



COURT CANCELS POLYTEX ASSET SEIZURE

The Court of First Instance has cancelled an order to seize the assets of the company responsible for the Pearl Horizon project

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LIGHT FESTIVAL EXTENDED TO JANUARY 20

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ALIGNING MACAU WITH CHINA'S REFORMS

Macau should take an active role in the country's national reform strategy, the CE said during an event marking the MSAR's anniversary

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WORLD BRIEFS



THAILAND Human rights groups along with current and former soccer players have called on FIFA and the Australian government to intervene to stop a Melbourne-based refugee and semi-professional soccer player being extradited from Thailand to Bahrain.

INDIA A gunbattle between Indian troops and Kashmiri rebels left six militants dead and triggered a new round of anti-India protests in the disputed Himalayan region.



AFGHANISTAN The Taliban welcomed news of the U.S. plan to withdraw half its troops in Afghanistan by the summer, as Afghan generals warned it would be a blow to the morale of the country's beleaguered security forces who come under daily attacks from the insurgent fighters.

RUSSIA Rescue teams yesterday found the bodies of nine construction workers who were trapped inside a burning potash mine in Russia's Ural Mountains. *More on p15*

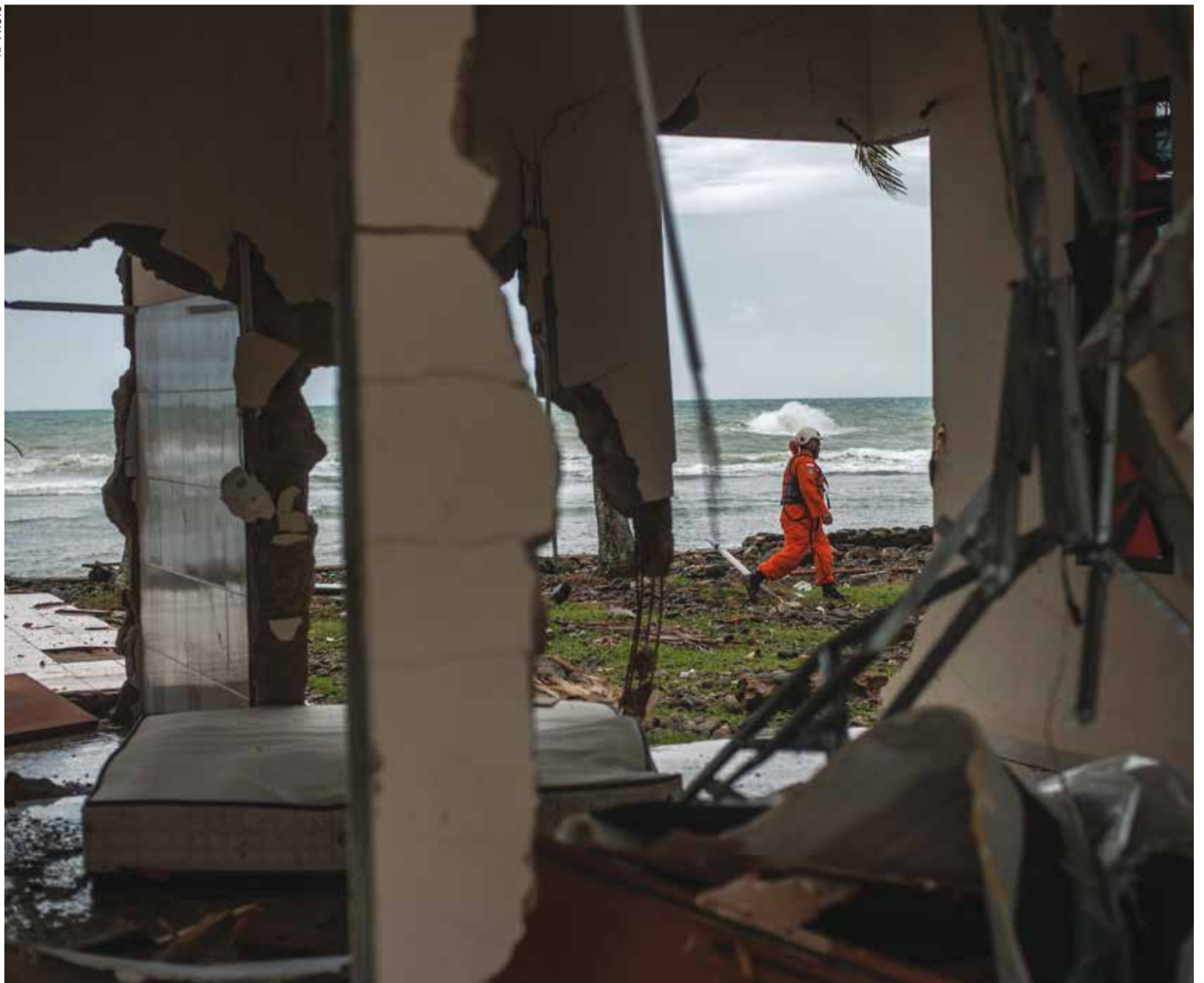
SAUDI ARABIA Prayers were held yesterday for Prince Talal bin Abdulaziz, a senior member of the royal family who supported women's rights and once led a group of dissident princes, who died at the age of 87.

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Gov't to proceed with crime of social alarm

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Tsunami set off by volcanic eruption kills over 220 in Indonesia

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Rise in visitor arrivals attributed to HKZMB



VISITOR arrivals in November 2018 increased by 15.3 percent year-on-year to exceed 3.26 million, according to the latest data from the Statistics and Census Service, attributed in part to the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HKZMB).

Overnight visitors (1.59 million) and same-day visitors (1.67 million) rose 5.1 percent and 26.9 percent year-on-year respectively in November, with the average length of stay holding steady at 1.2 days. Overnight visitors on average stayed for 2.2 days, while same-day visitors stayed for 0.2 days.

Analyzed by place of origin, visitors from mainland China grew by 15.3 percent year-on-year to 2.28 million in November, coming primarily from Guangdong province (925,400) and Hunan province (115,700).

Visitors from Hong Kong (591,000) surged 25.6 percent, whereas those from South Korea (67,600) and Taiwan (82,100) dropped by 6.6 percent and 2.4 percent respectively. Meanwhile, visitors from the United States (22,500), Australia (8,400), Canada (8,200) and the United Kingdom (6,400) registered year-on-year increases.

By mode of transport, visitor arrivals by land soared by 47.9 percent year-on-year to 2.31 million in November, with about 436,600 traveling via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge. Meanwhile, visitors arriving via the Border Gate (1.66 million) rose by 21.5 percent.

Visitor arrivals by air increased by 11.3 percent year-on-year to 272,800, while those by sea plunged by 33.7 percent to 678,500.

Visitor arrivals totaled 32.23 million in the first 11 months of 2018, representative of a 9.1 percent increase year-on-year, with overnight visitors (16.75 million) and same-day visitors (15.48 million) growing by 7.2 percent and 11.1 percent respectively.

During this time, visitors from mainland China exceeded 22.81 million in the first 11 months of this year, while those from Hong Kong amounted to 5.64 million. Visitors from South Korea (735,600) and Taiwan (967,900) dropped by 7.7 percent and 0.4 percent respectively. Travelers from the United States (182,200), Australia (80,200), the United Kingdom (53,400) registered growth, while those from Canada (66,300) declined.



Court cancels Polytex asset seizure

THE Court of First Instance has cancelled an order to seize the assets of property developer Polytex, the company responsible for the controversial Pearl Horizon project. A statement from lawyer Leonel Alves, who represents the company, suggested that the order might be ineffectual.

The Court had ordered the seizure of four buildings and 200 parking spaces owned by Polytex in the "La Baie du Noble" development.

After years of stagnation, the Pearl Horizon land plot expired in 2015 without the project's completion and, as a result, was reclaimed by the Macau government. An appeal of the government's repossession was rejected by the Court of Second Instance earlier this year.

At the request of some 120 pre-sale buyers, the Court of First Instance had initially ordered some Polytex assets

to be seized for liquidation if the courts ruled that compensation was due.

Buyers were demanding refunds for money spent on the acquisition of residential units. They had expressed to the courts their fear that the company would use the assets to avoid any liability.

Although the Court of First Instance had initially agreed with the buyers, it now says it has changed its stance to align with Polytex.

Alves's statement explained that the asset seizure was cancelled "because it is not possible to conclude that the company intends to dissipate its assets, as alleged by the promising buyers, in order to avoid any debts."

"[The Court] has thus decided to cancel and withdraw all previous arrests," the statement noted.

The Pearl Horizon case continues to spur controversy.

Polytex argues that it is the government's fault the project could not be completed within the 25-year period, citing obstructive administrative procedures.

However, earlier this year the Court of First Instance made its first ruling on the case, deciding that the developer must reimburse an individual who purchased a pre-sale residential unit over MOP2 million.

Meanwhile, a government initiative to develop a replacement residential site this year was not well received by the buyers, who said that it was unfair.

A number of related lawsuits are still being handled by the courts. Last week, a journalist accused of slander by Polytex was cleared of charges, but was still required to pay MOP50,000 in compensation for damaging Polytex's image. **DB**

ASK THE VET

by Dr Ruan Du Toit Bester

5 SUBTLE CANINE CANCER SYMPTOMS

THE following canine cancer symptoms may not always be sure-fire signs of the disease, but you may want to have a veterinarian examine your pet just to be sure.

Bumps and Lumps

Most cysts are harmless fluid-filled sacs, but others can be cancerous. If your dog spends a lot of time outdoors in the sun and is a light-colored breed, he is at a higher risk for canine skin cancer.

When a lump, bump, mass or cyst is worth a trip to the vet:

Lumps in the mouth area
A cyst with an irregular shape or jagged edges

Bumps or lumps that grow fast and bleed
Masses not confined to one spot

Testicle Enlargement can be a sign of testicular cancer. Blood in the urine, a soft or hard lump in the testicle, squatting to urinate like a female dog, and enlarged breasts are also indications of testicular cancer.

Difficulty with Bodily Functions and Activities:

There are times when canine cancer symptoms can show up subtly in your dog's normal behavior.

For example, when a dog has difficulty:

- Eating or swallowing

- Healing body sores
- Walking or exercising
- Urinating or defecating
- Loss of Appetite/Weight

This could be a sign of oropharyngeal cancer. With this condition, dogs can also develop mouth sores.

Swelling in Areas of Your Dog's Body: This may be lymphoma, which is a fast-spreading form of cancer that affects the lymph nodes, spleen and other organs in dogs.

Hope this info helps
Till next week
Dr Ruan



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR) Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
MANAGING EDITOR Paulo Barbosa paulo.barbosa@macaudailytimes.com
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Eric Sautedé, Leanda Lee, Severo Portela

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Daniel Beitler, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Lynzy Valles, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, Bloomberg, Financial Times, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua | SECRETARY Yang Dongxiao arry@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

SECRETARY Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephone: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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CIVIL PROTECTION LAW

Proposal upholds crime of social alarm

FOLLOWING a public consultation process which concluded on Aug. 11, the government has issued a report over the proposed civil protection law. Despite controversy, the report states that the new crime of false social alarm will be applied to those who intentionally spread false rumors during events such as catastrophes, accidents, epidemics or terrorist attacks. It says that "rumors can introduce panic and confusion in society and its consequences can be more devastating than the actual sudden incident in terms of threat to the public."

The new crime will be punishable with penalties that go up to a three-year prison term. During the public consultation, groups such as the Macau Portuguese and English Press Association (AIPIM) questioned the establishment of



Wong Sio Chak

a crime of social alarm. In a letter to the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, AIPIM noted that the in-

roduction of the crime is "causing concerns amongst the journalistic community." The letter argued

that the Penal Code "already has the answers on what is being avoided with the drafting of a new type of crime," meaning the new crime could be redundant.

However, the report states that "rumors that are used to instill panic and confusion amongst the community when facing dangerous situations" are not "in any way safeguarded by freedom of speech."

The bill includes the creation of the new structure of civil protection, with added responsibilities to be attributed to the Secretary for Security.

