



### THREE LOCAL RESTAURANTS GET TOP PRIZE

The Michelin Guide Hong Kong Macau 2019 awards ceremony took place in town yesterday

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### POLICE POWERS INCREASE APPROVED

P7 AL PLENARY



### PRODUCER: 'SUBURBAN BIRDS' FITS MACAU

The filmmakers see similarities between the setting of "Suburban Birds" and the experience of Macau in recent decades

P8 IFFAM

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# Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Goldenhuys EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho www.macaudailytimes.com.mo



"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

## WORLD BRIEFS

**CAMBODIA** Six union leaders yesterday each received suspended 2 1/2-year prison terms in connection with labor protests about five years ago in which four garment workers were killed and around 20 others hurt.



**PHILIPPINES** For over a century, the Bells of Balangiga have not rung in the Philippines, a silence that the president last year called "painful." Yesterday, a giant U.S. Air Force cargo aircraft brought the Bells of Balangiga back to the Philippine capital in a poignant ceremony. More on p12

**US-JAPAN** The U.S. military said yesterday that five missing crew members have been declared dead after their refueling plane collided with a fighter jet last week off Japan's southern coast, and that search and recovery operations have ended after finding only one survivor.



**RUSSIA** Kremlin officials and Russia's opposition yesterday gathered to pay tribute to Russia's most prominent human rights activist, Lyudmila Alexeyeva, who died at age 91. A staunch and uncompromising rights advocate, Alexeyeva made a name for herself protesting the treatment of Soviet political prisoners.

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## COUNCIL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Proposal to hire non-local croupiers

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## How Asia fell out of love with China's Belt and Road Initiative

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# Michelin Guide awards three stars to three restaurants

Lynzy Valles

**T**HE Michelin Guide Hong Kong Macau 2019 saw local restaurant Jade Dragon and Hong Kong's French restaurant Caprice awarded the three-star echelon.

The 11th edition of Hong Kong Macau's red guide also announced that, for the first time, four restaurants have earned two stars and six restaurants have debuted in the one-star category.

A total of 63 and 19 restaurants received star recognition yesterday at City of Dreams.

When commenting on the 2019 Hong Kong and Macau Guide, Gwendal Poullennec, international director of Michelin Guides, said, "Hong Kong and Macau are very special cities within the gastronomic world. They attract many tourists and business people from around the world, and as a result, these cities have been blessed with gastronomic influences that oscillate between traditional Cantonese and Macau cuisine, combined with international flavors."

City of Dream's Jade Dragon entered the red guide with one



Representatives of the three star restaurants showcase the awards

star in 2014 and has held on to two stars since 2016, before acquiring the third star this year.

Kelvin Au Yeung, executive chef of Jade Dragon, told the press that the newly-awarded restaurant would continue to enhance its menu.

"In Jade Dragon, we uphold traditional Cantonese cooking techniques. We showcase the

dishes through creative and modern presentation, along with the ingredients. After today, I'll sit with my team and see how we can further enhance the current menu," he said.

Chef Au Yeung has been the sous chef since the restaurant opened and was recently promoted to the position of executive chef.

With this new addition, Macau now has three three-star establishments, including Robuchon au Dôme and The Eight at the Grand Lisboa.

Meanwhile, the restaurant Alain Ducasse at Morpheus received two stars, five months after opening. The restaurant offers, in addition to original creations, some of the most fa-

mous dishes of iconic French chef Alain Ducasse.

"It's something amazing and incredible. After five months open, it's a great opportunity for us to show what French cuisine is here in Asia, and produce from here and France," said Pierre Marty, chef de cuisine at Alain Ducasse.

"After five months, you can't expect anything but we [gave] our best and we are very happy to get these two stars. We hope [to] get three stars one day," the chef added.

## The restaurant Alain Ducasse at Morpheus received two stars, five months after opening

With this new addition, there are a total of five two-star restaurants in Macau, including Feng Wei Ju, Golden Flower, Mizumi and The Tasting Room.

One-star restaurants King, Lai Heen 8 1/2 Otto e Mezzo - Bombana, Pearl Dragon and Shinji by Kanesaka, The Golden Peacock, The Kitchen, Tim's Kitchen, Wing Lei, Ying and Zi Yat Heen retained their status.

# Building owners complain about unauthorized construction

Julie Zhu

**T**HE owners of Edificio Lap Hing held a press conference urging the government to demolish unauthorized construction works located at the entrance of the building.

Two of the building's owners, surnamed Wong and Lai, accused a person surnamed Ng of conducting unauthorized construction.

Edificio Lap Hing is located at 5 Rua do Dr. Pedro José Lobo on the left side of the car park next to LusoBank.

The convenience store which has carried out the unauthorized construction work is at the entrance hall of the building.



One of the owners, surnamed Wong

According to Wong, the building's owners have paid for a sewage renewal project at the entrance of the building.

However, construction machines could not enter the building's hall due to Ng's store.

Wong reported the ow-

ners had several talks with Ng, asking him to demolish the store and the unauthorized construction conducted at the store.

However, Ng did not demolish the construction. Furthermore, on December 6 Ng issued a legal letter to the owners, warning them that if there were any damages to his store or his business was affected by the sewage project Ng would ask for compensation.

Wong informed the Times that Ng is not one of the owners of Edificio Lap Hing, and that his store has been operating at the building for more than 40 years.

Speaking to the media,

Wong also said that the owners reported the store to the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) in July. The owners received confirmation that the store's construction was unauthorized, and that the case was classified as A Class (the most serious level of unauthorized construction work).

The owners hoped that DSSOPT would demolish the unauthorized construction quickly. They also doubted the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau's role in issuing a business operation license for the store.

"If the store holds a vendor operation license, how come the store's license was not canceled since its operation does not correspond to vendor operations? How come the store can get electricity supply on top of the

unauthorized construction works? How come the store can get water supply on top of unauthorized construction works?" Wong questioned. He also asked the Health Bureau and Fire Services Bureau to follow up on health and safety issues created by the store's existence.

On the other hand, Ng's son told the media that his father purchased the place from the main owner of Edificio Lap Hing.

Ng said that he would cooperate with the owners on the sewage renewal project, but he disagreed with the owners' actions.

Ng also added that he had not yet received any notification informing him that the store had carried out unauthorized construction work. He believes that the store's operation should be decided by the local government.

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## News At Hand



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# Council members want to introduce non-local croupiers

**S**EVERAL members of the Council for Economic Development (CED) proposed that Macau import non-local dealers based on a maximum percentage of the total.

The proposal came out during the CED plenary meeting yesterday.

The head of CED's Human Resources Policies Research section, Vong Kok Seng, reported the aforementioned information after the meeting.

According to Vong, the proposal was made in consideration of solving human resource issues.

According to the proposal, non-local croupiers can be laid off first if the gaming industry requires



a reduction in employees, he mentioned.

However, government representatives, including

Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong, did not comment on the proposal.

# Lawmaker questions transgenic food products safety

**L**AWMAKER Mak Soi Kun has asked the relevant authorities to explain how the government is ensuring Macau's food safety, in particular for imported foods.

"Recently, media reports said that Chinese scientists have announced that the world's first gene-edited baby was born in mainland China, and it is a twin baby girl whose genetics have been modified to have natural resistance to AIDS. The occurrence of [the] gene-edited baby has caused heated talks on genes within the scientific community and the society," the lawmaker wrote in his inquiry to the government.

"Macau is a place which imports diverse kinds of food. Even though the government claims that the producers have [an] obligation to recall food that is transgenic [...], what kind of inspection technology and what kind of standards is the government using to identify whether or not currently imported transgenic food poses an impact on residents?" Mak asked.

"The government's reply [to my previous inquiry] declared that in regards to whether there is a need to attach transgenic food in-



formation on the food product's ingredients display, the government will continue to be in close contact with relevant technological departments. It means

**How can the government help the public to have peace of mind and rest assured when buying food?**

MAK SOI KUN

that, currently, in Macau, imported food does not even have any labels about transgenic food products," he added.

"How can the government help the public to have peace of mind and rest assured when buying food?" Mak asked.

"Some residents deem gene a terrific word, but ordinary residents do not know about genes. In the absence of transgenic labels, it is inevitable that residents will worry about their health when they [do not know more about the food]," said the lawmaker. "Residents even worry that genetic variations might occur. However, other countries and regions, such as U.S. and Germany, regulate and label transgenic foods."

### Gaming operators consider merging more shuttle buses

The city's six gaming operators have hired a consultant company to study the possibility of merging casino shuttle buses. According to Wilfred Wong, executive director and president of Sands China Ltd., joint casino shuttle bus operations in Taipa are working well. However, according to Wong it is difficult for the shuttle buses to merge on the Macau Peninsula side, as the results would "not be great" because all the casinos in Macau have different routes, and the local streets are heavily occupied.

### CE to visit Jiangsu province today

Chief Executive Chui Sai On will lead a government delegation to Jiangsu province today, to review the progress of development plans for the Jiangsu-Macao Cooperation Park. During his two-day visit, Chui is expected to meet leading officials in Jiangsu to discuss further cooperation initiatives between the two places, and to exchange views on the overall planning and construction of the park. The government delegation will visit Changzhou prefecture, Jiangsu, with the aim of selecting a site for the construction of the Jiangsu-Macao Cooperation Park. During Chui's absence, the Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, will be the Acting Chief Executive.

## Local cartoonist's work selected by UN

A local cartoonist's work was selected by United Nations to be included in Monday's 70th anniversary celebration of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thirty cartoons were chosen for the project - one for each article of the U.N. document.

Rodrigo de Matos's cartoon, "Desemprego Pontual" (Punctual Unemployment), reflects on employment stability in the modern age. It accompanied Article 22 of the Declaration, which begins, "Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security." "Desemprego Pontual" depicts a man and his work desk precariously balanced on a clock hand that forms a steeper decline as the minute hand ticks onwards, threatening to send the man hurtling into a trashcan below.

The cartoon was published in Portuguese weekly news-



paper Expresso in 2011, the year that Portugal accepted a bail-out from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund to help the country recover from its financial crisis.

Portugal was one of four European countries hit particularly hard during the 2007 financial crisis, taking years to recover and seeing

the unemployment rate soar to 17.5 percent in early 2013.

"The cartoon is about some news related to temporary work in Portugal at the time, the type of volatile link between employers and employees. It criticizes that trend," Matos told the Times in a phone interview. "I suppose it still goes on the-

se days. The problem has not been solved, but rather aggravated."

