



REVENUE CLIMBS 10 PERCENT IN JULY
Gross gaming revenue in Macau rose 10.3 percent in July 2018 to reach a total of MOP25.32 billion

P3



PROTESTORS DEMAND BETTER PAY
As many as 2,000 protestors gathered outside of Melco Resorts' properties yesterday afternoon

P3



ALL SURVIVE CRASH OF JETLINER

P15 MEXICO

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WORLD BRIEFS



SOUTH CHINA SEA
Southeast Asian nations are expected to welcome an initial negotiating draft of a nonaggression pact with China on the South China Sea, but critics warn that the protracted talks provide a diplomatic cover for Beijing's tenacious aggression in the disputed waters.
More on p10

PHILIPPINES Federal prosecutors say a Filipino woman and five of her family members have been indicted for conspiring to funnel into the U.S. some USD20 million in Philippine public funds obtained through an intricate bribery and fraud scheme.



INDONESIA A court has outlawed Jemaah Anshorut Daulah, a network of militants that supports the Islamic State group, following a series of deadly attacks over the past two years.

MYANMAR A report says flooding in Myanmar has killed 12 people and forced more than 132,000 others to take shelter at nearly 300 temporary camps.

PAKISTAN The first ever Hindu elected to a general seat in Pakistan's parliament says he wants to work on combatting early marriages and forced conversion, and on improving health care in his home region.

More on backpage

Bill to grant extended powers to police

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New digital mental health service helps migrants cope with stress

P5 MDT REPORT

Macau's first-ever esports venue launched

MACAU'S first-ever esports venue was officially opened Tuesday at an inauguration event at the Studio City integrated resort.

Dubbed the "Macau EStadium", the venue is located inside Melco Resorts' Studio City and is described by company representatives as a "high performance event space [...] equipped with cutting-edge advanced technology."

The gaming operator wants the "stadium", which, at a maximum of capacity of 274 guests, more closely resembles a repurposed theater, to cater to top-tier e-sport tournaments and virtual gaming leagues.

The venue features high-performance virtual gaming facilities which are expected to attract multiplayer tournaments from around the region. According to the resort operator, the venue is already booked to host an array of top competitions in the coming year.

The electronic tournaments may then be broadcast to local audiences with both Mandarin and Cantonese narration, as well as streamed internationally.

Melco also sees the venue as a way of attracting a new generation of customers to its resorts and of elevating Macau into a multifaceted tourist destination in Asia.

"Esports is a fast-growing market segment that is constantly innovating and evolving, and Melco is confident that this



venue will allow us to further cater to younger patrons while continuing to bring fresh and

Esports is a fast-growing market segment that is constantly innovating and evolving.

GEOFF ANDRES
PROPERTY PRESIDENT OF STUDIO CITY

novel experiences to all our guests," said Geoff Andres, property president of Studio City.

"The Macau EStadium is the first of its kind here in Macau and we are honored [...] to launch such an exciting new event space that will stage some of the most electrifying e-sport events around the world," he added.

Esports comprise multiplayer video game tournaments played by professional gamers and spectated by fans who may follow the competition as a live audience or via internet or television broadcasting.

It has become a global phenomenon that particularly

appeals to younger players and viewers, with the majority being less than 30 years old. Moreover, Chinese players account for over half of the global esports audience and virtual gaming is growing in popularity around Asia.

Proponents of esports argue that it should be put on par with other non-physical sports like snooker or darts. They say that the experience and atmosphere at such competitions mimics that of watching a more traditional sporting event. **DB**

C2 MAGAZINE FEATURES ESPORTS DEVELOPMENT

PUBLISHED BY the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), the 28th edition of C2 Magazine discusses the development of Macau's e-sports market. In a statement issued on Tuesday by the IC, the bureau asserts that e-sports is "booming in Macau."

The feature section of this edition of C2 will interview a local esports competitor, as well as representatives of the Macau E-Sports Federation and the 178 competitors, who were invited to share their views on the development of the sector.

TOURISM

HK partners with Guangdong, MSAR to boost visitor arrivals

THE Hong Kong Tourism Board has outlined its plan to collaborate with Guangdong and Macau to attract overseas visitors to the HKSAR as the US-China trade war intensifies.

Hong Kong Tourism Board chairman Peter Lam warned that Hong Kong's tourism sector recovery in the Pearl River Delta region could be short-lived due to the depreciation of the yuan, as cited in a report issued by the South China Morning Post.

The tourism chief proposed that the SAR set aside competition and work with mainland China, Guangdong and Macau to bolster tourist numbers from overseas in the Greater Bay Area.

Although in June there was a 12.8 percent year-on-year increase in tourist arrivals in Hong Kong – amounting to 4.74 million – 3.63 million of these were mainland Chinese visitors. Lam noted that June arrivals demonstrated "some decline."

He then disclosed that a delegation led by Chief Executive Carrie Lam would visit Japan in November – one of the key projects of the plan. "If the yuan situation and the trade war drag on, the city's tourism will be affected," he said. "We hope the new infrastructure – the bridge and high-speed rail services – [will help us] encourage visitors to stay longer in the city and make excursions to neighboring areas across the border," he added.

The China Foreign Exchange Trade System shows that the yuan deteriorated 8.6 percent to 86.85 percent per HKD100 on Tuesday from April 2. During this time period, the exchange rate of the RMB weakened, as it currently sits at RMB6.81 per USD1. Some economists believe that the depreciation of RMB will continue as the trade war intensifies, noting the proposed punitive tariffs of the U.S. target \$50 billion worth of Chinese imports.

Brokerage firm CLSA predicts that the currency would reach RMB7 per \$1 at the end of this year.

"By the end of the third quarter or early fourth quarter, we will begin to see the impact of yuan and the trade war," Tourism Board executive director

Anthony Lau said.

The Tourism Board has negotiated with airlines in the region for discounted packages to bring in more tourists from South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand as part of its short-term measure.

GREATER BAY AREA LEAGUE

THE HONG Kong Football Association (HKFA) last week announced that mainland football authorities are considering launching a Greater Bay Area league. Although the idea is still at a preliminary stage, HKFA chairman Brian Leung said that the plan is to establish a profession-

al regional league, noting that Hong Kong is finding it challenging to sustain a professional league on its own. As cited in a report issued by RTHK, the plan was revealed at a Legislative Council meeting where the government's sponsorship arrangements for the association were discussed.

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New law proposes added authority to PSP as 'criminal police'

Renato Marques

A proposal to change the current laws that govern the operations and procedures of the Public Security Police Force (PSP) has been finalized. The Executive Council's (ExCo) analysis of the proposed change will be sent today to the Legislative Assembly (AL) to be voted upon, the spokesperson from the ExCo Leong Heng Teng, informed in a press conference held at the government headquarters yesterday.

The proposal was said to have two main purposes: to add new authority to the PSP as a "criminal police," thus conferring on police department heads the power to, for example, take suspects into custody in the course of an investigation without the need for a warrant from a judge; and also to compile in a single law many of the powers that the police already have but "are spread among several laws and complementary regulations," as Commissioner of the PSP, Leong Man Cheong,



explained in response to media questions.

One of the new PSP heads who will be granted the new position of a Criminal Police authority is the Chief of the Traffic Department of the PSP. Leong justified this move by noting the number of cases related to "driving under influence of alcohol or drugs and similar situations."

As the ExCo spokesperson

added, "in the future, it is expected that other heads of department, like the head of the Immigration Department, would also be included in this regime."

Although in general it was noted that most of the roles and rules remain the same, the new law will also add to the authority of the PSP who will be granted access to "information of criminal interest within the

files of the Administration, the autonomous public entities and the concessionaires." Under this measure, those called by the PSP have the duty to be present at a nominated place, otherwise, they risk prosecution under the penal code. Previously this power was only possessed by the judiciary.

Questioned on which concessionaires will be obliged to provide the PSP access to such information, the Commissioner replied, "the bus companies, as well as the ones that supply electricity, water and others."

The proposal aims to put an end to the "Military Statute of the Security Forces" transforming it a "Force of Internal Security" of Macau. Leong Heng Teng noted that another law change establishes a new penitentiary regime in which PSP officers will be given separate imprisonment in cases when they are tried and subjected to imprisonment sentences, which is a measure currently extended to officers of the Judiciary Police or the Judicial Magistrates.



St. Augustine's Church reopens to the public

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has concluded the inspection and repair works of St. Augustine's Church, in cooperation with the Diocese of Macau. The Church reopened to the public yesterday and will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., including on public holidays. Strong winds and rain caused a part of the roof and wooden beams on the right-hand aisle of the Church to collapse. The IC carried out emergency reinforcement and repair works in that section. After the repairs were completed, the IC noted that, "a comprehensive inspection of the church's safety was carried out and, pursuant to its conclusions, the church's roof was fully repaired. In the future, the IC will continue to regularly monitor and inspect heritage buildings as well as communicate with the respective owners, in order to jointly and adequately protect the cultural heritage."

Head of Beijing delegation replaced

The Government Spokesperson Office has confirmed that the head of the Macau delegation in Beijing, Hong Wai, has ended her contract. In a short statement, the office said that "the nomination, exoneration and mobility of department heads are a result of common and normal decisions by the public administration." The office also says that the Beijing delegation will temporarily be headed "by a staff member of the delegation with the necessary qualifications."

Restaurant owner arrested following blast

The owner of the restaurant where a blast occurred last month was arrested, according to Radio Macau. The Judiciary Police (PJ) says that the case that led to one death and six injured persons, was caused by human error, namely the inappropriate use of a stove, which caused a gas leak. The owner of the restaurant located at the northern district, a woman aged 44, was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office for investigation, according to the PJ.

GAMING

Revenue climbs 10 percent in July, slowdown from Q2

GROSS gaming revenue in Macau rose 10.3 percent in July 2018 to reach a total of MOP25.32 billion, according to the latest data from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ). Analysts had broadly predicted a 5 to 13 percent growth for July.

Year-to-date revenue reached MOP175.54 with the inclusion of July, up from just under MOP150 billion in 2017. This represents a year-to-date growth of 17.5 percent, down from 18.9 percent for the first half of 2018.

The latest posting is in line with the months preceding July, suggesting that gaming revenue might have finally found its "new normal". Certainly, the 10.3 percent rise last month represents a slowdown from the approximately 12 percent growth seen in both May and June, and the growth of March and April, which exceeded 20 percent.

Nevertheless, this July marks almost two years of consecutive, year-on-year revenue gain in Macau, after a deep recession

that more than halved monthly revenue.

Citing gaming analysts, Reuters reported that growth in the high-roller VIP segment was flattening out, attributed to a recent tightening of Chinese capital outflows and the impact of the football World Cup. Looking further ahead, a deceleration in Chinese gross domestic product growth might also weaken demand from VIP players.

