

HEALTH

'Intelligent Medicine' builds grounds for further development

Renato Marques

THE first phase of the "Intelligent Medicine" program, which was established by the government as part of their "Smart City" plans to develop and improve local health care, has been completed. This lays down a foundation that will allow further development and "more visibility to the public," said Leong Kei Hong, chief of the Department of Organization and Information of the Health Bureau (SSM) during a press conference yesterday.

When presenting the preliminary results of the program's implementation, Leong said, "most of the works performed this year were related to the interconnection between the public and private sectors," particularly data sharing between institutions, such as patients' medical records and other important information that could facilitate diagnosis and treatment.

"This year's outcomes are not very obvious to [the] public because [they are mostly] related to infrastructure that is very important for the future," he noted. The SSM is currently working on a mobile application that "would allow citizens to perform several tasks and to



have access to records of their medical appointments, exams and results, medicine prescriptions and vaccination records, for example," he remarked.

As for work that is currently underway or already operational, Leong explained that it would allow for a great amount of statistics and comparative data to be collected, that "can help our leadership have a clear

idea of the use of the hospital [and other health care facilities in Macau]."

When questioned by the media, Leong stated that one of the reasons the SSM is developing a mobile app is "data privacy."

"We are coordinating the works and I think the government will launch it briefly, but we need to do many tests before launching it in order to assure

the security [level] and privacy," Leong replied.

In regards to the features and uses of the system currently in place, Leong noted that it allows data to be shared anonymously with external entities, such as other hospitals and healthcare centers, and organizes data into three indicators that allow the SSM to better manage its services and "define the risk [to] certain patients so we can follow up closely on some cases." For the time being, there are also two large screens that display information related to the system: one to the general public located in the lobby of the Conde de Sao Januário Hospital Center, and another for internal use, "which provides real-time informa-

tion on figures, attendance and other data that would allow us to respond to urgent cases, for instance."

Director of the SSM Lei Chin Ion said earlier, during his initial presentation, "during this first phase that started in the beginning of 2018 and lasted until November 30, we have performed works in areas such as the digitalization of the health vouchers, the set up of the big data platform for the [medical system] of Macau and privacy protection. We hope that with the conclusion of works we can reach the three goals we proposed: unifying data from several services and entities, fulfilling the supply of information at the interdepartmental level, and improving health services, providing a better service and making it more convenient [for the public]."

In a response to the media, Lei said currently 20,000 people have voluntarily registered to use the eHR Pilot Program, which launched February 28, 2017.

As for challenges in the implementation of the program and system, the representative of Alibaba Cloud Systems, Zhu Jontong, noted that they are mostly related to the "many variants and many interfaces [in use by the different health services and departments in Macau] that are not unified," he said. "The protocols among different institutions are not unified and they use different names and classifications, for example for diagnosis or treatment. [The Macau healthcare system] works like 'isolated islands' without any contact [between services or institutions]," he added, noting that the project aims to "combine the great power of the cloud to help institutions to improve their efficiency and capacity, making service more convenient and efficient for the public."

Gov't to enforce a special 'monitoring system' for seniors

THE Chief of the Department of Organization and Information of the SSM, Leong Kei Hong, said during yesterday's press conference that the government is implementing a specially dedicated system that aims to monitor of the use of healthcare services and needs of the elderly.

"We have a special system just for the elderly [population] in which we can monitor the number of visits to hospital [or health care centers] as well as problems registered during those visits," Leong said, adding that the SSM can also check in-depth data that includes "which departments or branches they use more, what kind of services they require, and in this way we can draft a plan [specifically dedicated] for the medical appointments of the elderly."

According to the official, the same applies to "special diseases" like influenza and other infectious conditions, and emergency room visits, where services can "compare data per year and month... so we can analyze tendencies and perform a forecast [of the incidence of such diseases]."



Leong Kei Hong

In Leong's words, the purpose is to allow the SSM to obtain the "full picture" of the situation in hospitals as well as in the health care centers so "we can also know which places are more overcrowded on external appointments so the leaders can also manage human resources better."

LEI CONFIRMS POSTPONEMENT OF DORMITORY CONSTRUCTION

THE HEALTH Bureau (SSM) director, Lei Chin Ion, confirmed yesterday that the SSM has decided to postpone the construction of the dormitory building of the Islands District Medical Complex. According to Lei, "the complex has seven buildings, the most important [ones being] the medical building and the laboratory. The dormitory building is the kind of construction that can be built later, because it is only for the use of frontline workers when there is an emergency,"



Lei Chin Ion

he said, adding that such a delay would have no impact on overall medical operation at the complex.

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Times

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MDT – You are probably the best-known Hollywood actor in China and Asia. What in your filmography do you think appeals to these audiences?

NC – I think much of my success in this region is down to working with Chinese and other Asian filmmakers like John Woo and the Pang Brothers. I have been coming here for many years and have developed a great relationship with the people of China and I hope that will continue for a long time.

It's the wonderful confluence of Chinese and Portuguese cultures that makes for the perfect place to shoot a film.

CAGE (NOT) LEAVING MACAU

'I would love to shoot here!'

Paulo Coutinho

IT was right after his masterclass on Sunday that we were able to “flash” interview Nicolas Cage.

During the one-hour class moderated by Mike Goodridge and attended by hundreds of fans, film professionals, journalists and critics, Cage reviewed his career and particularly his major contributions to cinema – “Moonstruck,” “Vampire’s Kiss,” “Raising Arizona,” “Wild at Heart,” “Leaving Las Vegas,” “Face/Off,” “Con Air,” “Adaptation”...

He looked to Marlon Brando and James Dean for inspiration, just as he looked to Elvis and Andy Warhol. He wanted to break rules, combine all these actors or artforms and create something new for himself, “moving away from naturalism

to a sort of art-synchronism.”

“I could very easily [have gotten] fired for doing that,” he teased.

Instead, David Lynch and the Coen Brothers welcomed his wild performances. Mickey Rourke, at a point, “was [his] mentor,” long after his father introduced him to the classics and horror movies played at home “with a very old film projector.”

The most difficult character Nicolas Cage ever had to perform was that of a man who drank to his death in Las Vegas after enduring a divorce and losing his job in Los Angeles. Cage told the audience in a ballroom at Wynn Macau how he got inspiration from famous “drunks” of the silver screen: Jack Lemmon (“Days of Wine and Roses”), Dudley Moore (“Arthur”), and, mostly, Albert Finney (“Under the Volcano”).

“That guy [Finney’s character] is REALLY drunk!” he laughed.

“Luckily [“Leaving Las Vegas”] was shot in six weeks; I couldn’t bear it if it were six months.”

“The film was being rejected at first. It was too dark for Hollywood,” he recalled studio managers’ reaction to the script. Eventually, it was made by a big studio and Hollywood applauded Cage’s deadly performance, giving him the Oscar for Best Actor.

International Film Festival and Awards Macao (IFFAM)’s most talented ambassador was about to leave Macau when we met briefly, with a promise to return. He likes it here and finds the place extremely cinematic.

Macau Daily Times – It is not the first time you have come to Macau, and you

seem to like it here. Why did you accept the role of Talent Ambassador for IFFAM2018?

Nicolas Cage – I do like it here! I accepted the invitation to be the Talent Ambassador as it’s an exciting opportunity to meet other people who are as enthusiastic about international cinema as I am.

MDT – What are your expectations of the festival and your participation in it?

NC – My expectation is for festivalgoers to enjoy a really marvelous lineup of movies that are the best in the industry so far, as well as exploring emerging new talent. I hope my participation in the festival helps raise awareness of the class and seriousness of IFFAM as it expands its worldwide reach.

MDT – Your latest movie “Mandy” [premiered] here at the festival. What is your take on the film?

NC – I think the film is a unique experience made by a visionary filmmaker in Panos Cosmatos – it is an intense visionary nightmare.

MDT – Do you find Macau, its ambiance and history, attractive for a Hollywood production? Would you like to shoot here?

NC – I would love to shoot in Macau! It’s the wonderful confluence of the Chinese and Portuguese cultures that makes for the perfect place to shoot a film. The combination of the architecture, the food, [and] the people is fantastic. Especially the people – they are just warm and welcoming. I would not hesitate to come back.

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SONIA CHAN

No preliminary direction on illegal guesthouse criminalization

SECRETARY for Administration and Justice Sonia Chan has said that, in relation to the issue of illegal guesthouses, she will proceed with an in-depth study and will articulate the opinions of the Secretary for Security and the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture. However, she pointed out that there is no preliminary direction yet.



Sonia Chan

On the sidelines of Sunday's Charity Walk for a Million, Chan said that the Chief Executive had already instructed her to proceed with studies on how to handle illegal guesthouses, and to articulate and analyze the views of the aforementioned secretaries.

Chan explained that the study must analyze key issues before the government reaches a consensus,

including an examination of all the cases that took place over the last two years, as well as each case's conclusion. Chan said declared that her secretariat needs time to conduct an in-depth study.

While presenting at the charity march, Secretary for Security Wong Siu Chak said that his secretariat would fully cooperate with Chan in regards to the study. He added that prior to the study being com-

plete, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) would continue to collaborate on illegal guesthouse crackdowns.

In addition to Chan and Wong, the Prosecutor General of the Public Prosecutions Office, Ip Son Sang, noted that the illegal guesthouse issue is one which has disturbed the local community for a long time and has greatly impacted residents.

However, the Prosecutor

General believes that society needs to be cautious when handling the criminalization of illegal guesthouses.

Ip noted that criminalization is the last step concerning legal principles, and that it should not be implemented until the last moment.

Ip explained that the illegal guesthouse issue is rather complex and sensitive, with the topic involving tourism development and guesthouse supply to tourists.

Regarding whether it would be unsuitable to criminalize illegal guesthouses, Ip said, "It can't be said like that."

"It is difficult to simply say that once there is a criminal system, problems can be solved. I think this problem cannot be seen like that," affirmed Ip.

Animal embalming museum to be complete in 2019

AN animal embalming museum is expected to be completed by the end of next year, according to the president of the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM), José Tavares.

The government will try to launch the public tender for the museum in the first quarter of 2019.

The museum will be located in Coloane. The first phase of BoBo the bear's embalming has already been completed.

Once the embalming is complete, the bear will first be preserved by the government and will later be on display to the public once the museum is completed.

