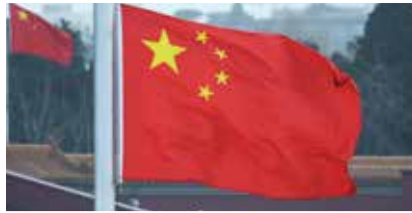




GALAXY SEEKS CLARIFICATION IN BORACAY PROJECT

Galaxy pledged to support the Philippines' initiative to clean up Boracay while seeking clarification from its partner

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NATIONAL SECURITY 'EDUCATION' PICKS UP STEAM

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TRUMP FOR PEACE?

A group of House Republicans is seeking the Nobel Peace Prize for Donald Trump due to his easing of tensions with North Korea, while at home he struggles with justice

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Authoritarian rule will trickle down to Macau

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BLOOMBERG



WORLD BRIEFS




CHINA-N. KOREA
China's foreign minister congratulated North Korean leader Kim Jong Un yesterday on his moves to reduce tensions with South Korea, as a visit underscored Beijing's desire to remain a key player in the Korean Peninsula peace process. **More on p11**


MALAYSIA Opposition leader Mahathir Mohamad is under investigation for a potential breach of a new fake news law, less than a week before an election that has him vying with Prime Minister Najib Razak for the crucial votes of ethnic Malays. **More on p12**

IRAN's foreign minister took to YouTube yesterday to criticize President Donald Trump's threat to withdraw from the nuclear deal, saying Iran will not "renegotiate or add onto" the atomic accord.

More on backpage



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CASINOS, TRIADS & DRAGONS
Macau's Hidden World of Illusion



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INSIDE

Beijing will not permit anti-gov't chief executive

Qiao Xiaoyang, former chairman of the Macau SAR Basic Law Committee, said while attending a meeting concerning the Chinese constitution and the Basic Law that Beijing would not accept anyone who is against the Central Government as Chief Executive. According to TDM, he noted the differences between criticism and confrontation and opined that criticism can also be a patriotic act. Qiao noted that confrontation operates on a "you die and I live" mindset and went on to claim that no central government across the world would choose to appoint people who subvert the state as the leaders of that state.

Mainlander physically assaults stranger's child

Earlier this week, a male tourist from the mainland was restrained after having physically assaulted a child who had allegedly been bullying the mainlander's son. Prior to the event, both children were playing in the Garden of Flower City. The mainland tourist kicked the local boy after the local boy hit his son. The local boy's maid, while trying to protect him, was also physically assaulted by the mainlander. People who saw these events unfolding called the police and prevented the man from leaving the scene. During the argument that followed, the man reportedly slapped and hit two of the witnesses, at which point, two local men restrained him to stop him from leaving or engaging in further violent acts. The maid and the local boy did not sustain serious injuries and have already been discharged from the hospital.

EDUCATION

Gov't changes regulation in the conferral of doctoral degrees at UM

Renato Marques

THE government is planning to promote changes to the administrative regulation that rules the acquisition of the academic degrees of master and doctor at the University of Macau (UM), the Executive Council (ExCo) spokesperson, Leong Heng Teng announced yesterday at a press conference.

Leong explained that the changes are intended to promote efficiency within the work of the university and particularly in the area of doctoral degree examination presentations.

The ExCo spokesperson noted that currently UM has a significant number of candidates for such higher degrees, around 950, and that the regulation currently in force only allows such examinations to be presided over either by the



rector or vice-rectors of the institution, a situation that has become unbearable in view of the high number of students.

In the proposal presented, it was suggested that the rector be able to delegate the presidency of the jury of such an examination to one of the vice-rectors or a full professor of meritorious distinction who has been the supervisor of at least three doctorate students who have successfully concluded the degree program.

In this way, the government proposes to accelerate the process of examinations that within the current regulation would have to wait for the availability of those with higher positions of the University, thereby postponing the conclusion of the candidates' degrees.

The ExCo proposes that such a change to the Administrative Regulation that regulates the Decree Law 15/94/M from February 28 to enter into force on the day after its publication.

Motor vehicles registration up by 10 percent

IN the first quarter of 2018, on account of an increase of 43.1 percent in light automobiles (1,660), new registrations of motor vehicles went up by 10.4 percent year-on-year to 4,155.

The data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) indicated that the total number of

licensed motor vehicles as at the end of March 2018 had dropped by 2.6 percent year-on-year to 238,970, of which light motorcycles and light automobiles decreased by 15.2 percent and 3.2 percent respectively, whereas heavy motorcycles rose by 2.5 percent.

There were 3,484 ca-

ses of traffic accidents in the first quarter, down by 2.6 percent year-on-year; the number of victims totaled 1,150, of which two were fatalities.

Commercial flight movements at the Macau International Airport increased by 14.9 percent year-on-year to 14,824 in the first quar-

ter of this year.

Flight movements to and from mainland China, Thailand and Taiwan grew by 14.3 percent, 3.4 percent and 9.2 percent respectively.

Meanwhile, as at the end of March 2018, the number of fixed-line telephone subscribers decreased by 4.8 percent year-on-year to

130,437.

The number of mobile phone subscribers rose by 17.6 percent to 2,327,834, of which stored-value GSM card subscribers (1,576,078) accounted for 67.7 percent. The number of internet subscribers increased by 10.1 percent year-on-year to 407,676.

In the first quarter of 2018, the cumulative duration of internet usage grew by 3.3 percent year-on-year to 309 million hours.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'The Australian Consulate-General is working hard to serve Australia's interests in Hong Kong and Macau'

Dear Editor,

I write in response to the "Macau Matters; Consulate Woes" opinion piece that appeared in the Macau Daily Times on 25 April.

Contrary to the author's perception, the Australian Consulate-General is working hard to serve Australia's interests in Hong Kong and Macau.

One of our roles is to provide a full range of consular services. For example, our Consulate is the Australian Government's second-largest passport-is-

suing post (behind only London), with around 10,000 passports issued each year. To save Australians in Macau having to travel to the Consulate in Hong Kong, we conduct passport interviews there once a month.

We provide consular assistance to Australians in need as well as a range of other consular services and advice. We perform close to 8,000 notarial acts for Australians and others each year (our website lists the types of documents we can and cannot legally witness). In addition, we are the second largest polling

booth for Australians voting overseas in elections.

Our Home Affairs team issues visas for thousands of visitors, students, business and family migrants each year as well as approving Australian citizenship for our newest Australians. We have law enforcement, immigration, customs and other responsibilities that extend across Hong Kong and Macau but also more broadly in the region.

Australian Consulate officials regularly visit Macau and work to strengthen bilateral cooperation on a range

of strategic and economic issues. For example, Austrade advises Australian businesses in Hong Kong and Macau and promotes two way trade and investment. We engage with the Australian business community and we greatly appreciate the advice and insights we receive from Australians in Hong Kong and Macau to help inform our work and priorities.

We note that the day the author's comments were published, an Australian consular official was participating in an Anzac Day dawn service in Macau.

Yours faithfully,

Michaela Browning
Australian Consul-General
to Hong Kong and Macau

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GAMING

Galaxy seeks clarification from local partner on Boracay project

GALAXY Entertainment Group (GEG) has pledged in a statement that it will continually support the Philippines' initiative to cleanup and restore the island of Boracay.

In financial data released yesterday, GEG stated that its first quarter was a productive one for the gaming operator in terms of its development initiatives, citing its announcement to develop an eco-friendly beach resort in Boracay.

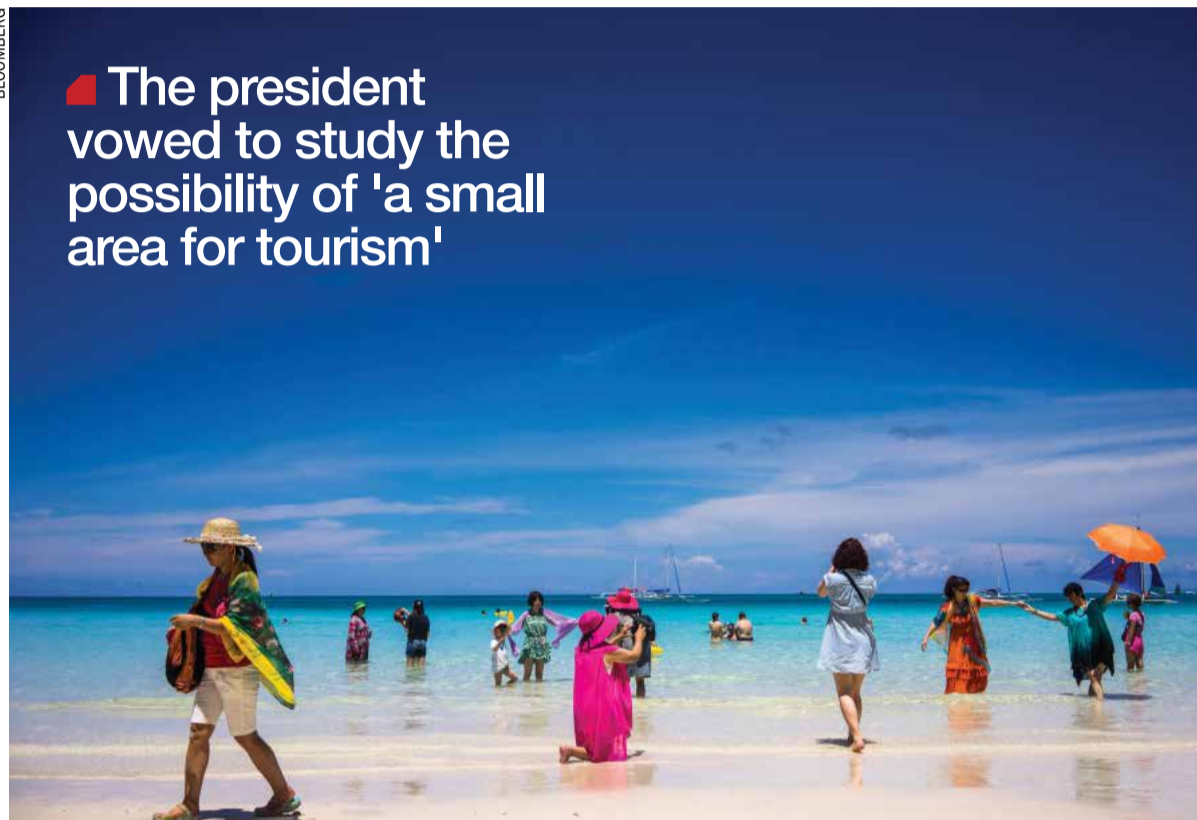
"We support the Philippine Government's decision to temporarily close Boracay and their restoration initiative for the Island," it said.