To offset their exposure, Macau casino operators have been steadily moving toward a business model that places equal importance on both the VIP and mass market segments. The latter is considered more resilient to unexpected market developments, and may help to avoid another prolonged gaming recession on the scale seen in 2014.

Casino operators are also keen to develop the mass market because they can seek out the lucrative "premium mass" cohort, without having to pay out large commissions to junket operators that bring in VIP clients.

Hundreds of protestors demand better pay, end to smoking

AS many as 2,000 protestors gathered outside of Melco Resorts' properties yesterday afternoon, demanding 14 months' salary per year and an end to smoking inside casinos.

Organized by the New Macau Gaming Workers Rights Association, hundreds of disgruntled employees marched along the Cotai Strip warning that if their demands are not satisfied, they will raise the issue with the government.

Organizers put the number of demonstrators at 2,000, but the police said that there were just half that number.

The protestors demanded "full pensions" for croupiers and also 14 months of pay per year. They also want to see the smoking ban fully enforced inside Mel-



co properties.

Speaking to media on the sidelines of the demonstration, New Macau Gaming Workers Rights Association president Cloe Chao said this was not the responsibility of the government, but that would not stop the Association from raising the issue if Melco was not prepared to heed their demands.

"If Melco Resorts does not satisfy our appeals, we will petition to the government," Chao told media at the

demonstration, as cited by TDM. "This is the duty a casino should undertake."

A senior representative at Melco Resorts attempting to formally accept a document with the workers' demands was rejected by the crowd, who called on Chief Executive Officer Lawrence Ho to come out instead.

Ho did not come out, but the protestors eventually accepted another senior representative in his place and submitted their complaints.

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News At Hand



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Digital mental health initiative helps migrants cope with stress

Lynzy Valles

A Macau-based scholar has recently co-launched the first online intervention program which was designed with Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) in a bid to provide access to psychotherapy intervention in the Filipino language.

Brian Hall, an assistant professor and director of the Global and Community Mental Health Research Group at the University of Macau, along with his team, has been working with Filipino migrant workers for over four years, stressing that there is a need for a program like this.

The scholar mentioned that there is a lack of counselors in the region, let alone those who can work with the Filipino community. A study led by the scholar concluded that the majority of the Filipino migrant population would use the e-service when made available and accessible to them, noting that 90 percent



Brian Hall

claimed to have a smartphone.

Thus, the access to technology is not a concern. "We learned from our population-level study of over 1,350 Filipino domestic workers that the majority of the community would make use of a program like this, and that many people are suffering from stress, homesickness, and other challenges that can make life in

Macau difficult times," Hall told the Times. "This motivated us to collaborate with the World Health Organization to adapt a program specifically for Filipino overseas workers who are experiencing stressful circumstances," he added.

Hall and his team collaborated with Filipino migrants in the city from a variety of occu-

pational backgrounds to ensure that they could create an intervention that can address the needs of all the migrant workers. "Now that we have an adapted intervention – we are rigorously testing it to ensure that what we offer OFWs [Overseas Filipino Workers] is of the highest quality and will provide the most considerable benefit to the community," said Hall. The project which also collaborated with Caritas Macau, the Philippine Consulate General, and the Philippines Overseas Labor Office, is a step-by-step program designed to help the migrants "overcome stress and challenges in a highly engaging storybook format."

Delivered online, the program has five sessions, which can be completed in less than 30 minutes.

The entire program can be completed within five to eight weeks.

"There are characters who narrate a story and inform OFWs about techniques that can be used to overcome challenges and start feeling better – so they can be more successful for their families," the scholar explained. According to Hall, it is critical for these workers to have access to evidence-based mental health services, as being a migrant worker can be stressful and challenging, especially as they are separated from their families:

"Although Filipinos are incredibly resilient and have incredible strength, when these stresses become too great, having a free, anonymous, and scientifically supported intervention is helpful." The scholar also noted that the mental health law of the Philippines is an acknowledgement

for the needs of Filipinos' emotional wellbeing.

Although there are still many who feel embarrassed at the prospect of talking about their problems, Hall suggested that the online intervention program could be a platform to assist these migrants regarding an issue that is seldom talked about in the community. "I think everyone is vulnerable to experiencing mental disorders. This is not unique to OFWs. We should really emphasize this point. This program is designed specially to address the issue of accessibility," the scholar explained.

My hope is that this program will offer them some relief from the stresses and challenges of being a migrant worker.

BRIAN HALL

Since the program is delivered via a website and can be accessed using a smartphone, it can be scaled up to reach a significant part of the population.

"My hope is that this program will offer them some relief from the stresses and challenges of being a migrant worker. This is the ultimate goal," Hall concluded.

A study Hall conducted last year showed that the number of Filipino and Indonesian domestic helpers in Macau who suffer from depression stands at 20 percent and 12 percent respectively.

It also suggested that these domestic workers are in a vulnerable position when it comes to suffering from mental illness due to their work-related exposures and current living conditions.

Migrants say program is 'helpful'

SOME Filipino migrants that spoke to the Times agree that the newly launched intervention program could be of particular help to those experiencing anxiety and depression.

According to some members of the community, there is still a number of their compatriots who do not feel comfortable speaking about their mental health conditions. These members of the community also cite the absence of depression tests and diagnoses.

"The online intervention is helpful, especially to our fellow compatriots who are afraid to voice out their personal problems. It will help them to overcome their loneliness and divert their attention to other meaningful activities," said Hazel Mamangon, president of the Filipino

Community Alliance in Macau.

"It will help reduce the depression and with that kind of program it can educate them [as to] how to overcome loneliness," he added.

Meanwhile, other migrants believed that the eMental service could lessen the prevalence of mental disorders or any issues relating to mental health.

A migrant worker also suggested that activities regarding this matter could be organized and promoted amongst the community to help raise awareness.

"The online intervention would really be helpful to us, especially if they could also organize different activities that tackle this issue," said a domestic worker, who declined to be identified.

Domestic helper documentary now on int'l distribution platforms

THE Helper, a feature-length documentary focusing on Hong Kong's migrant domestic workers is now available for purchase on DVD and Blu-Ray, and VOD and iVOD distribution platforms internationally.

It is also currently available to pre-order on iTunes, it stated in a statement.

The film was funded by a successful Kickstarter campaign and went on to have a sold-out 11-week theatrical release in Hong

Kong in 2017.

The Helper chronicles diverse stories from Hong Kong's migrant domestic worker population, showing the contribution these women make to Hong Kong society and uncovering the inspiring combination of grit, pride and determination that drives them.

Choosing to leave their homeland and separated from their families, the film features the Unsung Heroes, a choir of Filipino

domestic workers perform on stage at Clockenflap music festival.

"We wanted to shine a spotlight on an invisible sector of Hong Kong society," says director Joanna Bowers, as cited in the statement.

"These women have made the impossible decision to migrate for work and leave their families behind. They deserve their strength and sacrifice to be acknowledged and respected," she added.

Meanwhile, producer Tony Verb said, "almost every day we are contacted by someone who has watched it and wants to let us know how impactful they've found these incredible women's stories."

The film's social impact campaign titled "Thanks A Million" has been launched on Facebook with the objective of collecting a million "thank yous" to show gratitude towards domestic helpers.



Joanna Bowers

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HEALTH

Medical accreditation regime to set three kinds of licenses

Renato Marques

THE analysis of a bill that proposes to create a regime for medical personnel accreditation has concluded, and will now be sent to the Legislative Assembly (AL) to be voted on, the spokesperson from the Executive Council (ExCo), Leong Heng Teng, informed yesterday at a press conference.

One of the bill's proposals is to establish a licensing process that will create three different kinds of licenses: full, limited and internship.

The full license (with a three year period) is reserved for Macau residents only and demands that the health professional who holds it possesses their own facilities, which should therefore assist with the development of the health sector.

The limited license can be used to hire health professionals from abroad for specific tasks or technically complex jobs within a limited time frame. These licenses last one year, but can be renewed up to three times.

The last level of the licensing system, the internship license, is granted to professionals who have already passed their admission exam and have been admitted for medical internships. This license is valid for the period of the internship, with a maximum time period of six months.

The ruling, management and supervision of all these professionals from both the public and private sectors, will be conducted by the new entity, the Health Profes-



Leong Heng Teng and Lei Chin Ion (right)

sionals Council. The Health Professionals Council will operate as the ruling body for all examination, accreditation and training processes.

Health professionals with several years of experience may be exempted from examination, said the director of the Health Bureau (SSM), Lei Chin Ion, although, in reply to questions from the media, he noted that the law does not specify what period of time is sufficient to constitute "enough experience."

Lei elaborated, "It has not set a specific time; this has to do with the relevant experience of the [health] professional and will be decided by the [Health Professionals] Council on a case by case basis."

The law also establishes a subsidy mechanism for health professionals while they undergo their internships,

although again the bill does not establish an amount for such subsidies, Lei clarified.

He also clarified that the examination requirement only applies to people seeking new licenses, and those who are seeking to renew their existing license which is valid for only a year. According to the SSM director, the accreditation system should initially apply to around 2,000 professionals, recalling that, "every year we see around 200 to 300 new health professionals starting to work."

He also noted that in order to skip the process of examination every three years, health professionals must provide proof of continuing training which represents a minimum of "30 credit units for the period of three years." Credits can be acquired by participation in training courses, workshops or attending

to national or international conferences, or even for producing papers or other relevant academic work.

Included in this new system of accreditation are also new categories of health professionals: physicians, dentists, traditional Chinese medicine physicians, pharmacists and pharmacy assistant technicians (in both conventional and traditional medicine) as well as nurses, clinical laboratory technicians, radiology technicians, chiropractors, physiotherapists, occupational and speech therapists, psychologists and dietitians.

The bill also establishes regimes for inspection and supervision, as well as a regime for penalties in cases of non-compliance, misconduct or negligence. The penalties range from a written warning to total suspension of activities.

Security Chief outlines solution for hazardous material depot

THE Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak, has said that the long-term solution for the hazardous material warehouse is to "find a place in a landfill where we can have a permanent storage facility for dangerous and chemical substances, finally solving the problem."

The Secretary was speaking to the media at a public event where he noted the great importance that the government attaches to the management of hazardous substances. Wong noted that there were defined short, medium and long-term plans to find solutions for the storage and the handling of such products in order to minimize risks to residents.

The comments of the Secretary come in response to the presentation of a petition to the government of over 7,400 signatures by the residents of areas surrounding the Concordia Industrial Park in Coloane. The petitioners sought to stop the planned construction of a hazardous waste storage facility in the land plot.