For Matos, the U.N. project to combine cartoons with the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was "a smart move," as the art form is able to effectively communicate with different cultures and languages.

"I think the use of cartoons is a smart move as it is a language that is universal. Without words, cartoons have the ability to show lots of different ideas in a single image," he said.

"I wish more institutions would do these sorts of projects [involving cartoons]," he said, adding that the art form was "not as explored as it should be."

The 30 cartoons selected were nominated from hundreds of submissions, and then voted on by the participating cartoonists. The winning pieces are to be exhibited in Geneva, The Hague, Dakar and São Paulo, simultaneously.

In addition to working with Expresso, Matos has also worked as a cartoonist for local media outlets Macau Daily Times and Ponto Final. **DB**

AD

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# Sands China celebrates its suppliers for outstanding products, services

**S**ANDS China Ltd. recently honoured several of its outstanding suppliers at The Venetian Macao, at the 2018 Sands Supplier Excellence Awards, and commended all of its suppliers whom it views as its strategic partners.

A global initiative of Sands China's parent company, Las Vegas Sands Corp., the annual event recognises the cooperation and services of some of the company's most noteworthy suppliers worldwide.

"The services of Sands China's suppliers are essential for our business, creating a partnership of mutual success," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

"From micro-enterprises and SMEs to large corporations, each company plays a role in helping us deliver world-class experiences to guests and visitors of our integrated resorts. Sands China is pleased to acknowledge outstanding examples of their excellence through these awards each year."

Various Sands China business units and their employees nominated a total of 30 companies in this year's awards.

Nominees are chosen from a pool of thousands of service providers and suppliers that do business with Sands China.

The range of year's nominated companies includes industries such as food and beverage; marketing; construction; furniture, fixtures and equipment; and operating supplies and equipment, among others.

Winners include local SMEs – a testament to their growth and to Sands China's continuous support to local enterprises.

Over 400 guests attended that company's annual awards ceremony, including nearly 300 representing about 150 suppliers, mostly from Macao, Hong Kong and mainland China.

The event featured carnival-themed entertainment and an appreciation dinner, with each guest receiving a gift of two eco-friendly stainless steel water bottles – provided by one of Sands China's local SME suppliers.

Award winners are selected each year by a judging committee composed of Sands China executive management.

Judges consider several criteria, including suppliers' leadership, vision and strategy; product consistency and pro-



cess capability; and creative partnership opportunities.

The winner of 2018 Sands Supplier Excellence Awards in the SME category was Kin Nam Hong Co. Ltd., a supplier of fresh and cut vegetables for Sands China since 2004.

**The services of Sands China's suppliers are essential for our business, creating a partnership of mutual success.**

DR. WILFRED WONG

Following its partnership with Sands China, the local SME has grown from six employees to 32, and had acquired an additional eight cold trucks for delivery.

The local SME's annual spend with the company has increased a few dozen-fold since 2004.

According to the local SME's managing director, Lei Iong

Fai, 60 percent of its business sales revenue is acquired through Sands China.

"We are thankful for this awards recognized by Sands China, I feel that my efforts have been recognized," the awardee said.

"We supply 80 percent of vegetables the company and we are continually trying our best to cope with the standards of Sands China's development and in providing good quality products," Lei added.

Lei expressed its gratitude to the gaming operator as it has provided them with opportunities to enlarge its business capacity.

"Cooperating with a very large scale company allows us to not only increase in product volumes but to enhance our quality. The [sales] volume grew from 100,000 to over 1 million per month," Lei noted.

Looking ahead, the gaming operator is one of the most significant clients, and Lei pledged that it would cope up with the demand in a bid to also provide quality products to residents and visitors in the city.

Kin Nam Hong Co. Ltd., was awarded for providing competitive pricing, prompt response and excellent delivery service, even during emergencies.

For the Cost Management

Category, Elecon International Limited was awarded for having the best competitiveness in local market with efficient cost management for high quality services.

The local micro-enterprise providing energy-savings LED lighting and solutions, and has worked with Sands China on sustainability lighting projects since 2010.

"We have a good relationship and cooperation with Sands China," said Raymond Tam, General Manager of Elecon.

"They are very professional in terms of technical specifications so we are trying our best to cater to their needs," he added.

According to the awardee, the micro-firm will also provide their products to the integrated resort operator's new projects such as The Londoner and Four Season's new tower.

"Sands China has been very supportive to local SMEs. The payment from Sands China is

generally in one month, which is a very big help for SMEs," the awardee explained.

Sands China has taken up some 60 to 70 percent of Elecon International Limited's total sales volume, and is considering Sands China as its largest client.

"In two to three years, our sales revenue reached around MOP20 to MOP30 million," Tam expressed, noting that the gaming operator has been supportive of its products that promote sustainability.

The 2018 Sands Supplier Excellence Awards has honoured a total of seven distinguished suppliers in seven categories: small and medium-sized enterprise (SME); innovation; quality management; project management; corporate culture and sustainability, service excellence; and cost management.

**This article was sponsored by Sands China Ltd.**

## WINNERS' TESTIMONIES

"We are thankful for this awards recognized by Sands China, I feel that my efforts have been recognized." - Lei Iong Fai

"Sands China has been very supportive to local SMEs. The payment from Sands China is generally in one month, which is a very big help for SMEs." - Raymond Tam

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## AL PLENARY

# Police law approved without changes, only Sou opposed



Wong Sio Chak (center)



Sulu Sou

## Renato Marques

**T**HE bill that aims to establish the new competences of the Public Security Police Force (PSP) was finally approved yesterday at a plenary session of the Legislative Assembly (AL).

The bill gathered consensus from lawmakers save for Sulu Sou, who stood alone in questioning several articles and requesting several times for separate votes of parts of the bill with

which he could not agree.

Sou started by questioning article 6 of the law, which defines the competences of the PSP. The lawmaker was interested in understanding why the word "citizen" used on the original version of the law was replaced by "population" and why it did not match with the word "resident" used in the Basic Law.

Another of the word changes flagged by Sou concerned article 12 where the duty of "watch" was replaced by "observe." In his

opinion the word replacement does not change the concept.

"The effect is exactly the same. And this is very wide concept. It gives a huge discretionary power to the PSP," he decried, questioning its necessity when other articles already cover the duties of the police.

Before Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak was able to reply, lawmaker Vong Hin Fai stepped in to answer that such changes had to do with a "consistency in the juridical terms

and that the term 'residents' [in the Basic Law] should be interpreted also in a larger sense."

Wong concurred with the need for a "consistency in the law language" noting that both definitions of "watch" and "observe" were discussed in the third standing committee of the AL where the bill had been scrutinized, adding that the replacement word had found "consensus within the [standing] committee."

On the topic Wong added: "The pre-condition [for the force to act] is the possibility of an illegal activity. The PSP has the duty and competence to do this work as it contributes to law enforcement."

As expected, a vote of this part of the bill passed not with the full unanimity of 28 votes in favor, but with 27 in favor and one against from Sou.

Sou also expressed concerns regarding the attribution of powers to law enforcement officers to be valid around the clock and even when they are off duty. Sou recalled differences between Judiciary Police (PJ) officers and those of the PSP, whereby the law only grants such powers to the former "during their activities and duties," adding that there is a clear difference in the powers afforded to PSP officers and PJ officers.

The Secretary replied with an affirmation of the "need to fight criminality" noting that an officer "even off duty has such power and responsibility" and claiming once again that the topic had been discussed in the committee.

When it came to the vote for this part of the bill, Sou opted to abstain, while all the other lawmakers voted in favor.

After the bill was approved in full, two lawmakers expressed their feelings in vote declarations.

Agnes Lam justified her votes in favor with the need to renew the law currently in force, claiming that the new law does not enlarge the competences of the force, but was rather a renewal of the current law.

Sou, who disagreed with the opinion, that said that the new law establishes an extension of police competences in several fields such as ports and customs, the airport and on the surveillance of the general population. "We changed only the words but the content is the same and the definition of the 'behaviors susceptible of disturbing public order' [as interpreted by the government] continues to lack clarity," he argued.

## LRT audit proposal shot down by Assembly

**T**HE Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday voted against a proposal from lawmakers Ng Kuok Cheong and Au Kam San to have an audit of the entire situation relating to the Light Rail Transit (LRT) project.

In the proposal, the lawmakers wanted not only to have a debate session with the Secretary for Transport and Public Works and other responsible persons for the projects but called for a full audit with both the current and former officials since the project's birth. The lawmakers argued that the audit was needed in order to understand what exactly happened to cause so much delay and budget slippage.

Claiming that the many questions and spoken enquiries from AL lawmakers have not obtained a satisfactory reply from the government, Ng and Au were proposing this time to establish a commission to audit the whole project as a way to ascertaining the problems.

The proposal was met by the majority of the legislators with a vote against. Several of the lawmakers justified their vote by saying that the government has been replying to the many questions on the topic.

One such lawmaker was Ma Chi Seng, who noted that the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) has already issued reports on the topic and even the Final Instance Court has pronounced on some particular cases, saying, "I don't think we need to insist more on this."



A similar position was expressed by several others including Leong Sun Iok, Ella Lei and Song Pek Kei, who added that the current follow-up committee can perform this task without the need for an audit.

Sulu Sou was in favor of the proposal of Ng and Au and, replying to the opinion of Ma, said: "We have been asking... But there were no concrete replies. Maybe this audit will be the right method to know exactly what is going on. As far as I know the audit method was never used on the government. Maybe we should try." Besides the three democrats, lawmaker Agnes Lam was also in support of the proposal. In her vote declaration Lam explained that the topic was of "public interest," adding, "the budget doesn't stop hiking and there are few explanations."

### SOU PUBLICLY THANKS WORK OF AL LEGAL ADVISORS



Paulo Taipa (left) and Paulo Cardinal yesterday at the Legislative Assembly

**IN THE** period before the agenda, lawmaker Sulu Sou opted to use his time not to question the government but instead highlight and thank the work over the years of the two veteran legal advisers of the AL, Paulo Cardinal and Paulo Taipa, who were dismissed by the board of the AL back in August of this year. The dismissal becomes effective starting December 31. Sou highlighted the contributions

of the legal advisers by quoting former lawmaker Leonel Alves: "The two advisers are and will be indispensable elements for maintaining the quality of the legislative work of the Legislative Assembly. Nobody can understand which [reason] of public interest is so relevant that does not allow the renewal [of their contracts]. Discretionary power should not be confused with arbitrary power."

