



18TH EDITION OF FRINGE FESTIVAL OPENS

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LRT UNDER SCRUTINY

The timetable and budget overslips of the Light Rapid Transit project were under debate at the Legislative Assembly

P7 AL PLENARY



SAUDI ASYLUM SEEKER LANDS IN CANADA

Tired but smiling, an 18-year-old Saudi woman who said she feared death if deported back home arrived in Canada

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Times

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS



CHINA Twenty-one coal miners were killed when a mine collapsed in northern China. The disaster occurred in Shenmu in Shaanxi province in the heart of the country's coal-mining belt, according to state media. Sixty-six other miners were rescued.

SINGAPORE is making a clarion call to citizens and businesses to reduce domestic and industrial waste toward zero as the country's recycling rate has stalled and its sole landfill may run out of space by 2035.



MYANMAR A court rejected the appeal of two Reuters journalists convicted of violating the country's Official Secrets Act during their reporting on the country's crackdown on Rohingya Muslims.

INDIA Massive anti-India protests and clashes erupted in disputed Kashmir yesterday, leading to injuries to at least 16 people after a gunbattle between militants and government forces overnight killed two rebels, police and residents said.

SUDAN The government says more than three weeks of anti-government protests has left 24 people dead.

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HEALTH

Second case of flu induced encephalitis

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SPORTS

German team wins first int'l regatta hosted by Macau

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Regatta concludes, sailors hope for 'better weather'

Lynzy Valles

THE Macao Cup International Regatta concluded yesterday, awarding teams from Germany, France and Philippines.

Held alongside the 2019 Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Cup Regatta for four days from January 10, the first large international regatta hosted by Macao attracted 20 teams.

Kicking off the competition on Thursday, a parade was held where 10 Beneteau First 40.7 unified design group boats took part in a fleet parade, setting sail from the Fisherman's Wharf to the Macao Tower.

In the international regatta, Team Subic Sailing/Turquoise from the Philippines carried the form from Saturday which moved them up to third place in the overall standings to win the first

race of the day. As a result, the second race of the day became a shootout among Team WYC Lake Constance from Germany, Team Marenostrom Racing Club from France and Subic Sailing/Turquoise for the overall title. However, it was Team Estonia 100 that came out all guns blazing to claim the win in the final race of the regatta. WYC Lake Constance edged out Marenostrom Racing Club in this race to a fourth-place finish, which was enough for them to win the overall title with 19 points. Overall, the first runners-up were the French team and the second runners-up were Team Subic Sailing/Turquoise from the Philippines.

In the Greater Bay Area Cup Regatta, overnight leaders Team Wan Boo Fish Sailing from Macao won both races today to take overall title with eight points.

Some racers found it challenging to compete in the city's recent weather due to low visibility and low wind speed. Yet many of them believed that the SAR could improve from this international competition.

"It was very competitive and it's more exciting because we all had the same kind of boats. [...] It's a lot cooler here compared to other races that we've been to," said Marcus AVECILLA from Subic Sailing team.

"It's a bit harder because of the visibility and it is also tricky because we had a day where the wind speed was really low so we had to adjust and work on other techniques," he added.

During the first day of the competition, the wind speed dropped to around three or four knots and wind direction was unstable, which was not suitable for the

IRC fleets to race, thus making it more challenging for the teams to compete.

The regatta raced in the waters south of Hac Sa Beach to Huang-mao Island, and in the waters south of Hac Sa Beach on its third and fourth day.

Another competitor from France commented that Macao is a feasible place for such competition given the easy accessibility going to and from Guangdong and Shenzhen.

"We had bad luck in the weather but the venue is not bad. In the China Cup, we need to travel by bus [to go to different cities] but here it's very easy. From that point of view, it's great," said Philippe Grelone who competed with Marenostrom Racing Club from France.

Grelone added that although Macao has the potential to be a platform for these kinds of activities, he noted that the depth of the waters in the region would hinder bigger boats competing.

"You don't have so much water. The depths of the water is a bit complicated so that's one of the problems but why not?" said

Grelone, who also participates in regatta races going to and from Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, the team's skipper said that Macao's waters could only accommodate boats up to 40 feet to 45 feet. "Macao could have a lot of regatta events for sure. It could be done but the only thing is that nowadays there are different kinds of boats and many of them are big and [require] really deep waters," said chairman of the French club, Lionel Pean.

"We found a very good spirit racing in Asia. There were less regatta fights in the waters," he added.

Meanwhile, another skipper from the Philippines commented that it is feasible for the city to host similar events, yet noted that organizers could work on doing that during months where there is high visibility and higher wind speed.

According to Jun AVECILLA from Subic Sailing, the local competition is different from the ones the crew joined in Southeast Asia, citing weather conditions.

"I think January and February are good months for northeast winds. But of course, because of the winter season, it tends to be foggy, so that kills the wind," he said.

"I think there is room for improvement but I think this competition is going to grow as the potential for racing in this part of the world is great," AVECILLA added.

Subic Sailing teamed up with a Japanese group named Turquoise, making them ten in the group.

"We had good teamwork and we were fortunate to actually win several daily races here," said AVECILLA.

ASK THE VET

by Dr Ruan Du Toit Bester

AN INTRO TO DOG HEARING

External ear

There are two part to your dog's external ear. The pinna and the external ear canal. The pinna, or the ear flap, gives each breed of dog its distinctive look. The ear flap is made up of cartilage which gives the ear strength. The coned shape structure of the ear delivers sound to the external ear canal. The external ear canal also called the auditory canal picks up the sound and sends it down the canal to the ear drum. This canal runs down the side of the head diagonally and then horizontally into the head.

Middle ear

The middle ear includes the tympanic membrane, or eardrum, and the tympanic cavity. The ear drum is a thin tissue that separates the external ear from the middle and inner ear. Once the sound reaches the ear drum it vibra-

tes through air vibration and sends it to the tympanic cavity. The tympanic cavity contains auditory ossicles which are three small bones that vibrate with noise. These bones are the malleus, the stapes and the incus. These bones are connected and are located just behind the ear drum to the window of the inner ear. Unless the ear drum is ruptured, the middle and inner ear is not visible. To keep the ear pressure normal, the middle ear is connected to the pharynx by the eustachian tube. This allows air to pass in and out from the pharynx to the middle ear.

Inner ear

The inner ear is located by the petrous temporal bones of the skull. It contains cilia, which are tiny hair-like strands that are responsible for changing sound impulses into electronic

impulses. The inner ear houses a bony labyrinth or osseous that contains fluid filled membranes. There are three structures that are in the inner ear: the cochlea, vestibule and three semicircular canals. The cochlea contains nerves that pass on the sound impulses that are responsible for hearing. The vestibule and the semicircular canals are tissues that are responsible for equilibrium and balance maintenance. The cochlea, the vestibule and the semicircular canals are full of cranial nerves which transmit sound and balance to the brain.

Deafness

When puppies are born they are not able to hear. Their eardrums are closed until they are 10 days old. They can start to hear sound in about 14 days. At four weeks their inner ears are fully developed and a veterinarian can then check for deafness. Deafness results in the damage to the ear drum, the middle and inner structures or the nerves. Disease, trauma or certain drugs can cause deafness in your dog. Deafness can also be hereditary and can affect



certain breeds such as Dalmatians, Boston Terriers, Rottweilers and Border Collies.

Hope this info helps
Till next week
Dr Ruan Bester

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HEALTH

Two-year old hospitalized with flu complications, six new cases reported

A two-year old girl has been hospitalized in Kiang Wu Hospital due to complications related to an infection caused by the Influenza A virus. The child, a local resident attending Santa Rosa de Lima Nursery, has been hospitalized after complications arose while treating the flu which she had been diagnosed with last Friday, the Health Bureau (SSM) informed in a statement.

According to her medical report, the Outpatient Clinic of Kiang Wu Hospital initially received the case in the morning of January 11. After the girl was tested positive for influenza A virus, she was released with a prescription for the medicine "Tamiflu".

However, the symptoms persisted and progressed to convulsions and consciousness disorder, which resulted in the girl being brought back to the hospital that night for treatment through the Emergency Service.

The girl's high fever led to a lumbar puncture examination which revealed an increase in the intracranial pressure resulting in the diagnosis being changed to influenza A infection with mild encephalitis. The SSM added according to the latest update, the patient is in a stable condition and is responding positively to the treatment. The same report also noted that none of the girl's family members has reported any symptoms of the disease and the nursery



has not registered any case of infection with flu. This is the second recent case of encephalitis affecting a child in Macau. Last week, a four-year-old boy was in a life-threatening situation from the same infection, but his condition has improved since. Additionally, the SSM reported that there were six new cases of flu with pneumonia reported on Saturday in both the Conde de São

Januário Hospital Center and the Kiang Wu Hospital.

Five of these required hospitalization and one needed medical treatment.

These cases resulted in the total figures rising, from September 2018, to 21 cases of influenza with pneumonia or other complications, which resulted in one death.

According to the bureau, in 76 percent of cases, patients had not been vaccinated against the flu. **RM**

Power outage incident affects 396 households



A transformer failure occurred at 6:33 p.m. yesterday causing a power outage that, according to CEM, affected 396 households in the areas of Ho Lan Un and Guia. CEM has dispatched emergency teams and a mobile generator on-site to repair and provide support. However, the usage of the mobile generator required the closure of part of the Horta de Costa Road, which necessitated longer time for traffic coordination and wiring. A statement issued by CEM indicates that the power supply resumed at 8:31 p.m..

Wong Sio Chak wants to improve communication mechanism

Last week, part of the ceiling on the seventh floor of the New Yao Han department store collapsed, resulting in three people being injured, including a 12-year-old girl. The incident was not reported to the media, and the police authority was accused of poor communication with the public. Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, stated last Friday that the police authority did not conceal the case. Citing the Public Security Police Force (PSP), the incident was not within the ambit of the reciprocal notification mechanism. Wong claims that he would obtain instructions about releasing information from the PSP, and that the security force would then conduct an assessment regarding the method of notification. The Secretary further stated that the government will improve communication mechanisms with the media.

Parent says Alexis Tam's visit was 'publicity stunt'

Last week, while Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam was visiting the Centro Hospital Conde de São Januário, a local parent described Tam's visit as "disturbing and a publicity stunt." Tam arrived in the hospital around 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, and visited the waiting area. When a group of parents and children became surrounded by journalists, one parent used the aforementioned expression to depict Tam's visit. Commenting on the parent's statement, Tam denied disturbing the public and also denied the visit was a publicity stunt. Tam explained that inviting the media to report on his visit served to let residents know the importance of preventing the flu.

Water pipe leakage floods road in Taipa

A severe leakage resulting from a disconnection of underground water pipes has caused flooding on the sidewalk by the roundabout which interconnects the Avenida dos Jogos da Asia Oriental, the Avenida

Marginal Flor de Lotus and the Avenida do Estadio in Taipa at around 1 a.m. on Saturday, TDM reported.

The causes of the rupture were related to works being done at a construction site in the same area,

and the authorities provided a prompt response to the incident.

As a consequence of the flooding of the sidewalk, the police was forced to detour all traffic from the area during the early hours of Saturday while water

supply to several buildings in the surrounding area was also suspended to allow for repairs to be made.

According to Macao Water, the repair was done and supply was reestablished a few hours later.

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News at hand



"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

F3 DRIVER TICKTUM

'Macau makes Monaco feel boring'

BRITISH racing driver Dan Ticktum says the Guia Circuit in Macau is a favorite track of his and many other top racing drivers.

The Guia Circuit has a unique combination of long straights, tight corners and elevation change, meaning the 6.2km track is widely regarded as one of the world's most challenging circuits.

"I've got quite a biased view on Macau," acknowledged Ticktum, who has won the previous two editions of the Macau Grand Prix. "From the first year I drove there, it was immediately my favorite track. It's just unlike anywhere else. It makes Monaco feel boring! I think all the F1 drivers who have done it will say that Macau's their favorite."

Previous winners of the Macau Grand Prix include Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher, and Ticktum's praise of Macau echoes that of reigning Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton, who told Xinhua at last year's Abu Dhabi Grand Prix that the Guia Circuit was also one of his favorite tracks.

