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

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

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WORLD BRIEFS



SOUTH CHINA SEA

Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah said yesterday that Malaysia's new government will adopt a firmer stand in tackling a decades-old territorial row in the South China Sea amid China's aggressive expansion in the disputed area. More on p11

INDONESIA The government has asked a court to ban Jemaah Anshorut Daulah, a militant network linked to the Islamic State group, hoping to strangle its funding and support.

AUSTRALIA An alleged serial killer yesterday pleaded not guilty to slaying three women who vanished from an Australian city nightclub strip more than 20 years ago and to sexually assaulting another two teenagers up to 30 years ago.



PAKISTAN A suicide bomber on a motorcycle rammed into people waiting outside a busy polling station in the Pakistani city of Quetta yesterday, killing at least 31 and casting a dark shadow on what was to be a historic day for the country as Pakistanis cast ballots to elect their thirds consecutive civilian government. More on p12-13

IRAN's President Hassan Rouhani has replaced the governor of the central bank as the country's currency continues its downward spiral to record lows.

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Nutritionists say high salt intake turned norm

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China-backed frenzied race to harness the Mekong became deadly

P11,12 LAOS

CHINESE state media say a total of 15 people have been detained in a growing scandal over the faking of records by a rabies vaccine maker.

Those detained include the CEO of Changchun Changsheng Life Sciences Ltd., which has been accused of fabricating production and inspection records following a surprise visit to company offices by inspectors last week.

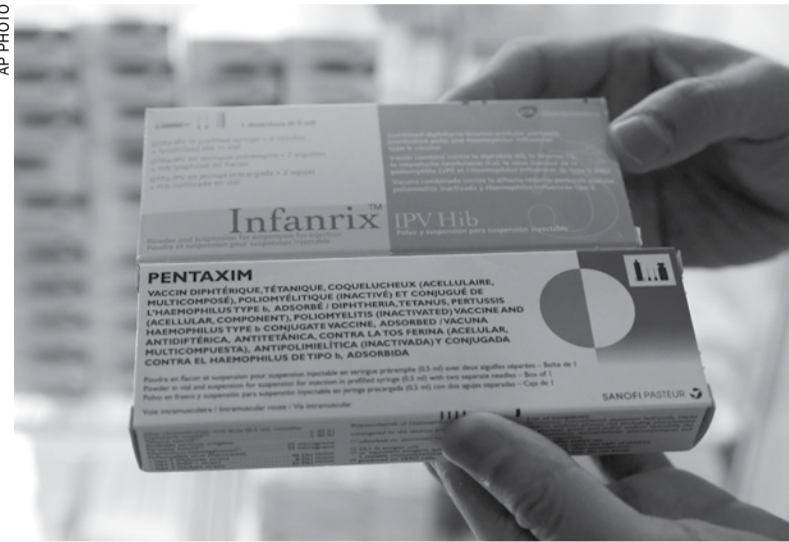
The other 14 were also executives at the company, state broadcaster CCTV said yesterday.

Both President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang have demanded urgent attention to the matter, underscoring the government's concern over public outrage about a series of public health scandals, especially ones concerning children.

The World Health Organization applauded the government's action, saying it shows "when regulatory oversight works well, potential risks can be averted."

"While the current incident is clearly regrettable,

15 detained in China rabies vaccine scandal



Boxes of Infanrix and Pentaxim vaccines for infants at a children's clinic in Hong Kong

the detection of this event by an unannounced inspection shows that the regulatory authority's system of checks and balances to protect population health is working," WHO's Beijing office said in

a statement. While there have been no reports of injuries, authorities have impounded the vaccines and suspended production at the company's plant in northeastern China.

The disclosure of the scandal has ricocheted around social media, reviving memories of past scandals involving faulty medications and bogus infant formula that contained little more than starch.

A similar scandal erupted two years ago after police

broke up a criminal ring that sold millions of faulty baby vaccines — but did not disclose the case for months.

Earlier this week, Reuters reported that the Changchun Changsheng Life Sciences case has prompted fears that mainland consumers will opt to have their children vaccinated in either Macau or Hong Kong, as has happened during previous scandals. Observers are warning that it could lead to another shortage in the two special administrative regions of China. MDT/AP

HEALTH BUREAU: VACCINES 'ENOUGH FOR DEMAND'

THE VACCINE supply in Macau "is enough for demand," the Health Bureau stated yesterday. "With the purpose of ensuring that the vaccination needs of the Macau residents are met, the Health Bureau has been implementing for many years measures establishing that the vaccines ordered are, in a general way, destined for the Macau residents." Still according to the statement, "there are rare cases of acquisition of vaccines

by non-residents, mostly involving children (non-resident) that are allowed to stay in Macau and vaccines for urgent cases, such as tetanus after injuries. There are non-residents that demand vaccines and [are willing to] pay for them, but those orders are not met, which means that they can't be vaccinated in the Health Bureau [facilities], nor in the vaccination posts that have agreements with the Health Bureau."

HISTORY

London urged Lisbon not to grant nationality to Macau citizens

NEWLY declassified documents have revealed that British officials were concerned about an influx of immigration from Macau to Britain in the late 1980s, following the handover of the former Portuguese enclave to China.

The documents, obtained by the South China Morning Post, show that the then-British home secretary, Douglas Hurd, had urged the government to put pressure on Portugal to restrict its practice of granting nationality to inhabitants of Macau, lest it encourage their counterparts in Hong Kong to request the same treatment.

In a letter dated October 16, 1985, Hurd expressed his worry that the negotiations underway for the Macau 1999 handover to China would set a precedent for Britain to take in more immigrants from



Hong Kong, as well as open the door to those wishing to leave Macau.

"With Macau perhaps returning to the control of China at the same time as Hong Kong, it may well be that there will be many Macanese of Portuguese nationality who will decide that Europe rather than Macau is the place to

be and if, as I understand it, they speak English, they will naturally seek to come here if the way is open for them to do so," the home secretary wrote in the letter.

He speculated that residents of Macau would try to use their Portuguese passports as a means of gaining entry into the

United Kingdom, a course made possible following Portugal's 1986 admission to the European Union.

Hurd also noted that "having succeeded in avoiding large scale immigration from Hong Kong as a consequence of the negotiations [...] we really should not drift into a position in which the unintended consequence of Portuguese accession is the potential immigration of large numbers from Macau."

Studies at the time suggested that around 85,000 Macau residents would be entitled to register for Portuguese nationality, and Hurd feared many of them would use their admission into Europe to travel unimpeded to the United Kingdom.

Moreover, Lisbon's policy of granting passports and full citizenship rights to anyone born in Macau

before November 20, 1981 — as well as the fact that nationality could be inherited by their descendants — meant that many more in Macau might immigrate to Europe in the future.

Residents of neighboring Hong Kong have argued that they should have been permitted the same right of abode treatment as their Macau counterparts. However, Britain did not have the same laws as Portugal regarding citizenship rights of its colonies' inhabitants.

"Surely it is clear that we may come under some pressure, because of the position of Portuguese nationals in Macau, to allow freer access to the United Kingdom to Hong Kong [British Dependent Territories Citizens] than is presently permitted," continued Hurd in the letter. "I am sure we should resist such pressure but in doing so we are likely to attract a lot of adverse criticism."

According to the South China Morning Post, Britain put pressure on Lisbon to change its policy of granting nationality to colonial residents of Ma-

cau, with a view to deterring those in Hong Kong from asking for the same. But the Portuguese government refused to capitulate, arguing that it was the individuals' lawful right to acquire citizenship if they chose to do so.

The United Kingdom implemented a different system for the inhabitants of its former colony. The government, then-led by Margaret Thatcher, conferred residency rights to around 50,000 Hong Kong inhabitants and their families, while offering only the British National (Overseas - BNO) passports to others.

The BNO passport is considered by many critics to represent a 'second-class' document. There are around 3.4 million holders of these passports in Hong Kong.

Several prominent British politicians, as well as a number of Hong Kong activists, have lobbied for the current administration in London to empower BNO passport holders with the right to permanently reside within the United Kingdom. Their calls have fallen on deaf ears. DB

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Times

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High intake of salt has become part of city's culture, say nutritionists

Lynzy Valles

MACAU recently recorded a higher rate of hypertension compared to mainland China and Hong Kong. Consequently, nutritionists are highlighting the importance of raising public awareness of healthy-eating.

In Hong Kong, its Consumer Council found that 76 out of 100 sampled Asian soup noodles contained too much sodium. Similar data is unavailable in Macau.

The World Health Organization recommends a daily intake of 2,000 milligrams for an average adult. However, some restaurants in neighboring regions have been found to contain up to triple the maximum recommended intake.

The Times contacted Macau's Consumer Council to enquire whether the council had conducted similar tests in the region, however these tests were only conducted on meats.

"The Consumer Council has recently conducted a test on Chinese barbecued meats and braised meats for bacteria, colorants, and [...] sodium," the council said.

"However, we have not conducted any test on Asian soup noodles recently," it added.

Excessive sodium intake over prolonged periods of time increases the risk of getting kidney disease and suffering a stroke.

A clinical dietician who declined to be identified said that there is no research studying salt usage in Macau's restaurants, unlike the one that has been conducted in Hong Kong.

"In Hong Kong, the studies are pretty much all covered and done very well, but in Macau, I can tell that [there are] no resources to do that," said the expert.

"We are eating in almost the same culture with the [same] Chinese environment. It's pretty much very probable but being probable is not enough. We

AP PHOTO

I see no local restaurants that have menus that label the amount of sodium a dish has.

VICTOR HO
CHAIRMAN OF MACAU
PROFESSIONAL NUTRITIONIST
ASSOCIATION



need to test it before we can say that it's really happening," the Macau-based dietician added.

According to the dietician, the region is also in need of such data in order for public to be aware of the reasons behind the high incidence of cardiovascular diseases, which could be partially caused by a high intake of salt and sugar.

Echoing the sentiments, chairman of the Macau Professional Nutritionist Association said that Hong Kong's data may likely be similar to Macau's due to the same culture in food choices and food intake.

Victor Ho explained that there is already a culture of Chinese locals ingesting a high amount of sodium which is found in frequently consumed sauces and side dishes.

"It's culture. No matter whether they are from Macau or Hong Kong, they often consume a very high intake of salt. They are keen to such taste," said the nutritionist.

"This is the underlining reason why we have an increased risk of developing diseases such as hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, stroke and diabetes," he added.

According to the chairman, some preliminary data in Macau about diseases such as hypertension is available, yet public education and awareness is quite low.

The nutritionist suggested that locals should be aware of the data available in Hong Kong, as residents from both regions consume similar foods.

He implied that there is only a small number of residents who

are health conscious and are therefore aware of the amount of sodium and sugar they intake, while many are not aware of local restaurants' use of salt.

"The major difference is that people in Macau intake specific food that Hong Kong people may not [consume] that much. This includes the availability of some salty food including codfish in local restaurants, then [...] different sauces they add to their noodles," said Ho.

According to Ho, the association he chairs provides beginner courses in nutritional information to raise awareness of healthy food options.

The nutritionist noted that Hong Kong has restaurants that list the amount of sodium that is on the menu, highlighting those dishes low in salt.

"I see no local restaurants that have menus that label the amount of sodium a dish has. There's way more the government can do to prevent the incidence of hypertension," he said.

"Education is what we focus on, to educate the public how to eat healthily. This is all that we can do but it takes time, it's not just a campaign or two that could change everything," Ho added.