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IFFAM

# Fitting for Suburban Birds to be screened in Macau

**T**HE producer of 2018 award-winning film *Suburban Birds* said at a red carpet event at the International Film Festival and Awards Macao (IFFAM) last night that it was fitting for the film to be screened in Macau.

*Suburban Birds* tells two parallel stories with a connecting narrative that has some critics praising the film for its unusual presentation and others scolding it for blandness. One story follows several land surveyors discovering subsidence in a suburban area. The other, linked via a child's diary, follows a group of school children roaming those same streets.

But as the protagonist reads into the diary, he discovers that it might contain prophecies about his own life.

A key theme of the movie is urban development and the filmmaking team finds similarities between the setting of *Suburban Birds* and the experience of Macau in recent decades.



Qin Sheng (right) and Patrick Mao Hung (center)

"The movie came from my growth experience. During my growth, my city has dramatically changed; everything of the current city seems to be different from what it was in the past," said Chinese director Qiu Sheng.

"This is my second time in Macau," the director added, before the film's producer Patrick Mao Huang complemented, "it's very suitable for the film to be presented here in Macau because lots of things are happening here" in terms

of urban development. The Chinese director's debut feature-length film won the Best Narrative Feature in Xining First International Film Festival and was nominated for two awards at Locarno International Film Festival earlier this year.

The director also said at the red carpet event yesterday that he hopes to keep making feature-length films, but acknowledged the difficulty in navigating "hundreds of daily options" on set. **DB**

## Liu Jie's 'Baby' tackles child abandonment in China

**C**HINESE director Liu Jie attended the screening of his movie "Baby" at the third International Film Festival Awards Macao.

His movie, which is a part of the New Chinese Cinema category, tackles the disturbing issue of how disabled children are frequently abandoned in China.

The film tells the story of how a cleaner at a local children's hospital encounters a baby born with the same congenital defects she herself suffered from as a child. Faced with a barrage of high-risk operations, the father decides to refuse treatment and take the baby home with him, condemning his daughter to certain death.

"It is a movie that is not too entertaining," said Liu to the press during the red carpet event this week at the Macau Tower.

"I surely hope that peo-



Chinese director Liu Jie

ple can see a place through a movie, and can see the structure of a society. We included such an incident in the movie and maybe [we want to see] what everybody's reaction is, and how the government is doing, and how hospital operations [in mainland China are]," the filmmaker added.

According to Liu, the film could be compared a documentary, due to its authenticity.

The Chinese director has received awards from different film festivals, including his movie "Courthouse on Horseback," which won the Orizzonti Award at the 63rd Venice International Film Festival.

His second feature "Judge" was also selected in Orizzonti at the 66th Venice International Film Festival and won the Best Original Screenplay Award at the 47th Golden Horse Film Festival. **LV**

# Huawei clash shows deeper US-China battle for global influence

David Tweed, Enda Curran

**T**HE Trump administration has insisted the arrest of a top Huawei executive has nothing to do with trade talks. In Beijing, it's just the latest U.S. move to contain China's rise as a global power.

Bail hearings proceeded this week after Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies Co., was arrested in Canada on Dec. 1 because of alleged violations of U.S. sanctions against Iran. The case threatens to derail a trade truce struck the same day between Donald Trump and Xi Jinping.

Even if the two leaders manage to strike a broader deal, the arrest shows that the U.S.-China conflict goes far beyond trade. The world's biggest economies are now engaged in a battle for global influence that will ultimately determine whether the U.S. remains the globe's predominant superpower, or China rises as a viable counterweight.

"The sentiment in Washington now is not just a Trumpian mercantilism - the desire to bring back factory jobs to Wisconsin or wherever," said Nick Bisley, a professor of international relations at La Trobe University in Melbourne who has written books on great-power politics. "It is a desire to significantly cut ties with China because of that larger perception it presents a strategic risk."

A bipartisan consensus has emerged in Washington that China's entry into the World Trade Organization hollowed out U.S. manufacturing and allowed it to grow rich. That increased economic power is now at a point where it risks eroding key American military advantages around the globe.

China insists it plays by the rules, and doesn't challenge U.S. dominance. Even so, three areas in particular worry American strategic planners: Technology, the dollar and the ability to project military power overseas.

A year ago, the White House identified China's growing technological prowess as a threat to U.S. economic and military might. American companies have long argued that China forces them to transfer intellectual property and sometimes steals trade secrets - all of which Beijing denies.

## Both America and China see their future global power as coming from the high-tech sector.

MICHAEL SHOEBRIDGE  
AUSTRALIAN STRATEGIC  
POLICY INSTITUTE

In justifying tariffs, Trump's team has cited Beijing's "Made in China 2025" strategy to become a global leader in state-of-the-art technologies from aerospace to robotics. So far, China has resisted those demands, arguing that doing so would crush its economic potential.

Huawei in particular epitomizes the threat. Earlier this year, Trump blocked Broadcom Inc.'s USD117 billion hostile takeover bid for Qualcomm Inc. over concerns that Huawei would end up dominating the market for computer chips and wireless technologies.

BLOOMBERG



The fear is that wireless carriers may be forced to turn to Huawei or other Chinese companies for 5G technology, potentially giving Beijing access to critical communications. Those concerns have prompted the U.S. to ban Huawei's products for government procurement, and Australia, Japan and New Zealand have reportedly followed.

China has fought back, with foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang saying this week that Huawei doesn't "force any enterprise to install forced backdoors."

"The competition is really focused in the areas where future strategic and economic dominance come from," said Michael Shoebridge, director of the defense and strategy program at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. "The Huawei arrest is right in the middle of this because both America and China see their future global power as coming from the high-tech sector."

The dominance of the dollar has allowed the U.S. to effectively control the world's finan-

cial system, underpinning its superpower status. Yet Trump's increased use of sanctions to assert its foreign-policy goals has prompted a wide range of nations - from China to Russia to the European Union - to look for an alternative.

The Trump administration added nearly 1,000 entities and individuals to its sanctions list in its first year, almost 30 percent more than the Obama administration's last year in office, according to law firm Gibson Dunn. The complete list now runs to more than 1,200 pages.

Sanctions are a key tool for the U.S. to subdue potential adversaries like North Korea, but they also can affect friends and allies. The EU, which objected to reimposing sanctions on Iran, this month unveiled plans to mitigate the so-called "exorbitant privilege" of the dollar.

During a visit to China last month, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said the two nations were looking at ways to boost the use of their currencies through allowing the use of China's UnionPay credit card in Russia and Russia's Mir card in

China. "No one currency should dominate the market," he said.

"We are potentially at the beginning of a systemic shift that may take some time to play out," said Gregory Chin, associate professor at York University in Toronto, and a political economy specialist. "The political will is building and coalescing."

Last year, Xi called his Belt and Road Initiative to finance infrastructure and development projects across the globe the "project of the century." Morgan Stanley says as much as \$1.3 trillion may be lent out under the policy by 2027.

Now, with a backlash growing across Asia from Malaysia to the Maldives [see more on page 11], Xi is playing defense: Last month he told the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit that it was "not a trap as some people have labeled it."

The U.S. has grown increasingly concerned that poorer countries may become economically dependent on China. The Pentagon warned earlier this year that China could use ports around the globe to support naval deployments. **Bloomberg**

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# Hong Kong says no to nano flats as prices start to crater

Shawna Kwan

**COULD** nano flats - billed as one way of solving Hong Kong's chronic housing shortage - be on the way out as quickly as they grabbed the public's attention?

Two years ago, when the developer of a residential project in the New Territories unveiled units smaller than a parking space, an executive was quoted as saying: "Even the emperor living in a place as big as the Forbidden City still slept on a bed."

Be that as it may, it seems ordinary residents are having second thoughts about super-tiny apartments. A sale over the weekend at the project, where some dwellings measure just 12 square meters, failed to attract much interest, with only two of the 73 units on offer selling.

"The rise and popularity of nano flats is largely centered around their relative affordabi-



lity for buyers with limited budgets," said Denis Ma, head of research at Jones Lang LaSalle Inc. "When housing prices start to sag, demand for these types of properties usually plummets as buyers turn their attention to larger units at the same price point."

A slide in home prices is already underway in Hong Kong. Property prices have declined 6.3 percent from their August peak, Centaline data show, while Midland Realty said last month that new-home sales in November were on track to be the lowest by volume since early 2016.

History suggests small apartments tend to suffer more when there are price adjustments: The cost for units measuring less than 40 square meters dropped 12 percent during the 2015-2016 price correction versus a 9 percent dip for those measuring 70 to 100 square

meters, government data show.

This will come as bad news to home builders hoping to cash in on the short-lived tiny craze, where apartments the size of a Tesla Model X were last year selling for around \$500,000.

**The rise and popularity of nano flats is largely centered around their relative affordability for buyers with limited budgets.**

DENIS MA  
JONES LANG LASALLE

Jones Lang LaSalle predicts that 3,300 new nano flats measuring 19 square meters or less will be completed between 2018 and 2020, up by 35 percent from the previous three-year period. **Bloomberg**



## Court bans some iPhones over Qualcomm dispute

**U.S.** chipmaker Qualcomm says it's won an order in a Chinese court banning some Apple phones in China as part of a long-running dispute over patents.

Qualcomm said Monday that the Fuzhou Intermediate People's Court in China has granted preliminary injunctions ordering four Chinese subsidiaries of Apple to stop selling and importing iPhones.

It's not immediately clear what the full scope of the ruling is. While Qualcomm says the ban covers iPhones 6S through X, Apple says all iPhone models remain available for customers in China.

The dispute is over two Qualcomm patents enabling consumers to format photos and manage phone apps using a touch screen. Apple called it a "desperate move" by Qualcomm and promised to fight it in the courts. Apple said it filed a request Monday for the court to reconsider its ruling.

Qualcomm's general counsel, Don Rosenberg, said in a statement Monday that if Apple doesn't heed the orders, it will seek enforcement of them through tribunals that are part of the Chinese court system. Although its name isn't widely known outside the technolo-

gy industry, San Diego-based Qualcomm is one of the world's leading makers of the processors that power many smartphones and other mobile devices. Qualcomm also owns patents on key pieces of mobile technology that Apple and other manufacturers use in their products.

Qualcomm's case against Apple is part of a broader legal strategy it has waged against the iPhone maker around the world, with cases also pending in the United States and Europe.

