



SOU ACCUSES CHUI OF FAILING REFORM PLEDGE
Lawmaker Sou Hing-choi called for a political reform plan after the CE failed to mention democracy during the Policy Address

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YOUNG DISSATISFIED WITH HOUSING PLAN FOR 2019
A survey of the Kaifong has shown that Macau's youth are dissatisfied with the government's housing policies for next year

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FILIPINA GRAY CROWNED MISS UNIVERSE

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WORLD BRIEFS



CHINA The use of armed drones in the Middle East, driven largely by sales from China, has grown significantly in the past few years with an increasing number of countries and other parties using them in regional conflicts to lethal effects, a new report said. *More on p11*



INDIA At least six people died and 129 others were injured in a fire that broke out yesterday in a hospital in Mumbai, India's financial and entertainment capital, police said. It took 10 fire engines to bring the fire under control, while 15 ambulances rushed the injured to hospitals. The Press Trust of India news agency said most of the injured were in a stable condition.

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JULIE ZHU

POLYTEC VS SON POU

Court acquits columnist, newspaper of slander.

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AL to finalize casino ban bill today

The Legislative Assembly (AL) of Macau is today expected to finalize the government-backed bill that seeks to bar employees of the gaming industry from entering casino floors while off duty. The rules will cover a total of around 54,000 Macau casino employees, including 8,000 junket operator staff members, as well as cleaning, surveillance and food and beverage employees. According to the proposed law, these workers will only be permitted to gamble in Macau casinos on the first three days of the Chinese Lunar New Year holiday period. The bill has found considerable support from legislators in the past as well as local workers' associations.

Special subsidy to rise starting from January

The Special Subsidy (Special Assistance for Vulnerable Families) will be officially increased starting from January 1, according to a dispatch published in the official gazette. The subsidy will increase from the current MOP200, MOP400, and MOP600 for kindergarten students or pupils, secondary school students, and tertiary school students, respectively, to MOP300, MOP500, and MOP750. For residents who live alone in Macau or for those who have relatives in Macau, the nursery subsidy will go up to MOP1,200 and MOP1,000, respectively, from the current MOP1,000 and MOP800. Subsidies for people with disabilities who live alone and those who have relatives in Macau will also increase to MOP1,000 and MOP750 respectively.

Association urges child sexual assault to become public crime

The General Association of Chinese Students of Macao has urged the government to classify as a public crime the sexual assault of a child aged below 16 years old. The association believes that the recent frequently reported sexual assault cases against children indicate the need for enhanced punishment and prevention towards such crime. The current law requires the parents of the victims to report sexual assault cases on behalf of their children. However, the association believes that due to the traditional Chinese mindset, which rules that "family shame should not be spread abroad," parents would likely choose to solve matters privately.

Columnist and newspaper cleared of slander, but fined

Julie Zhu

COLUMNIST Lei Kong, news outlet Son Pou and Director of the Son Pou Chao Chong Peng have been found not guilty of slander towards Polytec Asset Holdings Ltd (Polytec), the Court of First Instance announced yesterday.

However, although the two individuals and the newspaper were found not guilty of slander, the columnist, together with the newspaper and Chao Chong Peng, still need to pay a total of MOP50,000 to Polytec as compensation.

According to the presiding judge of the court, Chao Im Peng, Lei Kong's more than 25 columns, which featured the Pearl Horizon incident, damaged Polytec's image. That's the case even though the court could not see any intent to harm Polytec in Lei's articles.

"The court deems that the first defendant [Lei Kong] indeed affected Polytec's image, but the level of influence has not reached the level of slander. The court can't see any deliberation from the first defendant, so that the criminal offence is not convicted," said presiding judge Chao.

"Regarding the civil offence, the first defendant [Lei Kong] used many words [...] which even derailed from the facts," said Chao, adding "as an ordinary writer, the first defendant should seek the proof of the facts before [he] publishes [his articles]."

The judge remarked that Macau's law protects both freedom of speech and the freedom of press, and that, at the same time, Macau's law also protects individuals' dignity and reputation.

"News reports should respect the principle of proficiency. At least, [the writers] should seek proof of factuality of the source, and [the writers] can't speculate facts based on some [other] facts," said Chao, who also noted that "freedom of press is not the same as freedom of speech."

The judge noted that freedom of press highlights factuality and objectivity, and that freedom of speech is also restricted as speech has to respect human rights and others' dignity



Columnist Lei Kong

and reputation.

"Macau residents have the right to judge the reports and the facts. [...] Although residents were not necessarily influenced by the articles, they have caused a certain level of negative acknowledgement of the residents towards Polytec, and have damaged Polytec's image," said Chao.

In the judge's opinion, Lei did not write the articles out of spite, however, "as a professional commentator, [Lei] should not comment easily without proof," said Chao.

"The second defendant, who is the Director of the newspaper, and the newspaper, did not fulfill their responsibility in reviewing the articles, which resulted in these articles damaging Polytec's image. The second defendant and the newspaper should bear the joint liability," said Chao.

Besides the MOP50,000 compensation to Polytec, the defendants will also need to cover the costs of the civil litigation, as well as the interest on the compensation starting from the day of the verdict until the final installment.

The defendants were given 20 days to decide whether to appeal.

On the sidelines of the court, defendant Lei Kong told the media that he would appeal.

"As far as I know, in Macau's

history, nobody has ever been charged for slander [...] because of a public affair. This incident reflects what other places always say about Macau's law: that it is lagging behind and that its judicial system is falling and corrupted," Lei told the media. "In the past, I never believed [what other places said about Macau]. But having gone through today, I believe it. It is really ridiculous; far more than just being ridiculous."

"This lawsuit has turned a new page for Macau," said Lei.

In addition, Lei questioned the protection of Macau's freedom of press. He accused the court of not having taken account of the details of the Pearl Horizon case, having instead only considered the content of his articles.

"If I can't win the lawsuit once I appeal, then of course, I will not dare to write articles in the future. Thus, how can we talk about freedom of the press?" Lei questioned.

After the announcement of the verdict, the Macao Journalists Association expressed that it respected the verdict, but did not approve of it.

Polytec, developer of the canceled real estate project Pearl Horizon, sued Son Pou's columnist Lei Kong and the publisher of newspaper Chao Chong Peng. The real estate

company sued both defendants for alleged defamation originating in Lei Kong's articles published in Son Pou about the Pearl Horizon issue.

The Son Pou columnist wrote a series of articles, including eight feature stories, which featured comments on the Pearl Horizon case. After Son Pou published Lei's 27th Pearl Horizon story, the columnist received a lawsuit notice from the court.

Polytec's accusation identifies eight defamatory articles written by Lei Kong. In these articles, Polytec found that Lei Keong's expressions included the words "fraud" and "trap", as well as other accusations and allegedly defamatory statements about the company. In particular, Lei depicted the Pearl Horizon contract with buyers as being "arbitrary", a "trap", and that it was a "suspected fraud".

Previously, during the last trial session, Chao expressed that "Polytec probably did not want to solve the issue [concerning the articles], but the company is systematically making plans for other purposes."

In Chao's opinion, Polytec's loss of reputation is mainly due to the failure of the company to deliver the residences on time, and because of that "the media should not be held accountable for it."

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Daniel Beitler

IFFAM

Goodridge gunning for film festival hat trick

TWO-TIME film festival director Mike Goodridge says he hopes to return next year as the lead visionary behind the city's growing International Film Festival and Awards Macao (IFFAM).

The third edition of IFFAM, which concluded last weekend, marked an all-time high for the festival, attracting some of the biggest names in global cinema - among them prolific American actor, director and producer Nicolas Cage, Korean pop icon Im Yoon-ah (better known by the mononym Yoona) and Hong Kong-based entertainment star Aaron Kwok.

It was the last film festival to be held under an original three-year partnership etched out between principal organizers the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) and Alvin Chau's Macau Films & Television Productions and Culture Association (MFTPA). However, the Times has learned that the entities are planning to extend the cooperation for a fourth year and a proposal to this end is currently "undergoing administrative procedures," according to the MGTO.

Following the conclusion of this third edition, Goodridge told the Times in an interview yesterday that he is heading back to London for a Christmas break. The Times asked if he has plans to return for the hat trick.

"I hope so!" he said. "I hope to be back, but it's really not about me. It's about: Does this work for Macau?"

The MGTO thinks it does. Last night the tourism body informed the Times that although "the future plan of the IFFAM is still in discussion, [...] we have the intention to continue with Mike Goodridge as the Artistic Director for IFFAM."

Goodridge was appointed IFFAM artistic director in the summer of 2017, half a year after his predecessor Marco Müller's sudden and controversial resignation weeks before the inaugural IFFAM launched.

Supported by the head of festival management, Lorna Tee, one reason that Goodridge is the favorite for the role is because his vision appears to align with that of IFFAM Organizing Committee President and MGTO chief Helena de Senna Fernandes.

According to Senna Fernandes, one of the principal aims of the film festival is to put Macau on the map as a potential film 'set and shoot' location. In an interview with the Times ahead of the first year of the festival, the tourism chief said that by bringing filmmakers and other industry professionals to Macau for the IFFAM, it would open their eyes to the possibility of Macau serving as a set or shoot for their next film project. The effect would be greater ex-



Helena de Senna Fernandes



Alvin Chau



Lorna Tee

posure of Macau across world media, which might in turn draw more visitors to the city.

Goodridge told the Times yesterday that he too sees potential in the development of Macau as a nexus of global cinema, adding that the industry could bring "enormous" economic benefits to the MSAR. The festival director said that subsidiary industries could spring up and, if successful, they would provide an influx of spending in the city.

In time, Macau could surpass the success of Las Vegas - the U.S. gambling mecca that has earned a top spot in Hollywood cinema history - if the Chinese

city can do for cinema what it once did for East-meets-West trade.

"Macau is the perfect place for Western and Chinese cinema to meet. We have been that meeting place [for centuries]," said Goodridge.

"There should be [dozens] of Asian and Western films shooting here in Macau every year," he added. "But it's a long process and it's not straightforward. You have to approach these markets and convince them. [...] The Chinese film industry is a bit like Hollywood: It's very, very big and you have to get on their radar first."

The International Film Festival and Awards Macao began as a blip on the radar, but it is fast earning a name for itself in the cinema industry.

Goodridge seems to have a knack for calling some of the biggest films of the year - and inviting them to screen at the Macau festival. He reiterated in yesterday's interview to watch out for Green Book, The Favourite and Roma at the awards.

Organizers also brought together top talent from around world to step up as film festival ambassadors, including Nicolas Cage, who has for decades

struck a chord with Chinese audiences. Asked how he might top that next year, Goodridge says there are plenty of talented actors and actresses.