"We continue to work with our local partner to seek further clarification," GEG added.

Galaxy announced in March its initial plans to develop a USD300 to \$500 million, premium quality, eco-friendly, low density, low-rise resort that would include a small casino with up to 60 tables.

Although a license was awarded to partners Galaxy Entertainment Group and Philippine-based AB Leisure Exponent Inc. to develop the integrated casino-resort in March, the president claimed to be unaware of such a concession.

A tourism official had also previously said that GEG has



Tourists pose for photographs in the sea at White Beach in Boracay prior to its closure

▲ The president vowed to study the possibility of 'a small area for tourism'

been looking for another venue, a claim that the local gaming operator denied.

Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp (PAGCOR) President Alfredo Lim recently

told Reuters that Galaxy should convince the president of the advantages its project

would bring to the Filipino people.

"They [Galaxy will] probably have to explain to the president the advantages and that they will comply with the environmental laws," he said.

Meanwhile, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said this week that he does not want the entire island of Boracay to be used exclusively for tourism and commercial purposes.

The president vowed land reform for the island, adding that he would instruct his Cabinet and Congress to study the possibility of allowing "only a small area for tourism" in Boracay.

"You know Boracay is forestland agriculture [land]. Do not push me to the wall [...] because [the land] is not for commercial [use]," Duterte said in a speech.

"I am not in favor of converting it into a commercial [district]. We can have a portion [of] hotels there [...] if that is really the will of Congress," the president added. LV

Elaine Wynn files lawsuit over shareholder list

ELAINE Wynn has filed a lawsuit against Wynn Resorts Ltd. demanding that the company provide her with a list of its shareholders, which she plans to contact in her fight against John Jay Hagenbuch's re-election to the company's board.

Elaine Wynn is protesting Hagenbuch's re-election on the basis that

the private equity investor is too close to former chairman Steve Wynn, who stepped down in February amid sexual harassment allegations.

Though Hagenbuch is a member of the board's special committee investigating allegations of sexual harassment against Steve Wynn, Elaine Wynn says his

friendship with her former

husband is impairing his impartiality.

She argues that the re-election, if successful, will undermine the company's efforts to distance itself from the Steve Wynn scandal.

The lawsuit comes in response to Wynn Resort's call for shareholders to re-elect Hagenbuch, as the company resists Elaine Wynn's ef-

forts to oust him.

Both Wynn Resorts and Elaine Wynn plan to directly contact shareholders to influence the outcome of the election. Having requested the list of shareholders earlier this week, Elaine Wynn suspects the company is not "acting in good faith" and delaying the release.

Wynn Resorts has now

agreed to provide Elaine Wynn with a list of the company's shareholders, asking in return for her to withdraw the lawsuit.

It is not clear whether the lawsuit has already been withdrawn.

"Given Jay's key board role and deep institutional knowledge, withholding your vote for him would only serve to undercut the progress

Wynn is making," the company said in a Wednesday filing.

The progress the company is referring to includes the expansion of the board from 10 to 11 members and the hiring of three female directors in the past month.

The election will be held on May 16 during the company's annual shareholders meeting.

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AMCM launches Facebook page

The Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM) has launched a Facebook Page, forming part of its aim to convey the bureau's latest financial information to the community through various online platforms on a timely basis. According to a statement by the AMCM, the move was made to diversify the platforms for disseminating information to allow the community to keep abreast of the latest news from the bureau. Currently, apart from the official website and Facebook Page, the AMCM has also set up a WeChat account named "MacauAMCM," to enable the public to understand and be informed about the bureau's updates more easily.

Consumer Council promotes 'certified shops' through contest

Consumers may register for the "keep your shopping receipts" contest by using receipts or invoices issued by any "Certified Shop" until May 14, to win prizes such as cash or a special "Certified Shop" edition of an electronic money card, according to the Consumer Council. To encourage consumers to keep their shopping receipts and invoices, the Consumer Council is holding its fifth "Keep your shopping receipts" lucky draw activity. According to a statement issued by the council, the number of participants is increasing yearly and the council hopes to continue this annual game to remind consumers of their own rights. Local residents aged 15 or above can register for the lucky draw with their receipts of MOP50 or above issued by any "Certified Shop."

Government to spend MOP6.2b

Renato Marques

THE annual cash handout from the government, included in the Wealth Partaking Scheme for 2018, will benefit a total of 710,000 eligible residents costing the government some MOP6.2 billion, the Executive Council (ExCo) spokesperson, Leong Heng Teng, said yesterday at a press conference. The briefing was held by ExCo at the government's headquarters to report the conclusion of an analysis by the executive of three administrative regulations and one law review.

The figure raised doubt among the media at the press conference, who questioned the spokesperson as to how such a high number of Macau residents were found to be eligible.

Attempting to clarify the figure of the number of beneficiaries, which has been showing numbers over the 650,000 mark since 2015, Leong said, "in this figure are not only the Macau residents living in Macau but



Executive Council spokesperson Leong Heng Teng

also some that are living abroad and that are also eligible [to receive a share on the wealth partaking scheme]."

Leong then elaborated further, adding that according to the figures he had to hand, in the previous year the government issued approximately 64,000 cash handouts to Macau residents living abroad.

But to the media, the figure still seemed to be far higher than the official figures that record an approx-

imate number of local residents living in the region of 537,000 as of 2016.

Leong noted that "these are the figure[s] we have from the Statistics [and Census Bureau]," adding that the real number of the beneficiaries will only be known after this year's program distribution finishes, a time when the government would have the final figures as to the number of people that actually received and cashed their cheques.

Nevertheless, and accor-

ding to the official government figures on the scheme, every year the rate of completion of the process, with the transference of the money into the residents' accounts, is in between 98.5 and 99 percent.

At the press conference, Leong mentioned that this year, and after the evaluation conducted by the government on its financial status, it was decided – and previously announced by the Chief Executive, Chui Sai On – that the wealth

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on handouts for 710,000 residents

partaking scheme would continue in the same way as in 2017, granting to all holders of a Macau ID card until December 31, 2017 the amounts of MOP9,000 or MOP5,400, respectively to the permanent and non-permanent titles.

Remaining unchanged are also the rules of attribution, the scheduling and the means of receiving the handouts that will begin to be distributed on July 3 to all beneficiaries of the elderly subsidy by automatic transfer, a process that follows the usual timeline.

That is, usually pension receivers are considered first, then civil servants and older age residents and for 10 consecutive weeks until September 14, by which time cheques should have been issued for residents born between 2012 and 2017.

Another of the topics under analysis by the ExCo is the one related to another of the measures started by the government to subsidize some residents with lower income.

The "Temporary Measures for the Income Subsidy" scheme that will also continue into

2018, is now proposed by the government to be introduced as part of what concerns the application of such a subsidy.

Previously, these regulations stated that in order to apply, applicants needed to be registered by the Social Security Fund as hired laborers or employees until the end of the previous year. Now the government plans to change that requirement to require instead this status to last until the last quarter in which they are filing the application. With this change, the government is said to benefit people with handicaps who are concluding professional training courses, as well as other hired workers with low income.

As for the amount of the subsidy, it remains unchanged, allowing for a full complement in line with the salary ceiling of MOP5,000 per month.

It is proposed that the administrative regulation would enter into force on the next day after its publication, with retroactive effects dating back to January, 1 2018.

On the topic, the ExCo spokesperson noted also that the government registered a "[drastic] reduction" in the

number of applicants to this subsidy in the last three years; in 2015 there were 1,197 applicants per quarter, but in 2016 there were 341 applicants per quarter. This discrepancy is related to the commencement of the application of the minimum wage for cleaning and security staff.

Leong also added that it "is the intention of the government to transform these temporary measures into permanent mechanisms," noting that the timing for such a transformation has to be "coordinated with long-term measures."

Questioned also by the media as to whether, during the analysis of this administrative regulation, the extension of the minimum wage to all other professions was discussed, Leong said, "The Secretary [for Economy and Finance] has already addressed that matter. When the time to discuss that arrives we will inform [the public]. I can say that is a topic that is already in study within the Secretariat of Economy and Finance."

Also related to social welfare, it was announced that the government plans to cancel the current Temporary Disability

Subsidy, turning it into a permanent measure in which the beneficiaries start receiving the Disability Pension from the Social Security's normal regime.

■ The number of handouts exceeds the approximate 537,000 residents in Macau and 64,000 living abroad

Such a change will come under a change to the law of the Social Security Regime, which also eliminates the requirement to possess "certification of the disability only after the granting of the requirements to be a beneficiary." In this way, the government eases the process, providing all people with a proven incapacity with a means of receiving the disability pension.

NUMBER OF HANDOUT BENEFICIARIES

Year	Permanent residents	Non-permanent residents	Total number of beneficiaries
2008	470,641	64,031	534,672
2009	481,406	65,789	547,195
2010	501,871	70,510	572,381
2011	517,439	77,795	595,234
2012	540,610	73,731	614,341
2013	566,565	65,639	632,204
2014	586,745	60,267	647,012
2015	602,182	60,399	662,581
2016	615,722	61,059	676,781
2017	615,205	55,446	670,651

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Lawmaker warns authoritarian rule will trickle down to Macau

Julie Zhu

LAWMAKER Au Kam San has expressed his hope that Macau society will be more alert to the threats that, in his perception, are posed by authoritarian politics and threaten to trickle down into Macau.

Au Kam San, together with lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong, will take part in a forum tonight at 8.30 p.m. to debate the topic of China and Macau under authoritarian rule.

Yesterday, during a phone interview with the Times, Au said that “authoritarian politics, under the command of Xi Jinping, increase[s] the difficulties for China’s and Macau’s future in terms of [the development of] democratic politics or protection of freedom and human rights.”

“There is no need to discuss mainland China, [which] has always been under a [authoritarian system]. [The room] for Macau to fight for democracy or freedom might have been weakened,” said Au, adding that “it is already far away from reaching universal suffrage for both the Chief Executive and the Legislative Assembly elections. Even committee members from municipal organizations [which will be established by the government] will be appointed by the government itself.”

“The recent talks about the state interest and security, and the move to put the constitution law above the Basic Law, [indicates] a narrower room for [democratic] politics,” said Au.

“Recently, [China] started saying that the Basic Law is produced based on the Constitution law, whereby the latter stands higher than the former.



Au Kam San (left) and Ng Kuok Cheong

The [rights that are protected by the Basic Law] might be narrowed down gradually as well. [...] The Secretaries [visited Beijing] to get training in matters of state security. Later, it will be department directors

going there, and then it will be the division heads of public departments.”

