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The company's plan includes proposals to build a theme park, a riding school and a 'central park'

P7



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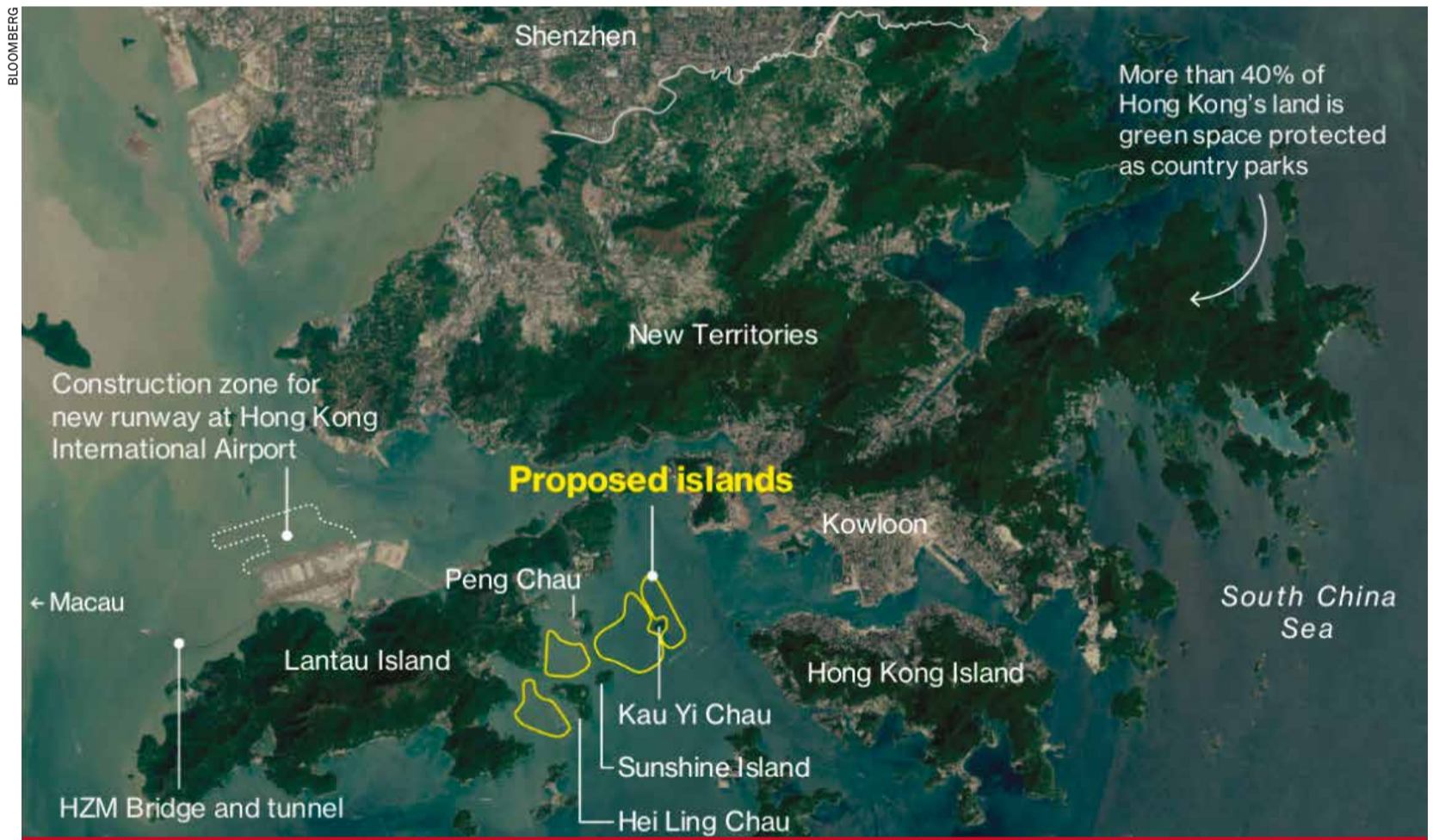
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LAND RECLAMATION CONTINUES IN MACAU

Plan to build 4 islands stirs controversy in HK

P2-3



WORLD BRIEFS

JAPAN An earthquake shook southwestern Japan yesterday, but there were no immediate reports of damage and a tsunami watch was lifted within an hour.



THAILAND Authorities suspended ferry services and began evacuations yesterday ahead of a powerful tropical storm that is expected to pound the Southeast Asian nation's famed southern beach resorts during a peak tourism season.
More on p13

BANGLADESH While Sheikh Hasina is set to begin her third consecutive term as Bangladesh's prime minister following a landslide election victory, critics say having such an overwhelming majority in Parliament could create space for her to become even more authoritarian.

More on backpage

CHINA

Spacecraft lands on 'dark' side of moon in world first

P11

A SIMULATED LANDING PROCESS OF THE CHANG'E-4 LUNAR PROBE

Hong Kong has a USD64 billion plan to build

Natalie Lung

HONG Kong, the world's least affordable property market, has a plan to tackle its housing crisis: build four artificial islands equal to about a fifth the size of Manhattan that could house more than a million people.

The government-backed plan to create a gleaming property and commercial hub has been tried before—Palm Jumeirah, the palm-shaped archipelago in Dubai filled with luxury developments; Forest City, a housing project for 700,000 people in Malaysia; and Jurong Island in Singapore, which houses chemical and energy facilities.

Yet building artificial islands in Hong Kong has a number of vexing complications, starting with the price tag. It'll cost at least an eye-popping USD500 billion in Hong Kong dollars (\$63.8 billion), the South China Morning Post reported, and the tab could double. There are also technical and political challenges—a November poll showed 49 percent of the public opposes the plan—as well as massive environmental costs, though the government says it has chosen a less ecologically sensitive area for development.

Hong Kong's plan to create islands in open waters shows the length governments will go to add housing in expensive, space-starved cities. The rising threat from climate change is also giving governments reason to create "smart and low-carbon" cities, which Hong Kong's government is planning to achieve for the new



Clockwise from top: Palm Jumeirah, Forest City and Jurong Island

islands with renewable energy, green transport and a higher greening ratio.

Yet with unpredictable weather events, as highlighted in the National Climate Assessment report in November, there's a debate over whether potential energy efficiencies are enough to compensate for the massive environmental disruption caused.

"The entire environment would

be disrupted," said Patrick Yeung, ocean conservation manager for the Hong Kong chapter of the World Wildlife Fund, citing potential damage to the marine food chain when microorganisms and other fishes are uprooted as a result of reclamation. "Is there really no other option than to reclaim land? That should be our first consideration."

Hong Kong Chief Executive Car-

rie Lam pitched the plan—called the Lantau Tomorrow Vision—as part of her annual policy address last year and it's core to her efforts to increase the city's land supply. The plan for 1,700 hectare (4,201 acres) islands in the city's central waters, between Lantau Island and Hong Kong Island, would be slated to add up to 400,000 housing units for an estimated 1.1 million people starting in 2032.

The plan is running into some early public opposition. Nearly 6,000 people took to the streets in protest three days after Lam announced the proposal, and it also became one of the key themes of an annual New Year's Day protest.

■ Hong Kong's plan to create islands in open waters shows the length governments will go to add housing in expensive, space-starved cities

The concept has clear benefits for China's government, which controls Hong Kong under the "one country, two systems" doctrine. Lam envisions Lantau, the city's biggest outlying island, becoming the third core business district and an "aerotropolis," given its proximity to the international airport and the recently opened Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge serving as a key link to the Greater Bay Area. That's part of a plan by Chinese President Xi Jinping to transform the region into a trillion-dollar economy rivaling Silicon Valley.

"It may be going in the right direction for China, but that's not

MACAU

The state of land reclamation

Daniel Beitler

MACAU has been a world leader in land reclamation since at least the early 20th century, presiding over a threefold increase in its total land area since 1912. But the last decade has seen an ambitious new leap, with work already underway on six new land zones and studies abound for an 85-square-kilometer sea

jurisdiction expanded by the Central Government in 2015.

The six new land reclamation zones, officially known as A, B, C, D, E1 and E2, will reclaim a total area of five square kilometers from the Pearl River, bringing the total dry land jurisdiction to 35.5 square kilometers.

Though the exact uses for the new land are still in question, it is understood that the plots will

serve to house new government and court buildings, residential areas, as well as education, culture, sports and leisure facilities.

Construction in Macau's corner of the Pearl River estuary will proceed in other ways too. A fourth Macau-Taipa link is planned to connect Zone A off the northeastern coast of the Macau peninsula and Zone E1 in Taipa's Pac On area,

near the international airport and the Taipa Ferry Terminal.

A tunnel project on the east side of the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge has been suggested as a fifth Macau-Taipa link, connecting Zone B close to the NAPE district with what will become Zone D in northern Taipa.

As was the case with the construction of southern China's megabrid-

ge connecting the cities of Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Macau, the two new Macau-Taipa links have environmental and ecological activists concerned about disturbances to local ecosystems.

Several possibilities for the exploitation of Macau's newly-granted maritime area have been raised by lawmakers and public servants in recent years, but others in the government say the options are severely limited by the unfavorable geography of the area.

Speaking to Macao Magazine in September last year, the director of the

Policy Research and Regional Development Bureau suggested that only a fraction of the 85 square kilometers was suitable for development.

Mi Jian, who was appointed to the post only recently, said that "after careful investigation into Macau's fairways, we found that only 12 square kilometers out of Macau's entire waters is available for development, and after deducting Zones A–E, there is only eight square kilometers left, and they are really scattered. Large-scale reclamation is impossible."

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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 Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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islands for new homes

going in the right direction for Hong Kong," Steve Tsang, director of SOAS China Institute at the University of London, said of the plan. "Simply getting Hong Kong into an integral part of a wider PRC development project diminishes Hong Kong in terms of its special character and special contributions to China, and does not enhance it."

As the public continues to be disenchanted by out-of-reach home prices, the supply of public housing has lagged behind targets and has driven up the average waiting time for housing to 5.5 years, the most since 2000.

A steady inflow of Mainland migrants is increasing the demand, and the islands are the "most efficient and fastest way" to accommodate them, said Sonny Lo, a politics professor at the University of Hong Kong. Nearly one-fifth of public housing applications in the first quarter of 2018 came from new arrivals from the Mainland, and this remains a contentious topic in local politics.

The government argues that one possible solution mentioned for development, so-called brownfield sites—barren farmland, open-air parking lots and cargo terminals in the northern part of Hong Kong that can be converted for residential use—are insufficient to relieve the land shortage in the long term.

Financial Secretary Paul Chan suggested that the government may issue bonds to finance the project, amid concerns that the city could run small fiscal deficits in the coming years.

Tommy Wu, a Hong Kong-based senior economist at Oxford Economics Ltd., said the government could set up a project-specific company to manage more profitable projects upon the islands' completion to attract funding from banks, insurers or pension funds.

Chan Ka-keung, former secretary for financial services and the treasury, said the project is fiscally defensible because the

government could eventually recover costs as the created land would have significant commercial value.

"We have to think about what kind of economy we will have in the 2030s and 2040s. It should be a technology economy, a green economy, a digital economy with smart infrastructure. Where in Hong Kong can you build that kind of place?" Chan said.

The entire environment would be disrupted. Is there really no other option than to reclaim land?

PATRICK YEUNG
ENVIRONMENTALIST

A group of 38 economics professors led by HKU's Richard Wong Yue-chim echoed that view in a joint statement, suggesting that the government could reap profits from selling land and society could benefit from hidden economic value from infrastructure and community facilities. Many of the professors, including Wong who is on the board of major developers, have served as consultants to the government and pro-Beijing think tanks.