Several other measures are proposed, such as the introduction of added responsibilities for public servants who may be required to work during catastrophes. The report states that a new type of subsidy and an insurance policy may be introduced to protect these workers.

Inflation up in November

The composite consumer price index (CPI) in Macau increased by 3.12 percent to 113.96 in November year-on-year, a decrease of 0.23 percentage points from the 3.35 percent growth recorded in October, according to the Statistics and Census Service. The decrease was attributable to increased fees for eating out, higher rental costs, rising parking meter rates, as well as the increasing prices of gasoline and adults' clothing. Among goods and services, the price indexes of clothing and footwear, education and transport notably grew by 6.94 percent, 5.88 percent and 5.13 percent respectively year-on-year, while the index of communication decreased by 6.86 percent. For the 12-month period ending in November 2018, the average composite CPI rose by 2.93 percent compared with the previous period. During this period, there was notable growth in the price indexes of clothing and footwear (6.18 percent), transport (5.22 percent), health (4.79 percent) and education (4.62 percent).

2.5pct of residents may have gambling addiction

A recent study which interviewed 2,000 residents revealed that 2.5 percent were suspected of having some level of gambling addiction. Presented at the "Responsible Gaming Symposium" at the University of Macau, the study suggests that when looking at the overall adult population in the SAR, some 14,000 local residents are likely to have gambling disorder. Data from the Social Welfare Bureau shows that the percent of residents who took part in some form of gambling dropped from nearly 70 percent in 2003 down to 51.5 percent in 2016. This year, over 300 people have asked to be banned from entering casinos. This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the government's efforts in promoting responsible gaming.

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CRIME

Man arrested for scamming ticket buyers

A man was arrested for allegedly scamming online concert ticket buyers out of MOP40,000 between October and November.

Some of the victims filed a complaint with police authorities after being ripped off by the online fraudster who claimed to be selling concert tickets.

Buyers were instructed to deposit payment into a local bank account but never received the tickets, public broadcaster TDM reported.

Authorities subsequently launched an investigation with the Judiciary Police (PJ) in the hunt for the suspect. "The victims followed the instructions of the suspect, depositing

the funds into his Macau bank account to purchase the tickets. However, the victims were unable to receive the concert tickets after that.

The victims suspected that they had been scammed. Hence, they filed a report with the police to ask for assistance," said Chan Wun Man, a PJ spokesperson.

The suspect was arrested upon entry to Macau via the Border Gate and has confessed to the crime.

According to him, he had successfully defrauded 17 people and acquired a total of MOP40,000.

The PJ has charged the suspect with fraud and his case has been transferred to the Public Prosecution Office.

TOURISM

Light Festival extended to January 20

THE Macau Light Festival 2018, themed "Time Travel in Macau," will be extended to Jan. 20 at select locations. Apart from St. Dominic's Church, the Camões Garden, the Taipa Houses and the Taipa Municipal Market, other locations will continue to stage the festival from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. from Jan. 1 to 20, the Macao Government Tourism Office announced in a statement.

The Gastronomy Night Market at the square in front of Pak Tai Temple, as well as the Cultural and Creative Night Market and the Outdoor Local Concert at Anim'Arte Nam Van will not be extended.

The projection mapping show produced by a local team will continue to be played at Ruins of St. Paul's. Similarly, "Search for the Taste of Memory" will continue to light up Pak Tai Temple.



According to statistics from the tourism bureau, the Macau Light Festival 2018 has gained relatively positive coverage in traditional media, on social media and on travel websites. In addition, during the extended festival period the "International Gastronomy Forum, Macau

2019" will be held from Jan. 19 to 21.

Some of the Forum activities will take place at Anim'Arte Nam Van.

MGTO said that it hopes to multiply the effects of the events, thus creating a new experience filled with light and gastronomic elements for residents and visitors.

At the same time, it noted that it aims to showcase Macau's capacity for interdisciplinary creativity as a Creative City of Gastronomy to international delegates from the UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy taking part in the Forum, helping transform Macau Light Festival into an international event.

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FOR RENT



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Multiple offices for rent, ranging from 837 sq ft to 6,415 sq ft. Some fitted out, others bare-shell. All include management fees and central air conditioning.



Kok Vui Apartment, St. Paul's Ruins

(Ref: 18110696)
622 sq.ft. HKD 10,800

Located at the historical center of Macau with breathtaking balcony views of the Ruins of St. Paul, this 2-bedroom apartment is perfect for a single professional or a couple looking to stay close to the pulse of the city and experience an authentic Macau lifestyle. Works expected to be finished early December, viewings available immediately. Pictures were taken pre-renovations, for reference only.



Lakeview Mansions, Central Macau

(Ref: 18110697)
1,750 sq.ft. HKD 25,000

Fabulous family home with stunning views overlooking Nam Vam lake, is rare and has just come on the market for rent. With a wonderful L shaped living dining area, subtle mood lighting and reverse cycle air conditioners this apartment makes it a perfect home for a young modern family or stylish executive couple. This property has been beautifully fitted out with superb attention to detail, a rare find in Macau.



Va Long, Central Macau

(Ref: 18100694)
1,750 sq.ft. HKD 23, 000

Luxuriously renovated 2-bedroom apartment near the business district of Macau. Fully fitted out with beautiful furniture, the bright ambiance of the unit is enhanced by the stunning partial sea views. Kitchen has separate washer, dryer, air-conditioning and both electric and gas cooktops. Perfect for professionals working in the area. Available immediately.

FOR SALE



WA BAO, TAIPA

(Ref: 18115568)
1,020 sq.ft. HKD 8.5 M
Rate: HKD 8,333

Taipa, fabulous and bright two bedroom apartment with two bathrooms. Lovely views one the Taipa Stadium, Galaxy and across to Hengquin are just stunning. Well designed kitchen. Very convenient for all types of transportation and within walking distance to Taipa village and Cotai.



Taipa, Nam Long

(Ref: 18095561)
550 sq.ft. HKD 4.08M
Rate: HKD 7,418

Fully renovated apartment with a bright street view situated on the edge of the popular Taipa Village. The original two bed layout has been converted into a large one bedroom configuration that can easily turn back into two. Great investment apartment. Central location means easy access to restaurants, supermarkets, shops, bus stops and the Cotai Strip.



Va Fat Taipa

(Ref: 18115566)
550 sq.ft. HKD 4.58M
Rate: HKD 8,327

Great two bedroom apartment in Taipa. Basic upgrades conducted on the property four years ago. The property has a long term tenant who would prefer to stay in the property. Open plan kitchen living area. Two double bedrooms. Excellent location within 15 minute of Cotai and 5 to old Taipa village. Good option for an investor to purchase.



Sea View Condo, Hellene Gardens

(Ref: 18085559)
1663 sq.ft. HKD 8.8 M
Rate: HKD 5,291

This lovely 3-bedroom apartment features two balconies with breathtaking views of the South China Sea and the beautiful green hillside, where you will awaken to stunning sunrises. Recently renovated, the apartment also features a luxuriously spacious open kitchen with white cabinets, bar counter and high quality, European appliances.



Ocean Garden Elm Court

(Ref: 18105563)
1,610 sq.ft. HKD 11.88M
Rate: HKD 7,378

A beautiful modern stylish apartment in the popular Ocean Garden complex in Taipa. This 3 bedroom apartment with an en-suite on the master bedroom. The apartment is bright and spacious with a lovely living/dining room, balcony and modern kitchen, plenty of built in storage and ready to move into.



Calçada da Surpresa, 12, Ching Fai Court, Macau

(Ref: 18035547)
2000sq.ft. HKD 11.5M
Rate: HKD 5,750

A unique opportunity to live in this sleek, modern property. The large open space area on the ground floor houses the open plan living and dining areas with fabulous designer kitchen located at back of the property. Viewing can be arranged by appointment.



2nd Floor Car Park Happy Valley

(Ref: 18115567)
2000 sq.ft. HKD 11.5 M
Rate: HKD 5,750
Large car park space available for sale in central Taipa. Situated near the elevators at Block 2 of Happy Valley.



The Manhattan, Unit D, Mid - High Floor - Taipa

(Ref: 18045551)
2,305 sq.ft. HKD 15.5M
Rate: HKD 6,724

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Fong Chi Keong

Oceanis Park developer prepares to appeal

Julie Zhu

FORMER lawmaker Fong Chi Keong, who is also a member of the board of Chong Va-Entretenimento, Limitada, said that the company's lawyer is handling the lawsuit against the government regarding the announcement of the former Oceanis Park land plot's expiration.

Last week, the government declared the expiration of the concession of a land plot located in Taipa, next to the Estrada Almirante Marques Esparteiro and in front of the Regency Hotel.

With an area of 134,891 square meters, the land had been approved for the construction of a theme park named "Oceanis Park."

However, the concession was declared expired because the concessionaire had failed to make use of it within the period stipulated in the concession, the government said. The concessionaire was given 30 days after the announcement of expiration to launch an appeal.

The Oceanis Park land plot was first outsourced in 1997, with the land utilization period expiring in 2001.

Last week, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, said that the expiration is similar to that seen in other cases, and that the government does not know when it can complete land recovery procedures.

Last week, Fong also said that his company had paid the government MOP800,000 every year, and that it had also delivered the government plans to change construction. Furthermore, the company had tried to contact the government several times but never received a response.

Fong believes these are the rea-

sons why the land has not been developed until now.

The former lawmaker also expressed doubt that Macau had ever had a project which had not exceeded the given development period. He mentioned the island medical complex as an example.

The Oceanis Park land plot was first outsourced in 1997

According to Fong, the government required the developer keep its original development plan, including the reservoir.

"What's the use in keeping the reservoir? [...] Look at the scale of Zhuhai's Chimelong. Do you still want to leave that reservoir there?" asked Fong, according to a report by All About Macau.

"What is the reason for hundreds of developers applying for land but [the government] never allowing them to develop the land?" Fong questioned, further claiming that Hong Kong has a "green channel" for discussions between the government and developers, whereas Macau does not.

Fong considers Macau's political atmosphere to have problems, according to All About Macau.

"There is a reservoir, and there are one hundred fish inside it. [When] some fish are sick, you will kill these sick fish. But when the one hundred fish all die, the water gets problems, the environment gets problems, and the social and political atmosphere get problems," said Fong.

José Tavares to head new municipal bureau



José Tavares has been appointed as the first head of the city's new Municipal Affairs Bureau, according to a dispatch published in the Official Gazette. Tavares' two-year term will start on Jan. 1, the day the new bureau commences operations. Lei Wai Nong and Lo Chi Kin have been appointed vice-presidents of the bureau. The pair are currently vice-presidents of the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau. Lei and Lo will also hold two-year terms starting New Year's day.

Live pig supply ensured amid Zhuhai ASF outbreak

Macau's supply of live pigs has returned to normal, after an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) was reported in Zhuhai last week. The Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau issued a statement, informing the public that the bureau had been keeping in close contact with mainland quarantine authorities over live pig exports to Macau. "Even though the supply of live pigs to Macau has decreased, it remains guaranteed. The supply will be coming from farms not involved in the outbreak," the IACM statement reads.

Monetary Authority of Macau raises discount base rate

The Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM) on Friday added 25 basis points to the discount rate raising it to 2.75%, the fourth review since the start of the year, the AMCM announced. This rise is due to the Macau being indexed to the Hong Kong dollar, which in turn is pegged to the United States dollar, "in order to safeguard the efficient functioning of this exchange indexation regime." According to the statement, the AMCM decision follows a 25 basis point increase in the base interest rate announced by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, which itself followed a US Federal Reserve decision on 19 December to raise the benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points. The AMCM noted that some banks have increased the preferential interest rate and the interest rates in the individual deposit categories, so it warned the population about the risk of increased financial charges associated with interest rate hikes and that any decision to take on a loan should be carefully considered.

THE Executive Council announced stricter scrutiny measures for wastewater treatment plants, suggesting companies file summary reports with the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) every six months regarding the status of their emissions standards.

According to Leong Heng Teng, the Executive Council spokesman, operators will face heavier fines if they fail to do so.

"The operator must submit a report showing that they are abiding by the government's standards regarding air pollutant emissions of wastewater treatment plants," Leong said on Friday, as cited in a TDM report.