He suggested that a food labeling law could be enforced in the city, emphasizing that the number of residents who develop chronic diseases in the region is "growing very fast."

Just last month, the Macau Association of Cardiovascular Interventions (MACI) reported that the number of residents predicted to suffer from cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension, coronary heart disease, arrhythmia, and others is increasing.

During the first working meeting of the Commission for the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases in March, the commission recalled that it held events related to salt restriction and weight reduction to promote the prevention of blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases.

It also recalled that it held events that aim to promote healthy eating which recommended through social media that citizens should reduce the sugar intake in their diet.

CC tests reveal results within parameter



ACCORDING to a report by the Council, 30 samples of Chinese sausages showed that all had normal values and within the safety parameters adopted.

Although the result of recent laboratory tests considered to be good, the council recommends a moderate consumption of this type of meat.

Also, among the 10 samples of sausages tested, "Johnsonville Smoked Sausage & Cheddar Cheese" has the lowest salt content and contains 1.2 grams of

salt per 100 grams of sausage.

The sample with the highest salt content is "Select's Chicken Franks," as each 100 grams of sausage contains 2.2 grams of salt content.

In regards to its laboratory analysis on the use of kitchen salt, 17 samples of salt were collected, 14 of which were supermarkets in Macau, and three in the Zhuhai market, of which all the samples examined were in conformity with the requirements of that standard.

HK Monetary Authority presents new banknote series



THE Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) this week presented a batch of new banknotes to be rolled out starting from October 2018, featuring added security features and consistent, vertical images to replace the existing horizontal ones.

The different denomination notes will be rolled out in series, starting with the HKD1,000 note this October and followed by the HKD500 early next year. The lower denominations of HKD100, HKD50 and HKD20 will be ready for issues in batches between 2019 and 2020, the HKMA said in a statement.

The respective colors of the banknotes will remain the same as in the series currently in circulation.

The new designs, arranged vertically on the bank notes, were also unveiled this week and feature thematic subjects representing different aspects of Hong Kong as an international metropolis as well as its rich natural and cultural heritage.

The HKD1,000 notes will depict the position of Hong Kong as an international financial center, while the Hong Kong UNSECO Glo-

bal Geopark will be displayed on the HKD500 note. The HKD100 note will feature Cantonese opera as a part of southern China's cultural legacy, while the HKD50 and HKD20 notes will show butterflies native to the HKSAR and the popular dim sum and tea culture respectively.

For aesthetic reasons, the reverse side of the banknotes will feature pictures in vertical orientation, instead of the traditional horizontal layout.

The HKMA also said that the new banknotes are coming with advanced security features.

They include a dynamic shimmering pattern revealed when the note is tilted, a windowed metallic thread, enhanced watermark, embossed feel to the print, as well as a fluorescent transparent denomination, for which single colors under normal light will appear as two fluorescent colors when exposed to ultraviolet light.

Accessibility features such as braille and tactile lines will continue to be available in the new series for people with visual impairments to differentiate the denominations.

Leong asks lawyers to pursue Viva Macau case

THE Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, said yesterday that the government was making a continued effort to optimize its existing subsidy and loan schemes available to local businesses. Speaking to reporters on Hengqin Island, Leong said the government had asked its lawyers to continue the case against Viva Macau's guarantor in order to recover a loan made to the bankrupt airline. He added that following Viva Macau's bankruptcy, the government hired an external team of lawyers to pursue the case – via civil litigation – against the Hong Kong-registered guarantor of Viva Macau. Leong said that at the time, the approach was considered to be more efficient for following up the case, rather than requesting a team of civil servants from the Industrial and Commercial Development Fund to do so.

Earlier this week, Legislative Assembly's (AL) directly elected lawmakers, José Pereira Coutinho and Sulu Sou, jointly delivered a proposal during the plenary session for discussion and clarification over the loans granted by the government to Macau's bankrupt low cost airliner Viva Macau.

The lawmakers proposed a discussion on the subsidies conceded by the government, totaling MOP212 million, to the company by the Industrial Development and Commercial Fund (FDIC) which were not able to be retrieved after the company filed for bankruptcy.

According to a statement from the office of the president of the Court of Final Appeal (TUI), as the Times reported on Monday, the courts informed that all the procedures related to the bankruptcy process of Viva Macau concluded on June 6 and creditors will not be able



Lionel Leong pictured yesterday in Hengqin

to recover investments made in the bankrupted company. The FDIC is the second largest creditor of the company (MOP212 million), right after the Eagle Airways Holdings Limited, to whom Viva Macau owes around MOP470 million. According to the statement, the bankruptcy administrator was only be able to sell some of the seized assets (including automobiles, luggage containers, airplane meal trolleys and office supplies) to obtain MOP98,000, which when added to the MOP20,759.64 in the bank accounts at the time of bankruptcy, reached a total amount a little less than MOP119,000. This led to a judge to issue an order on January 23, noting that the sentence was final and that Viva Macau no longer had any other property or sums to pay the debts of creditors.

In their statement, the courts also noted that efforts to claim the payment of MOP212 million in five different installments of the government subsidy from the guarantor, Eagle Airways, was not possible due to the attachment order over Eagle Airways' Hong Kong bank account. At the time (October 2011), there was no judicial co-operation agreement

signed between Macau and the neighboring region of Hong Kong.

In the debate proposal now made by the two lawmakers, the government has been asked for an explanation as to why there was no action taken to seek compensation for the amount of the loan earlier, as well as the reasons why it continued to support the company financially, having given two of the five installments even after there were problems fulfilling the duties regarding the first three.

Coutinho recalls the letters to the president of the AL sent back in 2008, 2009, 2013 and 2014, when he had questioned the government via verbal and written enquiries on the case and had received no replies. He urges the government to come to the plenary to explain their "negligent responsibilities" on the loans and on the consequent damage to public safety.

The lawmakers also claim that the call for the debate is to ascertain what went wrong in the process in order to ensure that similar cases do not happen again, stating that hopefully such a proposal can gather the support of other lawmakers.

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Government plans to expand Canidrome as sports venue

Renato Marques

THE government is planning to continue to use the facilities of the former Canidrome, included the Lin Fong Sports Center, as a sports venue, with plans to expand the facility in order to include other sports activities, the vice president of the Sports Bureau (ID), Allen Lau, told the media yesterday. "Regarding the future project[s] for the Canidrome, we have been informing and addressing the need to have more sports activities in the usage of such [a] facility," Lau said, adding that for such an expansion, the ID is also collecting opinions from other government bureaus, namely from the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ).

"As for the design of the future facility, we do not know yet [for the time being], we are only col-



lecting opinions," Lau said. "The purposes of the space will be maintained, and in the future we will add other areas with different usages and different sports disciplines."

For the time being, the vice president of the ID said that the

population is invited to use the running track.

"We have more areas for sports practice now, namely a running track which is open from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. from Monday to Sunday, and [so far] we are registering around 80 people to use

this facility [the running track alone] on a daily basis," Lau said, also noting that the football pitch is well-used by the Macau Football Association, as well as for School Championships and practice for different football clubs and associations.

For the moment, the pitch is only being used two days per week (every Wednesday and Friday) but the ID says the bureau is studying the possibility of expanding this by one more day each week or opening it for daily use.

In order to add more sports venues to the public sports facilities network, Lau said the ID is continuing to seek collaborations with school institutions that will allow the use of their sports grounds in times they are not being used by the school to service the population, a task he said would not be easy, but has been achieving some results.

FILM

IFFAM signs memorandum with Chinese association

INTERNATIONAL Film Festival & Awards – Macao (IFFAM) organizers met on Tuesday with the China International Culture Communication Center and the China Film Producers' Association successively in Beijing to introduce the latest progress for the upcoming edition of the event.

During the meeting, the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) and the China Film Producers' Association signed a memorandum of cooperation for the IFFAM. The agreement was signed by Chairman of the China Film Producers' Association, Ming Zhenjiang, and MGTO Director Helena de Senna Fernandes, on behalf of their respective entities.

With the memorandum signed, the Association has become a supporting entity of IFFAM and will recommend influential mainland Chinese film celebrities to join the film festival.

In addition, both parties will give mutual recommendation of remarkable films and make collaborative endeavors to promote exchange and cooperation with international filmmakers and nurture the next generation of film talent.

According to a statement from MGTO, by collaborating with different entities, festival organizers seek to "augment the charm and effect of IFFAM, thereby advancing local tourism development."



Another memorandum of cooperation was signed with the China International Culture Communication Center (CICCC) in early March, followed by continuous mutual communication and the Center's support to promote the IFFAM among the mainland film industry.

In this visit to Beijing, Senna Fernandes and her team met with the Secretary of the Leading Party Members' Group and Executive Chairman of the China International Culture Communication Center, Long Yuxiang, to share the latest preparations for IFFAM.

During the meeting, CICCC Executive Chairman Long Yuxiang expressed his recognition for the role of IFFAM as a cultural exchange platform between the East and West, and backed the continuous support of the Center to the work of the IFFAM Organizing Committee.

According to MGTO, "both sides engaged in a profound dialogue on the tasks that lie ahead."

CRIME

Dispute between friends ends with one accused of robbery

A strange dispute between two friends has ended with one of them being accused of robbery, a Public Security Police Force (PSP) spokesperson has revealed during a press conference this week.

The PSP said that the affair began when the police were called to act on a phone call to the 999 emergency line. In the call, the victim, a Macau woman of about 40-years-old, claimed to have been attacked and robbed by another woman at the Rua da Praia do Manduco, in the Barra area.

According to her report, when she was walking around the Caçada dos Remédios, she was attacked by another woman who stole her handbag and injured her.

She said she gave chase until the assailant eventually dropped the bag and disappeared.

Taken to the Public Hospital, the woman was presented with a bruised eye and a scratch on the side of her mouth.

The victim said that she knew the attacker, who was allegedly another lo-

cal resident, a woman of about 50-years-old who lived in the area of the Rua Marginal do Canal das Hortas, close to the Border Gate.

The PSP headed to the location and managed to locate the suspect. Further questioning revealed other details of the case.

According to the suspect, the attack was premeditated but was not planned with any intention of stealing anything from the victim.

According to her statement, the suspect had been waiting for the victim around the area where she lived because she thought she was responsible for affecting her relationship with a man.

After they met, the two women fought and the victim used her handbag to strike the suspect. The suspect says she grabbed the handbag from her during the exchange, claiming to have done so in self-defense, and threw it to the floor immediately afterwards without touching any of its contents.

Nevertheless, the police presented the suspect to the Public Prosecutions Office for robbery. **RM**

Citigroup retains 9pct forecast for July GGR

Citigroup has retained its July gross gaming revenue (GGR) estimate at MOP25 billion, according to AA Stocks Financial News, a figure which would represent an increase of 9 percent year-on-year. In its latest report, the firm believes that the impact of Typhoon Ampil, the first typhoon to directly strike Shanghai in three decades, has discouraged players in eastern China from traveling to the Macau SAR. The report also noted that Melco Resorts & Entertainment was expected to deliver a 4 percent year-on-year decrease in its second quarter revenue, while a 6 percent rise was expected for Las Vegas Sands.

Fai Chi Kei Post Office opens in August

The Fai Chi Kei Post Office, located at Rua Sul do Patane, will commence service effective August 2. According to a statement issued by the Macau Post and Telecommunications Bureau, the new post office was set up "in order to conform with urban planning and the development of the northern area of Macau."

