



### CHINESE VICE-PREMIER MEETS LAWMAKERS

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### BEISHAN JAZZ FESTIVAL RETURNS

A total of 17 jazz musicians from five bands will take part in this year's edition, which has an extension in Hengqin

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### IKEA PLANS TO EXPAND TO MACAU

The Swedish furniture giant plans to expand to about a dozen new markets in the coming years, including Macau

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## WORLD BRIEFS



**CHINA** is "not aware of the situation" surrounding reports that the wife of the detained Chinese former president of Interpol has been threatened, a foreign ministry spokesman said yesterday. Lu Kang told reporters that it would be "natural" for Chinese consular officials to contact the wife of Meng Hongwei, who vanished after traveling to China late last month from France, where Interpol is headquartered. More on p10



**TAIWAN** President Tsai Ing-wen called on China yesterday not to be a "source of conflict" and pledged to boost the island's defenses against Beijing's military threats. In a National Day address, Tsai said the best way to defend Taiwan was to "make it indispensable and irreplaceable to the world," while remaining non-confrontational in its attitude toward China. More on p11

**HONG KONG's** Securities and Futures Commission said it is preparing to charge 60 companies and individuals as investigations into what enforcement chief Tom Atkinson called "nefarious networks" come to a head. He spoke at the Refinitiv Pan Asian Regulatory Summit in Hong Kong yesterday. More on backpage



## HKSAR POLICY ADDRESS

# Artificial islands proposed to ease housing crisis

P11



## JOE CHAN

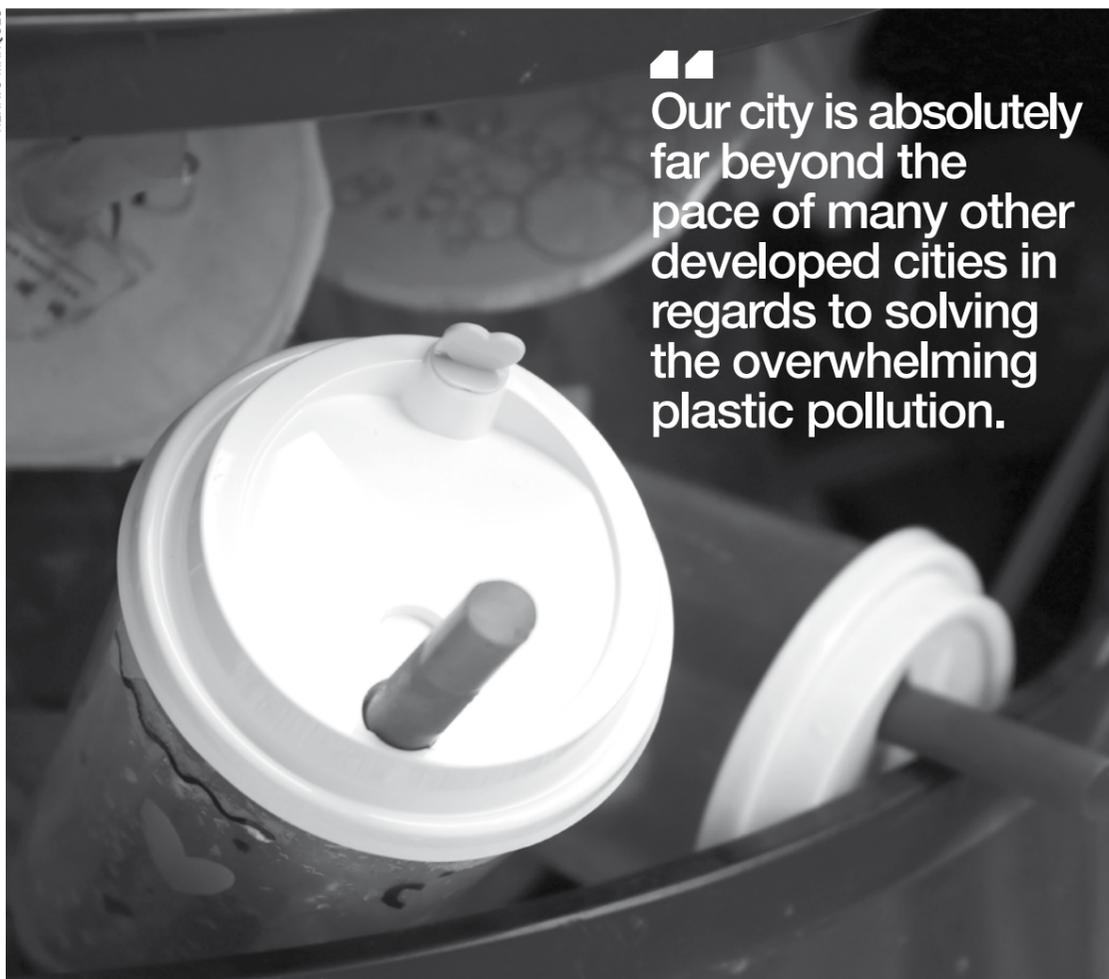
# 'So far, there is no education about plastic pollution'

P2 MDT INTERVIEW





RENATO MARQUES



Our city is absolutely far beyond the pace of many other developed cities in regards to solving the overwhelming plastic pollution.

**Q&A** JOE CHAN  
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

## ‘So far, there is no education about plastic pollution’

Lynzy Valles

A call to halt single-use plastics has been circulating online in the region as Macau saw a 2.9 percent increase in its daily solid waste last year.

On Aug. 30, a group of residents attained some 4,700 signatures in a campaign against the use of plastic bags, noting that the government needs to consider long-term investments for the environment protection system in the city.

Thus, environmental activists are continually urging the government to encourage the use of less plastic.

Supporting arguments include the fact that only less than 20 percent of plastic is recycled, while the rest is incinerated.

Meanwhile, it was only last month that the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) said it was considering a law that would levy a charge on plastic bags in the city, which is now in the legislative stage.

Joe Chan, environmental activist and president of the Macau Green Students Union, told the Times that it is about time for the government to take action on this matter, citing the city's long legislation process.

**Macau Daily Times (MDT) - How far are we from implementing the ban on single-use plastic?**

**Joe Chan (JC)** - It takes more than six years for our government to go through the legislation process of taxing plastic bags. Assuming that banning disposable plastic waste in our daily lives is very complicated, the whole process should take more than 10 years. That's why we need to start doing investigations [on our daily consumption patterns] and public education. Without the awareness of citizens, nothing will happen. But so far, there is no education about plastic pollution or any timetable for legislation from the government.

**MDT - So we lack education on this matter?**

**JC** - Yes. Everyday, many citizens use disposable plastic containers, [and] more and more fruits and vegetables are packed in unnecessary plastic film. There are no advertisements or any education from the government to inform people about the harmful effects or environmental impacts of using too much plastic.

**MDT - Do you think the city has effective measures to solve this problem?**

**JC** - Our city is absolutely far beyond the pace of many other developed cities in solving the overwhelming plastic pollution. As more and more plastic waste is created every year, the recycling rate is less and less. It only means that our government is just ignoring the off-track situation. They are trying to solve the problem by building a bigger incinerator in future, leaving this bomb for the government in the next term.

**MDT - What do you think is the most efficient way to tackle this issue?**

**JC** - There are three directions we should currently follow. First is to start to arouse public concern about plastic pollution by multimedia. Secondly, it is to advocate for the substitution of plastics at many public events, including food festivals, expos, or any activity that is held by government or big enterprises. In the end, legislation is the final key process. Even though we may not have it in the short term, at least we can keep proposing it in our agenda or by use executive law from the government to restrict the sale of plastic bottles in vending machines or to ban the most toxic plastic waste product.

**MDT - There is a call to stop using plastics in fruit wraps in the market on social media. What role do enterprises and gaming operators play in this?**

**JC** - From their point of view,

packing the fruits or vegetables with plastic may prolong the duration of selling, and since the appearance of package looks modern, they are selling the items at a higher price. So it won't be easy for them to stop the trend. Customers play a key role in this issue. When people realize the truth that packages with plastic may contaminate the fruits or vegetables as high temperatures during transportation results in the release of POC from the plastic material. They may not still believe it, based on the appearance of the packaging. Hence, this concept can only be instilled [in customers] through public education.

**MDT - Does most of the city's waste come from gaming operators?**

**JC** - According to global trends about the principle of "polluter paid," all casinos and hotels that are consuming more resources or creating more waste should be responsible for their environmental impact. Some of them have started a very astonishing green program to cut down their waste, but they just do it as their social duty. The government should have more eco-friendly policies for any casino or hotel to be encouraged to go green. For example, signing a new exclusive contract in future could be a requirement, or the government can provide a tax reduction for motivation.

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# Beijing endorses work of Macau assembly

**T**HE Chinese central government fully endorses the work of the Legislative Assembly (AL), according to Chinese vice-premier Han Zheng.

Yesterday during a meeting with AL's delegation, Han mentioned Beijing's endorsement of Macau's legislative body.

"The previous Legislative Assembly firmly supported the Chief Executive and the [Macau] SAR government in administering Macau in accordance with the law. It has played an important role in comprehensively and accurately implementing the One Country Two Systems policy, especially at advancing the system of the SAR established by the Constitution and the Basic Law," said Han.

"We have also fully comprehended that it [Macau AL] has made active contributions to the development of Macau's democracy, to the rule of law and to social progress," said Han.



Chinese vice-premier Han Zheng (second from right) meets with local lawmakers

The meeting between Han and Macau's lawmakers, which took place yesterday morning at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, lasted for approximately one hour.

This is also the third time since the handover that the Macau legislation body has

visited mainland China officials.

According to a report by TDM, AL chairman Ho Iat Seng said that being received by the vice premier of the State Council was a great encouragement to all members of the Macau AL.

Han also brought up three prospects for the Macau AL: to protect and implement the constitutional responsibility of the Basic Law and the constitution, and to resolutely safeguard national sovereignty; to respect the executive-led system; and to have Macau find its own position, in terms of co-operating with the country's development after the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

On Tuesday, a total of 29 lawmakers, including Ho, departed from Macau for a three-day visit to Beijing and Tianjin.

Besides meeting Chinese leaders in Beijing, the lawmakers will also meet with Tianjin People's Congress.

Prior to departure, lawmaker Song Pek Kei expressed that Macau could benefit by learning from mainland China's "rather advanced" legislation system.

Other lawmakers hope to know more about the Greater Bay Area projects. **JZ**

## Free visa to Myanmar for MSAR passport holders

Holders of the Macau SAR passport can now enter the Republic of the Union of Myanmar without a visa. This new measure is an enhancement of the visa-on-arrival privilege granted previously by the Republic of Union of Myanmar, and has been put into use on a trial basis for one year starting from October 1. According to the Identification Services Bureau, local passport holders can enter the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for the purpose of tourism through Yangon International Airport, Mandalay International Airport, Nay Pyi Taw International Airport, Yangon International Seaport, Myanmar-Thailand Land Border Checkpoints and Myanmar-India Land Border Checkpoints for a maximum stay of 30 days.

## ILCM to hold Melbourne Cup brunch on November 6

The International Ladies Club of Macau (ILCM) will hold its annual event to celebrate the running of the Melbourne Cup race at Splash Four Seasons Cotai. Known as "the race that stops the nation," the event organized by ILCM "is both social and civic, as it raises much needed funds for the many charities that look to the ILCM for support," a statement issued by the non-profit social organization reads. Tickets for the Nov. 6 event are MOP595 per person, or a table of 10 for MOP5500. Corporate sponsorships and raffle prizes are still being accepted, the organizers stated.

AD

# Oktoberfest Macau at MGM 2018

The annual Oktoberfest Macau at MGM will once again rock the town in October this year. To mark its 10th anniversary, the event will take place at MGM's newest resort hotel, MGM COTAI, with a more spacious environment for bigger crowds. Guests can experience the most authentic bierfest outside of Germany in the 11-day Bavarian party.