When discussing these matters, Au mentioned that the mutual recognition of driving licenses between mainland

China and Macau is one of the steps exhibiting this ‘narrowing down’ of Macau’s rights.

Another example mentioned by Au was the transferring of the authorization of the demonstration from the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau to the Public Security Police Force.

Au believes that this action will deteriorate the public’s rights.

However, in Au’s opinion, the local government does not have the capability to become an authoritarian government on its own.

“I believe that, in Macau, [the government] is not executing works based on a planned [schedule]. It is mainly about the mindset. When [the government’s] mindset is narrowed down, the whole society’s and people’s mindsets [gradually get constrained] when things happen,” said Au, adding that “currently, [...] Macau has not enough [powers] to implement

authoritarian politics, [but] Macau belongs to China, and China’s authoritarian politics will eventually involve the SARs and their principal officials. Under tough working methods, Macau will naturally interpret all matters in a tough way as well.”

Au explained that when the government chooses to appoint the members of the city’s future municipal organizations (instead of allowing part of the committee members to be voted by the public) that is an expression of working under a constrained mode rather than an authoritarian policy.

When talking to the Times, Au said that his office held a forum on May Fourth in past years, in memory of China’s May Fourth Movement, but this year marks the first time the forum features a new and specially selected topic.

“Through this forum, [we] don’t seek fierce reactions [from the public]. But [I] hope that, through this forum, more people will pay further attention to this matter [authoritarian politics]. Even though [people] do not have the ability to confront, hopefully they can improve their awareness about all things.”

National security ‘education’ is a hot topic

Daniel Beittler

NATIONAL security promotion is a hot topic in Macau today, with legislators and community leaders on all sides keen to be seen abiding by Xi Jinping Thought, the latest political theory advanced by the Chinese Communist Party.

President Xi Jinping is urging the whole country to conduct what the Party calls “national security education” and enhance community awareness on the topic.

“National security is of paramount importance for the people to live and work in peace and for realizing the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation,” he outlined on the country’s first National Security Education Day in April 2016, according to state media.

National security promotion involves

co-opting the civilian population to fulfill their patriotic duty and be on the lookout for anything that could undermine the country’s stability.

Among its themes are an obligation to love the People’s Republic of China and the Communist Party; a rejection of separatism; and counsel against the unwanted, degenerative influence of foreign culture.

A Macau exhibition last month, jointly organized by the local government and the Liaison Office, aimed to educate Macau residents in such matters.

It drew praise from lawmaker Mak Soi Kun this week, who naturally called for the local government to include the content in Macau’s school textbooks. Even fellow lawmaker Pereira Coutinho fell in line, saying that local residents needed to learn more about China’s state security and their

obligation to safeguard it.

But the line between national security education and government propaganda is blurred. Since the establishment of National Security Education Day, government-sponsored pamphlets and animated shorts have raised eyebrows inside and out of China for their anti-foreigner prejudice.

In 2016, a comic titled “Dangerous Love” was distributed on the mainland telling a fictional story of a Chinese civil servant who agrees to provide confidential information to her “handsome, romantic, cultured foreign boyfriend” who turns out to be a spy intent on stealing state secrets.

Last month, several animated shorts were released with the same warning against “foreign infiltration” and propagation within China of “Western notions of trade unions” and human rights.

corporate bits

MGM SPONSORS CRISIS INTERVENTION LECTURE



Following the sponsorship that allowed Caritas de Macau staff to participate in a disaster management training program in Nepal last year, MGM has sponsored and supported the “Certificate Course on Critical Incident Stress Management

- Group Crisis Intervention,” a program organized by the Sheng Kung Hui Macau Social Services Coordination Office.

Through this sponsorship, MGM hopes to enhance the local social service sector in dealing with trauma after

a crisis, and strengthen the community’s preparedness to respond effectively to a disaster.

The training course provided information on effective crisis intervention and post-disaster and stress management to the social workers and counselors, as well as MGM team members, according to a statement provided by the gaming operator.

Bonnie Chang, service coordinator of Sheng Kung Hui Macau Social Services Coordination Office, said, “MGM has subsidized our office’s purchase of [...] equipment and has also funded this training course to allow professionals in Macau to equip themselves for first responses.”

SHERATON GRAND ANNOUNCES DINING OFFERINGS FOR MOTHER’S DAY



Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel, Cotai Central has prepared a selection of culinary offerings in celebration of the upcoming Mother’s Day, the integrated resort has announced in a statement.

Bene, the Italian trattoria, is presenting the “Queen of the Day Brunch Buffet,” which features an array of fresh seafood, as well as a wide selection of antipasti and desserts.

This Mother’s Day at Xin, Bene, the Italian trattoria,

the hotpot table at Xin to enjoy fresh seafood, including sea prawns, clams, scallops and sea grouper with a selection of soup bases as it presents a Mother’s Day lunch and dinner buffet.

Feast will continue to present lunch and dinner buffets, offering spreads of fresh seafood. Asian favorites and a special Mother’s Day Carvery will be available during this festive event.

A “Thanks Mom!” Afternoon Tea Set will also be presented at Palms Café and Bar, featuring savories such as shrimp skaagen, baby mac and cheese croissant, alongside sweet treats of Hokkaido milk custard tartlets and milk chocolate truffle cake.

REAL ESTATE MATTERS

The difference between being cheap and frugal

Sam Lee is a marketing manager and property consultant at JML Property. JML was established in 1994 and offers Investment Property & Homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.

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SAM LEE

Many people work hard to stash away their earnings and save up for the initial pot of capital to get their foot on the so-called 'property ladder'. Although the end goal of saving money might be the same, people commonly take two different approaches to get there. Some try to get there by being cheap, and others by being frugal. It's not always about what you're doing, but also how you do it, right? But what's the difference? In short, a cheap person saves money in any possible scenario with no regard to the value they are getting. A frugal person happily spends money on things of value and saves money on things of no value. You might have noticed that one word in particular intentionally got re-

peated a few times in the last sentence: value. Perhaps an example would serve to best illustrate the difference. A cheap person would simply look at the price tag of a MOP200 book or MOP500/month gym membership and pass just because they think it's expensive with no regard to value. A frugal person will still consider the dollar amount, but will recognize that the potential value they can get from a good book or a healthy lifestyle will far outweigh the price and happily put up the amount. Another big difference is that a frugal person values time, while a cheap person values money. Here's a classic example I think most people can relate to: You go out to dinner with a group of 7+ friends. You all order meals that are similar in

value (within MOP150), but a few of your friends get a drink for MOP20. Because some people got drinks and more expensive meals, there is always that one person who tries to spend 15 minutes trying to allocate each item on the bill to the appropriate person. This person is being cheap, and not valuing everyone's time. A frugal person would simply split the bill down the middle and pony up the MOP20 - MOP50 extra for their friends. Frugality is admired, while cheapness is scorned. Money is meaningless on its own, and should always be considered with relation to the value that you get in exchange for it. If you'd like to find out more, please feel free to get in touch at info@jml-property.com

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Regina Garcia Cano, Las Vegas

GAMING

Union: Caesars rejects 'Do Not Disturb' sign policy change

THE union representing thousands of housekeepers in Las Vegas said Caesars Entertainment has rejected a proposal to include language in a new contract that would protect workers if a "Do Not Disturb" sign has been hanging on a doorknob for more than 24 hours.

The Culinary Union said under its proposal, security would open a room before a housekeeper enters if a guest has refused housekeeping for more than 24 hours. The proposal comes as the hospitality industry adopts new room checking policies after a gunman in October broke windows in his Las Vegas Strip hotel suite and carried out the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

"If a guest refuses entry to housekeeping employees for more than 24 hours the Employer's security shall open the guest's room for entry and service by housekeeping employees and shall remain in or next to the room as long as the Security Department deems it necessary to protect the safety of housekeeping employees," the union said, wanting to include the words in the new contract.

The organization is currently negotiating contracts for thousands of members who work in Las Vegas, including those working at casino-resorts operated by Caesars Entertainment. The contracts of 50,000 union members, including housekeepers, cooks, bartenders and food and cocktail servers, expire at midnight May 31.

The company is one of the world's largest casino operators. Caesars Palace, Flamingo and Paris are among its properties in Las Vegas.

Jennifer Forkish, vice president of corporate communications, said in a statement

AP PHOTO



that the company during the ongoing contract negotiations has made it clear that the safety of employees and guests is of utmost importance. She added existing policies encourage housekeepers to contact security if they have concerns over entering a room.

"Additionally, we will be providing our staff working independently in the hotel towers with safety buttons that they can activate if they feel unsafe," she said.

In February, the company told The Associated Press that security would begin checking

rooms every 24 hours, even if the sign is hanging on the doorknob. The company proposed having housekeepers do the checks, but changed its mind after opposition from a casino workers' union.

Forkish said security personnel or supervisors will begin to check rooms that hotel staff has not entered for extended periods "as soon as details are finalized."

Other gambling and hospitality companies have adopted similar policies requiring guest rooms to be checked periodically, even if a "Do Not Dis-

turb" sign is in use, including Disney, Hilton, MGM Resorts International, Wynn Resorts and Boyd Gaming. The frequency of checks ranges from 12 hours to two days.

MGM, the owner of the Mandalay Bay casino-resort from which a high-stakes gambler killed 58 people and injured hundreds more, said it requires a room check after two days if a guest has not interacted in person or over the phone with housekeeping or other hotel staff. MGM said it also "reserves the right to enter the room if it is deemed appropriate to

conduct a welfare check."

Two Caesars employees represented by the union in a news release said they don't feel safe when entering a room that has had the sign on for extended periods. Amalia Urciel, who works at Bally's, said rooms that have had the sign for days make her "shaky."

"I am constantly going into a room that staff hasn't been in for four days and never know what I'm going to find when I open a door: It could be completely trashed room or a dangerous situation," Urciel said in a written statement. **AP**

S&P Dow CEO says his firm decided against crypto indexes for now

Min Jeong Lee

S&P Dow Jones Indices says it's decided against introducing cryptocurrency indexes - for now.

With the popularity of bitcoin and other digital currencies, S&P has been receiving requests from customers to build gauges tracking them, Alex Matturri, chief executive officer, said in an interview. But for the time being, at least, the index provider

has no plans to offer them. "Not right now," Matturri said during a visit to Tokyo last month. But "it's prudent for us to take a wait-and-see approach."

S&P regularly receives requests from clients for various types of indexes, and often turns them down, but its final verdict on crypto gauges will probably take longer.

"We have a reputation, we've been around a lot of years and we're not going to tarnish our reputation

over just creating a new product idea," Matturri said. But the concept of cryptocurrencies is interesting and "clearly there is a demand - that's something worthwhile to keep an eye on."