Ticktum was speaking to Xinhua at the Chang International Circuit in Thailand,



Dan Ticktum

where the Briton was competing in the Asian Winter Series in a bid to secure enough points for a superlicense, which will allow him to compete in the Formula 1 World Championship.

"Achieving [enough points for] a superlicense is the primary reason I'm here, but there are other reasons, like more track time. My last race was in November, so it would be about five months [without racing] until the new season starts, so it's nice to have a bit of track time in the winter, and to have a goal and to try to win something."

Also competing in the Asian Winter Series was China's rising star Ye Yifei. Despite being just 18 years old, the Shaanxi-born driver already has several years' experience in European single seaters, and Ticktum noted that Ye would be one of his closest rivals for the series title.

"Yifei has been very strong. There's always people that come through and surprise you, but I think we've got three or four drivers here that are definitely going to keep me on my toes. I'll have to do my best to take the title." **MDT/Xinhua**

Residential mortgage loans increase 6.6 percent

NEW approvals of residential mortgage loans (RMLs) rose in November 2018, according to the latest data from the Monetary Authority of Macao, while approvals for commercial real estate loans (CRELs) decreased. With regard to the outstanding balance, both RMLs and CRELs witnessed monthly increases.

New RMLs approved by Macau banks increased by 6.6 percent month-to-month in November to MOP3.6 billion, of which the resident component accounted for 99 percent of the total, rising 6.9 percent to MOP3.6 billion.

The monthly average of new RMLs approved between September and November 2018 was MOP5.5 billion, down by 18.4 percent from the previous period, August to October 2018.

Meanwhile, new CRELs dropped 11.6 percent month-to-month to MOP2.8 billion.



Within this total, new CRELs to residents, which accounted for 94.1 percent of the total, decreased by 11.7 percent to MOP2.7 billion.

The monthly average of new CRELs approved between September and November 2018 was MOP3.1 billion, down by 42.7 percent when compared with the previous period of August to October 2018.

As at the end of November 2018, the outstanding value of RMLs stood at MOP212.3

billion, up by 0.2 percent from a month earlier or 12.3 percent from a year ago. When compared with the previous month, outstanding RMLs to residents rose by 0.2 percent, whereas those to non-residents decreased by 0.3 percent.

The outstanding value of CRELs was MOP192.4 billion, up by 1.6 percent month-to-month or 7.7 percent from a year earlier, with the resident component increasing 1.8 percent.

Fringe Festival launched Friday

THE 18th Macao City Fringe Festival kicked off Friday evening with an opening ceremony held at the Old Court Building, which was attended by Leong Wai Man, vice-president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, other government officials and representatives of some of the participating art groups.

The Festival began with same-day events including 'Sigma' by circus group Gandini Juggling and award-winning choreographer Seeta Patel from the United Kingdom, showcasing exuberant rhythms and colors and creating virtuoso geometries through the combination of circus and Indian dance.

This Fringe Festival is themed "Extra. Ordinary." According to organizers, through different means of expression, the festival seeks to "liberate creativity from theatre spaces to every corner of the city, injecting changes to daily scenes, and ultimately turning arts into a daily routine."

A host of other activities will be staged until the Festival concludes on January 27. This includes the Interactive Urban Music Ensemble featuring installation art and an outdoor orchestra, which invites audiences to play music by touching an installation with drawings of different musical instruments.

Additionally, Ephemeral Windows - Rooftop Street Art uses rice paper to show a non-invasive street art, and invites people from different walks of life to exchange views and participate, transforming the city through art. Flash Mob - Phubber Drama invites the audiences to engage in an interaction filled with fun and reflection by catching "phubbers" at bus stops.

Other performances include The Icebook by British artists Davy and



Kristin McGuire from the United Kingdom, the world's first projection mapped pop-up book; Be My Old Friend by the Dream Theatre Association, a show which tells personal stories of the elderly to piece together the bygone days of Macau; the outdoor performance Sonia, written by local scriptwriter Ma Wai In and directed by Ku Ieng Un, in which the audience will listen to a story reflecting the "reality" of "non-human" characters; the dance performance Goldfish, presented by Four Dimension Spatial from Macau and Changde Modern Dance Company from Hunan, revealing concealed memories of emotional taboos under a dream theme.

The Fringe Festival also features 10 outreach activities, including workshops, talks, art critique and sharing sessions, which seek to enrich the audience's artistic experience with more diverse activities.

EDUCATION

UM launches master's degree program in big data

THE University of Macau (UM) will launch a Master of Science in Data Science program in the 2019/2020 academic year to nurture a new type of professional in big data processing and applications. The new program will cover various areas, including artificial intelligence, marketing, financial technology, precision medicine, and intelligent education, with the aim of promoting the use of big data in different disciplines and the integration of data science and big data applications. According to a statement issued by the UM, it is the first interdisciplinary program in big data that has been launched in Macau, and is suitable for students from different academic backgrounds, including those outside of computer engineering.

Big data technology enables us to quickly collect valuable information from various kinds of data. Because of its rapid development

and its enormous potential for application, there is a growing demand for professionals in big data and data analysis worldwide.

The two-year program will include courses in data processing and programming, data visualization, data analysis and mining. It is a collaborative project among UM's six faculties, providing students with a choice of seven specializations. Those include artificial intelligence applications, big data and analytics in marketing, financial technology, data strategy and compliance, precision medicine, second language studies, and intelligent education.

Students in the program will be asked to choose one specialization so as to learn to apply big data effectively in their chosen field. The program is now in the process of registration and will be launched officially after being published in the Official Gazette.




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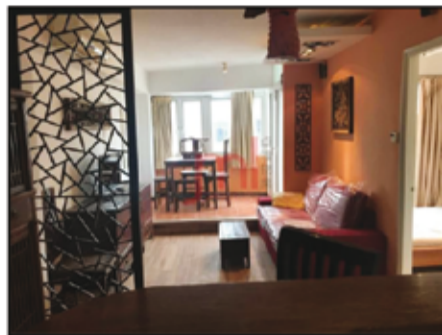
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Macau Square Office Space, Macau CBD

(Ref: 18100691)
837 sq.ft. HKD 21,000

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



Kok Vui Apartment, St. Paul's Ruins

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

Located at the historical center of Macau with breathtaking balcony views of the Ruins of St. Paul, this 2-bedroom apartment is perfect for a single professional or a couple looking to stay close to the pulse of the city and experience an authentic Macau lifestyle.



Office - Dynasty Plaza

(Ref: 18070685)
3,500 sq.ft. HKD 72,000

This spacious commercial space is immediately available for rent in the NAPE area of Macau. The former lawyer's office is well suited for any commercial tenant looking for a convenient park-side work space, including architectural firms, law firms and design companies. Viewing available upon request.



Apartment B, Sakura Court, Ocean Garden

(Ref: 18040674)
3700 sq.ft. HKD 35,000

Mid - floor, 4 bedroom apartment located in Taipa. Nice apartment for family. Unfurnished, but all appliances built-in. Large and bright living room with balcony with amazing seaview. Carpark included. Clubhouse facilities can be available gymnasium, outdoor pool, mini theatre, function rooms etc.

FOR SALE



LAKE VIEW TOWER

(Ref: 19015572)
1497 sq.ft. HKD 11.82 M
Rate: HKD 7900

Located in front of the Nam Van Lake, beautiful spacious and bright 2 bedroom apartment with 2 bathrooms. Well designed Kitchen with built in appliances. This lovely home, in the popular area of Nam Van Lake is within 5 minutes walking from Ferreira Amaral and Senado Square. Stunning Clubhouse facilities include pool, sauna, gym.



Taipa, Nam Long

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

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



Taipa, Supreme Flower City

(Ref: 13105367)
2060 sq.ft. HKD 16.4M
Rate: HKD 7961

The large living spaces in Supreme are very popular with families thanks to the amount of natural light, the high ratio of usable area and the generous room sizes. This 4 bedroom / 2 bathroom apartment has recently been renovated, it features a good sized western style kitchen including a built in oven and fitted cupboards, and high a quality finish.



Sea View Condo, Hellene Gardens

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

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



Ocean Garden Elm Court

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

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



Calçada da Surpresa, 12, Ching Fai Court, Macau

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

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



One Central, Tower 7 - Macau T7

(Ref: 18045554)
2700 sq.ft. HKD 31.9M
Rate: HKD 11814

Unique opportunity to live in an exclusive penthouse. Located in the One Central complex this property offers stunning views across the South China Sea towards Hong Kong. Floor to ceiling windows across one wall makes the living / dining room bright and spacious.



F Unit, Manhattan Taipa

(Ref: 16105507)
1720 sq.ft. HKD 13.6M
Rate: HKD 7906

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AL PLENARY

LRT major projects carried out on time, Rosário says

Julie Zhu

THE majority of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) projects have been carried out within timetable and budget, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, announced during a Legislative Assembly (AL) plenary meeting on Friday.

The parliament debated the LRT project in addition to matters concerning the project's budget and deadlines, which were discussed by lawmakers and clarified by the Secretary.

Answering lawmaker Angela Leong's question regarding the project requiring extended time for completion, Rosário suggested the lawmaker check with the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) and with the Infrastructure Development Office (GDI) in order to follow the project's progress.

"Eighty percent, or 90 percent of this matter has already been solved. This problem [over time and over budget] does not exist. [...] One or two projects indeed have those problems. [...] Please check the information we provide you on our website. Please don't repeat this question again," said Rosário.

The Secretary also responded to a statement which says that he would leave many tasks to the next government.

"The things I will leave to the next government will be less than the things I received [from the previous government]," said the Secretary.

Sulu Sou voiced that the government "does not have a budget," and that all numbers concerning said budget are only an estimate. He wants the government to solve the LRT problem.



"I agree with you, the most important [thing] is solving the problem. [...] These problems [that the lawmakers are raising] were ones which had been asked about before," said the Secretary.

Rosário's department decided that once the LRT Taipa section is done, the next consideration for the LRT line should be based on the Taipa section. In view of such reasoning, the government delayed the construction of an LRT system in Macau.

Many lawmakers wanted the Secretary to explain whether it is feasible to extend the LRT line to the Inner Harbor area. "I have never [done any research] on whether the Inner Harbor line is feasible. I have not spent time doing research because there are many important things to be done. [...] In the near future, the LRT will become the main [transportation], while buses will become a subsidiary," he explained.

Agnes Lam also criticized the government for not having a clear budget for the LRT project on the Macau side.

"You can continue your criticism. It's not that I don't give you a budget. It's because I am unable to give you one. [...] I don't even know which line goes where. How could I give you a budget? But, about the Barra section budgets, I can give you information," said Rosário.

I don't even know which line goes where. How could I give you a budget?

RAIMUNDO DO ROSÁRIO
SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Previously, it was announced that the LRT had been planned to be extended to Hengqin. According to Raimundo, the government has launched research on an extension. However, due to issues posed by the border divi-

sion, the government is still not making a final decision considering the location of the LRT Hengqin station.

"If the border gate is not the target of the decision, I don't know [where the station will be located]," said Rosário.

Lawmaker Cheung Lup Kwan wants the government to suspend the LRT project. "The LRT is related to Macau people's history and memory. In the beginning, [residents] were excited about it. But from then to now, residents have gone from being excited to being disappointed. I think that today, when we talk about this thing [the LRT], we should temporarily suspend it," said Cheung.

"If, suddenly, the LRT is suspended and the money gets distributed among residents, they will be even happier," said Cheung.

Regarding the LRT budget, Rosário once again noted that the budget for the LRT Taipa section is MOP11 billion and for the Taipa to Barra section is MOP4.5 billion. Moreover, there is another MOP2.5 billion for projects which have not been completed yet. In total, the LRT expenditure is estimated at MOP18 billion.

Ho Ion Sang voiced his disagreement toward the suspension of the LRT project. In the lawmaker's opinion, the suspension will deem all expenditures to have been made in vain, and will deem the LRT Taipa section an international joke.

More lawmakers, including Leong Sun Iok, also supported the continuation of the LRT project. However, they hope that the government can improve budget transparency, speed up the construction process, and complete the project on time.