With Macau celebrating the "2018 Macao Year of Gastronomy," MGM aims to enhance the city's gastronomic development with its cultural and entertainment elements as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy. Once again, this year's event will be partnered with the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Hong Kong and the German Macau Business Association, and will be supported by the Macao Government Tourism Office.

In the past nine years, MGM has welcomed 127,473 beer lovers with 123,750 liters of beer and nearly 40,000 kilograms of roasted pork knuckles and chickens. MGM captures the essence of the festivities through the traditional German food and beverage, entertainments and decorations, delivering the most authentic Bavarian party atmosphere to Macau. The beloved Hogl Fun Band will once again fly over from Munich for several nights of dynamic live performances. Löwenbrau, one of the six genuine German Oktoberfest brews, is definitely one of the highlights. With the traditional German gastronomies, Bavarian patterned beer tent and ceiling wreaths, as well as a wide range of carnival game booths, all of these will craft Oktoberfest Macau at MGM a guaranteed fun and alive event that is just like the Munich Oktoberfest.



MGM is hosting Oktoberfest from October 18 to 29 (excluding 21).

We are giving away a total of 10 sets of entry tickets and F&B coupons.

Readers will have to correctly answer today's question for a chance at winning.

Each prize set includes:

Oktoberfest entry tickets x 2	\$340
F&B coupons	\$100
<b>Total set value</b>	<b>\$440</b>

### Today's Question:

Who is partnering with this year's event?

Please email your answer to: [oktoberfest2018@macaudailytimes.com](mailto:oktoberfest2018@macaudailytimes.com) along with your name and contact details

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Oktoberfest Macau at MGM October 18 - 29, 2018 (excluding October 21)  
6pm - 12am MOP170

Industry Day October 20, 2018 11am - 3pm MOP100  
Family Day October 28, 2018 11am - 3pm MOP170



# Beishan Jazz Festival to kick off tomorrow

**T**HE Beishan Jazz Festival 2018 will be held from tomorrow till Sunday at the Hengqin International Advertising Creative Industry Base, bringing in a total of 17 jazz musicians from five bands.

Themed “amour,” the first performance of the festival will kick off at Central Plaza of Inno Valley in Hengqin tomorrow at 6:30 p.m. before it returns to Beishan Village on Sunday.

Norwegian jazz group Espen Berg Trio, labeled “the biggest and most important musical discovery in the first half of 2016” by Jazz Japan, will be the main performance, as cited in a report by Hengqin Record.

B’s Bees, a Canadian quartet whose first album reached number one on several jazz radio charts in Canada, will also perform, along with jazz trio Dusha Connection from Vienna, who will intertwine the language of modern jazz with archetypical Balkan folk songs.



Meanwhile Kari Ikonen Trio, an emerging Finnish piano band that has been active since 2012, will also showcase their music during the festival.

The band has also played in festivals in Europe, Japan, South Korea and Russia amongst others, following the acclaim from their albums “Bright and Beauteous Tales” and “Offbeat Stories.”

The festival is part of the

“Beishan East-West Cultural Hub” project, which is aimed at providing a platform for arts, entertainment and educational training, as well as boosting trade and tourism in the old Beishan Village in Zhuhai.

According to a press statement issued by the Beishan Music Festival Organizing Committee, over 200 musicians from over 50 countries have al-

ready been invited to this festival in the past nine years.

The festival is promoted by the Asian Artists Federation as one of the three major jazz festivals in China.

Organized by Zhuhai Hengqin Bar Technology Co., Ltd. and Hengqin Development Co., Ltd., the festival is a music and cultural brand founded by private enterprises.

“The team is also actively exploring how to use folk [to build] a bridge to strengthen multiculturalism. The integration of exchanges drives the development of regional cultural and creative industries,” the organizer said in a statement.

It is also believed that the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge would be a way to increase the “international cultural atmosphere” for Hengqin, as it would contribute to the development of Hengqin’s cultural and creative industries.

## CRIME

# 78-year-old man suspected of sexual assault of children aged 8 and 9

**A** local 78-year-old course instructor has been arrested after having sexually assaulted two female minor students, aged 8 and 9 years old. The two victims are sisters.

The suspect, surname Chan, was an instructor and in charge of a music and painting interest class in a club located at the Santo António area.

According to the Judiciary Police (PJ), the two girls started attending Chan’s class in April.

Since the beginning of the summer vacation, Chan started sexually assaulting the sisters when they arrived early to classes or left classes late.

Frightened, the two victims did not tell their parents about Chan’s sexual advances until September 25.

On October 4, PJ took Chan from his workplace

to the police station for investigation. Chan denied the accusations and claimed that he was only adjusting the studying position of the student, claiming that it was normal physical contact. He also said that he tried his best to avoid unnecessary physical contact.

PJ has already transferred case to the Public Prosecutions Office with Chan charged of sexual assault of children.

PJ is still investigating the existence of other victims.

In May, a 30-year-old male worker who had been working at the D. José da Costa Nunes kindergarten since 2015 was accused of sexually abusing children under his care after the parents of three children came forward to accuse the Philippines national of “inappropriately touching” the children.

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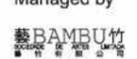
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# Flood barriers construction in Inner Harbor only after 2021

**T**HE construction of flood barriers (levees) in low-lying areas of the city and namely the Inner Harbor, was previously announced by the government as a measure to prevent some storm surge flooding in the area are to be built after 2021. This has been acknowledged by the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) during a meeting held with Macau's Inner Harbor Friends Association to gauge the flood prevention works that have been done in the area.

According to a statement issued by DSAMA, the bureau has concluded the analysis and scientific research on the improvement measures that can be implemented to prevent floods, concluding that such measures include "the installation of over 10 drain valves on the lower walls in the Inner Harbor," which would be open to facilitate faster draining of water that has accumulated after a storm surge.



DSAMA said that the installation of such valves "is possible [...] during the second semester of next year."

As for the flood barriers which are to be built in between piers number 23 and 26, DSAMA said "it can only be built after the conclusion of the construction

works of the 'Box-Culvert' of the Rainwater Collection and Pumping Station of the Northern area of the Inner Harbor." The work is expected finish during 2021, reaffirming that the project is included on the "mid-term measures."

Citing the same research

and analysis ordered by the government, the bureau said that studies concluded that the solution of deepening the riverbed in the area would not contribute to solving the problem of flooding.

"According to the results,

in the case of deepening of the Inner Harbor [riverbed], the level of the tide will raise and will change the scale of movement of the tides in the Hung Wan channel and in the Inner Harbor area, causing more tides to move to the Inner Harbor," DSAMA stated, adding "the growth of tides volume in the Inner Harbor will be superior to the volume of the possible excavation, so the level of water in the Inner Harbor will not decrease, but will increase." RM

## ONE SHOT NEWS



Francis Tam, chairman of the board of directors of Parafuturo de Macau Investment Limited, speaks at this week's unveiling ceremony of a co-working space in Macau. The Macau Young Entrepreneur Incubation Center is the first registered national co-working space in the Hong Kong and Macau regions.

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## Test run of HKZM bridge deemed a success

**T**HREE days of test runs on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau bridge have achieved the expected results, said Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, Hong Kong's chief secretary for administration. On his personal blog, Cheung said this week that the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau are now collating their experiences and working toward the bridge's official opening.

More than 300 government personnel from Hong Kong participated in the trial operation, with business people engaged in cross-border transportation also invited to the event, he said.

The bridge is the first cross-border link connecting the land of the three cities, and the opening means that the western part of the Pearl River Delta will be accessible from Hong Kong by a three-hour drive, Cheung said.

The new bridge will significantly reduce the cost and time of passenger and freight transportation by land and accelerate the economic development and linkage of the cities in the Greater Bay Area, he said.

Spanning 55 kilometers, the bridge is the world's longest bridge-and-tunnel sea crossing and will cut travel time between Hong Kong and Macau from three hours to just 30 minutes.

## Construction sector fell by 20 percent last year

**T**HE total receipts for the construction sector in Macau have registered a drop of 18.8 percent year-on-year in 2017, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) informed in a statement. According to the latest survey on the construction sector, the registered receipts last year amounted to MOP65.91 billion. Also decreasing was the value of construction work, which shrank by 19.3 percent to MOP64.02 billion in the same period. The drops in the construction sector are attributed to the fact that in 2016, the sector was experiencing high activity levels, with the completion of several hotels and entertainment facilities, a situation which did not occur in 2017, and hence registered a relatively low number of construction projects of such scale. At the same time and backing up the drop in receipts, Intermediate Consumption and Labor Costs have also dropped by 17.9 percent and 17.3 percent respectively, amounting to MOP50.63 billion and MOP9.97 billion. This led to the

Gross surplus of the sector to drop 28.6 percent to MOP5.31 billion.

In this sense, this sector registered a drop by 21.6 percent in relation to the sectorial contribution for the local economy.

According to DSEC's survey, in 2017 there were a total of 3,061 establishments operating in the construction sector, which was an increase of 141 establishments when compared to 2016. Although there were more establishments operating, there was a shortage in the number of workers, with a decrease of 3,356 to a total of 41,960.

Simple renovation projects registered the involvement of more people, with approximately 155 projects and 2,141 people.

The survey also found that there were 1,538 construction projects with permits being carried out in 2017, up by 106 year-on-year. Among these, the ones that registered the most significant hike where the private projects that rose by 76 to 966. Although in terms of value of construction work, there was a decrease by almost 24 percent to MOP49.02 billion.

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EDUCATION

# Lifelong Learning Week kicks off on Saturday

Julie Zhu

**T**HE 2018 Lifelong Learning Week will kick off on October 13 and will run until October 19, with more programs lined up for participants compared to previous events, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) announced yesterday in a press conference.

This year, activities consist of around 120 programs, including occupational education and family life education. These programs will be carried out through a series of seminars, courses and outdoor activities.

In total, nine associations, three schools and two government departments are co-organizing Lifelong Learning Week. In addition, 17 organizations (including some English tutoring centers) and book stores are offering special discounts to participants for course enrollment or book purchases.

On October 14, an awards presentation of the Lifelong Learning Incentive Project will also be held to award excellent participants of the project.

This year, 194 residents will be awarded under the Lifelong Learning Incentive Project.

Lifelong Learning Week was launched in 2002, while the first Lifelong Learning Incentive Project was first



Wong Chi long

carried out in 2005. In the first Lifelong Learning Incentive Project, only 11 residents were awarded.

According to the head of the Division of Continuing Education under DSEJ, Wong Chi long, besides the increase in the number of awards, the total number of participants in the two programs has also increased.

At this year's event, the government, together with co-organizers, is providing more projects.

**More than 420,000 residents took part in the Continuing Education Development Plan since 2011**

As a consequence, the budget for the two activities increased to MOP350,000, representing an additional cost of MOP120,000 compared to the previous year.

On the sidelines of the press conference, Wong talked about some statistics from the city's Continuing Education Development Plan.

"We can see that, in terms of infractions within organizations, there is no obvious increase," said Wong, adding

"recently, in the third phase of the plan, we have conducted approximately 2,500 inspections, [...] we have issued about 190 letters to the concerned organizations [which were found guilty of malpractice]."

In the third phase (from 2017 until now), around 20 infractions have been reported, with most cases being related to fraud and fabricating courses.

In regard to the city's overall continuing education program, a growth in the number of attendees has also been registered, as reported by Wong.

Since DSEJ launched the Continuing Education Development Plan in 2011, more than 420,000 participants have been registered.



URBAN RENEWAL CONSULTATION

## Pearl Horizon buyers agree with housing plan if their requests are met

**T**HE government has published yesterday the final report on the public consultation on the urban renewal regime that took place from August 22 to September 20.