"We have also set a heavier penalty so that the operator will be liable for a fine between MOP200,000 and

ENVIRONMENT

Heavier fines for wastewater treatment plant emissions

MOP300,000 if they violate the emissions standards."

The DSPA has commissioned an advisory company with defining the new emissions standards but did not disclose the company's name.

There are currently five wastewater treatment plants and facilities in the city.

Additionally, the Executive Council announced amendments to the city's noise control law, which is aimed at controlling excessive noise after 10 p.m.

The amendment suggests that a waiver be put in place for emergency situations, such as garbage collection

during typhoon season and for Light Rapid Transit System maintenance.

Ip Kwong Lam, acting director of the DSPA, said, "We're not making an exception for the noise made by the LRT when it runs during the day, but rather for the maintenance work on the LRT as it can only be carried out at night."

"Also a large amount of waste has piled up during the typhoons before and it's inevitable that it has to be cleared out at night. Considering this [...] a penalty waiver will be granted for clearing and collecting street garbage," Ip added.



RENATO MARQUES

SURVEY

Business climate stable for restaurants, retail sector in October

RESTAURANTS and the local retail sector reported a stable business climate in October and a conservative prospect in the near future, according to a survey by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

According to DSEC, 33 percent of the interviewed restaurants and similar establishments reported a year-on-year rise in revenue in October, up by 4 percentage points from September. On the other hand, the share of interviewed establishments recording a year-on-year decline in revenue dropped by 5 percentage points over September to 39 percent.

In retail business, 40 percent of the interviewed retailers registered a year-on-year sales increase in October, up by 4 percentage points from September. On the other hand, 33 percent of the interviewed

retailers reported a year-on-year sales decrease in October, down slightly by 1 percentage point from September.

The interviewed restaurants and similar establishments were cautious about their business prospects in November, with 33 percent of the interviewed establishments anticipating a year-on-year decline in revenue, up by 2 percentage points from October.

Meanwhile, 49 percent of the interviewed establishments expected their revenue to remain stable year-on-year, down by 2 percentage points from October.

Retailers were more conservative about their business performance in November, with 49 percent of the interviewed retailers expecting stable sales year-on-year, up by 4 percentage points from October.

HANDOVER

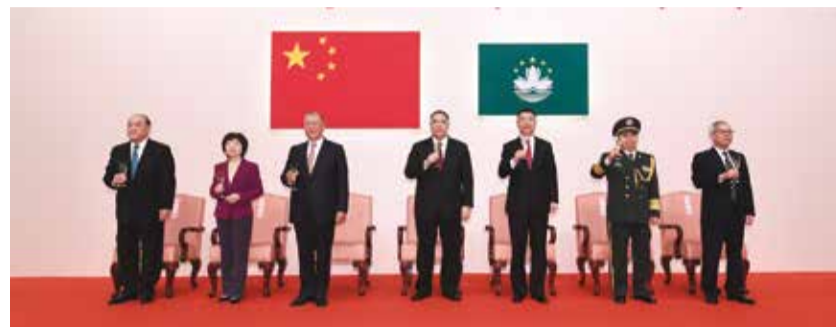
Chui says Macau trusted, valued by President Xi

THE Macau government hosted a reception on Thursday, December 20, to celebrate the 19th anniversary of the establishment of the Macau Special Administrative Region. The reception followed the annual flag-raising ceremony held at Golden Lotus Square.

According to Xinhua, approximately 910 guests attended the reception event, while more than 350 guests attended the flag-raising ceremony.

At the reception, Chief Executive Chui Sai On delivered a speech calling for further Macau participation in the country's national reform strategy and introducing new opening-up policies, under the principle of "serving the country's needs, delivering Macau's strengths". He said that the region was both trusted and valued by the mainland's top official, President Xi Jinping.

Chui said that in the year ahead, the local government will work together with the general public, namely to promote further understanding and implementation of the four aspirations for Macau, and their respective spirit, outlined by the Chinese President. Xi outlined



Chui Sai On (center) and guests toast at the reception hosted by the government

these aspirations in an important speech delivered when he received delegations respectively from Hong Kong and Macau in November.

Chui recalled that president Xi's four aspirations for Macau are: to play a more active role in the nation's reform and opening up process; to diligently integrate its development with the country's overall progress; to make greater contributions to the country's governance system; and to facilitate people-to-people exchanges at an international level.

According to Chui, these four aspirations show that Macau is valued and trusted by the Central Government. In addition, these four aspi-

rations gave Macau a clear direction for its long-term development, he added.

The Chief Executive also used his speech to review Macau's ongoing efforts to align the SAR with the country's overall progress. Specifically he mentioned the signing of agreements to promote Macau's participation in and support of the Belt and Road initiative.

Finally, Chui acknowledged that next year will mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the MSAR, coinciding with a change in administration. The process leading to the new administration will be handled according to the law, he said.

AD



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JD.com's Liu won't be charged after rape investigation

Gerrit De Vynck

JD.COM Inc. Chief Executive Officer Richard Liu won't be charged in connection with a rape investigation in Minneapolis, ending a probe of more than three months, authorities said.

Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman announced the decision Friday. Liu had been arrested Aug. 31 and accused of allegedly raping a 21-year-old female Chinese undergraduate student. Liu, 45, was a participant in a University of Minnesota program for business executives from China at the time of his arrest.

"As we reviewed surveillance video, text messages, police body camera video and witness statements, it became clear that we could not meet our burden of proof and, therefore, we could not bring charges," Freeman said in a statement. "Because we do not want to re-victimize the young woman, we will not be going into detail."

Wil Florin, the woman's attorney, blasted Freeman and his prosecutors for the decision, saying they never met the woman nor reached out to her or her lawyers during the investigation.

"If anyone cares to know why victims of sexual assault are hesitant and fearful to come forward to authorities seeking justice for what has been done to them, look no further than the manner in which this was handled by the Hennepin County Attorney's Office," Florin said in a statement. "On her behalf, we will not permit her dignity to be simply swept under the rug."

Liu has been in China since being released shortly after the arrest. In a blog post, Liu said the announcement by Free-



man's office "proves I broke no law."

"My interactions with this woman, however, have hurt my family greatly, especially my wife," Liu said. "I feel deep regret and remorse and I hope she can accept my sincere apology. I will continue to try in every possible way to repair the impact on my family and to fulfill my responsibility as a husband."

The potential criminal charges have hung over JD.com's stock for the past three months. Liu's outsize control of voting rights closely linked the firm's fate to his own. In China, he is seen as a visionary founder and the driving force behind one of the country's most successful internet companies.

"We are pleased to see this decision," JD.com said in a statement on its website. The company's American depository

receipts gained 5.9 percent to USD21.08 on the news - still significantly below the closing price of \$29.43 on the day before Liu's arrest became public.

In documents and text messages, the female student said she was invited to a party with Liu and other participants of the executive program where wine flowed freely. Her attorney alleged the student had been coerced into drinking more heavily than she wanted. The woman and Liu ended up at her home, where he raped her, the woman alleged. After a call the next morning from a friend of the student, police found the woman and Liu at the student's apartment. Later that day he was arrested.

Liu's lawyer, Jill Brisbois, said the decision by the county attorney "confirms our strong belief from the very beginning that my

client is innocent."

Liu and Brisbois hadn't previously elaborated on what Liu says happened at the dinner in August. On Friday, Brisbois said in an email that all the interactions between Liu and the woman were consensual. Though the woman and Liu both drank wine that night, Brisbois said, Liu wasn't drunk, and the woman didn't appear drunk either.

After Liu's arrest, the woman "made repeated demands for money, and threatened to make her allegations public and to sue Richard if her demands were not met," Brisbois said.

Freeman's decision in the criminal investigation doesn't prevent the woman from filing a civil suit against Liu, where the standard of evidence needed is lower for a judgment. Florin, in a text message, suggested the woman may pursue a civil suit,

saying "a civil jury will determine whether Mr. Liu, JD.com and their representatives should be held accountable."

Freeman, in his statement, confirmed the account of the dinner and the subsequent contact of Liu and the woman by police. He said "there were profound evidentiary problems which would have made it highly unlikely that any criminal charge could be proven beyond a reasonable doubt."

The three-month period it took to make a decision had "nothing to do with Liu's status as a wealthy, foreign businessman," Freeman said.

Formal criminal charges would have made running the company an increasingly untenable task for Liu. Unlike arch-rival Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., which runs a marketplace for third-party merchants, JD earns about 90 percent of its revenue through direct online sales and the CEO regularly travels the world striking agreements with suppliers.

Liu, who has become a household name in his native China and held a keynote panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos this year, was in Minnesota to complete the American residency of a U.S.-China business administration doctorate program at the University of Minneapolis and its Carlson School of Management. Co-led by Tsinghua University, the course takes place primarily in Beijing and is aimed at senior executives; the average age of students is 50.

Since the allegations arose Liu has largely avoided speaking in public, skipping prominent events including the Chinese government-backed World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai where he was set to be a speaker. Like many founder-led companies, JD's fate is closely linked to the executive who must be present for its board to have a quorum. He controls almost 80 percent of its voting rights even though he owns less than 15 percent of the business. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

MGM TO CELEBRATE NEW YEAR'S EVE IN NINE TIME ZONES



MGM is offering its very first round-the-clock "Celebrating Life - Celebrating with the World" New Year's Eve program, which offers a live-stream of countdown celebrations at the Spectacle

of MGM Cotai, as well as an array of festive foods at both MGM properties.

MGM will celebrate global countdowns in nine time zones from 20 cities, welcoming 2019 in true style on Dec. 31. The 22-hour live countdown marathon will start 7 p.m. Macau local time, when New Zealand begins celebrating 2019 in their time zone (GMT+13).

Meanwhile, MGM's culinary team has prepared festive dinners at Grill 58 and Aji.

Grill 58's Lounge will have live music from 9:30 p.m., the gaming operator said in a statement.

GALAXY RECOGNIZED AT WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS

Galaxy Macau has been crowned "World's Leading Casino Resort 2018" at the 25th annual World Travel Awards, held earlier this month in Lisbon, Portugal, the gaming operator announced.

Galaxy Macau took the regional title of "Asia's Leading Casino Resort" in September 2018, qualifying for to the Grand Final and competing for the global title.

Galaxy Macau has won the title of "Asia's Leading Casino Resort" a total of four times and has won the award for "World's Leading Casino Resort" twice.



The World Travel Awards is renowned as the most prominent and comprehensive awards program in the global hospitality industry.

WYNN SPONSORS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ENROLMENTS

Wynn sponsored the enrolment of 36 team members in either the one-year "Diploma in Casino Management" program, or the "Advanced Diploma in Gaming Management" program this year, as organized by the Institute for the Study of Commercial Gaming at the University of Macau.

This marked a record high in the number of participants compared with past years.