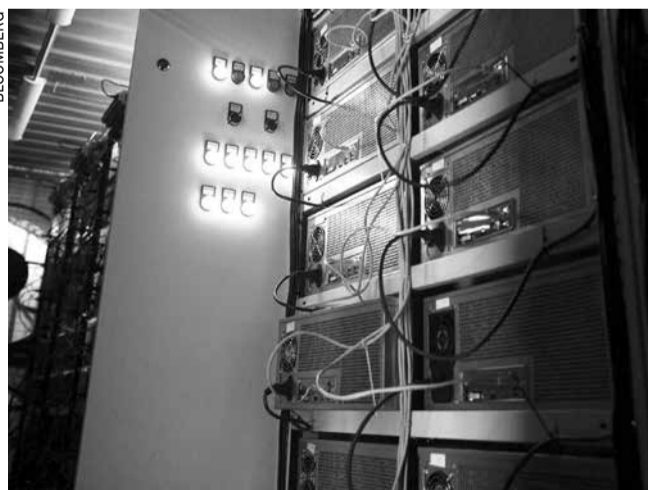
One of the key issues for Matturri is the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission's attitude toward exchange-traded products based on baskets of cryptocurrencies. In January, the SEC raised a series of investor protection

concerns about cryptocurrency mutual and exchange-traded funds, dealing a blow to the investment craze.

"You don't want an index that somebody is going to use in a product that either manipulates markets or is easily manipulated," Matturri said. "If it's meant as a tool for gambling, well, go to Macau or Las Vegas. That's not what investing is about."

At the same time, Matturri acknowledges the

BLOOMBERG



potential of the technology behind cryptocurrencies, which he says is keeping him from fully dismissing the idea of crypto indexes.

"It's still got a ways to go before it's kind of in

the mainstream, more legitimized," Matturri said. "But it could happen quickly. Technology is much more disruptive today than it ever was." **Bloomberg**



TRADE WAR

US-China talks center on rivalry over technology

Gillian Wong & Kelvin Chan, Beijing

A high-powered U.S. delegation arrived in Beijing yesterday for talks with Chinese officials on defusing tensions that are propelling the world's two largest economies toward a trade war.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is leading the group, which includes Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer. Liu He, President Xi Jinping's top economic adviser, was heading the Chinese side in the talks, which analysts say appear unlikely to yield a breakthrough given the two sides' intensifying rivalry in strategic technologies.

President Donald Trump said he expected relations with Beijing to stay on an even keel.

"Our great financial team is in China trying to negotiate a level playing field on trade!" he said on Twitter. "I look forward to being with President Xi in the not too distant future. We will always have a good (great) relationship!"

Trump is seeking to cut the chronic U.S. trade deficit by USD100 billion and gain concessions over policies that foreign companies say force them to share technology with Chinese partners in order to gain market access.

His administration has threatened to impose new tariffs on roughly \$150 billion in Chinese goods — prompting China to announce its own tariffs on U.S. goods.

The dispute has deepened as China stepped up efforts to overtake western industry leaders in advanced technologies, especially for semiconductors, the silicon brains required to run smartphones, connected cars, cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

Under Xi, a program known as "Made in China 2025" aims to make China a tech superpower by advancing development of industries that in addition to semiconductors includes artificial intelligence, pharmaceuticals and electric vehicles. The plan mostly involves subsidizing Chinese firms. But it also does require foreign companies to provide key details about their technologies to Chinese partners.

Beijing looks unlikely to cede any ground on that strategic blueprint.

"The Made in China 2025 industrial policy concerns China's long-term development plan, so the overall direction won't change at all," said Yu Miaojie, professor at Peking University's National School of Development. Yu says China would rather cut the trade deficit by

importing high-tech products from the U.S. that are currently tightly restricted.

Striking an adamant tone, the state-run Global Times newspaper said yesterday in a commentary that it's "our sovereign right to develop high-tech industry and it is connected to the quality of rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It will not be abandoned due to external pressure."

Our great financial team is in China trying to negotiate a level playing field on trade!

TRUMP TWEET

Both sides have shown a diversity of opinions, with China recently moving to loosen a restriction on foreign ownership of automakers to minority stakes.

But the rival views in Washington, reflected in the makeup of the U.S. team, could undermine the U.S. negotiating stance, the consulting firm Eurasia Group said in a research note.

"The U.S. delegation headed to

Beijing is too large and unwieldy to accomplish much; it is a reflection of inter-agency rivalry on the U.S. side and this will produce more posturing than actual negotiations with the Chinese," the firm said.

"The trip will produce few results and increases the risk that tariffs are adopted in the near future," it added.

Washington's recent decision to ban Chinese telecom gear maker ZTE from importing U.S. components in a sanctions-related case drove home to Beijing its costly vulnerability to foreign sources for advanced microchips.

The "Made in China 2025" plan calls for domestic producers to supply 70 percent of the country's chip demand.

The Trump administration's efforts may actually spur China to ramp up efforts to develop its domestic industry as it strives to fulfill Xi's vision, said Jian-Hong Lin, an analyst at research firm TrendForce.

China now consumes nearly 60 percent of the world's semiconductors but supplies only about 16 percent, according to PWC. The country spends more than \$200 billion a year on foreign-made semiconductors, which in 2015 surpassed crude oil as the country's biggest import.

Experts say Chinese chipmakers are five years behind their U.S. and Asian rivals and that increasingly high technological hurdles and a meager talent pool are hindering the effort to catch up with dominant U.S., Japanese, South Korean and Taiwanese manufacturers.

As Chinese researchers and chipmakers strive to catch up,

the technology is evolving, with new materials transforming the future landscape of the electronics industry. The latest advanced chips are highly complex to make because of their increasingly tiny "nodes," measured in nanometers, that make them faster and more power-efficient.

Beijing has been backing up its towering ambitions in the semiconductor sector with money and tax breaks. The government set up the National Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund in 2014, seeded with 140 billion yuan (\$22 billion) in capital to invest in chip companies. A second round of fundraising for as much as 200 billion yuan is underway, Chinese media report.

The state-controlled Tsinghua Unigroup project, associated with Tsinghua University — China's equivalent of MIT — has emerged as a national champion. It's building two massive memory chip factories, including a \$30 billion facility in Nanjing that will churn out 100,000 wafers a month and is expected to exert a "siphon effect," drawing microchip industry suppliers and experts to the area.

It's unclear how successful those efforts will be as foreign regulators push back against Beijing's strategy of acquiring overseas chipmaking-related firms. Washington has scuppered multiple China-linked bids for semiconductor-related firms following a call from a White House advisory panel to do more to protect the U.S. industry because of China's industrial policies.

Market leaders like Samsung, Intel and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing are investing aggressively as they fight for market share.

"Even though they've [the Chinese] committed a lot of money to the investment fund, the reality has sunk in that it's harder than just throwing money at the problem. The Samsungs of the world, the TSMCs have a large head start," said Alexander Wolf, an economist at Aberdeen Standard Investments. "Certain products, you can't really reverse engineer."

Companies like Huawei and ZTE are avidly pursuing advanced semiconductor technology, but experts say overall Chinese research and development spending is a fraction of the multibillion-dollar budgets of the big players. That's one reason Beijing's success is anything but a given.

"These things are built from thousands of engineers of different disciplines pulling it together," said Christopher Thomas, a Beijing-based partner at consulting firm McKinsey, who estimates it will take a decade for China's efforts to result in any meaningful shift. "You've got to solve all the complexity to catch up. You can't just solve one thing." AP

Beijing congratulates North Korea's Kim on reducing tensions

CHINA'S foreign minister congratulated North Korean leader Kim Jong Un yesterday on his moves to reduce tensions with South Korea, China said. Their meeting in Pyongyang underscored warming ties and Beijing's desire to remain a key player in the Korean Peninsula peace process.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi also told Kim that Beijing backs North Korea's shift of focus to economic growth, along with its efforts to resolve its "legitimate security concerns" while taking steps to denuclearize, China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

China "supports and congratulates" Kim's summit meeting last week with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and the statement they issued, it quoted Wang as saying.

"The meeting has brought a favorable opportunity for a political resolution of the [Korean] Peninsula issue," Wang said.

Relations between China and North Korea have undergone a vast outward improvement following Kim's recent visit to Beijing, China, North Korea's biggest trading partner, has joined United Nations sanctions against the North that have cut trade between them by around 90 percent.

Kim's March trip was his first to his country's only major ally



This video shot shows Kim Jong Un and Wang Yi

since taking power six years ago, kicking off a flurry of diplomacy. A meeting between Kim and U.S. President Donald Trump is expected in the coming weeks, although arrangements have yet to be announced.

For China, the recent meetings offer an opportunity for it to reinforce its importance in the region and ensure that its concerns and interests are respected in any future negotiations.

Wang's visit, which was to end yesterday, was aimed at explo-

ring ways China can contribute to the easing of tensions, along with implementing agreements reached in Beijing by Kim and Chinese President Xi Jinping, said Da Zhigang, a researcher at the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences in northeastern China.

Denuclearization efforts should "do no harm by taking into consideration the interests of all parties, including China," Da said.

"If the promotion of denu-

clearization turns the regional situation chaotic, then that is not what people want to see," he said.

China sent troops to fight on North Korea's side in the 1950-53 Korean War, but relations have suffered in recent years over the North's reluctance to implement Chinese-style economic reforms and Kim's continued pursuit of nuclear bombs and the missiles to deliver them.

China has long called for a return to six-nation talks on the

North's nuclear program, and welcomed the Koreas' summit as a way to reduce tensions. Analysts say China's sanctions may have helped prompt North Korea's diplomatic initiatives, although the secretive regime in Pyongyang has not commented publicly on the issue.

China says sanctions imposed over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs are intended to further diplomacy rather than punish the North. Beijing opposes any measures that could topple North Korea's government and possibly lead to a tide of refugees crossing its border and the stationing of U.S. and South Korean troops in the North.

Wang also told Kim that China supports efforts to bring a formal end to the Korean War, which was halted with an armistice, not a peace treaty, and North Korea's "shift of strategic focus to building its economy."

The ministry quoted Kim as hailing relations with China and stating that denuclearization was North Korea's "firm position."

Wang earlier told North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho that China is willing to work with the North to boost "practical economic and trade cooperation" and fully supports it in "concentrating its strength to carry out economic construction," the ministry said. **AP**

LIU XIA

Germany says Liu Xiaobo's widow is welcome 'at any time'

GERMANY said yesterday it would welcome the widow of Chinese Nobel Peace laureate Liu Xiaobo after a recording was released of her crying in desperation and indicating that she has given up hope of being able to leave China.