The report shows that from the total 11,642 opinions received, some 8,218 (70.6 percent) concern temporary and exchange houses. Many former buyers of the stranded Pearl Horizon real estate development expressed their views during the consultation. Yesterday, the Pearl Horizon buyers association delivered a petition to the Chief Executive saying that they would agree with the new bill if their requests are met.

On the report published by the Policy Research Office, it is also acknowledged that the public consultation received a majority of opinions by comments online, totaling 61.8 percent. Curiously, almost one-third of the total were in the very last day of the 30 that composed the public consultation.

The majority of the opinions, (83.2 percent) are supportive of the temporary and replacement housing bill, while only 6.9 percent are against it. There are still

9.9 percent that expressed opinions considered neutral.

As mentioned, as regarding the temporary housing regime, most of the ones that expressed opinions noted issues regarding the renting fee of such houses. The participants in the public consultation expressed concerns over rental price of such housing units. They also questioned if the government support regarding rent will be, in fact, sufficient to face an expected increase of rental fees.

The opinions come at the light of the governmental intention to fix rental fees for temporary housing "based on the market prices for buildings of the same class." Many pointed out that such rental prices could be unaffordable for residents of the old neighborhoods that will not be able to afford such rents. Opinions called for the government to take into account the real economic capacity of citizens, specially the ones with low-income and more vulnerable.

The construction criteria of the government houses were also noted, with most of those expressing opinions calling for guarantees that the units will have good construction quality. **RM**

## Ikea plans to expand to a dozen new markets, including Macau

**I**KEA plans to expand to about a dozen new markets in the coming years, including Macau, as the Swedish furniture giant aims to reach a total of 3 billion potential customers by 2025.

The company will in the coming years open stores in Chile, Colombia and Peru through a new Ikea franchisee called Falabella as part of its first foray into South America, Inter Ikea said in an emailed statement yesterday. Inter Ikea, which owns the Ikea concept and is the

worldwide franchisor, also said the company plans to start selling its products in Mexico, Estonia, Ukraine, Puerto Rico, Oman, Luxembourg, Macau and the Philippines.

"By 2025, we have the potential to reach and interact with 3 billion people," Inter Ikea Chief Executive Officer Torbjorn Loof said in the statement. "We will offer new and different ways to shop the Ikea product range - online, in remote locations and in city centers. We will introduce smaller store formats and

offer a wide range of flexible and affordable services."

Ikea is in the midst of a transformation where it's shifting resources toward emerging markets and alternative shopping experiences such as e-commerce and city center stores to better cater to customers' changing needs. The new expansion plans were laid out as Inter Ikea reported a 4.5 percent increase in retail sales in the 12 months through August, adjusted for currency impact, at the franchisees that operate

its more than 400 stores across the world.

Total retail sales, which include sales of both products and services, rose to 38.8 billion euros (USD44.7 billion) from 38.3 billion euros a year earlier. In its last fiscal year, India and Latvia became new Ikea markets as the company opened 19 new stores around the world. In its fiscal year 2019, which runs through August, a total of 15 retail locations are planned. That includes a new store that was opened in Bahrain in Septem-

ber, Inter Ikea said.

Ikea's stores, which can be found in more than 50 markets, welcomed 957 million visitors in the last fiscal year. The company now has online stores in 35 markets after its operations in Belgium, Romania and Malaysia introduced e-commerce. The company is also exploring selling its products on external online marketplaces and Loof said he hopes to introduce a collaboration with a digital shopping platform in the coming year. **MDT/Bloomberg**





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## GAMING

# Island casino for Chinese high rollers sputters amid delays

Matthew Campbell

**F**OUR years after it arrived on the remote U.S. territory of Saipan, Imperial Pacific International Holdings Ltd. is faltering in its effort to turn the obscure island into a gambling hub to rival Macau.

In August the Hong Kong-based company, which attracted attention across the gaming industry for the vast volumes of bets recorded in its Saipan operations, reported a 51 percent decline in first-half revenue that sent earnings tumbling by more than 90 percent. At the end of June it had almost 8 billion Hong Kong dollars (USD1.02 billion) in uncollected debts from gamblers - more than Macau casinos that cater to the highest of high rollers. Imperial Pacific faced problems that required it to delay paying some Saipan workers in August, according to local media and an internal memorandum seen by Bloomberg News.

Saipan's regulators last month approved four junket operators that can work with Imperial to bring high-stakes players to the casino, which caters to Chinese high-stakes players. The operator also received a two-and-a-half year extension to complete the 340-room hotel that it committed to building atop the gambling facility, saying that a shortage of workers was slowing progress.

The setbacks for Imperial Pacific may threaten one of the most unusual, and controversial, resort projects in recent gambling history. Saipan, the main landmass of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, is located more than 5,000 miles from the U.S. mainland, and was



The Imperial Pacific Resort and Hotel is shown under construction in Saipan

captured by American troops in one of the bloodiest battles of the Second World War's Pacific campaign. After the local garment manufacturing industry collapsed in the early 2000s, the island was left with virtually no economic base -- until Imperial Pacific's casino, which opened in 2015, began posting betting volumes that shocked industry veterans, some of whom said there was no way to generate them legitimately.

Imperial Pacific has always disputed the assertion, countering that it complies with all relevant regulations and has anti-money-laundering procedures in place. Imperial Pacific declined to comment for this article.

The casino operator, controlled by Chinese businesswoman Cui Lijie, has become by far the largest outside investor in Saipan's history and a significant force in local politics. The company has acquired long-term land leases on the island. Among others, it's

entered into financial transactions worth millions of dollars with relatives of the territory's governor, Ralph Torres, a staunch supporter of the project. Both Imperial Pacific and Torres, who is campaigning for a second term in November's general election, have denied that there is anything improper in their relationship.

Imperial Pacific's construction efforts have slowed ever since U.S. prosecutors, acting on arrests by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, said that many Chinese workers on the site employed by the company's contractors had arrived posing as tourists, and were working illegally. Separately, federal inspectors said conditions on the casino site were unsafe. Imperial Pacific has blamed those alleged violations on its contractors, and said it had no knowledge of any illegally employed workers, or of substandard construction practices.

Now, the financial viability of the facility is unclear. As Imperial Pacific began posting per-table betting volumes that outstripped the grandest Macau casinos, "what was largely unknown at the time was the amount of uncollected debt that was rapidly accruing," said Andrew Klebanow, a senior partner at Global Market Advisors, a gaming industry consultancy.

A comparison with Wynn Macau Ltd., which also caters to so-called VIP players, illustrates the depth of the issue. The Macau operator posted first half casino revenue of HKD16.5 billion - almost eight times more than that of Imperial Pacific - yet Wynn's uncollected debts from gamblers were less than one-tenth of Imperial's.

Imperial Pacific also "may have underestimated the challenges of building a resort on an island in the middle of the Pacific," said Klebanow.

In asking island regulators for more time to complete the project, the casino operator cited a "drastic reduction and non-availability" of skilled labor in Saipan, which has a population of just 50,000. According to local regulators, delays resulted in part from a substantial work stoppage that followed the FBI's actions. In subsequent months, the number of workers on the site fell to as low as 200, compared with at least 1,500 staff that Imperial said it needed to complete the project, according to the license extension document.

The extension of the resort completion date, to February 2021, was the latest of several instances in which Saipan's government has eased the conditions of the company's license agreement. As consideration for the extension, Imperial Pacific

agreed to donate \$500,000 to the island's cash-strapped hospital, according to a stock exchange filing.

Investors have reacted negatively to Imperial Pacific's recent setbacks. The company's Hong Kong shares have declined almost 52 percent since mid-2017, reducing its market value to about \$1.13 billion. Inventive Star Ltd., a holding company controlled by Cui, has steadily increased its stake at the same time, and currently owns almost two-thirds of Imperial Pacific.

The gaming operator has also experienced high-level executive departures. Marco Teng, a former human-resources manager who was serving as chairman of the Saipan operation, resigned in August, as did Cai Lingli, a senior executive and board director. Cai had a broad range of responsibilities and signed off on the company's various agreements, including land deals with relatives of Torres. Teng resigned to pursue other interests while Cai stepped down to spend time with her family, according to company statements.

Imperial Pacific's setbacks in Saipan present local citizens with a dilemma. The building of a mega-casino is a divisive issue on the island, and opposition politicians have consistently called for Torres to be less accommodating toward the company and to force it to contribute more to local coffers. Unlike most casinos elsewhere, Imperial Pacific pays no gambling-specific taxes.

On the other hand, Saipan has few prospects for economic development or large-scale employment, and losing the casino project would be a significant blow for the island's economy.

With Imperial Pacific's ability to deliver unclear, Saipan may need to consider granting a license to a second casino operator even though the company was granted the sole license, said Ed Propst, an opposition lawmaker.

"We have the right to do so, because they haven't lived up to their agreements," Propst said.

Bloomberg

**corporate bits****AIRASIA ANNOUNCES KRABI-MACAU ROUTE**

AirAsia is introducing direct flights from Krabi to Hong Kong and Macau at special promotional fares in celebration of its 10th year of flying to Hong Kong.

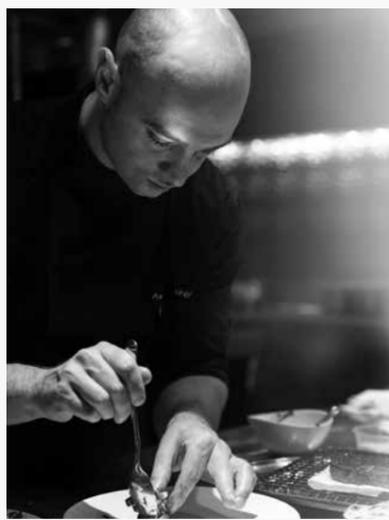
The new Krabi-Macau route will commence on Dec. 1, with promotional fares starting from

HKD210. The flights will take place four times a week, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday (the Krabi-Macau connection departs at 9 a.m. from Thailand and arrives at the Macau International Airport at 1.25 p.m.; thereafter it departs from Macau at 1.50 p.m.).

AirAsia Group began flying to Hong Kong in May 2008, with its first route Kuala Lumpur-Hong Kong operating seven times a week.

Celia Lao, CEO of AirAsia Hong Kong and Macau, said that 10 years ago AirAsia pioneered low cost flights to Hong Kong and has grown steadily ever since to now operate flights to seven destinations in ASEAN, with more to be added.

"Apart from celebrating our 10th anniversary in Hong Kong this year, we also received the World's Best Low Cost Airline Award for a 10th year in a row. We could not have achieved any of this without the support of our passengers, state agencies and the private partners who have worked with us for the past decade," she said.