Yet critics like Albert Lai, founding vice-chairman of the pro-democracy Civic Party, say the project would sacrifice Hong Kong's more urgent needs to this expensive and environmentally questionable undertaking.

"The government doesn't care about the people's livelihood and well-being at all," he said. "If they cared, resources would be spent on projects that could bring more immediate improvement to livelihood." **Bloomberg**

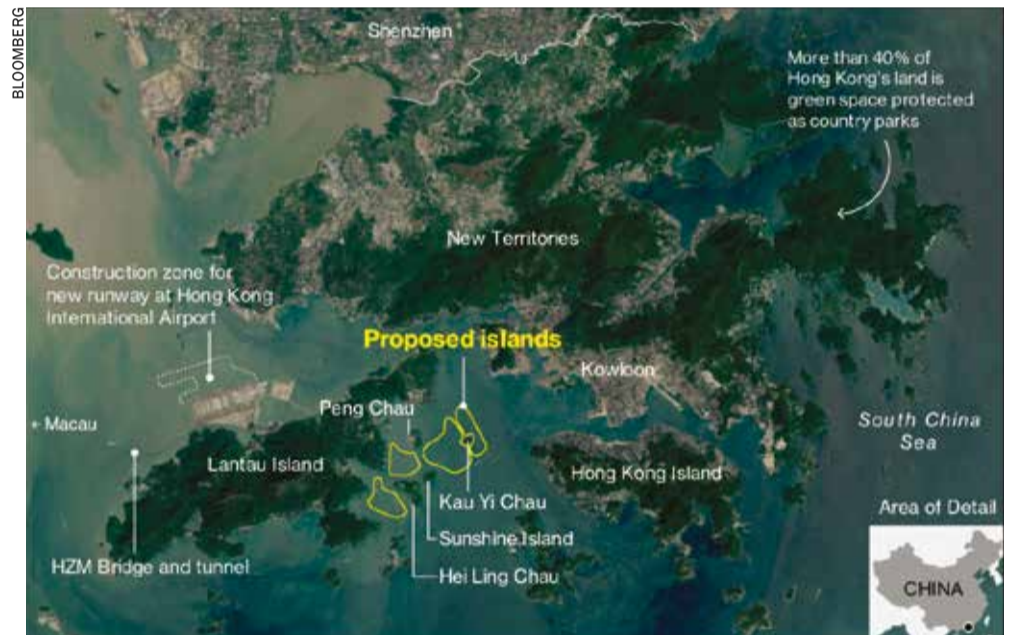
Even so, the bureau director said that they are investigating the possible development of a "fourth space" (in addition to Macau, Taipa and Coloane) to be located in the maritime area south of Coloane, which they believe will free up space in other parts of the SAR for more optimized urban development.

Another proposal would see an external circular path constructed along the shoreline of the Macau peninsula with the aim of alleviating traffic congestion.

According to Mi, the proposed path would start from the Border Gate and head down Avenida Norte do Hipódromo, Avenida da Ponte da Amizade, through to the Macau Science Centre at the southern edge, then A-Ma Temple, the Inner Harbor area, Fai Chi Kei, and then back to the Border Gate.



One of the proposed sites for an artificial island seen from Peng Chau island in Hong Kong



AD

Company Statement

Galaxy Entertainment Group Investigates Wrongful Use of Galaxy Name by Vietnam Hotel

It has recently come to the attention of Galaxy Entertainment Group ("GEG") that one or more third parties have posted advertisements on social media purporting to market the upcoming opening of a resort in Cam Ranh Bay, Nha Trang, Vietnam with invitations to register as a guest for the grand opening. The advertisements appear under a banner entitled "银河娱乐城一开业邀请函" and include photographs that appear to be those of the Duyen Ha Resort Cam Ranh whilst referring to the resort as "Nha Trang Galaxy's" and "越南芽庄银河度假村" in Chinese as well as bearing a mark that is extremely similar to that of GEG.

GEG wishes to clarify that it does not operate any hotel or resort in Vietnam nor does GEG have any association with any of the existing hotels or resorts in Vietnam. GEG considers these advertisements to constitute a serious infringement of Galaxy's intellectual property rights and is investigating this matter. We intend to take appropriate legal action in respect of the unauthorized use of the Galaxy brand, trade name "银河娱乐" and marks by these third parties. In the meantime, GEG wishes to alert our valued customers of these misleading advertisements which wrongfully purport to associate the resort in Cam Ranh Bay with GEG. GEG therefore wishes to advise its customers not to be misled by such advertisements and are welcomed to refer these to us for appropriate action.

Galaxy Entertainment Group
January 4, 2019





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Sulu Sou proposes amendments to social, economic housing bill

Lynzy Valles

LAWMAKER Sulu Sou is calling on Chief Executive (CE) Chui Sai On to allow the Legislative Assembly (AL) to debate on the housing bill amendments, stressing their rights to make proposals on bills and any modifications.

Yesterday, the New Macau Association submitted a proposal pertaining to the social housing act and economic housing act amendment – containing four proposals – to the government.

Sou proposed that the age limit for both social and economic housing to remain at 18; that the prohibition of “full-time students” to apply for social housing be lifted; and that at least half of any family group applying for economic housing be permanent residents of the SAR.

“The AL should participate in the policy-making. Therefore, I intend to propose a series of amendments to the bill to let the assembly decide what the policy



Sulu Sou (center)

should be,” said Sou. “Regarding other amendment proposals, due to the complexity of drafting an amendment proposal, we will continue researching, and in the future, we will try to propose other amendments,” he added.

As to the reasons behind the proposal, Sou recalled that the association has been advocating that the Assembly be “more proactive in executing the AL’s rights,” and that it should not

“eat whatever the government is feeding.”

“We should have the right to speak. I hope that the AL can participate in the decision-making procedure of the government’s bills, and I hope that the AL can have an influence on the final decision,” Sou added.

In a meeting at the AL last year, Sou recalled that Chui had pledged that when bills are being considered during the

committee stage, the government would be open to opinions in a bid to enhance the bill and to respect the legislators – a pledge also made by the Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário.

“We should have the right to speak. I hope that the AL can participate in the decision-making procedure.”

SULU SOU

Sou lamented that this is still not in effect, adding that such procedure is considered “normal” in other developed countries and regions.

“I hope that in the future,

[lawmakers making proposals] can become normal, but not news. The CE said in last year’s policy address that he agrees that Macau’s private sector housing price is very high, and he recognizes that young people hope to have their own houses,” he explained.

“More importantly, he proposed that he is open to hearing lawmakers’ opinions regarding the social housing law and the affordable housing law, in particular regarding the age requirement,” Sou added.

The association then hoped that Chui could approve its four proposals as soon as possible for it to be delivered to AL.

“The normal procedure should vote for lawmakers’ proposal first, and after the lawmakers’ proposals are passed, the government bill will not need to be voted. I have not talked with the CE’s office or the CE regarding the proposal,” Sou noted.

This year, the government will supply 4,000 affordable housing units, as previously announced by the Housing Bureau director Arnaldo Ernesto dos Santos.

Approximately 25 percent of these 4,000 housing units will consist of one-room apartments, 33 percent of two-room apartments, and the remaining 42 percent of three-room apartments.

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Residents can provide proof of life at Praia do Manduco Centre

Beneficiaries currently receiving old-age or disability pension from the Social Security Fund (FSS) are required to provide proof of life in January each year. The FSS yesterday set up a service counter for handling proof of life at the Praia do Manduco Centre for the Elderly. Its service hours are Monday through to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Beneficiaries of the old-age pension and disability pension need to bring their valid MSAR Resident ID Cards with them to provide proof of life at a service location. Apart from the newly added "centre, residents of various districts can also go to Macau Holy House of Mercy Albergue, Areia Preta Service Centre of the Macau SAR, Central and Southern District (Patane) Social Service Centre, Northwest District (Ilha Verde) Social Service Centre, Northern District (Tamagnini Barbosa) Social Service Centre, Outlying Office or Seac Pai Van Office of the Housing Bureau for providing proof of life.

DSI expands options for online appointment

Starting from yesterday, the Identification Services Bureau (DSI) is expanding its options for online appointment and online ticketing through the "Acesso Comum aos serviços públicos da RAEM" mobile application and website (<https://booking.gov.mo>) provided by the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau. In addition to DSI's website, self-service kiosk, hotline and service counter, citizens can now obtain numbered tags in advance through the mobile application and website for going through various formalities related to identification at DSI counters located at China Plaza in Avenida de Praia Grande and at the Government Services Centre in Areia Preta.

GAMING

Macau Legend completes land purchase near Angkor Wat

MACAU-BASED casino operator Macau Legend Development Ltd will purchase 1,200 hectares of land in Cambodia's Siem Reap Province from Howing Enterprises Co. Ltd, for the development of an integrated resort.

The land will be acquired for slightly over USD90 million - a sum that was deposited with Howing Enterprises following a memorandum of understanding signed by the two parties in June 2014.

Siem Reap is a resort town in northwestern Cambodia and the gateway to the popular tourist destination of Angkor Wat.

In a filing to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, the company said that the Siem Reap-based casino would allow it to "take part in and benefit from the tourism industry of Cambodia, which is important for the group's long-term develop-



The company's Legend Palace Hotel in Macau

ment as well as the broadening of its revenue base."

Integrated resorts usually entail a mix of hospitality, entertainment, casino and other activities. But earlier this year, a Cambodian government official was reported to have said that gambling was "not allowed" in Siem Reap.

"The area is forbidden by our government for casino

operations. We welcome investment, but not of the casino kind," the official said when asked about the Macau Legend planned acquisition, according to the Phnom Penh Post.

Macau Legend operates the Babylon and Legend Palace casinos in the Macau special administrative region, as well as Savan Legend Resorts in Laos. In

addition to its intention to develop an integrated resort in Cambodia, the company said earlier this year that it wants to invest as much as half a billion U.S. dollars across several further projects in Laos. It is also investing in the construction of a casino resort in the Cape Verde archipelago.

The move comes as the Cambodian government seeks to make the Southeast Asian country more enticing for international investors. Cambodia is already home to more than 60 licensed casinos.

Macau junket operator Amax International Holdings recently announced it was partnering with Cheung Shing Global Travel Entertainment Ltd to develop a casino in Sihanoukville Province, where Alvin Chau's Suncity Group is also looking to build an integrated resort.

AD



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Academic Year 2019/2020

Central Registration for Children Entering Kindergarten for the First Time

Aims

To optimise schools' enrolment mechanism, allowing schools to know the demand for school places as early as possible; to simplify the registration process for parents enrolling their children in infant education for the first time, enabling parents to choose the school for their children as early as possible.

Eligibility

Macao residents aged 3 by 31st December, 2019, who will enrol in infant education in Macao for the first time.

Enrolment information	Starting from 1 st January onwards, parents can consult the enrolment information on the DSEJ website or school website.
Central Registration	Parents register on the DSEJ website or at the DSEJ counters between 4 th and 20 th January.
Schools release the interview date and time	Between 20 th and 23 rd February
School admission interviews	Between 1 st and 31 st March
Printing out the "Registration slip"	Macao residents print out "Registration slip" at the self-service kiosks between 1 st and 10 th April.
Release of the admission list and submission of the "Registration slip"	Schools release the admission list Between 3 rd and 4 th April
	Parents of admitted students submit the "Registration slip" to the school selected for their children to attend. Between 6 th and 10 th April (On school working days)
Release of the admission list of waitlisted students and submission of the "Registration slip"	Starting from 11 th April onwards, schools release the admission list of waitlisted students.
	Parents of waitlisted students submit the "Registration slip" to the preferred school or conduct process for transferring their children to another school. Between 11 th and 30 th April
Enrolment at other schools	If children have not been admitted to any school until 11 th April, i.e. after schools release the admission list of waitlisted students, or parents want to enrol their child in other schools, parents can visit the DSEJ website to check the status of K1 places available at different schools, and go to the schools that still accept enrolment for enquiries and registration.