Wong issued a public reminder that hazardous substances are currently not being managed in a centralized way and are spread across different areas of the region, creating a potentially higher risk, and that this therefore requires a holistic solution. The Secretary also noted that the current draft plan not only includes the installation of a central hazardous waste storage facility, but also several contingency plans to protect the safety of the facility and the transportation of materials. He added that in relation to the currently planned warehouse, the Fire Services plans to keep all the materials under close inspection, adding that any possible incident will be immediately tackled.

Concerning residents' worries about the choice of site, Wong said it was a duty of the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau to explain the project to the population in a more clear and detailed way, repeating words previously spoken by the Chief Executive, Chui Sai On. Nevertheless, the Secretary said he would be available to explain the rules and criteria for construction, equipment, staff training, supervision procedures and management mechanisms, so that the population can be better informed about the management of hazardous substances. **RM**

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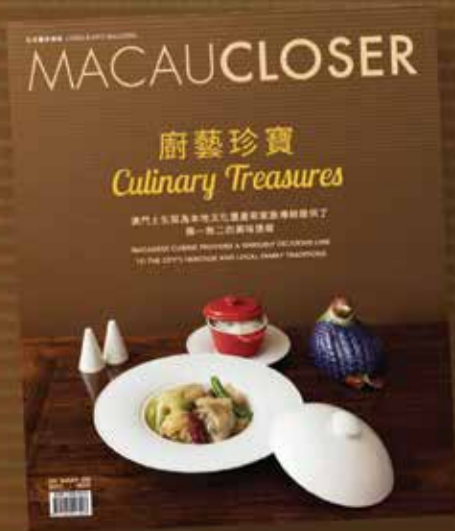
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GAMING

NBA strikes deal with MGM Resorts to provide data to bettors

THE NBA and WNBA will now share official data with MGM Resorts International, a major win for the leagues as they prepare for the anticipated growth of sports betting across the country.

The Las Vegas-based casino giant will pay the NBA for that data to use in determining outcomes of various bets. The NBA's stance has been that getting accurate stats to bettors is critical so players know what they're betting on and so casinos will know when to pay out, and MGM Resorts is the first casino to make an arrangement with the league for those numbers.

Terms of the deal announced Tuesday were not disclosed, other than it's a multiyear arrangement.

"I know the value of data," MGM chairman and CEO James Murren said. "To be able to have the official NBA data for sports bettors around the world is very valuable. I was willing to, and I've paid for that."

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, who has been talking with Murren about such an arrangement for weeks, said the leagues believe they're getting adequately compensated for the data.

"It's a leap of faith on both sides," Silver said. "It's a deal moderate in length where I think we can both step back and assess as we go and see, 'Is it working? Is this deal fair? Are we providing the consumers with the right type of experience?'"

It's the first such deal between



NBA commissioner Adam Silver speaks to the media during All-Star basketball festivities in Los Angeles

a major U.S. sports league and a casino.

"We understood the value of our marks, of official designations," Silver said. "But I think then in terms of the data we're providing, we have a sense of the magnitude of the current business and a sense of where things may go over the next few years. And I'd say we generally tried to approximate in a sense to come up with what we thought was fair compensation."

How MGM will get that data remains unclear.

NBA stat data is distributed globally by Sportradar, which sends it to media outlets, broadcasters and betting outlets outside the U.S. — but not inside this country, at least for now. With the start of preseason games still about two months away, there's plenty of time for those matters to get worked out.

"What this relationship entails is access to official data for the many casinos that MGM operates," Silver said. "It's the use of the NBA's intellectual property and as we've discussed before

we're very focused on integrity provisions to protect our fans, to protect those who choose to engage and bet on the NBA."

MGM will be an official casino partner for the league, but will not have exclusive rights to the data. The NBA still can, and likely will, try to make deals with other casinos who will be offering sports betting in various states or through mobile apps.

To be able to have the official NBA data for sports bettors around the world is very valuable. I was willing to, and I've paid for that.

JAMES MURREN
MGM CHAIRMAN AND CEO

The deal also won't stop other casino companies from offering wagers on NBA games, including prop bets that rely on results other than the final score.

MGM and other casino operators are moving aggressively to be able to capitalize on the U.S. sports betting market, which is expanding after the Supreme

Court ruled in May that states could take sports bets if they wanted. MGM has made three significant deals this week to expand its sports betting operations.

The company, which is scheduled to report second quarter earnings Thursday, announced separate agreements with a European bookmaker and a U.S.-based regional casino operator that will give it technological expertise and market access in several states where it doesn't already operate casino-resorts.

The joint venture with the United Kingdom-based owner of Ladbrokes, GVC Holdings, will lead to the creation of a sports betting and online gambling platform in the U.S. with a mobile app and website featuring odds and highlights.

Murren has previously expressed support for the leagues benefiting from the newly created market, but for the "integrity fee" as pushed by Silver and the NBA as well as other leagues.

"I'm not a fan of that name, and I don't have any idea what the economic proposition would be, but in so many cases there are opportunities, and this is on a going forth basis," he told The Associated Press hours after the Supreme Court issued its ruling in May.

The deal announced Tuesday also calls for cross-promotion: MGM will be advertised on NBA assets like NBA TV, NBA.com, the NBA App and social media platforms. In turn, MGM will promote the NBA on its betting platforms.

The NBA and MGM have been in business together before now. MGM owns the WNBA's Las Vegas Aces, who play inside the Mandalay Bay casino, and is also a presenter of the NBA Summer League.

"This is a whole new world for us," Silver said. **AP**

Vaccine scare has China moving to contain consumer backlash

CHINA is trying to contain the backlash over faulty vaccines given to babies and toddlers, with its top governing body vowing to punish those involved in a scandal that's testing faith in the country's USD122 billion drug industry.

The fraud — which sparked protests at government offices in Beijing and spurred Chinese parents to seek out foreign-made vaccinations in Hong Kong — was discussed at a State Council meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang on Monday. Those responsible for making the poor-quality vaccines face hefty fines, jail sen-

tences and bans for life from the drug industry, according to published remarks from the meeting.

Shenzhen-listed drug-maker Changsheng Bio-Technology Co. and state-owned vaccine maker Wuhan Institute of Biological Products Co. were found by a government probe to have made hundreds of thousands of low-quality vaccines that were then administered to children in a handful of provinces. Police have already petitioned prosecutors to arrest 18 people related to the fraud, including Changsheng Bio-Technology Chairwoman Gao Junfang.

The revelations have triggered a crisis of confidence among consumers that's exploded on social media in China and wiped more than \$20 billion off the value of health-care stocks.

The industry — which has aspirations to take on the west in drug innovation — is still recovering from a 2016 scandal over expired vaccines that were sold nationally. The public reaction also has echoes of the tainted milk scandal a decade ago in which at least six babies died and hundreds of thousands of others were sickened after consuming locally made infant formula laced with

the chemical melamine.

The Chinese government said about 650,000 child vaccines didn't meet standards, meaning the immunizations may not offer the children who received them protection from deadly diseases, namely whooping cough, tetanus and diphtheria.

The news has triggered not just a surge in demand for children's inoculations in Hong Kong parents but public pressure for more foreign-made vaccines to be made available in China.

Bloomberg Intelligence: China Vaccine Scare May Boost Hong Kong Tourism

China currently requires



all imported vaccines to go through Chinese clinical trials and a review process by the China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA) that can "almost take forever," said Milo Liu, head of research at AJ Securities Ltd.

Many vaccines used widely around the world are not available in China. "This incident will likely speed up the CFDA's import process in the future," Liu said. "On the other hand, China has restricted vaccine imports for years

in order to favor its domestic producers and this single incident will not turn the table entirely on this policy stance."

The scandal shows the high business risk facing China's drugmakers, Fitch Ratings said in a report Tuesday. The sector tends to concentrate on producing low-quality generic drugs because of a lack of investment in research and development, and weak supervision from regulators raises drug safety risks, Fitch said. **Bloomberg**



SOUTH CHINA SEA

Progress in sea feud, Koreans stir ASEAN though rifts persist

Jim Gomez
& Annabelle Liang, Singapore

SOUTHEAST Asian nations are expected to welcome an initial negotiating draft of a no-aggression pact with China on the South China Sea, but critics warn that the protracted talks provide a diplomatic cover for Beijing's tenacious aggression in the disputed waters.

Top diplomats of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will also praise the rapprochement between the Koreans, along with that of President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, when they gather for four days of annual summitry in Singapore starting yesterday.

Currently led by Singapore, the 10-nation bloc will host on

Saturday Asia's largest security forum, including the key players involved in the Korean Peninsula's disarmament efforts, which will provide a chance for them to talk on the summit's sidelines.

Concern over rising extremism in the region and the plight of minority Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar's Rakhine state will also be under the spotlight. Myanmar is to brief the ASEAN foreign ministers on the situation in Rakhine during a lunch "retreat," an informal gathering where ministers raise contentious issues that normally are a taboo in their staid plenary meetings.

Founded in 1967 in the Cold War era as a bulwark against communism, ASEAN has a bedrock principle of non-interfe-

rence in each other's domestic affairs and decides by consensus, meaning even one member state can doom any proposal it deems offensive.

Those cardinal principles have drastically slowed decision-making and have been used by authoritarian leaders to dodge outside criticism, causing the diplomatic collective to be labeled by skeptics as a "club of dictators" and human rights violators. But its principles have allowed ASEAN to maintain diverse national identities, from rambunctious democracies to martial law regimes, for half a century.

The bloc has also been an acceptable broker for talks for all sorts of conflicts.

In the South China Sea disputes, which have pitted China,

Taiwan and four ASEAN member states — Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam — the group is expected to announce an agreement with Beijing on an initial negotiating draft of a so-called "code of conduct," a proposed set of regional norms and rules aimed at preventing the long-seething disputes from degenerating into a shooting war.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said this week before flying to Singapore that talks on the code could be concluded this year or next. Other Asian diplomats have not been as optimistic.

The ministers will welcome "the improving cooperation between ASEAN and China and were encouraged by the progress of the substantive nego-

tiations towards the early conclusion of an effective code of conduct in the South China Sea on a mutually agreed timeline," according to a draft of a joint post-summit communique by the ministers which was obtained by The Associated Press.

Some of the ministers would repeat their concerns over China's transformation of seven disputed reefs into islands, including three with runways, which now resemble small cities armed with weapons, including surface-to-air missiles. China has come under intense criticisms for the aggressive action but it has said it has the right to build on its territory and defend them at all costs.

The ministers "took note of the concerns expressed by some countries on the land reclamations in the area, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions and may undermine peace, security and stability in the region," the draft communique said without naming China and reflecting the internal divisions over the touchy issue.

ASEAN member states Cambodia and Laos, which are known China allies, have opposed the use of strong language against Beijing over the disputes.