"If I can't leave, I'll die in my home," Liu Xia, the widow, said during a recent phone call with her close friend Liao Yiwu, a writer who documented their conversation in an essay published earlier this week.

"Xiaobo is gone, and there's nothing in the world for me now," Liu said tearfully. "It's easier to die than live. Using death to defy could not be any simpler for me."

Liu has never been charged with a crime, but has been kept guarded and largely isolated since her husband, Liu Xiaobo, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his human rights activism in 2010. He was still serving a prison sentence for inciting subversion of state power when he died of liver cancer last summer.

Germany's Foreign Ministry told The Associated Press that the German government has been discussing Liu's case with China and "will continue to do so."

"According to the information available to us, Liu Xia has not been accused of any crime," the ministry said in emailed comments. "She should be

allowed to travel, also for humanitarian considerations. Should she choose to come to Germany, Liu Xia would be welcome here at any time."

Writing from Germany where he is living in exile, Liao said that Chinese state security agents repeatedly promised Liu Xia that she would be able to leave the country and seek treatment for the clinical depression that has long ailed her.

Germany was prepared to take her in, according to Liao: "In early April the German Foreign Minister had already made specific arrangements, including as to how they'd not alert the news media, how they'd covertly collect Liu Xia at the airport, and

how they'd arrange her treatment and recovery and more."

But hopes for a quiet departure have not borne fruit.

Hu Jia, a dissident and longtime friend of the Lius, described Liao's essay as a "counterattack" against Chinese authorities prompted by an "awakening" after hearing for months that Liu would soon be released.

Corroborating Liao's account, Hu said Liu had initially been told by security agents to wait until after the 19th Party Congress last fall, when President Xi Jinping secured a second term at the helm of the ruling Communist Party. Then, Hu said, they told her to wait until after



Liu Xia (center) wife of jailed Nobel Peace Prize winner and Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo

the meeting of the ceremonial legislature in March.

During this time, Liu's supporters kept a low profile because government agents told them that remaining silent about the case would lead to a solution, Hu told the AP.

"Why did Mr. Liao call Liu Xia on April 30? Because at that point it was already clear that hope was shattered," Hu said. "We were duped."

When asked at a regular press briefing whether Liu will be able to leave the country, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said she was "not aware of the situation."

"But Liu Xia is a Chinese citizen. The competent Chinese authority will handle the relevant matter in accordance with laws," Hua said, repeating a statement often used by China to address Liu's case. **AP**

MALAYSIA

Mahathir, at 92 wants to rule again, shakes up election

Eileen Ng, Kuala Lumpur

MALAYSIA'S former authoritarian leader Mahathir Mohamad wasn't invited to the forum that planned to debate whether at well past 90 years he is too old to be prime minister again. He turned up anyway.

"As far as health is concerned, I am not senile yet," he announced to the stunned participants, many of whom stood and snapped photos with their smartphones.

For good measure, Mahathir sat in the front row and tweeted: "I'm here guys. Say it to my face."

The recent move was trademark Mahathir. During more than two decades of strong-arm rule, he rarely shied from aggressively confronting opponents, real and perceived. And at 92 his appetite for political brawling remains apparently unsated.

The difference is that Mahathir's targets aren't those of yesteryear such as an imagined Jewish conspiracy against the Muslim world or the domestic opponents he ruthlessly silenced or imprisoned.

In an unlikely comeback, he's switched sides in Malaysian politics, coming out of retirement to unite an opposition that's seeking to end his former party's 60-year hold on power and oust his protege, Prime Minister Najib Razak, in May 9 elections.

Mahathir, a maverick in the early days of his political career who survived expulsion from the dominant United Malays National Organization party, was the first commoner to become prime minister of Malaysia. Though credited with transforming the Southeast Asian backwater into a modern economy, his dominance, like that of his contemporary,

AP PHOTO



Mahathir Mohamad

Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore, was stifling.

Under his rule, the judiciary was a tool of the government, the media were muzzled and a system of economic privileges for the Malay majority remained entrenched. His retirement in 2003 was welcomed by many Malaysians who wanted the country's progress to be measured by more than just GDP figures.

Despite that mixed legacy, Mahathir is now welcomed by many "as a messianic figure, someone who has come back from the past" to redeem the country, said Rashaad Ali, a researcher at the S. Rajaratnam School of In-

ternational Studies in Singapore.

Even after stepping down, he remained influential, smoothing Najib's ascent to the top in 2009 after criticizing his first successor, Abdullah Ahamad Badawi, for poor economic management and also supported Najib in 2013 elections.

Then he became Najib's most ferocious critic as the prime minister, initially regarded as a cautious reformer, turned to Mahathir's authoritarian playbook to survive a multibillion-dollar corruption scandal at the 1MDB state fund that damaged the country's reputation abroad.

The United States and several

other countries are investigating allegations of cross-border embezzlement and money laundering at 1MDB, which was set up and previously led by Najib to promote economic development but accumulated billions in debt. The U.S. Justice Department says at least USD4.5 billion was stolen from 1MDB by associates of Najib and it is working to seize \$1.7 billion allegedly taken from the fund to buy assets in the U.S. Najib has denied any wrongdoing.

Analysts say the unfair electoral system that Mahathir himself helped maintain means the opposition has only a slim chance of

gaining a majority in parliament, even if it wins the most votes as it did for the first time in 2013.

But Mahathir could wound Najib, 64, by denying him a decisive victory. By being part of the opposition, Mahathir, an ethnic Malay nationalist, has lessened the potency of the Malaysian ruling class's perennial race card: playing on fears an opposition win would allow the Chinese minority to dominate Malays.

Despite two coronary bypass surgeries, Mahathir keeps up a hectic campaign schedule. He sometimes speaks several times a day at rallies that often last until the night and has also updated his tactics for the social media age.

■ He looks remarkably robust but opponents are quick to seize on any sign of physical weakness

He takes questions on weekly Facebook webcasts to reach younger voters. He has written poignant poems and produced short videos, telling Malaysians he only has a short time left and urging them to vote and save Malaysia from a venal elite.

"I am already old. I am past 90. I don't have much time but within my means, I will try my very best to work together with all my friends to rebuild our nation," Mahathir said in a recent video.

He looks remarkably robust but opponents are quick to seize on any sign of physical weakness and often try to portray him as tired and incapable of leading.

In February when he was hospitalized for a chest infection, he tweeted a photo of himself undergoing treatment.

"Taking a short break," it was captioned. "The fight will go on." **AP**

Historians name two Indian Ocean 19th century shipwrecks

A four-year search of the depths of the Indian Ocean has failed to locate Malaysia Airlines Flight 370. But the unprecedented sonar seabed hunt for the missing airliner might be close to solving two 19th century mysteries — the locations of two sailing ships that vanished with cargos of coal.

Maritime historians yesterday published a short list of possible identities

of two shipwrecks found in the course of the initial 710,000 square kilometer three-year search for the Boeing 777 that was lost in 2014 with 238 people aboard.

The wrecks were found in 2015 seven months and 36 kilometers apart, 2,300 kilometers southwest of Australia in debris fields scattered with coal more than 3.7 kilometers below the ocean's surface.

The searchers had a closer look with underwater drones that took photographs of both sites and retrieved a coal sample from one. Analysis showed the coal was probably from Britain, a Western Australian Museum report said.

The museum's examination of the images of the scattered remnants of a ship discovered on May 19, 2015, found it was possibly the brig W. Gor-

don or the barque Magdala, according to incomplete records of ships lost in that period.

W. Gordon was on a voyage from Scotland to Australia when it disappeared in 1877 with 10 crew aboard. Magdala was lost in 1882 while sailing from Wales to Indonesia.

The report found the splintered wreck was most likely sunk by an explosion. Coal cargoes in

the era exploded through sparking of methane gas accumulating below deck or the spontaneous combustion of overheated coal.

An iron wreck found on Dec. 19, 2015, was most likely the barque West Ridge, which vanished while sailing from England to India with 28 sailors in 1883, the report said. A coal sample from that wreck suggested the cargo was from Britain.

There was no evidence of what caused the disaster, but the wreck's location east of the trade route from Europe to Asia suggested it might

have been heading to the closest port in Australia for help.

The museum's curator of maritime archaeology, Ross Anderson, said the new data about the two 19th century sinkings was a significant byproduct of the search for Flight 370, which was flying from Malaysia to China when communications with it were lost.

But Anderson doubted that the identities of the two deepest wrecks found in the Indian Ocean would ever be confirmed without a wealthy private benefactor because of their depth and remoteness. **AP**

INDIA

Ten cities top WHO list of most polluted in the world

THE most recent air pollution data from the World Health Organization gives India a dubious lead. The world's ten most polluted cities are Indian.

The air quality database for 2016 was released by WHO yesterday [Macau time] and showed that the north Indian industrial city of Kanpur had the highest measured levels of PM2.5, or small particulate matter.

Kanpur, a northern city on the banks of the Yamuna River, recorded an annual average PM2.5 level of 173 micrograms per cubic meter, several times higher than the WHO recommendation of no more than 10 mcg per cubic meter.

India's capital, which once was the world's most polluted city, ranks sixth in the most recent list. But experts say the data does not show improvements in New Delhi's air quality, but rather that more Indian ci-



A thick layer of smog covers Connaught Place, the heart of New Delhi

ties have toxic air.

"This is a grim reminder that air pollution has become a national public health crisis. It requires hard action," Anumita Roy Chowdhury, executive director of the Centre for Science and Environment, a Delhi-based research and lobbying organization, said in a statement. WHO says as many as 9

out of 10 people across the world breathe unhealthy air. It attributes some 7 million deaths yearly to air pollution as tiny particulate matter lodge deep inside the lungs, causing strokes, heart diseases, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and respiratory infections.

The Indian capital and lar-

ge parts of north India gasp for breath for most of the year due to vehicle fumes and swirling construction dust as well as coal and garbage fires lit by the poor to keep warm.

Some local studies indicate up to a third of Delhi's children have impaired lung function and respiratory diseases like asthma. **AP**

Sandstorm kills at least 91, injures over 160



A powerful dust storm and rain swept parts of north and western India overnight, causing house collapses, toppling trees and leaving at least 91 people dead and more than 160 injured, officials said yesterday.

The devastation was particularly severe Wednesday night in Agra, the northern Indian city where the white marble Taj Mahal is located. Forty-three people died there as the wind speed touched 130 kilometers per hour, said Relief Commissioner Sanjay Kumar of Uttar Pradesh state.

There was no damage to the monument.