Gentle Reminder:

- To enrol in Macao schools, non-Macao Residents must possess a stay or residence permit for over 90 days issued by the authorised entity of the Macao SAR. Parents must process the registration at any of the DSEJ counters. "Registration slip" can be printed out from the DSEJ website/ DSEJ counters.
- Schools set no limit to the number of registrants and interviews. There is also no priority for early registration in the central registration system. Therefore, parents do not need to rush to be the first to register.
- The DSEJ will provide "Service of consultation and arrangement of school places" to parents who are in need.

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Jockey Club presents MOP4.5b investment plan to the AL

Julie Zhu

THE Macau Jockey Club has made an investment plan, supported by a maximum MOP4.5 billion in funding, for its development in the next 20 years or more, the Legislative Assembly (AL) Follow-up Committee on Land and Public Concession Affairs announced yesterday.

Government representatives, including Paulo Martins Chan, director of the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ), and representatives of MJC met yesterday with the AL committee regarding the follow-up of the exclusive concession of horse races.

Earlier in 2018, the government renewed MJC's exclusive concession for a period of 24 years and six months.

According to Martins Chan, the government signed the contract with MJC on December 31. The government will publish a dispatch regarding the contract's details next week.

The company's plan includes proposals to build a theme park, a riding school and a 'central park'

As Lei Chen I reported, MJC will renovate its current facilities, including the race track, the stable, and the main building. Some of these renovation plans have already been completed.

In addition to the renovation works, MJC's plan includes proposals to make new investments,



for instance, building a theme park, a riding school, a "central park" located in the core area surrounded by the horsing race track, as well as an apartment hotel.

In total, MJC claimed it will spend somewhere between MOP3.5 billion and MOP4.5 billion in total to cover all these projects.

The Light Rail Transit is expected to take passengers to MJC and, as a result, to the central park, which will be available for all members of the public.

According to Lei, MJC plans to build an apartment hotel with more than 10 storeys.

All these promised projects are expected to be completed between the years 2024 and 2026.

Regarding whether building hotels based on MJC's exclusive concession means a change to the utilization of MJC land, Lei explained that the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau

(DSSOPT) representatives stated that, including the hotel project, other projects concerning land issues will have to undergo the Urban Planning Committee's assessment and approval.

At the current stage, the DSSOPT is unaware whether the hotel project will involve land utilization change. Despite the new plans, MJC is currently indebted to the government to the tune of MOP110 million, according to Martins Chan.

Previously, when the company's concession was renewed, it owed the government MOP150 million.

The DICJ director said that MJC has been paying back its debt.

Previously, between the years of 2002 and 2018, MJC was granted a tax waiver. Martins Chan had also made it clear that the government does not have a reason to waive taxes for the company.

NO NEWS ON GAMING CONCESSIONS

THE CONCESSION of MGM and SJM will expire in March 2020. Paulo Martins Chan said that no news can be published about the concessions of these two companies. On the sidelines of yesterday's meeting, Martins Chan declared that he "has nothing to

tell" when asked if any of the two companies had already approached the government for the concession renewal. He further explained that DICJ's opinions regarding the six gaming concessions have already been delivered to the Secretary of Economy and Finance.

138 consumer cases recorded before New Year holiday

The Macao Consumer Council registered a total of 138 cases (83 complaints) between December 20 and January 1, according to a statement released by the council. Approximately 60 percent of the cases are complaints. According to the statement, the council has already provided relevant assistance in response to the situations complained about and the demands of the consumers. Among the 83 complaints, 44 were made by local residents and 39 were made by tourists. Five out of the 83 were about taxi services, while six regarded restaurant prices and food quality.

Man sets five trash bins and three bathrooms on fire

A 33-year-old Hong Kong resident has been arrested for a series of arsons at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge's Macau port, the Judiciary Police reported yesterday. The suspect is responsible for arson on three bathrooms and five trash cans at the venue. He is suspected of setting these eight locations on fire within one hour around noon, on Tuesday. The suspect claimed he had depression and had been feeling physically unwell, and has been undergoing medical treatment. Moreover, he said he took medication before he entered Macau.

Driver accuses passenger of assault after overcharge failure

A taxi driver aged around 30 and a 48-year-old passenger have been transferred to the prosecution authority because of an overcharging case. The case took place on the night of December 31. The taxi driver is suspected of overcharging an extra MOP20 for three mainland passengers, citing public holiday rate increase. The three passengers refused. The passenger sitting in the front seat is accused of prodding the driver during an argument. The driver admitted to the overcharging, but the passenger denied the prodding.

CRIME

Two arrested for pick-pocketing in casino restaurants

TWO mainland residents have been arrested for pick-pocketing inside restaurants located in casinos, the Judiciary Police reported yesterday. The two male suspects are named Mo (aged 52) and Xie (aged 53).

The suspects were behind six theft cases reported to the police be-

tween December 20 and January 1. The two are now suspected of pick-pocketing in four restaurants, all located inside Cotai casinos.

According to the PJ, the pair acted together during lunch and dinner in these restaurants.

Once they found a target who left their belong-

ings beside them, one of the suspects would pretend to be a customer of the restaurant and sit next to their target. When the target stopped paying attention to their belongings, one suspect would pick the target's pockets, while the second one would act as a whistleblower.

After successfully committing the crime, the pair would immediately leave the restaurant.

In total, the victims reported losses of MOP490,000.

On Tuesday morning, the PJ arrested the two suspects in the ZAPE area, having seized a total of HKD40,000 from

them.

The PJ believes that the stolen properties have already been taken to mainland China.

During the investigation, the PJ found out that the suspect named Xie was also involved in a similar theft case reported back in January 2012. In that case, the victim reported a total loss of HKD100,000.

The two mainlanders have been charged with aggravated theft, and have been transferred to the prosecution authority.

Young Researcher Award ceremony on January 31

Organizers of the 2018 Young Researcher Award will hold the award ceremony on January 31, after gathering a total of 27 papers that were analyzed by two university professors. The annual award aims to incentivize young students, teachers, graduates and creatives to research and further study on the city's strategic sectors of economy and diversification, heritage and identity, applied sciences and the history of Macau. Supported by the Macau Foundation, this award consists of a diploma and a monetary prize of MOP25,000. According to a statement issued by the International Institute of Macau, the contest also aims to stimulate the participation of youth in a bid to diversify social intervention.

IC adds fourth busking point

The Cultural Affairs Bureau has added a new busking point at Calçada da Igreja de São Lázaro starting January 1, in addition to the existing three busking points. This additional point will be available for buskers to perform in the afternoon on weekends and mandatory holidays, the bureau announced in a statement. The Busking Programme previously had three busking points, namely at Anim'Arte Nam Van, the Taipa Houses and Mount Fortress Garden. Buskers are advised to register at the registration counter near the entrance of the School of Music of the Macao Conservatory before they are assigned the busking place by staff on-site. The IC is also currently accepting applications and renewal for the Busker Cards.

Macau airport reaches 8.2m passengers, breaking record

THE Macau International Airport (MIA) achieved a new record for passenger traffic in 2018, registering 8.26 million arriving and departing passengers, which is 15 percent more than 2017. According to data released yesterday, the airport handled over 65,000 aircraft movements, representing an increase of 12 percent.

"It is the highest passenger traffic MIA has accomplished, over 12 times the local population," stated a press release issued by MIA.

In 2019, the airport management pledged to continue expanding in terms of passenger numbers and facilities. "In the aspect of market development, we will fully develop long-haul routes, aiming to change the current passenger market structure, thus attracting more international and local travelers flying to and from MIA," the press release reads.

In terms of facilities, at the end of 2018, MIA has



commenced the design and construction works of the south side of the existing passenger terminal to increase the capacity of the terminal building.

Reviewing the past year, MIA highlighted the addition of 10 new international routes, including Sanya, Qingdao, Xian and Kunming (China); Phuket and Krabi (Thailand); Tuguegarao and Cebu (Philippines); Kota Kinabalu (Malaysia) and Taegu (South Korea).

There are currently 27 airlines operating at MIA, connecting Macau to 51 destinations. Among them, the passenger traffic from routes of mainland China, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia account for 37 percent and 41 percent of the total passenger volume of the airport.

Six new airlines are flying to Macau, namely Small Planet Airlines, Royal Air Charter Service, Cambodia Airways, KC International Airlines, JSC Royal Flight

Airlines and Zhejiang Loong Airlines. A charter flight service to Russia has been introduced.

In 2018, the Taiwan market grew by 1 percent while Southeast Asia market and mainland China market increased by 9 percent and 34 percent respectively. There was a growth of 11 percent in passengers taking low-cost airlines and an increase of 18 percent in passengers taking traditional airlines.

AD



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Apple drops iPhone bombshell on already reeling stock market

Michael Liedtke, San Francisco

APPLE acknowledged that demand for iPhones is waning, confirming investor fears that the company's most profitable product has lost some of its luster.

The reckoning came in a letter from Apple CEO Tim Cook to the company's shareholders released after the stock market closed Wednesday.

Cook said Apple's revenue for the October-December quarter — including the crucial holiday shopping season — will fall well below the company's earlier projections and those of analysts, whose estimates sway the stock market.

Apple now expects revenue of USD84 billion for the period. Analysts polled by FactSet had expected Apple's revenue to be about 9 percent higher — \$91.3 billion. The official results are scheduled to be released Jan. 29.

Cook traced most of the revenue drop to China, where the economy has been slowing and Apple has faced tougher competition from home-team smartphone makers such as Huawei and Xiaomi. President Donald Trump has also raised new tensions between the U.S. and China by imposing tariffs on more than \$200 billion in goods, although so far the iPhone hasn't been affected directly.

China's "economy began to slow there for the second half," Cook said during an interview with CNBC on Wednesday afternoon. "The trade tensions between the United States and China put additional pressure on their economy."

Cook also acknowledged that consumers in other markets aren't buying as many of the latest iPhones, released last



fall, as Apple had anticipated — a factor that could stem from a starting price of \$1,000 for Apple's top-of-the-line iPhones.

Apple's stock plunged 7 percent to \$146.40 in Wednesday's extended trading. The shares had already fallen 32 percent from their peak in early October when investors still had high hopes for the new iPhone models. Apple's troubles may have ripple effects on other technology companies, given investors have been bailing on the industry in recent months. The tech-driven Nasdaq composite index now stands 18 percent down from its record closing high reached in August.

Now, Apple must try to find a way to win back Wall Street's confidence and reverse a steep decline that has erased \$350 billion in shareholder wealth in just three months.

"This is Apple's darkest day during the Cook era," We-

dbush Securities analyst Daniel Ives said. "No one expected China to just fall off a cliff like this."

While President Donald Trump's trade war with China isn't helping Apple and other U.S. technology companies, Ives believes Apple miscalculated by continuing to roll out high-priced phones in China, creating an opening for rivals with less costly alternatives that still worked well.