In addition, the IACM is accusing Yat Yuen Canidrome of abandoning greyhounds, according to Tavares.

The IACM president noted that the prosecution procedure regarding the reportedly abandoned animals is ongoing. In the prosecution statement, the IACM proposed fining Yat Yuen Canidrome MOP50,000 for each abandoned greyhound.



A memorial to Bobo bear at Flora Garden

In total, the IACM is fining the company in more than MOP25 million. IACM hopes the Canidrome can continue the overseas adoption of greyhounds.

Tavares hopes the company can continue to bear the cost of the the IACM keeping the dogs. Earlier, Yat Yuen paid MOP4 million corresponding to the cost until the end of November.

Regarding the fines, Angela Leong, the executive director of Yat Yuen, said that she was unaware of the situation, including whether her company will or will not appeal the fines.

ALBERGUE SCM
 婆仔屋文創空間

Vestiges of Lines
 線·跡
Vestígios de Linhas

Guilherme Ung Vai Meng
 吳衛鳴

On the Occasion of the Celebration of the 19th Anniversary of Macau Handover to China

12 / 12 / 2018 → 13 / 02 / 2019

Opening Ceremony
 December 12th 2018, 18:30 (Wednesday)

Opening Hours
 Monday, from 03:00PM to 08:00PM
 Tuesday to Sunday, from 12:00PM to 08:00PM

Exhibition Venue
 Albergue SCM – A2 Gallery

Free Admission

ALBERGUE SCM ALBcreativeLAB
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2018
13 - 22 December

Photography Exhibition - "Bicycles of Macao"
 by António Duarte Mil-Homens

Opening - 13 December - 6:30pm
 Bicycles/Dance/Music Performance
 with Alexandra Battaglia, António Mil-Homens and Paulo Pereira

Lecture - 15 December - 3pm
 "Urban Mobility, Non-polluting Vehicles and Bicycle Use in Macau"
 (participants are invited to attend with their own bicycle)

4.30pm - Short bicycle ride around Macau

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Sou questions budget increases for handover celebration



Sulu Sou

LAWMAKER Sulu Sou has asked the government to explain the reasoning behind big budget increases for celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the handover in particular.

"I believe that, in the name of the handover celebration, public funds, which will be spent across all kinds of activities, related projects and human resources, will be countless. It is worth examining which expenditures may not be necessary," Sou wrote in his inquiry to the government.

The 2019 budget for the Protocol, Public Relations and External Affairs Office was increased by 131.5 percent, from MOP76 million this year to MOP176 million.

"The government explained that it [the budget] serves to bear the budgets for preparing a series of activities for the celebration of the

20th anniversary of the handover," Sou wrote, listing other budget increases also justified using the 20th anniversary of the handover.

"In view of the facts that the budget of many departments, for instance, the Protocol Office, surged by 100 million simply because of the handover celebration, and that other departments and autonomous organizations have also seen a significant increase in the budget related to the handover celebration, how will the government review the relevant budget expenditures in line with the principle of no waste?" Sou asked.

"May I ask the SAR government to summarize the respective budget amounts of the departments and the autonomous organizations related to the handover celebration and also the total amount?" Sou asked.

Ung Vai Meng exhibition opens tomorrow

THE exhibition "Vestiges of Lines, Guilherme Ung Vai Meng" will open tomorrow at Albergue SCM. Marking the 19th anniversary of Macau's handover to China, this exhibition will feature five collections, including the "Instant Series," "Chinese Opera Series," "Saints Series," "Angel Series" and "Sketch Series." According to the organizer, Albergue SCM, the works featured were completed in the last five years.

Ung Vai Meng was born in Macau where he later received formal artistic training from Master Kam Cheong Ling. He completed his master's degree at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts. In 2010, he obtained his PhD in Art History at the China Academy of Art.

Between 2010 and 2017, he was appointed president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau. Currently, he is a guest professor and "doctoral mentor" at the Macau University of Science and Technology. As an artist, Ung Vai Meng has held a num-



ber of solo exhibitions in Macau, Hong Kong, China and Europe.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Macau Foundation and will be open to the public at the A2 Gallery of Albergue SCM every day until Feb. 13, with free admission.



WHOLE PERSON DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

MELCO fosters career advancement for employees and standards of excellence

GAMING company Melco Resorts & Entertainment Limited (NASDAQ: MLCO) highly values its Whole Person Development philosophy, the driving ideology behind many of the initiatives which extend the training and knowledge of employees by offering a multitude of training opportunities. One exciting initiative under the Whole Person Development philosophy is the Foundation Acceleration Program (FAP) which generates a deeper and more holistic understanding of the company's operations. This is achieved by placing participating Melco colleagues into roles they normally would not perform within their own field, challenging them to experience work in entirely different streams. Supporting practical experience with classroom-based theory and mentorship from a member of their management team, participants ultimately are left with a broader skillset which elevates the standard of service they offer while immeasurably increasing opportunities for their career advancement and future managerial roles. Nathan Lam, a Melco employee who participated in the FAP, said that thanks to the initiative, he "feel(s) well-prepared and ready for future challenges."

The focus on nurturing staff development to foster excellence has seen Melco staff receive several accolades over the years for the standards of their service and talent. In April 2018, Melco won several awards at the Food & Hotel Asia Culinary Challenge 2018 – Asia's most prestigious and challenging

culinary competition. Beating 800 competitors, including teams from the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia, and Singapore, Melco was awarded a gold medal and named the overall first runner up in the Gourmet Team Challenge. In individual challenge categories, Melco culinary team members secured one gold, three silver, and two bronze medals. This incredible performance saw Melco be invited to represent Macau in the IKA/Culinary Olympics in Stuttgart, Germany, in 2020. This marks the first time that Macau will be represented at the largest by invite only international professional competition for chefs, cooks, and pastry chefs, and is a testament to the hard work and skill of Melco's team members and the quality of service which can be found across Melco properties. It's perhaps hardly surprising that the Michelin Guide 2017 and 2018 awarded Melco the highest number of Michelin-starred restaurants in Macau.

The service excellence provided by Melco was also reflected in the fact that, on October 30, three Melco hospitality employees were recognized by the Hotelier Awards Greater China 2018. Lawrence Ho, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Melco Resorts & Entertainment commented that it is "a testament to our dedication to product and service excellence, and a tribute to our committed team of hospitality professionals who work seamlessly to create a remarkable and memorable experience for our discerning guests."



This article is sponsored by Melco Resorts & Entertainment

Taiwan-Macau fuel surcharge decreased

The fuel surcharge for all flights departing Taiwan and arriving in Macau has been decreased from USD20 to USD17.50, with the change taking effect from Sunday. According to a notice on the Air Macau website, the fuel surcharge, which is adjusted in accordance with fuel prices on a monthly basis, will be "applied per flight sector and collected based on the journey's [origin]." The charge is applied to adults, children and infants.

Legal Affairs Bureau organizes Greater Bay common heritage workshop

The Legal Affairs Bureau (DSAJ) will co-organize a workshop on the "Common Cultural Heritage of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area" with the Institute of European Studies of Macau (IEEM) in the Lotus Room of the Grand Lapa Hotel, Macau on Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The workshop is incorporated in the 3rd Cooperation Program in the Legal Area between the Macau SAR and the EU. With the themes of the "Preservation and Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Greater Bay Area" and the "Common Lingnam Cultural Heritage in the Greater Bay Area: Current Perspective and Preservation of Tangible and Intangible Heritage", the workshop aims at providing a common platform for academics and experts in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, with a view to exchange professional knowledge about the common cultural heritage and its legal implications as well as the best practical implications in this area in order to contribute to the preservation of the common cultural heritage in the Greater Bay Area.

MOTORSPORT

Macau GP organizers reluctant to adopt new cars

MACAU Grand Prix organizers are reluctant to adopt the new generation of Formula 3 racing cars and are considering sticking with older models prior to next year's revamp, according to a report from motorsport.com.

The news website suggested the annual racing event may rebrand outside of the current Formula 3 jurisdiction, inviting racers from other series to participate in a separate, non-championship event.

Last month's incident involving 17-year-old racing driver Sophia Flörsch has reportedly raised concerns for organizers about adopting even faster machines on the difficult Guia Circuit.

Flörsch's single-seater collided with Japanese driver Sho Tsuboi's car at high speed in the final hours of the Grand Prix event, tearing through a



Sophia Flörsch's car flies during the Macau GP

catch fence at the Lisboa bend and injuring several people. The accident left the young F3 driver with spinal fractures that warranted a seven-hour surgery and an extended stay at the Conde de São Januário General Hospital.

Citing unnamed sources from a Grand Prix orga-

nizer meeting after the Macau event, motorsport.com said that organizers were reluctant to adopt certain changes necessary to be classified as Grade 2, because the new-for-2019 F3 cars might carry too much momentum for the Guia Circuit and cause even more serious accidents.

The 2012-2018 generation of F3 cars produce 240 bhp and can achieve speeds of 270 km/h. The new generation will reach 380 bhp and a projected top speed of 300 km/h.

The Guia Circuit's current homologation as Grade 3 means a maximum possible weight-to-power ratio of 2:1, meaning that the newer cars would need to weigh at least 760 kg, significantly more than the 580 kg required of older cars.

Instead, the news website suggests the Macau Grand Prix might continue as a non-championship event separate from Formula 3, "allowing teams to import drivers from other series for a one-off event."

However, the Macau government is still understood to prefer to continue working with the FIA, which may lead to a period of negotiation between Grand Prix organizers and local authorities.

AD





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Jury calls on IFFAM to act as platform for emerging directors

Lynzy Valles

THE main jury of the third International Film Festival and Awards Macao (IFFAM) commended the event for featuring films directed by young directors, thus calling on the festival to be a platform for emerging directors.

The jury features Chinese director Chen Kaige, Hong Kong filmmaker Mabel Cheung, Indian actress Tillotama Shome, Australian producer and director Paul Currie and Bosnian director Danis Tanovic.

At a press conference held yesterday at the Macau Museum of Art, the jury recalled the first films and film festivals they had participated in at the beginning of their careers.

For Chen, who is the president of the jury, his first movie "King of Children" was initially introduced at the Cannes Film Festival.