Consumer complaints at highest level since 2010

MACAU'S Consumer Council received a total of 2,290 complaints in 2018, one-third more than the previous year, and the highest number of complaints in a single year since 2010.

The top five categories in terms of number of complaints last year were jewelry (201 cases), public transportation (166 cases), food and beverage (163 cases), personal care products and services (148 cases), and food services (144 cases). These five categories accounted for 35 percent of total complaints in 2018.

According the Consumer Council, complaints regarding jewelry mainly involved disputes related to tourist groups visiting designated jewelry shops as well as prices and quality of gold and diamond ornaments. The Council has started sending out guidelines to customers through the China Consumers Association and consumer organizations in different provinces and cities in China, advising tourists on buying gold and other ornaments in Macau.

The Council also works together with other government departments and requires the gold industry to label prices and other information about gold ornaments in detail. The Council will also be focusing on complaints in this category and will provide assistance to customers to protect consumer rights.

About 75 percent of the complaints regarding public transportation related to overcharging and the service attitude of taxi drivers. The number of cases in this category has increased by 40 percent compared to 2017.

Meanwhile, there was a 60 percent increase in complaints recorded in food and beverage, mainly concerning item quality and prices. Complaints in the food services category surged by 70 percent.

An increase of 57 percent was recorded in the number of complaints about personal care products and services, with consumers accusing sales personnel of being too aggressive.

With regards to complaints about public services, the Council is planning to publish more consumer alerts to strengthen awareness of consumer rights. Several complaints in this category involved the use of electronic payments.

GAMING

Massachusetts ends Wynn probe, but won't release findings yet

THE Massachusetts Gaming Commission completed an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct against former gambling executive Steve Wynn and the company he founded, Wynn Resorts Ltd.

The commission won't release any of the findings or a conclusion until its attorneys assess a Ne-

vada judge's ruling this month that bars some of the information from being disclosed.

David Mackey, an outside counsel to the commission, told the panel last week he is awaiting a written version of Nevada District Court Judge Elizabeth Gonzalez's ruling. Upon receiving that, Mackey said, investigators will assess

what may need to be removed from the report. Ed Bedrosian, executive director of the commission, said the work was otherwise complete.

Regulators in Nevada, Macau and Massachusetts began investigations of the company following reports of sexual harassment by Wynn, charges that he has denied. The casino industry legend

left the company last February and sold all of his shares. Wynn Resorts has replaced much of its board and executive ranks since then. Depending on the results of the investigations, none of which have been made public, Wynn Resorts could lose its license to operate in any of the jurisdictions.

Wynn Resorts is build-

ing a \$2.6 billion hotel and casino just outside of Boston that is scheduled to open in June. Wynn executives told commissioners Thursday that the project is 90 percent complete and scheduled to open on time.

Wynn shares declined 41 percent last year as betting activity in Las Vegas and Macau slowed. **Bloomberg**

Huawei fires sales manager who Poland charged with spying

Vanessa Gera, Kelvin Chan

THE Chinese tech company Huawei on Saturday announced it has fired a sales director who was arrested in Poland and charged with spying for China, saying he has brought the firm's reputation "into disrepute."

The company said it has "decided to terminate the employment of Mr. Wang Weijing, who was arrested on suspicion of breaking Polish law."

Polish authorities said Friday they have arrested Wang, a Chinese citizen and former diplomat, along with a Polish cybersecurity expert who had held several top government cybersecurity jobs and also worked at the telecom company Orange.

Huawei said Wang's actions "have no relation to the company" and that he was fired because "the incident in question has brought Huawei into disrepute."

The arrest rekindled tensions between China and the West over cybersecurity concerns surrounding Huawei. It's the world's biggest maker of telecommunications equipment but has been banned in the U.S. since 2012 over fears it's a security risk.

Earlier this week, Polish security agents searched the Warsaw offices of Huawei and Orange, Poland's leading communications provider, seizing documents and electronic data. The homes of both men, also in Warsaw, were also searched, according to Internal Security Agency spokesman Stanislaw Zaryn.

Huawei had ambitious plans in Europe to roll out next-generation "5G" mobile networks.



The Huawei logo displayed at the main office of Chinese tech giant Huawei in Warsaw

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

"One thing is clear: this is another nail in the coffin of Huawei's European ambitions," said Thorsten Benner, director of the Global Public Policy Institute, a think tank.

Poland is Huawei's headquarters for Central and Eastern Europe and the Nordic region.

Maciej Wasik, deputy head of Poland's Special Services agency, said the operation that resulted in the arrests had been underway for a long time. He said "both carried out espionage activities against Poland."

Zaryn told The Associated Press that prosecutors have charged the two men with espionage, but agents are conti-

nuing to collect evidence and interview witnesses. Further indictments are expected, he said.

Polish state television TVP reported that the men have proclaimed their innocence, but Zaryn could not confirm that. If convicted, they could face up to 10 years in prison each.

TVP identified the arrested Chinese man as Weijing W., saying he was a sales director in Poland at Huawei. It said he also went by the Polish first name of Stanislaw and had previously worked at the Chinese consulate in Gdansk.

A LinkedIn profile for a man named Stanislaw Wang appears to match details described by Polish television.

Wang's resume said he worked at China's General Consulate in Gdansk from 2006-2011 and at Huawei Enterprise Poland since 2011, where he was first director of public affairs and since 2017 the "sales director of

public sector." The resume said he received a bachelor's degree in 2004 from the Beijing University of Foreign Studies.

State TV identified the Polish man as Piotr D., and said he was a high-ranking employee at the Internal Security Agency, where he served as deputy director in the department of information security, until 2011.

The Polish state news agency, PAP, said the man had also held top cybersecurity positions at the Interior Ministry and the Office of Electronic Communications, a regulatory body. It said, while at the Internal Security Agency, he was involved in building a mobile communications system for top Polish officials, and he was fired in 2011 amid a corruption scandal.

Geopolitical tensions over Huawei have intensified since Canada arrested a top executive last month at the request of U.S. authorities. Last year

Australia, New Zealand and Japan instituted their own bans against using Huawei.

An official at the Chinese Embassy in Warsaw said Chinese envoys had urged Polish Foreign Ministry officials to arrange a consular visit with Wang "as soon as possible."

Orange Poland told the AP on Friday it was cooperating with Polish security services in the case and had "handed over belongings of one of our employees" in Tuesday's search of its offices. Orange told the AP it did not know if the suspicions against its employee were related to his work at Orange or his previous jobs.

One thing is clear: this is another nail in the coffin of Huawei's European ambitions.

THORSTEN BENNER
DIRECTOR OF THE GLOBAL PUBLIC
POLICY INSTITUTE

Huawei's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, was arrested Dec. 1 in Canada in connection with U.S. accusations that the company violated restrictions on sales of American technology to Iran.

The United States wants Meng extradited to face charges that she misled banks about the company's business dealings in Iran. She is out on bail in Canada awaiting extradition proceedings.

On Dec. 10, China detained former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and Canadian entrepreneur Michael Spavor on vague national security allegations in apparent retaliation for Meng's arrest. AP

Ikea announces plans to open first New Zealand store

SWEDISH home furnishings giant Ikea announced plans on Friday to open its first New Zealand store. The company said it would build the store near the largest city of Auckland over the next few years, and would open a pop-up store to give customers a taste of what was to come before the flagship store opened.

The announcement was welcomed by many New Zealanders concerned with high prices and limited selections for home furnishings, due in part to the costs of shipping to the island

nation of 5 million people. Others worried that Ikea could spell doom for some local retailers and manufacturers.

Ikea said planning is still underway for the location, size and opening date of the store, which would include a restaurant featuring its famous Swedish meatballs. The company said it would employ several hundred New Zealanders and offer 7,000 products in the store and online.

The store will be run by the Ingka Group, which is the biggest retailer for Ikea

within its franchise system. Ikea announced last month it was granting Ingka the franchise rights to New Zealand.

"We're really looking forward to bringing the full Ikea experience to New Zealand, working in partnership with the local community to make Ikea a part of kiwis life at home, starting with Auckland," said Ingka Group Chief Executive Jesper Brodin in a statement.

Ingka in November announced plans to create a net 4,000 jobs over the next

two years by expanding its online presence and opening new stores in city centers to complement its trademark larger stores in the suburbs. But it also planned staffing cutbacks.

It said the changes would create 11,500 new jobs and it would lay off 7,500 staff.

Ingka operates 367 Ikea stores in 30 countries and employs about 160,000 of Ikea's total workforce of 208,000.

Ikea was founded in Sweden in 1943. The Ikea Group has its headquarters in Leiden, the Netherlands. AP



Volkswagen sets new full-year sales record in race for No 1

GERMAN auto-maker Volkswagen posted another annual sales record in 2018 as new SUV models boosted deliveries and the company managed to increase its share in China even as the car market there shrank for the first time in years.

The Wolfsburg-based maker of Volkswagen, Audi, Porsche, Skoda and other brand name cars sold 10.83 million vehicles, beating its 2017 record of 10.74 million cars by 0.9 percent.

Marketing head Christian Dahlheim said increasing sales in a global passenger car market that contracted by 1.2 percent last year was "a great result."

Dahlheim said the company overcame bottlenecks in getting cars certified under new emission rules that took effect Sept. 1 in Europe. Those difficulties



hurt sales in the following months in Europe. The company overcame that with strong increases in South America and Eastern Europe as well as Russia. In the company's single largest market, China, sales rose 0.5 percent even as the overall market shrank.

In 2017, Volkswagen contested the title of world's biggest carmaker with the

Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance. The alliance asserted that it was No. 1 with 10.6 million vehicles sold and said Volkswagen inflated its tally by counting trucks. The alliance announces 2018 figures later this month.

Toyota, dethroned by Volkswagen as No. 1 in 2016, has forecast sales of 10.55 million for 2018 but has not

released final figures.

The company no longer sets unit sales records as a primary business goal. Taking over the top spot in the global sales race was a target once set by former CEO Martin Winterkorn, who lost his job in 2015 after the company was caught installing software that let cars cheat on U.S. emissions tests. The company paid more than 27 billion euros (more than USD31 billion) in fines and settlements.

Sport-utility vehicles rose from a 12.6 percent share of Volkswagen sales in 2014 to 23.2 percent last year. SUVs, which carry higher prices and profit margins than older types of vehicles such as sedans and hatchbacks, have been a strong growth category for automakers. The highest share for Volkswagen was 43 percent in North America. **AP**

Bamboo Airways will join Vietnam's crowded skies on January 16

VIETNAM'S Bamboo Airways, after repeated delays, will start commercial flights on Jan. 16, the company said in an emailed statement.

The carrier set minimum ticket prices at 149,000 dong (USD6.40) each. The carrier will initially operate 37 domestic routes, the company said in a separate statement. Bamboo Airways will also start this year international flights to Asian countries, starting with Japan, Korea and Singapore, it said.

Hotel and leisure company FLC Group JSC, which owns Bamboo Airways, will be competing in one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets against state-owned Vietnam Airlines JSC and budget carrier VietJet Aviation JSC. The International Air Transport Association forecasts Vietnam will be among the world's top five fastest-growing air travel markets in the next 20 years. The route between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City is already the world's sixth-busiest in terms of passenger numbers last year, according to IATA.

Bamboo Airways will initially use 20 leased narrow-body and wide-body aircraft, the carrier has said. FLC agreed to buy 24 Airbus SE A321neo planes worth \$3.2 billion at list price for Bamboo Airways. In June, it signed a commitment for 20 Boeing Co. twin-aisle 787-9 Dreamliners with a list price of \$5.6 billion.

Vietnam's airports in 2018 handled 106 million passengers, a 12.9 percent increase over the previous year, according to a statement on the Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam's website. Vietnamese carriers flew more than 50 million passengers, a 14 percent jump from 2017. **Bloomberg**

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Food giants undermined China's obesity fight, scholar says

Candice Choi, New York

CHINA'S efforts to keep obesity in check have been undermined from the inside by the food industry, according to newly published research.