Vietnamese association holds Martyr Day football tournament

A Macau association for overseas Vietnamese living in the SAR organized a youth football tournament on Sunday to commemorate the Day of Martyrs and Invalids. The one-day event was organized by the Vietnamese Fellow Countrymen Friendship Association in Macau and supported by the country's consulate general for the two SARs. Speaking at the event, the association president said that the tournament aimed to encourage physical activity as well as consolidate the unity of overseas Vietnamese residing in Macau, according to the Vietnam News Agency. Separately, a fundraising program was held during the event to support the families of injured and fallen veterans, as well as financially disadvantaged households. Established in 2013, the association has around 2,000 members drawn from the approximately 20,000 Vietnamese people living in Macau.

Airlines plan to accept China demands on naming Taiwan

U.S. airlines plan to comply with a Chinese government demand that they revise their website identifications of Taiwan to reflect China's claim on the island territory, said a person familiar with the discussions.

The U.S. carriers affected by the mandate - American Airlines Group Inc., Delta Air Lines Inc., United Continental Holdings Inc., and Hawaiian Holdings Inc. - will begin to change the Taiwan references over the next day or two, said the person, who asked not to be named because discussions among the carriers were private.

The four airlines had been hoping for a negotiated resolution between the U.S. and Chinese governments ahead of yesterday's deadline. Other airlines, including Qantas Airways Ltd., Air France-KLM and Deutsche Lufthansa AG, have already cooperated with China's wishes.

In April, the Civil Aviation Administration of China sent a letter to more than 40 foreign airlines telling them that they shouldn't place China, Hong Kong and Taiwan on an equal footing, and must refer to "China Taiwan" or the "China Taiwan region." Maps



Travelers check in for flights at the Delta Air Lines check-in counters at Beijing Capital International Airport

must display the territories in the same color as mainland China and the websites can't place Taiwan in other categories such as Southeast Asia, the order said.

China's foreign ministry applauded the airlines' changes as "positive progress." China welcomes foreign businesses if they "abide by Chinese laws and regulations, sovereignty and territorial feelings, and the feelings of the Chinese people," ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said yesterday.

"We're a business with signifi-

cant international activities and we need to deal with regulations in all of those jurisdictions," Peter Ingram, Hawaiian's chief executive officer, said Tuesday by telephone. "And obviously sometimes that can put us in challenging positions in one jurisdiction versus another."

Hawaiian consulted with its U.S. peers and government officials in both the U.S. and China before deciding to comply, Ingram said. The company doesn't fly to Taiwan itself but does sell tickets throu-

gh a codeshare relationship with China Airlines Ltd., which flies nonstop from Taipei to Honolulu. Hawaiian also operates its own service to Beijing.

China has waged a campaign to force global businesses to conform to its world view if they want to stay in its good graces. Democratically governed Taiwan has been a central issue among the territorial disputes, especially after the Trump administration's growing ties with the island's pro-independence President Tsai Ing-Wen.

China and Taiwan have been ruled separately since Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government fled to Taipei in 1949, and the Communist Party regards the island as a province to be taken by force if necessary. Hong Kong and Macau were also requested by the aviation authority to be referred to as Chinese territories.

Airlines feared a failure to comply would result in some kind of commercial penalty from China, which would threaten the carriers' operating conditions in the country's fast-growing aviation market.

Hong Kong's flag carrier Cathay Pacific listed Taiwan as part of China on its website on yesterday after

a request from mainland authorities. Cathay Pacific and subsidiary Cathay Dragon had previously listed Taiwan as its own entity, but as of yesterday morning, the island was listed as "Taiwan, China" on both its English and Chinese language websites. Air India also chose to rename Taiwan as Chinese Taipei on its website after the threat of a "hefty" penalty for non-compliance.

In early May, the White House had dismissed China's directive to the airlines as "Orwellian nonsense," adding it was part of a growing trend by the Chinese Communist Party to impose its political views on U.S. citizens and private companies.

"We would oppose a government's demand on private corporations that private corporations label something the way that the government demands it to do that," said Heather Nauert, a spokeswoman for the State Department. She referred questions about the airlines to the individual companies.

Last year, airlines made 7.95 million flights between China and the U.S., a 5.8 percent increase. United, Air China and China Eastern together account for more than 50 percent of the market share, followed by China Southern. Hainan Air replaced Delta as the fifth-largest carrier on this route amid its aggressive launch of direct flights from second-tier Chinese cities to the U.S. **MDT/Agencies**

AD



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LVMH's luxury allure eclipses fears of trade war

Robert Williams

LUXURY conglomerate LVMH said it plans numerous product launches before the end of the year as it races to stay ahead of fast-growing competitors like Kering SA's Gucci and closely held Chanel.

Second-quarter sales rose 11 percent, the Paris-based owner of Louis Vuitton handbags and Sephora cosmetics said in a statement late Tuesday, beating analysts' expectations. The world's largest luxury company reported double-digit percentage growth in sectors from fashion to jewelry and cosmetics. The shares rose as much as 2.6 percent early yesterday in Paris.

LVMH has so far thrived despite the opening rounds of a global trade war, as the Chinese consumer's appetite for French luxury goods surged during the quarter. But because of the threat of higher tariffs and other economic uncertainties, "the current trends cannot realistically be extrapolated to the second half of the year," Chief Financial Officer Jean-Jacques Guiony said on a call.

"Management sounded quite confident, despite ongoing concerns about Chinese demand and tougher comps," Raymond James analyst Hermine de Bentzmann wrote, adding that the result augured well for Kering.

Chinese consumers account for roughly a third of luxury purchases, according to consulting firm BCG - and as much as 70 percent of the sector's growth. LVMH sales in Asia surged 17 percent last year, and traveling Chinese shoppers lifted other markets. Now, investors are watching carefully to see how long the boom can last for luxury's leader, especially as U.S. President



Donald Trump's trade moves risk shaking confidence in the industry's biggest client base.

"The threats are there but I don't think they have materialized yet in any way," Guiony said.

Shanghai's CSI 300 stock index has fallen 11 percent this year, fueling fears that high-end shoppers could tighten their belts. China moved to bolster consumption by lowering import duties on many products earlier this month, and luxury brands including Louis Vuitton and Hermes have cut prices to pass the benefit on to consumers.

The company said its coming product launches include new perfumes from Christian Dior, endorsed by Jennifer Lawrence, and Givenchy, promoted by Rooney Mara. A Guerlain skin serum and a Chinese launch of the Kenzo World line are among the other debuts.

The plans come as LVMH's competitors have thrown down the gauntlet in recent months. Gucci set a midterm sales target that would rival estimates for Louis Vuitton, long the world's largest luxury brand with more than 9

billion euros in annual sales. Chanel released its yearly financials for the first time in 108 years - at the same time as Vuitton's most recent fashion show - to reveal that its sales of quilted leather handbags and No. 5 perfume had already bested Vuitton by some measures.

In a bid to keep its edge, LVMH has reshuffled the creative leadership at its biggest fashion brands in recent months. Designer Hedi Slimane, who set the menswear agenda for more than a decade with skinny jeans and suits at Dior Homme and Kering's Saint Laurent, has been tapped to add menswear and haute couture at LVMH's womenswear brand Celine, with his first shows this fall. New menswear chiefs at Vuitton and Christian Dior both made their debuts in June.

LVMH's first-half profit was boosted by rapid growth at Vuitton and the exit of a duty-free concession at the Hong Kong airport. Sales in the second quarter totaled 10.9 billion euros (USD12.7 billion), above analysts' prediction of 10.79 billion euros. **Bloomberg**

Fosun considers takeover of USD10b insurer Ageas

FOSUN International Ltd., the Chinese group backed by billionaire Guo Guangchang, is considering an offer for all or parts of Belgian insurer Ageas in what could be its boldest move to expand its international footprint, people familiar with the matter said.

Shanghai-based Fosun is talking to advisers about alternatives including teaming up with a partner to split the Brussels-based company or increasing its current stake, the people said, asking not to be identified because the deliberations are private. No final decisions have been made and Fosun may decide against pursuing a deal, they said.

Shares of Ageas jumped to their highest in almost a decade yesterday, giving the company a market value of about 9.3 billion euros (USD10.9 billion). The country's biggest life insurance provider this month won court backing for an amended 1.31 billion-euro settlement with some former investors in its predecessor, Fortis, helping bring to a close a battle with roots in the global financial crisis and clearing the decks for a takeover. Still, a potential deal could draw scrutiny from regulators globally because of Ageas's prominent role in Belgium's financial sector and its far-flung operations.

"Now that Ageas is Fortis free, it could be a compelling target for a Chinese conglomerate willing to expand its activities," according to Jason Kalamboussis, an analyst at KBC Securities. "Nevertheless, given its positions as number one in life insurance in Belgium and number two in non-life, there could be some political push back to an outright takeover."

Fosun has continued to ex-



pand its international business empire amid a Chinese crackdown on overseas deals in some industries that's forced other conglomerates like Anbang Insurance Group Co. to shed assets. This year, Fosun announced deals for Brazilian brokerage Guide Investimentos and French fashion house Lanvin.

Its biggest overseas forays abroad have been in insurance. The company bought control of Portugal-based Caixa Geral de Depositos SA's insurance business in a roughly 1.6 billion-euro deal in 2014. It also acquired U.S.-based Ironshore Inc. in 2015 for \$2.1 billion and then sold it less than two years later.

Fosun already holds about 3 percent of Ageas, though Ping An Insurance (Group) Co. is the largest shareholder with a 5 percent stake, according to filings. Shares of the Belgian company rose 5.1 percent to 45.90 euros in Brussels, after earlier trading up to 46.53 euros, its highest since October 2008.

In addition to operations across Europe, Ageas sells products in China, Malaysia, India, Thailand, the Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, Singapore and Vietnam. It's also a minority partner in a joint venture with China Taiping Insurance Holdings Co. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

SHERATON GRAND AND THE ST. REGIS PRESENT SIGNATURE MOONCAKES



Sheraton Grand Macao is presenting three signature mooncake flavors for guests to savor this Mid-Autumn. The flavors available are Mini Egg Custard Mooncakes, Low Sugar Deluxe Lotus with Egg Yolks Mooncakes and Chinese Ham Mooncake with As-

sorted Nuts and Yolk. Sheraton Grand Macao has also designed three mooncake gift sets to pair with different flavors. The Mini Egg Custard Mooncakes are packaged in a yellow box featuring the ancient legend "moon rabbit", while the Low

Sugar Deluxe Lotus with Egg Yolks Mooncakes will be presented in a pink carp box. The Chinese Ham Mooncake with Assorted Nuts and Yolk will be packed in an elegant purple box, along with an exclusive blend of Tea WG tea. The St. Regis Macao, Cotai Central, is introducing a limited edition collection of eight exquisitely handcrafted mooncakes, all made of luxuriously rich Valrhona chocolate.

Available from now through September 26, guests can purchase Sheraton Grand Macao's mooncakes from the Palms Café and Bar or Xin restaurant. Mooncakes are available for purchase from MOP328 per box, and mooncake gift sets with Tea WG tea are available from MOP738.

MELCO PAYS TRIBUTE TO EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS



Lawrence Ho, chairman and chief executive officer of Melco Resorts & Entertainment Limited, hosted an event this week to share his appreciation towards employee volunteers for their time and efforts benefiting Macau's wider communi-

ty. According to a statement by the company, "last year, Melco employees dedicated over 136,000 hours to volunteerism to benefit 40 local NGOs, with more than 9,700 employee headcounts recorded at volunteering events."