"I knew nothing about Cannes [...] I was like an idiot just looking around without any idea of what was going to happen. I did not really expect to win an award but I learned a lot," Chen told the press.

"I was encouraged by the main festivals and I hope IFFAM can do the same for the younger generation of filmmakers," he added.

Chen is a leading figure in the Fifth Generation of Chinese cinema and is the only Chinese filmmaker to have won the Palme d'Or at Cannes, which he won for



From left: Paul Currie, Danis Tanovic, Mabel Cheung, Tillotama Shome, Chen Kaige and Mike Goodridge

Farewell My Concubine in 1993.

When commenting on the competition section of this year's IFFAM – which highlights movies that have been directed by young filmmakers for the first and second time – Chen commended the directors, describing their films as "poetic."

"I can see some new talents just coming out and [it is] something different from other generations. I think that some of them did really well from an artistic point of view. You can see that their movies are kind of poetic," the Golden Globe winner said, "There are a lot of new talents. Whether they studied at Beijing Film Academy or not, there is a voice from them. I think it's wonderful [as] everybody knows that the market is becoming bigger [...] so [we] need to continue to make good mo-

vies," he added.

This year, IFFAM's competition focused on the first and second movies of young filmmakers.

The 11 selected films include "Ága," "All Good," "Clean Up," "Jesus," "Scarborough," "School's Out," "Suburban Birds," "The Good Girls," "The Guilty," "The Man Who Feels No Pain" and "White Blood."

Tanovic also remarked that first- and second-time film direction is no easy task, citing several challenges including funding.

His movie "No Man's Land" won the screenplay prize at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival, and won the Academy Award and Golden Globe for best foreign language film in 2002.

"What happens when you make your first film that is good is it puts you in the spotlight. It's not easier to make it, but at least people know about you, and it's

never easy to get money to make films, but at least there are some people who are interested that come and try to help you," said the Oscar-winning Bosnian director.

"I was joking the other day that Bosnia is a country with 3 million people and a good movie might not be seen by a lot of people, [while a] bad film in China at least will be seen by 50 million [people]," Tanovic joked.

I think it's wonderful when festivals really look at next generation talents.

PAUL CURRIE
JURY MEMBER

Meanwhile, Currie remarked that it is important for film festivals to be open to new voices and their ways of telling stories to audiences.

"I love that [the festival features] first- and second-time directors. I think they are really in a critical time in their career to reach a spotlight and have a focus on them. We can make a huge difference," said Currie.

"I think it's wonderful when festivals really look at next generation talents because our industry keeps growing and gets better. There are richer stories, more access but different cultures," he added.

Meanwhile, Cheung remarked, "I can see the energy and lack of burden and their willingness to try. Everything is new so we should approach every film like them."

Ng Kuok Cheong asks for Central Provident Fund review

Lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong has urged the government to review the city's Central Provident Fund system. In his written inquiry provided to the government, Ng asked the government to report on the fund participation of the six gaming operators and the nearly 40 hotels that also have casinos within their premises. The lawmaker questioned why some casinos do not participate in the fund. In addition to casinos, Ng also pointed out the participation situation of special concessionaires, education and social service organizations, which are subsidized by the government, in the Central Provident Fund.

IPIM corruption case still under investigation

On Sunday, Commissioner Against Corruption Cheung Weng Chon and Prosecutor General of the Public Prosecutions Office Ip Son Sang said that authorities were still investigating the misconduct of the President of the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion (IPIM), Jackson Chang, as well as that of two other high-ranking officials. Cheung said that when authorities sue the three, the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) would reveal the accusations to the public. Ip also said that the case needs a longer period for analysis, further noting that once the court has an official trial schedule, the prosecution authority will announce the detailed accusations. Regarding whether or not the three men are involved in corruption, Ip said that it would be unfair to the suspects at the current stage to reveal the accusations.

Wong: No extreme situation concerning illegal tour guides

The Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak said that the Public Security Police (PSP) and the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) have been working closely to combat mainland tour guides who practice in Macau. Ever since the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, mainland tour guides have reportedly been leading tour groups to visit Hong Kong and Macau. Wong said that once PSP finds any illegal tour guides, it will inform MGTO. However, at this stage PSP does not have data to indicate whether or not there is an abnormal situation with illegal tour guides.



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Prosecutors indict Nissan's Ghosn for underreporting pay

Mari Yamaguchi, Yuri Kageyama

PROSECUTORS have charged Nissan Motor Co.'s former chairman Carlos Ghosn, another executive and the automaker itself for allegedly violating financial laws by underreporting income.

The charges imposed yesterday involve allegations Ghosn's pay was underreported by about 5 billion yen (USD44 million) in 2011-2015. The prosecutors said earlier that the allegations were the reason for Ghosn's arrest on Nov. 19.

The arrest of an industry icon admired both in Japan and around the world has stunned many and raised concerns over the Japanese automaker and the future of its alliance with Renault SA of France.

The prosecutors issued statements yesterday outlining new allegations against Ghosn and Greg Kelly, the other executive. Those are of underreporting another 4 billion yen (\$36 million) in 2016-2018. Nissan as a company was not mentioned in the latest allegations, which did not give details about the income thought to have been underreported.

In Japan, a company can be charged with wrongdoing. A court date is still undecided as the prosecutors continue to question Ghosn and Kelly. The maximum penalty for violating Japan's financial laws, as the prosecutors allege, is 10 years in prison, a 10 million yen (\$89,000) fine, or both.

Some kind of action by the prosecutors had been expected



Carlos Ghosn

because the detention period allowed for the allegations disclosed earlier was to end yesterday. Nissan Motor Co. confirmed the charges against it in a statement and vowed to strengthen its governance and compliance. "Nissan takes this situation extremely seriously," it said. "Making false disclosures in annual securities reports greatly harms the integrity of Nissan's public disclosures in the securities markets, and the company expresses its deepest regret."

Kelly, 62, an American, is suspected of having collaborated with Ghosn. Kelly's attorney in the U.S., Aubrey Harwell, told The Associated Press earlier this month that his client is asserting his innocence. He said insiders at Nissan and outside experts had said the handling of the in-

come reporting was legal.

Ghosn has not commented. He was ousted as Nissan chairman and Kelly lost his representative director title following their arrests. They both remain on Nissan's board pending a shareholder's meeting.

Ghosn, 64, was sent to Nissan by its partner Renault SA of France in 1999. He led a dramatic turnaround of the near-bankrupt Japanese automaker. But his star-level compensation drew attention since executives in Japan tend to be paid far less than their international counterparts.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a news conference yesterday that relations between Japan and France are unshakable despite concerns over the future of Nissan's alliance with Renault after Ghosn's indict-

ment.

"It is important to maintain stability in the Nissan-Renault-Mitsubishi alliance, which is a symbol of industrial cooperation between Japan and France," he told a televised news conference Monday, adding that Japan will promote improved corporate governance in line with global standards.

It is typical in the Japanese legal system for there to be little access to comment by suspects. Prosecutors have also said little. Only Ghosn's attorneys and embassy officials from Lebanon, France and Brazil, where he has citizenship, have been allowed to visit him.

Shin Kukimoto, deputy chief prosecutor at the Tokyo District Prosecutor's Office, declined Monday to say if the suspects were rejecting the allegations.

He said Ghosn and Kelly were being detained because they are considered flight risks.

Japan's criminal justice system long has been criticized for detaining people for extended periods to pressure them to confess. The conviction rate for those charged is more than 99 percent.

Kukimoto denied that prosecutors were working to force confessions. "We do not have such a scenario. There is no such thing and we do not force suspects to make confessions to fit the story," he said in response to a reporter's question.

The prosecutors issued statements yesterday outlining new allegations against Ghosn and Greg Kelly, the other executive

Meanwhile, the Securities and Exchange Commission said it had filed criminal complaints against Ghosn, Nissan and Kelly, paving the way for the prosecutors to charge them. A commission official said Monday that Nissan, Ghosn and Kelly were suspected of falsifying reports on millions of dollars' worth of Ghosn's income.

Nissan has said that an internal investigation found three types of misconduct: underreporting income to financial authorities, using investment funds for personal gain and illicit use of company expenses. **AP**

Music giant backed by Pony Ma is poised to spin new billionaires

Venus Feng

A lawyer, a computer scientist and China's third-richest person are poised to create one of the year's biggest hits in the music industry.

Co-presidents Xie Zhenyu and Xie Guomin are on the brink of becoming billionaires as Tencent Music Entertainment Group prepares a public stock offering in New York that may value the company at USD24.5 billion. Zhenyu's fortune could be \$952 million if they price at the upper end of the range provided

in a prospectus, and Guomin's \$922 million.

Edmond Lococo, an external spokesman for Tencent Music, said the company declined to comment on their net worth.

This week's IPO will give American investors the opportunity to speculate on the expanding Chinese market for music-streaming services. Tencent's growth in China mirrors inroads by Spotify in the U.S., where streaming has helped music sales grow at their fastest rate since the 1990s.

Revenue at China's largest online music entertainment platform, which counts Pony Ma's Tencent Holdings Ltd. as its biggest shareholder, surged 152 percent last year to 11 billion yuan (\$1.6 billion). PAG Capital Ltd. is the second-largest owner, followed by Spotify Technology SA.

Guomin, 44, worked as an attorney after he graduated from Peking University and joined Sina Corp., parent of China's version of Twitter, in 1999. He served stints as vice president of public relations, general coun-

sel and general manager of Sina Music. In 2012, he founded China Music Corp., or CMC, which specialized in music copyright. CMC acquired online music service provider Kuwo the following year.

Zhenyu, 43, started out as a technical engineer at China Merchants Bank in 1998 after receiving a degree in computer science from Sun-Yat Sen University. He quit that job to found SoGua Music, China's first digital music search engine, according to the prospectus. In 2004, he set up music



Pony Ma

company Kugou, which merged with rival Kuwo a decade later. Tencent acquired a majority stake of CMC, the parent company of Kugou and Kuwo, in 2016 and renamed the combined entity Tencent Music.