A scholar of Chinese society at Harvard University traced how a group funded by Coca-Cola and other food companies enjoyed close ties to Chinese health officials. The group helped tilt the country's obesity fight with the message that exercise matters more than dietary habits, which health advocates say is a way to deflect attention from food's role in fueling obesity.

The International Life Sciences Institute was created in 1978 by a former Coke executive and has 17 branches around the world. In China, its small but influential branch organized obesity conferences focusing on physical activity, with speakers including Coke-funded researchers and a Coke executive, according to the papers published in *The BMJ* and *The Journal of Public Health Policy*.

A national exercise program for school children called "Happy 10 Minutes" was also modeled after a pet project of the former Coke executive who founded ILSI, the papers say. The concept might have a familiar ring for Americans. Facing criticism over its sugary drinks in the U.S., Coca-Cola in 2013 ran a TV ad showing activities that can burn the "140 happy calories" in a can of Coke. The activities included walking a dog, dancing, bowling and sharing a laugh with friends.

In another online ad in the U.S., the company showed people working off the calories in a can of Coke by riding a giant stationary bicycle as carnival music plays. The phrase "Movement



is happiness" appears on screen toward the end.

Susan Greenhalgh, the papers' author, noted the difficulty in trying to untangle how much of China's emphasis on exercise in recent years can be attributed to ILSI's influence. But she said ILSI's activities highlight the difficulty in assessing how food makers may be skewing public policy around the world.

"There's virtually no research on the incredibly complicated network by which ILSI Global and all its branches have been influencing obesity science," she said.

Chinese health officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In a statement, ILSI did not directly address the research findings but said it "does not profess to have been perfect in our 40-year his-

tory." It said it has instituted guidelines in recent years to ensure scientific integrity.

"The journey to best-in-class nutrition and food safety science research has been a circuitous one. Not surprisingly, there have been bumps along the way," the statement said.

The food industry has long faced criticism that it plays up the importance of physical activity to minimize the role of food and drinks in poor health. Mike Donahue, former chief spokesman at McDonald's, said such efforts may be seen as nefarious, but are intended to put foods in the context of overall lifestyles.

In 2004, for instance, McDonald's launched a campaign featuring "Adult Happy Meals" with pedometers and events where Ronald McDonald promoted exercise. Donahue said the cam-

paign was partly in anticipation of the documentary "Super Size Me" that detailed how a diet of McDonald's led to poor health. "It's playing offense rather than defense," he said.

In the U.S., prominent politicians and groups often collaborate with food makers on high-profile campaigns to improve public health. Industry efforts aren't always transparent, however, and there has been growing interest in uncovering businesses' hidden influence.

In 2015, *The New York Times* reported Coca-Cola was funding a nonprofit led by obesity researchers. The Associated Press subsequently obtained emails showing Coke's role in shaping the nonprofit, which the company envisioned would run a political-style campaign to counter the "shrill rhetoric" of "public

health extremists."

Amid backlash over the revelations, the Atlanta-based company pledged to be more transparent about its health efforts. In a statement responding to the new paper, the company said it recognizes that "too much sugar isn't good for anyone" and that it is rethinking how to reduce the sugar in its drinks around the world.

While the food industry's influence in the U.S. is well-established and debated, Greenhalgh said conflicts of interest and collaboration with industry are not seen as problems in China.

■ The food industry has long faced criticism that it plays up the importance of physical activity to minimize the role of food and drinks in poor health

"The whole political discourse around it is totally different," she said.

Greenhalgh said ILSI's influence in China stemmed from its former leader, who remained a senior adviser until her death last year. The group still shares an office with a government health agency, but its influence may be waning without its former director, Greenhalgh said.

Meanwhile, obesity has become an increasing concern in China. In 2016, China's updated dietary guidelines said sugary drinks should be discouraged. The following year, obesity and was one of the health issues targeted in a government nutrition plan. **AP**

Detained ex-Canadian diplomat gets consular visit in China

Rob Gillies, Toronto

CANADIAN diplomats have visited former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig for the second time since his arrest in China a month ago.

Canada's Global Affairs department provided no further details on how Kovrig was being treated. He and entrepreneur Michael Spavor were detained on Dec. 10 on allegations of "engaging in activities that endanger

the national security" of China.

The arrests came after a top Chinese Huawei executive was arrested in Canada on Dec. 1 at the request of the United States, which wants her extradited to face charges that she misled banks about the company's business dealings in Iran. She is out on bail in Canada awaiting extradition proceedings.

In an op-ed Wednesday, China's ambassador to

Canada described the detentions of the Canadians as an "act of self-defense."

Canada said it would continue to seek further access to Kovrig and Spavor.

"The Canadian government remains deeply concerned by the arbitrary detention by Chinese authorities of these two Canadians since last month and continues to call for their immediate release," Global Affairs Canada said in a statement

Canada has embarked on a campaign with allies to win the release of the detained Canadians.

"Canada continues to express its appreciation to those who have spoken in support of these detained Canadians and the rule of law. This includes Australia, the EU, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, and, most recently, the Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia," Global Affairs said. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Michael Kovrig

TAIWAN

Tsai appoints new premier following election loss

Taijing Wu, Taipei

TAIWANESE President Tsai Ing-wen appointed a close political ally as premier during a Cabinet reshuffle Friday following the ruling party's heavy election losses and growing pressure from rival China.

Su Tseng-chang took charge of the Cabinet amid tense relations with Beijing, which threatens to use force to take control of the island it claims as its own. China responded to Tsai's 2016 victory by cutting all contacts with her government and has ratcheted up economic and diplomatic pressure on the self-governing democracy.

The opposition Nationalist Party, which favors closer ties with Beijing, won 15 of 22 major seats in the Nov. 24 local elections, including in the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's southern stronghold of Kaohsiung. Soon after, Tsai resigned as chair of the DPP, which rejects



Tsai Ing-wen (center) holds hands with Su Tseng-chang (right) and William Lai

China's demands for unification with the mainland.

Analysts attributed the DPP's election losses to disappointment with the performance of Tsai's government, which had won a broad mandate, including seizing a majority in the legislature from the Nationalists for the first time since full democracy was attained three decades ago.

"The people expect us to improve livelihoods. The people expect us to protect democracy. The peo-

ple expect us to safeguard sovereignty," Tsai said at a ceremony at the Presidential Office Building. "These challenges need an experienced premier such as Su Tseng-chang to overcome."

Su thanked Tsai for her trust and support, adding, "Now, I will lead the team and roll up my sleeves to satisfy the people's expectations and respond to people's interests."

China's pressure campaign has increased Taiwan's international iso-

lation, reducing its number of diplomatic allies to just 17, excluding its representatives to international gatherings, and forcing international companies to designate Taiwan as a part of China. Chinese President Xi Jinping renewed the threat of invasion in a Jan. 2 address, saying the ruling communists "made no promises to abandon the use of force."

The island's high-tech economy continues to grow at a sluggish pace, and salaries for graduates have remained flat, increasing the lure of opportunities in China. Efforts at pension and fiscal reform have also been unpopular.

Su, 71, was a human rights lawyer and co-founder of the DPP during the former martial law era under the Nationalists, who shifted their government from China to Taiwan after defeat by the communists on the mainland in 1949.

He previously served as premier in 2006-07, as well as party chairman, legislator and county magistrate. **AP**

Spacecraft pictures from moon's far side aired

CHINA on Friday broadcast pictures taken by its rover and lander on the moon's far side, in what its space program hailed as another triumph for the groundbreaking mission to the less-understood sector of the lunar surface.

The pictures on state broadcaster CCTV showed the Jade Rabbit 2 rover and the Chang'e 4 spacecraft that transported it on the first-ever soft landing on the far side of the moon, which always faces away from Earth.

The pictures were transmitted by a relay satellite to a control center in Beijing, although it wasn't immediately clear when they were taken.

"The lander, its rover, and the relay satellite are all in a stable condition. They have reached the predetermined engineering goals, right now they are getting into the sta-



The screen at the Beijing Aerospace Control Center shows the lander of the Chang'e-4 probe (right) and the rover Yutu-2 (Jade Rabbit-2) taking photos of each other

ge of scientific searches," Zhang Kejian, director of the China National Space Administration, said before engineers at the Beijing center.

"Now I declare that the Chang'e 4 mission, as a part of the Chang'e Lunar Exploration Program, has been a success," Zhang said.

Pictures transmitted back show a rocky surface with the jagged edge of craters in the background, posing a challenge for controllers in plotting the rover's future travels, the official Xinhua News

Agency said.

Among the images is a 360-degree panorama stitched together from 80 photos taken by a camera on the lander after it released the rover onto the lunar surface, Xinhua said, citing Li Chunlai, deputy director of the National Astronomical Observatories of China and commander-in-chief of the ground application system of Chang'e 4.

"From the panorama, we can see the probe is surrounded by lots of small craters, which was really thrilling," Li was

quoted as saying.

The space administration also released a 12-minute video of Chang'e 4's landing utilizing more than 4,700 images taken by an on-board camera. The probe is shown adjusting its altitude, speed and pitch as it seeks to avoid obstacles on the ground.

Researchers hope that low-frequency observations of the cosmos from the far side of the moon, where radio signals from Earth are blocked, will help scientists learn more about the early days of the solar system and birth of the universe's first stars.

The far side has been observed many times from lunar orbits, but never explored on the surface. It is popularly called the "dark side" because it can't be seen from Earth and is relatively unknown, not because it lacks sunlight.

The pioneering landing highlights China's ambitions to rival the U.S., Russia and Europe in space through manned flights and the planned construction of a permanent space station. **AP**

opinion

Xi's LEADING CHINA TOWARD ECONOMIC STAGNATION

David Fickling, Bloomberg

The ambition of China hawks in the Trump administration is to maintain American dominance by halting China's economic rise. It's strange that President Xi Jinping appears to be working toward the same end.

The risk for any economy approaching China's level of development is that it gets ensnared in the middle-income trap. Once the low-hanging fruit of urbanization and industrialization have been plucked, countries tend to get stuck in second gear.

Latin America, the former Soviet Union and the largest Middle Eastern countries have never managed to close the gap with the U.S., Europe and Japan that opened up a century ago. The only nations that have really succeeded in making the transition have been petro-states, members of the European Union, and a handful of relatively small, export-oriented Asian economies — Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea.

That immediately suggests a problem for China. One factor that probably drove the four Asian success stories was the size of the global market for their specialized exports relative to their populations, which led to a substantial net inflow of value-added per capita. Even after they opened up their economies, more populous nations such as Russia, Mexico and Turkey failed to achieve a comparable export-led growth spurt — a problem that should be an order of magnitude greater in China's case.

To be sure, Beijing's economic planners seem well aware of the risk. The Made in China 2025 program that has raised hackles in the West looks like nothing so much as an attempt to build a group of high-value export industries that can help the country hurdle its way out of the trap — one of the key characteristics of economies that have achieved the feat, according to a 2017 study for the Asian Development Bank. It's not enough just to have a lot of exports, according to a 2012 paper by associates of the bank: The products involved need to be diverse, sophisticated and of a type to encourage a virtuous circle of technological development.

That's where Xi is pushing the country in the wrong direction.

Building that sort of export sector is unpredictable, and works best when there's a wide array of private businesses with myriad different approaches. But as Bloomberg Opinion contributor Richard McGregor wrote in November, China's president has persistently downplayed the benefits of the private sector and favored sclerotic state-owned national champions instead.

Rhetorically, this shows up in his frequent encomia to zili gengsheng. The term, usually translated as self-reliance, was used by Mao Zedong to denote the isolationist autarky of the Great Leap Forward era. Xi, however, employs it even in speeches where he's meant to be praising the opposite reform-and-opening-up policy pursued by Deng Xiaoping.

As my colleague Noah Smith argued last month, that's more than just rhetoric. Fixed-asset investments by private businesses in China came to 37.8 trillion yuan (\$5.5 trillion) in the 11 months through last November, an increase of 18 percent from three years earlier, according to government data. Those by state and state-owned enterprises climbed at twice the rate — 36 percent — to 21.6 trillion yuan. In the fight for investment capital from the country's lenders, the government is gradually crowding out the private sector.