The two companies have also battled over how much Apple owes in licensing fees to Qualcomm. **AP**

## Snowden adds voice to calls for Google to stay out of China

Gerrit De Vynck

**ON** the eve of Google Chief Executive Officer Sundar Pichai's testimony to Congress, a coalition of human rights groups and activists, including former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, are demanding more details on the search giant's potential plans to build out its China business.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Committee to Protect Journalists are among the organizations and individuals who signed the letter, which asks Google to promise it won't create a search engine for China that contributes to censorship and political repression in the country.

"Facilitating Chinese authorities' access to personal data, as described in media reports, would be particularly reckless," the letter's authors write. "There is a real risk that Google would directly assist the Chinese government in arresting or imprisoning people simply for expressing their views online, making the company complicit in human rights violations."

The activists also released a letter they obtained from Google's senior vice pre-



A banner supporting Edward Snowden is displayed in Hong Kong

sident for global affairs, Kent Walker, responding to an earlier set of protests and statements made by Amnesty International and others in October.

Walker references Google's goals of connecting people in emerging markets to the internet and repeats statements made by Pichai that project Dragonfly, as the search engine was known internally, was not close to being launched formally. He refrains from making any commitments about censorship though, instead saying the company will weigh all feedback carefully before making a final decision.

Dragonfly has caused an uproar inside and outside of Google, with many employees expressing con-

cern about the company potentially working with the Chinese government after pulling out of the country in 2010 precisely because Chinese authorities were pushing Google to help them monitor their citizens.

The conversation will come to a head on Tuesday, when Pichai answers questions at a committee of U.S. lawmakers. Some have already questioned why Google is considering a China search engine while backing away from some of its work with the U.S. military.

"We're hoping that folks on the hill will ask Google some hard questions," said Cynthia Wong, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch. **Bloomberg**

Iain Marlow, Dandan Li

**I**N late August, President Abdulla Yameen of the Maldives hailed the opening of a Chinese-built bridge connecting two islands in the archipelago as “the gateway into tomorrow and the opportunities beyond.”

One month later, Yameen was voted out and the new government of the palm-fringed nation off the coast of India began to uncover the mountain of debt with which he'd saddled the country. A pro-China strongman who jailed opponents and judges, Yameen borrowed heavily from Beijing to build a new runway for the main airport, housing developments and a hospital, as well as the 2.1 kilometer-long “China-Maldives Friendship Bridge.”

On a recent trip to New Delhi, Maldives officials opened up about their frustration over the scale of the debt to China—the equivalent of almost 20 percent of GDP—and the inexplicable preference given to Chinese financing under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In just one example, the previous government rejected a \$54 million hospital bid in favor of an “inflated” Chinese offer of \$140 million. “We have been burned,” said Economic Development Minister Fayyaz Ismail.

The tourist paradise of the Maldives isn't the only Asian nation to discover that the promise of Chinese President Xi Jinping's signature infrastructure program was too good to be true.

After an unprecedented run of funding large-scale investments in projects from railways to highways in poorer countries across Asia, governments are adopting a far more cautious approach to China's grand plans for what it regards as its backyard. From Malaysia to Sri Lanka, simmering voter anger over deals perceived as unfair or corrupt are prompting close examination, investigation and even suspension of projects until recently taken for granted.

“The first phase of the Belt and Road is effectively over,” said Andrew Small, a senior fellow with the German Marshall Fund's Asia program. “A new model has not yet emerged, but it is clear that the old one, almost entirely focused on speed and scale, is no longer sustainable.”

Chinese authorities have noted the examples of misconduct and are reassessing and tweaking their global infrastructure plans, said a senior Chinese official who asked not to be named discussing strategy. They are well aware that poorly executed projects can hurt China's reputation and are alert to the potential for resentment to spread, the official said.

Asia is in desperate need of infrastructure upgrades and no

# How Asia fell out of love with the Belt and Road Initiative

## Belt and Road

China's modern-day adaptation of the Silk Road aims to revive, and extend, the ancient routes

— Silk Road Economic Belt — Maritime Silk Road Initiative



Source: Belt and Road Portal, China's National Development and Reform Commission

Bloomberg

country other than China has the appetite—or the ready resources—to meet the demand for large-scale investments. Yet the criticism in Asia comes at a sensitive time of growing international skepticism of China's global intentions. While much of the focus is on President Donald Trump's standoff with Xi over trade, technology and market access, governments across Europe, in Australia and in Japan are tightening up their vetting of Chinese investments, particularly in critical infrastructure such as key ports and network systems.

China has commissioned internal reports that have highlighted the backlash, with the aim of continuing Xi's outward push at a time when the economy is struggling. Authorities have stepped up scrutiny of BRI projects and investment and are deliberating possible regulations, the official said, adding that China is ready to take measures to clamp down on misconduct.

That translates into “more willingness to renegotiate terms, more focus on project quality, more efforts to cooperate with third-country partners such as Japan, and greater sensitivity to political and macroeconomic risk,” said the German Marshall Fund's Small.

The shift in sentiment among Asian governments is already tangible, and has burst into the open in recent months. In Pakistan, China's all-weather ally for decades, militants an-

gered by Chinese investment in a remote area bombed and attacked the Chinese consulate in Karachi last month, killing seven people.

## ■ In poorer countries across Asia, governments are adopting a far more cautious approach to China's grand plans for what it regards as its backyard

In Sri Lanka, there is growing anger over China's vast economic influence as a threat to the country's sovereignty, while a Myanmar government adviser criticized as “absurd” the \$7.5 billion price tag for its Chinese-backed port, which was agreed to under the previous military government.

In Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad was elected prime minister in May after questioning Chinese investments on the campaign trail. In office, he slammed a “new version of colonialism,” as his government moved to suspend a \$20 billion Chinese railway project, and

later cancelled three China-backed pipeline projects worth \$3 billion.

Indian officials have long objected to the Belt and Road program because it funds \$60 billion worth of infrastructure in Pakistan, including in parts of disputed Kashmir, which India claims as its own.

And though New Delhi lacks the cash to compete against Beijing, Indian diplomats insist countries have been lured into debt traps and view the recent criticism as legitimizing their long-standing position. Indeed, a report this year by the Washington-based Center for Global Development identified eight nations at risk of debt distress from Chinese financing, among them Pakistan, the Maldives, Laos, Mongolia and Djibouti, where China has its only overseas military base.

Vietnam's clashes with Beijing in the South China Sea meanwhile mean security fears there risk overshadowing investment projects.

Increasingly, bashing China makes sound electoral sense in parts of Asia. Indonesia, where the campaign for an April ballot could bring heightened scrutiny of Chinese projects, is an example of how China's investments are often pulled into emerging market elections, according to Kelsey Broderick, an Asia associate at the Eurasia Group.

“Candidates around the world have used public concerns over Chinese debt as part of their successful challenges to incum-

bent candidates who have embraced BRI with open arms,” said Broderick. He cited Jair Bolsonaro's successful run for the Brazilian presidency on an anti-China platform, and said Kenya, Zambia and Thailand could face similar debates.

Part of the concern comes from perceptions that, apart from contributing to unsustainable debt levels, China's loans serve Beijing's strategic goals in the Indian Ocean region key to global shipping routes at a time when China is building islands in the South China Sea.

In the Maldives, former strongman Yameen's increasingly overt pro-China policies included ramming a free trade agreement with China through parliament and denying work visas for professionals from China's rival India. The strong-arm tactics ultimately backfired: New Maldivian Finance Minister Ibrahim Ameer has asked for \$200 million of Indian loans and pledged to pursue an “India-first” foreign policy, a sharp rebuke to Beijing.

The Trump administration meanwhile has honed its message against the Belt and Road. Vice President Mike Pence told leaders at the recent Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Singapore that the U.S. doesn't “offer a constricting belt or a one-way road.”

The U.S. has set up an agency to lend as much as \$60 billion for infrastructure, and last month backed a plan to build a \$1.7 billion electricity grid in Papua New Guinea as part of a push to provide countries with alternative lending schemes. Still, that number pales in comparison to the Belt and Road, which Morgan Stanley says may total \$1.3 trillion by 2027.

Asia clearly needs more infrastructure: The Asian Development Bank forecasts the region needs \$26 trillion worth of highways, railroads and other infrastructure over the next decade or so. In the absence of viable alternatives, China is likely to remain the first port of call. In any case, many countries in Asia and Africa still prefer Chinese loans that come with “no governance or accountability commitments,” said Broderick.

In the five years since Xi launched Belt and Road, “China has been on a learning curve,” said Pang Zhongying, an international relations professor from Macau University of Science and Technology. “It's the right thing to do for China to reassess its BRI projects and put more emphasis on risk control.” **Bloomberg**

# US returns three disputed bells taken in 1901 to Philippines

Jim Gomez, Manila

THREE church bells seized by American troops as war trophies more than a century ago were returned to the Philippines yesterday in a move long demanded by Filipino leaders, including the current president, who is critical of Washington and has moved closer to China.

U.S. defense officials and the American ambassador handed back the Bells of Balangiga to the Philippine defense chief in a solemn ceremony at an air force base in the capital, closing a dark episode in the treaty allies' love-hate relationship.

"It is my great honor to be here at this closing of a painful chapter in our history," U.S. Ambassador Sung Kim said. "Our relationship has withstood the tests of history and flourishes today."

Defense Secretary James Mattis has said the handover is an important gesture of friendship and is in the U.S. national security interest. Some U.S. veterans and officials had opposed the return of the bells, calling them memorials to American war dead.



Philippine Air Force personnel unload three church bells seized by American troops as war trophies more than a century ago

The bells are revered by Filipinos as symbols of national pride, and their arrival on a U.S. military transport plane and the handover ceremony were shown live on national TV. Two of the bells had been displayed for decades at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and the third was with the U.S. Army in South Korea.

After being colonized by Spain for more than three centuries, the Philippines became a U.S. possession in 1898 in a new colonial era that began with the outbreak of the Philippine-American War.

American occupation troops took the bells from a Catholic church following an attack by machete-wielding Filipino villa-

gers, who killed 48 U.S. soldiers in the town of Balangiga on central Samar island in 1901 in one of the U.S. Army's worst single-battle losses of that era.

One of the bells had been sounded to signal the attack by the villagers, some of whom were disguised as women who hid in the church near an American garrison, historian Rolando Borrinaga said.

The Americans retaliated, reportedly killing thousands of villagers above the age of 10, and a U.S. general, Jacob Smith, ordered Samar to be turned into a "howling wilderness," Borrinaga said.