The company's platforms are becoming important vehicles for pop stars such as Katy Perry and Rihanna to reach a Chinese audience, alongside homegrown artists such as Jason Zhang and Joker Xue. **Bloomberg**

ANALYSIS

Beyond Huawei, scientist's death is a blow for China

Shuli Ren

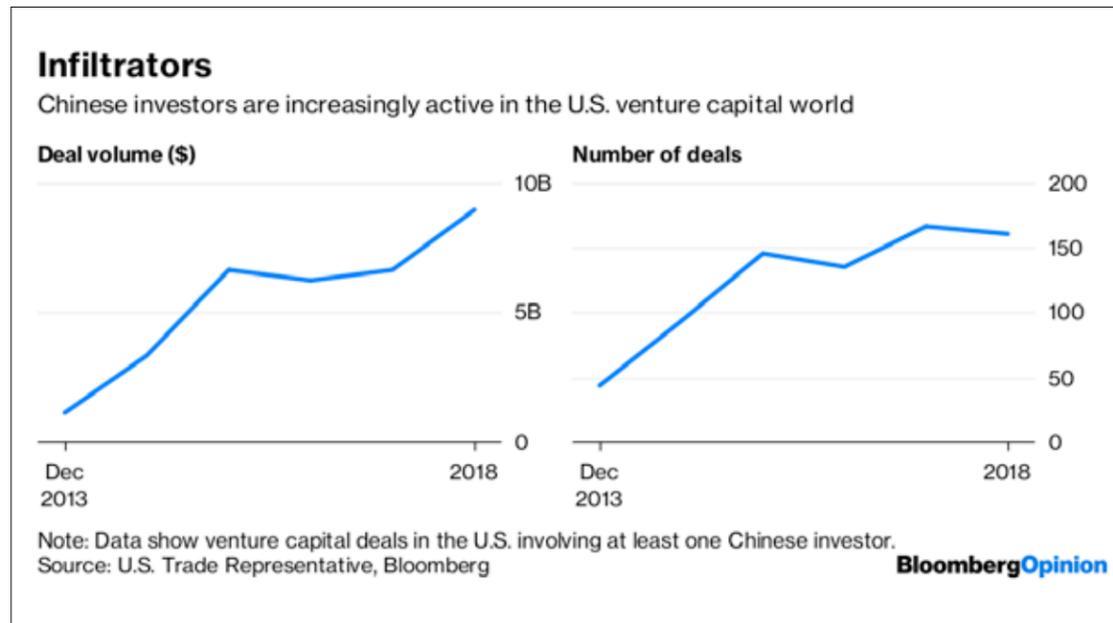
THE death of a prominent Chinese scientist in the U.S. has passed comparatively unnoticed beside the blizzard of global headlines devoted to the Huawei dispute, yet the tragedy bears upon another important aspect of Beijing's quest for technological leadership.

Zhang Shoucheng, an internationally recognized Stanford University physicist and venture capitalist, died on Dec. 1, the same day that the chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies Co. was arrested in Vancouver. The 55-year-old had been battling depression, the South China Morning Post reported, citing an email from the Shanghai-born scientist's family. In a later statement, the family said there was no truth in speculation on Chinese social media that Zhang's death was connected to a possible U.S. government investigation into his venture capital fund, the newspaper reported.

The scientist, who had been tipped as a future Nobel Prize winner for his work on quantum physics, founded a USD400 million fund that invests in Silicon Valley startups and was active in helping U.S.-trained Chinese researchers to return home.

His death highlights a deep pool of Beijing-backed money that has been passing under the public radar.

Consider the fund Zhang founded. Danhua Capital was cited in a report last month by the Office of the United States Trade Representative



after an investigation into China's technology policies and practices.

The way the USTR sees it, China is infiltrating Silicon Valley. Between 2015 and 2017, 10 percent to 16 percent of venture capital deals counted Chinese investors as participants.

The report singled out Zhang's firm as an example of the new tactics China is using to obtain U.S. technology. The fund lists 113 U.S. companies in its portfolio, most falling within emerging sectors that the Chinese government has identified as strategic priorities, according to the report. At least one "has reportedly decided to reduce operations in Silicon Valley and open operations in China," it said.

For years, China relied on government subsidies to encourage development of key industries. But starting in

2014, subsidies gave way to so-called "guidance funds", or state-backed funds of funds that act like venture capital and private equity firms. As of the first half, various levels of the government had established 1,171 guidance funds, aiming to raise and deploy a staggering 5.9 trillion yuan (\$858 billion).

Danhua Capital, also known as Digital Horizon Capital, is a major beneficiary of China's shift into guidance funds. It counts Zhongguancun Development Group, a state-backed investment fund with more than 10 billion yuan in assets, as a major investor. The firm invests in artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain and other disruptive technology sectors.

To be sure, there is no evidence that Danhua Capital has been following Beijing's bidding. And government-

backed venture capital funds aren't a Chinese invention. Beijing may have been inspired by the U.S., where the Small Business Innovation Research program made early investments in Apple Inc. and Intel Corp. The U.S. Small Business Investment Co. has \$26 billion in assets under management.

But one can see why these Chinese state-backed funds make the U.S. government nervous.

The scale is unprecedented. For instance, the \$21 billion China Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund, established in September 2014 and nicknamed the "Big Fund," is reportedly raising another \$47 billion this year. In addition, there's already evidence that shows China is abandoning fund-of-funds best practices.

In a 2014 interview, Zhongguancun, set up in the early

2000s long before the recent explosion of guidance funds, said that it would contribute to no more than 30 percent of the total capital of venture capital funds in which it invested, and that it would not interfere with fund managers' decisions. In other words, it would act only as a passive investor.

But the new kids on the block aren't abiding by the old rules. For instance, this May, China's largest chip foundry company, Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp., partnered with the Big Fund to establish a new 1.8 billion yuan venture capital vehicle. The fund is clearly in the driver's seat: It contributed 49.5 percent of the capital and owns 15 percent of SMIC.

[Zhang Shoucheng's] death highlights a deep pool of Beijing-backed money that has been passing under the public radar

In August, the U.S. government signed an update to legislation for the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S., broadening governmental scrutiny to vetting VC-backed, and especially Chinese state-funded, investments in U.S. tech startups.

With Zhang's death, China has lost a valuable connection to the newest technology in Silicon Valley. But my bet is that Beijing won't ease back on its aggressive tactics. The wall of money is too big and the strategic imperative to upgrade China's technology is too great. **Bloomberg**

Gene-editing scientist's project rejected for WHO database

THE global medical community is distancing itself further from the researcher whose controversial gene-editing work has been condemned by scientists and the Chinese government.

A Chinese branch of the World Health Organization has withdrawn an application to register He Jiankui's project in its clinical database. The move comes after China's government halted He's work, saying it would take a

"zero tolerance attitude in dealing with dishonorable behavior" in research.

He has faced a global backlash after claiming to have produced the world's first gene-edited babies in a bid to make them HIV-resistant. The project drew international criticism for its lack of transparency, with health officials and other scientists concerned that it raises ethical questions that will taint other work in the field.

The application to enter the database of the Chinese Clinical Trial Registry was rejected because "the original applicants cannot provide the individual participants' data for reviewing," according to the registry's website.

The application was uploaded to the website on Nov. 8 and updated on Nov. 30, the registry said. The site serves as a registry of Chinese trials. If the application is successful, project information

is sent to the clinical trial platform of the WHO, and that data is then searchable on its global website.

He's whereabouts are still unknown. Hong Kong newspaper Apple Daily cited unnamed sources earlier this month that the researcher was put on house arrest by his university, Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, but representatives of the university and He's lab both declined to comment. **Bloomberg**



MENG WANZHOU

Beijing pressures US, Canada ahead of Huawei hearing

Ken Moritsugu, Beijing

CHINA raised the pressure on the United States and Canada as a bail hearing for a top Chinese technology executive was set to resume today [Macau time] in Vancouver, British Columbia.

A headline in a Communist Party newspaper called Canada's treatment of Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies, "inhumane." The editorial published in yesterday's Global Times followed formal government protests to the ambassadors of both Canada and the United States over the weekend.

Meng was detained on Dec. 1 while changing planes in Vancouver. The U.S. wants her extradited. It alleges Huawei used a Hong Kong shell company to evade U.S. trade curbs on Iran.

Her arrest could fuel U.S.-China trade tensions at a time when the two sides are seeking to resolve a dispute over Beijing's technology and industrial strategy. Both sides have sought to keep the issues separate, at least so far.

"This is a criminal justice matter," U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said on CBS' "Face the Nation". "It is totally separate from anything that I work on or anything that the trade policy people in the administration work on. [...] We have a lot of very big, very important issues. We've got serious people working on them, and I don't think they'll be affected by this."

The hearing on whether to grant her release on bail was due to resume today. Canadian prosecutor John Gibb-Carsley asked the court Friday to reject Meng's bail request. Justice William Ehrcke said he would think about proposed bail conditions over the weekend.

Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng summoned Canadian Ambassador John McCallum on Saturday and American Ambassador Terry Branstad on Sunday. He called Meng's detention "extremely egregious" and demanded that the U.S. vacate the arrest warrant, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Le warned both countries that Beijing will take steps based on their response. Asked yesterday what those steps might be, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said only that "it totally depends on the Canadian side itself."

The Canadian province of British Columbia has already canceled a trade mission to China amid fears China could detain Canadians in retaliation for Meng's detention.



Commercial retaliation against firms from countries at odds with China has grown increasingly common as Beijing exercises its leverage as the world's second largest economy.

■ The hearing on whether to grant her release on bail was due to resume today

Authorities closed most of Lotte's supermarkets in China after the South Korean retailer sold land at home for a U.S. anti-missile system that was stridently opposed by Beijing.

At least two companies are rallying to support Huawei.

Shenzhen Menpad Technology Group, which makes teleconferencing, security monitoring and hotel TV systems, is offering a 15 percent subsidy to employees who buy Huawei mobile phones. It also said it would not buy American vehicles, computers and other office equipment and that employees buying Apple iPhones would be fined.

A major wine importer is offering employees a 10 percent discount on Huawei products for the next six months, according to a notice circulating on social media.

While such movements have grassroots support, they are al-

most certainly countenanced by the ruling Communist Party. The government doesn't confirm its role to avoid damaging its image as a champion of free trade.

Huawei, the biggest global supplier of network gear for phone and internet companies, has become the target of U.S. security concerns because of its ties to the Chinese government. The U.S. has pressured other countries to limit use of its technology, warning they could be opening themselves up to surveillance and theft of information.