Then there is the selection of competitive strands at the festival. The positioning of the festival's main competition segment, reserved exclusively for films by first- and second-time filmmakers, is both modest and ambitious, carving out a niche for the city in an already saturated market.

This year, the introduction of the New Chinese Cinema section also proved popular, bringing three films from China, two from Taiwan and one from Malaysia, and hinting at a greater emphasis on Asian cinema in future.

“We have the intention to continue with Mike Goodridge as the Artistic Director for IFFAM.”

MGTO

In terms of festival organization, everything went a lot smoother this year too. Previous editions of the festival generated complaints from international media about last minute changes to venues and other elements of disorganization. Though there was at least one venue change this year - on account of unexpected demand for certain showings - it went without hiccup, with organizers delaying the film's start and deploying shuttle buses to ferry audiences from the Macao Cultural Center to the Macao Tower.

Above all, however, Goodridge holds that local audiences are the key to IFFAM's growing reputation as an industry film hub and its ultimate success on the international film festival circuit depends on its outreach capability.

"We have spent these past two years learning about Macau and audiences. I've always said that the audience is the most important thing and if you don't have an audience then there is no point in having a film festival."

That's why, in Goodridge's view, the main achievement of IFFAM to date has been the creation of "something that is part of the Macau calendar and that local audiences feel connected to. It's the same with every [film] festival - whether it's Cannes or Toronto or Sundance - they have to have engagement from the people who live in these places."

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

CE has no intention of fulfilling election pledge, says Sulu Sou

WITH only one year remaining in Chief Executive (CE) Chui Sai On's term, lawmaker Sulu Sou has called for a political reform plan after Macau's top official made no such mention of democracy during his 2019 Policy Address.

Sou highlighted that local residents are still unable to exercise full voting rights in the election of the CE, contrary to what is stated in Article 26 of the Basic Law, which stipulates that permanent residents shall enjoy the right to vote.

"The current government has only one year remaining, but has yet to propose a political reform plan for the Chief Executive and the Legislative Assembly election. It seems that the current government has no intention of fulfilling the election commitments of the Chief Executive," said Sou in a written interpellation sent to the government.

The lawmaker recalled that Chui previously pledged to advance democracy in the SAR, specifying that in 2014 the CE mentioned in his policy address

RENATO MARQUES



that he would steadily advance the development of democracy in Macau.

"In this year's and last year's policy address, they also mentioned 'promoting the steady development of a democratic political system' and 'promoting the development of democratic

politics step by step'," he recalled.

"However, since the establishment of the SAR 19 years ago, according to the method of the Chief Executive, the vast majority of permanent residents in Macau are still unable to exercise full voting rights in the elec-

tion of the Chief Executive," Sou added.

Sou criticized the city's highest official, claiming that Chui has no intention of fulfilling his electoral promise. Nevertheless, the lawmaker questioned the government as to whether, based on the pace of political and econo-

mic change, the SAR will conduct public consultation on political reform in the remaining one-year term, and whether it will still survey public opinion – as the CE had previously pledged.

In 2012, in the first session of the second round of public consultation on political reform, representatives of the civil service and the law supported the "mainstream" proposal (also described by media as "2+2" / "+100" formula) to change the composition of the Legislative Assembly and the Chief Executive election committee.

According to the Basic Law, there were originally 27 legislators and then 29, with an additional two members directly elected.

In the 2013 election, the "2+2" / "+100" formula was implemented, adding two more directly elected and two indirectly elected.

This election was the first of its kind to effect reform of the Legislative Assembly composition, which created four new seats: two new geographical constituency seats and two new functional constituency seats.

Today, out of the 33 seats, only 14 are elected according to universal suffrage under the highest averages method, while 12 are voted upon from the functional constituency, and seven are nominated by the chief executive. LV

AD

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Sands Cares Ambassadors continue to make meaningful impact in local community



THE Sands Cares Ambassador programme is holding its year-long series of celebratory activities leading up to its 10th anniversary in August 2019, with the theme Spreading Love and Embracing Our Community.

This programme provides a platform for Sands China employees to respond to the various needs of the local community, serving it through a series of activities comprising four major pillars: reaching out to the community, enriching experiences, delivering festive joy, and happy outings.

Realizing that many team members were using their spare time to volunteer in the community, Sands China decided to formalize these efforts in 2009 through the establishment of the Sands Cares Ambassador programme.

The number of team members in the programme has increased from a couple hundred at its inception to its current membership of more than 3,300 volunteers.

The Sands Cares Ambassador programme is one of key initiatives in Macao under Sands Cares, the charitable giving programme of Sands China's parent company, Las Vegas Sands Corp.

Sands Cares integrates LVS's philanthropic work worldwide in

four key areas: financial giving, community problem solving and collaboration, in-kind donations, and team member volunteerism.

A significant initiative of the Sands Cares Ambassadors is their work with the Macau Special Olympics (MSO) Healthy Athletes programme, which Sands China has sponsored since September 2014.

Each year, Healthy Athletes provides health examinations for people with intellectual disabilities, screens for health problems, and subsequently informs caregivers of precautions to be taken in daily life and of any medical follow-up treatment needed, which the programme subsidizes.

Sands Cares Ambassadors receive training from MSO to assist with the check-ups, and Sands China makes donations to the programme to support its work.

To date, the Healthy Athletes programme has sponsored 1,685 people with intellectual disabilities for checkups.

The programme has also subsidized 233 people with intellectual disabilities to have follow-up treatment.

MSO's Healthy Athletes programme has helped many of its members since its launch.

"We have been trying to improve our system as Sands China

really cares about the community so we understand and see what these families need. The ambassadors understand and feel what our clients go through; we will create a better society for the future when we have volunteers like this," said Hetzer Siu, chief executive officer of MSO.

"Sands China provides us with manpower and they give us funding to support our clients to have follow-up treatment and that is important for us," he added.

Siu also thanked Sands China for its support to Macau Special Olympics since 2005. MSO has been in cooperation with Sands China since the establishment of the Ambassador programme, as MSO members have been invited to various activities including bowling, the Light the Night Run at The Parisian Macao's Eiffel Tower, and other events.

Echoing the same sentiments, president of the board of directors of the General Union of Neighborhood Associations of Macao, Ng Siu Lai, commended the gaming operator for its tireless effort in providing assistance for the past nine years.

"Sands China has provided support to our single-living elderly with the Peng On Tung Tele-Assistance programme, and they

also visit them and do cleaning initiatives during festive seasons and give them gifts every year," said Ng.

"They also give us assistance in promoting how to take care of our elderly," she added.

Additionally, as part of the programme's ongoing celebratory activities, a group of 25 Sands Cares Ambassadors hosted 100 members of the Macau Autism Association December 8 at The Parisian Macao and The Venetian Macao, taking them to Qube Kingdom and the Keith Haring Maze Macao, and painting recycled bottles with them – providing opportunities for autistic children to interact and play with

their parents, and gain creative inspiration.

The activity served to raise awareness of autism while exploring and demonstrating the potential of autistic children, helping them integrate into society.

The Sands Cares Ambassador programme was established in a bid to give Sands China team members a platform for serving the local community by organizing community activities and initiatives that work toward creating a better Macao. With membership comprising volunteers from across all Sands China properties – Sands Macao, The Venetian Macao, The Plaza Macao, Sands Cotai Central and The Parisian Macao – the Sands Cares Ambassadors have contributed 95,000 hours of voluntary community service since the programme's founding.

Dr. Wong, president of Sands China Ltd., said: "The Sands Cares Ambassador programme will celebrate its 10th anniversary next year. Corporate social responsibility is at the core of Sands China's business philosophy, and we are very proud of the efforts of our Sands Cares Ambassadors. Through their caring, compassion, and service to others, they represent some of the best qualities of the human spirit. Their dedication to service benefits the local community, and that same commitment manifests itself in their interactions with our guests and with their fellow team members at work."

Over years of engaging society's most vulnerable, Sands China has initiated or supported a wide range of community outreach events.

Through a variety of activity formats, memorable and moving experiences are created for the volunteers and the beneficiaries.

Efforts include reaching out to communities through events like friendly competitions and creating arts and crafts with people with intellectual disabilities; acquiring enriching experiences like learning sign language and experiencing a silence workshop; delivering festive joy in visits to live-alone elderly during Chinese New Year; and enjoying happy outings that bring underprivileged families to various exhibitions at The Venetian Macao.

This article is sponsored by Sands China Ltd.

WHAT THE SANDS CARES AMBASSADORS SAY...

"The company provides us a platform that gives us the opportunity to serve those people in need. It gives me inspiration serving those who are in need, as it is a very enriching experience; as a result, I'm able to share with others how we can help and gather resources to make a better community." - Constance Cheang, associate director of business and event services for Venetian Macao Limited

"Our volunteers gain more empathy and insight on how to improve harmony in society. From simple visits to participation in community events, the effect of volunteerism is magnified as our ambassadors spread these efforts through word-of-mouth. Thus, our volunteers, who are of different nationalities, have raised awareness on social inclusion – which is one of the programme's aims." - Annie Lam, director of community affairs for Venetian Macao Limited

ARTS

Application for album production subsidy now open

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) is calling for applications for this year's Subsidy Programme for the Production of Original Song Albums, through which it will grant a subsidy of up to MOP150,000 to each selected album.

The subsidy will cover the costs of song production and cover design for the album, as well as the physical album production.

The adjudicating panel will select a maximum of eight beneficiaries and al-

bums after the first and the second reviews, based on seven criteria.

According to the IC, the criteria include budget rationale, perfection level of album production proposals, compatibility between the album, album image

and market positioning, and level of composition and lyrics, amongst others.

The album candidates for this program must be solo performers, singing groups or band albums.

The program intends to cultivate music creators

and producers in Macau, hoping to encourage musicians to produce and release works and lay the groundwork for market development.

The bureau added that with the aim of fostering the local music industry, several promotional activities will also be held for the beneficiaries, so as to provide more performance opportunities.

The application period will last until January 31, 2019.