**FOUR SEASONS ANNOUNCES LINE-UP OF EVENTS**

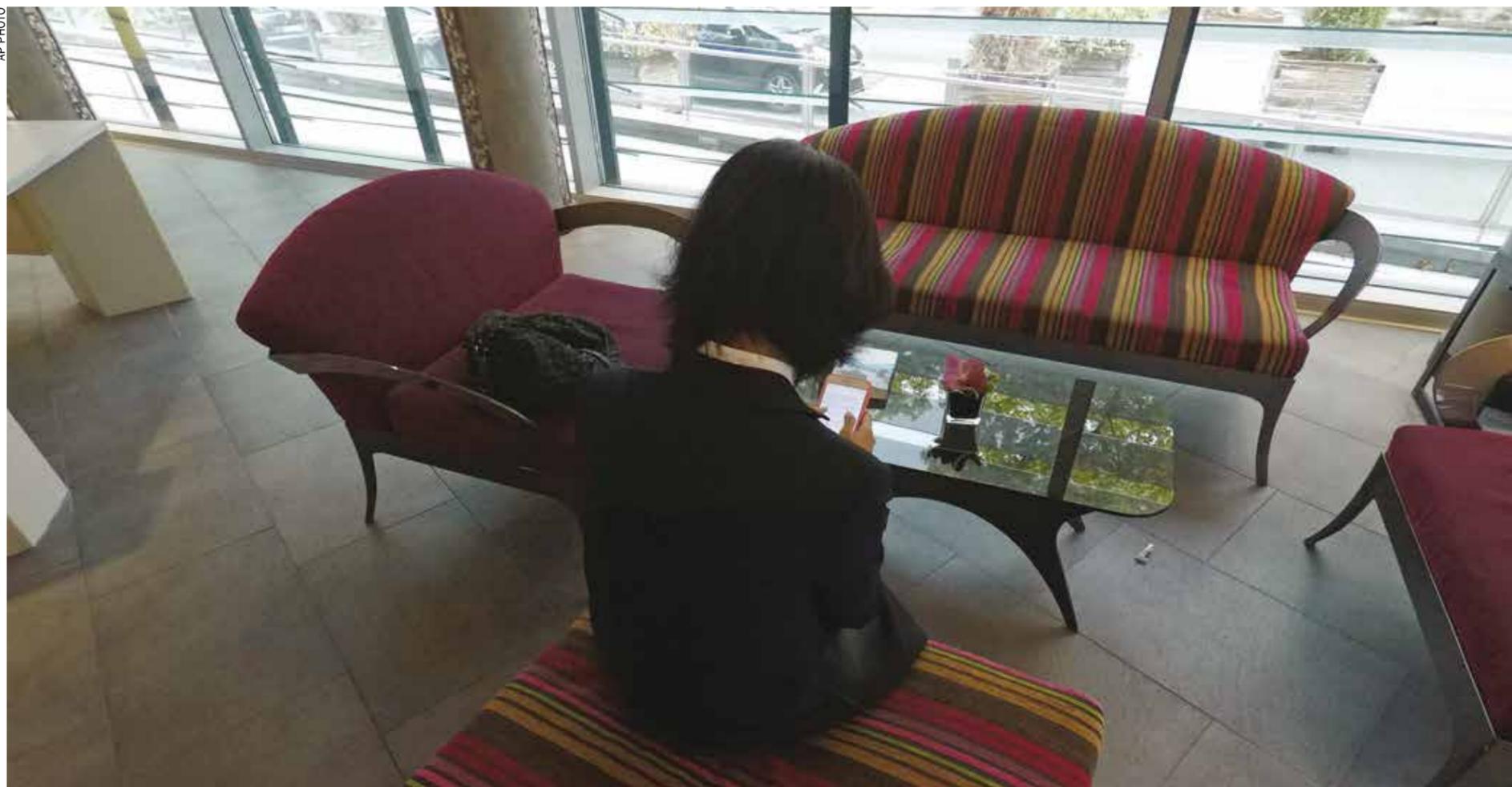
Four Seasons Hotel Macao announced the line-up for the "Taste of Artistry" series to take place at end of this month and in November.

The hotel announced in a statement that its team of experts has prepared a series of six experiences, including two highlight epicurean events that feature Italian guest chef Aniello Turco of Mio of Four Seasons Hotel Beijing, and guest bartender Taeun Yoon of Charles H. (No. 21 of Asia's 50 Best Bars) of Four

Seasons Hotel Seoul.

Restaurant Zi Yat Heen will present an eight-course menu, featuring contemporary Cantonese favorites, matched with Italian classics on Nov. 17, collaborating with chef Turco and Michelin-starred chef Charles Cheung of the restaurant.

Meanwhile on Oct. 27, the hotel will host a Halloween party at its pool deck and "Cocktails for a Cause" on Nov. 9, where proceeds will be donated to its annual Run of Hope Macau charity event to aid cancer research and local orphanages.



Grace Meng, who does not want her face shown, at the lobby of a hotel in Lyon, central France, where the police agency is based, earlier this week

## MENG HONGWEI

# Chilling call made to wife of ex-Interpol boss

John Leicester  
And Gillian Wong, Lyon

**T**HE call came at night and was chilling.

"You listen, but you don't speak," the man on the other end said. "We've come in two work teams, two work teams just for you."

In her first one-on-one interview since her husband's disappearance in China, the wife of the former head of Interpol described the threatening phone call that prompted authorities in the French city where the international law enforcement agency is headquartered to place her under police protection.

French authorities are still trying to determine whether China did indeed, as the mysterious caller menaced, dispatch agents to get to Grace Meng, the wife of Meng Hongwei. But she has good reason to be fearful: Speaking out about the fate of her high-profile husband risks China's ire and, she said, is putting her "in great danger."

However, she hopes that doing so will help other families in similar circumstances.

"He has disappeared for so long and nobody has given me any information or told me where he has gone. This is very common now in China," she told The Associated Press during an

interview. "I feel like I have a responsibility to stand up. Only when you've been through this much pain can you understand that even more people have been suffering."

Meng Hongwei — who was China's vice minister of public security while also leading Interpol — vanished while on a trip to China late last month. A long-time Communist Party insider with decades of experience in China's sprawling security apparatus, the 64-year-old is the latest high-ranking official to fall victim to a sweeping purge against allegedly corrupt or disloyal officials under President Xi Jinping's authoritarian administration.

Speaking to the AP late Monday at a hotel in Lyon, the French city where she lives and Interpol is based, Grace Meng said she had put their two boys to bed when she got the threatening call. It was one week after her last contact with her husband. On Sept. 25, he sent her from China an emoji of a knife — suggesting to her he was in danger.

The man who called her on her mobile phone spoke in Chinese, she said. She said the only clue he gave about his identity was saying that he used to work for Meng, suggesting that the man was part of China's security apparatus. He also said he knew

where she was.

"Just imagine: My husband was missing, my kids were asleep, all my other phones weren't working, and that was the only call I got. I was so frightened," she said.

**Once an issue becomes political, there is no law. This has happened even to Meng Hongwei himself.**

HU JIA  
RIGHTS ACTIVIST

By speaking out about her husband's fate, she has taken a step practically unheard of in Chinese politics, where such moves are seen as confrontational.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Chinese authorities said Monday that Meng Hongwei is being lawfully investigated for taking bribes and other crimes that were a result of his "willfulness."

Hours earlier, Interpol said Meng had resigned as the international police agency's president. It was not clear whether he did so of his own free will.

His wife suggested that the bribery accusation is just an excuse for a lengthy detention.

"As his wife, I think he's simply incapable of this," she said. She said she would be willing to make their bank accounts public.

She refused to provide her real name to the AP, saying she was too afraid for the safety of her relatives in China. It is not customary for Chinese wives to adopt their husbands' names. Mrs. Meng said she has done so now to show her solidarity with her husband. Her English name, Grace, is one she has long used, she said.

A French judicial official, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed to the AP that police are investigating the threat against her, but said the probe has yet to determine whether there were indeed Chinese teams sent to Lyon.

China's move to go after the Interpol president, an official with international standing, was unusually audacious even for an administration that under Xi's leadership has sought to assert its interests more aggressively on the global stage.

Poland's interior minister, Joachim Brudziński, told AP on the sidelines of a ministerial meeting in Lyon this week that he disapproved of Beijing's conduct. Brudziński thinks it shows China believes it can act with impunity "in an ostentatious way, without limit."

Grace Meng wouldn't speculate

on why her husband may have fallen out of favor, saying he had stayed above the secrecy-shrouded world of factional party politics.

She described her husband as a man of modest beginnings, the fifth of six children whose parents were school teachers. He rose through the ranks based on his own merit, she said, and remained an idealist who longed to see the rule of law established in China.

Tearfully, she said she hasn't yet been able to tell their young sons about his detention.

China's beleaguered rights activists point out that as someone with a seat atop the country's powerful public security apparatus, Meng has helped build the opaque system of largely unchecked power wielded by the ruling Communist Party to which he's now fallen victim.

"Once an issue becomes political, there is no law. This has happened even to Meng Hongwei himself," said Hu Jia, a Beijing-based rights activist who is frequently placed under house arrest for his critical comments. "If his wife weren't in France and speaking to the media, his case would have been locked in a black box."

Earlier this year Chinese officials established the National Supervision Commission, a party-led anti-corruption agency empowered to detain suspects for up to six months and to operate independent of the Cabinet, courts and prosecutors.

"If Meng Hongwei weren't an Interpol chief, people would have no idea what kind of a police empire China has become," said Hu, the activist. **AP**

# Taiwan leader calls on China to not be 'source of conflict'

Ralph Jennings, Taipei

**T**AIWANESE President Tsai Ing-wen called on China yesterday not to be a "source of conflict" and pledged to boost the island's defenses against Beijing's military threats.

In a National Day address, Tsai said the best way to defend Taiwan was to "make it indispensable and irreplaceable to the world," while remaining nonconfrontational in its attitude toward China.

"So once again, I am calling on the authorities in Beijing, as a responsible major power, to play a positive role in the region and the world, instead of being a source of conflict," Tsai told an audience of government officials, members of the public and foreign dignitaries gathered in front of the Presidential Office Building in the center of the capital, Taipei.

China cut off contact with Tsai's government shortly after her inauguration in 2016 and has been ratcheting up diplomatic, economic and military pressure on Taiwan in a bid to compel her to agree to Beijing's insistence that the self-governing island democracy is a part of China.



Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen pledged to boost the island's defenses against Beijing's military threat

China and Taiwan separated amid civil war in 1949 and China considers the island part of its territory to be taken control of by force if necessary.

Tsai also said yesterday that Taiwan would upgrade its security by increasing the defense budget annually and further developing domestic defense industries, particularly the manufacturing of submarines and training aircraft.

"Our lean and combat-ready troops absolutely have the ability to defend Taiwan's sovereignty," Tsai said.

She said she would neither approach conflict nor sacrifice Taiwan's autonomy, adding that the island's military spending will "grow steadily" every year.

The president's comments, though consistent with her stance of the past two years, come as China steps up pressure and the United States shows more support for Taiwan alongside a widening Sino-U.S. trade dispute.

"The environment, the external world has changed," said Lin Chong-pin, a retired strategic studies professor in Taiwan. "In a way, she is reacting to what

Beijing is doing to Taiwan, and I don't blame her."

China has flown military aircraft near Taiwan at least a dozen times since 2015 and has persuaded five diplomatic allies to switch allegiance during Tsai's presidency. Today just 17 countries recognize Taiwan compared to the more than 170 that recognize China.

Beijing commands the world's third strongest armed forces, including missiles aimed at Taiwan and an increasingly powerful navy and air force. This year China announced an 8.1

percent defense budget increase.

China also brought economic pressure by pulling back on tourism to the island, which is 160 kilometers away at its nearest point.

"Diplomatic pressure, social infiltration and economic security are all potential threats," Tsai said. "Our current priority is to formulate an overall strategy, and bolster our national security."

Strengthening the economy and social security are also key priorities, she said. Taiwan raised its 2018 forecast to 2.68 percent in June partly due to inflows of foreign investment.

Taiwan is getting more favorable attention from its staunchest informal ally the United States, Tsai added. President Donald Trump's administration has approved two Taiwan arms packages, allowed the first step in submarine technology sales and signed a bill that encourages high-level visits.

Under Tsai's Nationalist Party predecessor, Ma Ying-jeou, Taiwan and China signed a series of agreements promoting trade and tourism, while sidestepping political issues. China insists that was possible because Ma endorsed Beijing's "one-China principle," something Tsai has declined to do.