Canadian officials have declined to comment on Chinese threats of retaliation, instead emphasizing the independence of Canada's judiciary and the importance of Ottawa's relationship with Beijing.

Both the Global Times and the China Daily noted that Meng had been handcuffed and wore ankle restraints. "It is hard to escape the conclusion that her treatment is something of a show trial intended to humiliate her and the Chinese people," the China Daily said in a Monday editorial.

While protesting what it calls Canada's violation of Meng's human rights, the Communist Party is regularly accused by outsiders of rights violations at home. They include the widespread interment of Muslims in restive regions without due process to refusing to allow citizens of other countries to leave China to pressure their Chinese relatives living overseas and accused of financial crimes. AP

CHENGDU

Group says dozens detained in raid on church



A U.S.-based advocacy group says dozens of Christians have been detained in a raid on a prominent Chinese church that operates outside the government's official protestant organization.

ChinaAid says at least 80 churchgoers and seminary students from the Early Rain Covenant Church were taken away in the southwestern city of Chengdu beginning Sunday night. It says they include the church's pastor, Wang Yi, and his wife, Jiang Rong. China has cracked down heavily on independent church groups this year as part of an assault on all religions. China requires that Protestants worship only in churches recognized and regulated by the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Even within that framework, the officially atheist ruling Communist Party has been seeking to rein in religious expression, including removing crosses from official and unofficial churches.

PINGDU

Court charges 10 over riot at a military veterans' protest

China state media say 10 people have been charged with various offenses over rioting at a gathering of military veterans protesting for better benefits. It wasn't clear whether the suspects are veterans. However, the violence at the Oct. 4-7 gathering in the eastern city of Pingdu points to continued tensions between the authorities and ex-servicemen despite the establishment this year of a Cabinet agency to oversee veterans' affairs. Multiple protests have been staged in recent years, including in the capital, Beijing, to demand better pensions and health care. Violence is rare though, and organizers generally try to keep a low public profile to avoid drawing the ire of Communist authorities, who seek to prevent any demonstrations that could challenge their control over society. The government refused to confirm the Pingdu riot at the time and censored reports about it on the internet. Some of the suspects have past records "for obstructing official business, causing disturbances, drug abuse, theft and swindling," Xinhua said.

HONG KONG

Runaway school bus plows onto Hong Kong sidewalk, killing 4



A runaway school bus with no one aboard accelerated downhill and plowed into pedestrians in Hong Kong yesterday, killing four people and injuring 11 others, authorities said. Dash-cam video from another vehicle, posted online by the Apple Daily newspaper, shows a man who appears to be the driver standing outside the bus, closing the door and then running in front of it as it starts to roll away. The 62-year-old driver attempted to block the bus but was dragged for 20 meters as it gained speed, police said. The bus crossed a bustling thoroughfare, slammed into two taxis, and ran onto a sidewalk and into a store. Three people were pinned under the wheels of the yellow 19-seat bus. One person was pronounced dead at the scene, a fire department spokesman said at a news briefing. Six of the 12 injured are in critical condition, including the driver, who has been admitted to an intensive care unit, police said. The driver had just finished his last shift shortly before 2 p.m. The hand brake appeared not to be engaged, police said. Authorities are investigating.

INDIA

Thousands flock to funeral of two teenage Kashmir rebels



Aijaz Hussain, Srinagar

THOUSANDS of people in Indian-controlled Kashmir joined a funeral procession yesterday for two teenage rebels who were killed over the weekend in a long gunbattle with Indian troops in the disputed region.

Villagers carried the teens' bodies to a "martyr's graveyard" in the northern town of Hajin, chanting slogans eulogizing anti-India militants and demanding an end to Indian rule over the Himalayan region. Fu-

neral prayers were held at least three times, to accommodate the large number of people arriving from different places in the area.

According to police, the two friends, 14-year-old Mudasir Rashid Parray and 17-year-old Saqib Bilal Sheikh, joined the rebel ranks in late August. Police said Parray was the youngest rebel killed in the three decades of armed conflict in Kashmir, a territory divided between India and Pakistan but claimed by both in its entirety.

"The two remained friends in

life and in death," said Azhar Ahmed, a local resident. "We've lost two lively boys in our neighborhood. Everyone's eyes are moist. They lived and died for the same cause."

The two teens and a militant commander were killed Sunday in fighting with government forces that lasted nearly 18 hours, triggering anti-India protests and clashes in the region that left at least five people injured. At least two counterinsurgency police officers and a soldier were wounded in the gunfight.

Police identified the slain insurgent commander as a Pakistani national who trained the two friends and recruited them into Lashkar-e-Taiba, a militant group New Delhi blames for a 2008 attack that left 166 people dead in India's commercial capital of Mumbai.

Shortly after the burial, hundreds of people, mainly youths, chanted slogans including "Go India, go back" and "We want freedom" as they hit streets in Hajin and clashed with government troops.

Police and paramilitary sol-

diers fired shotgun pellets and tear gas to combat stone-throwing protesters. No one was immediately reported injured in the clashes.

Most Kashmiris support rebel demands that the territory be united either under Pakistani rule or as an independent country, while also participating in civilian street protests against Indian control. In recent years, mainly young Kashmiris have displayed open solidarity with the rebels and sought to protect them by engaging troops in street clashes during military operations.

Rebels have been fighting Indian control since 1989. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the rebels, a charge Pakistan denies. Nearly 70,000 people have been killed in the uprising and the ensuing Indian military crackdown.

The two deaths, especially of Parray, triggered a debate among Kashmiri netizens, with some arguing that rebel groups should not permit the recruitment of young boys.

"We as a society, state and resistance have failed to provide a ray of hope for the new generation," Mushtaq Ul-Haq Ahmad Sikander, a Kashmiri political commentator, wrote on Facebook.

Others highlighted the need to urgently resolve the Kashmir dispute.

"How can we simply sit back and generically imbibe the news of combatants and non-combatants killed and properties devastated," Ather Zia, who teaches anthropology at the University of Colorado Boulder, wrote on Facebook. "The occupation that pushes our children into the mouth of death must die. This systemic violence meted on Kashmiri lives has to end." **AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Prosecutors charge four with illegally importing North coal

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

SOUTH Korean prosecutors said yesterday that they have charged four people with illegally importing North Korean coal via Russia in violation of U.N. sanctions.

The indictments, handed down on Friday, came four months after customs authorities accused three of the four of using forged documents to illicitly import 35,000 tons of North Korean coal and other minerals worth USD5.8 million.

South Korean media said prosecutors found an additional person impli-



cated in the case during an investigation.

Prosecutors said in a

statement that the four people and their five entities were charged with

violating a law requiring government approval to bring North Korean pro-

ducts into the South.

U.N. sanctions that were toughened in 2017 ban member states from importing North Korean coal and other minerals that had been key sources of foreign currency for the impoverished yet nuclear-armed country.

The prosecutors' statement said the four people attempted to get profits by selling North Korean minerals whose prices dropped in the wake of the sanctions. It said they used falsified documents and transshipments at Russian ports to disguise North Korean minerals as Russian ones.

North Korea has been seeking sanctions relief in return for some of the measures the country has taken since entering nuclear talks early this year, such as dismantling its nuclear testing site and

suspending weapons tests. U.S. officials want the North to take more significant steps.

South Korea's liberal president, Moon Jae-in, who favors a negotiated solution to the nuclear issue, has facilitated U.S.-North Korea diplomacy this year. But when he met President Donald Trump recently on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Argentina, the two agreed that sanctions would remain in place until North Korea completes its nuclear disarmament.

A South Korean Foreign Ministry official said the indictments should be seen as an effort by the government to abide by U.N. sanctions. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because she wasn't authorized to speak to reporters on the issue. **AP**

Nick Perry, Wellington

NEW ZEALAND

PM Ardern apologizes for death of British tourist

NEW Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern made an emotional apology yesterday to the family of a 22-year-old British tourist who police say was murdered.

Ardern spoke about the nation's reaction to the case several hours after the man that police accuse of killing Grace Millane made his first appearance in court. Police on Sunday found a body in a forested area near Auckland which they believe is Millane's.

"From the kiwis I have spoken to, there is this overwhelming sense of hurt and shame that this has happened in our country, a place that prides itself on our hospitality," Ardern said at her weekly media briefing, using a colloquial term for New Zealanders.

"On behalf of New Zealand, I want to apologize to Grace's family," Ardern said, her voice breaking with emotion. "Your daughter should have been safe here, and she wasn't. And I'm sorry for that."

Ardern said it wasn't necessarily her role to apologize for individual acts of violence, but she'd sensed that New Zealanders were feeling a collective sense of shame over the case and that

AP PHOTO



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

many were taking it personally.

Earlier, the 26-year-old man accused of killing Millane stared at the floor while a judge addressed him during his brief appearance

at the Auckland District Court. The man has not yet entered a plea on murder charges and the court has temporarily blocked his name from being

published.

Millane's father, David Millane, traveled to New Zealand last week after his daughter vanished, and Judge Evange-

los Thomas addressed him and other family members.

"I don't know what to say to you at this time, but your grief must be desperate," he said, according to television station Three. "We all hope justice will be fair and swift and ultimately bring you some peace."

As the man was led away from the dock, somebody in the public gallery yelled out "Scumbag!" Three reported.

The case has riveted people both in Britain and New Zealand.

Described by her father as fun-loving and family-oriented, Grace Millane had been traveling in New Zealand as part of a planned yearlong trip abroad that began in Peru. She went missing Dec. 1 and failed to get in touch with her family on her birthday the next day, or on the days that followed, which alarmed them.

Before she vanished, Millane had been staying at a backpacker hostel in Auckland and left some of her belongings there. Detective Inspector Scott Beard said she met a man for a couple of hours in the evening before surveillance cameras showed them entering the CityLife hotel at about 9:40 p.m.

A week after Millane disappeared, police detained a man for questioning and later charged him with murder. **AP**

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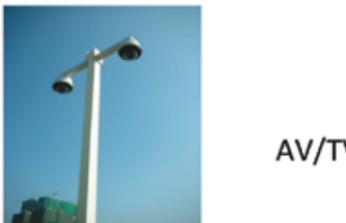
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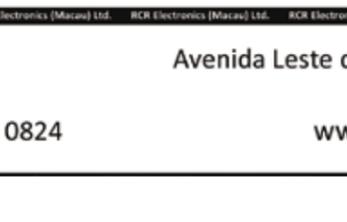
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Brexit in turmoil as May postpones Parliament vote on it

BRITISH Prime Minister Theresa May says her Brexit divorce deal with the European Union is still “the best deal that is negotiable,” as she aimed to win Parliament’s support. In a stinging statement yesterday to the House of Commons, May reminded lawmakers that any Brexit deal would require compromise.