Greg Poling, director of the U.S.-based Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, which monitors developments in the South China Sea, said highlighting the draft code of conduct in the summit will be "more political theater than substance at this point" given the lack of agreement on areas it will cover and whether the pact should be legally binding after more than 15 years of talks.

Without any major concessions, especially from China, Poling said the talks would drag further while China presses actions to reinforce its vast territorial claims "without paying much price because the code of conduct process offers diplomatic cover to claim it is seeking a peaceful and fair settlement." **AP**

Beijing warns of retaliation if US takes more trade steps

CHINA'S government warned yesterday it will retaliate if Washington imposes new trade penalties, following a report the Trump administration will propose increasing the tariff rate on an additional USD200 billion of Chinese imports.

A foreign ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang, said Beijing was ready for "dialogue and consultation" to defuse the escalating dispute.

"If the United States takes further measures that escalate the situation, China will definitely fight back," said Geng. He gave no details of possible measures but said, "we are determined to safeguard our legitimate and lawful rights and interests."

Washington imposed additional 25 percent tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese goods July 6 in response to complaints Beijing steals

or pressures companies to hand over technology. Beijing responded by imposing the same penalties on the same amount of U.S. imports.

Bloomberg News reported, citing three unidentified sources, the Trump administration would propose imposing 25 percent tariffs on a \$200 billion list of Chinese goods targeted in a new round of penalties, up from the planned 10 percent.

Geng gave no indication whether the two sides were preparing to resume negotiations.

"I need to stress that dialogues must be conducted on the basis of mutual respect and equality," he said. "Unilateral threats and pressure will only be counterproductive."

The Ministry of Commerce didn't respond to questions by phone and fax about the status of possible negotiations. **AP**



ALPHABET Inc.'s Google is preparing to launch a censored version of its search engine for China that will block results Beijing considers sensitive, The Intercept reported.

Google's been working on a project code-named Dragonfly since the spring of 2017 and demonstrated a sanitized version of its search app to Chinese officials, the news outlet reported, citing company documents and unidentified people familiar with the matter. A final version of the app could be launched within six to nine months, it said.

"We provide a number of mobile apps in China, such as Google Translate and Files Go, help Chinese developers, and have made significant investments in Chinese companies like JD.com. But we don't comment on speculation about future plans," Google said in an emailed statement.

China has been the biggest hole in Google's global footprint since it largely withdrew from the country in 2010 by refusing to self-censor search content. Its stance later saw most of its services blocked, including Gmail and the Google Play app store.

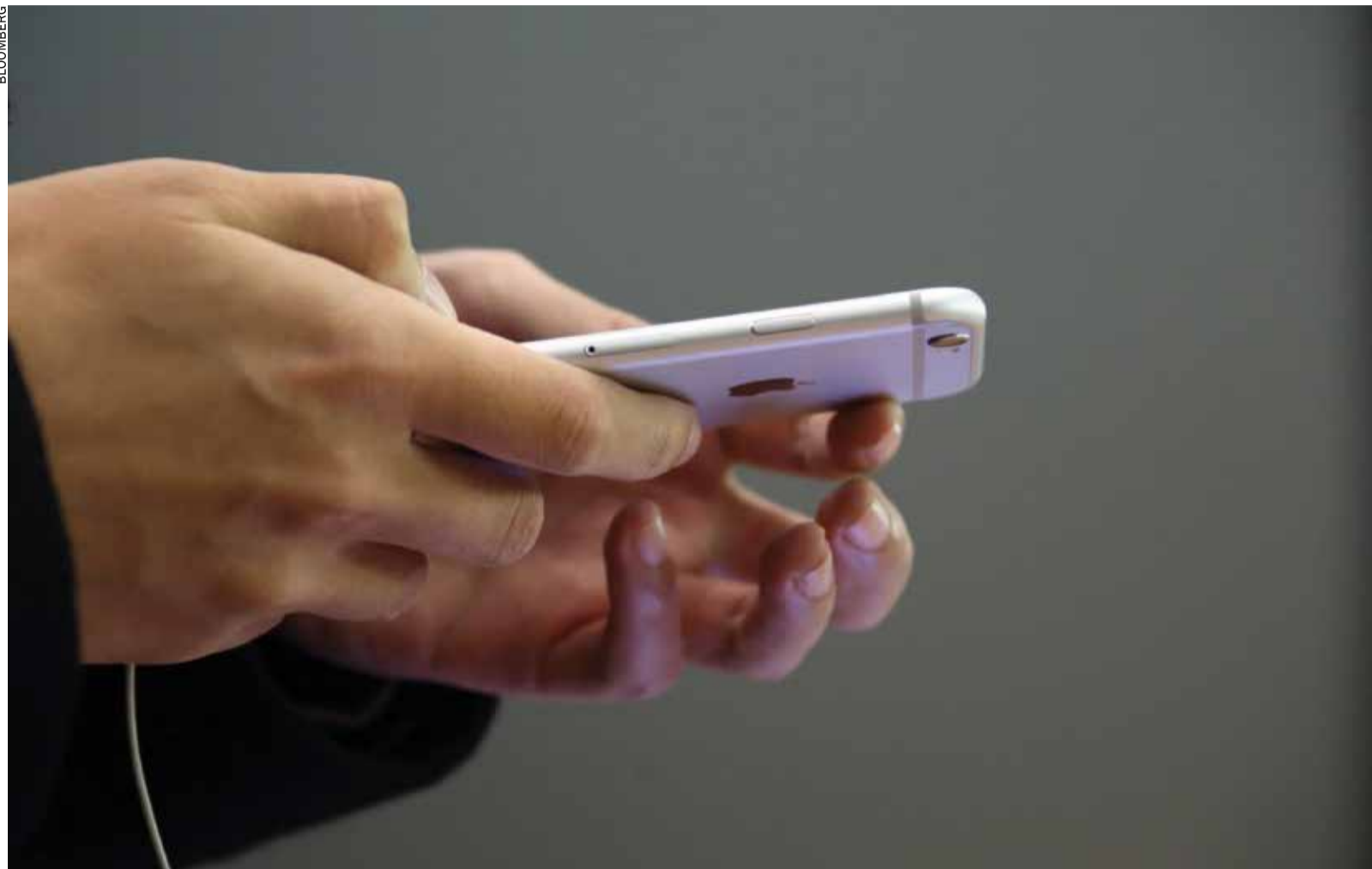
Offering a censored search app would mark a significant about-face for a company that began life with the motto "Don't Be Evil" and champions free communication on the internet.

In the company's absence, Baidu Inc. has strengthened its grip on search in China while Microsoft Corp.'s Bing operates in the country by censoring subjects and words. Facebook and Twitter are blocked outright. Shares in Baidu, which reported better-than-expected results a day earlier, fell as much as 3 percent in pre-market trade.

"Google is waking up to smell the coffee," said Andy Mok, founder and president of Beijing-based consultancy Red Pagoda Resources LLC. "Not being in China is a huge strategic mis-

MONEY TALKS

Google plans a censored search app for Chinese market



■ The app will automatically pick up on and block websites on Beijing's blacklist

calculation. The liberals of this world obviously will recoil at the idea."

In recent years, Google has made overtures to Beijing and

the country's tech industry, providing its TensorFlow AI products as well as investing in Chinese corporations and startups such as JD.com Inc.

The company decided to quicken the development of a censored app after Chief Executive Officer Sundar Pichai met with top government official Wang Huning in December 2017, the Intercept reported. Google insiders don't know if China will approve the app amid an escalating trade dispute with the U.S., but search head Ben Go-

mes told staff last month to be ready to launch on short notice.

Beijing bans outright criticism of the government and mention of sensitive terms such as the Tiananmen massacre. The Intercept reported that such terms would be censored in the planned app.

According to the Intercept, the app will automatically pick up on and block websites on Beijing's blacklist, known as the Great Firewall. Such banned sites will be removed from the first page of results, replaced

by a legal disclaimer disclosing the action. In some cases, no results will be displayed at all if a user types in a particularly sensitive query, the Intercept cited confidential documents as saying.

Google "faces an uphill battle in getting users who are now very accustomed to Baidu to switch," said Mark Natkin, managing director of Beijing-based Marbridge Consulting. "I am a bit surprised but it's indicative of how much sway the China market now has." **Bloomberg**

China promoting flying of national flags at religious events



OFFICIALLY recognized faith groups in China are promoting the flying of national flags at religious events amid a push by the ruling Communist Party to extend its ideological control over religious life.

Flying the flag would emphasize that the fates of the party, nation and individual are "bound tightly together," a statement viewed yesterday on the website of the party's United Front Work Depart-

ment that oversees such groups said.

"Raising the flag at religious venues abets the strengthening of religious figures' and religious believers' national and civic consciousness and creates a sense of the Chinese nation's community," said the statement, issued following a conference of groups representing Buddhists, Taoists, Protestants, Catholics and Muslims.

The officially atheistic party has tightened its grip over the country's five officially recognized religions this year, ordering especially that Christians and Muslims — religions considered foreign to China — work toward "sinosi-

zation."

Hundreds of thousands of Muslims in the northwestern region of Xinjiang have been confined to re-education camps, where they are told to repudiate Islam and their traditional Uighur culture and pledge fealty to the party. The authorities have removed crosses and other exterior identifiers from Christian churches and some have been demolished.

That was accompanied earlier this year by a campaign led by president and party leader Xi Jinping to promote the works of Karl Marx, who famously called religion the "opium of the people." **AP**



United Nations Command Chaplain U.S. Army Col. Sam Lee performs a blessing of sacrifice and remembrance on the 55 cases of remains believed to be U.S. servicemen killed during the Korean War

KOREAN WAR

Pyongyang provided just one dog tag with 55 sets of war remains

Robert Burns, Washington

WHEN North Korea handed over 55 boxes of bones that it said are remains of American war dead, it provided a single military dog tag but no other information that could help U.S. forensics experts determine their individual identities, a U.S. defense official said yesterday [Macau time].

The official, who discussed previously undisclosed aspects of the remains issue on condition of anonymity, said it probably will take months if not years to fully determine individual identities from the remains, which have not yet been confirmed by U.S. specialists to be those of American servicemen.

The official did not know details about the single dog tag, including the name on it, or whether it was even that of an American military member. During the Korean War, combat troops of 16 other United Nations member countries fought alongside U.S. service members on behalf of South Korea. Some of them, including Australia, Belgium, France and the Philippines, have yet to recover some of their war dead from North Korea.

The 55 boxes were handed over at Wonsan, North Korea last week and flown aboard a

U.S. military transport plane to Osan air base in South Korea, where U.S. officials catalogued the contents. After a repatriation ceremony at Osan yesterday, the remains will be flown to Hawaii where they will begin undergoing in-depth forensic analysis, in some cases using mitochondrial DNA profiles, at a Defense Department laboratory to attempt to establish individual identifications.