"We have been at the forefront of developing one-of-a-kind volunteer events, and the purpose of the recognition event is to communicate our gratitude to Melco's volunteering team; to thank them for their proactive participation during personal time, and to recognize their tireless efforts in positively impacting the community," said Ho during the event.

The event was attended by government and association representatives, members of Melco's executive team and over 1,100 Melco volunteers. Awards for most enthusiastic and inspirational volunteers, as well as the department with the highest number of participants were among those presented.

Trump accuses China of using 'vicious' trade tactics

Ken Thomas, Paul Wiseman & Lisa Mascaro, Washington

PRESIDENT Donald Trump yesterday accused China of "vicious" tactics on trade as he prepared for tough negotiations with European leaders in an escalating trade battle among world powers.

Trump tweeted that China was specifically targeting U.S. farmers with retaliatory tariffs because "they know I love & respect" them. His defense came after his administration announced a plan to provide USD12 billion in emergency relief for farmers who have been slammed by the president's trade disputes with China and other countries.

Addressing the China trade relationship, Trump wrote on Twitter, "They are being vicious in what will be their failed attempt. We were being nice - until now!"

The president was meeting at the White House today with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and other European officials as their trade dispute threatens to spread to automobile production.

Trump has placed tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, saying they pose a threat to U.S. national security, an argument that the European Union and Canada rejects. He has also threatened to slap tariffs on imported cars, trucks and auto parts, potentially targeting imports that last year totaled \$335 billion.

The European Union has warned that it will retaliate with tariffs on products worth \$20 billion if Trump puts duties on

AP PHOTO



cars and auto parts from Europe.

On Tuesday, Trump suggested in a tweet that "both the U.S. and the E.U. drop all Tariffs, Barriers and Subsidies! That would finally be called Free Market and Fair Trade! Hope they do it, we are ready - but they won't!"

The Trump administration has imposed tariffs on \$34 billion in Chinese goods in a dispute over Beijing's high-tech industrial policies. China has struck back with duties on soybeans and pork, affecting Midwest farmers in a region of the country that

supported the president in his 2016 campaign.

Trump has threatened to place penalty taxes on up to \$500 billion in products imported from China, a move that would dramatically ratchet up the stakes in the trade dispute involving the globe's biggest economies.

The moves have been unsettling to lawmakers with districts dependent upon manufacturers and farmers affected by the retaliatory tariffs.

The Agriculture Department said it would tap an existing pro-

gram to provide \$12 billion in direct payments to farmers and ranchers hurt by foreign retaliation to Trump's tariffs and other assistance, such as the purchase of excess crops.

With congressional elections coming soon, the government action underscored administration concern about damage to U.S. farmers from Trump's trade tariffs and the potential for losing House and Senate seats in the Midwest and elsewhere.

The administration said the program was just temporary.

"This is a short-term solution

that will give President Trump and his administration the time to work on long-term trade deals," said Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue as administration officials argued that the plan was not a "bailout" of the nation's farmers.

But that provided little solace to rank-and-file Republicans, who said the tariffs are simply taxes and warned the action would open a Pandora's box for other sectors of the economy.

Trump tweeted that China was specifically targeting U.S. farmers with retaliatory tariffs

"I want to know what we're going to say to the automobile manufacturers and the petrochemical manufacturers and all the other people who are being hurt by tariffs," said Sen. John Kennedy, R-La. "You've got to treat everybody the same."

Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., said the Agriculture Department was "trying to put a Band-aid on a self-inflicted wound. The administration clobbers farmers with an unnecessary trade war then attempts to assuage them with taxpayer handouts. This bailout compounds bad policy with more bad policy."

Trump pushed back against critics of his plan, telling them to "be cool" because "the end result will be worth it!"

On Twitter, Trump said people "snipping at your heels during a negotiation" will only delay the process. He wrote: "Negotiations are going really well, be cool. The end result will be worth it!" (See page 14) **AP**

Ivanka is shutting down her clothing company

IVANKA Trump is shutting down her fashion line of dresses, shoes and handbags that became a target of political boycotts and spurred concerns about conflicts of interest after her father was elected.

The president's daughter said in a statement she made the decision so she could focus more on work as a White House adviser. She had stepped away from the day-to-day management of her company when she joined President Donald Trump's administration.

"After 17 months in Washington, I do not know when or if I will ever return to the business, but

AP PHOTO



Ivanka Trump

I do know that my focus for the foreseeable future will be the work I am doing here in Washington," she said. She called the move the "only fair

outcome for my team and partners."

The Ivanka Trump brand has been buffeted by politics since she joined the White House ear-

Her company has been criticized for making its products in Chinese factories [in poor conditions]

ly last year. Sales appeared to surge at times due her celebrity as the U.S. president's daughter — White House adviser Kellyanne Conway once

urged on Fox News for people to "go buy Ivanka's stuff" — only to get battered as those who disliked her father's policies urged shoppers to boycott the line.

Nordstrom dropped the Ivanka Trump line last year, citing slowing sales, and recently Hudson Bay reportedly did the same.

The company said that its business was strong, and the decision to shut down had nothing do with its performance.

Analyst Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail, said that "while the company is still viable, doing business has become far more challenging and these problems

will only increase."

Ivanka Trump recently has been encouraging U.S. companies to pledge to hire American workers. Her own company has been criticized for making its products in Chinese factories, for the conditions in those factories, and for being granted trademarks by foreign governments such as China that would want to curry favor with the president.

Her announcement comes amid a worsening trade fight between the United States and China. President Trump is seeking to drive China to the negotiating table and rectify what he sees as years of unfair trade practices. **AP**

How a China-backed frenzied race to harness the Mekong turned deadly

Jason Koutsoukis
& Stephen Stacyszynski

STRETCHING from its headwaters in the high-altitude Tibetan Plateau to its endpoint in the delta marshes of Vietnam, the mighty Mekong River is one of the world's great ecosystems. For Laos, it represents so much more: the energy source behind an ambitious hydro-power buildout and decades of potential economic growth.

Now the landlocked nation's dream of becoming the "battery of Asia" fueled by scores of hydro-power projects has suffered a catastrophic setback, following the collapse Monday of a dam connected to a USD1 billion project backed by its Communist government as well as Thai and South Korean companies.

The breakneck race to harness the Mekong and its tributaries for hydroelectric power has been under way for years and reflects Southeast Asia's insatiable energy demand, projected last year by the International Energy Agency to expand by about 66 percent by 2040. Chinese investors are bankrolling huge projects in the region, particularly in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar.

With the dam failure this week, following another incident last fall, questions have arisen about whether the Laos government led by Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith and President Bounnhang Vorachith can safely manage the wave of investments coming into the country from international energy and construction firms doing business there.

Still, there may be little incentive for a one-party state like Laos to slam on the brakes. Its bet on hydro-power comes down to economic survival: It delivers this nation of almost 7 million nearly all of its



electricity consumption, and sales of surplus power to neighboring countries are a crucial source of export earnings.

"I don't believe this will affect the government too much," said Dane Chamorro, a former U.S. diplomat and senior partner with consulting firm Control Risks in Singapore. "The prime minister is new and well-regarded, and given the importance of the sector as an export earner, I can't see this slowing down future development."

For China, bankrolling the Mekong region's hydro-power projects improves its energy security and delivers added geopolitical leverage over Southeast Asia. That has raised concerns in the region, particularly from Vietnam, that China could block water flows downstream.

"There has been some controversy building over [Chinese-financed] Asian hydro projects," Simon Nicholas, an analyst at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, said by email.

Environmental groups also worry about whether project engineers and construction companies have adequately prepared for climate change and the torrential rains of recent years. There's also concern about a growing vulnerability to fisheries and rice production in Laos and Cambodia from the hydroelectric power boom and dam networks.

"The dam collapse shows that the current policy of developing hydro-power for export, and the rapid escalation of dam construction, needs to be re-examined," said Maureen Harris, Southeast Asia program di-

rector for International Rivers, an environmental group.

She said there were major concerns expressed about the ability of the Laos government to handle infrastructure projects of this scale.

'CLEARLY FAILED'

"It's that lack of capacity inside Laos that has led to an open-door policy to private sector investors from outside the country who have clearly failed to follow proper standards and that raises serious concerns about other projects going forward," Harris said.

Heavy rains this week have caused extensive flooding from southern China to Vietnam and played a role in the collapse of a dam tied to the hydro-power project, a joint venture between SK Engineering & Construction Co., Thailand's

Ratchaburi Electricity Generating Holding Plc, Korea Western Power Co. and the Laos government.

Engineers struggled for almost 24 hours to prevent the dam's failure, according to SK Engineering. However, the development's smaller auxiliary dams failed amid torrential rains.

The dam's failure in the southeast province of Attapeu caused massive flash flooding that engulfed villages and left more than 6,000 homeless, thousands more missing and at least 20 dead, according to the official Laos News Agency. (See page 12)

ALL IN

The mishap in Attapeu follows another dam collapse late last year in the central province of Xaisomboun, according to Keith Barney, a public policy professor at Australian National University.

"Construction standards and the regulation process appear to require improvements," Barney said. "This could represent an opportune moment for a considered pause in Laos' breakneck expansion of hydro-power."

While the Laos government may express regret, it will likely press ahead, according to Milton Osborne, author of "The Mekong: Turbulent Past, Uncertain Future." There are plans for construction of up to 120 dams on the Mekong and its tributaries, with the bulk of them slated for Laos, he said.

"It is in Laos that the greatest expansion of tributary dams is planned as part of that country's determination to become the battery of Southeast Asia," Osborne said. "They will crack down on any effort to make this a reason to change their plans to keep building more dams along the Mekong. This is such a poor country, they have very few alternatives." **Bloomberg**

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Malaysia to be firmer over Beijing's aggressive expansion in area

Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah said yesterday that Malaysia's new government will adopt a firmer stand in tackling a decades-old territorial row in the South China Sea amid China's aggressive expansion in the disputed area.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who won a stunning electoral victory in May, has said warships

should be removed from the South China Sea.

Saifuddin said that Mahathir was "sending a signal that we want to be more firm, more serious" in handling the maritime dispute.

The 2002 declaration of conduct by claimants in the South China Sea that set loose guidelines for behavior in the disputed waters has "no fangs," and China's continued militarization of

the area has raised concern and could potentially escalate regional tensions, he told Parliament.

China has sent big coast guard vessels that resemble warships to the potentially energy rich territory and has caused uneasiness among its neighbors, he said.

Malaysia's previous government rarely criticizes China, even though Chinese

coast guard ships have sailed near Malaysia's waters. In the Spratly island chain, China has constructed seven man-made islands and equipped them with runways, hangers, radar and missile stations, further cementing its vast territorial claims in the busy waterway.

Saifuddin said Southeast Asian foreign ministers meeting in Singapore next

week will seek to accelerate negotiations for a new code of conduct to ensure peace in the South China Sea, which is claimed by China almost in its entirety. Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan all dispute Beijing's holdings.

All parties should exercise self-restraint and any actions must be based on international law, Saifuddin said.

China and the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations earlier this year began negotiations on the new code of conduct. However, officials have warned it could take a long time, with no agreement on whether the pact will be legally

binding, raising doubts over its effectiveness.

Mahathir, who previously led Malaysia for 22 years until 2003, has sought to reduce China's economic influence by reassessing lopsided Chinese investment since taking power for a second stint. The government recently suspended work on a multi-billion-dollar rail link that is central to China's Belt and Road initiative, and two gas pipeline projects to renegotiate for better terms. Analysts however, say Mahathir's more assertive stance on the South China Sea is unlikely to amount to a challenge to Beijing, which is Malaysia's top trading partner. **AP**

Kathy Gannon, Islamabad

PAKISTAN

Explosion kills 31 as people vote in

A suicide bomber struck outside a crowded polling station in Pakistan's southwestern city of Quetta, killing 31 people as Pakistanis cast ballots yesterday in a general election meant to lead to the nation's third consecutive civilian government.