She then asked whether or not the House of Commons really wanted to deliver Brexit — and if it was willing to re-open the political division within the country by challenging the 2016 vote of the British people to leave the bloc.

May’s comments came after she postponed the vote in parliament on her EU divorce deal, acknowledging she would have lost today’s vote by a “significant margin.” The decision throws her Brexit plans into chaos.

May’s Conservative government does not have a majority in the House of Commons, and opposition parties — as well as dozens of Conservative lawmakers — said they would not back the divorce deal that May and EU leaders agreed on last month.

Pro-Brexit lawmakers say the deal keeps Britain bound too closely to the EU, while pro-EU politicians say it erects barriers between the U.K. and its biggest trading partner and leaves many details of the future relationship undecided.

The main sticking point is a “backstop” provision that aims to guarantee an open border between EU member Ireland and the U.K.’s Northern Ireland after Brexit. The measure would keep Britain under EU customs rules, and is supposed to last until superseded by permanent new trade arrangements.

Critics say it could leave Bri-



Demonstrators hold placards and flags at a pro-Brexit rally

tain tied to the EU indefinitely, unable to strike new trade deals around the world.

Pro-Brexit lawmakers said they wouldn’t support May’s agreement unless she renegotiated it to remove the Irish backstop. Steve Baker, a leading Conservative Brexiteer, said Monday that May should “go back to Brussels and demand a better deal.”

EU leaders insist the Brexit withdrawal agreement can’t be changed.

“The deal is the deal,” Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said yesterday. “It’s taken two years to put together. It’s a fair deal for both sides.”

However, while the 585-page withdrawal agreement is set, an accompanying declaration on future relations between the EU and Britain is shorter

and vaguer and may be open to amendment.

Postponing the vote can give May more time to seek concessions from the EU, which is due to hold a summit in Brussels on Thursday and Friday. She spoke over the weekend to European Council President Donald Tusk and to European leaders including Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, amid signs she was seeking to tweak the deal. “Of course we can improve this deal, and the prime minister is seeking to improve this deal,” British Environment Secretary Michael Gove told the BBC.

In the EU, though, there is exasperation at Britain’s indecision. Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament’s Brexit Coordinator, tweeted: “I can’t follow anymore. After

two years of negotiations, the Tory government wants to delay the vote. Just keep in mind that we will never let the Irish down. This delay will further aggravate the uncertainty for people & businesses. It’s time they make up their mind!”

The Brexit disarray leaves both May and her minority government on shaky ground. The main opposition Labour Party has said it may call for a no-confidence motion in the government, and Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said her Scottish National Party would support an attempt to topple the government and trigger an election.

“This shambles can’t go on - so how about it?” Sturgeon tweeted at Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

In another twist in the Brexit

tale, the EU’s top court ruled yesterday that Britain can change its mind over Brexit, boosting the hopes of British people who want to stay in the EU that the process can be reversed.

The European Court of Justice ruled that when an EU member country has notified the bloc of its intent to leave, “that member state is free to revoke unilaterally that notification.”

Britain invoked Article 50 of the EU’s Lisbon Treaty in March 2017, triggering a two-year exit process. But a group of Scottish legislators had asked the ECJ to rule on whether the U.K. could pull out of the withdrawal procedure on its own.

■ In another twist in the Brexit tale, the EU’s top court ruled yesterday that Britain can change its mind over Brexit

The Luxembourg-based ECJ said that, given the absence of any exit provision in Article 50, countries are able to change their mind in line with their own constitutional arrangements and that such a move “reflects a sovereign decision.” It said the British government is free to do so as long as no withdrawal agreement has entered force.

May has repeatedly said the government will not seek to delay or reverse Brexit. Gove, who helped drive the Brexit campaign, said the court ruling would have no real impact. “We don’t want to stay in the EU [...] so this case is very well, but it doesn’t alter the referendum vote or the clear intention of the government to make sure that we leave on March 29,” Gove said. **MDT/AP**

SWEDEN

Political mess deepens as talks on broad coalition fail

SWEDEN’S political turmoil shows no signs of ending after talks on a broader coalition fell apart.

After a week of talks, the opposition Center Party yesterday rejected forming a government with the Social Democrats, throwing negotiations wide open again three months after the Nordic nation’s inconclusive election that saw big gains by a nationalist party.

The Center Party worked “day and night” and is “disappointed” that the Social Democrats weren’t willing to compromise enough, leader Annie Lofven said at a press conference. The “differences are still too big,” she said.

The decision means a potential parliament vote on Social Democratic leader Stefan Lofven will be put off, the speaker’s office said in a statement.

Talks with the party leaders will now be held over the next “few days” after which a decision will be made on the next step, the speaker said.

At a press conference yesterday, Lofven said he remains willing to find an agreement and will now wait for what the speaker decides after the coming talks.

“Sweden needs a new government and I will do what I can to try to make

that happen,” he said, adding he made concessions on income tax cuts and labor market reforms and that there was a final cooperation agreement that his own party approved but that was rejected by the Center Party.

Sweden is at an impasse and needs three more votes in parliament before a new election can be held. Moderate Party leader Ulf Kristersson last month lost his bid to form a nar-

row conservative government after the Center and Liberal parties balked at backing a government that relies on support from the nationalist Sweden Democrats.

As talks founder, the nation also faces a vote on next year’s budget. The Center Party let it be known yesterday that it aims to vote for its own plan tomorrow and will then abstain in other votes, suggesting a spending

plan from the conservative Moderates and Christian Democrats is likely to pass. The care-taker government headed by the Social Democrats has proposed a transitional budget.

The Liberal party, which had also been negotiating with Lofven, canceled a planned meeting for today, saying they would also vote for their own budget and abstain in the final vote. **Bloomberg**

Macron addresses France amid protests; is it too late?

Angela Charlton, Paris

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron is at last preparing to speak to the nation, after increasingly violent and radicalized protests against his leadership and a long silence that aggravated the anger. Many protesters only want one thing: for him to declare "I quit."

That's an unlikely prospect. Instead Macron is expected to announce a series of measures to reduce taxes and boost purchasing power for the masses who feel his presidency has favored the rich. He's being forced to act after four weeks of "yellow vest" protests that started in struggling provinces and spread to rioting in the capital that has scared tourists and foreign investors and shaken France to the core.

Macron met yesterday in his presidential palace with local and national politicians, unions and business leaders to hear their concerns. In the evening, he will give a national televised address, his first public words in



more than a week.

Among steps the government is considering are abolishing taxes on overtime, speeding up tax cuts and an end-of-year bonus for low-income workers. Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said yesterday the government could delay some payroll taxes, but expressed resistance to restoring the wealth tax or lowering taxes for retirees, among protesters' demands. He stressed that the measures should focus on helping the working classes.

"We are ready to make any gesture" that works, he said on RTL radio. "What is important now is to put an end to the crisis and find peace and unity in the country again."

Fallout from the protests so far could cost France 0.1 percent of gross domestic product in the last quarter of the year, Le Maire warned. "That means fewer jobs, it means less prosperity for the whole country," he said.

The "yellow vest" protests began as a movement against a

rise in fuel taxes that Macron eventually abandoned, but have mushroomed to include a plethora of sometimes contradictory demands — increasingly including Macron's resignation.

The 'yellow vest' have mushroomed to include a plethora of sometimes contradictory demands

"Macron is there for the rich, not for all the French," 68-year-old retiree Jean-Pierre Meunier said at Saturday's protests in Paris.

Some members of the movement are already planning new action next Saturday, amid calls from police officers exhausted by four weekends of rioting for

the payment of overtime work instead of bonuses.

"The State should commit itself to the payment of overtime," the UNSA police union said in a statement yesterday. "These extra hours should be exempted from tax. Night hours should be revalued. UNSA police officials will listen carefully to the president's announcements."

Graffiti throughout the French capital singles Macron out for criticism, reflecting a national sense that the 40-year-old centrist former banker is arrogant and out of touch. Macron however has appeared determined to continue his course, and no presidential or parliamentary elections are planned until 2022.

Government spokesman Benjamin Griveaux warned Sunday that a "magic wand" won't solve all the problems of the protesters.

Paris tourist sites reopened Sunday, while workers cleaned up debris from protests that left widespread damage in the capital and elsewhere. At least 71 people were injured in Paris on Saturday, fewer than the week before but still a stunning figure. French media reported 136,000 protesters nationwide on Saturday, similar to the previous week.

Nearly 1,000 people were being held in custody after the Saturday protests in the French capital. AP

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what's ON



ASSEMBLAGE OF TREASURES - EXHIBITION OF THE MACAU MUSEUM COLLECTION FOR CELEBRATION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

TIME: 10am-6pm (ticket booth closes at 5:30pm; closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: February 24, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum

ADMISSION: MOP15 (free admission on Tuesdays and on the 15th of every month)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

"STYLE-ENCOUNTER MOMENT"

TIME: 10am - 8pm

UNTIL: December 30, 2018

VENUE: Macau Fashion Gallery

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 3341

SPARKLING GARDEN - GUAN HUAI BIN WORKS

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

UNTIL: February 24, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

DISCOVER MACAU: MUSEUM OF TAIPA AND COLOANE HISTORY

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Mondays)

ADDRESS: Rua Correia da Silva, Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

LA PARISIENNE CABARET FRANCAIS

TIME: 8pm (except on Mondays)
5pm (Sundays)

UNTIL: February 3, 2018

VENUE: The Parisian Theatre

ADMISSION: MOP188, MOP388, MOP488

COTA TICKETING: (853) 2882 8818

KONG SENG TICKETING: (853) 2855 5555

Offbeat

LEAPING LEMUR SURPRISES FLORIDA TROOPER DURING DUI ARREST



A lemur surprised a Florida Highway Patrol trooper when it crawled from a trailer being pulled by a pickup truck that had been stopped for driving erratically and hitting other cars.