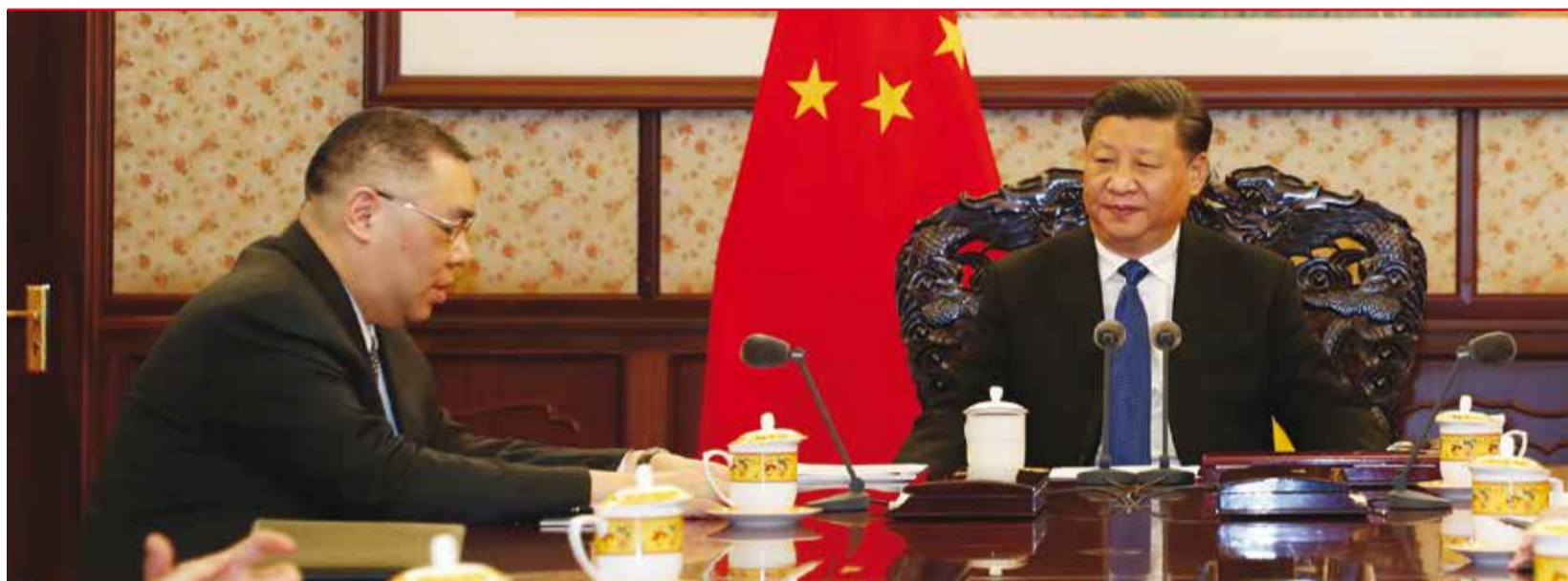
THE latest survey of the youth policy team of the General Union of Neighborhood Associations of Macau (UGAMM) has shown that Macau's youth are dissatisfied with the government's housing policies for the year of 2019. The survey concerned the local youth's satisfaction levels regarding the government policy address of 2019.

Public administration reform and transportation rank second and third respectively in terms of the most unfulfilled areas of the policy address. Meanwhile, the surveyed youth are most content with the medical policy, the cultural and education policy, and the social welfare policy. The area that garnered the least satisfaction was housing.

In total, there were 947 local youth respondents in the survey, aged between 18 and 45 years old.

Regarding satisfaction with the 2019 policy address, the survey results showed that 57.2 percent of the respondents considered it average, while 7.6

ONE SHOT NEWS



Performance review. President Xi Jinping receives Macau Chief Executive Chui Sai On, who is in Beijing for a four-day duty visit.

AD



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HOUSING

Youth unimpressed with gov't plan for 2019



percent were satisfied or very satisfied. About 10.7 percent of the respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied about it and, finally, 4.3 percent had no opinion.

Last year, 63.6 percent surveyed considered the policy address of 2018 to be average.

Meanwhile, 47.8 per-

cent of the youth are dissatisfied with the government's housing policy. They are the unhappiest with regards to the government's regulation of the private property market, the implementation of public housing, and to the renovation of the old district.

The respondents are

also calling for a vacancy tax in Macau, to punish the owners of residential units who do not lease them in the rental market.

Topping the list of transportation issues for the youth were traffic jams caused by the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, the implementation of road works' supervision

and the lack of parking lots.

In addition, the dissatisfaction rank among the youth for the smart city initiative rose from the 11th spot last year to fourth this year. Reports suggest that this may be due to frustration over the slow pace of smart city development. **JZ**

Chui Sai On denies involvement in failed Jiangmen project

THE Office of the Chief Executive has denied any involvement in an investment project in Jiangmen that allegedly used his name to give credibility to the project.

According to Hong Kong newspaper Apple Daily, real estate project Guangbohui had claimed in advertisements that Chui Sai On had personally invested millions in the project. Those advertisements have been reportedly removed.

The development is owned by Jiangmen TEDA Real Estate Development Company Ltd., a subsidiary of Macau TEDA Construction Engineering Company Ltd. headed by Chen Hak Gim. It was supposed to house a trade exhibition center, residential apartment buildings, commercial spaces, as well as a large shopping mall and other entertainment facilities.

In addition to being a businessman, Chan is a vice president of the Macau Jiangmen Communal Society and the Macao Real Estate Chamber of Commerce, according to Apple Daily.

Despite campaigning for investment as early as 2012, when investors were asked to contribute RMB250,000 (MOP291,000) in return for a guaranteed return of 5 percent, the land plot has not been developed for its stated purposes and is due to be repossessed by local authorities next year.

According to the Apple Daily report, Macau's Chief Executive attended an opening ceremony for the real estate project in 2012 and inspected the site on a separate visit three years later.

The Macau government denies that the city's top official has any involvement in the project.

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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”



Skyscrapers stand illuminated at night beside the River Main in the financial district of Frankfurt, Germany

Europe's borrowers brace for death of easy money as 2019 looms

BANKERS and borrowers are bracing themselves for a difficult year selling eurobonds now that the days of easy money are coming to an end.

January's often the busiest month of the year for new bond sales but as credit markets lose their biggest backer and political threats loom - Brexit, Italian fiscal angst and trade woes - companies must wise up to 2019's primary-market challenges. In vogue: opportunism, front-loaded issuance and higher borrowing costs.

"The year as a whole will be window driven, but many will try to access the market in January," said Duane Elgey, a debt syndicate director at Societe Generale SA. "Once it is accepted that spreads are not returning to early 2018 levels there will be a number of deals coming back to market."

That's a picture similar to the last weeks of 2018 as financial conditions have worsened and borrowing costs increased as credit investors react to rising U.S. rates and the end of the European

Central Bank's stimulus program. "What we have experienced for the first time in many years is if it's a bad market, it means there is execution risk, people are acutely aware of that and want to avoid that type of market," said Frazer Ross, Deutsche Bank AG's head of EMEA investment-grade credit bond syndicate. January could be "very hit and miss" and a lack of jumbo merger and acquisition activity could also stymie sales, he said.

January issuers could be the first in more than two years to miss out on the ECB's Corporate Sector Purchase Programme, as the central bank will end 2.6 trillion euros of quantitative easing at year-end. That tally included buying nearly 180 billion euros of corporate bonds in primary and secondary markets.

The central bank is set to reinvest asset proceeds as they mature, although it's not yet clear what the mix will be between new bonds and secondary market purchases. Bonds maturing next month include securities from BMW Finance NV, BASF SE and

Orange SA, data compiled by Bloomberg show. BMW has often been one of the first issuers in the market each January.

Getting in early may help issuers avoid volatility around looming risks, such as the U.K.'s March 29 exit from the European Union. This list of geopolitical dangers could also easily scupper even modest expectations for primary sales next year.

"The biggest concern is a lack of resolution," said Mariano Goldfischer, global head of syndicate at Credit Agricole CIB. "You can analyze company fundamentals but the uncertainty of the political landscape could derail everything."

With so many uncertainties, there's no consensus on how many corporate bonds will be sold in Europe next year. Barclays Plc and JPMorgan Chase & Co. analysts expect issuance to rise on this year, while UniCredit SpA's market watchers see volumes shrinking. BNP Paribas SA and Morgan Stanley predict broadly unchanged volumes on this year. **MDT/Bloomberg**

China sees bankruptcies surge amid slowing economy

CHINA'S effort to cut the burden of insolvent companies weighing on its slowing economy has kicked into higher gear, with a slew of bankruptcy filings that's set to enrich the case history of debt resolutions for bond investors.

Local courts have accepted or plan to accept at least five bankruptcy applications from firms that defaulted on publicly issued bonds since early November. That's roughly on par with the number seen over the previous four years. The new pace may continue: China's top planning body called on Dec. 4 for local officials to clean up the debt of firms with excess production capacity or insolvent balance sheets by 2020.

The bad news is that some bondholders may find they're going to get less back from defaulted issuers than they anticipated. The good news: there's likely to be swifter resolution once court procedures take over from ad-hoc work-out negotiations. And the process will give both creditors and debtors the chance to gain experience in restructuring obligations, little more than four years after China began embracing the concept of defaults in the world's third-largest bond market.

"Bondholders could face considerable losses after bankruptcy proceedings, but what is more important is that they can learn how to fight for their rights via the legal system, and how to choose among debt pro-

posals," said Ivan Chung, an associate managing director at Moody's Investors Service in Hong Kong.

As with many things in China, government direction is probably behind the latest development, market players say. China is steadily encouraging a financial system where the pricing of credit bears more relation to the risk of the borrower. Local and central authorities have for decades moved to support - or press creditors to support - troubled companies that could fuel unemployment and social unrest if they collapsed.

"Usually, local governments would only allow firms or creditors to file for bankruptcy proceedings if they couldn't come to any agreement with financial institutions and other creditors after long negotiations," said Chen Sheng, a Shanghai-based senior partner at Rolmax, a Chinese law firm.

China's bankruptcy law has been in place for more than a decade, though corporate bond defaults in the modern era only began in 2014.

The National Development and Reform Commission, in its statement earlier this month, encouraged local governments and courts to coordinate and support the acceptance of applications for bankruptcy. At stake is helping to shut down less productive parts of China's industries, improving productivity and pricing power. **MDT/Bloomberg**

corporate bits

SANDS CHINA PARTICIPATES IN HUMAN CAPITAL FORUM



Sands China Ltd. participated in the 2018 Macao China International Human Capital Forum at Sands Cotai Central, sending two of its top executives to represent the company.

Dr. Wilfred Wong, president

of Sands China, and Wen Hongyan, the company's senior vice president of human resources, delivered keynote addresses at the forum, where they shared their insights about human resource management with business

executives from Fortune 500 companies, the Top 500 Enterprises of China and local companies in Macau.

The two-day forum's agenda also included a site visit and symposium with Sands China human resources executives to discuss the establishment and dissemination of the employer brand in the hotel industry.

Sands China is the Premium Sponsor of the 2018 Macau China International Human Capital Forum, which is focused on exploring the industrial advantages of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area in the areas of human resource management and talent development.