■ It probably will take months if not years to fully determine individual identities from the remains

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said last week that the return of the 55 boxes was a positive step but not a guarantee that the bones are American.

"We don't know who's in those boxes," he said. He noted that some could turn out to be those of missing from other nations that fought in the Korean War.

"They could go to Australia," he said. "They have missing, France has missing, Americans have. There's a whole lot of us. So, this is an international effort to bring closure for those families."

Vice President Mike Pence, the son of a Korean War combat veteran, is scheduled to fly to Hawaii for a ceremony, which the military calls an "honorable carry ceremony," marking the arrival of the remains on American soil at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Wednesday. This will mark a breakthrough in a long-stalled U.S. effort to obtain war remains from North Korea, but officials say it is unlikely to produce quick satisfaction for any of the families of the nearly 7,700 U.S. servicemen who are still listed as missing and unaccounted for from the 1950-53 Korean War.

North Korea provided the 55 boxes in a delayed fulfillment of a commitment its leader, Kim Jong Un, made to President Donald Trump at their Singapore summit on June 12. Although the point of the summit was for Trump to press Kim on giving up his nuclear weapons, their joint statement after the meeting included a single line on an agreement to recover "POW/MIA remains, including the immediate repatriation of those

already identified."

North Korea had told U.S. officials more than once in recent years that it had about 200 sets of U.S. war remains, although none was "already identified." It remains unclear whether the boxes provided on July 27 include all of the bones North Korea has accumulated over the years. In the past, the North has provided bones that in some cases were not human or that were additional bones of U.S. servicemen already identified from previously recovered remains.

The Pentagon estimates that of the approximately 7,700 U.S. MIAs from the Korean War, about 5,300 are unaccounted for on North Korean soil. Many were buried in shallow graves near where they fell on the battlefield; some others died in North Korean or Chinese-run prisoner of war camps.

Efforts to recover remains in North Korea have been fraught with political and other obstacles since the war ended on July 27, 1953. Between 1990 and 1994, North Korea unilaterally handed over 208 caskets to the U.S., which turned out to contain remains of far more than 208 individuals, although forensics specialists thus far have established 181 identities. In addition, a series of U.S.-North Korean recovery efforts, termed

"joint field activities," between 1996 and 2005 yielded 229 caskets of remains, of which 153 have been identified, according to the Pentagon.

The Trump administration, as part of the Singapore agreement, is pursuing discussions with North Korea on resuming those "field activities," for which past administrations have paid millions of dollars in donated vehicles, equipment, food and cash at the request of the North Koreans. The U.S. official who discussed aspects of the return of the 55 boxes on condition of anonymity said the U.S. is considering the possibility of including South Korea in future searches for remains in North Korea. It's not clear whether negotiations for such an arrangement are under way.

Richard Downes, whose father, Air Force Lt. Hal Downes, is among the Korean War missing, says this turnover of remains, having drawn worldwide attention, has the potential to put the U.S. back on track to finding and eventually identifying many more.

Downes, 70, was 3½ when his father's B-26 Invader went down on Jan. 13, 1952, northeast of Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. His family was left to wonder about his fate. Downes, now executive director of the Coalition of Families of Korean and Cold War POW/MIAs, which advocates for remains recovery, said he hopes the boxes that arrive in Hawaii on Wednesday prove to be a vanguard that leads to a fuller accounting for families.

"These 55 can set the stage for more to come," Downes said. AP

Britain looks to growing Asian markets for post-Brexit era

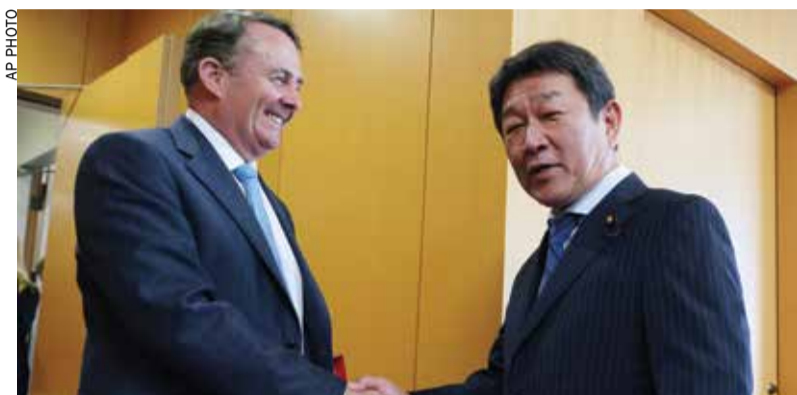
B RITAIN wants to align itself more closely with Asia's growing economies as it prepares to leave the European Union, Trade Secretary Liam Fox said yesterday.

The United Kingdom seeks to strike new trade pacts with countries that are becoming a larger part of its export market, he said, while also maintaining as much of its European trade as it can.

"This is where we're likely to see a lot of global growth coming over the next 10, 15 years," he told The Associated Press during an interview in Tokyo.

Fox was wrapping up a trip to the United States and Japan as Britain tries to launch negotiations on trade agreements with the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Asia for the post-Brexit era.

He appeared pleased with the strong backing he received from Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and key trade negotiator Toshimitsu Motegi for Britain's



Britain's Secretary of State for International Trade Liam Fox (left) and Japanese Minister of Economic Revitalization Toshimitsu Motegi during their meeting in Tokyo

aspirations to join an 11-country Pacific trade deal.

"It is as much support as we could have hoped to get at this point," he said.

President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the agreement, known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, but the 11 other countries have forged forward with it.

Fox said that Britain understands U.S. frustrations on trade issues such as Chinese steel

production and market access but favors multilateral solutions through the World Trade Organization and other forums.

"We think the use of unilateral tariffs, which can only result in countermeasures, increased costs, potential inflation and potential loss of jobs, is not the way forward to deal with the issue," he said.

He added: "As I've said often, in a trade war there are no victors, there are only casualties." AP



Jumpei Yasuda (right) in 2004

JAPAN

Gov't vows to rescue journalist believed held in Syria

JAPAN'S government said yesterday it's doing its utmost for the rescue of a Japanese journalist believed to be held in Syria after a video of a man appearing to be him was posted on the internet.

Freelance journalist Jumpei Yasuda was last heard from in Syria in June 2015.

Chief Cabinet Spokesman Yoshihide Suga told a regular news conference that he believed the man in the video was Yasuda. Suga refused to give further details about the rescue efforts.

"The biggest responsibility for

the government is to protect the safety of Japanese nationals," he said. "We are pursuing our utmost effort [for his rescue] through various information networks."

The man in the video released Tuesday said he was in harsh environment and needed an immediate rescue. The bearded man spoke in Japanese but said he's Korean named "Umaru." He cited the date as July 25, 2018, in the 20-second footage apparently filmed outdoors.

Several videos showing a man believed to be Yasuda have been also released in the past year.

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US-RUSSIA

Trump criticized for not leading effort to secure elections

Deb Riechmann, Washington

AS alarms blare about Russian interference in U.S. elections, the Trump administration is facing criticism that it has no clear national strategy to protect the country during the upcoming midterms and beyond.

Both Republicans and Democrats have criticized the administration's response as fragmented, without enough coordination across federal agencies. And with the midterms just three months away, critics are calling on President Donald Trump to take a stronger stand on an issue critical to American democracy.

"There's clearly not enough leadership from the top. This is a moment to move," said Maryland Sen. Chris Van Hollen, head of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. "I don't think they are doing nearly enough."

Various government agencies have been at work to ensure safe voting. The FBI has set up a Foreign Influence Task Force and intelligence agencies are collecting information on Russian aggression.

But Trump himself rarely talks about the issue. And in the nearly two years since Russians were found to have hacked into U.S. election systems and manipulated social media to influence public opinion, the White House has held two meetings on election security.

One was last week. It ran 30 minutes.

The meeting resulted in no new presidential directive to coordinate the federal effort to secure the election, said Suzanne Spaulding, former undersecretary of homeland security who was responsible for cyber security and protecting critical infrastructure.

Facebook uncovered 'sophisticated' efforts, possibly linked to Russia, to influence US politics on its platforms

"Trump's failure to take a leadership role on this, up until this [National Security Council] meeting, misses an opportunity to send a clear message to states that this is a very serious threat," Spaulding said.

"We did not get out of this NSC meeting a comprehensive, inter-agency strategy. It was each department and agency working in their silos."

Garrett Marquis, a spokesman for the NSC, said the government response is robust. He said NSC staff "leads the regular and continuous coordination of the

whole-of-government approach to addressing foreign malign influence and ensuring election security."

At a cybersecurity summit yesterday, Vice President Mike Pence said he was confident officials could prevent further meddling by foreign agents.

"We will repel any efforts to interfere in our elections," he said.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said government agencies are "doing a lot of good work, but nobody knows about it." He lamented Trump's contradictory statements about whether he accepts the U.S. intelligence assessment that Russia meddled in the 2016 presidential election.

"What I think he needs to do is lead this nation to make sure the 2018 election is protected," Graham said recently on CBS' "Face the Nation."

"He needs to be the leader of the movement — not brought to the dance reluctantly. So, I hope he will direct his government, working with Congress, to harden the 2018 election before it's too late."

The debate over safeguarding U.S. elections comes as evidence of cyber threats piles up. Facebook announced that it has uncovered "sophisticated" efforts, possibly linked to Russia, to influence U.S. politics on its platforms.

The company said it removed 32 accounts from Facebook and Instagram because they were involved in "coordinated" political behavior and appeared to

be fake. Nearly 300,000 people followed at least one of the accounts.

Earlier this month, Microsoft said it discovered that a fake domain had been set up as the landing page for phishing attacks by a hacking group believed to have links to Russian intelligence. A Microsoft spokesman said Monday that additional analysis has confirmed that the attempted attacks occurred in late 2017 and targeted multiple accounts associated with the offices of two legislators running for re-election. Microsoft did not name the lawmakers.

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., has said Russian hackers tried unsuccessfully to infiltrate her Senate computer network in 2017.

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., who is not running for re-election, told The Associated Press on Monday that someone contacted her office "claiming to be an official from a country."

A frequent critic of Russia, Shaheen said she didn't know if Moscow was behind the email received in November but had turned the matter over to the FBI.

Shaheen said another senator had been targeted besides McCaskill. "It's my understanding that there is, but I don't want to speak for other senators," she said. When asked if it was a Democratic senator, Shaheen nodded yes.

"People on both sides of the aisle have been beating the drum

for two years now about the need for somebody to be accountable for cybersecurity across the government," Shaheen said.

National Intelligence Director Dan Coats said U.S. intelligence officials continue to see activity from individuals affiliated with the Internet Research Agency, whose members were indicted by U.S. special counsel Robert Mueller. Coats said they create new social media accounts disguised as those of Americans, then use the fake accounts to drive attention to divisive issues in America.