Dashcam video shows the lemur peeking out of the trailer before hopping to the ground and leaping around the trooper who was talking to the driver along Interstate 4 in Sanford on Saturday night.

The video shows the trooper doing a double-take as the lemur runs around and stands on its hind legs.

Twenty-seven-year-old driver Shane Taylor warned troopers that the lemur named Miko "bites." Taylor was arrested on several charges including DUI.

State wildlife officers took custody of the lemur and other exotic animals including a tortoise, a goat, a parrot and a wallaby.

Jail records don't list a lawyer for Taylor.

TV canal macau



| | |
|-------|--|
| 13:00 | TDM News (Repeated) |
| 13:30 | News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast |
| 15:00 | Portuguese Soap Opera |
| 15:50 | Cartoons |
| 16:15 | Portuguese Comedy |
| 19:00 | Portugal Fashion |
| 19:35 | Portuguese Serie |
| 20:30 | Main News, Financial & Weather Report |
| 21:15 | You, Me & Apocalypse |
| 22:00 | Funny Things To Know |
| 22:25 | Portuguese Serie - Liberty 21 |
| 23:15 | TDM News |
| 23:50 | Documentary |
| 00:15 | Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated) |
| 01:30 | RTPi Live |

cinema



CINETEATRO

10-12 DEC



MORTAL ENGINES

ROOM 1

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

Director: Christian Rivers

Starring: Hugo Weaving, Hera Hilmar, Robert Sheehan

Language: English

Duration: 128min

NATSUME YUJIN-CHO THE MOVIE: EPHEMERAL BOND

ROOM 2

2:30, 7:30pm

Director: Takahiro Omori, Hideaki Ilo

Language: Japanese (Chinese)



THE NUTCRACKER AND THE FOUR REALMS

ROOM 1

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

Director: Lasse Hallstrom & Joe Johnston

Starring: Keira Knightley, Mackenzie Foy, Morgan Freeman

Language: English

Duration: 99min



MORE THAN BLUE

ROOM 3

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

Director: Gavin Lin

Starring: Jasper Liu, Ivy Chen

Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)

Duration: 105min

this day in history



1994 RUSSIAN TROOPS STORM INTO CHECHNYA

Russian President Boris Yeltsin has ordered tanks and troops into the rebel region of Chechnya.

Hundreds of tanks and armoured personnel carriers closed in on the territory's capital of Grozny at first light this morning.

The Russian army says its mission is to restore constitutional order in Chechnya.

The mostly Muslim region declared independence from Moscow three years ago under the leadership of former Soviet air force general Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Since that time armed opposition to Dudayev, secretly funded and supported by Moscow, has been active in the region.

In August this year Moscow set up a "provisional council" in an attempt to overthrow Mr Dudayev.

President Boris Yeltsin then issued an ultimatum saying that if fighting did not stop Russia would formally intervene.

The decision to send in troops, which comes after a two-week bombing campaign failed to quell the troubles, is a huge gamble for President Yeltsin.

His supporters say he cannot let such an important region of Russia break away as it could start the break-up of the rest of the country.

Others say it could lead to another Afghanistan.

Mr Dudayev is defiant saying he has always been willing to hold talks with President Yeltsin in return for recognition as a sovereign state.

He said: "We are right in the eyes of the world because we're defending our lives and our freedom."

"We wanted talks but instead Russia started a war."

Chechnya, which has a population of about one million which has struggled against Russian rule for two centuries.

Many are unable to forgive and forget the way they were treated in 1944 when Stalin ordered the entire nation to be deported to bleak camps in Siberia and Central Asia.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

A 20-month war between Chechen rebels and Russian forces followed.

An estimated 100,000 people lost their lives and many Chechen towns and villages were reduced to rubble in the bitter fighting. Hugely outnumbered and outgunned, Chechen fighters nonetheless outfought badly led and unmotivated Russian conscripts.

Peace accords signed in 1996 gave Chechnya substantial autonomy but not full independence. The Chechen chief of staff, General Aslan Maskhadov, was elected president.

However, Chechnya had been reduced to ruins by the war and Russia failed to invest in reconstruction. General Maskhadov could not control brutal warlords who grew rich by organised crime and kidnapping.

In August 1999, Chechen fighters crossed into the neighbouring republic of Dagestan to support a declaration by an Islamic body of an independent Islamic state in parts of Dagestan and Chechnya. By now Vladimir Putin was Russian prime minister. He put down the rebellion within a couple of weeks.

The late summer of the same year saw several explosions in Russia in which hundreds died. The Russian authorities blamed the Chechens.

President Putin sent the army back to subdue the republic by force in a second brutal campaign.

The Kremlin called a controversial referendum in March 2003 which approved a new constitution giving Chechnya more autonomy but stipulated it remained a part of Russia.

Some months after the referendum Akhmad Kadyrov was elected Chechen president with strong backing from the Kremlin - but he was assassinated in May 2004.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Don't camouflage your status to save another person's ego...

Taurus April 20-May 20 This isn't about fooling yourself or fooling anyone else -- it's about choosing to think positively...

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 In that flirtatious conversation with that cutie you met the other day, do you two share a mutual long-lost friend...

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 There are a lot of lost people around you right now, folks who don't quite know where they want to go...

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 It is obvious once it happens. If you are not seeing the signs, then the transformation is mostly smoke and mirrors...

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 To launch your latest plans, you must put them first today. Investigate options that might be more economical...

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Today you need to get it into your head that it is not a sign of weakness if you ask for help...

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 For optimum emotional and physical health, seek out some fresh air and sunlight today...

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 There is a collision of two opposing forces in your near future, and this could cause you a lot of unnecessary stress...

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Seek out the opinions of others today, and listen carefully to what they have to say...

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Maturity is a possession, and unfortunately, someone you have to deal with today doesn't have it...

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Things are slowing down a bit in your life, and you are going to have some time to play with later today...

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Young male horse; 5- Surrender; 9- Get-go; 14- Converse competitor; 15- Water pitcher; 16- Bobby of the Black Panthers; 17- Examine again; 19- ___ boy; 20- Embellishment; 21- The Hilton, e.g.; 22- Enduring; 23- ___-majestA@; 24- Addams family cousin; 25- One whose name appears under the head; 28- Summer camp transport; 31- Hebrew prophet; 32- Narc's employer; 34- First place?; 35- Agnew's old boss; 36- Burst of laughter; 37- The fifth sign of the zodiac; 38- Stand used by painters; 39- Steve of country music; 40- Athletic shoe; 42- Debussy's "La ___"; 43- ___-friendly; not too technical; 44- Capital of Armenia; 48- Bitter; 50- Recantation; 51- Tree-lined walk; 52- Place upon pallets; 53- Steeps; 54- Conductor Klemperer; 55- Breezed through; 56- March honoree, briefly; 57- "Saint Joan" playwright; 58- To a smaller extent;

DOWN: 1- Christmas song; 2- ___ barrel; 3- Property claims; 4- Exhaustion; 5- Building material; 6- "Dallas" family name; 7- Fender bender; 8- Able was I ___ I saw Elba; 9- Subtle absorption; 10- Tidy up; 11- Identical; 12- Airline to Ben-Gurion; 13- Your, to Yves; 18- Somewhat; 21- Troy beauty; 23- Disinfectant brand; 25- Prizefighter; 26- Fulda tributary; 27- Genuine; 28- Animation frame; 29- Cool drinks; 30- Sign gas; 31- Stingy one; 33- Malt beverage; 35- In the buff; 36- Maternal or paternal; 38- Least difficult; 39- Causing goose bumps; 41- Exclamation of triumph; 42- Free from discord; 44- Seaport in the Crimea; 45- Communication medium; 46- Carpentry tools; 47- Food and water; 48- Immensely; 49- Applaud; 50- Route; 51- Horse-like animal, term of insult; 52- Not neg.;



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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
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Tourism 28 333 000
Airport 59 888 88



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Argentina's River Plate players celebrate winning the Copa Libertadores final



Fights break out between the fans of rival teams after River Plate defeated Boca Juniors 3-1

S. American football still wary after successful final in Madrid

Tales Azzoni, Madrid

THE Copa Libertadores finally came to a conclusion, without incident. River Plate fans peacefully celebrated the team's triumph over Boca Juniors as the city of Madrid showed it is possible to successfully organize the high-profile game between two of the South American continent's fiercest rivals.

But there were doubts the happy ending at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium would prompt many changes after one of the greatest debacles in South American football history.

"To be honest, sometimes it seems like we are incapable of learning," Boca Juniors coach Guillermo Barros Schelotto said. "I don't think we will be able to take much from what happened in this stadium, from how the fans behaved here. Hopefully we will learn a lot, but it seems like we are incapable of learning. It

seems that if this final happens again in a few years, we won't be able to play it again."

River Plate won 3-1 in extra time yesterday [Macau time] in a match that was relocated to Madrid after the first leg was twice suspended because Boca players were injured when River fans attacked their bus with rocks, bottles and pieces of wood. The teams drew 2-2 in the first leg at Boca's La Bombonera Stadium nearly a month ago.

Nearly 70,000 River fans waited for hours inside the team's stadium two weeks ago before South American football governing body CONMEBOL suspended the match and later decided to play it outside Argentina because of safety concerns.

"Everybody knows that a lot of people wanted to watch this final," River captain Leonardo Ponzio said. "But we have to be realistic, our society is not prepared for this type of event. This final is over, but a lot of things

still need to be solved. All we can do is make sure that all of this never happens again."

While hundreds of River Plate fans celebrated in Madrid's iconic Puerta del Sol plaza, riot police had to take action against rowdy fans back in Buenos Aires. Argentine media said some fans were detained and a few police officers sustained minor injuries in the downtown confrontations.

It wasn't even certain that the Madrid final was actually the end of it all, as Boca could still try to appeal CONMEBOL's decision not to disqualify River for the problems outside its stadium ahead of the second leg.

"As far as the sports side is concerned, to me it's all over. River won," Schelotto said. "As far as all the legal issues, it would be good for CONMEBOL or South American football to take some action. Not about who won the Copa or about sanctions to River or Boca, but to make sure that what happened the other day

doesn't happen again. It's not normal to throw rocks at a bus of a rival team. Hopefully these things will not happen again."