Recently, a graduation was held for the students who had completed the 12th "Diploma in Casino Management" program and the 8th "Advanced Diploma in Gaming Manage-

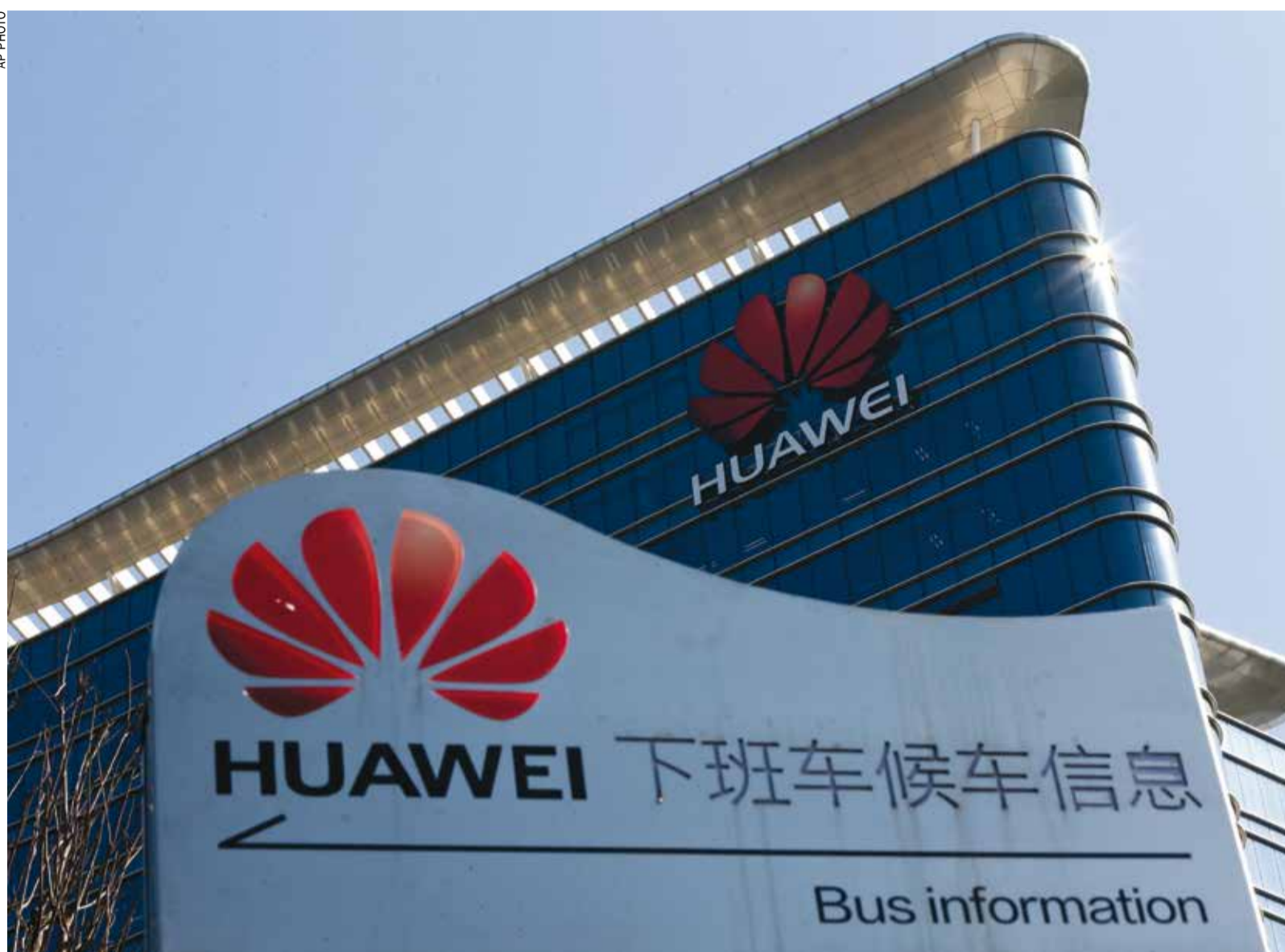


ment" program.

Moreover, nine of the 14 students awarded "Outstanding Graduates" or "Distinction Graduates" were from Wynn.

Since the launch of the diploma programs, a total of 145 Wynn team members have enrolled in the courses.

AP PHOTO



Huawei faces new setbacks in Europe's telecom market

Kelvin Chan

THE U.S. dispute with China over a ban on tech giant Huawei is spilling over to Europe, the company's biggest foreign market, where some countries are also starting to shun its network systems over data security concerns.

Some European governments and telecom companies are following the U.S.'s lead in questioning whether using Huawei for vital infrastructure for mobile networks could leave them exposed to snooping by the Chinese government.

Bans in Europe could significantly increase the financial pressures on Huawei. They would also cost Europe tens of billions of dollars as the region looks to build up "5G" networks, which are meant to support a vast expansion in internet-connected things, from self-driving cars to factory robots and remote surgery.

"Europe is still divided over Huawei, but the trendline is moving in a fairly clear direction" as the U.S. exerts pressure on allies to block it, said Thorsten Benner, director of the Berlin-based Global Public Policy Institute think tank.

Geopolitical tensions over Huawei intensified after its chief financial officer, who is also the

daughter of founder Ren Zhengfei, was arrested Dec. 1 in Canada in connection with U.S. accusations that the company violated restrictions on sales of American technology to Iran.

Huawei has been blocked in the U.S. since 2012, when a House Intelligence Committee report found it was a security risk and recommended that the government and private companies stop buying its network equipment.

Germany's Deutsche Telekom said last week it "takes the global discussion about the security of network elements from Chinese manufacturers very seriously." The company said it uses multiple companies to build its network, including Ericsson, Nokia and Cisco.

"Nevertheless, we are currently reevaluating our procurement strategy," the company said.

The statement is significant because until recently it had been one of Huawei's "biggest cheerleaders" based on its cheap and reliable equipment, said Benner.

It came shortly after Alex Younger, the director of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6, said in a speech that Britain needs "to decide the extent to which we are going to be comfortable with Chinese ownership of these technologies," according to local media reports.

At about the same time, mobile provider British Telecom said it was removing Huawei equipment from key parts of its current 3G and 4G networks as part of an internal policy not to use it for core infrastructure, which will also apply to 5G networks.

The British government-run center that tests the company's equipment and software this summer identified "shortcomings in Huawei's engineering processes that have exposed new risks" in U.K. networks. Huawei said it's working on fixing those issues.

Norway's telecom ministry said it was considering clarifying requirements from network operators, without being more specific.

Belgium's cybersecurity agency is reportedly considering a ban on Huawei. And the Czech Republic's prime minister ordered his government office on Tuesday to stop using Huawei mobile phones, after the national cybersecurity agency warned that products by Huawei and another Chinese telecom company, ZTE, pose "a security threat."

The European Union's head of technology policies, Andrus Ansip, said "we have to be worried" about possible security risks from Huawei when asked about

the company's role in European 5G and driverless car projects.

Huawei, founded in 1987 by a former military engineer, denies accusations it's controlled by China's ruling Communist Party or designs equipment to facilitate eavesdropping. It said it recognizes and shares security concerns around the rollout of new 5G networks and is happy to take part in Deutsche Telekom's review.

The company noted German officials have said publicly there's no reason to exclude Huawei and it has never been involved in any confirmed cybersecurity breaches.

"Cybersecurity is incredibly important to Huawei. It is central to every decision and product we make," said Vincent Pang, the company's president for Western Europe. "We think the answer lies in global cooperation and collaboration to ensure that networks are as secure as possible."

The Europe, Middle East and Africa market is Huawei's second biggest after China, accounting for 27 percent of its nearly \$90 billion revenue last year. Executives said the company has now signed contracts with 25 telecom carriers for commercial or test use of 5G and shipped more than 10,000 5G base stations.

The rollout of 5G networks is expected to take a decade. As technologies advance, the amount of data flowing between machines is set to surge, prompting governments to increasingly view telecom networks as strategic national assets.

Not everyone is endorsing quick action to ban Huawei. The CEO of the French telecom company Orange, Stephane Richard, said last week his company wouldn't use Huawei gear for sensitive parts of its network because of "messages of prudence" from French authorities. But he said that was not for any technical reason, and that the debate on Huawei had become politicized. "We're in the realm of fantasy: 'They're Chinese. They have links to the Chinese army, thus there are spies, thus we can't let them touch our telecom equipment'," he said.

Huawei denies accusations it's controlled by China's Communist Party or designs equipment to facilitate eavesdropping

Excluding Huawei won't be easy, analysts said. "It's not like there's some cheaper alternative," said Paul Triolo, head of geotechnology practice at the Eurasia Group. "Ericsson and Nokia don't produce the whole spectrum" of equipment, referring to the Scandinavian companies that are the only non-Chinese competitors.

Huawei has thrived in major European markets like Germany and Britain because their telecom industries wanted to ensure there were multiple equipment suppliers to avoid relying on one.

"So if you're asking them to remove a major vendor from their markets, it's going to be difficult," Triolo said.

German companies won't be happy if they can't use Huawei because their costs will go up and it will delay rolling out 5G networks, which will initially rely on existing 4G infrastructure for which Huawei is already a major supplier, said Benner.

But German decisions are also likely to influence those by smaller countries that are part of the German industrial manufacturing supply chain, such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

"They'll all wake up if Germany takes a decision and worries about the security of its infrastructure," said Benner. **AP**

China calls US arrogant and selfish after hacking indictment

Yanan Wang, Beijing

CHINA called the U.S. arrogant and selfish on Friday after two Chinese citizens were charged with stealing American trade secrets and other sensitive information on behalf of Beijing's main intelligence agency.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said "the Chinese government has never participated in or supported anyone in stealing trade secrets in any way."

She accused the U.S. of undermining the development of other countries in order to defend its own hegemony.

"The U.S. is a world superpower, and it's quite arrogant and selfish," she said during a regular press briefing.

The U.S. Justice Department announced Thursday the indictment of Chinese nationals Zhu Hua and Zhang Shilong for allegedly carrying out an extensive cyberespionage campaign against government agencies and major corporations.

Besides the alleged U.S. infiltration, Zhu and Hua are also accused of breaching computers linked to companies in at least 11 other countries, including Japan, the United Kingdom and India.

More than 90 percent of Justi-



Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein speaks during a news conference at the Department of Justice in Washington

ce Department economic espionage cases over the past seven years involve China, said Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, and more than two-thirds of trade secrets cases are connected to the country.

"China's state-sponsored actors are the most active perpetrators of economic espionage," FBI Director Chris Wray said in announcing the case. "While we welcome fair competition, we cannot and will not tolerate illegal hacking, stealing or cheating."

Hua, the Foreign Ministry

spokeswoman, said: "They believe that a lie repeated a thousand times will become the truth, but I want to tell them that a lie is still a lie even after it has been repeated ten thousand times."

In a written statement issued earlier Friday, she said the U.S. was "fabricating facts."

The whereabouts of Zhu and Zhang are unclear. China does not have an extradition treaty with the U.S.

"There is some cooperation under the framework of Interpol, but if the Chinese government doesn't agree with the U.S. char-

ges, there is no way to extradite the accused," said Li Fangping, a Beijing-based criminal lawyer.

Li said that if Zhu and Zhang travel to other countries that have signed treaties with the U.S., they could be detained for possible extradition, as was the case with Chinese tech executive Meng Wanzhou's recent arrest in Canada.

The indictment says the pair worked for the Huaying Haitai Science and Technology Development Company in Tianjin and acted in association with the Chinese Ministry of State Securi-

ty's bureau in the northeastern port city.

A public company registry says that Huaying Haitai's work includes the development of computer software, consulting and business related to a variety of technical equipment.

Among the cyberespionage maneuvers detailed in the indictment is the alleged use of a phishing technique which sent emails that appeared to be coming from legitimate email addresses but were in fact from members of "Advanced Persistent Threat 10," the China-based hacking group to which Zhu and Zhang purportedly belong.

I want to tell them that a lie is still a lie even after it has been repeated ten thousand times.

HUA CHUNYING
FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESWOMAN

James Gong, a cybersecurity senior associate at the Herbert Smith Freehills law firm in Beijing, said the mere announcement of charges is likely to affect public perception of China.

"The allegation itself will give rise to some suspicion, at least, among the international public, that these hacking activities are actually supported by the Chinese state," he said. **AP**

Leaders promise tax cuts, help for entrepreneurs

Joe McDonald, Beijing

CHINESE leaders on Friday promised more help to entrepreneurs in 2019 to shore up weakening economic growth as Beijing tries to resolve a tariff war with Washington over technology.

An annual planning meeting led by President Xi Jinping called for reforms to state industry and to reduce financial risks, according to a statement carried by the official Xinhua News Agency.

Beijing will "promote high-quality development of manufacturing," the statement said, suggesting the ruling Communist Party is sticking to plans for state-led industry development. But it gave no indication whether strategies Washington, Europe and other trading partners say violate China's market-opening obligations might be changed.



Xi's government is trying to shore up cooling growth in the world's second-largest economy and avoid politically dangerous job losses without reigniting a rise in debt levels that economists warn are already dangerously high.

"The external environment is complicated and severe, and the economy is facing downward pressure," the statement warned. "It is necessary to enhance the sense of urgency."

Such meetings set Beijing's priorities for the coming year, but companies usually have to wait weeks or months to see detailed regulations.