President Rodrigo Duterte, who has had an antagonistic attitude toward the U.S. and has revitalized ties with China and Russia, asked Washington in his state of the nation address last year to "return them to us, this is painful for us."

"Give us back those Balangiga bells. [...] They are part of our national heritage," Duterte said in the speech, attended by the U.S. ambassador and other diplomats.

Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said with the resolution of the issue, "It's time for healing, it is time for closure, it is time to look ahead as two nations should with a shared history as allies."

Duterte has referred to violence by Americans in Balangiga and on southern Jolo island in the early 1900s in public criticism of the U.S. government after it raised concerns about his brutal crackdown on illegal drugs in which thousands have died.

A breakthrough on the bells issue came with an amendment to a U.S. law banning the return of war relics and memorials to foreign countries. That allowed the homecoming of the Balangiga bells, said Lorenzana, who saw the bells last year in Wyoming, where he was notified by Mattis of the U.S. decision.

Philippine officials led by Duterte are to turn over the bells on Saturday to officials and the church in Balangiga, a small coastal town where villagers applauded while watching troops on TV screens pry open the wooden crates containing the bells.

"The Bells of Balangiga will once again peal, it will still remind the people of Balangiga of what happened in the town square more than a century ago," Lorenzana said. "But we would also look at that history with more understanding and acceptance." AP

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Kyunghee Park, Jill Ward

**T**HE investigation into the fatal crash of a Boeing jet from Asia's second-largest budget airline has turned the spotlight on the ballooning growth of low-cost carriers in the region and the training, staff and facilities needed to support them. Rising wealth is adding a million new Asian fliers a year, spurring entrepreneurs, full-service airlines and regional governments to try their hand in an industry notorious for price wars and outside forces that have doomed dozens of ventures.

Vietnam's Bamboo Airways is the latest to join the market with its first flight due this month, feeding holidaymakers to the resorts of owner and property billionaire Trinh Van Quyet. AirAsia Group will follow with a joint venture in the same country in August. Japan Airlines Ltd. aims to get a medium- and long-haul budget unit up and running by 2020, while in South Korea, at least four new aspirants have applied for permits.

New, longer-range and fuel-efficient planes are encouraging more routes. But the loss of Lion Air Flight 610 last month in Indonesia, and a preliminary accident report that criticized the carrier's safety and maintenance regimes without identifying the cause of the crash, has highlighted some of the factors that make the commercial operation of no-frills airlines so precarious.

Potential growth in Asia is huge. LCCs accounted for close to 55 percent of all seats within Southeast Asia so far this year and more than 60 percent in South Asia. Yet some of the biggest markets in the region are just getting going. China got its first no-frills airline - Spring Airlines Co. - in 2005, and Japan and South Korea are also now embracing the trend.

Here are five key factors Asia's low-cost carriers must navigate to succeed in luring Asia's growing army of fliers:

#### 1. MONEY

With the list price of a new 737 MAX starting at around USD100 million, strong financing and deep pockets are a must for setting up an airline. Most budget carriers are either backed by the fortune of an existing business, such as Trinh's property empire, or are affiliates of a full-service carrier, like Singapore Airlines Ltd.'s Scoot.

But buying or leasing planes is only the start. Budget carriers compete by meticulous attention to trimming costs, using computer algorithms to maximize the number of passengers and seat revenue while dispensing with all but the most basic free amenities. Get



Rescue crew members carry parts of the crashed Lion Air airplane

# Lion Air crash shows challenges of Asia's budget airline boom

the calculation wrong and an LCC's slender margins can rapidly vanish.

#### 2. FUEL

The biggest cost of all is fuel and low cost carriers have been suffering. For the airline industry as a whole, fuel will probably account for about 24 percent of costs this year, according to IATA, but for budget airlines the proportion is often much higher.

Airlines have had some respite recently as the price of benchmark Brent crude oil tumbled 25 percent in the past two months, bringing the level back to where it was a year ago. That may not be enough to prevent more players from failing after two European operators went to the wall this summer.

For carriers pursuing the expanding business of long-haul budget flights, the fuel equation is even more critical.

"On long haul there are fewer possibilities for LCCs to reduce costs" said Joanna Lu, head of Consultancy Asia for FlightGlobal. "Passengers expect a bit more in terms of comfort on longer flights and the full-service carriers benefit from having high-yielding premium traffic to achieve profitability and, crucially, to offer competitive fares in economy class."

One entrant into the trans-

continental budget arena, Norwegian Air, will end its London-Singapore service next month, starting instead a route from the U.K. capital to Brazil's Rio de Janeiro.

#### 3. STAFF

More airlines means more demand for pilots and cabin crew, but there is already a global shortage of trained pilots and the boom in demand in Asia is making the situation worse. Even with an increase in the number of schools training pilots in countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines, it takes years for a student to qualify as a co-pilot on a commercial airliner and years more before they have enough experience to take command.

Demand for new pilots worldwide is expected to be over 630,000 by 2036, with the Asia-Pacific region alone requiring more than a quarter of a million, according to Boeing Co.

#### 4. AIRPORTS

A key constraint on Asia's aviation growth is the availability of airport facilities, not just landing slots, but quality maintenance, security and air traffic control. China has been adding new civil airports at the rate of about 10 a year for the past decade, according to

the nation's Civil Aviation Authority, and most major hubs in the region have either been rebuilt or have added terminals to cope with a surge in traffic.

Yet most are barely keeping up with demand.

Worse still, many airports in the region, especially those in second-tier cities often favored by budget carriers, don't have the body and luggage scanners, maintenance facilities or modern air traffic control systems that meet the security and safety requirements for large-scale traffic.

"The biggest challenge that LCCs face in Asia is the lack of suitable airports," said Jeffrey Lowe, managing director of Hong Kong-based Asian Sky Group. "In Asia these small to medium size airports don't exist yet so you are stuck using the existing big, expensive international gateway airports, which are already at capacity in most cases."

#### 5. GOVERNMENTS

One area where Asian airlines face bigger hurdles than their European counterparts is in the region's fragmented regulations and restrictions. The European Union's open skies policies allow carriers more freedom to locate, merge and fly throughout the bloc, while in most of Asia, national

interests and subsidized government-owned flag carriers make for a less even playing field.

In India, where low-cost Indigo has almost half the total market share and budget carriers compete fiercely for the growing ranks of Indians who are taking to the skies, crippling taxes, government restrictions and devastating price wars have taken their toll. Since 2007, at least a dozen airlines have vanished or merged, including low cost carriers such as Kingfisher Airlines Ltd. and Sahara Airlines Ltd.

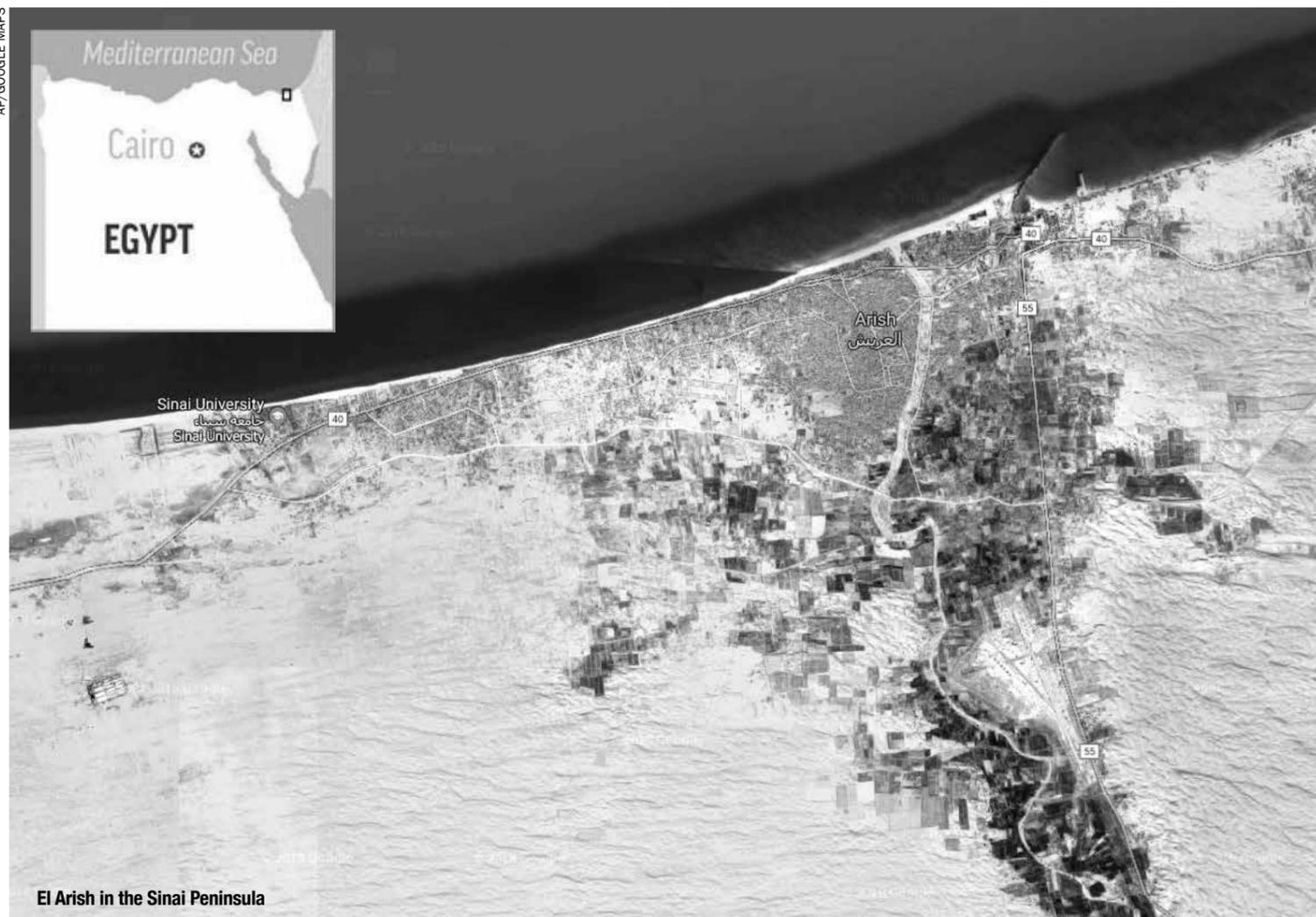
A continual push by the Association of Southeast Asian nations to open the region's skies, together with a cornucopia of holiday destinations, has made the group of 10 countries a hot-bed for budget airlines. Since Malaysia-based AirAsia Group was turned into a low-cost carrier in 2002, it has become Asia's biggest by passengers flown and Southeast Asia now has more than 10 major no-frills airlines, taking about half of the market share.