This year's Copa Libertadores, South America's equivalent to the Champions League, had been tarnished even before the fan violence marred the first leg of the "final of all finals" in Buenos Aires.

River Plate coach Marcelo Gallardo ignored a ban from carrying out his duties in the semi-finals against Brazilian club Gremio, and both River and Boca played with suspended players without punishment. There were also controversial video review decisions, including a red card reversed following a game as officials later concluded it was incorrectly shown to a player despite video review being used.

CONMEBOL had already decided that beginning next year the Copa Libertadores final will be played in a neutral site with a single game, with Chile hosting

it in 2019.

River assistant coach Matias Biscay, replacing the suspended Gallardo, said he hoped the team's victory would help ease the disappointment of those who missed the opportunity to witness the historic final this time.

This final is over, but a lot of things still need to be solved. All we can do is make sure that all of this never happens again.

LEONARDO PONZIO
RIVER CAPTAIN

"Not everybody is violent in our society, it's just a small group," Biscay said. "I think the people who behaved well and were patient the other day can enjoy a little bit of happiness after what the players achieved for them on the field." AP

Le Clos adds support to growing rebellion by top swimmers

FOUR-TIME Olympic medalist Chad le Clos threw his support yesterday behind a planned new competition that is leading top swimmers to rebel against their own governing body.

The International Swimming League, which aims to launch next year, "will benefit swimming with a new dynamic approach," Le Clos said.

The ISL is privately owned and outside the control of Switzerland-based governing body FINA. It also aims to pay higher

prize money and involve athletes more in making decisions.

"Why should athletes not shape their own series like so many other Olympic sports?" the 2012 Olympic champion in 200-meter butterfly wrote on Twitter.

In an escalating dispute, ISL organizers canceled a swim meet this month in Turin, Italy, after FINA threatened to ban those taking part.

In response Friday, three swimmers — Hungarian great Katinka Hosszu, and American teammates Tom

Shields and Michael Andrew — filed an antitrust suit against FINA in a California court.

FINA allegedly asked for USD50 million over 10 years to let the ISL operate, before organizers called off talks.

Le Clos said he is "so disappointed that our sport is not open to change" and that it needs innovation.

"We need to create different media and commercial opportunities," he said. "Everyone in swimming should consider the future."

The South African star fueled the dispute ahead of competing in FINA's short-course world championships in Hangzhou, China.

FINA said in a statement Sunday it was focused on its 25-meter pool event rather than the legal challenge.

"As always, FINA remains open to proposals that would genuinely enhance — rather than conflict with — the current and planned competition calendars," the governing body said.



An unrelated European ruling last year shows swimmers have a case to challenge possible anti-competitive behavior. Dutch speedskaters won a European Commission decision in Brussels

against the Swiss-based International Skating Union. They had been threatened with bans for wanting to compete in a South Korean-organized "Icederby" event in Dubai. AP

opinion

Our Desk

Julie Zhu



THE SILVER LINING IS WHAT IS MISSING

- For Cantonese, please press 1; for Portuguese, please press 2; for English, please press 3; for Mandarin, please press 4.

- Du... du... du... du... du..., Nei Hou [...]

Several times, when I have called companies (which probably provide services to all nationals), their hotline services claim to be available in several languages.

In this particular case, that is, in Macau, languages available include mostly Cantonese, Portuguese, English and Mandarin.

However, how many times have you effectively received language services that do not correspond to that which you require when requesting help in a non-Chinese language?

I am not trying to imply that language skills across town are poor. This is just me depicting how much a poor person needs to show other people that he or she is rich.

The truth is, when a place does not have one particular thing, that place tries to show other people that it has that particular thing.

Another example is when you dial a number to get some kind of phone operator and then they provide a machine to serve you, but the machine cannot solve any of your problems. That's what they call a smart city.

In particular, service industry services provided by human beings are still lagging so much behind that they try to encode the incapability of human services into a machine. Well, we can all figure out what the consequences are.

Once again, it's people trying to highlight what they don't have and force people to be part of it.

Another example is when you dial a number looking for some customer service and, before you are finally served by a human being, the recording asks you, "Are you willing to give us a review? If yes, please press 1," upon which the phone goes off.

Yes, you read it right. People are only given one option: "yes." You can only dial "1" and you can only say "yes."

Here is another thing that some places, in particular, Macau, try to do to make people believe they have, but in reality do not at all.

Last week, lawmaker Cheung Lup Kwan spoke the truth for so many people. Basically, he said that he goes to see a doctor out of Macau because he does not trust Macau's medical professionals, nor Macau's medical skills.

What he said was closer to the truth – not in regards to Macau's medical skills, but in regards to his words matching his behavior.

Where do those who brag about Macau's medical skills see a doctor? Those who brag about Macau's education system, where do they send their children to school? Those who say Macau is beautiful and is a world leisure and tourism center, where do they travel?

Admitting that "Macau is not good at this and that, or Macau is not doing a good job at this and that" is something that would be easily said if Macau were a really a good place. Moreover, admitting it would also give the city a lot of credit.

When Macau government officials say that Macau's public transportation is fantastic, how many times do they take public buses in order to support their claims?

When Macau government officials say that Macau's universities have trained tons of brilliant elites, how many of them actually send their children to study at public universities?

Macau, you speak very good Mandarin and that's it. At least it's always good to try and keep improving.

THE ANGOLA TO HOLD FIRST DIAMOND AUCTION IN JANUARY, SODIAM SAYS

Angola will conduct its first diamond auction in January as part of the southwest African country's plan to open its economy to foreign investors, state-owned diamond-trading company Sodiam said.

Seven gemstones from the Lulo mine, located in the northeast, will come under the hammer, Sodiam said in an emailed statement yesterday. They include a 114-carat stone and a pink,

46-carat gem. Several international buyers will be invited to the sale, which will be held at the company's headquarters in the capital, Luanda. Sodiam didn't give a date for the auction.

Click here to read about Angola allowing miners to sell their own gems

Angola is the world's fifth-biggest diamond producer in terms of value, according to Sodiam.

Croak to croon: City frogs sing more alluring love songs



Christina Larson, Washington

CITY frogs and rainforest frogs don't sing the same tune, researchers have found.

A study released yesterday examined why Panama's tiny tungara frogs adapt their mating calls in urban areas — an unexpected example of how animals change communication strategies when cities encroach on forests.

These frogs take advantage of the relative absence of eavesdropping predators in cities to belt out longer love songs, which are more alluring to female frogs.

Tungara frogs don't croak like American bullfrogs. To human ears, their distinctive call sounds like a low-pitched, video-game beep. To female frogs, it sounds like pillow talk.

Every evening at sunset, the 1-inch male brown frogs crawl into puddles to serenade prospective mates. The lady frog selects a mate largely based on his love song.

Researchers found that the urban frogs call faster, more frequently and add more embellishments — a series of staccato "chucks" on the end of the initial whine — compared with those in the forest.

Those fancy urban love songs are three times more likely to attract the ladies, as scientists learned by playing back recordings of both city and forest frog calls to an audience of female frogs in a laboratory. Thirty of 40 female frogs hopped over to the speaker playing the urban frog calls, the researchers report in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution*.

Whether the female frogs hailed from the city or forest

themselves, they showed the same preference for fast-paced, complex crooning that combines high and low tones in quick arrangements.

Study co-author Michael J. Ryan, a biologist at the University of Texas who has studied tungara frogs for more than 30 years, said that the high and low notes likely stimulated the inner and outer ear chambers of female frogs in a pleasurable or interesting way.

The high and low notes stimulated the inner and outer ear chambers of female frogs in a pleasurable or interesting way

So why don't rainforest frogs sing the same way?

The scientists set out to confirm their hypothesis that frogs that added extra high-pitched "chucks" attracted not only more mates, but also more trouble from frog-eating bats and parasitic midges. With the help of camera traps and sticky paper, the researchers demonstrated that extended frog calls significantly increased the risk of attracting predators.

In the rainforest, the frogs

must balance two goals: attracting a mate and staying safe.

In the city, there are no frog-eating bats, and far fewer snakes and midges. The male frogs are freer to belt their hearts out.

"An urban male can take greater risks," said lead author Wouter Halfwerk, an ecologist at Vrije University in Amsterdam.

A town frog also has to work harder to find a mate because lady frogs are rarer in the city. "Competition for females increases," said Halfwerk. "The best adaptation is to be the most attractive, with an elaborate love song."

Corinne Lee Zawacki, a biologist at the University of Pittsburgh who was not involved in the study, said the researchers' methodology confirmed that urbanization is the reason for the call changes.

"I love the choice of study system," she said. "A lot of background research has already been done on this frog. So we can see clearly how urbanization changes the interplay of natural and sexual selection" — or the trade-offs between survival and courtship goals.

But not all amphibians are as lucky as Panama's tungara frogs.

"Amphibian populations are declining worldwide, mostly due to habitat destruction," said Andrew Blaustein an ecologist at Oregon State University, who was not involved in the study. "This is a rare case — and a very interesting case — of an animal adapting quickly, in evolutionary terms, to new circumstances." AP

| Station | Air quality |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Roadside | 70-100 Moderate |
| High Density Residential Area | 55-75 Moderate |
| Ambient | 70-100 Moderate |

WORLD BRIEFS



INDIA Thousands of people in Indian-controlled Kashmir joined a funeral procession yesterday for two teenage rebels who were killed over the weekend in a long gunbattle with Indian troops in the disputed region. More on p12



IRAN President Hassan Rouhani warned Western countries that they will face a massive influx of drugs if Iran becomes weakened by U.S. sanctions.

ARMENIA Allies of Armenia's new leader have won an overwhelming majority of seats in the country's early parliamentary election, according to preliminary results released yesterday.

ISRAEL's prime minister yesterday announced that Oman will open its airspace to Israel's national airline. The move marks another sign of warming ties with Gulf Arab states, as Israel's behind-the-scenes dealings with its former foes become more public.



GERMANY Train workers have gone on strike, leading to cancellations in the country's long-distance and commuter rail system and making tens of thousands of employees and school children late.



PERU Voters agreed to take on corruption yesterday, according to exit polls, as the South American nation struggles to end a scourge that has landed lawmakers, judges and even former presidents behind bars.

BRAZIL Ten women in Brazil have accused a self-styled spiritual healer of sexually abusing them at a clinic in the central-western state of Goias.