Friday's statement echoed earlier ruling party promises to support entrepreneurs who generate China's new jobs and wealth. Reform advocates complain Beijing is dragging its feet on promises to rein in the dominance of state industry.

Beijing is due to start talks in January with Washington aimed at resolving a tariff battle over U.S. complaints that China steals or pressures companies to hand over technology. President Donald Trump raised U.S. tariffs on USD250 billion of Chinese goods, adding to pressure on export industries that support millions of jobs at a time of weakening global demand.

Washington also objects to development plans including Made in China 2025, which calls for state-led creation of global champions in robotics, biotech and other fields.

American officials worry those might threaten U.S. industrial leadership. Chinese officials have indicated those programs might be opened to foreign companies, though it is unclear whether that would satisfy Washington.

Friday's announcement

follows a decline in economic growth to a post-global crisis low of 6.5 percent over a year earlier in the latest quarter. Consumer demand is weakening and auto sales have contracted for the past four months.

The slowdown, combined with Beijing's fight with Trump, has fed gloom among companies, consumers and investors. China's stock market is on track to end this year down 25 percent.

The ruling Communist Party's Politburo called Dec. 13 for efforts to stabilize employment, finance, trade and investment and to "boost market sentiment."

Communist leaders promised for the first time in 2013 to give market forces the "decisive role" in allocating resources. But reform advocates complained that until recently, they built up state indus-

try and did little for entrepreneurs who have limited access to loans from government banks and can be buffeted by abrupt policy changes.

Chinese leaders have stepped up promises to help private business as economic growth weakened.

The party needs to create conditions to "let the private economy create vitality," Xi said in a Nov. 1 speech to an audience of entrepreneurs.

The 2019 economic plan promises tax cuts and to "solve the financing difficulties of private enterprises," according to Friday's statement.

This week, Beijing unexpectedly announced a 100 billion yuan (\$15 billion) lending program for entrepreneurs. Financial analysts said that "targeted easing" appears to be aimed at shoring up growth without reigniting a rise in debt. **AP**

JAPAN

Emperor marks last birthday on throne, prays for peace

Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo

JAPAN'S Emperor Akihito, marking his 85th birthday — his last before his upcoming abdication — said he feels relieved that his reign is coming to an end without having seen his country at war and that it is important to keep telling younger people about his nation's wartime history.

"It gives my deep comfort that the Heisei era is coming to an end, free of war in Japan," Akihito, his voice trembling with emotion, said at a news conference at the palace that was recorded this past week and released Yesterday. "It is important not to forget that countless lives were lost in World War II and that the peace and prosperity of postwar Japan was built upon the numerous sacrifices and tireless efforts made by the Japanese people, and to pass on this history accurately to those born after the war."

Akihito's 30-year reign of the Heisei is the only era without war in Japan's modern history. Praying for peace and making amends for a war fought in the name of his father, Hirohito, has become a career mission for Akihito, who succeeded the throne in 1989.

Akihito is set to abdicate on April 30, to be succeeded by his eldest son, Crown Prince Naruhito, on May 1. Sunday's birthday celebration is Akihito's last in his reign.

Tens of thousands of well-wishers who gathered at Tokyo's Imperial Palace to celebrate the occasion cheered and waved



Emperor Akihito (left) and Empress Michiko (right) pose for a photograph at the Imperial Palace

small rising-sun flags as Akihito and his family appeared on the balcony to greet and thank them.

As emperor, Akihito has made unprecedented visits to the Philippines and other Pacific islands conquered by Japan early in World War II and devastated in fierce fighting as the U.S.-led allies took them back. Though Akihito has avoided a direct apology, he has subtly stepped up his expressions of regret in recent years in carefully scripted statements on the war.

Akihito said he won't forget those trips with his wife, Empress Michiko, and thanked those countries for welcoming them despite their bitter memories of the war. "I am grateful to each of those countries for welcoming us with warm hospitality," he said.

At home, Akihito particularly cared about Okinawa's difficult history. The small southern island was the only site of ground battle in Japan. Okinawa was under U.S. occupation until 1972, two decades behind the mainland, and is still burdened with American troops stationed in Japan. Okinawans feel they have been sacrificed for the mainland as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's pro-U.S. government is currently forcing a relocation of disputed Marine Corps air station on Okinawa's eastern coast.

During his father's reign, Akihito himself was almost hit by a Molotov cocktail on a 1975 visit to Okinawa, where tens of thousands of civilians died in intense fighting near the end of World War II. He and Michiko

studied the history and culture of Okinawa and kept visiting.

"Okinawa has experienced a long history of hardships, including what happened there during the war," he said. "We are committed to continue to care for the sacrifices that the people of Okinawa have endured over the years, and that commitment will remain unchanged in the future."

Akihito's pacifist image and his compassion for disaster victims, the handicapped and the minorities have gained public support for him and his family. Experts say Akihito's pacifist views may have come from his childhood wartime experiences.

Akihito was 11 years old when he heard his father's voice announcing Japan's World War II surrender on the radio on

Aug. 15, 1945. During the subsequent U.S. occupation of Japan, he was tutored in English by Elizabeth Vining, a Quaker, an experience that experts say gave Akihito his pacifist and democratic outlook.

In recently released wartime diaries and notes of schoolteacher Koichi Suzuki, who taught Akihito and his classmates during their evacuation outside of Tokyo in the last two years of the war, Akihito's life is removed from his parents amid food shortages and frequent air raid sirens.

On Aug. 13, 1945, Akihito and Suzuki had to run up the hill as eight U.S. warplanes flew above them the moment they jumped into an unfinished bunker, Suzuki wrote. His April 17, 1946 note showed Akihito read a haiku about the people living in barracks in the devastated neighborhood under the falling snow.

Akihito, in his birthday message, fondly recalled receiving many dignitaries visiting Japan after its return to international society with the signing of the 1952 San Francisco peace treaty.

Akihito is the first emperor enthroned under Japan's postwar pacifist constitution as the symbol with no political power, unlike his father, who was revered as a god until the end of the war. As crown prince and emperor, Akihito has tried to bring the secluded palace close to the people, and thanked everyone including his wife Michiko, a commoner, for understanding his views and supporting his work.

"As I come to the end of my journey as emperor, I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart the many people who accepted and continued to support me as the symbol of the state," he said, and reiterated his respect and adherence to the war-renouncing charter and his symbolic role. **AP**

Asia's richest take hit with USD137b in losses in 2018

THE world's fastest growing source of mega-wealth hit a speed bump this year. The 128 people in Asia with enough money to crack the 500-member Bloomberg Billionaires Index lost a combined USD137 billion in 2018, the first time wealth in the region has dropped since the ranking started in 2012.

Global trade tensions and concerns that stock valuations are too frothy hammered some of the area's biggest fortunes. China's tech sector was hit particularly hard, while India and South Korea weren't spared. The declines occurred even as banks and money

managers aggressively stepped up efforts to cater to Asia's richest. Asian equities retreated again on Friday, with benchmarks slipping in Japan, China and Australia.

"Difficult stock market conditions this year and the uncertainty of the trade tensions likely have been a challenge to many businesses," said Philip Wyatt, a Hong Kong-based economist for UBS Group AG, who doesn't see the downdraft continuing through 2019 or significantly reducing the ranks of billionaires. Conditions are actually ripe for the region to create more of the mega rich as new

technologies attract private capital and government support, he said.

For now, though, fear in the market is trampling fortunes. More than two-thirds of the 40 Chinese on the Bloomberg ranking saw their wealth dwindle. Wanda Group's Wang Jianlin, whose property conglomerate is selling assets to cut debt, lost \$10.8 billion, the most of anyone in Asia.

JD.com founder Richard Liu, who was arrested in the U.S. in August for less than 24 hours on suspicion of rape before being released, took the heaviest losses in percentage terms, with his wealth cut almost

in half to \$4.8 billion. Liu won't be charged, authorities in Minneapolis said Friday [more on p9].

India's 23 richest people, meanwhile, saw \$21 billion vanish. Lakshmi Mittal, who controls the world's largest steelmaker, led the way, losing \$5.6 billion, or 29 percent of his net worth, followed by Dilip Shanghvi, the founder of Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, the world's fourth-largest generic drugmaker, whose wealth declined \$4.6 billion.

South Korea's tycoons didn't escape the carnage either. The market roiled lopped \$17.2 billion from the fortunes of the coun-

try's seven richest people. The father and son who control Samsung Electronics, Lee Kun-Hee and son Jay Y Lee, account for more than a third of that decline.

In Hong Kong, titans of real estate took a big hit. Li Ka-shing, who retired as chairman of CK Hutchison and CK Asset in March, lost \$6 billion in 2018, while Lee Shau Kee, the city's second-richest person, ends the year about \$3.3 billion poorer.

There were still plenty of winners to emerge from the wreckage of 2018: Lei Jun, the chairman of Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi Corp., added \$8.7

billion, with a July initial public offering catapulting him into the Top 100 of the Bloomberg index after he started the year outside the ranking. The IPO also turned three of his co-founders into billionaires.

Japan's richest person, Tadashi Yanai, added \$6.3 billion to his fortune as shares of Fast Retailing Co., the world's largest apparel retailer, surged 30 percent. India's Mukesh Ambani added \$4 billion to his fortune and eclipsed Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.'s Jack Ma as Asia's richest person, thanks in part to the performance of Reliance Industries Ltd. **MDT/Bloomberg**

INDONESIA

Tsunami set off by volcano sweeps coast; over 220 dead

Niniek Karmini, Carita Beach

A tsunami believed to be triggered by a volcanic eruption killed more than 220 people in Indonesia during a busy holiday weekend, sweeping away hotels, hundreds of houses and a group of people attending a beach concert.

According to the Disaster Management Agency, more than 840 people were reported injured after the tsunami hit around the Sunda Strait at 9:27 p.m. Saturday. At least 30 others were missing, but the toll could continue to rise because some areas had not yet been reached.

Scientists, including those from Indonesia's Meteorology and Geophysics agency, said yesterday that the tsunami could have been caused by undersea landslides or those occurring above sea level on the Anak Krakatau volcano's steep outside slope following the eruption. The volcano's name translates to "Child of Krakatoa," a volcanic island formed over years after one of the largest eruptions in recorded history occurred at the Krakatoa volcano more than a century ago. The scientists also cited tidal waves caused by the full moon.

Dramatic footage posted on social media showed an Indonesian pop band named "Seventeen" performing under a tent on a popular beach at a concert for employees of a state-owned electricity company. Dozens of people sat listening at tables covered in white cloths while others bobbed to the music near the stage as bright strobe lights flashed and theatrical smoke was released.

A child could also be seen wandering through the crowd. Seconds later, with the drummer pounding just as the next song was about to begin, the stage suddenly heaved forward and buckled under the force of the water, throwing the band and all their equipment into the audience.

The group released a statement saying their bass player, guitarist and road manager were found dead, while two other band mem-



Cars damaged by a tsunami sit in Carita

bers and the wife of one of the performers remained missing.

"The tide rose to the surface and dragged all the people on site," the statement said. "Unfortunately, when the current receded our members are unable to save themselves while some did not find a place to hold on."

Tourists were also affected during the long holiday weekend ahead of Christmas.

"I had to run, as the wave passed the beach and landed 15-20 meters inland," Norwegian Oystein Lund Andersen wrote on Facebook. The self-described photographer and volcano enthusiast said he was taking pictures of the volcano when he suddenly saw a big wave come toward him.

"Next wave entered the hotel area where I was staying and downed cars on the road behind it," he wrote. "Managed to evacuate with my family to higher ground [through] forest paths and villages, where we are taken care of [by] the locals. Were unharmed, thankfully."

The Anak Krakatau volcano lies in the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra islands, linking the Indian Ocean and Java Sea. It erupted about 24 minutes before the tsunami, the geophysics agency said.

The worst-affected area was the Pandeglang region of Java's Banten province, which encompasses

Ujung Kulon National Park and popular beaches, the disaster agency said.

Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said 168 deaths had been confirmed and at least 745 people were injured. Rescue workers were still trying to access other affected areas.

Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo expressed his sympathy and ordered government agencies to respond quickly to the disaster.

"My deep condolences to the victims in Banten and Lampung provinces," he said. "Hopefully, those who are left have patience."

In the city of Bandar Lampung on Sumatra, hundreds of residents took refuge at the governor's office. At the popular resort area of Carita Beach, some survivors appeared lost.

Azki Kurniawan, 16, said he was undergoing vocational training with a group of 30 other students at Patra Comfort Hotel when people suddenly burst into the lobby yelling, "Sea water rising!" He said he was confused because he did not feel an earthquake, but ran to the parking lot to try to reach his motorbike. By the time he got there, it was already flooded.

"Suddenly a 1-meter wave hit me," he said. "I fell down, the water separated me from my bike. I was thrown into the fence of a building about 30 meters from

the beach and held onto the fence as strong as I could, trying to resist the water, which feels like it would drag me back into the sea. I cried in fear. [...] 'This is a tsunami?' I was afraid I would die."

The 305-meter-high Anak Krakatau volcano, located about 200 kilometers southwest of Jakarta, Indonesia's capital, has been erupting since June. In July, authorities widened its no-go areas to 2 kilometers from the crater.

However, Anak Krakatau remains much smaller than Krakatoa when it blew in 1883, killing more than 30,000 people. Krakatoa launched far-reaching tsunamis and created so much ash, day was turned to night in the area and a global temperature drop was recorded. The violent explosions sank most of the island into the volcanic crater under the sea, and the area remained calm un-

til the 1920s, when Anak Krakatau began to rise from the site. It continues to grow each year and erupts periodically.

Gegar Prasetya, co-founder of the Tsunami Research Center Indonesia, said Saturday's tsunami was likely caused by a flank collapse — when a big section of a volcano's slope gives way. He said it's possible for an eruption to trigger a landslide above ground or beneath the ocean, both capable of producing waves.

"Actually, the tsunami was not really big, only 1 meter," said Prasetya, who has closely studied Krakatoa. "The problem is people always tend to build everything close to the shoreline."

Nine hotels and hundreds of homes were heavily damaged. Broken chunks of concrete and splintered sticks of wood littered hard-hit coastal areas, turning beach getaways popular with Jakarta residents into near ghost towns. Vehicles tossed by the waves remained belly up in the rubble or were lodged in the air under collapsed roofs. Debris from thatch-bamboo shacks was strewn along beaches.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago of more than 17,000 islands and home to 260 million people, lies along the "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

In September, more than 2,500 people were killed by a quake and tsunami that hit the city of Palu on the island of Sulawesi, which is just east of Borneo.

Saturday's tsunami rekindled memories for some of the massive magnitude 9.1 earthquake that hit on Dec. 26, 2004. It spawned a giant tsunami off Sumatra island in western Indonesia, killing more than 230,000 people in a dozen countries — the majority in Indonesia.

Roads and infrastructure are poor in many areas of disaster-prone Indonesia, making access difficult in the best of conditions. AP

MACAU: NO ASSISTANCE REQUEST RECORDED

THE TOURISM Crisis Management Office (GGCT) is paying close attention to the tsunami that occurred in Banten province, Indonesia, and is maintaining close contact with the tourism industry for follow up. According to a statement from the Office, from the information gathered through

the Macau travel industry, no request for assistance from Macau residents has been received. Until the present moment, the GGCT has also not received any request for information or assistance. The GGCT says that if necessary, Macau residents can call (853) 2833 3000 for information.



Josh Boak, Washington

Now in its 10th year, America's economic expansion still looks sturdy. Yet the partial shutdown of the government that began Saturday has added another threat to a growing list of risks.

The stock market's persistent fall, growing chaos in the Trump administration, higher interest rates, a U.S.-China trade war and a global slowdown have combined to elevate the perils for the economy.

Gregory Daco, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics, said he thinks the underlying fundamentals for growth remain strong and that the expansion will continue. But he cautioned that the falling stock market reflects multiple hazards that can feed on themselves.

"What really matters is how people perceive these headwinds — and right now markets and investors perceive them as leading us into a recessionary environment," Daco said.

Many economic barometers still look encouraging. Unemployment is near a half-century low. Inflation is tame. Pay growth has picked up. Consumers boosted their spending this holiday season. Indeed, the latest figures indicate that the economy has been fundamentally healthy during the final month of 2018.

Still, financial markets were rattled Thursday by President Donald Trump's threat to shut down the government unless his border wall is funded as part of a measure to finance the government — a threat that became reality on Saturday. As tensions with the incoming Democratic House majority have reached a fever pitch, Trump warned Friday that he foresees a "very long" shutdown.

The expanding picture of a dysfunctional Trump administration grew further with the surprise resignation of Defense Secretary James Mattis in protest of Trump's abrupt decision to pull U.S. troops out of Syria — a move that drew expressions of alarm from many Republicans as well as Democrats.

How markets and government officials respond to such risks could determine whether the second-longest U.S. expansion on record remains on course or succumbs eventually to a recession:

A closer look at the risks:

ADMINISTRATION CHAOS

It has been a tumultuous few days even for a White House that has been defined by the president's daily dramas.

Trump faces an investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 elections that has led to indictments and criminal convictions of some of his closest confidants. He is coping with a wave of top staff defections, having lost both his chief of staff and defense secretary. He is in the process of installing a new

Partial gov't shutdown compounds risks for US economy



attorney general.

Then there is the partial government shutdown that Trump himself has pushed.

The shutdown is unlikely to hurt economic growth very much, even if it last awhile, because 75 percent of the government is still being funded. S&P Global Ratings estimates that each week of the shutdown would shave a relative minuscule USD1.2 billion off the nation's gross domestic product.

Still, the problem is that the Trump administration appears disinclined to cooperate with the incoming House Democratic majority. So the federal support through deficit spending that boosted the economy this year will likely wane, Lewis Alexander, U.S. chief economist at Nomura, said in his 2019 outlook.

That, in part, is why the economy is widely expected to weaken from its roughly 3 percent growth this year, which would be the strongest performance since 2005.

TUMBLING STOCKS

Stock investors have been trampled since October, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average sinking nearly 15 percent. The plunge followed a propulsive winning streak for the stock market that began in 2009. But investors are internalizing all the latest risks, including Trump's trade war with China and higher borrowing rates, and how much they might depress corporate

profits and the economy.

"Markets people are forward-looking, so they're taking into account the latest information," said Jim O'Sullivan, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics.

Markets can often fall persistently without sending the economy into a tailspin. But O'Sullivan warned of a possible feedback loop in which tumbling stock prices would erode consumer and business confidence, which, in turn, could send stocks sinking further. At that point, the economy would likely worsen, the job market would weaken and many ordinary households would suffer.

TRADE WAR

For economists, this may pose the gravest threat to the economy. Trump has imposed tariffs against a huge swath of goods from China, which has retaliated with its own tariffs on U.S. products. These import taxes tend to dampen economic activity and diminish growth.

"The trade war with China is now the biggest impediment to U.S. economic growth," Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said in his forecast for the first half of 2019.

In part because of the taxes Trump imposed on Chinese imports, manufacturing growth appears to be slowing, with factory owners facing higher costs for raw materials. The president

has held off on further escalating tariffs to see if an agreement — or at least a lasting truce — can be reached with China by March.

Any damage from trade wars tends to worsen the longer the disputes continue. So even a tentative resolution in the first three months of 2019 could remove one threat to economic growth.

■ **Many economic barometers still look encouraging. Unemployment is near a half-century low. Inflation is tame. Pay growth has picked up**

FED RATE HIKES

The Federal Reserve has raised a key short-term rate four times this year and envisions two more increases in 2019. Stocks sold off Wednesday after Chairman Jerome Powell laid out the rationale. Powell's explanation,

in large part, was that the Fed could gradually raise borrowing costs and limit potential U.S. economic growth because of the job market's strength.

The Fed generally raises rates to keep growth in check and prevent annual inflation from rising much above 2 percent. But inflation has been running consistently below that target.

If the central bank were to miscalculate and raise rates too high or too fast, it could trigger the very downturn that Fed officials have been trying to avoid. This has become a nagging fear for investors.

GLOBAL SLOWDOWN

The world economy is showing clear signs of a downshift, with many U.S. trading partners, especially in Europe and Asia, weakening or expected to expand at a slower speed. Their deflating growth can, in turn, weigh down the U.S. economy.

Several other global risks abound. There is Britain's turbulent exit from the European Union. Italy appears close to recession and is struggling to manage its debt. China, the world's second-largest economy after the U.S., is trying to manage a slowdown in growth that is being complicated by its trade war with Trump.

"Next year is likely to be challenging for both investors and policymakers," Alexander, the Nomura economist, concluded in his outlook. **AP**

RUSSIA

Nine bodies found in burning potash mine



A Russian rescue team waits for an elevator to go down into the potash mine

RESCUE teams yesterday found the bodies of nine construction workers who had been trapped inside a burning potash mine in Russia's Ural Mountains.

A fire erupted Saturday at the mine operated by the fertilizer company Uralkali in the Perm region, where two teams of workers were doing maintenance work. Uralkali said the mine had shut down its operations for the maintenance.

Officials said 17 construction workers were inside the mine in Solikamsk, which is located 1,200 kilometers east of Moscow, when the fire broke out and eight of them were quickly evacuated. The blaze cut off access to nine other workers who were in a different section.

Russian news agencies yesterday quoted the rescue operations headquarters as saying that all nine bodies had been found after an hours-long operation and they were now being recovered. The firefighters were still putting out the blaze.

The Perm region declared Monday a day of mourning for the workers.

Russian President Vladimir Putin urged regional authorities and investigators to conduct a thorough probe into what happened inside the mine.

Poor safety standards are often to blame for recurring accidents in Russian mines. The last major Russian mining accident took place in August 2017, when 17 people died after a diamond mine in Siberia flooded. **AP**

UK

Police free two drone suspects in Gatwick travel chaos

BBRITISH police yesterday released a man and a woman who had been arrested in connection with the drone incursions at London's Gatwick Airport that had disrupted holiday plans for tens of thousands of travelers.

Sussex police said yesterday the two had cooperated with police and were no longer considered suspects in the case. They had been arrested late Friday. Both live in Crawley, a town that is a five-minute drive from Gatwick, Britain's second-busiest airport.

Flights to and from Gatwick were operating normally Sunday, airport authorities said, after days of disruptions began Wednesday night when drones were seen over the airfield.

Authorities fear that a drone could damage a plane in flight or be sucked into a plane's engine, causing a deadly crash.

Police had searched a house in Crawley for clues after the arrests



but Sussex Chief Detective Jason Tingley said he's satisfied the two are no longer suspects.

"We ask for the public's continued support by reporting anything suspicious, contacting us with any information in relation to the drone incidents at Gatwick," he said.

Police say Gatwick Airport has offered a 50,000 pound (USD63,000) reward through Crimestoppers for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the fugitive drone operators.

British military personnel and their equipment are being deployed at Gatwick, which handles 43 million passengers a year, to buttress police in an effort to deter drone use and try to keep the airport operating if another drone is spotted.

Officials have not disclosed the technology being used to keep the airfield free of drones.

Police say the motive of the drone operators is not yet known but they do not believe it is "terror-related." **AP**

AD

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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

BAKERS UPSET WITH MISSING TIPS ON HERSHEY'S KISSES CANDY

AP PHOTO



Bakers are complaining that something is amiss with Hershey's Kisses.

The chocolate candy's trademark tips have been mysteriously missing from batches around the country. Bakers have taken to social media to complain that the lopped-off tops are ruining the look of their holiday treats. Without their points, the chocolate candies are left with flat tops.

The Hershey Company responded to the disgruntled bakers after hearing of a Facebook post by the Wedding Cookie Table Community group that detailed the problem.

Company spokesman Jeff Beckman tells the Lebanon Daily News they're reviewing the issue. Beckman says Hershey has donated baking items to the group as a thank you for pointing out the issue.

The candy company has yet to explain what's causing the missing tips.