Southeast Asian LCCs have a staggering 1,400 aircraft on order, compared with fewer than 400 for full-service carriers, according to CAPA. In South Asia the budget order book is more than 700 aircraft. **Bloomberg**

EGYPT

# Normalcy restored in Sinai city, but danger lurks

AP/GOOGLE MAPS



El Arish in the Sinai Peninsula

Hamza Hendawi, el Arish

**MOHAMMED** Amer Shaaban stood over trays of fresh fish at his tiny store in the coastal Sinai Peninsula city of el-Arish, pointing to his right and left while recalling the tough days when Islamic State militants operated with impunity.

"They killed a Christian who owns a knife shop there and an informant over there. They also killed one of my cousins," he said.

"We have enjoyed some stability and peace for the past six or seven months," added the 48-year-old father of five as some two dozen journalists descended on el-Arish's fish market as part of a rare, army-organized trip.

The trip was chiefly designed to show off signs of normalcy in el-Arish, northern Sinai's largest city, as evidence that the military's all-out offensive against militants launched nearly 10 months ago has succeeded.

But in the city and the surrounding deserts, the signs of war are difficult to miss, particularly the enormous security presence. The Associated Press was required to submit the photos and video

accompanying this story to Egypt's military censor, which did not say two weeks after submission if or when the material would be released.

The carefully scripted trip included visits to an indoor arena packed with thousands of screaming schoolchildren, a new housing project, a school and a factory. No one is claiming the militants have been defeated, but there have been no major attacks for several months, save a recent ambush of buses carrying Christian pilgrims to a remote desert monastery south of Cairo that left seven dead.

The fight against militants in Sinai has gone on for years, but the insurgency gathered steam after the 2013 ouster by the military of a freely elected but divisive president, the Islamist Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood. Authorities have since shut down almost all underground tunnels that they suspected militants used to smuggle fighters and weapons into Sinai from neighboring Gaza, ruled by the Islamist Hamas group since 2007.

They also razed to the ground much of the town of Rafah on the Gaza border in a

bid to deny the militants a safe haven and stop its use as cover for tunnels. Elsewhere in northern Sinai, olive orchards have been bulldozed to deny the militants sanctuary.

**■ No one is claiming the militants have been defeated, but there have been no major attacks for several months**

A brutal militant attack on a Sinai mosque that killed more than 300 worshippers a year ago — the deadliest such attack in Egypt in living memory — prompted general-turned-president Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi to order a major offensive.

The operation, with thousands of troops backed by tanks, jet-fighters and warships, got underway in February. Security forces almost completely sealed off northern Sinai, causing shorta-

ges of food and fuel. The siege was eased in May, allowing normalcy to gradually return to the mostly desert region, especially in el-Arish.

Barely a year ago, militants in el-Arish killed suspected informants in broad daylight, set up bogus checkpoints, shot Christians in their stores, snatched clerics and members of the security forces to later dump their bodies on the streets. Now traffic is heavy, families are out in public, stores are filled with goods, and school classes are packed with children.

The military is eager to tout the changes.

"Terrorism will be completely defeated in a matter of a few months," announced Mohammed Abdel-Fadeel Shoushah, a retired general who serves as the governor of northern Sinai. "Now we are focusing on development, which is the basis of security."

For now, though, el-Arish shows enduring signs of conflict.

A Pharaonic-style building across the road from the governor's heavily guarded office has almost every one of its windows shattered. Some streets are blocked by sandberms, while others are sea-

led off by concrete blocks. Unfinished buildings are everywhere in the city, parts of which look deserted. Many of the date palms in the city look like they have received little care for years.

Authorities are building a wall around the city's airport after militants last December rocketed a helicopter used by the then defense and interior ministers while parked on the tarmac. The ministers were unharmed, but one officer was killed in the attack.

Another wall with heavily fortified watch towers is being built on the southern reaches of the city to prevent militants from infiltrating through dense olive orchards.

The pervasive security, and the great lengths to which the military went to protect the journalists, suggest danger may not be far away. The reporters traveled in armored cars with gunners in full combat gear perched atop, and a signal-jamming vehicle tagged along as a precaution against roadside bombs. The top officials in the convoy were protected by heavily armed policemen in black fatigues and ski masks.

In late October, militants twice attacked workers employed by the company building the wall just south of el-Arish, killing at least six and wounding 16. Earlier in November, security forces killed 12 militants hiding in unused buildings in el-Arish.

"Stay put in the vehicle and don't come out and wander around," an armed plainclothes police officer sternly warned reporters during one stop. "It is not as safe as you might think," he said, pointing to the expanse of desert on one side of the road.

The magnitude of the counterterrorism task becomes apparent during the nearly 200-kilometer journey through the desert from the east bank of the Suez Canal to el-Arish.

All along the road are military positions. At some, tanks are buried in the sand for protection with only their turrets showing. Soldiers on watch towers in the middle of nowhere cut forlorn figures against a backdrop of desert. The checkpoints create long lines of vehicles. Helicopters occasionally hover above.

El-Arish resident Hassan Mahdi, a lawyer who came to Sinai from a Nile Delta province as a young boy nearly 30 years ago, said the restored security is a welcome change.

"To be honest, life was very, very difficult here," he said. "Businesses were relocating out of Sinai in search of security and many things were in short supply. Not anymore." **AP**

Mike Corder and Lorne Cook, The Hague

EUROPEAN UNION

# May in the Netherlands as she fights to save Brexit deal

TOP European Union officials yesterday ruled out any renegotiation of the divorce agreement with Britain as Prime Minister Theresa May launched her fight to save her Brexit deal by lobbying leaders in Europe's capitals.

May began her quest over breakfast with Dutch counterpart Mark Rutte, a day after she abandoned a vote in the U.K. Parliament to secure support for the agreement thrashed out with the EU over more than a year, sensing that it would be rejected in London "by a significant margin."

While May made no public comment as she met Rutte in The Hague, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker warned that the Brexit agreement cannot be re-opened for negotiation at a summit of EU leaders tomorrow, but he did say that elements of the deal could still be clarified.

"There is no room whatsoever for renegotiation," Juncker told EU lawmakers in Strasbourg, France, as he briefed them on the summit.

Juncker, who is set to meet May on Tuesday evening, underlined that "the deal we have achieved

is the best deal possible. It is the only deal possible."

But he added that "if used intelligently, [there] is room enough to give further clarification and further interpretations without opening the withdrawal agreement."

EU leaders have often supplemented agreements with political declarations that clarify their interpretation of elements of an accord or provide assurances about how parts of any deal might work.

In Brussels, Danish Foreign Minister Anders Samuelsen also said that EU countries might be willing to clarify parts of the deal.

"It is always a political option to clarify if that is needed, what is meant, what kind of underlining is needed," Samuelsen told reporters.

One of the main sticking points since the Brexit talks began has been how to keep goods flowing



British Prime Minister Theresa May is greeted by Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte upon her arrival in The Hague yesterday

between Northern Ireland in the U.K. and EU member country Ireland, and May is sure to seek flexibility on this from her European partners.

But Juncker said that the so-called "backstop" — an insurance arrangement to ensure that no hard border appears after Brexit on March 29 — must remain, even

though it was never meant to be used.

"We have a common determination to do everything to be not in the situation one day to use that backstop, but we have to prepare," he said, and underlined that "Ireland will never be left alone."

The European Parliament's Brexit point man, Guy Verhof-

tadt, noted that with the canceled vote in London "we have spiraled again into a new mess," and he supported Juncker's message.

"Whatever the request may be we will never let down our Irish friends. It is out of the question to renegotiate the backstop," Verhofstadt said.

If the Brexit agreement is accepted by the U.K. Parliament, it must still be endorsed by the European Parliament before March 29.

May is traveling to Berlin for talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and to Brussels for meetings with Juncker and EU Council President Donald Tusk, who will chair tomorrow's summit.

A senior German official said May won't get any pledge of new negotiations while in Berlin. And he stressed that the chief negotiators were in Brussels, not the German capital. AP

AD

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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 CLOSING 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

**LANDSCAPE OF CHANGE - MACAU WATERCOLOUR PAINTINGS FROM THE MAM COLLECTION**  
**TIME:** 10am-7pm (last admission 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)  
**UNTIL:** February 10, 2019  
**VENUE:** Macau Museum of Art  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 8791 9814

**SPARKLING GARDEN - GUAN HUI 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, 2019  
**VENUE:** The Parisian Theatre  
**ADMISSION:** MOP188, MOP388, MOP488  
**COTAI TICKETING:** (853) 2882 8818  
**KONG SENG TICKETING:** (853) 2855 5555

**FLEETING SPEEDS**  
**TIME:** 2pm-7pm (closed on Sundays)  
**UNTIL:** December 31, 2018  
**VENUE:** Creative Macau - Center for Creative Industries  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 2875 3282

## Offbeat

## NINE YEARS AFTER BEING FLUSHED, WOMAN'S WEDDING RING REAPPEARS

A New Jersey woman has her wedding ring back, nine years after she accidentally flushed it down her toilet.

Paula Stanton was sure the diamond-encrusted gold ring was lost forever after she noticed it wasn't on her finger while she was cleaning her bathroom nearly a decade ago.

Luckily, a member of Somers Point's public works department remembered Stanton mentioning the ring about three years ago.

Last month, Ted Gogol was doing maintenance work near a manhole about 400 feet from Stanton's house. He tells the Press of Atlantic City he saw a shiny object sitting in the mud.

It turned out to be Stanton's ring, and after boiling it in peroxide and lemon juice, she is wearing it again.

## 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

6, 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 &amp; 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 &amp; English)

Duration: 105min

## this day in history



## 1969 DEADLY BOMB BLASTS IN ITALY

At least 13 people have been killed and more than 100 injured after a bomb exploded at a bank in Milan, Italy.

Up to 14 people were also injured in simultaneous blasts at a bank and memorial in the capital, Rome.

Another bomb was later discovered by police near Milan's La Scala opera house.

The first explosion happened at about 16.45 local time on the third floor of Milan's Banca dell' Agricoltura (National Agricultural Bank), in Piazza Fontana.