The attack in Quetta, the provincial capital of Baluchistan, also wounded 35 people and several were reported to be in critical condition, raising concerns the death toll could rise further, according to hospital official Jaffar Kakar, a doctor.

A witness who was waiting to cast his ballot, Abdul Haleem, said he saw a motorcycle drive into the crowd of voters just seconds before the explosion. Haleem's uncle was killed in the explosion.

"There was a deafening bang followed by thick cloud

of smoke and dust and so much crying from the wounded people," he told The Associated Press.

Baluchistan also saw the worst violence of the election campaign earlier this month when a suicide bomber blew himself up at a political rally, killing 149 people, including the candidate Siraj Raisani. Another 400 were wounded. Voting in that constituency has been suspended.

Citing security concerns, the election commission announced that internet and cellphone services in several districts in Baluchistan have been suspended. Election commission secretary Babar Yaqub told reporters that threats against polling stations, staff and even candida-

tes have been received.

Hours earlier, militants lobbed grenades and opened fire at a military convoy escorting election staffers and voting material in Baluchistan's district of Turbat, killing four troops. At the request of the election commission, Pakistan's military is deploying 350,000 troops countrywide outside and inside polling stations.

Also yesterday, police said a shooting between supporters of two opposing political parties killed one person and wounded two in a village near the northwestern city of Swabi.

Early voting was heavy at some polling stations in Islamabad, the capital, and also in the Punjab provincial ca-

pital, with several political party leaders standing in line to cast their ballots. Local television reported scattered incidences of police arresting people with pre-marked ballots.

Rights groups have warned that a rancorous election campaign and widespread allegations of manipulation imperil the wobbly transition to democratic rule and raise the specter of bitter challenges of fraud after the elections.

The unprecedented participation of radical religious groups, including those banned for terror links but resurrected and renamed, has also raised fears that the space for moderate thought may shrink further in Pakistan.

Attacks against minorities have increased in recent years.

One candidate, Jibrán Nasir, an independent from Pakistan's financial hub of Karachi, received death threats and even had a fatwa, or religious edict, issued against him after he refused to condemn Ahmadis, reviled by mainstream Muslims as heretics because they believe the messiah promised in Islam arrived over a century ago. Pakistan in 1974 declared Ahmadis non-Muslims.

"I am speaking for the millions of Pakistanis who are too afraid to confront religious bigotry," Nasir said in a telephone interview. He also said that no arrests have been made of those who



LAOS

State media says dam disaster kills 20

RESCUERS were researching yesterday for villagers left missing when part of a newly built dam broke in southeastern Laos, flooding the surrounding countryside and killing at least 20 people.

More than 6,000 people lost their homes when the dam gave way on Monday, flooding surrounding villages.

The exact number of victims was unclear. The official Lao news agency KPL said earlier that hundreds of people were missing, without providing details. More recent reports put the number missing in the dozens. KPL said yesterday that the death toll had risen to 19.

Photos and videos posted on social media showed people sitting on rooftops to escape the surging water, while others were carried to safety or rescued by boat. State media said helicopters were also being used to rescue people.

SK Engineering & Construction, one of two South Korean partners in the project, said the top of one of five auxiliary earth-fill dams at the project "got swept away" on Sunday night after heavy rains.

But Korea Western Power, which was due to operate the hydroelectric power plant after its com-

pletion, said problems first emerged Friday when workers discovered the dam's center had sunk by 11 centimeters.

Repair work for the earth-fill dam was hampered by heavy rain and damaged roads, and the situation worsened on Monday as water cascaded out of the reservoir, flooding seven out of 12 villages in the area, SK E&C said. It was helping to evacuate and rescue residents while also trying to contain further damage.

The government declared the area a disaster zone and top officials rushed to the site, it said.

Continued heavy rain and strong winds forecast for the area could hinder rescue efforts, and risks from flooding persisted in the mountainous region.

Provincial authorities issued a call for emergency aid — clothing, food, drinking water, medicine, cash and other items — from the "party, government organizations, business community, officials, police and military forces and people of all strata."

The International Red Cross said food was a concern because village food supplies were drenched in the flooding. It was arranging for water purification units to be sent to the area

to ensure supplies of clean drinking water.

The presidential office in South Korea said President Moon Jae-in had ordered an emergency relief team to help with the disaster.

SK E&C sent its president to Laos and set up an emergency team in Seoul, South Korea's Yonhap News agency reported.

The USD1.02 billion project encompassing several river basins in a remote corner of southeastern Laos is the first hydroelectric dam to be built by a South Korean company, and it was unclear how severe the damage would be to the overall plan. The dam was due to begin operating in 2019, with 90 percent of the power generated going to Thailand.

Shares of companies affiliated with SK E&C sank on Wednesday on concerns over potential costs for compensation and other financial setbacks from the disaster.

SK Discovery Co., SK E&C's second-largest shareholder with a 28.25 stake in the builder, tumbled more than 10 percent to trade at its lowest level in more than three years. SK Holdings Co., the biggest shareholder in SK E&C with a 44.48 percent stake, fell 3 percent. AP

general elections

threatened him.

The leading contenders in the polling are former cricket star Imran Khan and his right-of-center Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Party, or PTI, and the right-of-center Pakistan Muslim League, the party of disgraced Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is in jail serving 10 years on corruption charges. His younger brother Shahbaz Sharif took control of the party.

Hours earlier, militants lobbed grenades and opened fire at a military convoy escorting election staffers

The third-largest party in the running is the left-leaning Pakistan People's Party, headed by Bilawal Bhutto, the son of late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, assassinated by Pakistan's Taliban militants, whom she had vowed to eradicate.

Election officials say more than 11,000 candidates are vying for 270 seats in Pakistan's law-making Lower House of Parliament and 577 seats in four provincial assemblies.

The 85,307 polling stations opened at 8 a.m. and will continue for 10 hours, an hour longer than in the 2013 polls. Voting for two parliamentary seats and six seats in provincial assemblies has been postponed due to att-

cks on candidates or disqualifications.

There are 105.96 million eligible voters in Pakistan, with 59.22 million men and 46.73 million women.

Pakistan's election commission reminded candidates their elections will be nullified if the female voter turnout does not reach 10 percent. The requirement was imposed after the 2013 elections, when several areas banned voting by women, mostly in Pakistan's religiously conservative northwest. Some candidates were elected without a single woman marking a ballot.

The commission issued its reminder earlier this week after veteran rights activist Tahira Abdullah said local jirgas, or councils, of elders from 60 areas of the country, representing 16 different constituencies, had signed agreements banning women from voting.

Results will trickle in after polling ends, with the outcome expected early Thursday, according to election officials.

International and domestic election observers will monitor voting. The European Union Election Observation Mission has 120 monitors at polling stations in major centers across Pakistan, with the exception of Baluchistan, where a suicide bomber earlier this month killed 149 people, including a candidate.

Under Pakistani law, separate seats are reserved for women and for non-Muslim minorities, which comprise 4 percent of the population. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Imran Khan

IMRAN KHAN

Ex-cricket star may be on the verge of win

Kathy Gannon, Islamabad

HE'S a thrice-married playboy who hangs out with Mick Jagger. But he's also an Islamist who has kept company with a cleric and spiritual adviser to many in Afghanistan's Taliban movement.

He has denounced Washington's intervention in Afghanistan, but also has criticized Pakistan's turn toward China, which has invested billions of dollars in the country.

Former international cricket star Imran Khan turned to politics more than two decades ago and may be on the verge of becoming Pakistan's next prime minister in yesterday's parliamentary elections.

The 65-year-old opposition leader has disparaged liberals, attacked feminism, embraced radical religious parties and vowed to uphold Pakistan's blasphemy law. He enjoys the support of the country's powerful military establishment, although he has been known to go his own way.

Khan has led his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, or PTI, in widespread protests alleging ballot-rigging in the 2013 election, in which he received about 19 percent of the vote.

He also has seized on an anti-corruption message and led demonstrations against former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, demanding a criminal investigation after leaked documents from a Panama law firm revealed that Sharif and his family had undisclosed assets abroad.

Sharif was convicted in one case of corruption involving the purchase of luxury apartments in Britain and is serving a 10-year sentence while awaiting an appeal. He also has been banned from running for office.

But Khan also has drawn criticism by having his party

field candidates chosen not on merit but on their likelihood to get elected — the so-called “electables.” Novelist Mohammed Hanif described in a recent column as “land-grabbers, feudal lords and rent-seekers” who know how to win at the ballot box.

Khan's priorities will be the economy, security and foreign policy, specifically Afghanistan and how to move forward with the U.S., said Mohammad Amir Rana, executive director of the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies.

In an earlier interview with The Associated Press, Khan said U.S. President Donald Trump's policy on Afghanistan was “deeply flawed.” He said U.S. attacks against militants in Pakistan won't end the protracted war in Afghanistan, now in its 17th year and the longest U.S. military engagement.

Trump “neither understands the history of Pakistan nor the character of the Afghan people,” Khan said. He criticized the U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan, saying they kill innocent people and have failed to bring success.

“Drone attacks lead to collateral damage. If [they] were such a successful strategy, they would be winning the war,” Khan said in the interview.

His critics have nicknamed him “Taliban Khan,” a refer-

Khan enjoys almost mythical status after leading its cricket team to victory in the 1992 World Cup

ence to his earlier support for negotiations with Pakistan's Taliban. He also has expressed admiration for the tribal system of justice that still regards women and young girls as property to resolve disputes.

Khan also has supported the blasphemy law, which urges that the death penalty be imposed on anyone found to have insulted Islam or the Prophet Muhammad. There has been widespread criticism of the law, saying it has been misused to settle personal disputes and to target minorities in Pakistan, where the mere suggestion of blasphemy can incite mob violence.

Khan enjoys almost mythical status in Pakistan after leading its cricket team to victory in the 1992 World Cup. Since then, the Oxford-educated athlete with the rugged good looks has parlayed his celebrity into a political career, founding the PTI in 1996 and espousing a message of change.

His married his first wife, wealthy British heiress Jemima Goldsmith, in 1996. They have two sons who live with Goldsmith, who has publicly supported Khan's political ambitions and praised his skill as a leader, even after their divorce in 2004.

His second wife, Rehman Khan, divorced him within a year and has recently written a book attacking him and members of the PTI.

Khan rarely responds to the gossip that relentlessly swirls around him, and over the years has become more conservative and religious.

He married his third wife, Bushra Maneka, earlier this year after dismissing months of speculation about it. After his marriage to Maneka, also known as Pinki Pir, was disclosed in February, he said he was drawn to the mother of five's spirituality. **AP**

AP PHOTO



GREECE

Rescue crews search for missing in wildfires; 79 dead

Costas Kantouris
& Elena Becatoros, Mati

RESCUE crews were searching yesterday through charred homes and cars for those still missing after the deadliest wildfires to hit Greece in decades decimated seaside areas near Athens, killing at least 79 people and sending thousands fleeing.

There was no official indication as to how many people might be missing, and some took to social media and Greek television stations with appeals for information on their loved ones.

Fire service spokeswoman Stavroula Malliri said the death toll had increased by five to 79.