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

20 - 23 Dec



RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET:
WRECK-IT RALPH 2

ROOM 1

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

Director: Rich Moore, Phil Johnson

Starring: John C. Reilly, Sarah Silverman, Gal Gadot

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 122min

SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE

ROOM 2

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

Director: Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey

Starring: Shameik Moore, Jake Johnson, Hailee Steinfeld

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 117min



BUMBLEBEE

ROOM 2

7:30 pm

Director: Travis Knight

Starring: Hailee Steinfeld, Dylan O'Brien, Megyn Price

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 113min

POKEMON THE MOVIE: THE POWER OF US

ROOM 3

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

this day in history



1962 BAY OF PIGS PRISONERS FLY TO FREEDOM

The last of more than 1,000 men taken prisoner at the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba has returned to the United States in time for Christmas.

The government agreed to the payment of a ransom of \$53 million in food and medical supplies, donated by companies all over the USA, as a condition for their release.

The airlift of the prisoners began yesterday, when the first 107 men boarded a DC6 airliner supplied by Pan American World Airways at a military airbase near Havana.

After just four flights, however, the operation was suspended for the night, to the consternation of the thousands of anxious relatives of the prisoners, keeping vigil in Florida for their return.

Flights resumed early this morning, and by the end of the day all 1,113 prisoners had been safely returned.

A rapturous crowd of 10,000 Cuban exiles greeted each new arrival at the Dinner Key Auditorium, on the outskirts of Miami.

Police and army cordons could barely restrain the mass of cheering, flag-waving people as they surged towards the buses bringing the prisoners back.

The release was the result of almost a year of talks between the Cuban government and a New York lawyer, James B Donovan, acting on behalf of the relatives of the prisoners.

The negotiations had the covert backing of the US government.

Mr Donovan persuaded the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, to accept supplies of medicine and food instead of cash in exchange for the prisoners.

Mr Castro has demanded that a fifth of it should be delivered before Christmas Day.

The first down payment was delivered yesterday by the 6,000-ton American freighter, the African Pilot.

Full delivery of the entire list of 10,000 items, all donated by companies and organisations across the United States, is expected to take months.

The prisoners were taken after the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba on 17 April 1961, funded in part by the US government.

Fidel Castro's militia crushed the invasion within a few days and captured 1,200 of the 1,500 invaders.

They were sentenced to up to 30 years in prison at their trial in Havana earlier this year.

Passing sentence, the court added that a ransom of \$62m would secure their release.

Cuban exiles in the United States arranged the return of 60 wounded prisoners soon afterwards for \$2.5m (about £900,000).

The remainder have been in captivity ever since.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

It was later revealed that the ransom deal almost fell apart at the last minute, after Fidel Castro demanded an additional \$2.9m in cash just as the prisoners were preparing to leave.

The money was raised in a frantic day of fundraising on 24 December by the president's brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, and General Lucius D Clay, an advisor to the Cuban Families Committee of prisoners' relatives.

The largest donation was \$1m, given by a donor who wished to remain anonymous but was not, the government said, part of the Kennedy family. The prisoners' release came at the end of an all-time low in relations between the United States and Cuba.

Diplomatic relations, broken off in 1960 after Fidel Castro nationalised US businesses in Cuba, have never been restored, and the US continues to enforce trade sanctions against Fidel Castro's regime.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba was forced to introduce limited market reforms.

But refugees continue to make the perilous 90-mile journey to join the growing community of Cuban exiles in Florida.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Your hard work is coming to a head today, and you may find that you need to just step back and let the results speak for themselves.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Art holds special appeal today, so seek out a museum you love or find something totally new and enthralling.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 A boundary emerges that you hadn't seen - or even considered - before. Things may get a little weird as you adjust, but the good news is that this should clarify an important relationship.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Now is the time for you to follow up on that one old email or task that you've been putting off for too long.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Your desires may stretch a little further than reality will allow today, but that just means you've got to find ways to stick closer to the truth.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Go out somewhere new and strange and wonderful tonight - your energy demands a change of pace!

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 It's just way too easy for you to freak out over a seeming abandonment today - but if you can let it happen you should soon find that it's just a test of freedom.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Sometimes you are rigid, and then there are days like today. You can tell that if you're not flexible, things are unlikely to go your way.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 A new responsibility comes your way - are you ready for it? You may have to deal with a little backlash, but you are sure to take to it with relish once the adjustment period is over.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 A pervasive sense of fun suffuses the day - no matter what else is happening. Somehow, your good energy lifts your spirits and you find yourself smiling, at least on the inside.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 It's time for a change - but not one of your famous radical shifts. This is a good day for something small and progressive, just enough so that people take notice but not so much that they get nervous.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Your communication skills are legendary today, thanks to an infusion of great energy that guides your hand or tongue as you form words.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION. Rows include CHINA (Beijing, Harbin, etc.) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, etc.).

CROSSWORDS

CROSSWORDS ACROSS: 1- boom; 6- Heroin, slangily; 10- Political cartoonist Thomas; 14- menthe; 15- Poi source; 16- Toast topper; 17- San Antonio landmark; 18- Cornerstone abbr.; 19- Farrow and Hamm; 20- -Rooter; 21- Abominable; 23- Blemished; 25- Commendation; 26- Rage; 27- Water vapor; 29- Like the streets of San Francisco?; 32- Bunk; 33- Hosp. workers; 36- 1997 Peter Fonda role; 37- Judean king; 38- Middle Eastern bread; 39- Golfer Ernie; 40- Troy beauty; 41- Combat; 42- Highways, e.g.; 43- Whopper; 44- Unit of time; 47- Ear ornament; 51- Shout of joy; 54- Let's go!; 55- Shrinking Asian sea; 56- Historic times; 57- Ornamental coronet; 58- Adopted son of Claudius; 59- All there; 60- Emo anxiety; 61- Shangri-la; 62- Go downhill; 63- Curved moldings; DOWN: 1- Surgery souvenirs; 2- Lowermost deck; 3- Swell; 4- Not able to move; 5- Business VIP; 6- Spirited horse; 7- Dramatic troupe; 8- Commedia dell'arte; 9- Good fortune; 10- Polite refusal; 11- Excuse; 12- Closes; 13- We're Off the Wizard; 21- Actress Ruby; 22- Cafeteria carrier; 24- Attempt, a score in rugby; 27- Sensitive spots; 28- Roger Rabbit, e.g.; 29- Color; 30- Ailing; 31- Bandleader Brown; 32- Grippped; 33- Tractor-trailer; 34- degree; 35- Parked oneself; 37- Acephalous; 38- Shirl; 40- Fine-tune; 41- Evergreen tree; 42- Deodorant type; 43- Well, -di-dahl; 44- Classic Alan Ladd western; 45- Dog- (like some used books); 46- Irish county; 47- Alleviated; 48- Icon; 49- Like Thor; 50- No-see-ums; 52- Russian range; 53- Author Austen; 57- Chinese "way"; Thursday's solution grid.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' sections with property listings in various Macau locations like Coloane, Taipa, and Central Macau.

TENNIS

Governing bodies promise to address corruption

TENNIS' governing bodies have promised to deliver a "timely implementation" of recommendations to tackle corruption in the sport.

An independent review of corruption in tennis was prompted after the BBC and BuzzFeed News published reports in January 2016 alleging that governing bodies ignored widespread evidence of match-fixing involving more than a dozen players.

Following the release of an interim report in April, an independent panel has published its final recommendations that include limiting the supply of official live scoring data, eliminating all sponsorship deals with gambling companies and expanding the staffing and reach of the Tennis Integrity Unit — the anti-

corruption group established in 2008.

In a joint statement, the ITF, ATP, WTA and the four Grand Slam tournaments — the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and U.S. Open — said they would work to implement the recommendations, adding that "delivering a world-class anti-corruption regime for professional tennis remains a paramount priority."

The panel said tennis' governing bodies were "well-positioned to address the integrity challenges" the sport faces, having previously said there was no evidence of "institutional corruption or cover-up."

Members of a new, independent supervisory board to provide oversight and guidance of the TIU will be appointed early next year. **AP**

DOPING

Russia prevents WADA from finding data in Moscow lab

WORLD Anti-Doping Agency inspectors are leaving Moscow empty-handed after Russian authorities prevented them from accessing key doping data that the country's authorities had agreed to hand over.

WADA reinstated the suspended Russian Anti-Doping Agency in September on the condition Russian authorities hand over lab data, which could help confirm a number of violations uncovered during an investigation that revealed a state-sponsored doping program designed to win medals at the Sochi Olympics and other major events.

But Friday, WADA said its delegation "was unable to complete its mission" because Russia unexpectedly demanded its equipment be "certified under Russian law." WADA says the demand wasn't raised at earlier talks. The deadline to turn over the data is Dec. 31.

WADA says team leader Toni Pascual will now prepare a report on the failed mission. The WADA compliance review committee that recommended RUSADA's reinstatement will meet Jan. 14-15, where it could recommend the ban on RUSADA be re-imposed. WADA kept open the



The building of Russia's national drug-testing laboratory in Moscow

option of returning to the lab before year's end if Russia resolves the issue.

Russian Sports Minister Pavel Kolobkov told local media the WADA team would return, but there was no word on the date and no mention of the issue raised by WADA.

WADA leaders portrayed Russia's willingness to turn over the data as a key reason for agreeing to reinstate RUSADA despite its failure to comply with key requirements on the "roadmap" WADA had set out.

"We've tried to come to terms with the Russians on how this was to be done, and this is the first time since

discussing it that they've actually said 'yes,'" WADA director general Olivier Niggli in September, in an impassioned defense of the decision. "We hope they'll fulfill that promise."

It was a widely criticized decision, and the reaction to Friday's news was predictable.

"Surprise, surprise — anyone shocked by this?" said Travis Tygart, the CEO of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency. "Let's hope WADA leadership has finally learned the lesson and immediately declares them non-compliant. Anything else is simply another shiv in the back of clean athletes." **AP**

AD

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FOOTBALL | EPL

Man United stunning, Man City stunned

Tony Jimenez

MANCHESTER United was stunning and Manchester City was stunned.

United responded to a change in coach by producing a rampant display to thrash lowly Cardiff 5-1 hours after English Premier League leader City slumped to a first defeat at home, to struggling Crystal Palace 3-2 on Saturday.

Former striker Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, back at United as manager in midweek after Jose Mourinho was sacked, appeared to give the team a new lease of life as it turned on the style in the Welsh capital.

The last time United scored five goals was in Alex Ferguson's last match in charge in May 2013, a 5-5 draw with West Bromwich Albion.

Meanwhile, City's loss brought to an end its 100 percent home record in the league, and left leader Liverpool four points clear at the top after 18 rounds.

In another upset, former England striker Jamie Vardy scored to guide Leicester to a 1-0 victory at Stamford Bridge and inflict on fourth-placed Chelsea its first loss at home, also.

Arsenal drew level on points with Chelsea after easing past Burnley 3-1.

Southampton won for the second successive match under new coach Ralph Hasenhuttl when it defeated Huddersfield 3-1, while Watford ended West Ham's run of four consecutive victories by winning at London Stadium 2-0.

Bournemouth beat Brighton 2-0, and Newcastle's home game with Fulham ended 0-0.

Manchester United's often ponderous style was one of the reasons Mourinho was fired. Solskjaer promised more attacking intent upon his appointment and the former Norway forward was as good as his word as his new team romped to victory at Cardiff.

Former captain Wayne Rooney



Manchester City's goalkeeper Ederson Moraes reacts during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Crystal Palace

summed up the drastic change of mood at United when he said, "The players obviously looked a bit restricted [before]. The players have ability and today we've seen that. A lot of things were happening around the team and around the manager, which isn't good."

"Ole's given them that freedom," he told BT Sport. "It's a fantastic day for the club."

Jesse Lingard struck two goals, one a penalty, while Marcus Rashford, Ander Herrera, and Anthony Martial were also on target for the visitors.

Victor Camarasa replied with a penalty for Cardiff.

United was still in sixth place but Chelsea's defeat means the Old Trafford club was only eight points off the Champions League qualifying positions.

Palace forward Andros Town-

send scored one of the goals of the season as Palace won at Manchester City for the first time in 28 years.