The price gap is one reason Huawei surpassed Apple in smartphone sales from April through September last year to seize the No. 2 spot behind industry leader Samsung, according to the research firm International Data Corp.

"The question now is will Apple change its strategy or stick to its hubris," Ives said.

To help boost iPhone sales, Cook said Apple will expand its financing plans and build upon its recent efforts to make it easier to trade in older mo-

dels at its stores.

But outsiders will find it harder to see how that's working out. In November, Apple unexpectedly announced that it would no longer disclose how many iPhones it ships each quarter, ending a long-running practice. Wall Street immediately interpreted the move as an attempt to mask a slow but steady downturn in sales.

Apple said at the time that it wanted to reduce investor focus on its iPhone division and instead highlight other promising areas of its business, including its services division that sells subscriptions for music streaming, collects app-related commissions and repairs malfunctioning devices.

But the company now expects its annual revenue to fall 5 percent from the previous year's level. That reversal of fortune could reinforce fears of a global economic slowdown. **AP**

China P2P lending crackdown may see 70pct of firms close

THE number of Chinese peer-to-peer lenders may drop by 70 percent this year, a research firm that tracks the industry says, as the nation intensifies a crackdown on riskier forms of financing.

As few as 300 companies will remain by the end of the year, according to an estimate from Shanghai-based Yingcan Group. The number of operators dropped by more than 50 percent to 1,021 during 2018, it said, adding that there's been no new entrants into the market since August.

Chinese leaders are dramatically shrinking a market that spawned the nation's biggest Ponzi scheme, protests in major cities, and life-altering losses for thousands of savers. Authorities are planning to wind down small- and medium-sized P2P lending platforms nationwide, people with knowledge of the matter had earlier said.

Yidai is the latest to exit the business. It has about 32,000 lenders with an outstanding principal balance of 4 billion yuan (\$581 million), and expects to repay them within five years, Yidai said in statements in recent days.

Yidai, which received investment from SB China Capital (SBCVC) in 2014, said it was affected by panic spreading among individual lenders that shrank transaction values and triggered defaults. Some senior executives aren't allowed to leave the country, it said in the statement. Yidai didn't immediately reply to calls and emails seeking comments.

P2P platforms comprise one of the riskiest and least regulated slices of the shadow banking system in China. The lack of oversight has allowed for world-beating growth, with outstanding P2P loans ballooning from almost nothing in 2012 to 1.22 trillion yuan in December 2017. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

SANDS CHINA HALTS USE OF PLASTIC STRAWS



Sands China Ltd. has discontinued its use of plastic straws at all its properties, in an effort to reduce the consumption of single-use plastics.

The company's ban on its use of plastic straws went into effect

on Tuesday and will eliminate the use of 2.2 million plastic straws each year, as cited in a statement by the gaming operator.

"This ban on plastic straws, along with other plastic-reduc-

tion measures, will have a significant impact on our sustainability efforts, resulting in a greener Macau," said Mark McWhinnie, senior vice president of resort operations and development for Sands China Ltd.

Those other measures include a plan to progressively replace hotel rooms' single-use bathroom amenities with refillable dispensers. Implementation is scheduled to begin early this year.

Sands China has also redesigned the complimentary bottles of water supplied to rooms and suites, resulting in 3 million fewer bottles of water provided per year.

Additionally, the company is installing filtered water dispensers in public areas of its properties on a trial basis.

MELCO INSTALLS LARGE SOLAR POWER SYSTEM



Melco Resorts & Entertainment collaborated with a local SME to install over 18,000

solar photovoltaic panels, covering close to 30,000 square meters of rooftop

space at the City of Dreams and Studio City.

Once fully operational, the system will have the capacity to generate a total of nearly 7.7 million kWh of energy per year, the gaming operator said in a statement.

Each year, the system is expected to reduce CO2 emissions by more than 6,000 tons.

Sam Liu, director of Business Development at Manlo Energy, said, "We are thrilled as a local small and medium enterprise to have the opportunity to collaborate with Melco on this pioneering sustainability project for Macau's gaming and hospitality industry."

ANALYSIS

Why slowing economies could prod US and China to reach deal

AP PHOTO



Paul Wiseman
& Joe McDonald, Washington

THE Trump administration and China are facing growing pressure to blink in their six-month stare-down over trade because of jittery markets and portents of economic weakness.

The import taxes the two sides have imposed on hundreds of billions of each other's goods — and the threat of more to come — have heightened anxiety on each side of the Pacific. The longer their trade war lasts, the longer companies and consumers will feel the pain of higher-priced imports and exports.

Their conflict is occurring against the backdrop of a slowdown in China and an expected U.S. slump that a prolonged trade war could worsen — a fear that's weighing on financial markets. Yet those very pressures, analysts say, give the two countries a stronger incentive to make peace.

"The U.S. and China now have a strong shared interest in striking a deal in order to halt the downward spiral in business

and investor confidence, which have taken a beating in both their economies," said Eswar Prasad, professor of trade policy at Cornell University.

The economic threats, agreed Wang Yong, an international relations specialist at Peking University, "might be conducive to negotiations" by nudging Beijing toward market-oriented changes long sought by the United States.

Still, it will hardly be easy to bridge the complex differences between the world's top two economies. They range from President Donald Trump's insistence that China buy more U.S. products to widespread assertions that Beijing steals trade secrets from foreign companies operating in China.

Negotiations between the two nations are expected to resume next week. Gao Feng, a spokesman for China's Commerce Ministry, said last week that the two sides have "made specific arrangements for face-to-face meetings" and are talking by phone. Gao offered no details, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative declined to con-

firm the talks.

The world is watching anxiously. China and the United States, the two largest economies, are the "main engines of the world," noted Song Lifang, an economist at Renmin University in Beijing. That makes their dispute "a matter not only for the two countries but for the world," he added.

The dispute is "a major factor" in a slowdown in global growth, Song said, and a settlement would "help in arresting the decline of the economies of the two countries and of the world."

Trump has long complained about America's gaping trade deficit with China: The gap between what Americans sold and what they bought from China in 2017 amounted to USD336 billion and will likely be higher in 2018. But the dispute goes far deeper than lopsided exports and imports. It's fundamentally a high-stakes conflict over the economy of the future.

The U.S. accuses China of deploying predatory tactics in a drive to surpass America's technological supremacy. A report in March by the U.S. Trade

Representative accused China of hacking into U.S. companies' computer networks to steal secrets and coercing American companies to hand over technology as the price of admission to the Chinese market.

To try to compel China to reform its ways, Washington has imposed tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese imports; Beijing has counterpunched by taxing \$110 billion in U.S. goods. Trump had been set to raise the tariffs on most of the Chinese goods on Jan. 1. But he and President Xi Jinping agreed to a 90-day cease-fire to try to resolve their differences.

Since then, the case for peace has strengthened as economic risks in the U.S. and China have grown and financial markets have reeled. For 2018, the Dow Jones Industrial Average — America's highest-profile stock market benchmark — fell nearly 6 percent, its worst performance since 2008. China's Shanghai Composite Index sank nearly 25 percent.

On top of concerns about collateral damage from the U.S.-China trade war, investors

in the U.S. markets are worrying about rising interest rates and a wobbly U.S. real estate market. Fears are growing that the second-longest economic expansion in U.S. history could slide to a halt next year or in 2020. Cutting a deal with Beijing could help at least reduce the threat.

China's economy has been decelerating since the government pulled back on bank lending a year ago to try to curb a run-up in debt. The International Monetary Fund estimates that China's economy grew about 6.6 percent in 2018, down from 6.9 percent in 2017. But heavy government spending masked weakness in private-sector activity. In December, factory activity shrank for the first time in more than two years.

Auto sales in China plunged 16 percent in November from a year earlier. It was the fourth month of contraction, and it put annual sales in the world's biggest auto market on track to contract for the first time in three decades.

■ The conflict is occurring against the backdrop of a slowdown in China and an expected US slump that a prolonged trade war could worsen

Despite its softening economy, China will likely find it difficult to comply with U.S. demands to slow its economic ambitions. Those ambitions cut to the heart to China's drive to become the world's 21st century economic superpower.

"It is difficult to solve the trade dispute immediately because the U.S. demands are too high, especially demands for changes in China's economic and social systems, which it is difficult for China to accept," said Song, the economist at Renmin University.

Wendy Cutler, a former U.S. trade negotiator, said the U.S. likely can't realistically settle for anything less than an agreement by Beijing to reform how it does business.

"There are certainly compelling reasons for both sides to reach a deal and avoid further tariff increases," said Cutler, now vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute. "However, these reasons can only take you so far... Without a strong deal that addresses structural issues, it sets the administration up for critics to say, 'You took us into a trade war for this?'" **AP**

Ken Moritsugu, Beijing

CHINA'S burgeoning space program achieved a first yesterday: a landing on the so-called dark side of the moon.

Three nations — the United States, the former Soviet Union and more recently China — have sent spacecraft to the near side of the moon, which faces Earth, but this landing is the first-ever on the far side.

The China National Space Administration said the 10:26 a.m. touchdown of the Chang'e 4 craft has "opened up a new chapter in human lunar exploration."

A photo taken at 11:40 a.m. and sent back by Chang'e 4 shows a small crater and a barren surface that appears to be illuminated by a light from the lunar explorer. Its name comes from that of a Chinese goddess who, according to legend, has lived on the moon for millennia.

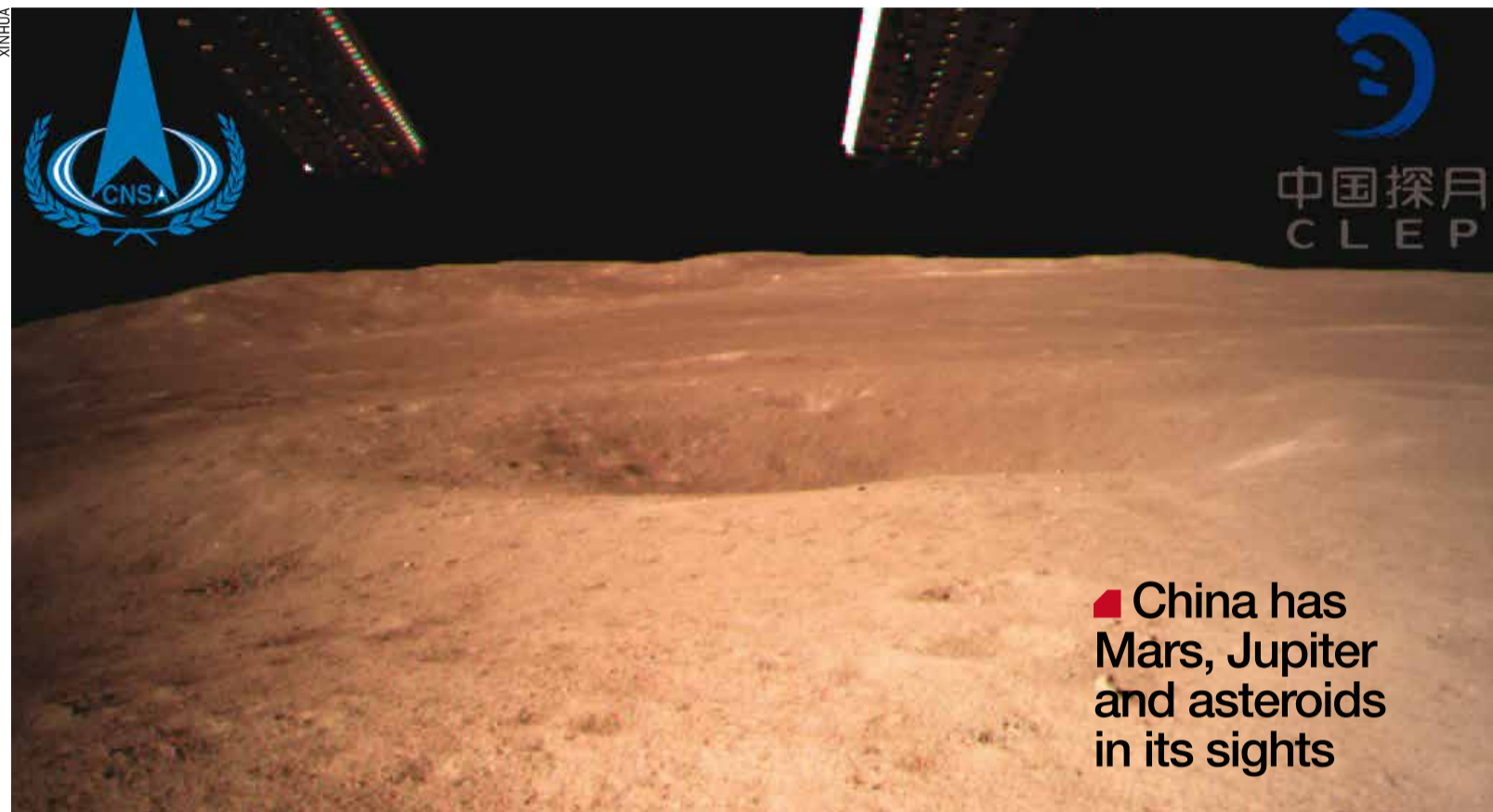
The landing highlights China's growing ambitions to rival the U.S., Russia and Europe in space, and more broadly, to cement the nation's position as a regional and global power.