Oct. 10 marks the 1911 founding of the Republic of China, which once ruled on the mainland but was forced to retreat to Taiwan in 1949 after Mao Zedong's Communists seized power from Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists. **AP**

## HONG KONG | POLICY ADDRESS

# Lam highlights housing, livelihood, Greater Bay opportunities

**C**HIEF Executive Carrie Lam delivered her policy address yesterday, highlighting housing, economy, people's livelihood and young people's development.

It was Lam's second policy address since she was sworn in on July 1, 2017.

Titled "Striving Ahead Rekindling Hope," her policy address comprehensively covers areas including good governance, housing and land, diversified economy, nurturing talent, improving people's livelihood, liveable city and connecting with young people, a dispatch from Xinhua reads.

The Chief Executive proposed a total ban on electronic cigarettes; actively promote primary healthcare services, and provide further resources for research and development to enhance HKSAR's



A video screen shows Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam delivering her policy speech at the Legislative Council

research capability for supporting HKSAR's development into an international I&T center.

In Lam's policy address, housing and land supply is treated as a stand-alone chapter, demonstrating HKSAR government's determination to solve the housing problem, Xinhua said.

She said the HKSAR government would introduce three steps to solve the housing problem faced by Hong Kong people.

According to Xinhua, to deal with the urgent issue with where to get land, Lam presented plans on land supply, including Lantau Tomorrow Vision, development of brown-

field sites, land sharing and revitalization of industrial buildings.

Being the largest outlying island in Hong Kong, Lantau was home to the Hong Kong International Airport and the gateway to the world. And the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge improved Lantau to a "Double Gateway" to the world and other cities in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

"Lantau Tomorrow Vision covering 1,700 hectares is to provide 260,000 to 400,000 residential units, with 70 percent being public housing, and accommodating 700,000 to 1,100,000 people, and creating 340,000 jobs for the coming 20 to 30 years," said Lam as quoted by Xinhua.

Lam noted that in the

first half of this year, the HKSAR economy grew strongly by 4 percent in real terms over the previous year, riding on the broadly positive global economic environment.

The government will act proactively, strengthen its roles in serving as "facilitator" and "promoter," and seize the opportunities brought by the Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development, with a view to generating new impetus for HKSAR's economy, Xinhua stressed from Lam's words. **MDT/Agencies**

## HONG KONG TO BAN E-CIGARETTES, OTHER NEW SMOKING PRODUCTS

**HONG KONG'S** leader says the semi-autonomous Chinese territory plans to ban e-cigarettes and other new smoking products to protect public health, AP reported. Carrie Lam said in an annual policy address that her government was drawing up proposed legislation to forbid the import, manufacture, sale, distribution and advertisement of products used in the pastime known as vaping. E-cigarettes typically contain the stimulant

nicotine and there is little research on their long-term effects, including whether they help smokers quit. The rise in teenagers using e-cigarettes has alarmed health officials in the United States who worry users will become addicted and be more likely to try cigarettes. Lam's speech focused on improving quality of life in Hong Kong, where education, health care, youth employment and the high cost of housing are key concerns.



South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha

## KOREAS

# South considers lifting some sanctions on North

Kim Tong-Hyung, Seoul

**S**OUTH Korea is considering lifting some of its unilateral sanctions against North Korea to create more momentum for diplomacy aimed at improving relations and defusing the nuclear crisis, the South's foreign minister said yesterday.

During a parliamentary audit of her ministry, Kang Kyung-wha said the government is reviewing whether to lift sanctions South Korea imposed on the North in 2010 following a deadly attack on a warship that killed 45 South Korean sailors.

South Korea then effectively shut down all cross-border economic cooperation except for a jointly run factory park in the North Korean border town of Kaesong, which was shuttered in February 2016 after a North Korean nuclear test and long-range rocket launch. The so-called "May 24 measures" of 2010 also banned North Korea from using shipping lanes in South Korean territory.

A move by South Korea to lift its unilateral sanctions would have little immediate effect since U.S.-led international sanctions remain in place. But it's clear the South's liberal government is preparing to restart joint economic projects if the larger nuclear negotiations between the United States and North Korea begin yielding results.

"Many parts of the May 24 measures now duplicate with the United Nations sanctions (against North Korea)," Kang said. "As negotiations continue to improve ties between the South and North and achieve denuclearization, there's a need to flexibly review (lifting the measures) as long as it doesn't damage the larger framework of sanctions against the North."

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has described inter-Korean engagement as crucial to resolving the nuclear standoff. A large number of South Korean business leaders accompanied Moon last month to Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, where he and leader Kim Jong Un agreed to normalize operations at the

Kaesong factory park and resume joint tours to North Korea when possible, voicing optimism the international sanctions could end and allow such projects.

The North and South also announced measures to reduce conventional military threats, such as creating buffer zones along their land and sea boundaries and a no-fly zone above the border. The North also said it would dismantle its main nuclear facility in Nyongbyon if the United States takes unspecified corresponding measures.

Despite the current mood of detente and negotiation between the Koreas, the removal of sanctions will be a difficult decision for Seoul's government.

South Koreans are deeply divided along ideological lines and many people still harbor deep anger over North Korea's 1950 attack that started the Korean War, killing and injuring millions. There has been occasional bloodshed ever since — the 2010 attack on the warship was followed months later by North Korea's shelling of a South Korean border island that killed four and gutted homes.

Kang's comments drew an angry reaction from conservative opposition lawmakers. Chung Jin-suk of the Liberty Korea Party demanded that Moon's government consult with the families of the sailors who died in 2010 before making any decision on sanctions. Kang's ministry later tried to downplay her comments, saying in a statement that no decision was imminent.

During her conversation with lawmakers, Kang described Seoul's unilateral sanctions as a key obstacle in restarting South Korean tourism to the North's Diamond Mountain resort,

which was suspended in 2008 following the shooting death of a South Korean woman there.

But the removal of such sanctions wouldn't be enough to get the tours back on, said Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk University and a policy adviser to Moon. While U.N. sanctions against North Korea don't ban tourism, they do place strict restrictions on the transfer of funds, he said. Still, the lifting of the 2010 sanctions could offer at least some tangible benefits to the North.

"For North Korea, the most meaningful result from the lifting of the May 24 measures would be that its ships will be able to travel through Jeju Strait again," said Koh, referring to waters between South Korea's mainland and the southern island of Jeju. "This will allow them to save time and fuel."

As part of the agreements reached during Moon and Kim's meetings, a liaison office between the countries opened in Kaesong last month. Seoul's Unification Ministry said Tuesday that water being supplied to the office is being provided to the town's residents as well.

Using a facility that draws from a reservoir near the factory park, South Korea has been pumping 1,000 to 2,000 tons of water to the liaison office and about 15,000 tons to the rest of the city every day, ministry spokesman Baik Tae-hyun said. He said the resumption of the water supply does not violate sanctions.

The closure of the factory park had deprived Kaesong residents of what had been a steady supply of water and electricity. South Korea is providing electricity to the liaison office, but not to the town's residents.

"There are also humanitarian considerations as the residents of Kaesong have to rely on the park's facility for water," Baik said. "This has nothing to do with restarting the Kaesong factory park."

Other moves by the Koreas to reduce tensions include temporary reunions between war-separated relatives and military agreements that call for reducing weaponry and guards at the border and demining sections of the Demilitarized Zone. **AP**

## Pompeo displeased by agreement between Korea

**S**OUTH Korea's foreign minister said U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo expressed displeasure over an agreement reached between the rival Koreas last month to reduce conventional military threats between them.

Kang Kyung-wha replied "Yes" yesterday when a lawmaker asked her whether a Japanese media report was correct that Pompeo had complained strongly about the agreement, which was announced during a summit between the Koreas in Pyongyang last month.

Kang did not specify what Pompeo

was unhappy about. She said Pompeo asked "multiple questions" about the content of the agreement.

The agreement calls for the creation of buffer zones along the Koreas' land and sea boundaries and a no-fly zone above the border to prevent accidental clashes. It also provides for a reduction of weaponry and guards at the border and the demining of sections of the Demilitarized Zone.

Kang's comments are likely to fuel speculation that Washington wasn't fully on board before Seoul signed the agreement.



Mike Pompeo



Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono (right) and Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne during a joint press conference in Sydney yesterday

# Australia, Japan agree to keep pressure on North Korea

**A**USTRALIA and Japan yesterday reaffirmed their commitment to pressuring North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program and enforcing sanctions on Pyongyang. Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said Australia and Japan are committed to working closely with allies and partners to ensure North Korea is pressured to end its nuclear and missile programs. Payne and Defense Minister Christopher Pyne were mee-

ting in Sydney with Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono and Defense Minister Takeshi Iwaya. "We need to see real steps to complete, verifiable irreversible denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula, Payne told reporters. Payne and Kono had discussed sanctions enforcement with the United State at last month's U.N. General Assembly in New York. Iwaya said the "international community must remain united" to achieve the dis-

mantling of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction. Meanwhile, Australia and Japan warned China and the United States to settle their differences over trade and political issues using existing rules. "No country wishes for a new cold war," Kono said. President Donald Trump stepped up pressure on China by raising tariffs on billions of dollars of Chinese goods. Beijing has retaliated by imposing penalties on billions of dollars of U.S. products. **AP**

## MALDIVES

# Defeated president challenges election result



Maldivian outgoing president Yameen Abdul Gayoom

**T**HE outgoing president of the Maldives filed a complaint with police yesterday challenging the results of last month's presidential election in which he was defeated by the opposition candidate. President Yameen Abdul Gayoom's Progressive Party of the Maldives said in a statement that lawyers filed the complaint over "serious allegations of vote rigging, fraud, malpractice and corruption." The statement said the party is seeking a remedy from the High Court and Supreme Court, but did not specify what kind of relief it wants. The opposition alliance has said Yameen is attempting to cling to power. Yameen, who has rolled back many of Maldives' democratic reforms, was decisively defeated by opposition candidate Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in the Sept. 23

election and quickly conceded defeat. The constitution allows two weeks to submit a challenge from the day that official election results are announced. The election was generally seen as fair, although the opposition alleged ahead of time that Yameen's government was using state resources to rig the vote in his favor. Yameen's five-year term ends on Nov. 17. Four of the country's Elections Commission five members have fled the country because of threats from supporters of Yameen's party who accused them of rigging the election in favor of Solih, Elections Commissioner Ahmed Shareef said. He said groups had gathered in front of the members' homes and threatened them, saying they had accepted bribes from the opposition. **AP**

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# Market forces put America's recycling industry in the dumps



Mary Esch, Albany (NY)

**A**MERICA'S recycling industry is in the dumps.

A crash in the global market for recyclables is forcing communities to make hard choices about whether they can afford to keep recycling or should simply send all those bottles, cans and plastic containers to the landfill.

Mountains of paper have piled up at sorting centers, worthless. Cities and towns that once made money on recyclables are instead paying high fees to processing plants to take them. Some financially strapped recycling processors have shut down entirely, leaving municipalities with no choice but to dump or incinerate their recyclables.

"There's no market. We're paying to get rid of it," says Ben Harvey, president of EL Harvey & Sons, which handles recyclables from about 30 communities at its sorting facility in Westborough, Massachusetts. "Seventy-five percent of what goes

through our plant is worth nothing to negative numbers now."

It all stems from a policy shift by China, long the world's leading recyclables buyer. At the beginning of the year it enacted an anti-pollution program that closed its doors to loads of waste paper, metals or plastic unless they're 99.5 percent pure. That's an unattainable standard at U.S. single-stream recycling processing plants designed to churn out bales of paper or plastic that are, at best, 97 percent free of contaminants such as foam cups and food waste.

The resulting glut of recyclables has caused prices to plummet from levels already depressed by other economic forces, including lower prices for oil, a key ingredient in plastics.