At least 64 people died

and another 67 were injured in northern Uttar Pradesh state, Kumar said.

In the western state of Rajasthan, the Press Trust of India news agency said 27 others died and 100 were injured. Most deaths were caused by house collapses and lightning.


The rainstorm caught people by surprise as the monsoon season is still more than six weeks away.

Uprooted trees flattened mud huts of the poor, Kumar said. Electrical and telephone lines were snapped in parts of Uttar Pradesh state, Kumar said.

AD

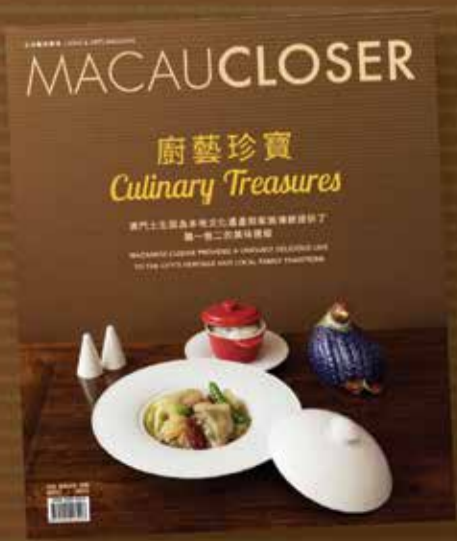

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USA

Shakeup in Trump's legal team may usher in tougher stance

Chad Day & Eric Tucker, Washington

PRESIDENT Donald Trump hired a veteran attorney who represented Bill Clinton during his impeachment process as the White House shifted to a more aggressive approach to a special counsel investigation that has reached a critical stage.

The White House announced yesterday [Macau time] the hiring of lawyer Emmet Flood after disclosing the retirement of Ty Cobb, who for months has been the administration's point person dealing with special counsel Robert Mueller.

It's the latest shake-up for a legal team grappling with unresolved questions on how to protect the president from legal and political jeopardy in Mueller's Russia probe, which is nearing the one-year mark.

The replacement of Cobb with Flood appears to usher in a more adversarial stance toward the Mueller team as Trump's lawyers debate whether to make the president available for an interview with the special counsel and brace for the prospect of a grand jury subpoena if they refuse.

The hiring came just hours before Trump's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, took direct aim at Mueller's investigation and provided a new rationale for why the president fired former FBI Director James Comey, a move that has attracted the special counsel's attention as investigators probe possible obstruction of justice.

In an interview with Fox News Channel's "Hannity," Giuliani said Trump fired Comey last year "because Comey would not, among other things, say that he wasn't a target" of the special counsel's Russia investigation.

The explanation was at least the third offered by Trump and his advisers.

When he fired Comey last May, Trump initially cited the FBI director's handling of the probe into Democratic rival Hillary Clinton's emails. He later told NBC's Lester Holt that he was thinking of "this Russia thing." On Fox News, Giuliani said Trump did the Lester Holt interview "to explain to the American people the president was not the target of the investigation."

The latest explanation comes as Cobb eases out of his role as White House point person on the Mueller investigation.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said that Cobb had been discussing the decision for weeks and would retire at the end of May and that Flood would be joining the

AP PHOTO



White House staff to "represent the president and the administration against the Russia witch hunt."

"I'm deeply grateful to the president and the chief of staff for this opportunity to serve my country," Cobb told The Associated Press. "It's been a privilege, and I'm confident that the matter will be in good hands with Emmet Flood."

Although Cobb does not personally represent the president, he has functioned as a critical point person for Mueller's document and interview requests, coordinated dealings with prosecutors and worked closely with Trump's personal lawyers. He has repeatedly urged cooperation with the investigation in hopes of bringing it to a quick end, and he has viewed his role as largely finished now that interviews with current and former White House officials have been completed.

Yet Flood, who was embroiled in the bitterly partisan Clinton impeachment fight 20 years ago, may well advocate a more confrontational approach. His law firm, Williams & Connolly, is one of Washington's most prominent, with a reputation for aggressive advocacy for its clients and a history of tangling with the government. It has also represented senior White House officials, including presidents.

Flood, a former law clerk to the late Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia, has defended former Vice President Dick Cheney in a lawsuit brought by former CIA official Valerie Plame and represented President George W. Bush in executive-privilege disputes with Congress - suggesting he is well-versed in the powers of the presidency and may invoke those authorities as the Mueller investigation moves

forward.

Flood was always the top choice of White House counsel Don McGahn for the job Cobb was given last summer, according to a person familiar with the hiring decision who described Flood as a "fighter." The person spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Cobb and McGahn hold different views on how cooperative the White House should be with the special counsel investigation.

Cobb's retirement, though not a surprise, was nonetheless the latest evolution for a legal team marked by turnover.

Trump's lead personal lawyer, John Dowd, left in March. Another attorney whom Trump tried to bring on ultimately passed because of conflicts, and the president two weeks ago added Giuliani and a pair of former prosecutors, Martin and Jane Raskin, to work alongside mainstay lawyer Jay Sekulow.

Critical decisions lie ahead. The president's legal team has not committed him to an interview with Mueller, who has dozens of questions on a broad array of topics he'd like to ask. Trump initially said he was eager for an interview, but he hasn't said so recently. His view of Mueller soured further after raids last month that targeted one of his personal lawyers, Michael Cohen, in a separate investigation.

Those interview negotiations are hugely consequential, especially after Dowd confirmed to the AP this week that Mueller's team in March raised the prospect of issuing a grand jury subpoena for Trump, an extraordinary move that would seek to force a sitting president to testify under oath.

Also yesterday, Trump echoed the concerns of a small group of House conservatives who have been criticizing the Justice Department for not turning over certain investigation documents.

"What are they afraid of?" Trump tweeted. "At some point I will have no choice but to use the powers granted to the Presidency and get involved!"

It was unclear what Trump meant by "get involved."

Trump hired a veteran attorney who represented Bill Clinton during his impeachment process

Several Republican House committee chairmen have recently negotiated deals with the Justice Department to turn over documents related to Russia investigations into Trump and to a 2016 investigation into Democrat Hillary Clinton's emails.

The Justice Department says that "dozens of members and staff from both parties" have viewed thousands of classified documents and House staff members have temporary office space in the department to review additional materials.

But some lawmakers who sit on those committees remain unsatisfied, particularly members of the conservative House Freedom Caucus. Some of them have asked for an unredacted version of a Justice Department document that sets out the scope for Mueller's probe, a request that the department immediately denied because it pertains to an ongoing investigation. **AP**

It was not immediately clear in what context the possibility of a subpoena was raised or how serious Mueller's prosecutors were about such a move. Mueller is probing not only Russian election interference and possible coordination with Trump associates but also possible obstruction of justice by Trump after he took office.

If Mueller's team decides to subpoena Trump, the president could still fight it in court or refuse to answer questions by invoking his Fifth Amendment protection from self-incrimination.

Trump lashed out against the investigation in familiar fashion, tweeting: "There was no Collusion (it is a Hoax) and there is no Obstruction of Justice (that is a setup & trap)."

GIULIANI SAYS TRUMP REPAID MONEY PAID TO DANIELS



THE ATTORNEY for Stormy Daniels is calling for "serious consequences" for President Donald Trump after his new lawyer says the president reimbursed his personal "fixer" for a USD130,000 payment to the porn actress. Michael Avenatti said: "This is a stunning revelation. Mr Trump evidently has participated in a felony and there must

be serious consequences for his conduct and his lies and deception to the American people." Rudy Giuliani said on Fox News Channel's "Hannity" that the president repaid attorney Michael Cohen. Trump has previously told reporters that he was not aware of the payment and that he didn't know where Cohen had gotten the money.

USA

Republican House members seek Nobel Peace Prize for Trump

Kevin Freking, Washington

A group of House Republicans is seeking the Nobel Peace Prize for President Donald Trump because of his work to ease nuclear tensions with North Korea.

Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un are working out the details of a historic summit that could take place by the end of May or early June. Yet an agreement by which the North would give up its nuclear weapons and allow for the world to confirm it still seems far off.

The United States has reached aid-for-disarmament deals with North Korea before, but they've ultimately failed.

Recent comments from the leaders of the two Koreas have raised hopes. Trump's supporters on Capitol Hill are pushing the idea that he deserves a Nobel, and Trump clearly enjoyed it Saturday when supporters at a Michigan rally began chanting "Nobel" as he talked about North Korea.



Rep. Luke Messer, R-Ind., speaks during the Indiana Republican Senate primary debate in Indianapolis

Rep. Luke Messer, R-Ind., made the suggestion in a letter yesterday [Macau time] sent to members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee. It was signed by 18 Republicans.

The letter said that North Korea has long ignored international demands to cease its aggressions but that Trump's "peace through strength policies are

working" and bringing North Korea to the negotiating table.

It said the Trump administration united China and others in imposing strict sanctions.

"The sanctions have decimated the North Korean economy and have been largely credited for bringing North Korea to the negotiating table," the nomination letter stated.

Messer is running for the Senate in Indiana, where support for Trump has become a litmus test for Republican voters. The lawmakers who signed the letter are among the most conservative in the House. The group includes several other lawmakers who are also running for governor or senator in Republican-leaning or strongly GOP states.

Rep. Luke Messer made the suggestion in a letter sent to members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, signed by 18 Republicans

Among them: Rep. Marsha Blackburn, who is running for a Senate seat in Tennessee; Rep. Kevin Cramer, who is running for the Senate in North Dakota; Rep. Evan Jenkins, who is running for the Senate in West Virginia; and Jim Renacci, who is running for a U.S. Senate seat in Ohio. Rep. Diane Black, another signatory to the letter, is running for governor in Tennessee. AP

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FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:50	Miscellaneous
18:25	Miscellaneous
18:55	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
19:45	Non-daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:50	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Portuguese Mini Serie
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	European League Highlights
01:25	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
02:15	RTPi Live

SATURDAY

10:30	Comedy
11:35	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:55	Miscellaneous
17:50	Miscellaneous
18:35	Miscellaneous
18:35	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Grimm Sr. 3
22:20	Miscellaneous
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:05	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:25	Kids Serie
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:55	Brainstorm
17:40	Got Talent Portugal
19:20	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-daily Portuguese News
22:00	Documentary
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:15	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:50	RTPi Live

Offbeat

HE DID IT AGAIN! MAN ROBS SAME BANK DAY AFTER RELEASE FROM PRISON

Authorities say a man sent to state prison for bank robbery has robbed the same Cleveland bank branch the day after his release.