That's the wrong part of the economy to be favoring, given China's need for export-led growth. In 2013, state-owned enterprises accounted for only 11 percent of overseas shipments, with private domestic companies on 39 percent and 47 percent coming from local affiliates of foreign companies.

The investments are also failing on their own terms. While public fixed-asset spending at the end of 2017 was up 88 percent from five years earlier, profits from state-owned enterprises increased only 17 percent. That divergence is particularly worrying, since a plateau in productivity growth is another key factor keeping countries trapped in middle-income status.

China's economic rise over the past two decades has been so rapid that it's easy to miss the profound weaknesses lurking below the surface. But it's worth remembering that the golden ages for the Soviet and Japanese economies were followed by periods of stagnation that are still ongoing.

The huge increase in the urban workforce that powered China's rise has all but played out, with the country losing almost as many workers as Japan last year. Meanwhile, its capital stock per head in 2014 was about where South Korea's was in the late 1990s, and is likely to now be substantially higher.

As economist George Magnus wrote in his recent book "Red Flags," "complex middle-income countries such as China have, by definition, exhausted much if not most of the potential to get growth by deploying and exploiting physical capital and labor." [...]

Right now, Beijing needs to be pushing hard on all fronts to keep its growth engine running. But Xi's self-reliance policy increasingly resembles the import-substituting industrialization favored by postwar Latin American countries. That delivered staggering growth for a while — but ultimately left economies wallowing in debt and stuck at middle-income status.

[Abridged]

Jokowi challenger moots tax cuts to stimulate economy

Arys Aditya, Viriya Singgih

INDONESIAN presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto is proposing deep tax cuts to stimulate Southeast Asia's largest economy, copying the playbook successfully used by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Subianto and his running mate Sandiaga Uno will lower company and individual taxes by between 5 and 8 percentage points over five years and widen the tax-to-gross domestic product ratio to at least 16 percent from about 11 percent, according to Anthony Budiawan, an economist advising the pair's campaign. Lower taxes will lead to greater compliance and allow the government to cut its borrowings to fund its budget, he said.

The economy has taken center-stage in Indonesia's presidential election campaign, with Subianto targeting incumbent Joko Widodo's policy of adding to record government debt to finance building roads, ports and dams worth billions. The swelling of government debt and its high foreign ownership were factors in a market sell-off last year, which saw the rupiah tumble to levels not seen since the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis.

"Our corporate tax is one of the most expensive in the region," Rizal Ramli, a former finance minister, told reporters in Jakarta on Friday. "Lower tax rates will make Indonesia more competitive."

Indonesia now has a top perso-



Presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto

nal income tax rate of 30 percent and a corporate tax rate of 25 percent.

Subianto, who's popularly known as Prabowo, is taking on Widodo, known as Jokowi, in a rematch of the 2014 election, which he narrowly lost to the former furniture businessman and the first non-elite to occupy the presidential office. The former general has picked Uno, a business-savvy former private equity investor, and has blamed the high public debt and slump in the currency as examples of Jokowi's mismanagement of the economy.

If elected, Prabowo will also introduce a progressive individual tax rate, with the rich paying more to ensure a more equitable society, Budiawan said. A cut of between 5 and 8 percentage points in corporate tax can boost economic growth by as much as 0.7 percentage point a year in

the short term and deliver a 1 percentage point increase in the tax-to-GDP-ratio, said Harryadin Mahardika, a member of the pair's economic team.

While Jokowi's government has failed to increase the tax ratio despite introducing an amnesty plan while it continued to rely on revenue from commodities and debt to finance the budget, a Prabowo administration will overhaul the tax bureaucracy to make it more efficient, Mahardika said.

"Everyone understands the capability of Prabowo and Sandi. They are entrepreneurs and know what they are doing," Mahardika said. "The current administration gives false hope. We won't do that. We can make Indonesia great again as Prabowo said."

Jokowi, who came into office promising to deliver annual growth of 7 percent, is set to miss the target by a wide margin as the economy has expanded at

about 5 percent during his tenure. But the incumbent enjoys a lead of 20 percentage points in opinion polls over Prabowo after he created millions of new jobs and spent billions of dollars to add roads, ports and airports to cut logistic costs in the archipelago.

The incumbent, who's paired with Ma'ruf Amin, a conservative Muslim cleric, will focus on fiscal and structural reform and development of manufacturing and export-oriented industries to create more jobs, according to Jokowi's election manifesto.

The Prabowo-Uno combination will also involve more private sector participation and end the dominance of state-owned enterprises in projects and opt for more multilateral free-trade agreements than bilateral pacts. The pair's agenda also includes more protection for certain local industries like Trump has done. Mahardika said Uno will act as an economic ambassador traveling the world to further Indonesia's trade and economic interests. **Bloomberg**

Resurgence gathers pace as global investors pile in

THE return of yield-hungry investors is signaling the worst may be over for Indonesia. Global funds are piling back into Asia's bellwether for emerging markets, buying USD795 million of debt so far this year and sending yields down about 90 basis points from their October peak as the Federal Reserve looks to take a more cautious approach to policy tightening. That's spelling relief for the rupiah and Bank Indonesia, which spent most of 2018 seeking to stem an exodus of foreign capital amid a rout in developing-nation assets.

After plunging almost 9 percent over the first nine months of last year, the currency roared back in the fourth quarter as Indonesia raised interest rates to 6 percent, intervened in the

foreign-exchange and bond markets and curbed imports to help rein in the trade gap. The rebound has shown no signs of fading in 2019. The rupiah is already up 2.4 percent - tops in the region - and central bankers have signaled a willingness to let the currency strengthen further, according to PT Bahana Sekuritas.

"At the moment, BI appears more inclined to push for rupiah appreciation to lure foreign inflows, rather than to keep the rupiah undervalued to curb imports and boost exports," Satria Sambijantoro, an economist at the Jakarta-based broker, wrote in a Jan. 9 note to clients. "The one-way strengthening of the rupiah should make Indonesian assets very appealing among foreign investors."

Singapore, Malaysia delay meeting amid territorial spat

Chanyaporn Chanjaroen

SINGAPORE and Malaysia agreed to postpone a ministerial meeting amid a dispute on territorial waters, a sign that tensions between the neighbors may be intensifying in spite of efforts to forge closer ties.

Singapore proposed delaying the Jan. 14 meeting after what it called an "intrusion" into its waters by Osman Sopian, chief minister of Johor, the Malaysian state closest to the island-nation, it said in a statement. Osman said in a Facebook post the area he visited isn't in Singapore waters.

The bickering between the two nations over issues ranging from air space to the pri-



Vehicles travel along the Causeway across the Straits of Johor as commercial and residential buildings stand in the Malaysian city of Johor Bahru

ce of water supplied to the city-state deepened after Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad led the opposition coalition to victory in the May elections. The foreign ministers of both countries reiterated efforts to improve bilateral ties earlier this week.

Malaysia confirmed the postponement in a statement yesterday, saying that the

state chief minister's Jan. 9 port visit was within its own waters.

The governments are in communication and agreed that both sides should remain calm and not sensationalize matters, according to the statement, and both parties will continue to meet to discuss "other bilateral issues."

Bloomberg

PHILIPPINES

Foreign Secretary's claim data was stolen probed

THE Philippines privacy watchdog will investigate allegations by Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin that a disgruntled contractor made off with personal passport data and other documents held by the department.

The National Privacy Commission will look into "the Department of Foreign Affairs assertion that a private contractor has caused the non-availability of Filipino passport data and other documents entrusted to it for processing," the agency said in a statement on Saturday. The commission will summon the department and

other concerned agencies, including the contractor, according to the statement.

Locsin, on his personal Twitter account said on Jan. 8 that a contractor involved in producing passports "made off with data" after being terminated. Earlier, department spokesman Elmer Cato issued an advisory on Twitter saying that people renewing passports should submit their birth certificates "because we need to capture and store the document in our database as we no longer have a physical copy of the document submitted when they first applied."

The foreign affairs department hasn't issued a statement nor provided information on the extent of the alleged theft.

Former Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay said in a Facebook post that the department in October 2015 awarded the production of electronic passports to a contractor, which subcontracted the printing to another vendor in violation of terms.

Data privacy lawyer Cecilia Soria was among those who took to Twitter to react to the alleged theft. Journalist Inday Espina-Varona also weighed in. Locsin said he just wants it "fixed and not repeated." **Bloomberg**

Humble Pacific island movie star Mungau Dain dies in mid-20s

Nick Perry, Wellington

MUNGAU Dain had never considered acting before he starred in the Oscar-nominated film "Tanna." He got the role because his elders decided he was the best-looking guy in their traditional village on the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu. They would later describe him as their answer to Brad Pitt.

Dain died Saturday in the capital Port Vila, after contracting a leg infection that wasn't quickly treated. He was in his mid-20s.

Martin Butler, who co-directed "Tanna," said Dain wasn't a natural actor but was very enthusiastic, learned quickly, and ended up giving a fabulous performance. The 2015 movie won a number of awards, including two at the Venice Film Festival, and was nominated for an Academy Award for best foreign language film.

Dain is survived by his wife, Nancy, and two children. His village, Yakel, on Tanna island, remains in a traditional two-week mourning period.

Jimmy Joseph, the cultural director for Tanna island, said Dain was quiet, humble and respected in Yakel, where he had chosen to remain living even after achieving some fame in the movie. He said Dain never drank or smoke.

People in the village typically choose to live as they have for centuries, in simple thatch huts and wearing nothing but grass



skirts or a penis shield called a nambas. They raise crops and pigs, and observe a traditional way of life known as kastom.

But the village isn't completely isolated from modern life. When villagers make the trek to the island's main town to sell the coffee beans they've grown or buy rice, they usually wear clothes. Some have cellphones, which

they charge with small solar panels.

When Australia-based Butler and Bentley Dean decided to make the movie, which is loosely based on a true story, Butler said they quickly realized the village elders would be doing the casting. He said Dain looked too old for the role with his full beard, but 10 minutes later he'd shaved

it off at their request.

He said he fondly remembers how awkward Dain was when trying to act in a scene in which he was supposed to lift co-star Marie Wawa in his arms and carry her along a river bed.

Butler said he and Dean plan to travel to Yakel at the end of the mourning period to join the village in celebrating Dain's life.

"I was totally devastated. He was so fit and young and gorgeous. His wife is fabulous and the kids are great," Butler said. "He was a great example of how you can live a totally different type of life, and still be completely happy."

Location producer Janita Suter, who lived in Yakel for seven months during filming with her husband, Dean, and their children, said if there was an award for most improved actor, it would have to go to Dain. She said she doesn't think he'd even seen a movie before acting in one.

She said that when they traveled to Venice for the film festival, she was in her apartment when the chandelier and ceiling started shaking. It turned out it was Dain and the other villagers in the room above, stomping their feet in a traditional dance.

"He was a really proud ambassador for his people," she said. "It's a real loss."

She said Dain had been staying in Port Vila for the past couple of months as he tried to get a temporary visa to come to Australia and earn some money picking fruit. She said a doctor had explained that Dain had got an infection in his leg that he didn't treat and by the time he was taken to the hospital he was unconscious and likely in septic shock.

Butler said he hoped there may be some way to get better information to people in Vanuatu about the risks of infections, and that Dain's death could act as a catalyst. **AP**

Russia criticism bodes ill for Japan island talks next week

JAPANESE Foreign Minister Taro Kono's visit to Russia for talks on a long-running territorial dispute look set to be overshadowed by anger over official comments about the negotiations. Kono is set to meet his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, in Moscow today.

Russia's Foreign Ministry summoned the Japanese ambassador last week to protest his government's recent remarks ahead of Kono's arrival. The island dispute has kept the two countries from sealing a peace treaty since World War II.

Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov told



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (center right) and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono (right back to the camera) during a prior meeting in July 2018

Toyohisa Kozuki that recent comments by Japanese officials distorted a 1956 agreement and crea-

ted tension around the problem, according to a statement on the ministry's website.