Michelle Carlotto, 27, a clerk at the bank, said: "I was sitting at my desk behind the bank counter. I heard a blast, a bolt which stunned me."

"In the smoke I saw a body fly from the public section above the counter and fall one yard away from me. I was shocked, I couldn't move."

Many of the wounded were taken to hospital where they remain in a serious condition.

Police said eight kilograms (18lbs) of explosives had been placed in an aluminium box and a slow burning fuse was attached to the device.

Within an hour of the blast, at least another 14 people were injured by three further explosions which shook two areas of Rome.

Another bomb was discovered by police a few hours later inside a separate bank in Milan, near the La Scala opera house.

Officers immediately detonated the device in the courtyard of the Banca Commerciale Italiana.

Police in Rome have detained four men so far but no organisation has yet claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The explosions come at a time of deep social unrest and political uncertainty in Italy.

Italian President Giuseppe Saragat condemned the attacks and pledged to "restore the law willed by the people and its sovereignty."

The Prime Minister, Mariano Rumor, called an emergency cabinet meeting and in a news conference he said the explosions were "an act of barbarism which has no precedent in the history of the country."

He later sent a telegram to the Mayor of Milan, Aldo Aniasi, which ordered the Minister of the Interior to "act with the maximum severity against those who want to poison the peace of the Italian people."

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

In total, 16 people were killed and 58 wounded in what became known as the Piazza Fontana massacre.

Over 4,000 arrests were made in the aftermath of the bombings and one of the suspects, Giuseppe Pinelli, died after falling out of the fourth floor window of the police station where he was being held.

The bombing marked the start of a series of attacks known as "the strategy of tension" between 1969 and 1974 by the right wing group, Ordine Nuovo.

Their aim was to prevent the country falling into the hands of the left -wing by duping the public into believing the bombings were part of a communist insurgency.

The attacks appeared to come to an end in 1974 but the worst strike was to come in 1980, when a suitcase with over 18kg (40lbs) of explosives went off in a train station, in Bologna, killing 85 and wounding more than 200 people.

One of the original suspects, Pietro Valpreda, was eventually tried alongside two neo-Fascists and numerous other secret service agents in 1974, but all the accused were acquitted in 1985 following numerous trials and appeals.

A new trial opened in 1999 after a Milan judge, Guido Salvini, claimed to have discovered the real bombers.

Three neo-fascists, Delfo Zorzi, Carlo Maria Maggi, and Carlo Rognoni were sentenced to life imprisonment but the decision was overturned on appeal in March 2004.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 When you're faced with equal but different kinds of pleasure, what do you do? First, you can cackle with glee at your fabulous so-called problem. Next, keep quiet about it.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Are you and someone close acting more like enemies? Whether it's a friend, colleague or the love of your life, relations might have a certain dangerous vibe right now. It's easy enough to defuse, though.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You're like a master chef, except that you excel at cooking up tasty social events. It may be a tete-a-tete for two or a larger-scale happening involving hundreds, but you're able to mix and blend all the ingredients.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You feel like the lead in your own personal drama - with the entire world as your audience! You do love to be the center of attention sometimes, and everyone else always does enjoy watching.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Don't sit at home surfing channels when your energy is pushing you to surf crowds! Everyone needs time to decompress, of course, but Your good energy has given you an extra dose of charm and energy.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Fools rush in where angels fear to tread - but it's also true that sometimes angels are just a bunch of old scary-cats who don't know how to loosen up and have a good time.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Any long-term plans you're brewing up right now should get the thumbs up, so don't be afraid to dream - and dream big. Why stop at just a few turrets - why not add a double-wide moat and some errant knights riding around the place?

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Blessings can sometimes wear the weirdest disguises in order to see if we're paying attention. Something good that comes along today might wear the guise of a frustrated boss or an angry mate.

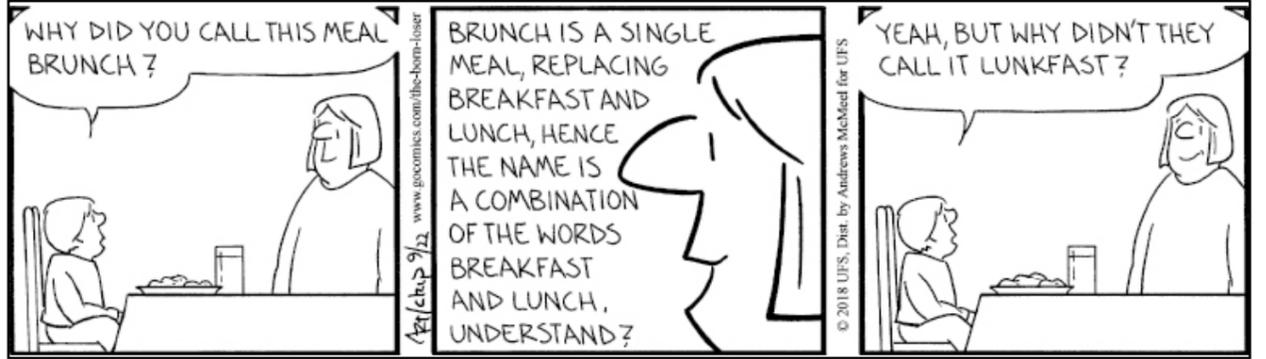
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 A gale force wind of change is blowing into town today. You might just be lifted up out of some sweet, comfortable surroundings and dumped somewhere utterly fantastic.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You're a deeply thoughtful and somewhat complicated person, while those closest to you might be more about the simple life. Is this a case of irreconcilable differences? Of course not!

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 With certain friends and loved ones, even the most casual of conversations can become a big, challenging game of Telephone - your 'Let's eat out tonight' might suddenly become 'Let's spend some time apart.'

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Reality shows can be fun to watch on TV, but who wants to live that way? If you're thinking about indulging in any of the staples of reality TV - alliances, backbiting, gossip, hysteria - don't.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Slugger Sammy; 5- Take \_\_\_ at (try); 10- Racer Yarborough; 14- Harper's Bazaar illustrator; 15- Indira Gandhi's father; 16- Oil of \_\_\_; 17- Self-centered; 19- Amusement; 20- Shaggy-haired wild ox; 21- Island feast; 22- Topeka's state; 24- Hemoglobin deficiency; 26- This, in Tijuana; 27- Capital of Utah; 33- Male deer; 36- Comic O'Donnell; 37- Cohort of Fidel; 38- Abrupt; 39- Glossy fabric; 40- Marine mammal, secure something; 41- Atty.'s org.; 42- Spring up; 43- Month of showers; 44- Place under civil control; 47- "Alice" diner; 48- Pokes gently; 52- Black Sea peninsula; 55- \_\_\_-Tass (Russian news agency); 57- "\_\_\_ tu" (Verdi aria); 58- Beige; 59- Instant; 62- "The Godfather" Oscar nominee; 63- Nancy Drew author Carolyn; 64- "What I Am" singer Brickell; 65- Latin being; 66- Org.; 67- Dregs; DOWN: 1- Later, dude!; 2- Church instrument; 3- Tend a fire; 4- Former nuclear agcy.; 5- Yearly; 6- \_\_\_ precedent; 7- Drive-\_\_\_ window; 8- Shipping magnate Onassis; 9- Skin of a deer; 10- Good brandy; 11- Exclamation to express sorrow; 12- Buddhist monk; 13- Peepers; 18- Inventor Howe; 23- To \_\_\_ (exactly); 25- High-ranking NCO; 26- Simpler; 28- Characteristics; 29- \_\_\_ luck!; 30- Bakery worker; 31- Asian cuisine; 32- Holler; 33- Great quantity; 34- Pipe; 35- Composer Khachaturian; 39- Ceylon, now; 40- Raced; 42- "Hard \_\_\_!" (sailor's yell); 43- Sky blue; 45- Not susceptible; 46- Momentarily; 49- Crystal-lined rock; 50- Tennessee \_\_\_ Ford; 51- Factions; 52- Gospel singer Winans; 53- Some TVs; 54- Nest eggs, briefly; 55- Supermodel Sastre; 56- Up \_\_\_ good; 60- Loser to DDE; 61- Animation unit;

Yesterday's solution crossword grid with filled-in words.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' sections with property details for Lakeview, Ocean Garden Elm Court, WA BAO, TAIPA, Va Fat Taipa, Manhattan F Unit, Va Long, Central Macau, Kok Vui Apartment, and Lakeview Mansions.

FOOTBALL | EPL

# Chelsea suspends four people amid Sterling racism investigation

Steve Douglas

**A**MID an outcry over the treatment of Raheem Sterling by England's media and soccer fans, Chelsea suspended four people from attending its matches as police investigated whether the Manchester City winger was racially abused during a Premier League match.

Police are reviewing footage that circulated widely online during Chelsea's 2-0 win over City on Saturday, showing a man aggressively hurling abuse at Sterling as the player retrieved the ball off the field. Others near the man also appeared to be goading the England international.

Chelsea said the club was fully supporting the police investigation and will pass on any information it gathers.

"Chelsea finds all forms of discriminatory behavior abhorrent," the London club said in

a statement on Monday, "and if there is evidence of ticket-holders taking part in any racist behavior, the club will issue severe sanctions, including bans. We will also fully support any criminal prosecutions."

Sterling, one of English soccer's best and most high-profile players, posted a message on his Instagram account on Sunday, touching only briefly on the incident and instead focusing on the portrayal of black footballers in British newspapers which he believes helps to "fuel racism."

"Regarding what was said at the Chelsea game," Sterling wrote, "as you can see by my reaction I just had to laugh because I don't expect no better."

The 24-year-old Sterling has had an uneasy relationship with the media, with critical coverage before the World Cup in Russia of his decision to get a tattoo of an assault rifle on his right leg. He said it was a tribute to his



Manchester City's Raheem Sterling (left) runs with the ball followed by Chelsea's Mateo Kovacic

late father, who was shot dead when Sterling was two. He was also heavily criticized

by fans and in the media before, during, and after the European Championship in 2016, so

much so that he decided to stop going on social media. Former Manchester United

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Attention No admission under 18

defender Gary Neville was one of Sterling's coaches at Euro 2016, and was approached by the winger during the tournament. Sterling, felt, according to Neville, that the abuse toward him was "vicious" and that he was being "targeted."

"There was a tonal difference to the actual attacks that he was getting compared to others," Neville said. "He was asking me why this was happening. The abuse that he received, particularly in the media, and the language that was used against him, I have not seen it before. And I have lived closely with David Beckham and Wayne Rooney."