The three largest publicly traded residential waste-hauling and recycling companies in North America — Waste Management, Republic Services and Waste Connections — reported steep drops in recycling revenues in their second-quarter fi-

ancial results. Houston-based Waste Management reported its average price for recyclables was down 43 percent from the previous year.

"A year ago, a bale of mixed paper was worth about USD100 per ton; today we have to pay about \$15 to get rid of it," says Richard Coupland, vice president for municipal sales at Phoenix-based Republic, which handles 75 million tons of municipal solid waste and 8 million tons of recyclables nationwide annually. "Smaller recycling companies aren't able to stay in business and are shutting down."

Kirkwood, Missouri, announced plans this summer to end curbside recycling after a St. Louis-area processing facility shut down. Officials in Rock Hill, South Carolina, were surprised to learn that recyclables collected at curbside were being dumped because of a lack of markets. Lack of markets led officials to suspend recycling programs in Gouldsboro, Mai-

ne; DeBary, Florida; Franklin, New Hampshire; and Adrian Township, Michigan. Programs have been scaled back in Flagstaff, Arizona; La Crosse, Wisconsin; and Kankakee, Illinois.

Other communities are maintaining recycling programs but taking a financial hit as regional processors have raised rates to offset losses. Richland, Washington, is now paying \$122 a ton for Waste Management to take its recycling; last year, the city was paid \$16 a ton for the materials. Stamford, Connecticut, received \$95,000 for recyclables last year; the city's new contract requires it to pay \$700,000.

A big part of the problem, besides lower commodity prices overall, is sloppy recycling.

In the early days of recycling, people had to wash bottles and cans, and sort paper, plastic, glass and metal into separate bins. Now there's single-stream recycling, which allows all recyclables to be tossed into one bin. While single-stream has benefited efficiency, and customers

like it, it's been a challenge on the contamination side.

A tour of Republic's facility in Beacon, about an hour's drive north of New York City, makes the challenges clear. A third of the material dumped by collection trucks is non-recyclable "contaminants" such as garden hoses, picnic coolers and broken lawnmowers. Workers have to pull that out and truck it to a landfill, adding to overall costs. Plastic bags contaminate bales of other materials and tangle machinery. Spilled ketchup and greasy pizza boxes turn otherwise marketable material into garbage.

"The death of recycling was completely avoidable and incredibly easily fixed," says Mitch Hedlund, executive director of Recycle Across America, which advocates standardized labeling on recycling bins so people understand what goes in and what doesn't.

A range of initiatives have been launched to get people to recycle right. Chicago is putting "oops" tags on curbside recycling bins with improper contents and leaving them uncollected. Rhode Island is airing "Let's Recycle Right" ads.

While some recyclables have been diverted to other Asian markets since China's closure, there are also signs of market improvement in the U.S. to offset the lost business, said David Biderman, CEO and executive director of the Solid Waste Association of North America. He noted Chinese paper manufacturers that had relied on recyclables imported into their country have recently purchased shuttered mills in Kentucky, Maine and Wisconsin.

Meanwhile, recyclable materials processors are re-negotiating contracts with municipalities to reflect the fact that prices paid for recyclables no longer offset the cost of collecting and sorting them.

"What we're advocating is to step back and re-look at recycling," Republic's Coupland said. "This is the new normal. The model no longer funds itself." AP

UK

## Woman who spent USD21m at Harrods fights wealth order

**A**woman from Azerbaijan who spent 16 million pounds (USD21 million) on jewelry, wine and other goods at luxury London department store Harrods over the course of a decade has become the first target of a new British rule allowing officials to seize money from people suspected of getting their

wealth through corruption.

A court has ordered Zamira Hajiyeva, 55, to explain where she got the money to also buy an 11.5 million pound (\$15 million) London home close to Harrods and a golf course outside the city worth 10.5 million pounds (\$14 million).

Hajiyeva's husband, former International Bank of Azerbaijan chairman Jahangir Hajiyev, was sentenced to 15 years in jail in his home country in 2016 for fraud and embezzlement.

The case marks Britain's first use of Unexplained Wealth Orders, introduced this year to curb Lon-

don's status as a haven for ill-gotten gains. The orders allow authorities to seize assets over 50,000 pounds from people suspected of corruption or links to organized crime until the owners account for how they were acquired.

During previous court hearings Hajiyeva was identified only as Mrs. A,

but a court order granting her anonymity was lifted yesterday.

At an earlier court hearing, a lawyer for Britain's National Crime Agency gave details of her spending at Harrods, a large chunk of it using 35 credit cards issued by her husband's bank. Between 2006 and 2016, Hajiyeva spent more than 16 million pounds at the store, including 100,000 pounds in one day on Cartier jewelry, 150,000 pounds in another trip on goods from luxury brand Boucheron, and 1,800 pounds on wine.

The crime agency argued the lavish spending was a sign the money was ill-gotten.

Hajiyeva denies wrongdoing and is fighting to overturn the order and hang onto her properties.

Her lawyers said in a statement that the issuing of a wealth order "does not and should not be taken to imply any wrongdoing, whether on her part or that of her husband."

They said the order "is part of an investigative process, not a criminal procedure, and it does not involve the finding of any criminal offense." AP

USA

# One of oldest coal companies files for bankruptcy

Matt Volz, Helena, (Mont.)

ONE of the oldest coal companies in the U.S. filed for bankruptcy protection yesterday [Macau time] to deal with more than USD1.4 billion in debt amid declining demand for the fuel.

Englewood, Colorado-based Westmoreland Coal Co. filed for voluntary Chapter 11 protection in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Houston as part of a restructuring agreement with an unnamed group of lenders.

Westmoreland, which operates mines across the U.S. and Canada, is the fourth major coal company to file for bankruptcy in the past three years, joining Peabody Energy Corp., Arch Coal and Alpha Natural Resources.

Westmoreland officials said in a statement that operations won't be interrupted and there are no expected staff reductions. "After months of thoughtful and productive conversations with our creditors, we have developed a plan that allows West-



AP PHOTO

moreland to operate as usual while positioning Westmoreland for long-term success," interim CEO Michael Hutchinson said in the statement.

Coal companies have struggled as demand drops due to a glut of cheap natural gas, the rise of renewable energy sources and plans by some states to reduce or eliminate coal from their energy portfolios.

There are no new coal plants being built in the U.S., and two major coal consumers, China and India, have canceled projects as they seek to reduce air pollution.

Westmoreland officials warned in August that declining industry conditions and significant debt "give rise to substantial doubt about our ability to pay our obligations as they come due," ac-

ording to a filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

## Westmoreland is the fourth major coal company to file for bankruptcy in the past three years

Westmoreland has \$770 million in assets and \$1.4 billion in debt, according to the bankruptcy filing. One of its creditors is the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, which Westmoreland owes \$1.8 million in royalties, according to the bankruptcy filing.

The restructuring agreement, which must be approved by a judge, includes refinancing an outstanding loan and a "busi-

ness transformation" meant to significantly increase cash flow, the company statement said, without providing details.

The group of lenders that holds a majority of Westmoreland's debt also plans to bid for the company's assets, the statement said. An affiliated company, Westmoreland Resource Partners, is being sold off separately.

Westmoreland was incorporated in 1854 in Pennsylvania. It has coal mines in Montana, Wyoming, New Mexico, Ohio, North Dakota and Texas, and a coal-fired power plant in North Carolina.

Westmoreland also has mines in Canada that are not part of the bankruptcy filing.

In Montana, coal demand involving Westmoreland's Rosebud mine is expected to drop when two of the four units of the Colstrip power plant cease operations by 2022. The company's other major Montana mine, the Absaloka mine on the Crow Indian Reservation, has already seen demand drop.

Crow chairman Alvin "A.J." Not Afraid said the mine provides a significant portion of the tribe's revenue. But there is less potential for financial harm after Westmoreland renewed a contract earlier this year with an Xcel Energy power plant in Minnesota, which burns coal from the Absaloka mine. AP

AD

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## what's ON



## ABSTRACT PAINTINGS FROM THE MAM COLLECTION

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

UNTIL: November 11, 2018

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

## MONKEY KING

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

VENUE: Sands Cotai Theatre

ADMISSION: MOP380, MOP480, MOP680, MOP980, MOP1280

COTAI TICKETING: (853) 2882 8818

KONG SENG TICKETING: (853) 2855 5555

## MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE

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

VENUE: Macau Science Center

ADMISSION: MOP25 (Exhibition Centre)

MOP60 (Planetarium 2D dome or 2D

sky shows)

MOP80 (Planetarium 3D dome or 3D

sky shows)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0822

## EXHIBITION OF NEW WORKS IN MAM COLLECTION

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

UNTIL: October 26, 2018

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

## Offbeat

## GECKO BUTT-DIALS 'BAZILLION' TIMES FROM HAWAII SEAL HOSPITAL



If you got incessant phone calls last week from a hospital that cares for Hawaiian monk seals, you were butt-dialed.

Or, more specifically, foot-dialed.

By a gecko.

Marine mammal veterinarian Claire Simeone was at lunch when she got a call from Ke Kai Ola, the Big Island hospital where she's director. There was silence on the other end. Nine more silent calls followed. Fearing a seal emergency, she rushed back.

She wasn't the only one getting calls, and people started asking why the hospital was calling non-stop.

Trying figure out why a "bazillion" calls were made from one line, she called the phone company and a rep tried to talk her through finding a possible line on the Fritz. She walked into a lab and found the culprit. The gecko was perched on a phone, making calls to everyone in the recent call history with "HIS TINY GECKO FEET," she wrote in a Twitter thread the next day, detailing the saga.

Social media delighted in the tale and some people offered jokes about a certain company's gecko calling to save you money on your car insurance.

After discovering the mystery caller, Simeone caught the gecko and put it outside on a plant, she said yesterday [Macau time].

"If there's a little gecko that helps us share the story of conservation, then that's a win."

## TV canal macau



13:00 TDM News (Repetição)

13:30 Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)

15:00 Mistura Fina

15:55 Os Craques do Pingue-Pongue

16:20 Nelo & Idália

16:55 Quem Quer Ser Milionário

18:05 Depois do Adeus

19:00 TDM Entrevista (Repetição)

19:35 Os Nossos Dias Sr.2

20:30 Telejornal

21:15 Montra do Lilau

21:45 LiteraturAqui

22:10 Liberdade 21 - Fim

23:15 TDM News

23:50 Curso de Cultura Geral Sr.2

00:45 Telejornal (Repetição)

01:30 RTPi Directo

## cinema



## CINETEATRO

04 - 10 Oct



## VENOM

ROOM 1

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

Director: Ruben Fleischer

Starring: Tom Hardy, Michelle Williams, Riz Ahmed

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 112min



## DESTINATION WEDDING

ROOM 2

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

Director: victor levin

Starring: Keanu Reeves, Winona Rider

Language: Cantonese (Chinese, english)

Duration: 130min



## PROJECT GUTENBERG

ROOM 2

9:15pm

Director: Felix Chong

Starring: Chow Yun Fat, Aaron Kwok, Zhang Jingchu

Language: Cantonese (Chinese, english)

Duration: 130min

## JOHNNY ENGLISH STRIKES AGAIN

ROOM 3

7:30pm

Director: David Kerr

Starring: Rowan Atkinson Emma Thompson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 88min

## this day in history



## 1976 CHINA'S 'GANG OF FOUR' ARRESTED

The new chairman of China's Communist Party, Hua Guofeng, has ordered the arrest of four leading radicals in Peking.

It is a sign that China is changing political direction following the death last month of Chairman Mao Zedong.

The so-called Gang of Four is led by Chairman Mao's widow Jian Qing, and includes Wang Hongwen, Yao Wenyuan, and Zhang Chunqiao.

They were active proponents of the Cultural Revolution instigated ten years ago by Chairman Mao.