Without specifying who had made the comments, the Russian Foreign Ministry criticized the des-

cription of 2019 as a "turning point" in the talks and the need to gain the agreement of the Russian residents of the islands for a transfer to Japan.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made comments along these lines in a Jan. 1 statement and a Jan. 4 press conference.

Abe has devoted political capital in office to resolve what Russia calls the Southern Kurils at the end of World War II, expelling thousands of Japanese residents.

Japan refers to the four islands as the Northern Territories.

"Negotiations are always with counter-parties, so I cannot preempt or pre-judge the outcome, but my hope is to seek as much progress as possible in the negotiations with Pre-

sident Putin," Abe said, referring to his planned summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin later this month.

Forging closer relations with Russia would also give Japan a new lever of influence over China and North Korea, two nuclear-armed rivals that Putin has assiduously courted. For the Kremlin, deeper ties to America's richest ally would help alleviate Russia's isolation from the West, particularly if the two islands likely to be returned will be exempt from Japan's security pact with the U.S., as Putin is demanding.

The two leaders sparked speculation of a compromise last year by agreeing to accelerate talks based on a 1956 declaration that refers to the transfer of only two of the islands, rather than the four that Japan officially claims. **MDT/Bloomberg**

FRANCE

3 dead, dozens injured in Paris bakery gas leak explosion

Angela Charlton, Sylvie Corbet

A powerful explosion apparently caused by a gas leak blew apart a Paris bakery on Saturday and devastated the street it was on, killing three people and injuring dozens as it blasted out windows and overturned nearby cars, French authorities said.

Witnesses described the sound of the explosion as deafening. Firefighters pulled injured victims out from broken windows and evacuated residents and tourists as a fire raged and smoke billowed over Rue de Trevisse in the 9th arrondissement of north-central Paris.

Charred debris and broken glass covered the pavement around the apartment building housing the bakery, which resembled a blackened carcass, and people were trapped inside nearby buildings.

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner paid homage to the courage of rescuers, who saved the life of one firefighter who was buried under the rubble for 2½ hours.

AP PHOTO



The French Interior Ministry said two firefighters and a female Spanish tourist were killed by the blast and about 10 of the 47 wounded were in critical condition. French authorities corrected the figure of four dead given earlier by France's interior minister.

Paris prosecutor Remy Heitz said the cause of the blast appeared to be an accidental gas leak. He said Paris firefighters were already at the scene to investigate a suspected gas leak at the bakery when the explosion happened about 9 a.m.

Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Borrell tweeted that "I deeply regret the death of three people after the explosion in central Paris, including a Spanish woman." He shared condolences to her relatives and "wishes for a quick recovery to the other injured Spaniard."

The Spanish newspaper El Pais reported the woman was a tourist staying in a hotel near the bakery, which is around the corner from the Folies-Bergere theater and not far from the Paris shopping district that includes the famed headquarters of Galeries Lafayette.

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo extended a "message of affection and solidarity" to the victims. She said many residents and tourists had been evacuated from neighboring buildings and hotels and Paris authorities were helping to provide them temporary accommodations.

Authorities said around 200 firefighters and police were involved in the operation. A helicopter evacuated the wounded. Silver-helmeted firefighters and red firetrucks filled the street

and inspected adjoining courtyards.

Pedro Goncalves, an employee at the Hotel Mercure opposite the bakery, said he saw firefighters enter the bakery in the morning but he and his co-workers "thought maybe it's a joke, a false alarm," and they went back to work.

About an hour later, he said a blast rocked the surrounding streets, one so powerful that he felt a whistling in his ears.

"I heard one big explosion and then a lot of pressure came at me, a lot of black smoke and glass," he said. "I had just enough time to get down and cover myself and protect my head."

Goncalves, who was struck by shattered glass, had cuts on his head and spots of blood on his sweater and undershirt. He ran for the exit and then went back to check on the hotel's clients, adding that some of them had head injuries and were bleeding. He said the hotel was "destroyed" in the blast. "Thank God I'm OK," he said.

Another witness told The Associated Press that she was awakened by the blast and feared it was another terrorist attack.

The explosion came as the French capital was on edge and under heavy security for yellow vest protests Saturday against economic inequality. Authorities said 32,000 protesters took to the streets around the country. AP

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Woman who fled Saudi Arabia reaches her new home in Canada

Rob Gillies, Toronto

TIRED but smiling, an 18-year-old Saudi woman who said she feared death if deported back home arrived Saturday in Canada, which offered her asylum in a case that attracted global attention after she mounted a social media campaign.

"This is Rahaf Alqunun, a very brave new Canadian," Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said arm-in-arm with the Saudi woman in Toronto's airport.

Rahaf Mohammed Alqunun smiled broadly as she exited an airport arrival door sporting a Canada zipper hoodie and a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees hat, capping a dramatic week that saw her flee her family while visiting Kuwait and before flying to Bangkok. Once there, she barricaded herself in an airport hotel to avoid deportation and tweeted about her situation.

On Friday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that Canada would accept Alqunun as a refugee. Her situation has highlighted the cause of women's rights in Saudi Arabia, where several women fleeing abuse by their families have been caught trying to seek asylum abroad in recent years and returned home.

Freeland said Alqunun preferred not to take questions Saturday. "She is obviously very tired after a long journey and she preferred to go and get settled," Freeland said. "But it was Rahaf's choice to come out and say hello to Canadians. She wanted Canadians to see that she's here, that she's well and that she's very happy to be in her new home."

After arriving she was off to get winter clothes, said Mario Calla, executive director of COS-TI Immigrant Services, which is



Rahaf Mohammed Alqunun, 18 (center) stands with Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland (right) as she arrives at Toronto Pearson International Airport

helping her settle in temporary housing and applying for a health card.

Calla said Alqunun has friends in Toronto who she would be meeting up with this weekend.

"She did comment to me about the cold," Freeland said. "It does get warmer," Freeland said she told her.

Alqunun flew to Toronto via Seoul, South Korea, according to Thai immigration Police Chief Surachate Hakparn. Alqunun tweeted two pictures from her plane seat — one with what appears to be a glass of wine and her passport and another holding her passport while on the plane with the hashtag "I did it" and the emojis showing a plane, hearts and a wine glass.

Canada's decision to grant her asylum could further upset the country's relations with Saudi Arabia.

In August, Saudi Arabia expelled Canada's ambassador to the kingdom and withdrew its own ambassador after Canada's Foreign Ministry tweeted support for women's right activists who had been arrested. The Saudis

also sold Canadian investments and ordered their citizens studying in Canada to leave.

Freeland avoided an answer when asked what Alqunun's case would mean to Saudi-Canadian relations.

There was no immediate Saudi government reaction, nor any mention of her arrival in state media. But a Saudi government-sanctioned body, the National Society for Human Rights, said it deplores the methods used by some foreign officials and organizations to "incite" some young Saudi females to disobey their families and leave the country.

In a statement late Saturday, the group's director, Muftal al-Qahtani, slammed alleged political motives of some countries and said attempts to encourage these women to disobey their families leaves some vulnerable to abuse and trafficking, and harms families. Al-Qahtani insisted women facing abuse in the kingdom can turn to Saudi authorities and local organizations for assistance.

Freeland said that the U.N. refugee agency found Alqunun

was in danger in Thailand and that Canada's government is glad it was able to act quickly to offer her refuge.

Alqunun's father arrived in Bangkok on Tuesday, but his daughter refused to meet with him.

Several other countries, including Australia, had been in talks with the U.N.'s refugee agency to accept Alqunun, Surachate said. "She chose Canada. It's her personal decision," he said.

Australian media reported that UNHCR had withdrawn its referral for Alqunun to be resettled in Australia because Canberra was taking too long to decide on her asylum.

"When referring cases with specific vulnerabilities who need immediate resettlement, we attach great importance to the speed at which countries consider and process cases," a UNHCR spokesperson in Bangkok told The Associated Press in an email reply on condition of anonymity because the person wasn't authorized to discuss the case publicly.

"Why did Rahaf go to Canada

instead of her preferred choice of Australia where she had friends?" Human Rights Watch executive director Kenneth Roth said in a tweet. "Because she needed safety from her Saudi pursuers fast, and Canada expedited her case while Australia slow-walked it."

Canada's ambassador saw her off at the airport, where Alqunun thanked everyone for helping her. She plans to start learning more English, though she already speaks it more than passably.

Alqunun was stopped Jan. 5 at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport by immigration police who denied her entry and seized her passport.

She barricaded herself in an airport hotel room where her social media campaign got enough public and diplomatic support that Thai officials admitted her temporarily under the protection of U.N. officials, who granted her refugee status Wednesday.

Surachate said her father — whose name has not been released — denied physically abusing Alqunun or trying to force her into an arranged marriage, which were among the reasons she gave for her flight. He said Alqunun's father wanted his daughter back but respected her decision.

"He has 10 children. He said the daughter might feel neglected sometimes," Surachate said.

UNHCR spokeswoman Lauren La Rose said the fact she was processed so quickly is a credit to those that made it happen.

"This is someone who was clearly in harm's way, who clearly felt her life with her threatened, and my colleagues in concert with governments in Thailand and Canada recognized that need," she said. AP

GREECE

Defense minister resigns over Macedonia name change

GREECE'S conservative defense minister, who leads the junior partner in the country's coalition government, resigned Sunday over the Macedonia name deal, which he opposes.

Panos Kammenos announced his resignation after meeting with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras yesterday. He said his party is quitting the government.

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said, in response, that he will ask for a vote of confidence in Parliament in the coming week. He added he had a "frank discussion" with Kammenos, whom he thanked for his government partnership.

Tsipras also announced that Admiral Evangelos Apostolakis, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

will replace Kammenos as defense minister.

Greece and Macedonia agreed last June to a deal that would change the name of Greece's northern neighbor to North Macedonia. In exchange, Greece would lift its objections to the country joining NATO.

Macedonia's parliament ratified the deal on Friday and the Greek parliament

now needs a majority for its ratification.

Tsipras' left-wing Syriza party has 145 deputies in the 300-member Greek Parliament, while Kammenos' right-populist Independent Greeks party has seven. With the departure of his coalition partner, Tsipras would need opposition help to pass the Macedonia name deal. AP



Panos Kammenos (center)

what's ON



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

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

UNTIL: February 23, 2019

VENUE: Albergue SCM

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2550

MACAU GIANT PANDA PAVILION AND PAVILION OF RARE ANIMALS

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

VENUE: Seac Pai Van Park

ADMISSION: MOP10 (Pavilion of Rare Animals)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0087

MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE

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

VENUE: Macau Science Center

ADMISSION: MOP25 (Exhibition Centre)

MOP60 (Planetarium 2D dome or 2D sky shows)

MOP80 (Planetarium 3D dome or 3D sky shows)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0822

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TIME: 4pm & 8pm daily (except on Thursdays)

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Offbeat

INDONESIA WAS ROCKED BY MORE THAN 11,000 EARTHQUAKES LAST YEAR



Indonesia was rattled by more than 11,500 earthquakes last year, almost double the annual average of the past decade, according to the nation's meteorological agency.

The archipelago was hit by 11,557 temblors in 2018, with 297 of them packing a magnitude of more than 5 on the Richter scale, according to data from the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency. That was more than the average 6,000 quakes recorded in recent years, Antara news agency reported, citing the meteorological agency's head, Dwikorita Karnawati.