More than 280 firefighters were still in the area to the northeast of Athens in the wider Rafina area, dousing the remaining flames to prevent flare-ups. A further 200 firefighters backed up by a water-dropping helicopter were tackling the second forest fire west of the capital, near Agioi Theodori, where local authorities pre-emptively evacuated three nearby communities overnight, according to the fire department.

Flags across Greece were flying at half-staff after the prime minister declared three days of national mourning for the victims.

The two fires on either side of the Greek capital started Monday within hours of each other, and were



fanned by gale-force winds that hampered firefighting efforts.

The speed with which the fire northeast of Athens spread took many by surprise, and is believed to have contributed to the high death toll.

"We couldn't see any fire. The fire came suddenly. There was so much wind, we didn't realize how it happened," said Anna Kiriazova, 56, who survived with her husband by shutting themselves in their house instead of trying to flee through the flames.

Kiriazova said they doused their house in the Mati area near Rafina with water from a garden hose,

and credited the fact that their window frames were metal instead of wood for their home being spared.

"We shut ourselves in the house, we closed the shutters, we had towels over our faces," she told AP. "The inferno lasted about an hour. I have no words to describe what we lived through."

Her 65-year-old husband, Theodoros Christopoulos, said the couple decided to take shelter in their home because the narrow roads outside were jammed with cars.

"There was a great panic because the whole street was blocked by cars," Christopoulos said. "Shouting, hysteria, they could see the fire was coming with the wind. It already smelled a lot, the sky was black overhead and in no time at all the fire was here."

Hundreds of others abandoned cars and fled to nearby beaches, from where they were evacuated hours later by coast guard and private boats. Dozens swam out to sea despite rough weather to escape the intense heat and choking smoke blanketing the area.

With the number of missing unclear, authorities appealed for people to call them if they were searching for loved ones. Some people also turned to Greek tele-

vision and radio stations, asking for information from the public for relatives they hadn't heard from since the blaze.

The story of one man desperately searching for his children highlights the plight of many families looking for relatives.

Yiannis Philipopoulos appeared on television early yesterday appealing for help to locate his missing twin daughters, who he said he had spotted on television footage arriving in the port of Rafina in a fishing boat during the evacuation of people from beaches overnight Monday to Tuesday.

Yiannis Philipopoulos said he and his wife recognized 9-year-old Sophia and Vasiliki in the news footage after spending a fruitless day searching hospitals and giving DNA samples at the Athens morgue. He had contacted police, who were helping search for the girls.

Philipopoulos said the girls had been with his parents, of whom there was no sight in the footage. Speaking on television stations Skai and Alpha, he said the images gave him hope his children were alive, and urged anyone with information to contact him.

The footage showed two girls among other people, many clad just in swimsuits, disembarking from the fishing boat. Philipopoulos said he went with police to the TV station and saw the footage in higher resolution, and was sure the children were his daughters. But he had not heard from them since the fire.

The captain of the fishing boat said authorities had recorded the names of rescued people as they disembarked. The names of the two girls, however, appeared not to be among them. **AP**

MANY farmers remain critical of President Donald Trump's tariffs and the damage done to commodity prices and markets but were appreciative early yesterday [Macau time] that he offered to provide some cash to help offset their losses.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a USD12 billion three-part plan that would borrow money from the U.S. Treasury to pay producers of soybeans, sorghum, corn, wheat, cotton, dairy, and hogs.

The USDA also will buy the surplus of commodities that would otherwise have been exported and distribute them to food banks and other nutrition programs. That will cover fruits, nuts, rice, legumes, beef, pork and milk.

The third prong of the plan is to help farm groups develop new export markets.

US

Farmers prefer Trump do trade deals than hand them cash

"This is a short-term solution to allow President Trump time to work on long-term trade deals to benefit agriculture and the entire U.S. economy," said Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

The money comes from the Commodity Credit Corporation, a USDA agency founded in 1933. It has authority to borrow up to \$30 billion from the Treasury at any one time to "stabilize, support, and protect farm income and prices."

Farmers said they would rather have Trump settle the trade disputes with China, Mexico, Canada and the European Union and get free trade flowing again.



"A Band-Aid doesn't cure an illness, but it might make it temporarily better," said Dave Struthers who grows corn, soybeans and hay on a 1,100-acre Iowa farm near Collins, about 48 kilometers northeast of Des Moines. He also sells about 6,000 pigs a year.

Reaction from trade partners to Trump's tariff policies have pushed soybean prices about 18 percent lower and corn and pork prices down 15 percent from the time Trump began discussing tariffs this spring.

China is the largest buyer of U.S. soybeans

and one of the largest importers of U.S. pork.

U.S. farmers are expected to grow 14.2 billion bushels of corn this year and 4.3 billion bushels of soybeans, down some from last year but still huge crops. There were 73.5 million pigs on farms as of June 1, the hi-

ghest number on that date since records began in 1964.

"Experience has shown that trade wars and all this tit-for-tat is devastating to the [agriculture] economy and drives prices down," said Richard Schlosser, who grows soybeans, corn and wheat in Edgeley, in southwest North Dakota. He called the Trump's tariffs "government interference at its worst."

Schlosser said he had been "transitioning" his farm to his son, but the future doesn't look good for young farmers now, he said.

The temporary aid is more of an admission by the president of the "huge impact" the trade war is having on farmers, said Mark Watne, president of the North Dakota Farmers Union, which has more than 45,000 members in the state. **AP**

Albert Aji, Damascus

SYRIA

IS claims suicide blasts, attacks that kill dozens

A series of suicide bombings and attacks that sparked fighting between local armed groups in southern Syria killed around 90 people yesterday, a local health official and activists said, spreading mayhem in a province that has been relatively quiet throughout Syria's seven-year conflict.

The coordinated attacks — the worst in recent months — had all the hallmarks of IS even before it claimed responsibility and were reminiscent of the group's horrific assaults over the past years in Syria, already ravaged by civil war.

The bombings in the city of Sweida, including a motorcycle bomber who struck at a busy vegetable market, were apparently timed to coincide with attacks by a militant group linked to IS on a number of villages in the province, also called Sweida. It triggered deadly clashes between pro-government fighters and residents who picked up weapons to defend their hometowns on one side, and IS militants on the other.

Al-Ikhbariya state-run TV showed images from several locations in the province and its capital where the bombers blew themselves up. State-run news



In this photo released by the official news agency SANA, Syrians inspect the site of a suicide attack in Sweida yesterday

agency SANA said 38 people were killed in the suicide bombings and blamed the Islamic State group. The breakdown of the fatalities from the attacks was not immediately known.

Sweida health official Hassan

Omar told The Associated Press by phone that 90 people were killed in the suicide blasts and subsequent fighting in Sweida, and that 80 people were wounded. The Britain-based Observatory for Human Rights monitoring

group put the overall death toll at more than 100.

The rare attacks in Sweida, populated mainly by Syria's minority Druze, came amid a government offensive elsewhere in the country's south. Government

forces are battling the IS-linked group near the frontier with Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and near the border with Jordan. The group also has a small presence on the eastern edge of Sweida province.

IS has been largely defeated in Syria and Iraq, but still has pockets of territory it controls in eastern Syria and in the country's south.

The extremist group claimed responsibility for Wednesday's deadly attacks, boasting that it's "soldiers" killed more than 100 people in Sweida. In a statement posted on the group's social media channels, it said its militants carried out surprise attacks on government and security centers in Sweida, sparking clashes with Syrian troops and allied militias before detonating their explosive belts.

Since their offensive in June, Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces have retaken territories controlled by the rebels along the Golan Heights frontier and are now fighting militants in the country's southern tip.

The death toll, initially reported at 27, quickly climbed. The Observatory also reported a series of suicide blasts and the clashes in the province's countryside. It said a total of more than 100 were killed in the blasts and the fighting, including civilians, pro-government fighters and IS militants. AP

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Time	Event	Venue
27 / 07 / 2018 (Friday)		
11:00 - 11:40	Opening Ceremony of Macao Franchise Expo 2018	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
10:00 - 18:00	Exhibition	Hall A
10:00 - 18:00	Business Matching	Business Matching Area, Hall A
10:00 - 18:00	Branding Consultancy Service	Branding Consultancy Service Area, Hall A
12:00 - 13:00	2018 Macau Franchise Awards and Franchise Awards and the Inauguration Ceremony of the 4th Franchise Awards of the Macau Franchise Association	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
14:00 - 15:15	Forum and Ceremony of Award Presentation of the "2018 China Chain Stores and Franchise Overseas Commerce (Macau)"	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
15:00 - 17:00	Forum on Chain and Franchise Business Opportunities of International Brands	Naples Room 2001
16:45 - 18:45	Guangdong-Macao New Retail Forum	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
17:15 - 17:40	Protocol Signing Ceremony	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
17:30 - 19:00	Pre-event Tour of Macao Franchise Expo 2018	
28 / 07 / 2018 (Saturday)		
10:00 - 18:00	Exhibition	Hall A
10:00 - 18:00	Business Matching	Business Matching Area, Hall A
10:00 - 18:00	Branding Consultancy Service	Branding Consultancy Service Area, Hall A
13:00 - 14:30	iFood Workshop	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
14:45 - 18:15	Swire's 75th Anniversary 75th Anniversary and Release of Macau's Food Culture Day	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
16:30 - 17:15	Entrepreneurship Sharing Session - A Closer Look at Franchising	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
17:30 - 17:45	Introduction of Orthographic Cipher by Dynamic English	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
18:00 - 19:00	Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Market Visit - Macao Tour	
29 / 07 / 2018 (Sunday)		
09:00 - 16:30	Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Market Visit - Zhuhai Tour	
10:00 - 17:00	Exhibition	Hall A
10:00 - 17:00	Business Matching	Business Matching Area, Hall A
10:00 - 17:00	Branding Consultancy Service	Branding Consultancy Service Area, Hall A
10:00 - 11:00	Startup Day Session 1: Roadshow & Investors' Commentary	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
11:00 - 13:00	Startup Day Session 2: Key to Startup	Multi-Function Area, Hall A
14:00 - 15:00	Startup Day Session 3: Franchising - What Makes a Successful Entrepreneur?	Multi-Function Area, Hall A

Remarks: The above programme is subject to change. All of 27 July 2018 program before 18:00 hours, visitors may be required to show their identification card for security purposes.

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Fax: 853-8294 6701
Email: sec@mfe.mo

Opening Hours
27/07/2018 (Fri) 10:00 - 18:00 (Open for Trade Visitors only)
28/07/2018 (Sat) 10:00 - 18:00 (Open for public)
29/07/2018 (Sun) 10:00 - 17:00 (Open for public)
Free admission

what's ON



MARC CHAGALL, LIGHT AND COLOUR IN SOUTHERN FRANCE
 TIME: 10am-7pm (last admission 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)
 UNTIL: August 26, 2018
 VENUE: Macau Museum of Art
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

SCULPTURE – A JOURNEY, EXHIBITION BY ANTÓNIO LEÇA
 TIME: 3pm-8pm (Mondays)
 12pm-8pm (Tuesdays to Sundays)
 UNTIL: October 21, 2018
 VENUE: A2 Gallery, Albergue SCM
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2550

KAMEN RIDER EXHIBITION (MACAU)
 TIME: 1pm-8pm daily (last entrance 7:30pm)
 Until: AUGUST 26, 2018
 Venue: 2/F EXHIBITION HALL, BROADWAY MACAU
 ADMISSION: MOP128, MOP180 (Tickets are available at Kong Seng Ticketing Service www.macaupoint.com)
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2855 5555

DISCOVER MACAU: MUSEUM OF TAIPA AND COLOANE HISTORY
 TIME: 10am-6pm daily (last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Mondays)
 ADDRESS: Rua Correia da Silva, Taipa
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

Offbeat

DANCERS ON EGYPTIAN STREETS ACCUSED OF VIOLATING TRAFFIC LAW

People who took to the streets in Egypt for an online dance challenge face penalties over allegations they endangered lives and violated public decency, the state media reported this week.