In the Obama administration, synchronizing federal agencies' work on election security would have likely been the job of the White House cybersecurity coordinator. Trump's national security adviser, John Bolton, abolished the post in May to remove a layer of bureaucracy from the NSC flow chart.

Under the current structure, the point man for election security is Rear Adm. Douglas Fears. Trump tapped Fears in early June as his deputy assistant to the president and homeland security and counterterrorism adviser.

Fears oversees the election security and other portfolios of the NSC's Cybersecurity Directorate and coordinates the federal government's response to disasters.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen says cyber threats are "an urgent, evolving crisis."

"Our adversaries' capabilities online are outpacing our stove-piped defenses," Nielsen said yesterday. "In fact, I believe that cyber threats collectively now exceed the danger of physical attacks against us. This is a major sea change for my department and for our country's security." AP

AEROMEXICO CRASH

Stronger planes can mean fewer fatalities

PASSENGERS in plane crashes like yesterday's Aeromexico accident — in which no one died — have better chances of survival due to better aircraft construction and safety standards, experts say.

Air safety investigator Adrian Young, from the Netherlands-based consultancy To70, says that crash survival rates “are higher than they have ever been” in part because “airplanes are stronger than ever.”

People are now less likely to be trapped by collapsed seats and floors, especially if the plane comes to rest more or less level and the accident occurs on flat ground, as in the crash in northern Mexico. He told The Associated Press it was too early to speculate about the cause.

Other improvements in recent decades include interior materials that burn more slowly and don't give off poisonous gases, and better airport construction that eliminates obstacles near runways.

Young cautioned as well that “good fortune is crucial in any accident.”

Authorities said there were no fatalities among the 97 passengers and four crew members aboard the Embraer 190 jet. Rescuers took 49 people to hospitals, most with minor injuries.



The lack of a death toll recalls a 2008 crash landing by a British Airways Boeing 777 short of the runway at London's Heathrow Airport. All 152 passengers and crew survived.

In 2013, only 2 of 302 passengers from an Asiana 777 died when the plane crashed on landing in San Francisco.

To70's safety review for 2017 indicated the year was the safest

on record for airline passengers, with 13 lives lost in propeller-driven aircraft and no jets crashed in passenger service anywhere in the world.

Yesterday [Macau time], an Aeromexico jetliner taking off in a blustery storm smashed down into a nearby field but skidded to a stop virtually intact, and all 103 people aboard were able to escape advancing flames before

fire engulfed the aircraft.

Passengers expressed gratitude to be alive, but many were extremely shaken after the crash.

“It was really, really ugly,” said Lorenzo Nunez, a passenger from Chicago who fled the plane with his two sons and wife. “It burned in a question of seconds,” he told reporters, snapping his fingers for emphasis.

Survivors said the Embraer 190

plane burst into flames right after it hit the ground.

“We felt the flames coming quickly [...] there was a lot of smoke,” Jaquelin Flores told the newspaper El Sol.

After the accident, several passengers walked away from the plane before first responders arrived. Some sought medical help, while others rushed home to loved ones. **MDT/AP**

BREXIT

UK foreign secretary warns against messy EU divorce

Britain's foreign secretary warned anew against a “messy divorce” with the European Union that could poison future relations as he visited Austria yesterday, bringing his message to the country that holds the EU's rotating presidency.

Britain is due to leave the EU in March, but the two sides have not agreed on their future relationship and concerns are mounting that no deal will be reached in time. Differences persist over the terms of a new trade setup and how to regulate the border between Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland.

“We are very concerned that, as things stand at the moment, we are heading for ‘no deal’ by accident — a ‘no deal’ situation which would have a profound impact on the relations between Britain and the



Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl (right) welcomes Britain's Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt

EU countries for a generation,” Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said after meeting Austrian counterpart Karin Kneissl.

Hunt said Prime Minister Theresa May has made a “big choice” in seeking a close future re-

lationship with the EU, with the U.K.'s economy remaining closely integrated.

“There is a real risk of a messy divorce, which would be a huge geostrategic mistake,” he said.

Hunt, who took a simi-

lar message of appeal to Germany and France in recent days, dismissed suggestions that London is going over chief EU negotiator Michel Barnier's head to individual governments. Brexit negotiations are being led by the

EU's executive Commission.

“We don't want to negotiate with anyone other than the EU Commission; we recognize that that is the correct and legal thing to do,” he said. “But in the end, the outcome of those negotiations are a choice for European countries from whom the Commission gets its mandate.”

“We are very concerned that, as things stand at the moment, we are heading for ‘no deal’ by accident.”

JEREMY HUNT
UK FOREIGN SECRETARY

Hunt said that “time is very, very short” but a delay in Britain's departure

is “highly unlikely.”

Kneissl said there is “a high degree of cohesion” within the EU on Brexit talks, even though the bloc is divided on other issues such as migration. She said that “we have a pragmatic attitude” toward the negotiations.

Earlier this week, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and his newly-appointed British counterpart, Jeremy Hunt, held their first working meeting in Paris.

Hunt was appointed this month after the resignation of Boris Johnson over Prime Minister Theresa May's white paper detailing a Brexit plan that proposes a close relationship with the European Union.

Hunt said “it is time for the EU to engage with our proposals, or we potentially face the prospect of a no-deal by accident.”

France's foreign ministry said the meeting covered international issues, “notably Iran and the Sahel, as well as trans-Atlantic relations,” without mentioning Brexit. **AP**

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.macaoticket.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

CATALOGUE EXHIBITION IN CELEBRATION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF MACAO MUSEUM
 TIME: 10am-6pm (closed on Fridays)
 UNTIL: August 30, 2018
 VENUE: Kun lam Ecumenical Centre
 ADMISSION: Free
 ENQUIRIES: (853) 2875 1516

Offbeat

TWO DRIVERS CITED FOR GOING TOO SLOW UNDER NEW LAW

Idaho police are starting to enforce a new law targeting slow drivers using the passing lanes of highways.

Two drivers have been cited as of July 27 for driving too slowly in the passing lane since the law took effect July 1, the Idaho Press reported.

Idaho State Police have given warnings to three other drivers.

Most people expect the general traffic to stay on the right lane and leave the left lanes open for passing, said Lt. Shawn Staley.

"If vehicles are moving slower, it can cause accidents and crashes," he said.

The law doesn't specify how much time it should take for slow cars to move over to the right lane. Staley expects it should be within a normal and reasonable time, as determined by troopers.

Drivers who hold up traffic by going below the speed limit in the left lane could face a USD90 fine, Staley said.

"Guys will make traffic stops on it," Staley said. "But it would have to be fairly egregious."

State Rep. Lance Clow of Idaho Falls sponsored the bill. The Republican doesn't expect state troopers to actively look for slow drivers, but said they have a new tool if needed.

The law also allows drivers to go 15 mph (24 kph) over the speed limit on a two-lane road to pass a vehicle going below the speed limit.

It does not apply to multilane highways or Interstate 84, Staley said.

Those driving the speed limit on the left lanes will not be fined even if they "impede" drivers who want to speed, Staley said.

"If you're going the lawful rate of speed, another person shouldn't push up behind you," he said.

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

02 JUL - 04 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: Tom Cruise, Henry Cavill, Simon Pegg

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 118min



CHRISTOPHE ROBIN

ROOM 3

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

Director: Marc Forster

Starring: Ewan McGregor, Hayley Atwell, Bronte Carmichael

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 147min

this day in history



1965 RIVIERA FIRES FORCE CAMPERS TO FLEE

Thousands of British campers on holiday in the south of France have been forced to abandon their tents when forest fires threatened to engulf them.

At least 7,000 people, mostly holidaymakers, spent a sleepless night on the beach as fires swept the hills between the Provence resorts of Hyeres and St Tropez.

Narrow roads were clogged with cars trying to make their escape from the hills to the safety of the coast. There they were rescued by pleasure boats, steamers and four minesweepers requisitioned by the French authorities.

Most of the campers lost all their equipment and some no longer have their passports or money.

Mr Barnott from Hampstead in London told The Times newspaper of his escape to the beach from the Camp du Domaine site last night.

"The whole area was thick with smoke. We had to go to the water's edge to breathe and we put wet towels round our heads. People were kneeling on the sand praying and children were crying," he said.

The fire brigade chief at Le Lavandou has made assurances that there was no "further danger to life".

But last night two elderly residents of Borme-les-Mimosas died just yards from their home, overcome by smoke as they were trying to run from the flames.

Fire brigades and volunteers from all over the region are helping 1,000 troops and hundreds of gendarmes to control the fires with the aid of a dozen helicopters and Catalina "water bomber" aircraft.

But the hot wind known as the "mistral" is fanning the flames and making their job very difficult.

The blazes have destroyed farmland, campsites, villas and more than 30 square miles (77 sq kms) of forest land that could take years to recover.

Forest fires occur every summer in this part of France - usually as a result of arson or carelessly discarded cigarette ends, or a combination of the two.

But this year has been described as one of the most savage in the region's history. Now local residents are demanding serious action from the government to tackle the problem.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

It was another two days before the fires were finally brought under control.

But it was too late for the thousands of British campers who decided to cut short their holiday after returning to their sites to find total devastation. On 16 August the minister of agriculture, Edgard Pisani, visited the stricken region and announced he would press for various measures to prevent forest fires.

They included the provision of fire-breaks and walls to contain blazes, special fire-watchers in vulnerable dry areas, more water storage facilities on the roadsides and tougher penalties for those caught discarding cigarette ends.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Only projects could be all about pleasure. But unfortunately, those pesky legal details need to be taken into consideration.

Taurus April 20-May 20
You're getting lazy. The best way to ensure you'll get exercise is to put it on your work calendar.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21
Loose ends have needed tying up for too long. Nothing kills a mood like something hanging over your head.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22
With too much to do you'll be tempted to go into the office. But that would really rock your domestic boat.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Working hard and enjoying your days is a good combination. Others will agree with you, but not necessarily your boss.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22
True, a good wardrobe goes a long way in any career and you could certainly use some new duds.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22
Ah, you can finally breathe some life into your romance, hobbies or home life.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
It's surprisingly hard to enjoy the day today. Your private life requires more patience than work does.