CTM BRINGS FESTIVE SPIRIT WITH CHARITY CENTER VISIT



To celebrate Christmas and the festive season, the CTM Volunteer Team organized a Christmas visit to

the Fountain of Love and Joy Integrated Family Service Centre, delivering seasonal blessings and care to

the beneficiary families.

According to a statement issued by the company, apart from giving out Christmas presents to the users of the center, the ten volunteer team members also conducted performances, including a singing and magic show.

CTM pledged to fulfill its commitment to corporate social responsibility by organizing a series of community activities, aiming to extend care and support to people in need and to build a harmonious society.

It also noted that it encourages its employees to participate in different community activities, so as to enhance the cohesion of society.

Locked away, forgotten: Uighur wives of Pakistani businessmen in China

Kathy Gannon, Islamabad

THE last time Chaudhry Javed Atta saw his wife was over a year ago — the Pakistani trader in dried and fresh produce was leaving their home in northwestern China's heavily Muslim Xinjiang region to go back to his country to renew his visa.

He remembers the last thing she told him: "As soon as you leave, they will take me to the camp and I will not come back."

That was August, 2017. By then, Atta and Amina Manaji, from the Muslim ethnic Uighur group native to Xinjiang, had been married for 14 years.

Atta is one of scores of Pakistani businessmen — and he says there are more than 200 — whose spouses have disappeared, taken to what Chinese authorities tell them are education centers.

Beijing has been accused of interning members of its Muslim population — by some reports as many as 1 million — to "re-educate" them away from their faith. It is seen as a response to riots and violent attacks that the government blamed on separatists.

"They call them schools, but they are prisons," Atta said. "They can't leave."

Pakistanis often rally loudly in defense of Islam and Muslims whenever they are perceived offended around the world — most recently over cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. In 1989, protests spread from Pakistan elsewhere, leading to the fatwa by Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini against author Salman Rushdie for his depiction of Islam in his



A Pakistani businessman shows a picture with his missing Uighur wife outside the Pakistani embassy in Beijing

book *Satanic Verses*.

But political and economic factors, including concerns about losing out on vast Chinese investments, have kept Pakistan and other Muslim countries silent about the plight in China of fellow Muslims, the Uighurs.

"Cold, hard interests will always carry the day" in international relations, said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center. "The Muslim world's deafening silence about China's treatment of Muslims can be attributed to its strong interest in maintaining close relations with the world's next superpower."

China is financing major development projects in cash-strapped Pakistan. Islamabad says Beijing's up to USD75 billion development project known

the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor — part of an effort to reconstruct the historic Silk Road linking China to all corners of Asia — will bring new prosperity to Pakistan, where the average citizen lives on just \$125 a month.

For Atta, it's not just the separation from his wife.

He has also had to leave their two sons, who are 5 and 7 years old and whose passports were confiscated by the Chinese government, in the care of his wife's family. Otherwise, he said, the authorities would have put them in an orphanage.

He went back to China twice for a few months but both times his visas expired and he had to return to Pakistan. Getting in touch with family in Xinjiang is a circuitous route that involves reaching out to Pakistani friends still there, who then track down family members

willing to talk.

"Now especially I am worried. It is now eight, almost nine months, that I have not seen my children," he said. "I haven't even been able to talk to them."

Beijing has been accused of interning members of its Muslim population - as many as 1 million - to 're-educate' them away from their faith

Last week, Atta finally talked to his brother-in-law after a friend discovered he had a heart attack and was recovering in a hospital in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang.

"He said my sons were good, but he had no news of my wife," said Atta.

China routinely responds to queries on Uighurs by saying its policies are aimed at creating "stability and lasting peace" in Xinjiang but President Xi Jinping's campaign to subdue a sometimes restive region, including the interning of more than 1 million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities, has alarmed a United Nations panel and the U.S. government.

Mushahid Hussain, chairman

of Pakistan's Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, said the cardinal principle of Pakistan-China relations is to refrain from commenting on anything to do with the other country's domestic issues.

"Given the relationship of Pakistan with China, and in the Muslim world in particular, the Chinese narrative is apparently being accepted across the board as the one that is correct," Hussain said.

A steady stream of Pakistani men has visited Beijing in recent months, lobbying for the release of their wives to little avail. Some say they met Pakistan's ambassador to China, Masood Khalid, on multiple occasions, and were told their issues were raised privately with the Chinese.

Another Pakistani man in a similar predicament, Mir Aman, went to China more than 25 years ago as a poor laborer in search of work.

There, he met his wife, Maheerban Gul, they worked hard and eventually bought a hotel. The couple has two daughters, Shahnaz, 16, and Shakeela, 12, both now with their father in Pakistan.

After the disappearance of his wife last year, he pestered police for four months every day, threatened to take his life in public. He was finally allowed to see her, who was brought to a local police station, for just an hour.

They cried. When the meeting ended he was told to go home to Pakistan "and stop making trouble for the administration," Aman said.

He has no idea where she is being held. **AP**

BELT & ROAD

Cambodia's biggest hydropower dam now producing electricity

CAMBODIA'S largest hydropower project officially began producing electricity yesterday as the country tries to increase its energy capacity to reduce energy imports and help jump-start industrial expansion.

Prime Minister Hun Sen inaugurated the 400-megawatt Lower Sesan II hydropower dam in the northeastern province of Stung Treng. The project, constructed on a build-operate-transfer basis, will boost the country's

production of electricity by 20 percent, according to the Ministry of Mines and Energy.

It was built over four years at a cost of nearly USD800 million and is a joint venture of China's Hydrolancang International Energy, which has a 51 percent stake, Cambodia's Royal Group with 39 percent and Vietnam's EVN International with 10 percent.

The dam is expected to bring in almost \$30 million in tax revenue

yearly. Ownership will be handed over to the government after 40 years.

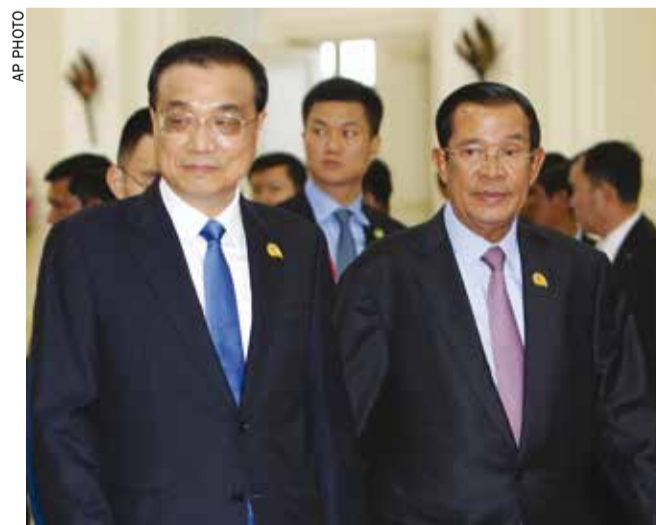
Opponents say the dam will damage the biodiversity of two tributaries of the Mekong River and devastate the livelihoods and homes of thousands of people. As many as 100,000 people could lose the ability to catch fish.

The dam is the seventh commercial-scale hydropower dam in Cambodia, bringing hydropower production to 1,328 me-

gawatts.

Hydropower supplies 45 percent of Cambodia's electricity consumption, followed by 35 percent from coal-fired power plants and about 5 percent from petroleum and alternative energy.

About 15 percent of electricity must still be purchased from neighboring countries. High utility prices, caused by the shortfall in local supply, are a major obstacle to Cambodia attracting foreign investment.



Premier Li Keqiang (left) and his Cambodian counterpart Hun Sen in Phnom Penh, in January

A government report last year estimated that Cambodia could generate as much as 10,000 megawatts from hydropower, and development of additional projects is underway.

China is Cambodia's largest investor in developing hydroelectric dams and other infrastructure projects. **AP**

AP PHOTO



conduct strikes in situations where they would not have risked using conventional aircraft, it said. Iran developed armed drones from the outset specifically to enable to project power beyond the reach of its air force, which is hamstrung by obsolete aircraft and sanctions, the report added.

China has won sales in the Middle East and elsewhere by offering drones at lower prices and without political conditions attached

REPORT

Beijing is driving use of armed drones in Middle East

Zeina Karam, Beirut

THE use of armed drones in the Middle East, driven largely by sales from China, has grown significantly in the past few years with an increasing number of countries and other parties using them in regional conflicts to lethal effects, a new report said yesterday.

The report by the Royal United Services Institute, or RUSI, found that more and more Mideast countries have acquired armed drones, either by importing them, such as Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United

Arab Emirates, or by building them domestically like Israel, Iran and Turkey.

China has won sales in the Middle East and elsewhere by offering drones — otherwise known as UAVs or unmanned aerial vehicles — at lower prices and without the political conditions attached by the United States.

The Associated Press reported earlier this year that countries across the Middle East looked out of purchasing U.S.-made drones are being wooed by Chinese arms dealers, helping expand Chinese influence across a region vital to American security interest.

It noted the use of Chinese armed drones across Mideast battlefields, including in the war on Yemen, employed by the Emirati air force. Iran has also violated Israeli airspace with armed UAVs from bases in Syria, provoking armed Israeli response on the suspected bases.

The RUSI report, entitled “Armed Drones in the Middle East: Proliferation and Norms in the Region,” said that by capitalizing on the gap in the market over the past few years, Beijing has supplied armed drones to several countries that are not authorized to purchase them from the U.S., and at a drama-

tically cheaper price.

“China, a no-questions-asked exporter of drones, has played and is likely to continue playing a key role as a supplier of armed UAVs to the Middle East,” it said.

The report explored where and how each of the states have used their armed drones and whether they have changed the way these countries approach air power. It found that Iran, the UAE and Turkey all changed the way they employ airpower after they acquired armed drones.

For Turkey and the UAE, armed drones enabled them to

The report said it remains to be seen whether and how the loosening of restrictions on the exportation of armed drones by the Trump administration will alter dynamics in the region. The administration in April permitted U.S. manufacturers to directly market and sell drones, including armed versions, although the government must still approve and license the sales.

Aniseh Bassiri Tabrizi, who authored the report along with Justin Bronk, said proliferation of armed drones in the Middle East is unlikely to stop and could in fact accelerate despite the changes introduced by the U.S. administration.

“Over the past two years the sales have increased massively and they are likely to increase even more,” she said. “This kind of collaboration is just going to grow especially in cases where countries don’t have the capacity to build them themselves.” **AP**

Canada gets access to detainee in China six days after arrest

CANADA’S ambassador to China was given access last weekend to detained Canadian entrepreneur Michael Spavor six days after he was arrested, the country’s Global Affairs department said.