The dance craze flared up social media networks with video postings of people dancing in response to the so-called "Kiki challenge" to the song "In My Feelings" by Canadian singer Drake.

The challenge was initiated by Instagram comedian known as the TheShiggyShow. It involves people getting out of their cars and dancing to the song alongside the cars' open door.

Videos of Egyptian celebrities, including popular goalkeeper Essam al-Hadary, as well as actresses Dina al-Sherbini and Yasmin Raees, went viral on the hashtag "Kiki", now among the top trending hashtags in Egypt.

Some Egyptian dance enthusiasts went a step further, posting clips of themselves dancing to Egyptian songs. A user posted a photo of a man running alongside an overcrowded public bus, trying to catch it, with the caption reading: "We have another kiki challenge in Egypt."

But Egyptian officials were alarmed by the dancing spree.

The state-run MENA news agency cited a warning by an unnamed Interior Ministry official as saying the "Kiki challenge" dancers could be persecuted for violating the country's traffic law. The official didn't elaborate.

Local media say charges under the traffic law, including endangering lives and traffic disruption, can be punished by sentences of up to a year in prison and fines of up to 3,000 Egyptian pounds or USD167.

Religious officials viewed the challenge as a threat to the country's "long entrenched values and ethics."

"The dance, which has spread like wildfire, violates social norms and ethics," Ahmed al-Malki, a researcher at Al-Azhar, the Sunni Muslim's foremost religious institution, told The Associated Press.

"The state has an inherent right to protect its citizens from whatever it views as harmful to them," the religious scholar added.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:20	Miscellaneous
17:35	Portuguese Documentary
18:10	Maternity
19:05	Portugal Fashion
19:35	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Non-daily Portuguese News
21:20	Tech Tree
21:30	You, Me & the Apocalypse
22:20	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Macau Documentary
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:05	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

26 JUL - 01 AUG



INCREDIBLES 2

ROOM 1

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

Director: Brad Bird

Starring: Craig T. Nelson, Holly Hunter, Sarah Vowell

Language: Cantonese (Chinese)

Duration: 118min



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE - FALLOUT

ROOM 2

2:30, 6:00, 9:00pm

ROOM 3

4:30pm

Director: Christopher McQuarrie

Starring: Paul Rudd, Evangeline Lilly, Michael Douglas

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 118min



SKYSCRAPER

ROOM 3

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

Director: Rawson Marshall Thurbe

Starring: Tom Cruise, Henry Cavill, Simon Pegg

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 147min

this day in history



1952 EVA PERON DIES

Eva Duarte de Peron, wife of the president of the Argentine Republic, has died from cancer, aged 33.

She passed away at 2025 local time at the presidential residence in the company of her husband General Juan Domingo Peron.

Her death was announced by the Subsecretariat of Information at 2142.

The President of the Chamber of Deputies, Dr Campora, immediately submitted a bill to Congress, declaring 26 July as a national day of mourning from now on.

The government has announced that it will observe official mourning for 30 days.

The Queen sent a message of condolence to the Argentine president.

It read: "I extend to you my deepest sympathy and that of my people for the tragic loss which you and the Argentine people have suffered in the premature death of your brilliant and devoted partner."

Argentina's most famous first lady, who was recently proclaimed "spiritual chief of the Argentine nation" by Congress, was born Maria Eva Duarte on 7 May 1919 in the village of Los Toldos.

She was the youngest of five children born to Juana Ibarguren and Juan Duarte. Her father died when she was seven and the family struggled to make ends meet.

Before she was 20 Eva had moved to Buenos Aires to pursue her theatrical aspirations.

She met the then Colonel Juan Domingo Peron in 1944 when he was vice president and secretary of war and the couple were married in 1945.

The following year General Peron became president. His wife devoted her time to the poor, or the descamisados (shirtless ones), of Argentina and over the next seven years brought the working classes into a position of political power never witnessed before.

She organised mass political rallies and spent millions of pounds of public money on the poor. She got women the vote and legalised divorce.

But the Peronist years were controversial.

Although hailed a social champion and adored by the working classes, Evita, as she became known, was feared and loathed by the military and the upper classes. They regarded her as a threat and believed she was using her public position to further her own personal aspirations.

In 1951 she was nominated for vice-presidency but was forced to withdraw after pressure from the military.

Her last public appearance was on 4 June this year when she stood beside her husband in an open motor-car during the inauguration ceremonies for his second presidential term.

Her body, dressed in a white evening dress, has been taken to the Ministry of Labour and Welfare, where it will lie in state for two days.

It will then be transferred to the General Confederation of Labour.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In 1955 General Peron was overthrown in a military coup and he fled to Spain.

Evita's embalmed body was removed and its whereabouts remained a mystery until 1971.

It was eventually discovered that her body had lain in a secret grave for 14 years under the name of a nun in a Milan cemetery. It was returned to General Peron in Spain.

In 1973, Juan Peron returned to Argentina after years of exile to begin a third term as president.

His wife's body was taken back to Argentina in November 1974, four months after General Peron's death.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 There's no need to be in the middle of any conflicts today - people are at odds with each other, and you have nothing to do with it. Jumping in to make peace might seem like a great idea.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Are you detecting some shift in energy around you today? There are two camps forming: Those who are all for you, and those who don't have your best interests at heart.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Your productivity is admirable, and you've been doing an excellent job at staying cool under pressure. You deserve to slow things down and coast for a while - right about now.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Working on the foundation of a partnership or romantic relationship will suddenly become a lot easier as your communication skills take the wheel and steer you down a lighthearted, nurturing path.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You're finally starting to get a sense of how you affect others - and you like it a lot. Today this forward momentum continues when you get a chance to hold the attention of a group of people.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 A project among your friends or in the professional realm is getting stuck in the mud - and today it may hit a do-or-die point. Others may immediately turn to you for guidance, given your insight and experience.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 The harsh restrictions hindering you recently will be removed today, or they'll go away on their own. What will be left for you are a lot of open spaces and loose energy.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You may not need to get entrenched in the lives of the people around you today, but you'll really want to. There's a strong urge to be involved building inside of you - and it's creating some amazing growth opportunities.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 A birth or other type of new beginning introduces you to an interesting philosophy today. It's like a light is shining in a new corner of the world, and you're very intrigued to see what's there.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Today the little luxuries of life take on a more important role than the biggest bling ever could. You'll gain new contentment with nature, simplicity and modest means.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Despite quite a few recent nap attacks, your energy level isn't decreasing at all. What's going on is more of a slow adjustment - you do have more energy than you think.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 It took you a long while to come to a certain decision or philosophical position, so don't waver when it's challenged today. You don't even have to feel obligated to listen.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

3x3 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle

Easy+

3x3 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle

Medium

3x3 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle

Hard

3x3 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle

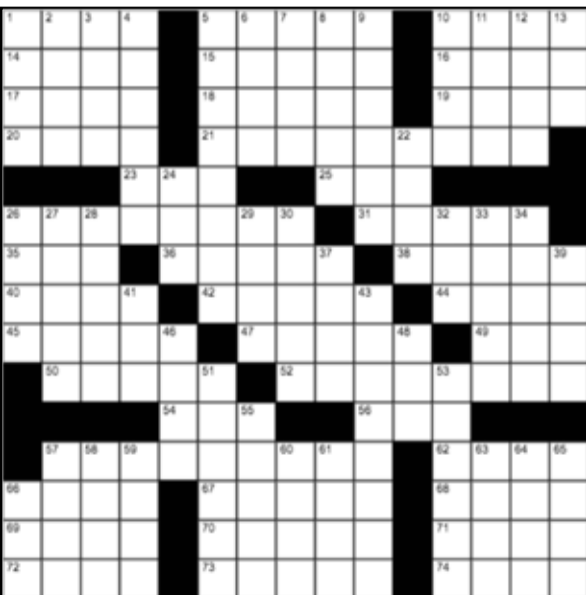
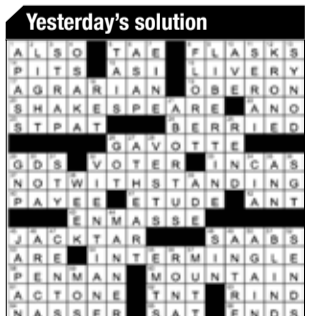
WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns: CHINA, MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Lists cities like Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Swindle; 5- Harvests; 10- Touched down; 14- Great lake; 15- Sufficient; 16- Mystique; 17- Some wines; 18- That is to say...; 19- Salon sweepings; 20- Baa maids?; 21- Bulbous plant; 23- Corner key; 25- Ages; 26- Launching of a rocket; 31- Governed; 35- Backtalk; 36- Painter Uccello; 38- Donates; 40- Et ___ (and other men); 42- Tire pattern; 44- ___ kleine Nachtmusik; 45- Fundamental; 47- California border lake; 49- Draw; 50- Hot stuff; 52- Eyeglasses with tinted lenses; 54- Old English letter; 56- Tree-ring indication; 57- Percolator; 62- Iowa city; 66- An apple or a planet will have this at the centre; 67- Rice-___; 68- Bright star; 69- 1997 Peter Fonda role; 70- Scout master?; 71- Some digits; 72- Get an A, say; 73- ___ a high note; 74- Monster;

DOWN: 1- Shrivelled, without moisture; 2- Ship's company; 3- West Wing worker; 4- Untidy states; 5- Wet weather wear; 6- Anarchist Goldman; 7- Copycat; 8- Position; 9- Elder; 10- Sounds of pleasure; 11- Hawaiian outdoor feast; 12- Eye part; 13- It paves the way; 22- Cozy; 24- Indy 500 sponsor; 26- Tell all; 27- Pale purple; 28- Imitative; 29- Permanent army post; 30- Hopping bloodsuckers; 32- Fail to tell the truth; 33- Madonna role; 34- Actor Leary; 37- Honolulu's island; 39- Matches a bet; 41- "Rocky ___" (1982); 43- Contribution; 46- Musical staff sign; 48- The fruit of a hen; 51- Think; 53- Simple shed; 55- Long-legged bird; 57- Soft drink choice; 58- Minerals; 59- Professional charges; 60- Fishing hole; 61- Not fooled by; 63- Electronic music pioneer; 64- Perpetually; 65- Freelancer's encl.; 66- Drinking vessel;



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Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
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News At Hand



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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

Stephen Hawkins, Grand Prairie

THE starting lineups are announced in English and Spanish at home games for the independent Texas AirHogs, and then the Chinese national anthem is played.

For about 30 members of the Chinese national baseball team, the suburban ballpark adjacent to a horse track and only a few miles west of downtown Dallas has become their summer home and training ground in an unprecedented setup.

They are a revolving part of the roster for a professional team in the United States, playing more games and against tougher competition while working to improve their team for future international events such as the upcoming Asian Games and 2020 Olympics.

"The system that they've created here, where we work out in the morning, we've got weight training, the pitchers have a system where we throw on, the coaches have kind of set up a system that's really helped them to be able to make the adjustment to play more games," Sun Jianzeng, a 26-year-old right-hander, said through a translator.