Indonesia's 17,000 islands are prone to earthquakes because the country straddles the Pacific Ring of Fire - an arc of fault lines and volcanoes that causes frequent seismic upheavals. In September more than 4,000 people were killed in Central Sulawesi after an earthquake and tsunami struck the island. That was preceded by a series of deadly earthquakes earlier last year that rattled the popular tourist destination of Lombok island, near Bali. The Southeast Asian nation also recorded for the first time liquefaction, a phenomenon that causes soil to lose its strength after violent shaking. It was seen in Sulawesi last year, and after a tsunami triggered by a volcanic eruption in the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra in December, Karnawati said.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Mistura Fina
15:55	Zig Zag
16:55	Quem Quer Ser Millionário
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
22:00	Todas as Palavras
22:25	Nome de Código: Sintra
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Resumo Liga dos Campeões 2018/2019
	Macau Sítios: História Que Eu Ta Vai Contar - Coloane
00:10	Telejornal (Repetição)
00:55	RTPi Directo

cinema



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10 JAN - 16 JAN



MORE THAN BLUE

ROOM 1

2:30, 9:30 pm

Director: Gavin Lin

Starring: Jasper Liu, Ivy Chen

Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)

Duration: 105min

THE POOL

ROOM 1

4:30, 7:30 pm

Director: Ping Lumpraploeng

Starring: Theeradej Wongpuapan, Ratnamon Ratchiratham

Language: Thai (Chinese & English)

Duration: 95min

YOU ARE THE APPLE OF MY EYE

ROOM 2

4:30, 7:30 pm

Director: Yasuo Hasegawa

Starring: Yuki Yamada, Asuka Saito

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 89 min

BUMBLEBEE

ROOM 2

7:15 pm

Director: Travis Knight

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

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 113min



A DOG'S WAY HOME

ROOM 3

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

Director: Charles Martin Smith

Starring: Bryce Dallas Howard, Ashley Judd

Language: English

Duration: 96min

this day in history



1969 MATT BUSBY RETIRES FROM MAN UNITED

Football legend Sir Matt Busby has announced he will retire as manager of Manchester United at the end of the season - FA Cup final day on 26 April.

Sir Matt, who is 59, told a news conference at the club's ground at Old Trafford: "It's time to make way for a younger man... a track-suited manager".

He said the pressures of managing a top-class team were becoming too great for a man of his age and he would now take on the role of general manager. "United is no longer just a football club," he said, "it is an institution. I feel the demands are beyond one human being."

The new team manager has not yet been chosen but one man that may well be considered for the job is Wilf McGuinness, a former United wing-half, a coach and manager of England Under-23s.

Sir Matt is English football's longest serving manager. He took over United in 1945 and has since had a superlative record of achievement. With the £1 million in profits he has since made for the club he rebuilt Old Trafford, which had been badly damaged by the blitz. He has managed three highly successful teams. The first won the 1948 FA Cup Final against Blackpool.

The second team of talented young players, known as the "Busby Babes", included Bobby Charlton and Duncan Edwards. In 1958 tragedy struck when eight players were killed in an air crash at Munich after competing for the European Cup against Red Star Belgrade in Yugoslavia.

Sir Matt was seriously injured but survived, along with Charlton who said of him today: "Matt Busby's presence will always be at Manchester United. He is Manchester United." After the Munich tragedy, Sir Matt built up his third team, which included the transfer of Denis Law from Italian side Torino for a record fee of £116,000.

In May last year United beat Portuguese team Benfica 4-1 to win the European Cup - the first English side to do so. In June Sir Matt was awarded a knighthood.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Sir Matt never quite left the helm of Manchester United. As general manager he appointed Wilf McGuinness as his successor.

But Sir Matt's act proved too hard to follow and the general manager sacked McGuinness after just 18 months.

He was followed by Frank O'Farrell who fared little better, and then in 1972 Tom "the Doc" Docherty took control and gradually lifted the team's flagging performance as ageing players like Sir Bobby Charlton retired to let in new blood.

Docherty was sacked in 1977 after it was revealed he was having an affair with the wife of the team's physiotherapist.

From 1980 until 1993 Sir Matt was president of the club. He died in 1994. There is a statue of him at the ground he helped recreate at Old Trafford, situated in Sir Matt Busby Way.

Sir Alex Ferguson, who took over as manager in 1986, led the club to a string of victories at home and abroad. In the 1998-9 season, United became the first British club to win the Premier League Championship, the FA Cup, and the European Cup.

YOUR STARS

Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Don't dismiss the news that comes early today - things are not going so well, and you need to shore up your position to hold off a decline. The good news is that things are just about to turn in your favor.

Taurus

April 20-May 20

This is the best possible time to implement that crazy scheme you dreamed up with friends recently. Things should shake out so that you have a decent shot at making it all work out!

Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

You need to consider the changes you want to see in your life - and how to bring them about. Today is all about the contrast between illusion and reality, so turn it to your favor somehow!

Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Your mind may wander pretty far today, but that's just because you've got so much to think about! Your great personal energy should help you finish up whatever is absolutely vital.

Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Your affinity for art and music is peaking, so seek out something new and lovely. Make a date of it if you can - that is sure to draw you closer together, and you may find new shared interests, too.

Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Criticizing is easy - and sometimes vital - but for now, you need to keep your tone light and positive. At least one person is teetering on the edge of despair, and you don't want to push them over.

Libra

Sep.23-Oct. 22

Have you finally taken on too much? It may seem that way, as your schedule is packed full of things you'd forgotten about or hadn't realized would take so long. Try to bow out of what you can.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

You're no stranger to creative endeavors, and you should find that today brings an opportunity to pull off something big! Seize the momentum and find a way to keep it in your favor.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You need a new story to tell about yourself - something that can get people to try things your way. Take all day if you need to, but don't stop until you've got the right frame of mind to make it all work.

Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Your psychic prowess is stronger today - which may just mean that you can read people better. Trust your instincts and follow your nose to new opportunities; things are getting really good!

Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

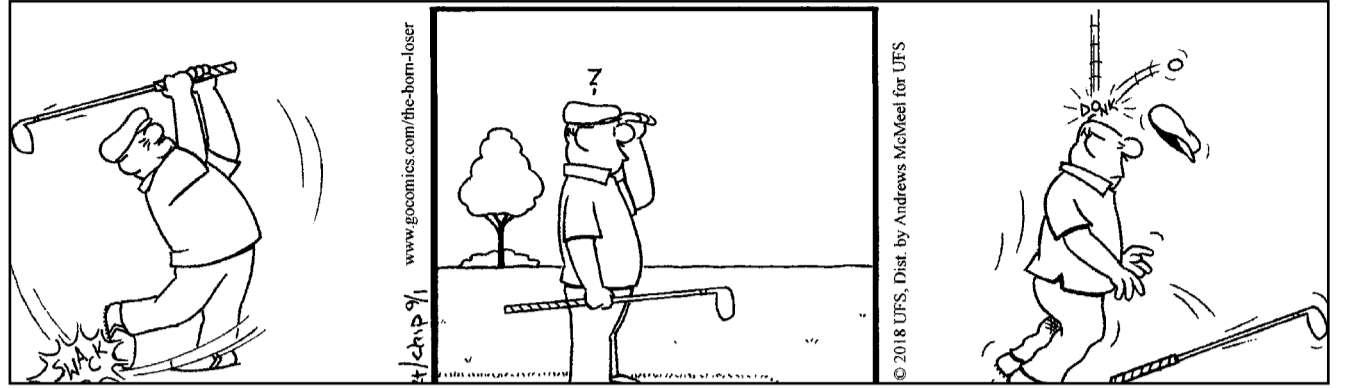
You need to avoid the temptation to reach for your credit cards every time a problem arises today. It's far too easy to just spend your way into deep debt without realizing quite what you're doing.

Pisces

Feb.19-Mar. 20

Treat yourself to something lavish today - you know you deserve it! This kind of energy is impossible to squander, and you shouldn't feel selfish if you choose to spend some of it on personal stuff.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

8x8 Sudoku grid for Easy level.

Easy+

8x8 Sudoku grid for Easy+ level.

Medium

8x8 Sudoku grid for Medium level.

Hard

8x8 Sudoku grid for Hard level.

WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION

CHINA

Weather forecast table for various Chinese cities including Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.

WORLD

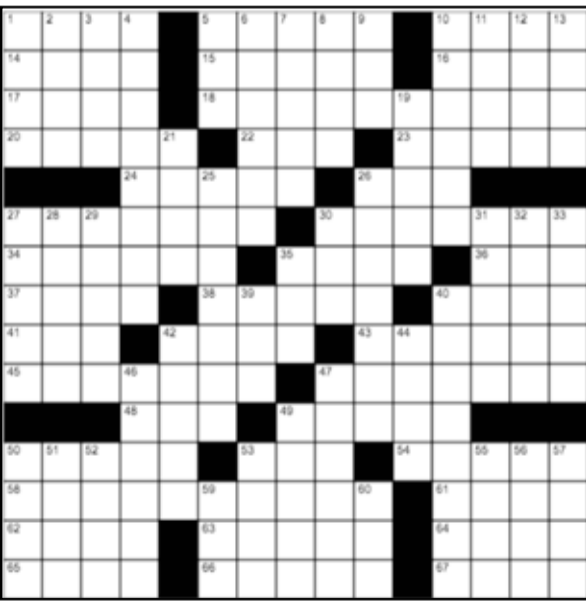
Weather forecast table for various world cities including Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, etc.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Work up lather; 5- ___ Gras; 10- Ollie's partner; 14- ___ sow, so shall...; 15- Love in Lyons; 16- Prefix with conference; 17- Be that ___ may...; 18- Superintendent; 20- Additional pay; 22- French possessive; 23- Played the part; 24- Tennis great Rod; 26- Wapiti; 27- Bloodsucking fly; 30- Compliant; 34- Makes amends; 35- It's owed; 36- That ship; 37- Breathe hard; 38- Graph; 40- Highway hauler; 41- Afore; 42- Spent, as batteries; 43- Sharon's land; 45- Contort; 47- Commander in chief of a fleet; 48- Born in the ___; 49- Biblical abode of the dead; 50- All together; 53- However, briefly; 54- Australian cockatoo; 58- Half of a sphere; 61- ___ me tangere; 62- ___ all-time high; 63- Give it ___!; 64- Eccentric; 65- Strong taste; 66- Sensitive spots; 67- Get in a hand;

DOWN: 1- Swedish auto; 2- ___ buco; 3- 16th letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 4- Peevish; 5- Bell and Barker; 6- Entertained; 7- Rodeo performer; 8- Membership fees; 9- Like some discounted mdse.; 10- Adhesive; 11- Dry run; 12- Drug-yielding plant; 13- Social misfit; 19- Hired parker; 21- Completely without madness; 25- The intestines; 26- State of decline; 27- Recorded, in a way; 28- Pong maker; 29- Skeleton; 30- ___ the fields we go...; 31- Do ___ a Waltz?; 32- Where Hercules slew the lion; 33- Gridiron; 35- Pops; 39- Boater or bowler; 40- Ceylon, now; 42- Prescribed amounts; 44- Air pollution; 46- Adjusting a musical instrument; 47- Riding; 49- Diaphanous; 50- At the drop of ___; 51- ___ precedent; 52- Muscat's land; 53- Comin' ___ the Rye; 55- Crazy as a ___; 56- Tons; 57- Scouting outing; 59- Dance step; 60- Aliens, briefly;

Friday's solution



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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



AD

Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' sections with property details and the JML logo.

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Attention
No admission under 18

Probe of IOC's Takeda hangs over Tokyo Olympics

Stephen Wade, Yuri Kageyama

A month ago, Tsunekazu Takeda was warmly applauded by 1,400 Olympic dignitaries as he spoke alongside International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach in Tokyo.

A month later, the powerful IOC member and head of the Japanese Olympic Committee is fighting a corruption investigation, suspected by French investigators of authorizing the payment of bribes to help land the 2020 Tokyo Olympics when IOC members voted in 2013.

In a Japanese Olympic Committee statement on Friday, Takeda denied any wrongdoing.

A distant relative of Japan's royal family — the great grandson of the Meiji Emperor — Takeda could join a growing list of suspended IOC members, and honorary members, who are linked to corruption probes. His case could potentially tarnish the Tokyo Olympics, which open in 18 months.

Bach has called Tokyo's preparations "the best ever," though there are concerns about rising costs with the price tag to prepare the games at about \$20 billion. That's three times what Tokyo bidders said it would cost when they were awarded the Olympics.

"The Tokyo Olympics Face a Black Cloud," was Saturday's headline in the popular daily Nikkan Sports.

Takeda has scheduled a news conference tomorrow in Tokyo to address an investigation that has been going on for several



Tsunekazu Takeda

years. "The case is causing tremendous concern among the people who are supporting the Tokyo Games," Takeda said. "But I will continue to cooperate in the investigation in order to clear any suspicion of me."