"The space dream is part of the dream to make China stronger," President Xi Jinping said in 2013, shortly after becoming China's leader.

In year-end wrap-ups, Chinese media and officials hailed the Dec. 8 launch of Chang'e 4 as one of the nation's major achievements in 2018. The landing was announced to the public by state broadcaster CCTV at the top of the noon news.

"On the whole, China's space technology still lags behind the West, but with the landing on the far side of the moon, we have raced to the front," said Hou Xiyun, a professor at Nanjing University's school of astro-

Chinese spacecraft lands on 'dark' side of moon in world first



The first image of the moon's far side taken by Chang'e-4 probe

China has Mars, Jupiter and asteroids in its sights

nomy and space science.

He added that China has Mars, Jupiter and asteroids in its sights: "There's no doubt that our nation will go farther and farther."

In 2013, Chang'e 3, the predecessor craft to the current mission, made the first moon landing since the former Soviet Union's Luna 24 in 1976. The United States is the only country that has successfully sent a person to the moon, though China is considering a crewed mission too.

For now, it plans to send a Chang'e 5 probe to the moon next year and have it return to Earth with samples — also not done since the Soviet mission in 1976.

The moon's far side isn't always dark but is sometimes called the dark side because it faces away from Earth and is relatively unknown. It has a different composition than the near side, where previous missions have landed.

Chang'e 4, a combined lander and rover, will make astronomical observations and probe the

structure and mineral composition of the terrain above and below the surface.

"The far side of the moon is a rare quiet place that is free from interference from radio signals from Earth," mission spokesman Yu Guobin said, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. "This probe can fill the gap of low-frequency observation in radio astronomy and will provide important information for studying the origin of stars and nebula evolution."

One challenge of operating on

the far side of the moon is communicating with Earth. China launched a relay satellite in May so that Chang'e 4 can send back information.

China conducted its first crewed space mission in 2003, becoming only the third country to do so after Russia and the U.S. It has put a pair of space stations into orbit and plans to launch a Mars rover in the mid-2020s. Its space program suffered a rare setback last year with the failed launch of its Long March 5 rocket. **AP**

DIRE STRAIT

Even Taiwan's Beijing-friendly opposition cool to Xi's plan

Samson Ellis

CHINESE President Xi Jinping's proposal for a Hong Kong-style union with Taiwan has instead spurred a rare show of unity between the island's fiercely combative political parties.

No thanks, they both said.

The China-friendly Kuomintang said in a statement yesterday that the "one country, two systems" framework adopted before Hong Kong's return from British rule was unacceptable for democratically run Taiwan because it lacked public

support. The opposition's remarks echoed criticism from President Tsai Ing-wen and her pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party after Xi reaffirmed China's interest in the model Wednesday.

"We look forward to the two sides of the Taiwan Strait engaging in a competition of systems to determine the best system to advance the welfare of the people on both sides of the strait," the KMT said.

The rebuke by Taiwan's strongest advocate for improved relations with the mainland underscores the difficulty Xi faces in trying to resolve the 70-year dispute

during his tenure.

The Hong Kong system - originally conceived as a solution for Taiwan - has

70 percent of the Taiwanese public opposed the notion that both sides of the strait belong to 'one China'

come under increasing criticism as Beijing works to rein in dissent in the financial hub.

Former Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou, the KMT leader who held an unprecedented meeting with Xi in 2015, also said in a radio interview that there was no market for "one country, two systems" in Taiwan, which has been ruled separately since the Chinese civil war.

Xi made his remarks in a speech Wednesday to commemorate the 40th anniversary of a landmark Communist Party appeal across the Taiwan Strait.

Xi proposed that both sides elect representatives "to conduct extensive and in-depth democratic consultations on cross-strait relations and the future of the Chinese nation."

"The difference in systems is not an obstacle to reunification or an excuse for separation," Xi said.

Xi's message appeared targeted at the KMT, which has long advocated talks, rather than Tsai and the DPP. Ma even took issue with Xi's interpretation of the so-called 1992 consensus, a negotiating framework that underpinned their meeting. Under it, both sides agree there's "one China," even if they disagree on what that means.

Ma said both sides should clearly define what the 1992 consensus means to avoid misunderstandings. He said Xi's comments

show a sense of urgency in Beijing to move the Taiwan dispute forward.

Almost 70 percent of the Taiwanese public opposed the notion that both sides of the strait belong to "one China," according to a poll conducted by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council in October.

Jonathan Sullivan, director of the University of Nottingham's China Policy Institute, called Xi's speech "a huge missed opportunity to demonstrate new and creative thinking that takes the reality of Taiwan's position and Taiwanese public opinion into account."

"Instead, it rehashed the same old thinking that has totally failed to resonate in Taiwan in the 40 years since the first direct communication to Taiwanese compatriots," Sullivan said. **Bloomberg**

KOREAS

South lawmaker: Spy agency says North diplomat in hiding

Kim Tong-Hyung, Seoul

NORTH Korea's acting ambassador to Italy, Jo Song Gil, went into hiding with his wife in November, South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers in Seoul yesterday. A high-profile defection by one of North Korea's elite would be a huge embarrassment for leader Kim Jong Un as he pursues diplomacy with Seoul and Washington and seeks to portray himself as a player in international geopolitics.

South Korean lawmaker Kim Min-ki said an official from Seoul's National Intelligence Service shared the information during a closed-door briefing. Kim did not say whether the spy agency revealed any information about Jo's current whereabouts or whether the diplomat had plans to defect to South Korea. Kim said the NIS said it has not been contacted by Jo.

Kim said the NIS official said that Jo and his wife left the official residence in early November, weeks before his term was to end in late November. Kim said he couldn't confirm whether the NIS official revealed whether Jo and his wife were accompanied by any children. The NIS earlier said it couldn't confirm a South Korean media report that Jo was under the protection of the Italian government as he seeks asylum in a Western nation.

North Korea has not yet commented on Jo's status.

An official with the Italian Foreign Ministry said the North Korean hadn't requested asylum from Italy. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with standard practice, said Jo no longer held



North Korea's acting ambassador to Italy Jo Song Gil (second from right)

diplomatic status in Italy. That presumably refers to his government's ending his diplomatic assignment to Italy and his being recalled.

North Korea, which touts itself in its propaganda as a socialist paradise, is extremely sensitive about defections, especially among its elite diplomatic corps, and has previously insisted that they are South Korean or U.S. plots to undermine its government.

North Korea may publicly ignore Jo's possible defection or hold back harsh criticism to avoid highlighting the vulnerability of its government as it pursues diplomacy with Washington and Seoul, said Koh Yu-hwan, a Nor-

th Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk University.

The last senior North Korean diplomat known to have defected is Thae Yong Ho, a former minister at the North Korean Embassy in London, who fled to South Korea in 2016.

In an interview with South Korean television, Thae said he worked with Jo for more than a decade in the North Korean Foreign Ministry's Europe bureau and that Jo had a child when Thae last saw him in 2013. Thae said Jo comes from a family of diplomats, with his father and father-in-law both serving as ambassadors.

Thae said the Italian embassy is critical for North Korea be-

cause it handles annual negotiations with the Rome-based World Food Program over food aid to the North. Thae also said Italy has been a hub for smuggling luxury items to the North Korean elite and Jo would have been involved in those activities.

Thae said Jo would have been North Korea's main diplomat for the Vatican and would have handled discussions involving a possible visit to the North by Pope Francis if such talks had taken place. South Korea said in October that North Korean leader Kim said during a summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in that he would welcome a papal visit.

Thae said he believes Jo was to

be replaced by incoming ambassador Kim Chon in late November, but did not reveal how he obtained such information.

While not identifying him by name, North Korea's state media described Thae as "human scum" after his defection to the South and claimed he was trying to escape punishment for serious crimes.

Thae, who has been an outspoken critic of Kim Jong Un while living in South Korea, denied the accusation and said he defected because he didn't want his children to live "miserable" lives in the North.

It's possible that Jo is trying to defect because of similar reasons, said Koh, who is a policy adviser for South Korean President Moon Jae-in. "It could be difficult for some diplomats to accept being called back to the North after enjoying years living in the free West. They could want their children to live in a different system and receive better education."

The highest-level North Korean to seek asylum in South Korea is Hwang Jang-yop, a senior ruling Workers' Party official who once tutored Kim Jong Un's late father, dictator Kim Jong Il.

Hwang's 1997 defection was hailed by many South Koreans as an intelligence bonanza. Hwang died in 2010.

In 1997, the North Korean ambassador to Egypt fled and resettled in the United States.

Not much is publicly known about Jo, who had been North Korea's acting ambassador to Rome after Italy expelled then-Ambassador Mun Jong Nam in October 2017 to protest a North Korean nuclear test and long-range missile launch.

Kim, the lawmaker who listened to the spy agency's briefing, said the NIS official said the agency has yet to figure out many details about Jo.

About 30,000 North Koreans have defected to South Korea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, according to South Korean government figures. **AP**

INDIA

Hindu hard-liners paralyze state over women at shrine

HINDU hard-liners shut shops and businesses and clashed with police in a southern state yesterday to protest the entry of two women in one of India's largest Hindu pilgrimage sites.

Supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party held protest marches in Kerala state as part of a strike call by Sabarimala Karma Samithi, an um-

brella organization of Hindu groups.

Women of menstruating age were forbidden to pray at the temple until the Supreme Court lifted the ban in September. The ban was informal for many years, but became law in 1972.

Some devotees have filed a petition saying the court decision revoking the ban was an affront to celibate deity Ayyappa.

The two women entered the temple to pray early Wednesday. They were escorted by police because it is "the government's constitutional responsibility to give protection to women," said Pinarayi Vijayan, the state's top elected official.