Chinese players, who professionally back home would play only 20-30 games a season, make up about two-thirds of the expanded roster for the American Association team now formally known as the AirHogs powered by Beijing Shougang Eagles. The players ranging in age from 18 to 29 rotate on and off the active roster to play 6-7 games a week in one of the low-minor leagues not affiliated with Major League Baseball.

"It makes it workable, because we don't want to wear these guys down," said AirHogs manager John McLaren, a big league coach for three decades who has worked with Chinese teams since 2011.

Players not on the active roster for games go through early workouts at AirHogs Stadium, 10 minutes from the home ballpark of the Texas Rangers. There are



Texas Airhogs starting pitcher Meng Weiqiang, of China

BASEBALL

Chinese team takes over Texas minor league club

conditioning and weight training drills that are new to the Chinese players.

"They're trying to do something they've never done before, which is play this many games on a daily basis, and you throw into the fact that with the exception of maybe three or four pitchers, they're physically and experienced-wise overmatched," said Larry Hardy, a former Rangers pitching coach filling the same role for the AirHogs. "But they're getting better."

McLaren, who had a short stint managing Seattle in 2007-08 and was Washington's interim manager for three games in 2011, was on the Philadelphia Phillies staff the past two seasons.

He also managed China at the

World Baseball Classic in 2013 and 2017. Over that time, there would be gaps of six or seven months when he wouldn't even see the team, and players would barely play baseball. China has a 2-10 record in its four WBC appearances, getting outscored 102-18 in those games.

"These guys, I don't think they'd ever played twice in a week," McLaren said.

That changed when the Chinese Baseball Association made arrangement with the AirHogs, allowing them to focus on daily development.

They are now together all of the time in a 12-team league that stretches more than 1,300 miles south to north through the middle of the United States — and

into Canada with the Winnipeg Goldeyes. The closest stop is Cleburne, Texas, where 53-year-old former big league slugger Rafael Palmeiro is starring for the Railroaders.

China's only Olympic berth was in 2008, going 1-6 in group play after an automatic berth as the host nation. That was the last time baseball was part of the Summer Games until its 2020 return in Tokyo.

The AirHogs are a league-worst 17-44 this season, but player-coach Na Chuang said the team has progressed faster than expected, increasing the confidence of the Chinese players who will leave with McLaren and some of their national coaches for the Asian Games in Indonesia before the

end of the 100-game AirHogs season.

Kevin Joseph, who pitched in the majors briefly with the St. Louis Cardinals in 2002, is part of McLaren's staff as an assistant pitching coach and invaluable translator. He learned Mandarin Chinese while spending more than eight years teaching baseball to young people after a friend with connections to baseball officials in China invited him there.

"The big need I think for China is they don't play a lot of games. So for them to be able to come, and to learn the rhythm of a baseball lifestyle, play against better competition, has been a great experience," Joseph said. "The players have really meshed well with the Chinese guys, they love them."

There are the inevitable hiccups because of communication issues and culture differences, including the style of play the Chinese players were used to, but Joseph said things have gone great overall.

"It's fun just to watch them interact with everybody, and themselves, and show up every day, kidding and joking," said McLaren, sitting in the coaches office next to a narrow room cramped with lockers. "It's a clubhouse. They're a different culture, speak a different language, but the laugh in the clubhouse is the same."

Joseph said hitters have changed the way they swing the bat, being more aggressive and ready to hit against velocity beyond what they'd ever faced.

For the pitchers, the emphasis has been on throwing more fastballs and fewer breaking balls. Hardy said the catchers have started to understand what the coaches are looking for from pitchers.

"The level of play is a lot higher," Jianzeng said. "You can make smallest mistakes, can be hurt here as a pitcher. [...] Because you're playing so many games, you're learning about yourself as a pitcher, and you're getting a lot more experience." **AP**

TENNIS

Serena Williams hits out again at testing 'discrimination'

SERENA Williams has complained on social media that it's "test Serena" time again as she once more hit out at the frequency with which she is selected for anti-doping tests.

The 23-time Grand Slam champion took to Twitter yesterday [Macau time] after she received another visit from a tester.

Williams tweeted: "And it's that time of the day to get 'randomly' drug tested and only test Serena.

Out of all the players it's been proven I'm the one getting tested the most. Discrimination? I think so. At least I'll be keeping the sport clean."

In a second message, the 36-year-old American added: "But I'm ready to do whatever it takes to have a clean sport so bring it on. I'm excited."

Williams has complained before at being drug-tested more than other American tennis players this year.

"Just test everyone

equally," Williams said on the eve of this year's Wimbledon, where she lost to Angelique Kerber in the final.

A report by Deadspin said Williams had been checked five times in 2018 by June, more than other U.S. women and men in the sport.

Williams returned to competition this season after missing more than a year as a result of pregnancy. She gave birth to a daughter last September. **AP**



opinion

Made in Macao
 Jenny Lao-Phillips



LONG-BOILED SOUP — THE CHINESE SECRET TO HEALTH AND BEAUTY

A friend who works closely with expatriates in Macao told me that one of the questions she has often been asked is why we Chinese take so long to make soup. It came as culture shock when she was asked this question for the first time, as we never considered soup to be something that was supposed to be cooked quickly. I cannot speak for all Western cultures, but at least for North Americans and some Asian cultures like the Japanese and Koreans, soup is like fast food. Not in the literal sense, but something that can be cooked fast for a quick meal. But for traditional Chinese families, soup is not that simple, it is the center of our family lives, a symbol of love and care.

When I was a kid, I remembered going with my grandmother to the market every morning to buy fresh ingredients like pork ribs, fish or chicken for making soup. Because the community was smaller, everyone seemed to know each other, and the greetings of the wet market customers were usually, "How are you?" followed by, "What soup are you making today?" Then the ladies would gather and discuss soups. This was not just a brainstorming session. They decided what soup to make based on the season, the weather and the health of their family members. For instance, if the humidity was high, the more senior market-goers would recommend young housewives make soup with melon, red beans, date and pork, just to name a few ingredients, some of which I still don't know - they are mostly Chinese herbs. Unlike the older generations, from mine onward I'd say soup is just chopped up vegetables thrown together with some stock and boiled for 15 minutes. For the traditional Chinese family, however, soup is what keeps the family healthy and what the central person of the family, usually the mother, take hours each day to prepare.

But why does it take hours to make some soup? Well, for one thing, the slow boiling of the soup cooks all the ingredients till they are soft, especially the bones. Instead of using a broth to make soup, long-boiled Chinese soup is the broth itself, with no chemicals but with all the protein, calcium and taste from the ingredients gathered, making the soup an essence of the ingredients. One may be curious as to why Chinese chicken soup uses a whole chicken and is boiled till even the bones are almost melted, with not much meat to eat. The chicken is reduced to bowls of essence which is, some say, healthier than eating chicken itself, as the bones contribute collagen to the protein we get already from the food and enhance skin elasticity - that is why. I'm not sure if that is true, but many ladies have attributed their younger looking skin to having Chinese soup every day.

Also, having long-boiled soup to drink when one gets home from school or work was considered the basis of family lives. In fact, there is a Chinese saying that wives who can make good soup can capture the heart of their husbands. Therefore, the hours spent making a soup are not just part of the recipe for another dish on the dining table. The soup is for the health of family and is a symbol of love. Regardless of the scientific evidence of long-boiled soup having physical health benefits, the fact that someone spent hours going through the difficulty of sorting out numerous ingredients, and hours boiling soup every day for you is definitely healthy for one's psychological health.

THE FACEBOOK SETS UP SUBSIDIARY IN CHINA, WHERE IT'S BLOCKED

Facebook is blocked in China but it's still setting up a subsidiary in the world's most populous country.

The company says it wants to set up an "innovation hub" in Zhejiang to support Chinese developers, innovators and startups. It has done the same elsewhere, including France, Brazil, South Korea and India. But it is not blocked in those countries.

Facebook said yesterday [Macao time] that

the subsidiary will focus on training and workshops for developers and entrepreneurs.

According to The Washington Post, a filing published on China's National Enterprise Credit Information Publicity System listed the company as Facebook Technology (Hangzhou) Co. The filing, which is no longer accessible, noted that the company is owned by Facebook Hong Kong Ltd. It has registered capital of USD30 million.

Bad dogs die young, many from euthanasia, British study says

BAD dogs tend to die young, according to a British study that says aggression, excessive barking and disobedience are among behaviors that can doom canine pets to an early demise.

One in three deaths in U.K. dogs younger than 3 years old was from "undesirable" behaviors, a disproportionately high number, the study found. Euthanasia was the most common cause of those deaths - 75 percent overall. Traffic accidents involving disobedient dogs were another common cause.

The study involved data on 264,000 U.K. dogs, and the results underscore the importance of training dogs and educating owners, the researchers said. They said the large number of misbehaving dogs that are euthanized also highlights a need for improved behavioral education for veterinarians so they can better assist pet owners.

The study was published this week in the British publication Animal Welfare.

Making sure owners are aware of traits in breeds they select is important, as is socialization for young dogs, "to ensure that the lives of dogs and their owners are fulfilling for all



parties involved," said study supervisor Dan O'Neill, a senior lecturer at the Royal Veterinary College.

Socialization is most effective when puppies are 4 to 12 weeks old, according to Partnership for Animal Welfare, a U.S. nonprofit animal rescue and adoption group. It involves introducing them to new experiences, including people, places, objects and other animals to help teach them how to respond "appropriately and without fear," the group's website says.

The researchers analyzed 2009 to 2014 records from 127 U.K. veterinary clinics to determine what portion of early deaths were linked with undesirable behavior. The study didn't report other causes but previous research by the same group found that less common

causes included gastrointestinal and neurological diseases.

Males, mixed-breed dogs, and small dogs weighing less than 10 kilograms were more prone to early deaths from misbehavior than females, larger dogs and purebreds.

Compared with Labrador retrievers, a common breed in the U.K. and the United States that is often well-tempered, certain breeds faced higher risks of behavior-related deaths including cocker spaniels and Staffordshire bull terriers, similar to American pit bulls.

"Greater awareness of the scale of this issue can be the first step toward reducing the problems and making the lives of thousands of our young dogs happier," O'Neill said. AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	45-65 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	70-100 Moderate
Ambient	70-100 Moderate

WORLD BRIEFS



SYRIA A series of suicide bombings and attacks that sparked fighting between local armed groups in southern Syria killed around 90 people yesterday, spreading mayhem in a province that has been relatively quiet throughout Syria's seven-year conflict. More on p15

SOUTH AFRICA's trade minister has opened a summit of the BRICS emerging economies with a warning that the world's trading system is enduring "enormous turbulence."



SPAIN Former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont said yesterday he will return to Belgium this weekend to resume efforts to drum up European support for Catalan self-determination after Spain's bid to extradite him collapsed.

ITALY's hard-line interior minister is dismissing as mere "charity" the proposal by the European Commission to pay EU member states 6,000 euros (USD7,000) to accept and process each migrant saved at sea.



NICARAGUA A Brazilian medical student and three other people have been killed amid unrest that has rocked this Central American nation for over three months, her university and a human rights group reported.

COLOMBIA Influential former President Alvaro Uribe said he would resign from his Senate seat after Colombia's Supreme Court ordered him to testify on allegations of witness tampering.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Peter Dejong



Fans picnic atop of a hill overlooking the road leading to the top of Peyragudes pass prior to the seventeenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 65 kilometers with start in Bagnères-de-Luchon and finish in Saint-Lary-Soulan Col du Portet pass.