Federal prosecutors in Cleveland say 40-year-old Markiko Sonnie Lewis was indicted this week on a single count of bank robbery for robbing a Cleveland Key Bank branch April 12. Prosecutors say he took just over USD1,000.

Lewis, of Maple Heights, was sentenced to 30 months in prison in Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court in April 2016, including time already served, after pleading guilty to robbing the same bank branch in November 2015.

He was released April 11.

Court records indicate Lewis hasn't been assigned an attorney.

cinema



CINETEATRO

03 - 09 MAY



AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR

ROOM 1
2:30, 6:00, 9:00pm
ROOM 2
4:30pm

Director: Anthony Russo, Joe Russo
Starring: Robert Downey Jr, Chris Evans, Chris Hemsworth
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 149min



RAMPAGE

ROOM 2
2:30, 9:30pm

Director: Brad Peyton
Starring: Dwayne Johnson, Naomie Harris, Malin Akerman
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 107min



TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY

ROOM 2
2:30, 9:30pm

Director: Chan Tai-Lee
Starring: Teresa Mo, Ling Man Lung, Ray Lui, Bonnie Xian
Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)
Duration: 91min

THE THROUGH

ROOM 3
02:30, 04:30, 7:30, 9:30pm

Director: Nick Cheung
Starring: Nick Cheung, Xu Jing Lei, He Jiong, Miu Kiu Wai
Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

this day in history



1979 ELECTION VICTORY FOR MARGARET THATCHER

The Conservative Party has won the general election making Margaret Thatcher Britain's first ever woman prime minister. Mrs Thatcher arrived at Downing Street to take over from James Callaghan after her party won an overall majority of 43 seats.

On the steps of Number 10, she quoted from St Francis of Assisi: "Where there is discord, may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith. And where there is despair, may we bring hope."

The Tories have won 339 seats, Labour 269, the Liberals 11, Ulster parties 12 and Nationalists four.

Former Liberal leader Jeremy Thorpe, currently awaiting trial at the Old Bailey for conspiracy and incitement to murder, has lost his North Devon seat in a crushing defeat.

Reacting to Mrs Thatcher's victory he said: "I am horrified. She makes [her predecessor] Ted Heath look like a moderate."

During the election campaign, Mrs Thatcher said the Conservatives would cut income tax, reduce public expenditure, make it easier for people to buy their own homes and curb the power of the unions.

She will soon announce members of her new cabinet. William Whitelaw is likely to become Home Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe Chancellor and Sir Keith Joseph Secretary of State for Industry.

Other prominent politicians rejected by the electorate included: Liberal deputy leader John Pardo (Cornwall North); Shirley Williams (Hertford and Stevenage), formerly education secretary; shadow Scottish Secretary Sir Teddy Taylor (Glasgow Cathcart) and former arts minister Hugh Jenkins (Putney).

Labour can gain some consolation from its success in the local elections, winning several important councils from the Tories, namely Leicester, Coventry, Tameside and Sandwell.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Friend and foe agree that Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013) was one of the dominant political figures of the century. Over the following 11 years, she changed the nature not only of her own party but of others too.

Such policies as the sale of council houses and the privatisation of the nationalised industries have been accepted by most political parties.

Thanks in part to the relationships she developed with her ideological soul-mate US President Ronald Reagan and with the Soviet Union's President Gorbachev, the "Iron Lady" as a Moscow newspaper once called her, became a world figure.

Lady Thatcher was popular for her strong leadership style - demonstrated during the 1982 Falklands War.

Her strident Euro-scepticism led to disputes within her own party which resulted in her downfall in 1990 - and ultimately that of the Conservative Party, routed by Labour in the 1997 general election.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19

It's not that you live for conflict, competition, and aggression - not at all. It's just that you happen to be, well, an adrenaline junkie.

Taurus April 20-May 20

You have a sometimes-uncanny ability to see through the mundane and tickle out the profound.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21

Take the day off. That's right - if you can possibly duck out of social engagements and any extra work commitments and the like, do it.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Today's the day to look at all finishing details. If you've been cleaning, dust the salt and pepper shakers.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You go straight to the heart of the matter. You discard all the unnecessary clutter, peel away any obscuring layers and contemplate the thing itself.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Nope, today is a getup and get out there or get up and stay in and boot up the computer.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22

What do you like more: Fame or fortune? Love or money? Brawn or brains? Or would you ideally like to have a combination of all of these?

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

You're no wheeler-dealer and you're not a huckster either. You're not a cheater at cards or an inventor of convenient truths.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You're not one to stay on the surface when it comes to probing the meaning of things around you.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You could see some problems right now. But don't fall into the trap of thinking this is a bad thing.

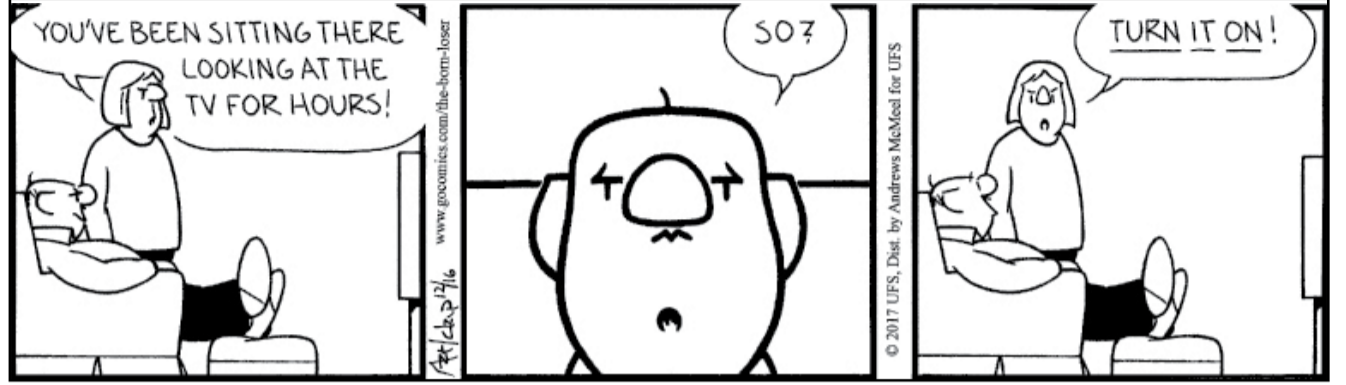
Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You're the social equivalent of a bonfire at the beach (that's been built by an expert and provides heat and light but poses no threat of burning out of control).

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20

If anyone out there is familiar with the concept of melodrama, it's you - because when your emotional cup is full, it really runs over.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION

CHINA

Table listing weather conditions for various Chinese cities like Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.

WORLD

Table listing weather conditions for world cities like Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Flavor; 6- Ed and Mel of baseball; 10- Czech, e.g.; 14- Device with 88 keys; 15- Lash; 16- Yarn; 17- French farewell; 18- I could ___ horse!

DOWN: 1- Box; 2- Verdi heroine; 3- Duo; 4- Dedicated to the ___ Love; 5- Like some corners; 6- Be in the red; 7- Yonder thing; 8- Saturn's largest moon; 9- Astronaut; 10- Flight of steps; 11- Knight's weapon; 12- Communion table; 13- Osso buco meat; 21- Golly!



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Liverpool's Sadio Mané (right) celebrates scoring his side's first goal as Roma goalkeeper Alisson Becker looks back

FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Liverpool goes from qualifier to finalist

Andrew Dampf, Rome

WAY back in August when Liverpool was sweating its way through the playoffs just to qualify for the Champions League group phase, going all the way to the final wasn't even on the Reds radar.

Not after a season in which Liverpool didn't even play in Europe.

Not when no one could have imagined that Mohamed Salah would develop into a scorer to rival Lionel Messi. Or that Liverpool would score a Champions League-record 46 goals — surpassing the mark set by Barcelona in 1999-2000.

Yet 10 months later, Liverpool is going to face two-time defending champion Real Madrid for the most coveted trophy in club football.

Liverpool advanced to its first Champions League final in more than a decade despite a 4-2 loss at Roma yesterday.

The Reds scored two early goals and that was all they needed to advance 7-6 on aggregate after a 5-2 win in the first leg of the semifinals.

"We came in as a qualifier and now we're in the final," Liverpool coach Juergen Klopp said. "Now we will go

to Kiev, which sounds crazy but is the truth. We will go to Kiev."

The final is scheduled for May 26 in Ukraine.

Sadio Mané took advantage of a misplaced Roma pass to put Liverpool ahead nine minutes in and Georginio Wijnaldum restored the advantage with a header after Milner's own goal.

Edin Dzeko equalized for Roma early in the second half and Radja Nainggolan scored two late goals for the hosts as the Giallorossi narrowly missed out on another miracle after their stunning 3-0 second-leg victory over Barcelona in the quarterfinals.

"Tonight was all about getting the job done," said Liverpool midfielder James Milner, who scored an own goal.

Madrid beat Bayern Munich 4-3 on aggregate in the other semifinal.

"These fans deserve to be in the final, and they'll have a great time in Kiev regardless of the result," Liverpool defender Andy Robertson said. "We ended up losing tonight, but they threw everything at us."

Roma was left feeling aggrieved about two penalty decisions that weren't given. "The VAR would have given

us what was taken from us tonight," Roma coach Eusebio Di Francesco said. "That was ridiculous. [...] But Liverpool certainly didn't steal anything from us. They played 45 extraordinary minutes [in the first leg] and we played two second halves that were just as extraordinary."

Liverpool last reached the final in 2007, when it lost to AC Milan, having won the last of its five titles over Milan two years earlier.

The 13 goals scored between the two legs was a record for a Champions League semifinal.

"When two squads play in an open manner like that, it's more like a boxing match," Di Francesco said. "There should be more matches like these."

Klopp was full of complements for Roma.

"What a performance, what a comeback. What a brave football game," the German manager said. "It was the first time we were not as good as we can be. So we needed luck."

There were concerns of fan violence surrounding the match after two men from Rome were arrested on suspicion of attempted murder following an assault outside the stadium before the first

leg in Liverpool.

Supporters of both clubs met at Rome's City Hall earlier yesterday to condemn violence and express solidarity with Sean Cox, the Liverpool supporter who was severely injured in the clashes last week.

Inside the stadium, fans of both sides lit flares in the stands before kickoff. It was so loud at one point that the Champions League anthem couldn't be heard.

With Liverpool advancing and Roma winning the match, both sets of fans applauded their clubs at the final whistle.

Afterward, Liverpool players posed near their fans behind a banner that read, "Sean Cox: You'll never walk alone."

Like the first leg, Liverpool was more impressive early on before Roma asserted itself late.

Roma's defense looked out of sorts when Nainggolan misplaced a pass early on and Roberto Firmino set up Mané for an unchallenged goal — the first that Roma has conceded at home in this season's Champions League.