Ambassador John McCallum also met with ex-diplomat Michael Kovrig on Friday. Both were detained in China last Monday in apparent retaliation for the arrest of a top Chinese tech executive on behalf of the United States.

Canada arrested Huawei

executive Meng Wanzhou on Dec. 1 on U.S. charges that she misled banks about the company’s business dealings in Iran. Canada gave Huawei chief financial officer Meng — daughter of the telecom giant’s founder — access to Chinese consular staff on the day she was arrested and three days of public hearings before releasing her on bail. Members of Vancouver’s large Chinese community who came to court to show their support cheered her release.

By contrast, the Chinese secretly detained the two Canadians on suspicions of “engaging in activities that endanger the national security of China.”

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has called the detention of the Canadian citizens unlawful and said they should be released.

Entrepreneur Spavor is known for his contacts in China with high-ranking North Korean officials, including leader Kim Jong Un, with whom he has been photographed

shaking hands and laughing. He was instrumental in bringing NBA player Dennis Rodman to Pyongyang in 2013 and has organized a number of tours and projects with the reclusive country since then.

In 2015, Spavor founded Paektu Cultural Exchange, a nongovernmental organization that works to facilitate sports, cultural, tourism and business exchanges with North Korea. Its mission statement says it aims to “promote greater peace, friendship and understanding.” **AP**

AP PHOTO



Michael Spavor



Kashmiri protesters clash with Indian paramilitary soldiers in Srinagar, Indian-controlled Kashmir

INDIA

Regular troops enforce lockdown to foil Kashmir protest march

Aijaz Hussain, Srinagar

SOLDIERS and police fanned out across Indian-controlled Kashmir yesterday to enforce a security lockdown for a second straight day to stop anti-India protests and foil a call by separatists for a march toward India's main military garrison in the disputed region.

Government forces patrolled streets in the region's main city of Srinagar and sealed off all the roads leading to India's military garrison in the city.

Three Kashmiri leaders,

known as the Joint Resistance Leadership, or JRL, called for Kashmiris to march to the army cantonment to protest the killings of seven civilians and three rebels during an Indian counterinsurgency operation over the weekend.

Police and paramilitary soldiers in riot gear and carrying automatic rifles laid steel barricades and coiled razor wire on roads and intersections to cut off neighborhoods in a bid to stop protests.

Defying restrictions, dozens of activists, some wearing symbolic shrouds imprinted with

the words: "Indian army, kill us all," marched in Srinagar's main business hub. Police detained Mohammed Yasin Malik, one of the leaders of the JRL, and about half a dozen others, leading to scuffles and clashes during which troops fired tear gas and protesters threw stones, police said.

Authorities also stopped train services and suspended internet on cellphones in the region, a common tactic to make organizing protests more difficult and stop dissemination of protest videos by Kashmiris.

Shops and businesses in

other areas with no security restrictions closed in a show of solidarity with those protesting Indian rule.

The killings and injuries of more than three dozen civilians on Saturday angered Kashmiris and sparked protests and clashes at several places in the region. Residents accused troops of directly spraying gunfire into the crowds and killing at least two civilians, including a teenage student, away from the battle site.

Police said in a statement that they regretted the killings but that the protesters had come

"dangerously close" to the fighting.

Separatists who challenge India's sovereignty over Kashmir said the killings were part of India's state policy and called for three days of mourning and a general shutdown in Kashmir apart from yesterday's public march.

The Indian army has appealed for people to not heed the call. The army said in a statement that it was "fighting terrorism and proxy war sponsored by Pakistan and its proxies in Kashmir," adding that its objective "is to bring peace and normalcy" in Kashmir.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's army spokesman Maj. Gen. Asif Ghaffoor condemned what he called "state sponsored terrorism" by Indian forces in Kashmir, saying "bullets can never suppress unarmed brave freedom fighters."

He said on Twitter that the "Indian Army must respect ethics of professional soldiering."

India and Pakistan each administer part of Kashmir, but both claim the region in its entirety. Rebels have been fighting Indian control since 1989. Nearly 70,000 people have been killed in the uprising and the ensuing Indian military crackdown.

Kashmiris deeply resent Indian rule and support the rebels' call that the territory be united either under Pakistani rule or as an independent country.

In recent years, mainly young Kashmiris have displayed open solidarity with the rebels and sought to protect them by engaging troops in street clashes during India's counterinsurgency operations despite repeated warnings from Indian authorities. **AP**

MALAYSIA

KL files criminal charges against Goldman Sachs over 1MDB

MALAYSIA filed criminal charges against Goldman Sachs and two former executives yesterday for their role in the alleged multibillion-dollar ransacking of state investment fund 1MDB.

Attorney General Tommy Thomas said the government is seeking several billion dollars in fines from Goldman Sachs for breaches of securities laws that involved it making false and misleading statements to investors.

He said his office will seek prison sentences of up to 10 years for the former Goldman executives, Roger Ng Chong Hwa and

Tim Leissner, who is married to model Kimora Lee Simmons.

Malaysian and U.S. prosecutors allege that bond sales organized by Goldman Sachs for 1MDB provided one of the means for associates of former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak to steal billions from a fund that was ostensibly set up to promote Malaysia's economic development.

Outrage over the scandal, first reported by Sarawak Report and the Wall Street Journal, resulted in Najib and his party losing power in a historic election defeat earlier this year. Najib himself is fa-

cing corruption charges.

U.S. legal filings that are part of a Justice Department civil case to recover assets bought with 1MDB funds allege the money was used to finance Hollywood films and spent on luxuries such as diamond jewelry for Najib's wife, a yacht, artworks and high-end properties.

Thomas said USD2.7 billion was stolen from three bond sales organized by subsidiaries of Goldman Sachs. The investment bank, he said, received \$600 million in fees for organizing the bond deals, which was several times higher than

industry norms.

Leissner and Ng conspired with Najib associate Jho Low, a key architect of the fraud, to bribe Malaysian government officials to use Goldman Sachs as the arranger of the bond deals, according to Thomas. They and Goldman Sachs knew that the money would be stolen, he said.

"Having held themselves out as the pre-eminent global adviser/arranger for bonds, the highest standards are expected of Goldman Sachs," the attorney general's statement said. "They have fallen far short of any standard. In consequence, they have to



Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak walks out of courtroom after a court hearing at Kuala Lumpur High Court

be held accountable."

Prosecutors plan to seek fines "well in excess" of the amount allegedly stolen because of the severity of the violations of Malaysia's laws, Thomas said.

Goldman Sachs denied any wrongdoing.

"We believe these char-

ges are misdirected and we will vigorously defend them and look forward to the opportunity to present our case," bank spokesman Edward Naylor said in a statement. "The firm continues to cooperate with all authorities investigating these matters." **AP**

THAILAND

Philippines contestant Catriona Gray named Miss Universe

Kaweewit Kaewjinda, Bangkok

THE Philippines' Catriona Gray was named Miss Universe 2018 in a competition concluding yesterday in Bangkok, besting contestants from 93 other countries and delighting her home nation.

Gray wore a sparkling red dress she said was inspired by a volcano in the Philippines as she was handed the crown to the delight of a roaring crowd that generally favored Southeast Asian contestants.

The 24-year-old singer and model said she wore red because "when I was 13 my mom said she had a dream that I would win Miss Universe in a red dress." She said her mom cried when they saw each other after she won the competition, the 67th Miss Universe pageant.

Gray edged out first runner-up Tamaryn Green of South Africa and third-place Sthefany Gutierrez of Venezuela.



Catriona Gray of the Philippines waves to the audience after being crowned the new Miss Universe

She succeeds Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters of South Africa.

In the Philippines, pageants are a popular attraction, and Gray's countrymen watching the televised contest cheered wildly and jumped for joy

when she was declared the winner.

Celebrations were especially buoyant in Oas town in the northeastern province of Albay, from which Gray's Filipina mother hails. According to

Gray, her gown's design, with its lava color and appearance, was influenced by Albay's iconic Mayon Volcano.

Gray's father is Australian, and she was born and grew up in Cairns, Australia. She studied at the Berklee College of Music in Boston in the United States.

The office of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was quick to congratulate the winner. Gray is the fourth Filipina to be named Miss Universe.

"Ms. Gray truly made the entire Philippines proud when she sashayed on the global stage and showcased the genuine qualities defining a Filipina beauty: confidence, grace, intelligence and strength in the face of tough challenges," he said in a statement from the presidential palace. "In her success, Miss Philippines has shown to the world that women in our country have the ability to turn dreams into reality through passion, diligence, determination and hard work."

An early round of questioning touched on the issue of drugs, a controversial issue in the Philippines where Duterte's aggressive 'war on drugs' has taken thousands of lives, many in what critics charge were extrajudicial executions. Duterte raised even more controversy when he recently joked that he smoked marijuana to deal with his busy schedule of meetings with other Asian leaders at a regional summit.

Asked what she thought about legalizing marijuana, Gray said: "I'm for it being used for medical use, but not so for recreational use. Because I think if people will argue, then what about alcohol and cigarettes? Everything is good but in moderation."

This year's Miss Universe competition included the first-ever transgender contestant, Angela Ponce of Spain. She said in a video presentation that it was not important for her to win but was more important for her "to be here."

The finale was again hosted by Steve Harvey who infamously announced the wrong winner in the 2015 contest. Harvey joked briefly about the incident in exchanges with contestants and said: "You all can't let that go" and "I'm still here." **AP**

AD



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USA

White House closer to partial shutdown with wall demand

AP PHOTO



US Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., speaks to reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington

Hope Yen, Washington

PUSHING the government to the brink of a partial shutdown, the White House is insisting that Congress provide USD5 billion to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border despite lawmaker resistance from both parties.

Without a resolution, parts of the federal government will shut down at midnight Friday.

"We're going to do whatever is necessary to build the border wall to stop this ongoing crisis of illegal immigration," White House senior adviser Stephen Miller said yesterday [Macau time].

Asked if that meant having a government shutdown, he said: "If it comes to it, absolutely."

Trump said last week he would be "proud" to have a shutdown to get Congress to approve a \$5 billion down payment to fulfill his campaign promise to build a border wall. But the president doesn't have the votes from the Republican-controlled

Congress to support funding for the wall at that level.

Both parties in Congress have suggested that Trump would likely need to make the next move to resolve the impasse. The House is taking an extended weekend break, returning Wednesday night. The Senate returns Monday after a three-day absence.

Democratic congressional leaders, Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, have proposed no more than \$1.6 billion, as outlined in a bipartisan Senate bill. The money would not go for the wall but for fencing upgrades and other border security. Democrats also offered to simply keep funding at its current level, \$1.3 billion.