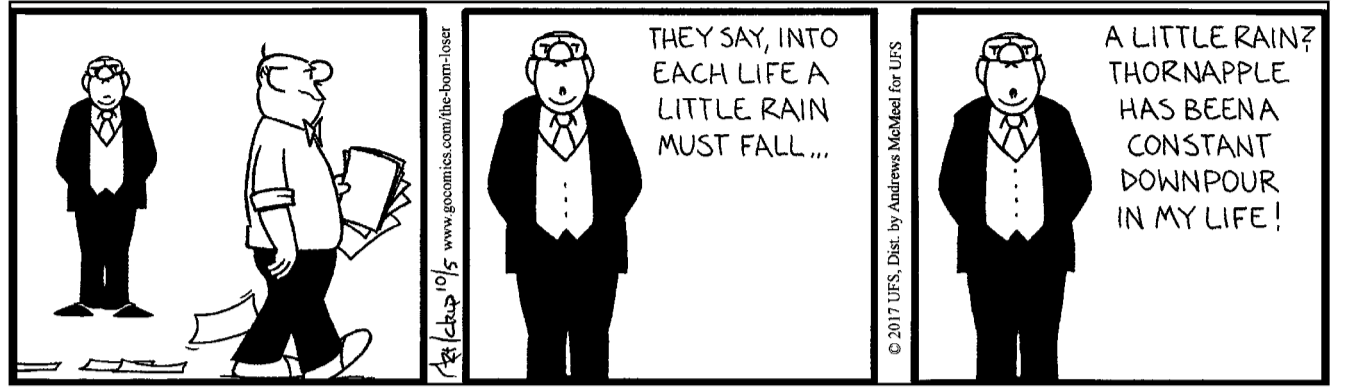
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Your days off, in a way, are preparation time for your work week. That should mean doing things that leave you refreshed and fulfilled.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You'll have to apply your work skills to your private life. If you're feeling restless, start some new projects.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Personal issues dominate the day, and that makes perfect sense for a Saturday. But these issues tie into your work concerns.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20
Your social life could use a shake-up, and you have nothing but time to give to it.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- The wolf ___ the door; 5- Black cuckoo; 8- Electrically versatile; 12- Dominion; 13- Foremost part; 15- Skater Lipinski; 16- Inter ___; 17- Greek marketplace; 18- Tel ___; 19- Asking; 22- Copycat; 23- Moray; 24- Scream; 26- Fine cloth; 29- Literary ridicule; 31- Modern address; 32- Romantic rendezvous; 34- So far; 36- Boot bottom; 38- Refrain in a children's song; 40- Former Hungarian premier Nagy; 41- ___ barrel; 43- Audacity; 45- Align the cross hairs; 46- Milk and egg drink; 48- Tranquil; 50- Apropos of; 51- Slender bar; 52- Singer Torme; 54- Not plausible; 61- Like the Gobi; 63- Swimming holes; 64- Nightclub of song; 65- Brief letter, paper money; 66- Greek goddesses of the seasons; 67- License plates; 68- Spoollike toy; 69- Hi-___; 70- Sports figure?; DOWN: 1- Kirkuk's country; 2- "Star Trek" role; 3- That's ___!; 4- Tantalizes; 5- Golden Fleece ship; 6- Lunch time, often; 7- Crucifix letters; 8- ___ snail's pace; 9- Soldier in the cavalry; 10- Faucet fault; 11- Spelunking site; 13- Lack of success; 14- Country singer Tucker; 20- Try out; 21- "___ grip!"; 25- Actress Virna; 26- Valuable collection; 27- Unlawfulness; 28- Giving the once-over; 29- Agitates; 30- Spine-tingling; 31- R&R provider; 33- This is what eyes do; 35- Pro ___; 37- Energy units; 39- Use too often; 42- Opponent; 44- Archer of myth; 47- Pizazz; 49- Decrees; 52- Numerous; 53- Switch ending; 55- Needy; 56- Passed-down knowledge; 57- ___, poor Yorick; 58- Sloop, yacht, or canoe; 59- Annika Sorenstam's org.; 60- Sunrise direction; 62- ___ volente (God willing);

Yesterday's solution: A crossword puzzle grid with the words from the previous section filled in.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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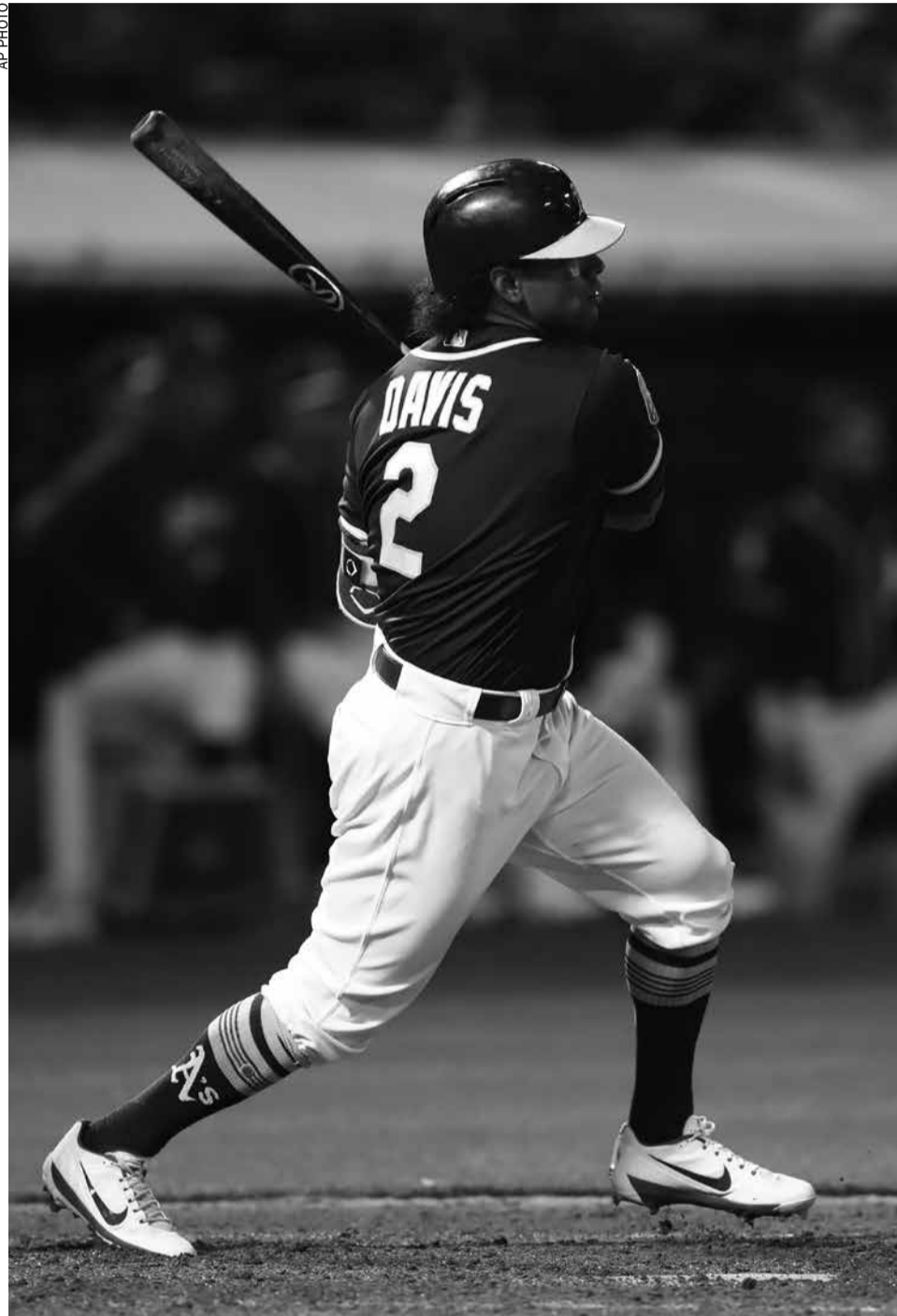
Email: amy@ktranz.com.mo

Tel: +853 2871 6081/2 Fax: +853 2871 6084

Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edf. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR

BASEBALL

Davis hits 29th home run, A's beat Blue Jays 6-2



Oakland Athletics' Khris Davis

Michael Wagaman, Oakland

UNABLE to land a starter at the trade deadline, the Oakland Athletics got a big lift from one they already had and gave manager Bob Melvin a milestone victory.

They also moved one game closer to Seattle in the race for the AL wild card.

Trevor Cahill had six strikeouts in six innings, Khris Davis homered among his three hits, and the A's beat the Toronto Blue Jays 6-2 yesterday [Macau time].

Cahill (3-2) overcame an uneven night and allowed two runs on five hits. The right-hander has won consecutive starts for the first time since May 2017.

"Early on I'm not sure his command was as good as it normally is but he got better and better as he went along," Melvin said. "Next thing you know he gives us six innings, and six innings makes it a lot easier on us."

Cahill yielded a two-out RBI single to Kendrys Morales in the first and Justin Smoak's leadoff homer in the fourth but got a pair of double plays while giving Oakland's bullpen a break.

"Just finding a groove," Cahill said. "You never know what your stuff's going to be like and you

just try to make adjustments. I was able to do that a little bit going deeper into the game."

Yusmeiro Petit, Jeurys Familia and Blake Treinen retired three batters apiece to complete the six-hitter.

Matt Olson had two RBIs, Mark Canha doubled twice and stole home and Marcus Semien added two hits.

Melvin celebrated his 600th win as manager of the A's — tied for third-most in franchise history behind Connie Mack (3,582) and Tony LaRussa (798).

"One more than 599," Melvin said.

Oakland moved within one game of Seattle for the second wild card. The A's are 29-10 since June 16, the best record in baseball.

Despite being in the thick of a playoff race, Oakland stayed quiet as the trade deadline passed. There were reports early in the day linking the A's to a trade with Detroit but nothing materialized.

That was fine with Cahill. "It might not be the big-name guys or the big-price guys like some other teams have but with our offense and our bullpen, if we all just do our part we'll be fine," he said.

Justin Smoak homered for Toronto, which has lost six of eight.

Olson's two-run single

off Sam Gaviglio (2-4) in the first put the A's up 2-1.

"(Gaviglio) was off," Toronto manager John Gibbons said. "He's a control guy and when he's not throwing strikes, pinpointing it, he's going to get hit around a little bit. We've seen that before."

After Davis hit his 29th homer leading off the third, Canha and Semien pulled off a double steal with Canha sliding into home to beat the throw from second baseman Devon Travis.

TULO HOPING TO PLAY: Toronto shortstop Troy Tulowitzki made a rare appearance with the team in Oakland and said he still hopes to play this season. Tulowitzki underwent surgery on both of his heels in the offseason and has been rehabbing since then. "I'm doing better, just not 100 percent yet," Tulowitzki said. "There's good days, there's bad days."

TRAINER'S ROOM: Blue Jays: 2B Lourdes Gurriel Jr. will be sidelined indefinitely after being diagnosed with a left high ankle sprain and bruised knee. Gurriel has a franchise record 11 consecutive multi-hit games. Newly acquired reliever Ken Giles isn't expected to join the team until Thursday in Seattle.