This was a political and ideological campaign aimed at reviving revolutionary fervour and resulted in enormous social, economic and political upheaval.

Ideological cleansing began with attacks by young Red Guards on so-called "intellectuals" to remove "bourgeois" influences. It is believed millions were forced into manual labour, and tens of thousands were executed.

Mr Zhang rose up the ranks during the first year of the Cultural Revolution in Shanghai and was until recently chief political commissar of the armed forces.

Mr Wang had less power but was regarded a wonder-boy - he rose to number three in the party in 1973 while still only in his late thirties, relatively young by Chinese standards.

Mr Yao, also a member of the Politburo standing committee, is regarded as dedicated, if not fanatical, in his belief in Maoist ideals of social development.

Jian Qing, formerly an actress, became Chairman Mao's third wife in 1939. She is regarded as a radical and active proponent of Maoist principles but in the years before his death, had led an independent life from her husband.

News of the arrests have not been confirmed by China's officials but it is believed the four were attempting a coup in the wake of the death of Chairman Mao on 9 September.

Some reports say Jian Qing was in the process of forging Chairman Mao's will placing her as Mao's successor, when she and her associates were surrounded by Hua Guofeng's personal bodyguards and placed under house arrest.

They are being questioned about their campaign against former prime minister Zhou Enlai, who died in January.

Commentators say the arrests might lead to a liberalisation of foreign, cultural and economic policy - the Times newspaper editorial calls this latest move "the most potent sign of a new political direction" following 27 years of Maoist dogma.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The Gang of Four were kept under house arrest and, following a propaganda campaign against them, were expelled from the Communist Party in July 1977.

By the end of 1978 reformist Deng Xiaoping had effectively wrested power from Hua Guofeng - although he did not assume the title of premier of China and chair of the CCP until 1982.

On 20 November 1980 all members of the Gang of Four were put on trial charged with attempting to overthrow the government and establish a hardline Communist dictatorship.

They were sentenced to death, later commuted to long-term imprisonment. After a period of political indoctrination Jian Qing was released in 1991 and died soon after - some reports say she committed suicide.

Wang Hongwen died in 1992, Zhang Chunqiao died in April 2005 and Yao Wenyuan died in December 2005.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Don't do anything drastic just yet.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You'll get a communication you've been long waiting for.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Times change, and so do you. You have a new hobby.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Trust your emotions, not your head. Someone is trying to convince you to put your money into something that just doesn't feel right.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Keep your pride in check. Don't spend just for looks.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You'll be forced to spend time with people who work your nerves.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Sure, you know how to appreciate the smaller things in life.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 If you could get anything you want, what would it be?

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Why fake it? There's no point in questioning your situation.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You wish you could be somewhere else. In fact, you'd go so far as to swap lives if you could.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Extreme emotions are making you unhealthy. Get a grip.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 The universe is forcing you to create something new.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle.

WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION

CHINA

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

WORLD

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- River of Tuscany; 5- Tantalize; 10- Highbrow; 14- Work up lather; 15- Truman veep Barkley; 16- Man, in Milan; 17- Pastiche; 19- School orgs.; 20- Animal trap; 21- Form of bowling; 23- The works; 25- Speeder spotter; 26- RR stops; 29- Fast fliers; 31- Lapwing; 35- Singer Torne; 36- Naturalness; 37- Positive aspect; 38- Quantities; 40- Dons clothes; 41- Uses money; 42- Alum; 43- Devour; 44- Old Testament book; 45- Christmas song; 46- French airport; 47- Chilly; 49- Actor Erwin; 51- Bright red color; 54- The opposition; 58- Acquire through work; 59- Imitation; 63- Hint; 64- Lasso; 65- Within (prefix); 66- Look after; 67- Dart; 68- Ooze;

DOWN: 1- Egyptian cobras; 2- Horse shade; 3- Wine valley; 4- Musical dramas; 5- Bar bill; 6- "Hold On Tight" band; 7- Attorneys' org.; 8- Some mattresses; 9- Finished, terminated; 10- Quell; 11- Denier's words; 12- Muscat's land; 13- Manager; 18- Fam. reunion attendee; 22- Snoozed; 24- Atty.-to-be exams; 25- Road with a no.; 26- Huge hit; 27- Rhythm; 28- Healing plants; 30- Leaky tire sound; 32- Smarter; 33- Perfect; 34- Irritable; 36- Ultimate goal; 37- Russian range; 39- Undeserved; 40- Rap's Dr. \_\_\_; 42- Deity; 45- Some acid; 46- Weights; 48- Toothed wheels; 50- Mai \_\_\_; 51- Denomination; 52- Racer Yarborough; 53- Give \_\_\_ for one's money; 55- Fork feature; 56- Must've been something \_\_\_; 57- Sow chow; 60- Chinese "way"; 61- Figure skater Midori; 62- Blubber;



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



AD

Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' sections with property details and the JML logo.

## BASKETBALL

# Rockets' Zhou Qi hurts knee in exhibition game vs. Shanghai

**H**OUSTON'S Zhou Qi played only three minutes yesterday [Macau time] before the 7-foot-1 center from China sprained his left knee against the Shanghai Sharks.

Qi, the Rockets' second-round pick in 2016 who played in 18 games last season, was playing in his first preseason game.

He bent over to pick up a loose ball in the lane in the second quarter when Shanghai's Luis Scola crashed into his left knee, bending it sideways. The 22-year-old Qi immediately grimaced in pain and grabbed for the knee.

He was taken to the locker room in a wheelchair.

Coach Mike D'Antoni said before the game Qi was expected to see plenty of playing time against Yao Ming's former team.

It was one of 13 preseason games this year where NBA teams host international clubs. The other international teams include the Beijing Ducks, Melbourne United, New Zealand Breakers, Sydney Kings and Perth Wildcats.

In addition, the Mavericks and 76ers played two exhibition games against each other in China this preseason.

## ROCKETS 128, SHANGHAI SHARKS 86

James Harden had 37 points in 30 minutes, leading the Rockets to the victory. Harden was 13 of 18 from the field, including 9 of 14 from 3-point range. He also had nine assists. P.J. Tucker had 22 points and six 3-pointers as the Rockets launched 66 3s, making 28.

Jimmer Fredette led the way for the Sharks with 41 points on



16-of-40 shooting. He also had nine rebounds and three assists.

Scola, a former Rocket, finished with 18 points on 8-of-13 shooting and 12 rebounds.

**SHARKS:** Fredette played all 48 minutes. [...] Center Zhang Zhaoxu had 10 points and five rebounds.

**ROCKETS:** Houston hit 17 3s in the first half and scored 73 points. [...] Harden had 17 points in the first quarter as the Rockets built a 38-20 lead. [...] Gary Clark had 16 points and James Ennis III and Gerald Green each scored 15. [...] Brandon Sampson had four points and missed

all three 3-point attempts in his first game with the Rockets.

**UP NEXT:** Houston (3-1) visits Memphis on Friday.

## THUNDER 119, BUCKS 115, OT

Deonte Burton had 16 points for the Thunder, including the go-ahead 3-pointer in overtime. Paul George played only the first half and finished with a game-high 26 points on 8-of-13 shooting.

Christian Wood had 19 points on 7-of-10 shooting and 15 rebounds for the Bucks. Tyler Zeller had 17 points, and Tim

Frazier made a buzzer-beating 3-pointer from the top of the key to send the game into overtime.

**BUCKS:** Rookie guard Donte DiVincenzo, who helped lead Villanova to the national championship last season, got the start for the Bucks. He missed his first four shots and finished with 12 points on 3-of-10 shooting. [...] Giannis Antetokounmpo, Eric Bledsoe, Brook Lopez, Khris Middleton and Ersan Ilyasova were given the night off to rest.

**THUNDER:** Russell Westbrook did not play. [...] Hamidou Diallo added 19 points and Nerlens Noel had 10 rebounds.

[...] Timothe Lewawu-Cabarrot had 10 points off the bench.

**UP NEXT:** Oklahoma City (3-1) visits Golden State for the regular-season opener yesterday. Milwaukee (2-1) visits Minnesota on Friday in preseason finale.

## LIPPERS 109, NUGGETS 103

Danilo Gallinari scored 16 points in 20 minutes to help the Clippers to the victory.

The Clippers pulled away with a 10-2 run to start the fourth quarter and led the rest of the way.

Trey Lyles had 15 points, 10 rebounds and five assists in 24 minutes for the Nuggets. Monte Morris added 14 points and six assists.

**CLIPPERS:** With regular starters Tobias Harris and Marcin Gortat resting, 7-foot-3 center Boban Marjanovic and No. 11 pick Shai Gilgeous-Alexander were in the starting lineup. Marjanovic had 14 points, 12 rebounds and three blocks in 14 minutes. [...] Hours before the game, the Clippers announced they had waived undrafted rookie Desi Rodriguez. [...] Milos Teodosic went scoreless in his preseason debut. He was held out of the previous three games with a hamstring injury.

**NUGGETS:** Coach Michael Malone played Denver's regular starters for the entire first quarter and sat them the rest of the game. [...] Malik Beasley scored 12, and Will Barton and Juancho Hernandez added 11 points each. [...] Denver shot 58.1 percent from the field in the first half and 25.5 percent in the second. [...] Nikola Jokic had two turnovers in 12 minutes and has 14 turnovers to just 13 assists in 78 preseason minutes.

**UP NEXT:** The Clippers (4-0) host Maccabi Haifa on Thursday to wrap up their preseason. The Nuggets (3-1) conclude their preseason with a trip to Chicago on Friday. [...] Denver will visit the Clippers on Oct. 17 to open the regular season. **AP**

## BASKETBALL

# Dennis Rodman benched for Yao Ming at Pyongyang friendly?

**H**AS Dennis Rodman, the former NBA star-turned pal of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, been benched for Chinese hoop legend Yao Ming?

The former Houston Rockets center and eight-time NBA all-star took center court in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, this week as Chinese and North Korean basketball players held a friendly match, part of a high-profile sports exchange between the two countries intended to



Chinese hoop legend Yao Ming, center rear, poses for a group photo with Chinese and North Korean basketball players

help thaw ties that had been growing chilly over the past year.

Senior ruling party officials turned up for the game, but Kim, who was

famously serenaded with the birthday song by Rodman in Pyongyang

in January 2014, didn't attend.

On the court, Chinese female basketball players who are visiting Pyongyang this week mixed together with North Korean female players to form two teams, called "Friendship" and "Unity."

The Unity team won the match, 107 to 106.

Yao Ming, towering over everyone else in the stadium, congratulated the players at the end of the game.

"Today's friendly match will be a display of top basketball skills and the great sportsmanship of all the players from both of our countries," Kim Il Guk, the North Korean minister of sports, said

before the game began.

After a period of frosty ties, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has visited China three times this year, and traditional proclamations of friendship between the two neighbors have been resurrected.

Speculation continues as to whether Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit North Korea in return.

Yao Ming, who at 2.29 meters was one of the tallest players in the NBA, is the head of China's Basketball Association.

He arrived with a high-level delegation on Monday that includes China's equivalent of a sports minister. **AP**

FOOTBALL

# Paul Pogba back to friendly environment with France

Samuel Petrequin, Paris

**F**AR away seem the days when Paul Pogba was praised for the mature displays that helped France win the World Cup.

For the Manchester United midfielder, the euphoria that engulfed French players following their title lasted only a few weeks as he fell out with coach Jose Mourinho on his return to Old Trafford.

Pogba's relationship with Mourinho has been complicated since his return to United in 2016. But it reached its nadir last month when Pogba was stripped of the vice-captaincy at the club and then appeared to have a spat with Mourinho at practice.

Following a poor start to the season, United is under pressure and Pogba's future there seems uncertain amid reports he could leave.