Showing no signs of budging, Schumer said that it was up to Trump to decide whether the federal government will partially shut down, sending thousands of federal employees home without pay during the holidays.

About one-quarter of the government would be affected, including the departments of

Homeland Security, Transportation, Agriculture, State and Justice, as well as national parks.

"He is not going to get the wall in any form," Schumer said.

Trump had neither accepted nor rejected the Democrats' proposal as of Friday, according to the Democrats, telling them he would take a look. Trump will need Democratic votes either way, now or in the new year, for passage.

Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, the No. 3 Republican in the Senate, said Republicans remain hopeful they can come up with a proposal that can be acceptable to Trump and pass both chambers. He suggested that could take the form of a stopgap bill that extends funding until January, or a longer-term bill that includes money for border security.

"There are a lot of things you need to do with border security," he said. "One is a physical barrier but also the technology, the manpower, the enforcement, all of those things, and our current laws

are in some ways an incentive for people to come to this country illegally, and they go through great risk and possibly great harm."

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, urged senators to revisit a bill she helped push earlier this year that would provide \$2.5 billion for border security, including physical barriers as well as technology and border patrol agents.

Schumer declined to say whether Democrats would be willing to consider proposals other than the two options that he and Pelosi offered.

Republicans "should join us in one of these two proposals, which would get more than enough votes passed and avoid a shutdown," Schumer said. "Then, if the president wants to debate the wall next year, he can. I don't think he'll get it. But he shouldn't use innocent workers as hostage for his temper tantrum."

Miller and Barrasso spoke on CBS' "Face the Nation," Schumer appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press," and Collins was on ABC's "This Week." **AP**

SOMALIA

US conducts six airstrikes against extremists, 62 dead



THE U.S. military says it has carried out six airstrikes in the Gandarshe area of Somalia which killed a total of 62 al-Shabab extremist rebels.

In a statement issued yesterday, the U.S. military's Africa Command said it carried out four strikes on Dec. 15 in which 34 people were killed and two more on Dec. 16 which killed 28. All the air attacks were in the Gandarshe coastal area south of the capital, Mogadishu, it said.

No civilians were injured or killed in the attacks, it said.

All six strikes were carried out in close coordination with Somalia's government, it said. The airstrikes were "conducted to prevent al-Shabab from using remote areas as a safe haven to plot, direct, inspire, and recruit for future attacks," it said.

Al-Shabab uses parts of southern and central Somalia to plot and direct extremist attacks, steal humanitarian aid, extort the local populace to fund its operations, and shelter radicals, said the statement.

With these attacks, the U.S. military has carried out at least 46 airstrikes so far this year against al-Shabab, which is allied to al-Qaida and Africa's most active Islamic extremist group. Al Shabab controls parts of rural southern and central Somalia and continues to stage deadly attacks in Mogadishu and other cities.

The U.S. airstrikes have picked up dramatically since President Donald Trump took office and approved expanded military operations in the Horn of Africa nation. Airstrikes also target a small presence of fighters linked to the Islamic State group. **AP**

MIDDLE EAST

Saudi Arabia rejects US Senate's 'interference' in kingdom

Aya Batrawy, Riyadh

SAUDI Arabia issued an unusually strong rebuke of the U.S. Senate yesterday, rejecting a bipartisan resolution that put the blame for the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi squarely on the Saudi crown prince and describing it as interference in the kingdom's affairs.

It's the latest sign of how the relationship between the royal court and Congress has deteriorated, more than two months after Khashoggi was killed and dismembered by Saudi agents inside the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul. The assassins have been linked to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

U.S. Senators last week passed the measure that blamed the prince for Khashoggi's killing and called on Riyadh to "ensure appropriate accountability." Senators also passed a separate measure calling for the end of U.S. aid to the Saudi-led war in Yemen.



Late Jamal Khashoggi

In a lengthy statement yesterday, Saudi Arabia said the Senate's resolution "contained blatant interferences" in the kingdom's internal affairs and undermines its regional and international role. The resolution was based on "unsubstantiated claims and allegations," the statement also said.

"The kingdom categorically

rejects any interference in its internal affairs, any and all accusations, in any manner, that disrespect its leadership [...] and any attempts to undermine its sovereignty or diminish its stature," it said.

Such language is usually reserved for those who criticize the kingdom's human rights record, such as Sweden in 2015 after the

public flogging of a blogger, and Canada this year over the arrests of women's rights activists.

But the statement was also tempered in saying the kingdom "reaffirms" its commitment to relations with the United States and describing the Senate as "an esteemed legislative body of an allied and friendly government."

President Donald Trump has

been reluctant to condemn the crown prince, despite U.S. intelligence officials concluding that Prince Mohammed must have at least had knowledge of the plot. Trump instead has touted Saudi arms deals worth billions of dollars and has thanked the Saudis for lower oil prices.

Saudi Arabia denies Prince Mohammed was involved in the Oct. 2 killing of Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist who wrote critically of the crown prince. Under intense international pressure, the kingdom recently acknowledged that the plot was masterminded by top Saudi agents close to Prince Mohammed.

After shifting accounts about what happened to Khashoggi, Saudi Arabia said its investigations concluded that the crown prince's aides had plotted to bring Khashoggi by force back to Saudi Arabia and that the agents on the ground exceeded their authority and killed him.

The Saudi statement said the Senate's position will not affect the kingdom's "leading role in the region," its role in supporting the stability of international energy markets, its counterterrorism cooperation and its stand with the U.S. in confronting Iran.

It "sends the wrong messages to all those who want to cause a rift in Saudi-U.S. relationship," the statement added. **AP**

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what's ON



VESTIGES OF LINES, GUILHERME UNG VAI MENGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE 19TH ANNIVERSARY OF MACAU HANDOVER TO CHINA

TIME: 12pm-8pm (Tuesday to Sunday)

3 pm-8pm (Monday)

UNTIL: February 23, 2019

VENUE: Albergue SCM

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2550

MACAU GIANT PANDA PAVILION AND PAVILION OF RARE ANIMALS

TIME: 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm daily

VENUE: Seac Pai Van Park

ADMISSION: MOP10 (Pavilion of Rare Animals)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0087

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

MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE

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

VENUE: Macau Science Center

ADMISSION: MOP25 (Exhibition Centre)

MOP60 (Planetarium 2D dome or 2D

sky shows)

MOP80 (Planetarium 3D dome or 3D

sky shows)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0822

"STYLE-ENCOUNTER MOMENT"

TIME: 10am - 8pm

UNTIL: December 30, 2018

VENUE: Macau Fashion Gallery

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 3341

Offbeat

NOT INTO BINGO, 84-YEAR-OLD TEXAS WOMAN GETS COLLEGE DEGREE

AP PHOTO



Janet Fein

After raising five kids and retiring at age 77 from her secretarial job, Janet Fein couldn't be blamed for finally relaxing, but that's not her.

Fein, now 84, went to back to school. And this week she'll accomplish a long-held goal when she graduates from the University of Texas at Dallas with a bachelor's degree. Fein says, "I didn't have anything to do in retirement and I didn't think that playing bingo was up to my speed."

Fein made it to class even after she had to start using a walker. Then her knees gave out, so she did a semester of independent study and took online classes to fulfill her degree requirements.

Fein's college adviser, Sheila Rollerson, says, "She did not give up in the midst of her challenges."

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Mistura Fina
15:55	Zig Zag
16:55	Quem Quer Ser Millionário
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
22:00	Todas as Palavras
22:25	Nome de Código: Sintra
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Resumo Liga dos Campeões 2018/2019
	Macau Sítios: História Que Eu Ta Vai Contar - Almeida Ribeiro
00:35	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:20	RTPi Directo
04:00	Liga Europa: Sporting - Vorskla (Direc

cinema



CINETEATRO

13-19 Dec



POKEMON THE MOVIE: THE POWER OF US

ROOM 1

2:15, 4:00, 7:45pm

Director: Tetsuo Yajima

Starring: Emily Bauer, Sam Black, Kathryn Cahill

Language: Japanese (Chinese)

Duration: 97min



MORE THAN BLUE

ROOM 1

5:45, 9:30 pm

Director: Gavin Lin

Starring: Jasper Liu, Ivy Chen

Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)

Duration: 105min



SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE

ROOM 2

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

Director: Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey

Starring: Shameik Moore, Jake Johnson, Hailee Steinfeld

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 117min



MORTAL ENGINES

ROOM 3

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

Director: Christian Rivers

Starring: Hugo Weaving, Hera Hilmar, Robert Sheehan

Language: English

Duration: 128min

this day in history



1997 DAWN OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

A bill giving Scotland its own parliament for the first time in three centuries has been unveiled in Glasgow today.

Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar revealed his blueprint for the future of Scottish politics and called on the House of Lords not to delay or disrupt its passage into law.

"In well under 300 days we have set in train the biggest change in 300 years of Scottish history," he said.

The bill outlines the parliament described in the white paper, Scotland's Parliament, published in July.

It outlines a 129-member Scots parliament to be set up by the year 2000 with powers to legislate on all mainstream issues of national importance, including health and education.

Following elections in 1999 the majority party will form an Executive to act as government of the country.

The parliament, to be based in Edinburgh, will have the power to vary income tax by 3p in the pound.

Mr Dewar added: "This bill will give Scotland the power to boost its self-confidence, economically, culturally and political."

He said the Bill had clear backing from Scots, who overwhelmingly voted in favour of devolution in a referendum in September.

The Conservative party, which campaigned for a "no" vote at the referendum, now accepts a majority of Scots want devolution.

But Tory constitutional affairs spokesman, Michael Ancram, said: "That does not mean that we have to accept the Bill as it stands."

"There are areas of major concern such as the effect on the constitution of the UK as a whole."

Inter-party talks are already under way on how the bill will be handled.

All UK citizens aged 20 or over will be eligible to stand for election to the Scottish Parliament but only those living in Scotland, or with a main residence in the country, can vote at the 1999 election.

The bill will get its second reading during the first two days of Parliament's return in the New Year.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Scotland Act 1998 was introduced in 1997 and elections to the Scottish Assemblies were held in May 1999.

Donald Dewar became Scotland's First Minister and later the same month the Scottish parliament met for the first time.

Devolution Day on 1 July 1999 saw the Scottish parliament assume its full powers in the presence of the Queen - to cheers and applause.

But the parliament was plunged into mourning when Mr Dewar, a much loved politician described as the "father of the Scottish nation", died in October 2000 aged 63.

He had suffered bleeding on the brain following a fall.