He accused the BJP of triggering violence when police fired tear gas at several places to disperse stone-throwing mobs pro-

testing the women's entry. Vijayan told reporters that 39 police officers were injured while trying to control the protesters, who also damaged 79 state-run buses in the state.

The Press Trust of India news agency reported that a 55-year-old passerby who was seriously injured in rock throwing by protesters in Pandalam a town died later Wednesday. **AP**



Opposition Congress party activists burn an effigy of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan

RED ALERT

Thailand braces for powerful storm at southern beach towns

THAI authorities suspended ferry services and began evacuations yesterday ahead of a powerful tropical storm that is expected to pound the Southeast Asian nation's famed southern beach resorts during a peak tourism season.

Rain was already falling around the Gulf of Thailand and officials warned that torrential downpours, strong winds and rough seas were expected in 16 provinces when Tropical Storm Pabuk makes its expected land-fall today.

There are fears that the storm will be the worst to hit Thailand since 1989, when Typhoon Gay left more than 400 dead. A tropical storm in 1962 killed more than 900 people in the south.

In what was possibly related to the storm, a Russian tourist in Koh Samui drowned Wednesday as he tried to rescue his daughter, who was struggling in strong surf. Thai PBS television reported that the daughter survived but her father lost consciousness after being tossed against some



Tourists walk in Chaweng Beach in Koh Samui as a red flag indicating expected rough weather conditions displayed in the area

rocks and couldn't be revived by rescuers.

"There will be heavy rainfall and we have to prepared for flooding or an impact on transportation," Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said. "We are ready ourselves, but if the rainfall is high we will need some time to resolve problems."

He later held a video conference with the governors of the 16 pro-

vinces to discuss preparations for the emergency, including digging canals to run off floodwaters, mobilizing rescue vehicles, ordering all boats to be docked, and readying medical facilities.

Thailand's Meteorological Department said the storm will lash southern Thailand's east coast from Thursday to Saturday, with the two provinces of Surat Thani and Nakhon Si Thammarat

expected to be hardest hit. Surat Thani is home to the popular tourist islands of Koh Samui, Koh Tao and Koh Phangan.

The department said the storm was moving west into the Gulf of Thailand with maximum winds of 65 kilometers per hour. It said waves 3 to 5 meters high were possible in the Gulf of Thailand and 2 to 3 meters high in the Andaman Sea on the west coast.

It warned of strong winds and storm surges on the gulf side and said all ships should stay berthed on land through Saturday.

Southern Thailand's tourist industry is a huge moneymaker, and authorities have become particularly sensitive to visitors' safety since last July, when 47 Chinese tourists drowned when the boat they were on sank in rough seas near the popular resort of Phuket in the Andaman Sea.

Fishing is another major industry in the south, and small boat owners were heeding the warning. Many dragged their vessels ashore, attaching ropes to the boats and having friends help tug them on to beaches.

Two natural gas production platforms in the Gulf of Thailand directly in the path of the storm suspended operations and had their personnel evacuated to shore, said the exploration and production arm of the Thai state oil company PTT. It said drilling rigs and vessels had been moved to unaffected areas, and gas production at a third platform remained operating to help meet energy needs.

The storm was passing about 300 kilometers south-southwest of Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City at midday yesterday, and was expected to bring heavy rain and strong winds to the Mekong Delta. AP


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USA

Trump gives new Pentagon chief a taste of his world view

Robert Burns, Washington

ON his first working day in charge of the Pentagon, Pat Shanahan got a taste of President Donald Trump's scatter-shot way of looking at the world.

As Shanahan sat to Trump's left at a Cabinet meeting at the White House, the president denounced U.S. allies as free-loaders, expressed disgust with U.S. warfighting strategy in Afghanistan, mused about his own potential to be a great general, dismissed Syria as "sand and death," spoke encouragingly of a second North Korea summit, and falsely claimed he had fired former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

It was a very public reminder of the challenges that Shanahan, as acting defense secretary, faces as he navigates the complex terrain that led to the early end of his predecessor's tenure.

At one point, Trump turned to Shanahan with an unusual demand.

The commander in chief said audits of Pentagon war spending must be "private" — an apparent reference to reports produced by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. Trump asserted that the reports give away too much information and should not be publicly released, although the law that created that watchdog's office says its reports must be made public.

Trump wished Mattis well in



Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan (right) and President Donald Trump

the retired Marine general's return to private life after two tumultuous years leading the Pentagon. But Trump also took a swipe at the man he had approvingly called "Mad Dog Mattis" when he hired him shortly after winning election in 2016.

"What's he done for me?" Trump asked. "How has he done in Afghanistan? Not too good."

He added, "President Obama fired him, and essentially so did I."

Trump did not explain his complaint about Mattis' approach to the war. But Trump hinted that he had irreconcilable differences with Mattis on what Trump views as an unfair defense relationship with allies such as NATO. Trump suggested that

Shanahan, who took over as acting defense secretary when Mattis ended his tenure Monday, agrees with him on this.

"We have some great allies, but a lot of our allies were taking advantage of our taxpayers and our country," Trump said. "We can't let that happen, and Pat Shanahan agrees with that and he's agreed with that for a long time. And that was very important to me."

"I couldn't get other people to understand it," Trump said, apparently referring to Mattis, who argued for higher defense spending by NATO allies but did so in a nonconfrontational way.

In a resignation letter that amounted to a rebuke of Trump's view on how to treat

alliances and adversaries, Mattis wrote, "My views on treating allies with respect and also being clear-eyed about both malign actors and strategic competitors are strongly held and informed by over four decades of immersion in these issues."

Mattis submitted his resignation on Dec. 20 after a series of policy disagreements with Trump, including the president's decision to withdraw troops from Syria. Mattis said he would stay until the end of February, but on Dec. 23 Trump announced that Shanahan would take over Jan. 1, speeding up Mattis' departure.

In his Cabinet meeting remarks with reporters present, Trump said he was in no rush

to get U.S. troops out of Syria but did not clarify a timetable. Mattis and other Trump advisers tried unsuccessfully to persuade Trump to stay in Syria long enough to ensure that the Islamic State group, which has largely been defeated on the battlefield, cannot regroup. Nor did the president clarify plans in Afghanistan, where he has ordered a troop reduction on an unspecified timetable.

Shanahan, who had served as deputy to Mattis since July 2017, is a career business executive with no prior government or military experience. His views on alliance relations and other key defense issues are not well known. As the deputy secretary he had focused the budget as well as a Trump favorite topic: development of a Space Force.

At a morning meeting at the Pentagon with the military service secretaries and other top civilian officials, Shanahan said he was focused on the defense strategy developed during Mattis' tenure. It emphasizes the importance of great power competition with Russia and China, after America's many years of fighting insurgent wars in the Middle East.

In that context, Shanahan said the Pentagon leaders should remember, "China, China, China," according to one official, who was not authorized to publicly discuss internal defense meetings and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Trump administration has had a rocky relationship with China. Like the Obama administration, Trump's government is concerned by what it calls China's militarization of disputed areas in the South China Sea and by its advances in certain high-tech weaponry. AP

SAUDI ARABIA

Prosecutors say five face death penalty in Khashoggi killing

SAUDI Arabia announced yesterday it will seek the death penalty against five suspects in the slaying of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, a killing that has seen members of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's entourage implicated in the writer's assassination.

Prosecutors announced that 11 suspects in the slaying attended their first court hearing with lawyers, but the statement did not name those in court. It also did not explain why seven other suspects arrested over the Oct. 2 killing at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul did not immediately face for-

mal charges. The kingdom previously announced 18 people had been arrested.

Saudi officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The killing of Khashoggi, who wrote columns critical of Prince Mohammed, has strained the decades-long ties the kingdom enjoys with the United States. It also has added to a renewed international push to end the Saudi-led war in Yemen.

The state-run Saudi Press Agency and state television gave few details about the hearing.

"The Public Prosecutor demanded imposing proper punishments against the defendants and is

seeking capital punishment for five of the defendants for their direct involvement in the murder," a statement from prosecutors said, without elaborating.

The suspects requested copies of the indictments they faced, as well as asked for more time to prepare for their case, prosecutors said.

While vague on details about the case, prosecutors made a point to express concerns about Turkey. They alleged that Turkish officials did not answer two formal requests made for evidence in the case.

"To date, the Saudi Public Prosecutor has not re-

ceived any response, and the Public Prosecution is still awaiting their response," the statement said.

Officials in Ankara could not be immediately reached for comment. Turkish officials have previously said they shared evidence with Saudi Arabia and other nations over Khashoggi's killing.

Turkey also has demanded Saudi Arabia extradite those 18 suspects to be tried there for Khashoggi's killing. Turkish security officials have kept up a slow leak of videos, photographs and morbid details surrounding Khashoggi's slaying to pressure the kingdom, as the two U.S.-allied countries vie for



Jamal Khashoggi

influence over the wider Mideast.

Turkish media have published photographs of members of the crown prince's entourage at the consulate in Istanbul ahead of the slaying. Khashoggi's body, believed to have been dismembered after his killing, has yet to be found.

Khashoggi, 59, entered the consulate Oct. 2 as his fiancée waited outside. But unbeknownst to him, a team of Saudi officials

had flown in before his arrival and laid in wait for him.

Saudi Arabia denied for weeks that Khashoggi had been killed but later changed its story and ultimately acknowledged the brutal slaying. King Salman ordered the restructuring of the country's intelligence service, but has so far shielded Prince Mohammed, his 33-year-old son who is next in line to the throne in the oil giant kingdom. AP



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FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Portugueses Pelo Mundo Sr.2
22:00	Contentor 13
22:30	Filha da Lei - Fim
23:15	TDM News
23:50	O Amor É Lindo... Porque Sim!
01:25	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:10	RTPi Directo

SATURDAY

12:00	Endereço Desconhecido
12:30	Gostos e Sabores
13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
14:30	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2 - Compacto
18:10	Fotobox
18:25	Lusa Music Box
19:00	Animais Anónimos
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Terra Prometida
23:05	Tec Net
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Cá Por Casa Sr.2 - Estreia
01:40	RTPi Directo

SUNDAY

11:40	Endereço Desconhecido
12:00	Gostos e Sabores
13:00	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
18:10	Fotobox
18:25	Lusa Music Box
19:00	Animais Anónimos
19:40	1986
20:30	Telejornal
23:05	Tec Net
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Cá Por Casa Sr.2 - Estreia
01:40	RTPi Directo

Offbeat

UFFIZI URGES GERMANY TO RETURN PAINTING STOLEN BY NAZIS

The director of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence is urging Germany to return a Dutch masterpiece stolen by Nazi troops during World War II, dramatizing its absence by hanging a black and white photo of the work with the label "Stolen" in three languages.

Eike Schmidt said in a New Year's appeal this week that the still-life "Vase of Flowers" by Dutch artist Jan van Huysum is in the hands of a German family who hasn't returned it despite numerous appeals. Instead, intermediaries for the family have demanded payment for its return to Italy.

"The painting is already the inalienable property of the Italian State, and thus cannot be 'bought,'" Schmidt said.

The oil painting had been hanging as part of the Pitti Palace collection in Florence from 1824 until the outbreak of World War II. It was moved for safety during the war but was stolen by retreating German troops. It didn't surface again until Germany's reunification in 1991, when the offers to sell it back to Italy began.

"This story is preventing the wounds inflicted by World War II and the horrors of Nazism from healing," said Schmidt, who is German. "Germany should not apply the statute of limitations to works of art stolen during the war, and it should take measures to ensure that those works are restored to their legitimate owners."