Roma equalized six minutes later when Dejan Lovren's attempt to clear an effort from Stephan El Shaarawy ricocheted off teammate James Milner's face back into his own goal.

Ten minutes later, Edin Dzeko's attempt to head away a Liverpool corner went backwards instead toward Wijnaldum, who nodded it in.

El Shaarawy hit the post with a shot from beyond the area before the break.

El Shaarawy, who put in a strong performance, also had a role in Roma's second goal. His curling effort was batted away by goalkeeper Loris Karius and Dzeko had enough time to control the rebound before shooting firmly into the far corner for his eighth goal in 12 matches in this season's competition.

Roma could have had a penalty shortly after the hour mark, but Liverpool got away with an evident handball by Trent Alexander-Arnold as he blocked a close-range effort from El Shaarawy.

Nainggolan then put his team ahead on the night with a long-range shot off the post in the 86th for his first goal in 24 Champions League appearances.

In added time, Nainggolan converted a penalty following a handball by Ragnar Klavan.

Salah, who scored the opening two goals of the first leg and who has 43 goals in 48 appearances in all competitions this season, was held scoreless against his former club. **AP**

European weekend: What to watch in the main leagues

ENGLAND

It's win or bust for Chelsea and West Bromwich Albion in the Premier League this weekend.

If Chelsea fails to beat Liverpool at Stamford Bridge on Sunday, the Champions League is virtually out of reach with only two more games. Chelsea is in fifth place and six points behind third-place Liverpool, which has one more game remaining.

At the other end of the standings, last-place West Brom will be relegated if it doesn't win at home against Tottenham on Saturday. Even a victory is unlikely to keep West Brom in the top flight because it is five points from safety with two games left.

SPAIN

Barcelona and Real Madrid meet in the last "clasico" of the season on Sunday with very little to play for in the Spanish league.

Barcelona has already won the title, while Madrid has secured a Champions League spot.

Madrid is still in the fight for second place — it trails city rival Atletico Madrid by four points with a game in hand — but its mind might already be on the Champions League final against Liverpool.

Barcelona also has won the Copa del Rey but has no other trophies to play for.

Atletico, which hosts Espanyol on Sunday, is trying to guarantee its best league finish since winning the title in 2013-14.

ITALY

Juventus can clinch a record-extending seventh straight Serie A title this weekend.

Victory at home against Bologna on Saturday would see Juventus move seven points clear of Napoli and leave the southern club needing to win or draw against Torino on Sunday to keep the title race going with two matches remaining.

Roma, which visits Cagliari on Sunday, is in third place, tied on points with fourth-place Lazio and four ahead of fifth-place Inter Milan. The top four finishers qualify for the Champions League.

Lazio hosts Atalanta, while Inter visits Udinese and Hellas Verona plays at AC Milan needing a win on Saturday to avoid being relegated.

FRANCE

Paris Saint-Germain needs to win its last three games to finish the season with 100 points, starting with Friday's trip to Amiens.

PSG is looking to break its own record for points, having won the league with 96 two years ago. That season, PSG scored 102 goals, lost only two games, and conceded only 19 goals for a goal difference of plus-83. It has a goal difference of plus-81 this season — also losing only twice — with 106 goals and 25 conceded.

The team remains on course for another domestic treble, and should wrap that up easily against third-division club Les Herbiers in next week's French Cup final.

opinion

Kapok
Eric Sautédé



TOOTHLESS LABOR ORGANIZATIONS

I was recently reminded that in the years leading to the handover, the Portuguese administration had expressed the wish, almost on an annual basis, to move forward with the long-delayed passing of a trade union law in Macao. However, at the time, with the constraints of the transfer of sovereignty becoming more pressing, all projects or proposals of law had to be submitted “informally” for prior approval to the Xinhua News Agency, the one institution that served as Beijing’s unofficial representation prior to the establishment of the Liaison Office in 2000.

Few people remember that the Xinhua News Agency had itself replaced the Nam Kwong in 1987, and the latter is still a force to reckon with in present-day Macao, both economically and politically, as it employs, for example, the likes of legislator Mak Soi Kun, who, in the past few weeks, has been making his high-pitched voice heard in favor of installing CCTV cameras all over the streets while recommending teaching “national security” in schools.

Xinhua’s refusal to “grant” a trade union law to Macao is easily understandable. For a start, the move was considered as useless: in the People’s Republic of China, the All China Federation of Trade Unions was (and still is) a mass organization directly supervised by the Chinese Communist Party, thus the mere idea of an “independent” relay in society representing the workers’ interests did not strike a chord. Moreover, the Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) already existed — “sponsored” by the Chinese communists at the end of the 1950s — and it had faithfully served its purpose by ensuring stability for the good sake of the colonial administration and swiftly channeling the political guidance of Beijing. Finally, the initiative looked rather suspicious: after all, the colonizers had had ample time to pass such a piece of legislation, why the sudden rush? Why now and not then?

Could things change for the better after 1999? Looking back at 1992, that was the year when Fernando Chui Sai On got elected for the first time at the Legislative Assembly on a ticket representing... the Macao Federation of Trade Unions! The charity arms of business interests in the territory take good care of the most deprived members of society, so much so actually that it prohibits them from being genuinely represented.

Thus, although the right to form and join a union is enshrined in Article 27 of the Macao Basic Law and constitutes a significant component of at least three international covenants and conventions of which Macao is a signatory, there is no way the benevolent entrepreneurs who run the show will ever introduce such a law on their own, without a strong-enough push from the ones vying for it. Legislator José Pereira Coutinho knows it more than anyone else: he tried to introduce a trade union law on nine occasions and failed flatly every single time. And even when he got the support of the “yellow” FAOM — in this part of the world, we say “tofu onion” — it was never enough to tilt the balance in the right direction.

Back in 2007, when we still had dozens of independent organizations taking to the streets and 5 or 6,000 demonstrators showing up on May 1, some saw the possibility for a very embryonic bona fide civil society to develop. That was the time when plain cloths policemen would shoot in the air to intimidate the crowd! The next year, the wealth-partaking scheme went into effect.

Fast forward to today: May 1 has become a total fraud! The FAOM organizes banquets with the government on the evening of April 30, and its main demand concerns a few extra bank holidays that fall on Sundays! The most vocal demonstrators defend their property rights, and trust more the Liaison Office than Mr Tam! Meanwhile, labour rights in Macao have remained the same since... the mid-1980s! Consumers of the world, Unite!

THE GEORGE HARRISON’S FIRST ELECTRIC GUITAR UP FOR AUCTION

George Harrison’s first electric guitar is up for auction. Julien’s Auctions says Harrison played the Hofner Club 40 when The Beatles played around Liverpool, England, as The Quarrymen. Harrison traded his acoustic guitar for the electric model with Ray Ennis, who was a member of The Swinging Blue Jeans.

Harrison donated it to a band competition in 1965 and it was won by a member of a German band who died in 2017. His widow is putting it up for auction. The auction house estimates the guitar will sell for between USD200,000 and \$300,000. The auction will take place at New York’s Hard Rock Cafe on May 19.



Station	Air quality
Roadside	80-100 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Moderate
Ambient	80-100 Moderate

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



INDIA A powerful dust storm and rain swept parts of north and western India overnight, causing house collapses, toppling trees and leaving at least 91 people dead and more than 160 injured. [More on p13](#)

SAUDI ARABIA opened its second movie theater this week with tickets expected to go on sale to the public this weekend. The move comes two weeks after the country’s first movie theater opened.



ARMENIA After weeks of raucous protests, the streets of the Armenian capital suddenly calmed yesterday and the ruling party confirmed it would back an opposition leader to become prime minister next week.

GREECE About 500 people on the Greek island of Lesbos are protesting against a European Union migration policy.

GERMANY-SLOVAKIA German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged Slovakia to solve the slayings of an investigative journalist and his fiancée that triggered a political crisis in the country.



SPAIN Basque separatist group ETA publicly declared its dissolution yesterday, bringing an end to a campaign against Spain that saw more than 850 people killed over more than four decades. But the Spanish government said it would continue to prosecute anyone with any links to any of the violence.

BRAZIL Local media in Brazil are reporting more than 30 people have been shot dead in the northern city of Belem since Sunday, when police officer Maria de Fatima dos Santos was gunned down.

Australian first lady ‘flattered’ by ‘delicious’ description



The Daily Telegraph caricatured Macron as “President Pepe Le Pew”, with an altered image of the French statesman

Rod McGuirk, Canberra

AUSTRALIA’S prime minister said yesterday his wife was “flattered and charmed” to be described by President Emmanuel Macron as “delicious,” a compliment that has sparked lighthearted conjecture during the French leader’s first official visit Down Under.

Macron raised eyebrows on Wednesday with his description of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s wife of 38 years, Lucy, during a Sydney press conference.

“I want to thank you for your welcome, thank you and your delicious wife for your warm welcome,” Macron told the prime minister.

Turnbull showed no hint of jealousy when questioned about the compliment, which the beaming prime minister revealed he also found charming.

“Lucy was very flattered,” Turnbull told reporters. “She’s asked me to say that she found the president’s

compliment as charming as it was memorable.”

“President Macron charmed Australia. He certainly charmed all of us, all the Turnbells,” the prime minister said. “Mrs. Turnbull is both flattered and charmed as we all are.”

The president’s comment quickly sparked lighthearted reaction on social media and in the Australian press amid lively conjecture about the French leader’s intent.

Sydney’s best-selling newspaper, The Daily Telegraph, reported the comment on its front page on yesterday under the headline “President Pepe Le Pew,” likening Macron to the Warner Bros. love-sick French skunk cartoon character.

Despite Macron’s deadpan delivery, some observers felt he may have been joking. The comment was made just before lunch and he and Turnbull had made previous comments about food.

Others felt Macron may simply have slipped up in his use of English, since the

French word for delicious — *delicieux* — also translates as “delightful.”

The more mischievous may have even considered Macron’s comment to possibly be a tongue-in-cheek reference to Trump’s visit to Paris last year, when he was caught telling Macron’s wife, Brigitte, that she was “in such great shape,” before looking to her husband and saying, “Beautiful.”

In any case, the moment made headlines in Australia as a somewhat comedic ending to a serious news conference focusing on violent May Day protests in Paris, the Iran nuclear deal and China’s growing influence.

Macron ended his trip to Sydney yesterday with a thumbs-up and a farewell wave to the prime minister.

Macron’s next stop is the South Pacific island nation of New Caledonia, where locals are preparing for a referendum in November on whether the French territory will become independent of France. **AP**