His death was marked by warm tributes from around the world and Scotland.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Try to reign in what comes naturally to you. With your tongue set on rapid fire, it's just too easy to shoot yourself in the foot. Think for at least a split second before speaking.

Taurus
April 20-May 20
Yes, your coworkers can be amusing. But remind yourself that you work for the financial rewards, not the entertainment value of your colleagues. Don't waste all day being distracted.

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
You can have a good day, filled with the best of intentions. Or you can have a great day filled with follow-through. You know which the adult in you would pick, and definitely which one the professional in you should go for.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You're feeling overwhelmed. Your boss isn't putting any controls on your output for some reason. Now you know how you would do if left to your own devices. Welcome back some voices of authority.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
You can't help but listen to your colleagues talk. And by the sound of it, life for them is one big party. Don't be impressed. That's exactly the response they have in mind. Stay focused on more intellectual pursuits.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
The day has the potential to be either good or bad. Even though you're stuck at the office, work issues don't play a decisive role. What matters is whether or not you let personal problems cloud your every thought.

Libra
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
A new project or work topic rings a bell deep inside you. You're finally discussing your innermost self at work, although in a roundabout way. Enjoy being free of your mask.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
You're not a pickpocket, exactly, but you're tempted to take what doesn't belong to you. Don't think for a second that an unusual minor detail gives you that kind of license.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Watch out for interactions with colleagues - if you want to have a productive day, that is. There's always at least one who wants to bend your ear or waste your time. Keep busy instead.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Communication at the office is a tricky thing. What you say is just as important as how you say it. You can never just cut to the chase, so practice beating around the bush with finesse.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
An intellectual connection with a colleague makes most directions seem like stating the obvious. This is simply not so with all your coworkers. Don't assume you have the same spark with everybody at the office.

Pisces
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Your boss may wonder just what's going on. When clarity dissolves, you have no choice but to be vague. Just how carefully you word things is your key to a solid day.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9			2	7	5			
7			9					4
2	5	7						3
	8		4					
	1	7	8	9				
		9		4				
3			6	9	7			
7			8		3			
8	9	1						2

Easy+

5		4				9		
6		8			7			
		9			3	6		
	6	5	3					
1	5				4			3
		7	9	5				
1	7			8				
	2		4					1
8		1				3		

Medium

3	5	9				2		
	7					4	1	
1		7	6					
	4			5			9	
		3	6					
7		4		6				
			5	3		1		
1	4				2			
7			9	8		3		

Hard

			7			4		
			2	9				
6						1		
1	4	5						
		8	3					
7								
	3				9	7		
					2			
			1					

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-5	8	clear
Harbin	-14	-6	clear/cloudy
Tianjin	0	9	clear
Urumqi	-11	-4	cloudy
Xi'an	-3	10	clear/cloudy
Lhasa	-5	5	overcast/snow shower
Chengdu	6	11	cloudy
Chongqing	6	11	cloudy
Kunming	8	18	cloudy
Nanjing	1	15	clear
Shanghai	3	15	cloudy/clear
Wuhan	-1	16	clear/cloudy
Hangzhou	3	17	clear
Taipei	13	19	clear
Guangzhou	9	21	clear
Hong Kong	17	22	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-10	-6	flurry
Frankfurt	-2	4	sleet/cloudy
Paris	5	7	cloudy/drizzle
London	5	11	drizzle
New York	3	5	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Long-distance race; 9- Slanted; 15- Green visor for an accountant, perhaps; 16- Approached; 17- Diminished; 18- Knapsack; 19- Bone; Prefix; 20- A furthest point; 22- ___ Grows in Brooklyn; 26- Greek goddess of agriculture; 27- Needlefish; 29- Royal son of comics; 30- From ___ Z; 31- Unstable; 33- 3rd letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 38- Womb-related; 39- Now; 41- Electromagnetic telecommunication; 42- Apprentice; 43- Civil War initials; 46- Faucet; 47- Fury; 48- Resident of Canadian region; 52- Committee type; 54- Specialist in religious law; 56- It runs in the cold; 59- Threefold; 60- Plume of feathers; 64- Completely; 65- Make narrow; 66- Closer; 67- Tranquility;

DOWN: 1- Prefix with drama; 2- Affirmative votes; 3- Turned over again; 4- Item having exchange value; 5- Definite article; 6- Solo of "Star Wars"; 7- Lyric poem; 8- Actor Beatty and others; 9- Short sock; 10- Instrument for measuring earthquake intensity; 11- Starbucks order; 12- Planet's path; 13- Freedom from war; 14- Gardener's tool; 21- Harem room; 23- Reason logically; 24- ___ Brockovich; 25- Suffix with exist; 27- Massive wild ox; 28- Hammett hound; 32- Former Bush spokesman Fleischer; 34- Comparative suffix; 35- Large tubular noodles; 36- Fulda tributary; 37- Ancient Greek harp; 39- Neighbor of Sask.; 40- Be in front; 44- Mariner; 45- Ques. response; 48- Join the cast of; 49- Chili con ___; 50- Singer Baker; 51- Giver; 53- ___ a million; 55- Soviet news agency; 57- Editor's mark; 58- Start of a counting rhyme; 61- Suffix with meteor; 62- Watchdog warning; 63- Actress Charlotte;

Yesterday's solution

A	L	A	E	R	A	H	A	L	I	S	A	T		
L	I	M	I	P	A	N	A	N	O	T	A			
S	M	I	T	M	E	S	A	S	S	A	R	G		
O	P	E	R	A										
O	S	T	E	I	T	S								
R	E	N	I	O	T	A	S							
B	L	O	C											
S	I	T	A	R										
G	E	E	S	E										
C	H	A	U	C	E	R								
O	M	A	R											
T	O	R	E											
O	N	E	A											

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- 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
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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	<p>Macau Square Office Space, Macau CBD Macau Square Office Space HKD 21,000 / 837 sq ft Ref: 18100691</p>	<p>Va Long, Central Macau Macau Two Bedroom Apartment Partial Sea View HKD 29,900 / 1,750 sq ft Ref: 18100694</p>	<p>Kok Vui Apartment, St. Paul's Ruins Macau Two Bedroom Apartment HKD 10,800 / 622 sq ft Ref: 18110696</p>	<p>Lakeview Mansions, Central Macau Macau 2 Bedroom Apartment HKD 25,000 / 1,750 sq ft Ref: 18110697</p>

FOOTBALL

Landmark Juve goal brings out contrasting sides of Ronaldo

Daniella Matar, Milan

TORINO 0, JUVENTUS, 1

JUVENTUS reached another landmark this weekend — and it was fitting that Cristiano Ronaldo was the player to do it.

But contrasting sides of the five-time world player of the year were on show in the Turin derby.

Ronaldo converted a 69th-minute penalty in Saturday's 1-0 win at Torino as Juventus became the first club to score 5,000 goals in Serie A.

"I'm happy, but what matters most is having helped the team to win," Ronaldo said immediately after the match, when asked about scoring the landmark goal.

The Portuguese star also celebrated the occasion on Twitter.

"Historic win, important achievement, historic achievement... 5000 times Juve" Ronaldo wrote, along with a photo of him scoring the penalty.

Juventus remained eight points ahead of second-placed Napoli as the Bianconeri continued their seemingly unstoppable march to



a record-extending eighth straight Serie A title.

It was also an important goal personally for Ronaldo.

The 33-year-old has been playing and scoring regularly this season and showing little sign of being affected — on the field at least — by a rape allegation in the

United States.

However, Ronaldo had failed to score in his previous two games, the first time that had happened since September.

Ronaldo was visibly relieved when the goal went in, especially as Salvador Ichazo had got a hand to it, and he ran up and ches-

t-bumped the Torino goalkeeper. Ronaldo, who was booked for that, appeared to immediately regret his actions and gave Ichazo an apologetic hug.

Italy forward Mario Balotelli commented on Instagram: "If I had done that.... goodbye!"

It was Ronaldo's 11th Serie A

goal, moving him second in the goalscoring charts, one behind Genoa forward Krzysztof Piatek.

Kathryn Mayorga filed a civil lawsuit in September in Nevada claiming Ronaldo raped her in his Las Vegas hotel room in 2009. Police reopened an investigation into the allegation at her request. Ronaldo has denied any wrongdoing.

CAGLIARI 0, NAPOLI 1

Napoli coach Carlo Ancelotti has used squad rotation much more than his predecessor Maurizio Sarri but it almost cost him dearly yesterday [Macau time].

Ancelotti rested top players Lorenzo Insigne, Dries Mertens, Marek Hamsik and Jose Callejon against Cagliari after the midweek defeat to Liverpool saw Napoli eliminated from the Champions League.

He was forced to bring on Mertens, Callejon and Insigne during the second half and Napoli clearly improved.

Mertens won the free-kick which Arkadiusz Milik curled in during stoppage time to send Napoli to a 1-0 win.

The Belgian international also provided an earlier cross which Milik headed onto the crossbar.

"I chose a fresher starting lineup in order to rest those who had used a lot of energy in Liverpool and to have more energy during the match," Ancelotti said. AP

AD

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FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Three English teams face German opposition in last 16

Graham Dunbar, Nyon

ONE of the fiercest international rivalries in soccer will play out three times in the last 16 of the Champions League when a trio English teams take on German opposition.

Five-time European champions Liverpool and Bayern Munich were drawn yesterday to face each other, Manchester City was paired with Schalke and Tottenham will play Bundesliga leader Borussia Dortmund.

Also, three-time defending champion Real Madrid will first play at Ajax, while Barcelona was drawn with Lyon.

In other matches, Manchester United will play French leader Paris Saint-Germain, Juventus will take on Atletico Madrid and Porto will play Roma.

The draw included nine former champions with a combined 40 of the 63 Champions League or Eu-

ropean Cup titles since the competition began in 1955.

Real Madrid and Ajax have 17 of those titles, though those two storied clubs have never met in a final.

The potential first-time winners include Paris Saint-Germain, which topped the toughest group ahead of Liverpool and Napoli with a tournament-high 17 goals in this year's group stage.

Manchester City, also seeking its first title, arguably got the weakest opponent on current form. Schalke is in 13th place in the Bundesliga.

Months after leaving Real Madrid, Cristiano Ronaldo will return to the city with Juventus for the first leg against Atletico. The final on June 1 will also be played at the Metropolitan Stadium in Madrid.