Athletics: RHP Daniel Gossett will undergo Tommy John surgery, making him the fourth Oakland pitcher to have the reconstructive surgery this year. Gossett was 0-3 with a 5.18 ERA in five starts this season. ... RHP Andrew Triggs (right arm nerve irritation) has begun a throwing program. **AP**

ATHLETICS

Travel chaos as athletes stranded, African champs delayed

THE start of the African track and field championships in Nigeria was delayed yesterday after hundreds of athletes were stranded at an airport, some for three days when they were left to sleep on the floor as they waited for a connecting flight to the host city.

The Confederation of African Athletics said only a small number of events scheduled for the first day of competition in Asaba in Nigeria's southern Delta state would go ahead, and they will be moved back

from the morning to the afternoon.

The majority of the events scheduled for Day 1 will take place later in the week after the chaos at Lagos' international airport.

The CAA said there had been "organizing problems" as angry and exhausted athletes and team officials were stuck in Lagos amid flight cancellations and long delays. Some were still there yesterday.

Pictures posted on social media showed Africa's top athletes sleeping on the

airport floor surrounded by their luggage. Some used suitcases for pillows as they slept next to airline check-in desks.

Members of the Kenyan team spent 48 hours at the airport and threatened to quit the championships and go home before they all finally arrived in Asaba yesterday.

"It's not being rude [...] it's being real. Nigeria is a poor, poor country," Nicholas Bett, Kenya's 400-meter hurdles world champion in 2015, wrote on his official Facebook page.

Moroccan high jumper Rhizlane Siba, the 2014 African champion, said she and her teammates were stranded for three days waiting for a flight and claimed they were given little help by organizers.

"We slept the first night at the airport. And then we slept the second night at the hotel," she said in a video posted on Twitter earlier. "They claimed that we had a flight coming today. We've spent the whole day in the airport waiting for a flight but

when some of the Nigerian team came in, they took our spots and went to Asaba. We are stranded in Lagos. We haven't trained for three days, and we haven't eaten properly in two days."

Officials at the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria said they were not responsible for the problems and it was a matter for airlines and the African championships organizers.

Kayode Thomas, spokesman for Asaba's organizing committee, declined to comment to The Associated Press and said the organizers would instead issue a media release later.

The stranded athletes included South Africa's Olympic 800-meter champion Caster Semenya and long jump

world champion Luvo Manyonga. The South African team also spent three days in Lagos.

IAAF president Sebastian Coe is in Nigeria for the event, which was initially meant to be held in Lagos but was moved to Asaba, a city that has no previous experience of international sports events.

"Whoever gave Asaba the rights to host this year's African athletics championships must see a doctor," Kenyan journalist Muigai Kiguru said. He was stranded with the Kenyan team.

Organizers put on a colorful welcoming ceremony for Coe in Asaba on Tuesday as the problems continued in Lagos.

Athletes from around a dozen countries were affected. **AP**

opinion

Girl About Globe

Linda Kennedy



IS BALJIU THE NEW APEROL SPRITZ?

World Baijiu Day is coming up soon. If you're reading this outside China, baijiu is a powerful spirit. The name means 'white liquor'. It's a unit through which social status is earned, as the more baijiu you drink, the more impressive your toast boast. High-end baijiu is especially popular – it's a bigwig's swig.

Until now, I'd thought of baijiu's future being within China, as the market of thirsty mainlanders is enormous, and growing online. Sure, I'd taken note of the industry for its amusing architecture: one brand, Wuliangye, has a building shaped like a baijiu bottle – a rare example of a property asset being liquid in China.

But beyond the People's Republic, I felt baijiu faced too many challenges. Such as anyone being able to spell it. I could only foresee a global elevation should blood alcohol level ever be judged too confusing to determine sobriety. The new legal test would be to spell baijiu. If you could do that, you would be fine; you'd passed the baijiu-alyser.

But things, it seems, have been changing. Not only is there World Baijiu Day, Britain has had a baijiu cocktail week. And a company called 'Bye-Joe', in the US, offers a cocktail named a 'cup of joe', which blends coffee and baijiu. ('ByeJoe' gets round the spelling issue; they also have an office in Shang-Hi.)

Could baijiu become the new cool drink? The next Aperol? Time for a muse about this booze.

To precisely model itself on Aperol, an issue immediately crops up. Baijiu Spritz sounds like what older men do on pavements in Beijing, in content and action.

To be a cool cocktail, it needs colour. Aperol is apricot tinged with tian. What about 'Baijiu Bleu' – mixed with Blue Curacao? Have an extra strong version, 'Baijiu Taboo'.

Or is this aiming in the wrong direction, and baijiu should be taking a pot shot at hot shot tequila? Tequila is widely considered the top hangover manufacturer, but there is precedent for a lesser-known alcohol challenging and succeeding. Prosecco. It's been squaring up to champagne to be the big bubble for a while.

There is much to learn here from a little study – and reasons to think the Chinese government could even get behind the baijiu-ification of the world's bar menus. Earlier this year, it was reported the U.K. had reached 'peak prosecco', when sales growth slowed from double digits to 5%. (Prosecco no longer sees double, though you still will.)

With billions of yuan worth of baijiu sold in China every year, one might well ask: could China soon reach 'peak baijiu'? It's at such moments that the Chinese government tends to come up with solutions. The Belt and Road initiative, for example. Many see this as China out-sourcing its desire to build new stuff, given they've all the vanity bridges and empty towns anyone could need at home. So why not turn the Old Silk Road into a giant construction site? That's the Belt and Road, baby.

Out-sourcing baijiu demand could become a part of this. Every construction contract might be required to include a British-style pub called 'The Belt and Road', which would serve only baijiu.

World Baijiu Day is August 9th. The eighth month, ninth day because 8.9 is 'ba jiu' in Mandarin and like 'baijiu'. This presents another promotional possibility, should Western bars be persuaded to add numbers to their drink menus, like some Chinese restaurants. 'I'll have an 8.9, mate'. It skips the potential fiasco of articulating baijiu, which gets harder as the night goes on.

Maybe 8.9 Spritz will be the new cool drink.

THE BUZZ GERMANY: NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH IMMIGRANT ROOTS RISES

Official data show that the number of people in Germany with immigrant roots increased 4.4 percent last year to nearly 19.3 million.

The Federal Statistical Office said yesterday that 51 percent of those people were German citizens. It defines a person with an immigrant background as someone who either wasn't born a German citizen or has at least one parent who wasn't.

The largest groups were 2.8 million peo-

ple with Turkish, 2.1 million with Polish, 1.4 million with Russian and 1.2 million with Kazakh roots.

The report, based on an annual microcensus, didn't give a reason for last year's increase and didn't collect details on people in communal shelters. Germany saw large numbers of refugees arrive in 2015-2016 but that influx has slowed.

Germany's population is around 82 million.

DARING HEIST

Thieves steal Swedish royal jewels, escape by speedboat



A discarded bicycle near the scene of a robbery at the Strangnas Cathedral, in Strangnas, Sweden

Jan M. Olsen & Barry Hatton, Copenhagen

THIEVES in Sweden walked into a small town's medieval cathedral in broad daylight and made off with priceless crown jewels dating back to the early 1600s before escaping by speedboat, police said yesterday.

Two men vanished after the heist into a vast patchwork of lakes around Strangnas, 60 kilometers west of the capital Stockholm on Tuesday afternoon, police said.

The thieves snatched two gold crowns and an orb made for King Karl IX and Queen Kristina in the daring robbery. One of the crowns is encrusted with precious stones. The stolen items were on display at an exhibition in the cathedral, and visitors were inside at the time.

"The alarm went off when the burglars smashed the security glass and stole the artifacts," Catharina Frojd, a spokeswoman for the 14th-century Strangnas cathedral, told The Associated Press.

The church wrote on its website that the stolen items were kept "in accordance with the prevailing safety regulations in locked and alarmed displays in the cathedral." It gave no further details.

Police sent out a helicopter and boat to hunt for the thieves but found nothing. Authorities said nobody was hurt in the robbery, but didn't provide further details.

The alarm went off when the burglars smashed the security glass and stole the artifacts

Tom Rowell, a visitor who was eating lunch outside, said he saw two men running from the cathedral toward a small nearby jetty where a motorboat was moored.

"The two men hurriedly jumped on board and it sped off," Rowell said, adding that they "appeared non-Nordic." He didn't explain further.

The men appeared to have escaped using two black women's bicycles – which they likely stole ahead of the heist – to race to a waiting boat, said police spokesman Stefan Dangardt.

While the items are of great historic and cultural value, police expressed doubt whe-

ther the burglary would bring the perpetrators financial gain.

The stolen items are "impossible to sell" because of their uniqueness and high visibility, Maria Ellior of the Swedish police's National Operations Department told Swedish news agency TT.

The theft would be logged at Interpol, enabling an international search, TT said.

Strangnas is a small, quiet town with a population of about 13,000. It is popular with Stockholm commuters and with tourists, who come to see the cathedral and a street that has been called the prettiest in Sweden.

The Gothic-style cathedral, built between 1291 and 1340, is in the heart of the town. The cathedral's red-brick tower with a black top can be seen from kilometers around.

The cathedral was closed yesterday, and a grassy area by the jetty was cordoned off as police inspected the ground for clues. Police also questioned witnesses who were inside the church at the time of the theft and people outside who saw the suspects get away.

Rowell, the eyewitness, is getting married at the cathedral next weekend. "It's despicable that people would steal from a holy building," he said. AP

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	20-40 Good	
High Density Residential Area	20-40 Good	
Ambient	20-40 Good	

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

IRAN's parliament announced yesterday it would hold a special session to question President Hassan Rouhani about the plummeting currency and struggling economy.



UAE The United Arab Emirates launched a three-month visa amnesty program yesterday, hoping to resolve a Catch-22 for foreign workers who are fined daily for overstaying their permits but prevented from leaving until they pay the penalties.

SYRIA Russian President Vladimir Putin's envoy to Syria said that an agreement with Israel that includes Russian guarantees ensures that Iran-backed fighters will remain more than 80 kilometers away from Syria's frontier with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

TURKEY's state-run news agency says Kurdish rebels have detonated an improvised explosive device on a road in southeast Turkey, killing a woman and her infant child.

SERBIA Police say two migrants have been found shot dead in the village of Dobrinca, some 40 kilometers from the capital city.

BRITAIN wants to align itself more closely with Asia's growing economies as it prepares to leave the European Union, Trade Secretary Liam Fox said yesterday. More on p13, 15



PERU Two passenger trains crashed near the popular Peruvian tourist destination of Machu Picchu, injuring 10 people, five of them seriously, authorities said.

VENEZUELA's fractured opposition coalition is advancing in its efforts to unite around a new plan of action as the country's economic crisis deepens, a key anti-government leader says.