He called it Germany's "moral duty" to return to the artwork, adding, "I trust that the German government will do so at the earliest opportunity, naturally along with every other work of art stolen by the Nazi Wehrmacht."

Schmidt told The Associated Press in an email that German courts have so far refused to take up the case, citing statute of limitations. Several international treaties could be applied, including under UNESCO and the European Union, but "technically there is the difficulty that there is no compulsion to apply them retroactively," he said.

Germany has returned 16,000 objects to Holocaust survivors and their families under a 20-year-old international agreement on returning art looted by the Nazis. But Schmidt said the so-called Washington Principles apply only to public collections, not private ones.



Eike Schmidt, director of the Uffizi Gallery

cinema

CINETEATRO

03 JAN - 09 JAN



THE GRINCH

ROOM 1

4:30, 9:30 pm

Director: Yarrow Cheney, Scott Mosier

Starring: Benedict Cumberbatch, Cameron Seely, Rashida Jones

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 86min



MORE THAN BLUE

ROOM 1

2:30, 9:30 pm

Director: Gavin Lin

Starring: Jasper Liu, Ivy Chen

Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)

Duration: 105min



BUMBLEBEE

ROOM 2

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

Director: Travis Knight

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

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 113min



RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET: WRECK-IT RALPH 2

ROOM 3

7:15pm

Director: Rich Moore, Phil Johnson

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

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 122min

this day in history



1958 EXPLORER HILLARY ARRIVES AT SOUTH POLE

Sir Edmund Hillary has reached the South Pole - the first overland explorer to do so since Captain Robert F Scott's expedition in 1912.

The New Zealander and his team arrived safely after travelling 70 miles (113km) through mist and poor weather conditions.

They described seeing the round tower of the South Pole for the first time as a "black blob" on the horizon.

Sir Edmund and his colleagues had only one drum of petrol left when they sighted the Polar base. This would have been enough for the "tractor train" to travel 20 miles (32km).

Earlier, the explorer had said fuel consumption was the party's main worry and that the team were "cutting it fine" because of very soft snow. Members of the team had to use shovels to clear a path for their tractors.

It took the tractor train, which included three tractors, a ca-booze and two sledges, more than 80 days to complete the 1,200-mile (1,930km) journey.

Sir Edmund was reportedly enthusiastic ahead of his arrival at the South Pole, and had told colleagues of heavy going in snow with a consistency of sugar, although he said good progress had been made.

In the final leg of the journey, the sky was overcast and there was no sun to warm the polar plateau. The party had to travel in "white-out" conditions for most of the time, with Sir Edmund telling Scott Base by radio: "It is tough, but not too tough."

The explorer later thanked his team, which included Ron Bahlam, Peter Mulgrew, Murray Ellis, Jim Bates and Derek Wright, and everyone involved in the expedition to the South Pole.

A broadcast message congratulating the triumphant group has been sent by New Zealand Prime Minister Walter Nash. All the explorers have spent 16 hours sleeping following their gruelling journey.

Crossing the polar plateau has led to several problems for Sir Edmund and the others in his party, including engine failure and poor weather conditions such as low cloud and strong winds, plus the hidden danger of crevasses.

Meanwhile, Sir Vivian Fuchs - director of the British Antarctic Survey - has reported a significant advance to about 200 miles (322km) from the Pole, and hopes to advance by around 50 miles (80km) per day. The two parties, approaching from opposite directions, had originally intended to link up on the Scott Base side of the South Pole.

Both teams of explorers were able to report progress by radio to the outside world and also made radio contact with each other to discuss future plans. They were also helped by the Beaver aircraft of the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

Sir Edmund Hillary's team is one of two Commonwealth Antarctic Expeditions. There are also 10 other national expeditions currently exploring the vast Antarctic continent.

Since October 1956, the Americans have had a station at the geographical pole, with 20 men there at any one time. Russia has five bases - including the biggest in the Antarctic, which is at Mirny.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

On 20th January 1958, Sir Edmund welcomed fellow explorer Sir Vivian Fuchs to the South Pole.

Sir Edmund and his team set out from the newly-created Scott camp near the Ross Sea while the British party, led by Dr Fuchs, began their journey at Shackleton camp near the Weddell Sea. Both groups of explorers used motorised vehicles for the trip to the South Pole.

Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay became the first men to reach the 29,028ft (8,847m) summit of Everest in 1953, as part of an expedition led by John Hunt. Hunt and Hillary were knighted on their return.

Sir Edmund took part in several expeditions after that including the trip across Antarctica to the South Pole in 1958. He set up a medical and educational trust for the Sherpa people in 1961 and was New Zealand High Commissioner to India in Delhi from 1984 to 1989.

Sir Edmund is remembered primarily for being the first man to climb Everest but today in the region around the mountain he is best known for his charity work - for building schools, hospitals and bridges, through his Himalayan Trust.

Since his ascent in 1953 he has devoted his life to helping the Sherpas of the Khumbu region.

YOUR STARS

Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Take action today! You should make sure that you find a way to use this terrific energy that is coursing through you. Even if you're not sure what you want, you still need to take action.

Taurus

April 20-May 20

Your financial situation is taking over today — but that could be a really good thing! Your energy is a bit off, but you can see a few solutions to advanced problems that should make life better.

Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

You've got to listen carefully when your friends come to you this morning — at least one of them has advice you are destined to ignore. The good news is that you can backtrack when you need to.

Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Your mental agility is tested today — and you come out on top! It's easy to come up with creative ideas and find new ways to engage with old problems. Things are looking up for sure!

Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You're still absorbing new ideas and information — no matter how full your brain feels. Your amazing energy is perfect for learning, and you should find it easy to explain complex issues.

Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

You need to find your reason for being — or at least refocus on that ideal. It's a good time for you to inspire yourself and take off in a bold new direction. Your confidence gets you halfway there!

Libra

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

It's all about people today — so check in with those closest to you. It's easier than ever for you to mend fences or to build new alliances. It should pay off in the very near future.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

A selfless act makes a big difference late in the day — so make sure that you keep your eyes open for ways to help. You're investing in your karmic future, so don't be shy about going big!

Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You've got so much energy that you may be at a loss for what to do with it all. See if you can get your people to back off so you can get the time and space you need to move forward quickly.

Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Your multiple parallel lives are starting to create problems for each other, so try to focus on one as exclusively as possible. It may cause some strife, but it should also lead to a new balance.

Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Your forward-looking ideas are incredibly influential today — but only if you're making them known! Communication is vital for the time being, so ensure that you're talking to all the right people.

Pisces

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Something seemingly insignificant grows all out of proportion and takes over your life today — but this may be for the best! Sometimes you need to let yourself get absorbed fully into something new.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
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CHINA

Beijing	-11	-2	cloudy
Harbin	-23	-12	cloudy/clear
Tianjin	-6	-1	cloudy/overcast
Urumqi	-19	-13	clear/cloudy
Xi'an	-6	2	clear
Lhasa	-11	5	clear/cloudy
Chengdu	0	4	overcast/cloudy
Chongqing	2	7	overcast
Kunming	4	14	overcast/cloudy
Nanjing	-3	5	flurry/overcast
Shanghai	1	7	sleet/cloudy
Wuhan	-6	2	cloudy
Hangzhou	0	4	moderate snow/overcast
Taipei	15	18	drizzle
Guangzhou	6	11	drizzle/overcast
Hong Kong	11	15	cloudy

WORLD

Moscow	-5	-2	flurry
Frankfurt	2	4	drizzle
Paris	1	8	drizzle
London	5	9	drizzle
New York	3	9	drizzle/overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Flight of steps; 6- ___ fide; 10- Ball belles; 14- Perform better than; 15- Atop; 16- ___ avis; 17- Kate & ___; 18- ___ Camera; 19- Plugging away; 20- Largest book of the OT; 21- Lucy at "Swan Lake"?; 24- Fine wood particles; 26- Vehement; 27- Hard water; 28- Signs; 30- Jeter of the Yankees; 33- Memorable mission; 34- Delicious!; 37- Single entity; 38- Madonna role; 39- Streetcar; 40- Banned insecticide; 41- Poles, e.g.; 42- Newly married woman; 43- Off the leash; 44- Tell it like it isn't; 45- High-speed skiing; 48- Medieval form of the trombone; 52- Study of rainfall distribution; 55- "Wheel of Fortune" buy; 56- Blows it; 57- Dynamic start; 58- Menu; 60- Prom wheels; 61- Bandleader Puente; 62- Bolshevik leader; 63- Intend; 64- Pulitzer-winning biographer Leon; 65- Curved letters;

DOWN: 1- Lathers; 2- Oklahoma city; 3- Attorney follower; 4- Dictator Amin; 5- Male European deer; 6- Constructed; 7- Milky gem; 8- Seward Peninsula city; 9- Excretion; 10- Stage plays; 11- Really bother; 12- Pickling solution; 13- Satisfied; 22- Peer Gynt's mother; 23- Vintner's prefix; 25- Cut calories; 28- Green shade; 29- Wrestling surfaces; 30- Failure; 31- Break off; 32- Mus. slow-up; 33- Gardner and others; 34- Hosp. procedure; 35- Deranged; 36- Marseille Mrs.; 38- Stretch; 39- Difficult journey; 41- Go it alone; 42- Two wheel vehicle; 43- Pretends; 44- Well, ___-di-dah!; 45- Engulf; 46- Eagle's nest; var.; 47- Skin layer; 48- Bobbin; 49- Farm structures; 50- Free laces, say; 51- Ages between 13 and 19; 53- Nevada senator Harry; 54- Commedia dell' ___; 59- Loser to DDE;



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		




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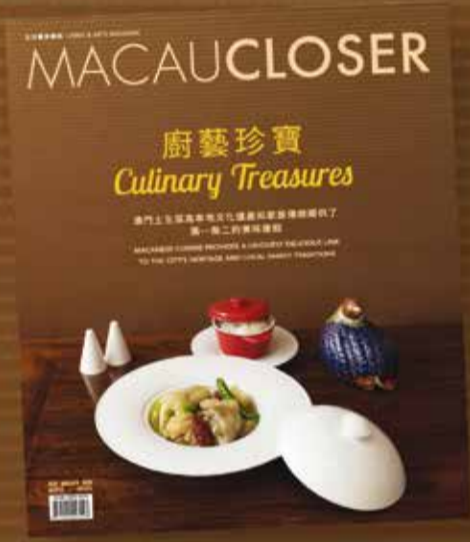
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Osaka talks to her coach Sascha Bajin



Naomi Osaka

John Pye, Brisbane

TENNIS

Some words from the coach inspire Osaka's quarterfinal win

NAOMI Osaka responded to some court-side advice from her coach in the most emphatic way after dropping the first set in the Brisbane International quarterfinals, conceding only five points in the next set on her way to a 3-6, 6-0, 6-4 win over eighth-seeded Anastasija Sevastova.

The U.S. Open champion was clearly under pressure in the first set yesterday, when she made 15 unforced errors and had fewer winners than Sevastova, who had won both of their head-to-head meetings last year and had already converted two service breaks.

A disconsolate-looking Osaka went to a courtside chair at the changeover. And whatever coach Sascha Bajin, a former hitting partner for Serena Williams, told her during a quick, animated conference worked. She finished with 11 aces, converted all four of her break-point chan-

ces in the second and third sets and appeared far more confident in her own game.

Osaka said the advice was merely a reality check. "I mean, I was just trying to stay calm. Was trying to tell myself, 'She's one of the best players in the world. I just have to stay in there, and hopefully I'll get a chance,'" Osaka said. "I did, so I just kept trying to roll with it. He literally told me that."