Neville said it was a "miracle" Sterling has been able to become such an integral player for City and England.

"He has been carrying this for years," Neville said. "This was not just a Chelsea fan at the weekend."

English soccer's players' union said Sterling was "often singled out and treated more harshly than his colleagues."

"Raheem has made a stand by speaking out and we stand shoulder to shoulder with him against the discrimination of which he speaks," said Simone Pound, head of equality and diversity at the Professional Footballers' Association.

"We all have a part to play in tackling racism and discrimination and certain sectors of the media must be held to account."

Pound said the PFA was "in no doubt that the negative narrative influences public opinion and emboldens racist rhetoric."

A week before the incident involving Sterling at Chelsea, a banana skin was thrown by fans at Arsenal striker Pierre Emerick-Aubameyang as he celebrated scoring against Tottenham in a Premier League match.

"I am obviously not surprised that things like this still happen," Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp said on Monday, when asked about the abuse of Sterling, "but I like the fact that we put the finger on it and say, 'You cannot say what you want, it is not possible.'

"As long as people are silly enough to do this, they need to be punished for it. That is how it is. I am sure 95 percent of people or more are not like this so we should try to find the right amount of attention for these people. Yes, punish them but do not talk too much about them because they do not deserve that we talk about them."

The Football Association has said it will work with the clubs and other authorities regarding the incident at Stamford Bridge involving Sterling. **AP**

## FOOTBALL | LA LIGA

## Spanish league scraps plan to play January match in US

Tales Azzoni, Madrid

**T**HE Spanish League has given up on its plan to play a regular-season match in the United States next month because Barcelona backed down from its commitment.

The Catalan club said on Monday it did not intend to play the game against Girona near Miami because there was no consensus among all stakeholders.

The club's board of directors said Barcelona remained behind the idea of the game abroad, but the "project will not prosper until there is an agreement between all parties."

"From the beginning we have said that participation in the game abroad is voluntary," the league said in a statement. "If FC Barcelona wishes not to attend, the game scheduled in Miami can't be staged on the agreed date."

The Spanish league last month took legal action against the country's soccer federation in an effort to get approval for the Jan. 26 match at Hard Rock

Stadium. A court decision was expected as early as Thursday.

"La Liga will continue the planned action so an official league game can be played outside of Spain," the league said. "La Liga is convinced that [the federation] is not acting in accordance with the law."

The league needs approval from the federation to be able to play abroad. The federation was yet to approve or deny the league's request, having raised concerns that the overseas game would not comply with Spanish and international regulations and TV broadcast contracts. It also said the overseas match could harm the other 18 league clubs.

Barcelona said in its statement it "accepted that income from the game would be shared" among all first-division and second-division clubs following the criteria for television rights money distribution.

The league offered several compensation plans for fans of Girona, which would be relinquishing a home match.

Other stakeholders, including UEFA and CONCACAF, also needed to approve the match. The FIFA council recently opposed the idea, although its permission for the match was not mandatory.

Staging the game in the United States is seen as an important step for the Spanish league to continue expanding internationally and to close the gap on the powerful English Premier League. The Spanish league has a 15-year deal with sports and entertainment group Relevent to promote soccer and take games to the United States.

"We regret to disappoint our fans in the U.S. and will work to, in the shortest possible time, stage an official La Liga game in the U.S., just like the major American leagues (NBA, NFL, MLB, NHL) stage games outside their borders."

The league last month launched a campaign to showcase the public support from American fans, asking them to sign an online petition in favor of the game. **AP**

AD

## ACCURATE, TIMELY & COMPETITIVE TRANSLATIONS

**Languages:**  
ENGLISH, CHINESE,  
PORTUGUESE, JAPANESE,  
KOREAN, SPANISH,  
FRENCH, ARABIC,  
RUSSIAN

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opinion

**Macau Matters**

Richard Whitfield



**GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP**

All round the world, including Macau I am sure, many people suffer from poor sleep quality/quantity, resulting in many health, economic and social issues. For example, a 2013 study showed that more than 65% of the US adult population regularly failed to get the 7-9 hours of sleep recommended for each night. Studies in other countries have found similar results and it is estimated that half the people in the developed world will not get the sleep that they need this week.

This chronic lack of sleep is said to cost US companies about \$2,000/worker/year because of reduced productivity and poor quality decision-making – everybody knows that when you are tired you cannot work hard, you cannot think creatively and you inevitably make poor decisions! To counter this problem, progressive companies like Nike and Google include relaxation areas with “nap pods” in their work sites.

Similarly, researchers are beginning to suspect that the rising rates of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) among school children may often be misdiagnosed sleep deprivation. Biologically, adolescents naturally go to sleep very late and to get the 8 hours of sleep that they need they should not start school until after 9am. However, most schools start at 7:30 – 8:30am, so that many school children regularly do not get enough sleep – chronic tiredness, irritability, lack of concentration, and so on are the result, which are similar symptoms to ADHD. Progressive schools are beginning to recognize this problem and are delaying their school starting times, with dramatic results. For example, after school starting times were delayed until 9am in Minnesota, student Math-SAT (Mathematics Scholastic Aptitude Test) scores rose by about 20%.

**Tips for getting better sleep include:**

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule (sleeping and rising times) and ensure you allow for a good 8 hours of sleep every night
- Exercise regularly but not in the evenings – exercise raises your body temperature which makes falling asleep more difficult so avoid it for 2-3 hours before your bedtime.
- Avoid Caffeine and nicotine because they interfere with your body's sleep signaling mechanisms.
- Avoid sleeping pills and alcoholic nightcaps – sleeping pills and alcohol are strong sedatives which can render you unconscious but only give you very poor quality sleep. They prevent the proper REM and NREM sleep cycles, thus interfering with your memory.
- Avoid large meals and beverages in the late evening because they can lead to indigestion and needing to rise during the night to use the toilet which disturbs your sleep.
- Don't take naps after 3pm because they make it harder to fall asleep at the normal time; nonetheless daytime naps are often good for you to “catch up” on missed sleep.
- Relax before bed to get you in the mood for sleep.
- Take a hot bath before bed because getting out of the bath lowers your body temperature making it easier to fall asleep.
- Have a very dark, cool and gadget-free bedroom. Even small amounts of light, especially blue LED light, tricks your body into thinking it is daytime making sleep more difficult. To fall asleep your body reduces its temperature by about 1 degree and this is difficult if you have too many bed-covers or the bedroom is too warm.
- Go out into the sunlight in the mornings to help your body regulate its circadian rhythm.
- Don't lie in bed awake – if you find it hard to fall asleep, get up and do a relaxing activity (eg reading) and go back to bed when you feel sleepy.

We should be doing much more to extol the benefits of getting a good night's sleep in Macau. Everybody needs it.

**THE FOUR JOURNALISTS AND A NEWSPAPER BUZZ ARE TIME'S PERSON OF THE YEAR**

Time magazine named four journalists and a newspaper yesterday as its 2018 Person of the Year for what it said was standing up for the truth in the face of persecution and violence.

The group, which Time called “the guardians,” consists of slain Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi; the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, Maryland, where five people were shot to death at the newspaper's offices in June;

Philippine journalist Maria Ressa, who has been arrested; and Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who have been detained in Myanmar for nearly a year.

“They are representative of a broader fight by countless others around the world – as of Dec. 10, at least 52 journalists have been murdered in 2018 – who risk all to tell the story of our time,” Editor-in-Chief Edward Felsenthal wrote in an essay.



SOURCE: DSMG

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

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**LEBANON**'s president said yesterday that Israel's operation to destroy what it says is a series of cross-border attack tunnels built by the militant Hezbollah group won't endanger the calm along the frontier, adding that his country takes the issue seriously.

**TURKEY** A police officer angered that his request for a transfer was rejected fired shots at his superiors inside a police station in northern Turkey yesterday, killing the local police chief and wounding two other officers.

**FRANCE** Tax relief and other fiscal measures announced by French President Emmanuel Macron to try to calm nationwide protests will cost 8-10 billion euros (MOP73-91 billion), the government said yesterday.



**BRITAIN** Top European Union officials yesterday ruled out any renegotiation of the divorce agreement with Britain, as Prime Minister Theresa May fought to save her Brexit deal by lobbying leaders in Europe's capitals. More on p15

**SPAIN**'s central government says it will send in national police to ensure security in Catalonia if regional authorities fail to stop recent disruptions to major highways by pro-independence protesters.



**BRAZIL** Researchers from Brazil's National Museum said they had recovered more than 1,500 pieces from the debris following a massive fire.

**VENEZUELA** Socialist President Nicolas Maduro further consolidated power in Venezuelan local elections, while accusing President Donald Trump of plotting to overthrow him.

**NEW ZEALAND**

**Law makes medical marijuana widely available**

Nick Perry, Wellington

**N**EW Zealand's government yesterday passed a law that will make medical marijuana widely available for thousands of patients over time.

The legislation will also allow terminally ill patients to begin smoking illegal pot immediately without facing the possibility of prosecution.

The measures come ahead of a planned national referendum on recreational marijuana use. The government has pledged to hold the referendum some time over the next two years, but has not yet set a date or finalized the wording.

The new law allows patients much broader access to medical marijuana, which was previously highly restricted. But most patients will have to wait a year until a new set of regulations, licensing rules and quality standards are put in place.

The law will also allow medical marijuana products to be manufactured in New Zealand for both domestic and overseas markets.

Health Minister Dr. David Clark said in a statement the new law will help ease suffering.

“This will be particularly



AP PHOTO

welcome as another option for people who live with chronic pain,” he said.

He said the 25,000 people who are in palliative care with terminal illnesses didn't have time to wait for the new scheme, and so the law provided a legal defense for them to use illegal marijuana.

“People nearing the end of their lives should not have to worry about being arrested or imprisoned for trying to manage their pain,” Clark said.

But the opposition's health

spokesman, Dr. Shane Reti, said the new law is “lazy and dangerous” because it doesn't provide details of the planned medical marijuana scheme, and would also allow some people to start smoking pot in public.

“We support medicinal cannabis but strongly oppose the smoking of loose-leaf cannabis in public,” Reti said. “Smoked loose-leaf is not a medicine.”

Reti said the new law amounted to decriminalizing marijuana by stealth. **AP**

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

AP Photo/Gregory Bull



Immigrant rights activists are arrested by border patrol agents during a protest this week at the border wall in San Diego.

AP PHOTO