers, true "stars" were few, and almost every one of my friends and acquaintances was a fan of only one of the four or five pop stars around. Although people my age remember the most famous ones such as Andy Lau, Jacky Cheong, Leon Lai or Aaron Kuok, the real pop-king of all time was Leslie Cheung, who started in the 80s and was sitting on the throne of stars until early 2000. I believe anyone living in Macao or Hong Kong during that time would have heard his name, and April of this year was when we missed him the most.

Winning Hong Kong's equivalent of the Academy Award for best actor, and Hong Kong's equivalent of the Grammy Award for best singer in the same year, in addition to being one of the few Hong Kong actors who had won movie awards worldwide, Cheung's talent was unquestionable. But he died young, committing suicide on 1st April 2003, following a long battle with depression. I still remember that most people thought it was an April fools' joke until it was reported on the news.

My commemoration of Cheung came late this year because he was outshone by a bigger star, Jesus, when Easter Sunday fell on April 1 this year. But listening to the old pop songs which I grew up listening to over the last couple of weeks got me thinking as to whether there was link between our pop music culture and depression. A recent survey of popular songs in Macao and Hong Kong seemed to really express only two themes, of two extremes, romantic sweet love or self-torturing, unrequited love.

There are songs with themes like 'I fall for you alone', 'I love you for who you are' and 'Love you more everyday', giving teenagers a feeling that love is sweet and romantic and involves someone singing such a song to us. However, if sweet romance is not what we get, there is only the other extreme: "songs which focus on showing how one suffers from love," with lyrics like "now it's my heart bleeding but you will feel the pain soon... one day the one you love most will stab you in your heart...". The songs we grew up with seem to make us believe that either our love life is perfect, or else there has to be serious drama, and there are more cases of the latter than the former.

One can argue that there are songs of love and un-requited love in almost every culture, but there are also many songs that are about greater love, or hope, or just everyday life. However, that 90s pop music culture here, at least songs I grew up with, had very few songs about anything aside from self-torture in one's love life. Perhaps that is why more people are suffering from depression in Macao and Hong Kong. But is it the songs that shaped our culture, or our culture that shaped the songs?

**THE BUZZ** DiCAPRIO TO PRESENT SCORSESE WITH AWARD AT TCM FILM FESTIVAL

Leonardo DiCaprio will present his friend and collaborator Martin Scorsese the inaugural Robert Osborne Award for his contributions in keeping classic film relevant. Turner Classic Movies says that DiCaprio will present the award on the opening night of the TCM Classic Film Festival on April 26 in Hollywood at

the TCL Chinese Theater. DiCaprio has starred in five of Scorsese's films starting with "Gangs of New York" in 2002. Their other collaborations include "The Departed," "The Aviator," "Shutter Island" and "The Wolf of Wall Street." The TCM Classic Film Festival is now in its ninth year.



ICELAND

**Bitcoin heist suspect has likely fled to Sweden**

A man suspected of masterminding the theft of about 600 computers used to mine bitcoins and other virtual currencies has likely fled to Sweden after breaking out of a prison in Iceland, officials said yesterday.

Swedish police spokesman Stefan Dangardt says no arrest has been made in Sweden but Icelandic police have briefed them on the situation and issued an international arrest warrant.

Police in Iceland said they believe Sindri Thor Stefansson fled a low-security prison through a window and boarded a flight to Sweden at Iceland's international airport in Keflavik.

Icelandic officials said it was unlikely that Stefansson had to show a passport at the airport since he traveled within Europe's passport-free Schengen travel zone but the plane ticket he used was under someone else's name.

Non-European Union member Iceland is member of Europe's borderless travel area.

Stefansson was among 11 people arrested for allegedly stealing the powerful computers in a series of four burglaries in December and January in what is considered Iceland's biggest-ever heist.

The stolen equipment,



A row of computer rigs that run around the clock 'mining' bitcoin inside the Genesis Mining cryptocurrency mine in Keflavik, Iceland

which still is missing, has been valued at almost USD2 million. Icelandic media have the case the "Big Bitcoin Heist." If used for its original purpose – to create new bitcoins – the thieves could turn a massive profit in an untraceable currency.

Police have arrested 22 people altogether, including a security guard, without solving the burglaries.

The escaped prisoner was being held at the Sogn prison in rural southern Iceland, 95 kilometers from the airport. The prison is unfenced and inmates have telephone and in-

ternet access.

Stefansson had been in custody since February. He was moved to the open prison 10 days ago, police said.

"He had an accomplice," Police Chief Gunnar Schram told Visir, an online news outlet in Iceland. "We are sure of that."

A passenger on the same flight to Sweden as the inmate told national broadcaster RUV that Iceland's prime minister, Katrin Jakobsdottir, was also on that flight.

Jakobsdottir was among five Nordic prime ministers who met with India's prime minister in Stockholm.AP

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa



New old-Cuba. Newly-weds pose for their wedding portraits in a vintage American car on the coast of Havana.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	60-80 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	40-60 Moderate
Ambient	65-85 Moderate

**WORLD BRIEFS**



**ISRAEL** Is the country a success as it turns 70? As Israelis commemorate the milestone this week, satisfaction and a grim disquiet share the stage. The grand peace hopes of the 1990s have mostly evaporated. Israel still feels endangered. More on p14

**SAUDI ARABIA** is to hold a private screening on Wednesday of the Hollywood blockbuster "Black Panther" to herald the launch of movie theaters in the kingdom that are expected to open to the public as early as next month. More on p15

**CUBA's** National Assembly will elect a new president today and announce the replacement for Raul Castro the next day, an unusual two-day process that will install someone from outside the Castro family in the country's highest government office for the first time in nearly six decades.



**USA** Barbara Bush, the former U.S. first lady and literacy campaigner, has died at the age of 92. She was the matriarchal figure of a political dynasty that included two presidents. Bush, who was first lady from 1989 to 1993, had been in failing health for some time and had declined further medical treatment. Tributes to her poured in from across the U.S. political establishment and across the world.



**USA** A Colorado man who was wearing a mask and had a knife in his car when he was arrested outside a Beverly Hills home owned by Taylor Swift was released from custody while police continued their investigation.