The first legs will be played from Feb. 12-20, with the second legs scheduled between March 5-13. AP



Clash of giants: Liverpool to face Bayern in CL quarter finals

CL Draw List

First Leg - Feb. 12-20

- Schalke (Germany) vs Man City (England)
- Atletico Madrid (Spain) vs Juventus (Italy)
- Man United (England) vs PSG (France)
- Tottenham (England) vs Borussia (Germany)
- Lyon (France) vs Barcelona (Spain)
- Roma (Italy) vs Porto (Portugal)
- Ajax (Netherlands) vs Real Madrid (Spain)
- Liverpool (England) vs Bayern (Germany)

Second Leg - March 5-13

- Man City (England) vs Schalke (Germany)
- Juventus (Italy) vs Atletico Madrid (Spain)
- PSG (France) vs Man United (England)
- Borussia (Germany) vs Tottenham (England)
- Barcelona (Spain) vs Lyon (France)
- Porto (Portugal) vs Roma (Italy)
- Real Madrid (Spain) vs Ajax (Netherlands)
- Bayern (Germany) vs Liverpool (England)

RUGBY

Michael Cheika to stay as Wallabies coach through World Cup

RUGBY Australia has confirmed Michael Cheika will lead Australia to next year's World Cup but from now on will work under the supervision of Scott Johnson, who takes a new role as Australia's director of rugby.

Cheika was under pressure after the Wallabies won only four of 13 tests in 2018 - their worst record in 60 years. But Rugby Australia has kept faith in Cheika's leadership, with chief executive Raelene Castle saying "he's started something, he wants to finish it."

Johnson, who is returning to Australia after working in the United States and Britain, most recently as Scotland's director of rugby, will take up his position officially in mid-March. But he and Cheika will meet sooner to plot elements of Australia's World Cup campaign.



Australia's head coach Michael Cheika

"We are confident Michael is the right man to lead the Wallabies to the World Cup and the appointment of Scott Johnson will support Michael and his coaching team as they prepare for the tournament in Japan

next September," Castle said.

Castle and chairman Cameron Clyne announced the decision at a news conference in Sydney yesterday which came after the board of Rugby Australia completed a review of the

Wallabies' season and received a presentation from Cheika on past problems and future plans.

No announcements were made about the future of Cheika's principal assistants, Nathan Grey, Stephen Larkham and Simon Raiwalui. Castle said their roles would be discussed when Johnson took up his role.

"Michael's made some recommendations post his review and those recommendations will be discussed with Scott Johnson," Castle said.

Castle said she had spoken to Cheika about the decision to appoint Johnson and he was satisfied with the changed structure.

"We've had some good discussions with Michael and he sees that as a model that allows him to do what he's best at which is coach the Wallabies," she said.

Johnson's focus mainly will be on off-field issues. He will lead a wider campaign to rebuild Australian rugby, which has fallen into a malaise, losing ground to rugby league, football and Australian Rules football in the competition between Australia's four football codes.

He will oversee a fighting fund to help retain Australia's best young talent and will work to produce greater alignment between Australia's four Super Rugby teams.

In the past, the Australian teams have been fiercely independent, refusing to adopt a single national style or coaching approach.

Rugby Australia will now adopt a system which New Zealand has used for many years under which Super Rugby teams, while still independent and competitive, work

towards a coherent national style which ensures players joining the Wallabies have common skill backgrounds.

Clyne said RA's focus was on sustained success.

"Obviously winning a World Cup next year is really critical and we're obviously confident we can do that with the right program," he said.

"But what's clear today in sport is that that only buys you support for a short period of time.

"What you need is sustainable success. We want to win the World Cup, then we want to win the Bledisloe, then we want to win Rugby Championships."

Johnson, 56, was Australia's attack coach under John Connolly at the 2007 World Cup.

"I am excited to be returning to Rugby Australia in the director of rugby role and I am looking forward to supporting Michael and the Wallabies in their build up to the World Cup," Johnson said.

In a statement, Cheika said the new structure will be "great" for Australian rugby. AP

opinion

World Views
 The Editors, Bloomberg

MAY'S DELAYING TACTICS ARE MAKING BREXIT WORSE

It's unclear what U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May hoped to get from leaders of the European Union at their recent summit. As things turned out, she got less than nothing — a public brush-off that further weakened her standing at home, if that were possible. Her Brexit strategy has collapsed, and nothing is to be gained by persisting with it any longer.

Playing for time is all May appears to have left, though time is not on her side. The withdrawal agreement she negotiated with the EU was set for a crushing defeat in Parliament last week. Instead of facing that verdict and moving on to develop a workable alternative, she postponed the vote, suggesting that it might not happen until late January — just weeks before the U.K. is due to leave the EU on March 29th.

May then went to Brussels asking the EU for reassurance on the notorious “backstop” — a device to avoid the need for a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland after Brexit, while leaving the U.K., perhaps indefinitely, as a rule-taker with no voice in EU affairs.

Some consoling words, devoid of legal substance, had apparently been negotiated by British and EU officials in advance — with May believing, against all evidence, that these crumbs might have been enough to change Parliament's mind. In the end, the EU's leaders refused even this. The withdrawal agreement cannot be changed, they said: The backstop stays as it is, and that's that.

With Europe refusing to budge, May's withdrawal agreement is dead, and further delay will not revive it.

What happens on or after March 29th if she persists with these tactics is anybody's guess. Perhaps May calculates that if the vote on her deal waits long enough, Parliament will be pressured to back it. There are two problems with this. First, her deal is objectively terrible. Second, it's impossible to predict what will happen on the brink of disaster, if May maneuvers the country into that position. Meanwhile, the continuing uncertainty, with no prospect of relief, is the worst of all outcomes for investment and growth.

The prime minister is nothing if not tenacious: The humiliations keep bouncing off. But mere survival in office is no achievement. May needs to help the country acknowledge that, despite all efforts, her Brexit project has failed.

Now, Britain has to choose between a cliff-edge Brexit, which few in the U.K. want and for which no real preparations have been made, or remaining in the EU.

However, one rates the U.K. government's performance over the past several years — and it's hard to be generous — the results are in. The best available Brexit deal is worse, far worse, than remaining in the EU. The country ought to be given the opportunity to revisit its vote to leave the union. May or her successor (if it comes to that) needs to lead the U.K. out of this wilderness, starting now.



THE TOP OF MIND: 'JUSTICE' IS MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S WORD OF THE YEAR

Racial justice. Obstruction of justice. Social justice. The Justice Department. Merriam-Webster has chosen “justice” as its 2018 word of the year, driven by the churning news cycle over months and months.

The word follows “toxic,” picked by Oxford Dictionaries, and “misinformation,” plucked by Dictionary.com.

Peter Sokolowski, Merriam-Webster's editor at large, told The Associated Press ahead of yesterday's announcement that “justice” consistently bubbled into the top 20 or 30 lookups

on the company's website, spiking at times due to specific events but also skating close to the surface for much of the year.

The designation for “justice” came soon after President Trump's one-time fixer, Michael Cohen, was sentenced to three years in prison for crimes that included arranging the payment of hush money to conceal his boss' alleged sexual affairs.

It also came ahead of a Senate vote on the “First Step Act,” a criminal justice reform bill with broad bipartisan support.

Germany to compensate hundreds who fled Nazis as children

David Rising, Berlin

GERMANY has agreed to one-time payments for survivors, primarily Jews, who were evacuated from Nazi Germany as children, many of whom never saw their parents again, the organization that negotiates compensation with the German government said yesterday.

The New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany said the government had agreed to payments of 2,500 euros (USD2,800) to those still alive from among the 10,000 people who fled on the so-called “Kindertransport.”

This year is the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the transport of the children to Britain from Nazi Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

About 1,000 survivors are thought to be alive today, with about half living in Britain, and the payment is seen as a “symbolic recognition of their suffering,” Claims Conference negotiator Greg Schneider said.

“In almost all the cases the parents who remained were killed in concentration camps in the Holocaust and they have tremendous psychological issues,” Schneider told The Associated Press.

Following the Nazis' anti-Jewish pogrom in November 1938 known as Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, the British government agreed to allow an unspecified number of Jewish children as refugees from Nazi Germany or territories it had annexed.

Jewish groups inside Nazi Germany planned the transports, and the first arrived in Harwich on Dec. 2, 1938, according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The last transport from Germany left Sept. 1, 1939 — the day World War II broke out with the Nazi invasion of Poland — and the final transport from



A statue to perpetuating the memory of the 'Kindertransport' (children transport) in Berlin

continental Europe left the Netherlands on May 14, 1940, the same day Dutch forces surrendered to the Nazis.

In all, about 10,000 children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland were taken to Britain, about 7,500 of whom were Jewish, according to the museum. About half were placed with foster families, while the others stayed in hostels, schools or farms.

About 1,000 survivors are thought to be alive today, with about half living in Britain

In addition to those who remained in Britain, many resettled in the U.S., Israel, Canada, Australia and elsewhere, Schneider said.

Today, survivors are at least in their 80s and most continue to look back on their escape as the defining moment of their lives as they were put alone

onto trains into the unknown, saying goodbye to parents and siblings often for the last time, Schneider said.

“This money is acknowledgement that this was a traumatic, horrible thing that happened to them,” he said.

Some survivors already received small payments in the 1950s but that will not bar them from receiving the new benefit, the Claims Conference said.

The Claims Conference carries out continuous negotiations with Germany to expand the number of people eligible for compensation.

Since 1952, the German government has paid more than \$80 billion to individuals for suffering and losses resulting from persecution by the Nazis.

In 2019, the Claims Conference will distribute approximately \$350 million in direct compensation to more than 60,000 survivors in 83 countries, the organization says. In addition, it will provide some \$550 million in grants to social service agencies that provide home care, food, medicine and other services for Holocaust survivors. AP

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

WORLD BRIEFS

THAILAND An accident yesterday outside of Bangkok involving three vehicles killed one Thai man and left 11 other people injured, including seven South Korean tourists, Thai police said. Police suspect that a van carrying the seven S.Koreans was driving behind a pickup truck that appeared to have made a sudden U-turn, causing the van to hit the truck from behind and instantly killing the van's Thai driver.



FRANCE People filled a square in the French city of Strasbourg to show respect and sympathy for the victims of last week's shooting attack near a famous Christmas market as the death toll rose to five. French authorities said a Polish man died in a Strasbourg hospital, one of a dozen people wounded in last week's attack.



USA Pushing the government to the brink of a partial shutdown, the White House is insisting that Congress provide USD5 billion to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border despite lawmaker resistance from both parties. Without a resolution, parts of the federal government will shut down at midnight Friday. More on p14



NIGERIA Clashes between Nigerian farmers and herders killed at least 3,641 people in the past three years, with more than half of the deaths occurring in 2018, Amnesty International said. The London-based organization blamed the escalation in the conflict on the authorities' failure to investigate the violence or prosecute perpetrators. The study was based on 262 interviews and 230 documents, including medical records and military reports, it said. The army condemned the report.