Such concerns are irrelevant when Pogba plays with his national team, and the international break is likely to provide solace to a player regarded as indispensable by France coach Didier Deschamps.

Pogba joined his teammates at France's training ground ahead of today's friendly game against Iceland. France, which beat Croatia in the World Cup final in July, hosts Germany in the UEFA Nations League on Oct. 16 at Stade de France.

"I don't want to interfere with the relationship that he, or any other player, could have with his coach," Deschamps said. "But given the situation of some (players) in their clubs, the breath of fresh air brought by the France team can do them good."

Often criticized for his laid-back

AP PHOTO



approach, Pogba took more responsibilities in France during the World Cup and is now regarded as a proper team leader. Pogba is crediting Deschamps, who uses him on the pitch in a less restricted role than Mourinho, for his positive influence.

"I have a very good relationship with the coach, he speaks straight to me," Pogba said.

Here is a look at other talking points ahead of this week's international matches:

### EMPTY STADIUM

The last time Croatia played England was in the packed Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow in a World Cup semifinal match. When they meet in the Croatian coastal city of Rijeka on Friday, there will be no fans.

Croatia is completing a sta-

dium ban imposed by UEFA in 2015 when a swastika was painted on its field ahead of a game.

### STRUGGLING ITALY

Italy is in desperate need of a victory at Poland on Sunday to avoid more embarrassment after failing to qualify for the last World Cup.

The Azzurri already sit last in its Nations League group with only one point and one goal scored from their opening two matches — a 1-1 draw with Poland and a 1-0 loss to Portugal.

Napoli's Lorenzo Insigne is being tapped for a "false 9" role amid a series of problems for the usual center forwards.

Mario Balotelli and Andrea Belotti have been dropped due to poor form while Ciro Immobile and Simone Zaza have stru-

gled with the national team.

### FALLEN CHAMPS REBUILD

Germany is still searching for its way back after its disastrous World Cup defense in Russia. Joachim Loew's squad drew 0-0 with France last month in a game in Munich that did little to assure fans it will be challenging again for titles anytime soon.

If anything, the game just highlighted the absence of Mesut Ozil, who retired from international football after feeling he was made the scapegoat for the German team's disappointing performances in Russia. While Loew wanted his side to display more defensive stability, it failed to convince going forward.

Loew experimented with five changes in the subsequent 2-1-

friendly win over Peru, but the pressure is on to show real progress is being made in the games against the Netherlands and France.

### REPLACING RONALDO

With Cristiano Ronaldo out again, Portugal's attack will be relying on Andre Silva, the Sevilla striker who has been thriving in the Spanish league.

Silva, playing on a loan from AC Milan, has seven goals in eight league matches so far. Silva scored Portugal's winner in the 1-0 win over Italy in the team's Nations League debut and is set to start in the match at Poland on Friday. Ronaldo hasn't played for Portugal since the World Cup and isn't expected to be back until next year.

### DEPLETED SPAIN

Spain will be depleted when it hosts England on Monday with a chance to practically secure a spot in the Nations League's final four.

Some key players will be absent because of injuries, including Francisco "Isco" Alarcon, Dani Carvajal, Sergi Roberto and Diego Costa.

### BEST OF THE REST

Russia returns to Sochi, where the World Cup host lost a quarterfinals penalty shootout against Croatia, to play Turkey on Sunday in Group 2 of League B. Russia first hosts Sweden in Kaliningrad.

In B3, Bosnia-Herzegovina goes for a third straight when Northern Ireland visits on Monday.

In League C, Group 4 co-leaders Montenegro and Serbia meet in Podgorica. The Balkan neighbors joined together as one team at the 2006 World Cup.

In League D, teams with two wins last month include Georgia which next hosts Andorra, Luxembourg playing at Belarus, and Macedonia hosting Liechtenstein.

One of the longest journeys in European soccer faces Azerbaijan — about 4,400 kilometers to play at the Faroe islands today. **AP**

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

opinion

**Girl About Globe**

Linda Kennedy



**HK'S HIGH-GROWTH ECONOMY MUST INCLUDE TREES**

Hong Kong has a shady past. I hope it has a shady future.

A few days after the super-typhoon hit last month, I sat at a café with a view of tree debris.

I watched as a man and woman stopped beside the trunks and began talking. I assumed, about the awfulness of it all. I hoped at least some people would meet through timber not Tinder.

But, as the following weeks took me, and others, on our usual journeys through town, the realisation came that many formerly tree-lined routes were now open to harsh sunlight. Tens of thousands of trees – some leafy and overhanging, others slender and offering just a momentary respite from the sun – were now on the ground, inside roped-off areas, as workers chopped up them up. Most were transported to the old Kai Tak airport where they stretched across an area the size of 12 football pitches. That many branches, boughs, twigs and leaves then sparked a row about whether or not the remains of the trees could be composted.

In Hong Kong, there have always been meetings behind closed doors discussing seed funding and, more covertly, root and branch reform. I hope such gatherings no longer pertain to start-ups and politics, but instead the planting of more trees and a reconsideration of tree policy. One reason so many were easily blown over was their growing situation – little soil in pavements meant roots had no where to go. One expert likened it to growing a tree in a flower pot. Another factor was that branches were often cut back to avoid blocking views from apartment windows; that left the trees potentially unstable.

What isn't in dispute is that Mangkhut has left shade in short supply in Hong Kong. And if you're pale skinned, with a 'shade-dar' that detects any shadows so you can make for them, the lack of cover is stark.

Against this background, the recent news that scientists at Hong Kong's Baptist University found chemicals from sunscreen in the waters around Hong Kong carried new impact. The study collected seawater from 30 locations off the Hong Kong coast, and concluded that, after human use, washed-off organic and chemical UV filters in sunscreen eventually enter the sea.

With fewer trees for shade, I for one had been intent upon thicker daily applications of sunscreen. And given the fondness for whitening cosmetics in Asia, I don't think I am the only one to be concerned by too much exposure to the sun.

Without trees or recourse to sunscreen, what can one do? Is it time to change career and open a parasol business which also sells black ones, called man shields, so blokes can use parasols too?

Whilst mulling, I at least renew my plea for Hong Kong to establish fast walking lanes on its pavements. Liverpool, England, announced three years ago it would introduce such lanes, though it was just a short-term trial rolled out by retailer Argos because people were apparently frustrated by the slow pace of other shoppers. The trial didn't last long - which yields the pioneer spot for speed-walking lanes to post-Mangkhut Asia.

Perhaps soon we might be urged to do our civic and environmental duty. "Walk fast and leave the sunscreen at home. There may be no trees, but at least save our oceans from lotions."

Failing that, I hope those in charge of our denuded environments choose the right type of new trees, which is surely any kind that will shoot quickly skyward. Hong Kong is famed for having a high-growth economy, but now the pressure is really on.

**THE SWISS COURT CLEARS EX-BANKER WHO GAVE SECRETS TO WIKILEAKS**

Switzerland's high court has upheld the acquittal of a former private banker who handed over confidential client information to WikiLeaks, ruling he wasn't bound by the country's strict banking secrecy laws at the time.

The Federal Tribunal validated a ruling by Zurich's regional supreme court in the case of Rudolf Elmer, a former top accountant at a Cayman Islands affiliate of Swiss bank Julius Baer who was fired in 2002.

The tribunal agreed yesterday that as an employee of the affiliate, Elmer wasn't bound by Swiss banking secrecy laws when he gave the information to WikiLeaks in 2008.

The secret-busting group went public with the information in 2011. The case increased pressure on Switzerland to relax its strict banking secrecy rules.

The tribunal upheld convictions against Elmer on other charges.

RETAIL

**Luxury shoppers in China are still buying bags, but not BMWs**



Angus Whitley, Daniela Wei

CHINA'S luxury shoppers may be shunning pricey autos, but they're still finding an appetite for handbags and champagne as the trade war plays out unevenly across the country's high-end retailing landscape.

Report cards from LVMH, home of Louis Vuitton leather goods and Dom Pérignon champagne, as well as casino operators in Macau offer signs that the trade fight with the U.S. and the accompanying economic slowdown aren't entirely derailed the China-led boom in top-end retail. That's helping to offset gloomier scenarios in BMW and Mercedes showrooms and luxury real-estate offices.

French giant LVMH said Tuesday its luxury retailer DFS performed especially well at the key Chinese tourist destinations of Hong Kong and the gambling enclave of Macau, while the company's wines and spirits business "grew rapidly" in China, too. LVMH said it did well in all its markets as it reported a 10 percent jump in third-quarter sales.

Chinese demand is "intact," said Deborah Aitken, senior analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence in London. "LVMH is the first to confirm Asian markets are buoyant."

The economic standoff between the U.S. and China escalated last month when President Donald Trump slapped a 10 percent duty on \$200 billion of Chinese imports including handbags, and said the levy will jump to 25 percent in 2019. China said it would retaliate with levies on \$60 billion worth of U.S. goods. As retailers pass on the duties to consumers and Chinese markets sell off, the tit-for-tat spat has raised concerns shoppers would rein in spending.

Chinese consumers make up the lion's share of growth for the luxury business as an increasing number of families cross the income threshold to become affluent.

Relief also showed up in Macau during the Golden Week holiday, which is often seen as a thermometer for China's economy. Chinese tourist arrivals in the world's largest gaming center for the period that ended Sunday jumped 14 percent from a year earlier. High rollers bet 10 percent more in the first six days of October than in the same period last year, according to Morgan Stanley.

Still, the casinos' robust performance isn't wiping out analyst concerns that the industry will grow at a slower pace in the next few months amid a weakening

macro economy in China.

Other sectors of the luxury market weren't so fortunate during Golden Week. While the holiday is typically a buoyant period for new-home sales, transactions this year were the lowest since at least 2014, according to China Securities Co. Official home-sales data for October is due next week.

Chinese households are also balking at committing to other big-ticket items. Jaguar Land Rover, the British marquee brand owned by Tata Motors Ltd., reported sales in China slumped 46 percent last month, amid uncertainty over import duty changes and trade tensions.

Fashion is holding up better. Chow Tai Fook Jewellery Group Ltd., the world's biggest jewelry retailer by revenue, notched double-digit sales growth in mainland China and Hong Kong for the three months ended June. Same-store sales in Hong Kong rose 26 percent, helped by "improving local consumer spending and reviving mainland visitation."

LVMH reported its results after the European market closed on Tuesday. The shares fell as much as 5.2 percent in early trading yesterday as Morgan Stanley downgraded the luxury-goods sector, citing slowing earnings growth. **Bloomberg**

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

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

**VATICAN CITY** The Vatican has confirmed that two Chinese bishops attending a major Vatican gathering for the first time will return home before delegates formulate their final conclusions for Pope Francis. The head of the Vatican's communications office, Paolo Ruffini, said there was "no surprise" in the early departure of Bishops Guo Jintai and Yang Xiaoting from the Oct. 3-28 synod on young people. He said it was known the two had other commitments that would cut short their participation.



**THAILAND** The son of former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was indicted on charges of money laundering, as pressure mounts on the ousted leader's political allies. Panthongtae Shinawatra (pictured) was arraigned by prosecutors for allegedly laundering 10 million baht (USD303,500) linked to an earlier corruption case involving Krungthai Bank.



**USA** Google will begin offering its pay-to-carpool service throughout the U.S., an effort to reduce the commute-time congestion that its popular Waze navigation app is designed to avoid. The expansion builds upon a carpooling system that Waze began testing two years ago in northern California and Israel before gradually extending it into Brazil and parts of 12 other states. Now it will be available to anyone in the U.S.



**UNITED NATIONS** The U.N. office for disaster risk reduction said that worldwide reported economic losses from earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, hurricanes and other climate-related disasters surged to total nearly USD2.9 trillion over the past 20 years.