The 21-year-old Osaka will play either Lesia Tsurenko or Anett Kontaveit in the semifinals, and now could rise to No. 3 in the rankings next week — which would be a high for a player from Japan.

Osaka has now made the se-

mifinals or better at four of her last five tournaments, a streak that began with her run to a first major title that culminated with a memorable win over Williams in the U.S. Open final. And it has all been a significant boost to her confidence ahead of the Australian Open, which starts on Jan. 14.

Osaka has now made the semifinals or better at four of her last five tournaments

"I feel like right now I'm really confident in myself, and I feel like the offseason training that I've been doing is really paying off," she said. "And I'm not sure if I would have had the same feeling six months ago. Six months ago I didn't win the U.S. Open."

Jeremy Chardy beat Japanese qualifier Yasutaka Uchiyama 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (4) to be first through to the semifinals, where he will meet either second-seeded Kei Nishikori or 2017 champion Grigor Dimitrov, who play later Thursday.

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga got an easier path to the quarterfinals than expected, avoiding a second-round contest with 17-

time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal, who withdrew from the tournament with a thigh muscle strain on Wednesday.

Tsonga beat Taro Daniel 7-6 (5), 6-3. The 77th-ranked Daniel was the lucky loser from qualifying who got a spot in the main draw when Nadal pulled out.

"You go from the challenger to the guy that is supposed to win — it's not easy," Tsonga, a 2008 Australian Open finalist, said of the difference.

It was the first time in almost a year that Tsonga recorded back-to-back wins at the elite level after spending most of 2018 out following knee surgery in April. **AP**

FOOTBALL

Son 'sad' and 'sorry' to be leaving Tottenham for Asian Cup

SON Heung-min is looking forward to making history with South Korea at the upcoming Asian Cup. He's just sorry it has to come at the expense of helping Tottenham maintain its title challenge in the Premier League.

Son might be in the form of his career, having scored eight goals in his last nine games as Tottenham moved into second place in the league and into serious contention for the title.

He will play one more league game — against Manchester United on

Jan. 13 — before leaving for international duty at the tournament in the United Arab Emirates. He could be away for up to five of Tottenham's matches in all competitions if South Korea reaches the Feb. 1 final in Abu Dhabi.

Son also missed the first part of the English season while playing for South Korea at the Asian Games. He led the team to the title, securing exemption from military service in the process.

"Of course I feel very sorry because I miss already in September," said Son, speaking after scoring his

latest goal in Tottenham's 3-0 win at Cardiff.

"I feel sorry for my teammates, the fans and the coaching staff. It's difficult. Sometimes you think it's a bit sad, but it is also important for my country. I hope I can keep my form for the national team and when I come back here again as well."

Son is likely to miss league games against Fulham, Watford and Newcastle, as well as the second leg of Tottenham's English League Cup semifinal against Chelsea.

Spurs would want Son back in time for the Feb.

10 match against Leicester in the league, but there's a chance he'd be tired after his exertions in the UAE where South Korea heads as the favorite. After all, he struggled on his return from the Asian Games.

"I was tired after the Asian Games because in that tournament I was playing after [every] two or three days," Son said. "It is very important to be right mentally at the Asian Cup and to come back with a strong mind and be strong physically."

"It [November] was a turning point for me be-



Son (left) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal

cause I was tired and I didn't travel. It was good to have this time, some days off, and hard sessions with the team. But the Asian Cup is big for us because we have not won it for 59 years."

The Asian Cup starts on Saturday. South Korea and Tottenham have agreed that Son only needs to link up with his international teammates in time for the start of the knockout stage. **AP**

opinion

Bizcuits

Leanda Lee



POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN BAKING BREAD

It was many months ago, but it has been sitting uneasily on my mind. A close associate had been developing skills and knowledge of baking bread and relishing in the finer points of home-extracted coffee. A keen critical and vocal mind, I also know of him as a gourmand and proud of building expertise in any of his networking, academic and cultural endeavours. Occasionally he would post the product of his barista and baking efforts on social media, until one day (maybe coincidentally) when an individual posted a comment ridiculing the him for wasting time in such banal un-intellectual pursuits. The sub-text being that home-based labour-intensive activities were of lesser value than public cerebral ones.

This was someone clearly uninitiated in the historical importance of breaking bread in COM-PAN-y; someone likely inexperienced in the sheer sensory pleasure of developing skills of observation, patience, and perseverance when pitted against multiple changeable elements; someone who is yet to feel the deep satisfaction of providing delicious, warm, fragrant abundance for family and close friends.

Home-baking bread is about learning from (not about) natural processes. It teaches humility in the face of natural variables of humidity, time, altitude, heat, and how gluten, starches and sugars transform as bacteria and yeast work their magic. We are the enablers of this process, but never the overlords.

Just as pets teach us how to love and be loyal, producing food by harnessing natural chemical and biological processes, working with live yeasts and bacteria teach us that there is much we do not understand, and much that we should not aim to, and cannot, control. By gently observing and working together with these natural processes, nudging them this way or that, rather than attempting to subjugate them to our whims and fictitious mastery, we come to a profound realisation that we live in a symbiotic relationship with the complexity of nature. We have a part to play to create a magnificent abundance that industrial processes merely attempt to mimic.

These pursuits – whether they be bio-intensive farming, fermentation and preserving, cha-no-yu, noodle-pulling, metal forging, distillery... - are far from banal, they call upon a sensitivity and an intellect which over time becomes artisanal mastery. This is a mastery not of what we work with, but of ourselves.

In a modern lifestyle, we rely for our day-to-day pleasures and nutrition on centralised, industry-based agri-business, and our choices are dictated by government policies and limited by what corporations decide will sell and which are cost-efficient to produce, store, package and transport. Production decisions are made based upon a range of variables which do not necessarily weight nutritional content or health benefits ahead of shelf-life and transportability. For such reasons, paw-paws and loquats rarely hit the supermarket and 75-90% of products on supermarket shelves in the USA incorporate either soy or corn in the production process. Our taste-buds have become used to foods that are mild, salty or sweet and no longer appreciate the bitter, the acrid, the tart, the sharp, the aged, the gamey, the herbal, or the malty: whatever happened to choice?

Refusing to trust or participate in our centralised, top-down system of food and food-like substance delivery, the Food Movement is growing in voice and influence. Farmers' Markets, even in Hong Kong, are burgeoning, and even if back-yard production is not possible, herbs and vegetables in pots on windowsills are becoming popular; not much effort is needed to enhance nutritional diversity on our plates. We are regaining our connection with food production.

So, about that bread; as more people in the over-developed world are learning of the nutritional hollowness of mass-produced staples, about being over-fed and under-nourished, they are reclaiming control of access to good food.

Bread brings people together and has long been implicated in revolutions: baking it is no trivial matter.

THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL GETS NEW BUZZ MEMBERS, AND ONE GETS PRESIDENCY

The United Nations Security Council has five new members, and one of them – the Dominican Republic – is starting out as the group's president.

Belgium, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa also are starting their two-year terms. All five new members are being recognized with a ceremony yesterday [Macau time] marking the installation of their flags outside the council chamber.

Bolivia, Ethiopia, the Netherlands, Kazakhstan

and Sweden finished their terms as 2018 closed.

The 15-member council is the U.N.'s most powerful body. China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States are permanent members, with veto power.

Other members are elected by the 193-member General Assembly for staggered, two-year terms that are allocated by global regions. Seats are sought-after, and countries often campaign for years. The presidency rotates each month.

HASAN MINHAJ

Netflix criticized for yanking comedian's episode in Saudi

NETFLIX faced criticism from human rights groups for pulling an episode in Saudi Arabia of comedian Hasan Minhaj's "Patriot Act" series that criticized the kingdom's powerful crown prince.

The American comedian used his second episode, released Oct. 28, to criticize Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman over the killing of writer Jamal Khashoggi and the Saudi-led coalition at war in Yemen.

Human rights group Amnesty International said Saudi Arabia's censorship of Netflix is "further proof of a relentless crackdown on freedom of expression." PEN America, the literary and human rights organization, said the move "legitimizes repression." Netflix said it was simply complying with a local law.

Khashoggi, who wrote critically of the crown prince in columns for the newspaper, was killed and dismembered by Saudi agents inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul last year. The U.S. Senate has said it believes the crown prince is responsible for the grisly killing, despite insistence by the kingdom that he had no knowledge of the operation.

"It blows my mind that it took the killing of a Washington Post journalist for everyone to go: 'Oh I guess he's not really a reformer,'" Minhaj said in the episode.

Netflix, in a statement yesterday [Macu time], said the episode was removed from the kingdom as a result of a legal request from authorities and not due to its content.

"We strongly support artistic freedom worldwide and removed this episode only in Saudi Arabia after we had received a valid legal demand from the government – and to comply with local law," the streaming giant said.

Minhaj, a former correspondent with "The Daily Show" on Comedy Central, told The Associated Press this summer that his Netflix show would fuse his personal narrative as a first-generation Indian-American



Muslim-American comedian Hasan Minhaj

with the current political and social backdrop to examine deep issues confronting the world.

In the roughly 18-minute now-censored "Patriot Act" monologue, Minhaj also mentions the ruling Al Saud family and its vast wealth, saying: "Saudi Arabia is crazy. One giant family controls everything."

Amnesty International said Saudi Arabia's censorship of Netflix is 'further proof of a crackdown on freedom of expression'

In a tweet, Minhaj mocked the censorship attempt, pointing out that the episode banned from the kingdom is available elsewhere online.

"Clearly, the best way to stop people from watching

something is to ban it, make it trend online, and then leave it up on YouTube," he tweeted.

The Saudi-led coalition's airstrikes in Yemen have also come under intense scrutiny since Khashoggi's killing. The war, which began in March 2015, has killed thousands of civilians and pushed millions to the brink of famine.

The Financial Times first reported that Netflix yanked the episode. The episode had been available in Saudi Arabia since late October but was pulled in December after the legal request. Only the second episode has been pulled and it is available to subscribers elsewhere.

The kingdom's Communication and Information Technology Commission said the episode was in violation of Article 6, Paragraph 1 of the Anti-Cyber Crime Law in Saudi Arabia. Officials at the commission could not be immediately reached for comment.

But Samah Hadid at Amnesty International said "Netflix is in danger of facilitating the kingdom's zero-tolerance policy on freedom of expression and assisting the authorities in denying people's right to freely access information." AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	40-60 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	45-65 Moderate
Ambient	35-55 Moderate

WORLD BRIEFS



INDIA Hindu hard-liners shut shops and businesses and clashed with police in a southern state yesterday to protest the entry of two women in one of India's largest Hindu pilgrimage sites. More on p12

SAUDI ARABIA announced yesterday it will seek the death penalty against five suspects in the slaying of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, a killing that has seen members of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's entourage implicated in the writer's assassination. More on p14



TURKEY Official figures show that Turkey's inflation rate eased slightly for the second consecutive month in December to 20.3 percent, helped by tax cuts and discounted prices on consumer goods.

DENMARK Two more bodies have been found in the wreckage of a crashed train on a Danish bridge, raising the death toll to eight in Denmark's deadliest train accident in 30 years, police said yesterday.

BRITAIN Officials say two men have been arrested on suspicion of smuggling migrants from France to England by sea.



BRAZIL Newly installed President Jair Bolsonaro targeted Brazil's indigenous groups, descendants of slaves and the LGBT community with executive orders in the first hours of his administration, moving quickly after a campaign in which the far-right leader said he would radically overhaul many aspects of life.