Ilkay Gundogan headed the home team in front before Jeffrey Schlupp equalized.

Townsend then turned the match on its head in spectacular fashion when the ball dropped invitingly toward the former England international 30 meters out, and he met it with a ferocious volley that flew into the roof of the net.

Luka Milivojevic made it 3-1 for Palace with a 51st-minute penalty.

Kevin De Bruyne pulled one back late on but it proved too little, too late for City.

"Palace had three shots on target and scored three goals," City coach Pep Guardiola said. "Football is like this."

Roy Hodgson's mood was rather different after his Palace side climbed to 14th place.

"You don't produce that sort of performance by waving a magic wand or having a five-minute team talk, there's a lot of work that goes into that structure and we were excellent," Hodgson said.

"We are playing against a team with enormous skill levels and their focus, their ability to sustain attacks, is an example to us all."

Leicester won at Chelsea for the first time in 18 years thanks to Vardy's sixth goal of the season.

A run of two victories in 12 games led to media speculation that Claude Puel's job as Leicester manager was in jeopardy.

Vardy said on Friday that Puel's patient playing style did

not suit him but his goal showed the value of having a top striker in the team. The Stamford Bridge crowd was left stunned in the 51st minute when Ricardo Pereira made a strong run down the right before finding James Maddison and he set up Vardy.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored twice and Alex Iwobi also struck in Arsenal's win over Burnley.

Troy Deeney's penalty and a goal from Gerard Deulofeu steered Watford past West Ham.

Nathan Redmond, Danny Ings, and Michael Obafemi netted in Southampton's win at Huddersfield.

Wales international David Brooks scored twice in Bournemouth's win against Brighton, for which captain Lewis Dunk was sent off in the 73rd minute for two yellow cards. **AP**

FOOTBALL | LA LIGA

Barca's 3-point lead defended before winter break

LIONEL Messi ensured Barcelona reached the Spanish league's winter break atop the standings, playing a part in both goals of a 2-0 win at home over Celta Vigo on Saturday.

Messi scored Barcelona's second goal to take his league-leading tally to 15 in 17 rounds, in-

cluding six goals in his last three matches, as Barcelona stayed three points ahead of Atletico Madrid.

"Our goal was to finish the year as leaders, and with the same advantage we had going into the round," Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde said.

Messi helped to set up

Ousmane Dembele's opener when he received a pass from Jordi Alba and took a shot that was saved by goalkeeper Ruben Blanco. The rebound fell to Dembele to drive between the legs of a defender to take the 10th-minute lead.

Messi made it 2-0 in the 45th after Jordi Alba

found him arriving to the center of Celta's box completely unmarked to fire in a left-footed shot.

"On the first goal I looked for [Messi] like always, and on the second goal Luis [Suarez] and Dembele made runs to pull away defenders and left Leo alone," Alba said about his role in

both goals. "And Leo never misses."

Third-placed Sevilla trails Barcelona by six points before visiting Leganes on Sunday.

After yesterday's games the Spanish league stops play for two weeks.

With its game from this round postponed so it could play the Club

World Cup, Real Madrid successfully defended its world title by beating Al Ain 4-1 in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

Barcelona's win left fourth-placed Madrid eight points back with a game in hand that it will recover on Jan. 3 when it cuts its vacation short to visit Villarreal. **AP**

opinion

Views on China

Noah Smith, Bloomberg

How China risks trashing its amazing growth story

In a recent column, I observed that by many measures, China is the world's largest economy. This means a number of benefits will now flow — and indeed are already flowing — to China that used to go to the U.S. and Europe. Chief among these is agglomeration, of the tendency of businesses to seek out the biggest markets and the densest concentrations of economic activity. Being the center of the global economy really does have value.

But nothing is certain, especially in realms as complex as economics and politics. China's vast size is indisputable, but it might easily make mistakes that would prevent the country from leveraging that size for maximum economic benefit. Chief among these self-inflicted wounds would be closing the country to foreign investment, extending state control of the economy and adopting an adversarial relationship with neighboring nations. Ominously, the country seems to be doing all of these now, to one extent or another.

The magic of agglomeration works best when investment can flow across international borders. For many countries, there's a temptation to wall themselves off from outside capital, and try to have domestic businesses do everything — after all, even if foreign companies produce the things they sell in the domestic market locally, much of the profits they make on those sales still exits the country afterward. So why shouldn't China just block foreign companies from operating, and get homegrown businesses to do everything instead?

Because if China does that, then American, European, Japanese and other multinational companies will set up their supply chains elsewhere. Instead of capturing the valuable parts of the supply chain — something China doesn't do now, but would almost certainly will in the future — the country would be forced to replicate the entire chain domestically. [...] Unfortunately, there are some signs that China has been creating an increasingly hostile climate for overseas businesses in recent years. China mandates that foreign companies operating in certain strategic industries form joint ventures with local Chinese companies. The multinationals' technology is then rapidly stolen or copied; economists Kun Jiang, Wolfgang Keller, Larry Qiu and William Ridley have found empirical evidence that this is the rule rather than the exception. It's then easy for the Chinese government, or entrepreneurs connected to the government, to form a competing company using the appropriated technology, muscling the foreign firm out of the market. Add to this a thicket of rules, relationships and regulatory discrimination designed to favor domestic companies, and it's little wonder that multinationals are growing glum about their prospects in China.

The drop in foreign direct investment this year might presage a new, troubling trend: The second big danger is that China will re-nationalize much of its economy. Privately owned companies in China are more innovative, have better financial performance and are generally more productive. But the government still controls the economy's commanding heights — banks, telecoms, energy and auto manufacturing. Ownership of the country's most advanced technology companies, including Huawei and ZTE, is murky, but many believe the state controls these as well.

In recent years, the state's role has been increasing. And, more troubling, China's total factor productivity growth has been slowing: A few economists even believe Chinese TFP growth is now falling. Rising productivity is the ultimate driver of rising living standards, so this is disconcerting news. Increasing state control may be part of the reason for the slowdown. [...]

The final big mistake China could make would be to antagonize its neighbors. The country's aggressive actions in the South China Sea, the East China Sea and the Indian border have not endeared it to its neighbors. Even if they don't spill into war, tensions with neighbors could limit China's trade relations with these countries, disrupting local supply chains, slowing the exchange of technology and investment, and delaying East Asia's rise as the center of the global economy.

In recent decades, wise policies of reform and opening up have turned China into the world's largest economy. If those wise policies were to continue, there would be nothing to stop China from taking its natural place as the center of the global economy.

[Abridged]

THE CUBAN ASSEMBLY APPROVES DRAFT OF NEW CONSTITUTION

Cuba's National Assembly on Saturday approved an update of the country's constitution, the final step before a national referendum expected to approve the new charter in February.

The new constitution contains more continuity than change, although it recognizes the de-facto modernization of Cuban society over the last decade. The constitution maintains Cuba as a centrally planned economy ruled by a single Communist Party, but recognizes private property for the first time. It also creates the role of prime minister alongside the current president, as well as provincial governors.

Legalizing private property is a formal recognition of significant change in Cuban society since former President Raul Castro permitted home and auto sales, creating a booming real-estate market, and allowed more than half a million Cubans have permits to work as entrepreneurs.

The new constitution also recognizes worker-owned cooperatives for the first time as a legal form of production in every sector of the economy, while maintaining Cuba's largely inefficient and stagnant state-run industries as the central means of production.

UK

Former Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown has died at 77

BRITAIN'S Liberal Democrat party has announced the death of former leader Paddy Ashdown after a short illness. He was 77.

The popular, articulate Ashdown was for decades a prominent figure in Britain and continental Europe. He was known for his intellect, outspoken nature and wit.

Ashdown received a knighthood and was made a member of the House of Lords, but was the sort of person almost everyone called Paddy.

He was a former Royal Marine commando who helped build the Liberal Democrats into a force to be dealt with in Parliament, raising the party's profile considerably by helping it amass a total of 46 seats in 1997, its best result in more than seven decades.

He ran the party with military-style discipline, yet was always warm on a one-to-one basis. He made time for just about everyone who sought him out.

Current party leader Vince Cable said Saturday that it was a "hugely sad day" and that everyone across the political spectrum "had immense affection and respect for Paddy."



AP PHOTO

"He was famous for his politics, but his talents extended well beyond that arena," said Cable. "He was an accomplished author, and had spent many years serving the country before he got near the House of Commons."

Ashdown's influence also went beyond Britain. He served as high representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002 and had been a forceful advocate for international intervention during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

Longtime opponent John Major, a former prime minister from the Conservative Party, said Ashdown was "a man of duty, passion and devotion to the country" he loved.

"In Government, Paddy Ashdown was my opponent. In life, he was a much-valued friend," said Major. "His loss will be felt deeply by many — and not least by myself."

Ashdown's political fortunes were damaged by news stories about a five-month affair with his secretary — one tabloid memorably dubbed him "Paddy Pantsdown" — but his marriage and career survived.

Ashdown married his wife Jane in 1961. He lived in Hong Kong between 1967 and 1970, where he undertook a full-time interpreter's course in Chinese.

Ashdown is survived by his wife, his children and grandchildren. MDT/AP

Thailand to honor beautiful, violent Siamese fighting fish

THE Siamese fighting fish, a popular beauty in home aquariums and a popular bet for gamblers for their violent territoriality, is set to become Thailand's national aquatic animal.

The often brightly-hued fish is also called a betta, but government minister Suwapan Tanyuwardhana noted the species is clearly identifiable as Thai by its name: Siam is the old name for Thailand.

Scientific and historical accounts also call it the Siamese fighting fish and its native waters are Southeast Asia, including Bangkok's Chao Phraya River.

The National Identity Committee, which promotes Thai cultural pride, decided Thursday to forward its recommendation to the Cabinet for final approval, said Suwapan, who is attached to the Prime Minister's Office and vice president of the committee.

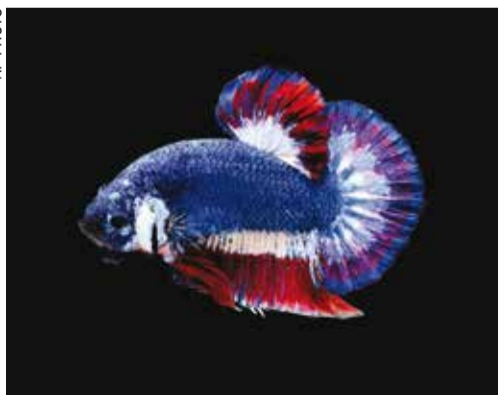
Being designated Thailand's national aquatic animal could boost conservation and breeding efforts for the fish, as well as bring commercial benefits.

Private sector breeding efforts of the fish are

flourishing, and promoting the fish could push its popularity higher and bring it higher prices, he said.

The fish is especially popular in small office and home aquariums because of its bright colors and relative ease of care. But they are territorial, especially the males, who will attack other males in the same tank.

Their aggressive behavior makes them appealing to gamblers, even though most gambling is illegal in Thailand. AP



AP PHOTO

Station	Air quality
Roadside	30-50 Good
High Density Residential Area	30-50 Good
Ambient	30-50 Good

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

SYRIA Turkey is massing troops near a town in northern Syria held by a U.S.-backed and Kurdish-led force, a war monitor and Turkish media said yesterday.



AP PHOTO

FRANCE Authorities yesterday defended aggressive police actions to contain violence at yellow vest protests after a policeman was seen briefly brandishing a gun at a surging crowd in Paris.

BRITAIN Police yesterday freed two people who been arrested in connection with the drone incursions at London's Gatwick Airport, saying they were no longer suspects. The move left the public with no answers about who had disrupted the holiday travel plans of tens of thousands of people. More on p15



AP PHOTO

NICARAGUA In barely a week's time, President Daniel Ortega has cemented the authoritarian reputation of his government by shuttering the offices some of the few remaining resonant voices of dissent and expelling the international monitors documenting his government's alleged crimes.

BRAZIL's state police say they have found a suitcase full of cash and emeralds hidden in the home of a faith healer accused of sexual abuse by hundreds of women.

X'MAS TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holidays. The Times will be back on the stands on Thursday, December 27. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends a Merry Christmas.