Two of Japan's three major newspapers — Mainichi and Asahi — put the story on Saturday's front page. It was the top story for Mainichi, and Asahi placed the Olympic story just under the ongoing detention of Nissan ex-chairman Carlos Ghosn.

In Asahi, next to a photograph of Takeda, a headline read: "French preliminary hearing judge suspects bribery in Olympic bidding."

Ghosn is a Brazilian-born Frenchman, and several papers suggested that France could be getting even for Japan's treatment of Ghosn.

"France Retaliates for Ghosn Case?" said a headline in the magazine Aera, which is published by Asahi.

The Tokyo Shimbun ran with the strongest headline: "Tokyo Olympics in Shock and Turmoil."

"Impossible. Why now?" the newspaper headline asked, quoting unnamed 2020 Tokyo Olympic officials. The paper said "shock ran through people working on the Tokyo Olympics. With about 500 days to go before the games open, those invol-

ved are perplexed and flabbergasted."

The IOC ethics commission was to have met Friday, but the IOC did not say what action it had taken. It could suspend Takeda or ask him to step aside during the investigation. Or do nothing.

Three IOC members are now suspended: Sheikh Ahmad of Kuwait, Patrick Hickey of Ireland, and Frankie Fredericks of Namibia. Honorary member Carlos Nuzman of Brazil, who headed the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, is also suspended in a similar vote-buying investigation.

The preliminary charge against Takeda announced by the Natio-

nal Financial Prosecutors office was first reported on Friday by French newspaper Le Monde. The preliminary charge means the investigating magistrate has determined there are serious grounds for suspicion. But no decision has been made on prosecution.

Le Monde said French authorities suspect the IOC vote for Tokyo in 2013 was swayed by secret deals that secured the backing of IOC members from Africa.

Le Monde reported French investigators suspect Takeda of authorizing the payment of \$2 million in bribes made on either side of the IOC vote in September 2013 to a Singapore company, Black Tidings.

French prosecutors have linked Black Tidings to Papa Massata Diack, one of the sons of Lamine Diack, who presided over the IAAF from 1999 to 2015.

Lamine Diack, who had huge influence on African voters in Olympic contests, is under investigation in France on corruption-related charges and allegations that he, his son and others were involved in blackmailing athletes and covering up failed drug tests. The 85-year-old Diack has had to turn in his passport and is not allowed to leave the country. His son is believed to be in Senegal.

Takeda was leading Tokyo's second straight bid for the Summer Games, after losing in the 2016 Olympics race to Rio de Janeiro. French prosecutors are also investigating Rio officials and IOC members for alleged financial wrongdoing in 2009 linked to Papa Massata Diack.

Takeda was an Olympic equestrian athlete in 1972 and 1976 and is the head of the IOC's marketing commission, which has played a part in lining up billions in sponsorship money from Japanese companies for the Tokyo Olympics. **AP**

FOOTBALL

Iran and Iraq advance at Asian Cup

IRAN and Iraq advanced to the knockout stages of the Asian Cup on Saturday with a game to spare.

Three-time champion Iran beat Vietnam 2-0 and secured its spot in the round of 16 when 2015 semifinalist Iraq beat Yemen 3-0 in another Group D game.

Another three-time champion, Saudi Arabia, moved closer to gaining its spot in the next round after beating Lebanon 2-0 in Group E.

With two wins each, Iran and Iraq meet in Dubai on Wednesday to decide the group winner.

Saudi Arabia meets Qa-



Iran's forward Sardar Azmoun (right) scores his side's second goal

tar on Thursday to close the group stage in a highly charged game amid the

political tensions between the two nations.

The top two teams in

each group and the four best third-placed teams advance to the round of 16.

It was a record ninth successive victory for Iran in Asian Cup group matches. Asia's top-ranked team looked comfortable in its opening two games, scoring seven goals without conceding.

Iran's Sardar Azmoun took care of the goals against Vietnam, scoring in each half.

Saman Ghoddos crossed for the forward to put Iran ahead with a close-range header before halftime. Azmoun added his second in the 69th with a left-footed strike from the middle of the box for his third goal at the tournament.

Vietnam lost a second straight match after falling to Iraq 3-2.

Iran is led by former Real Madrid and Portugal coach Carlos Queiroz, who is chasing a major title with Iran after eight years in charge.

In Sharjah, Mohanad Ali Kadhim and Bashar Rasan Bonyan scored with low shots from outside of the area early in the first half to give Iraq a comfortable advantage against Yemen. Substitute Alaa Abbas sealed it in second-half injury time.

Yemen and Vietnam are pointless and will fight for third place in Al Ain on Wednesday.

In Dubai, Fahad Al Muwallad opened the scoring 12 minutes into the game and Hussain Almoqahwi doubled the lead in the 67th.

opinion

Rear Window

Severo Portela



DECORATIONS, MEDALS AND CERTIFICATES OF MERIT

It was again that time of happily be the recipients of the Lotus and the other Merit Awards... honoring those individuals, and entities, whose contributions latu sensu to Macau and dedication to community service was found to be sufficiently relevant and deserving to be acknowledged in 2018 by the Chief Executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region. The long list was led by the recipient of the Grand Golden Lotus, Chan Meng Kam, businessman and former lawmaker, followed by former cannonball legislator Fong Chi Keong with the silver rank.

Usually this type of selection and its apparent open merit criteria would be a source of trivial pursuit at least, and perhaps an incentive to a political reading of the list of who is who, and who has been over the last year in the MSAR. However we find the solemnity of the Lotus Awards too mundane to qualify as a political fact deserving a look.

If we were to point to a true political fact, and one driven by a combination of factors, we would chose the statements albeit in the context of an alleged courtesy call to former CE Edmundo Ho made by the new strong man at the Liaison Office Fu Ziyang.

Fu Ziyang, before coming to MSAR, was deputy minister of Commerce, a vice-ministerial level position. Fu was also a Trade Representative, and in 2015 was appointed head of the Discipline Inspection Unit in the publicity department of the CCP's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection; a political heavyweight indeed.

What made us attentive to Fu Ziyang's circumstantial commentary on the importance of the role played by the first CE, now a vice-president of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, was that he overcame the usual economic savvy (gaming liberalization) and the decisive building up of the platform of Portuguese Speaking Countries, to praise Ho Hau Wah politically ("rassemblement" of patriotic sectors and trends) and the more grassroots or conservative youth formation. In short, Ho Hau Wah is the one to listen to about Macau... bad news for those who hastily tried to rebuke or refute his political role.

As we hinted above there is much more beyond Decorations, Medals and Certificates of Merit.

The New Macau Association is working again on antics to let establishment sectors make a living on their existence speaking to themselves. Instead of political food, NMA is serving a diet of contradictions and well-behaved irony: they handed a petition to the Legislative Assembly urging lawmakers to investigate the government's delay in putting to bed the land concession known as Ocean World.

The notorious plot was leased in 1997 and its utilization expired in 2001; in 2016, allegedly, a review was made on recovering unutilized land. The New Macau Democrats statement is an example of the type under of the likes of, "It has been 17 years. There was an unreasonable situation in the recovery procedure". We say that 17 years as an understatement is a pun to preposterous claims!

Finally, to salute the new year and to clear any hindrances to 2019, we have a couple of notes on issues actually preoccupying Macau people. Lawmakers at the Legislative Assembly, rather, some legislators, refused to take a leap of faith regarding the Cybersecurity law. They demanded that the government had to write clear articles on the promise to not intercept communication.

It is hard to believe such a thing, and allow us to call it in the way it was grounded, on a promise. Promise to only monitor network traffic...never monitor or save communication content.

It will be a promising year, so also to the outgoing Chief Executive Chui Sai On. He will have his moment when in the second half of the year Taipa's section of the Light Rapid Transit opens for transportation.

THE BUZZ EMIRATES TO CUT 25PCT FLIGHTS ON CLOSURE OF DUBAI SOUTHERN RUNWAY

Emirates plans to reduce its number of flights by 25 percent during the closure of Dubai International Airport's southern runway for 45 days.

The closure, scheduled between April 16 and May 30 for maintenance, will result in up to 48 Emirates aircraft not being utilized, the world's largest long-haul carrier said in a statement.

The northern runway, one of the two at the airport, was closed for 80 days in 2014 as it underwent refurbishment. The closure cost Emirates Group an estimated \$467 million impact on revenue, according to its financial statement.

The Dubai government-controlled airline said it'll take delivery of six new Airbus A380s in its 2019-



2020 financial year and retire seven Boeing 777s. Emirates took delivery of its last Boeing 777-300ER in November and will commence taking deliveries of the next generation Boeing 777Xs in 2020.

MEDIA

New York Times bets that more people want the news read to them

THE New York Times is expanding further into audio with five new offerings for Amazon.com Inc.'s speakers, including a shorter version of its hit podcast, "The Daily."

Starting Friday, "The Daily" will produce a news briefing on weekdays for the Amazon Echo, a voice-enabled speaker with a built-in assistant named Alexa. The free news briefing will be sponsored by the carmaker Audi and be read by host Michael Barbaro.

The 167-year-old paper is trying to rely less on print while seeking new forms of digital distribution. The new programs also let the company capitalize on booming sales of smart speakers - devices that include Google Home and Apple HomePod. Last week, Amazon said it has sold more than 100 million products with Alexa built in.

"The Daily" podcast takes a deep dive into a specific news topic and typically runs about 20 minutes. The new briefing, in contrast, will only be about

three minutes. Owners of Amazon speakers can start it by saying "Alexa, enable the New York Times briefing."

"It's meant to be a short rundown of what you need to know in the news every morning," Times voice editor Dan Sanchez said in an interview. One drawback is it's hard to discover new features without a screen. To make up for that, the print edition of Sunday's New York Times will include prompts for readers who have Amazon speakers to hear more about pop music, books and travel. The Times also plans to introduce an interactive news quiz every Friday with multiple-choice questions.

On-demand audio is evolving, with podcasts of different lengths to fit into your day - from the time it takes to commute to work or brush your teeth. While some people use smart speakers to quickly get the weather or news, others want to listen to songs or hourlong podcasts. Some also use them to play interactive trivia and quizzes.

The Times is pushing



deeper into a crowded landscape. Several major media companies, including AT&T Inc.'s CNN, the Associated Press and the Washington Post, produce flash briefings for Alexa. But "The Daily" has proven to be a valuable asset for the Times. It generated more than \$10 million in advertising revenue last year, according to a person familiar with the matter. **Bloomberg**

Cathay sold tickets from HK to Lisbon at one-tenth of price

LESS than two weeks after saying it had a ticketing error that gave away premium seats at huge discounts, Cathay Pacific has done it again.

This time, some visitors to their booking site got lucky on flights from Europe to Hong Kong. The South China Morning Post reported yesterday that the carrier offered first-class seats from Portugal to Hong Kong at a tenth of its original price of \$16,000. Since Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. doesn't fly direct from Lisbon to Hong Kong, the tickets included a leg to London,

Zurich or Frankfurt through partner airlines, the newspaper said.

"We are aware of the error on some fares from Europe on our website because of an input issue," a spokeswoman for Cathay said in a statement Sunday, adding the sale of such fares was stopped immediately and being probed. "For the very small number of customers who have purchased these tickets, we look forward to welcoming you on board to enjoy our premium services."

The repeat of the glitch adds to the embarrass-

ment the carrier faced last year when a sophisticated hack on Cathay's computer systems exposed private information of 9.4 million passengers in the world's biggest airline data breach. Asia's largest international carrier is in the midst of a three-year turnaround program after losses in 2016 and 2017, with last year's earnings due to be announced in March.

Around New Year's day, Cathay sold such discounted round-trip business-class tickets from Vietnam to Canada and the U.S., and later said it would honor the fares. **Bloomberg**

Station	Air quality
Roadside	40-60 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Moderate
Ambient	30-50 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



SYRIA Artillery shelling by government forces pounded parts of the northwestern Idlib province, thwarting an infiltration attempt by militants as tension rises in the region following victories by al-Qaida-linked militants against Turkey-backed opposition fighters, Syria's state news agency reported.

GREECE Defense Minister Panos Kammenos, leader of the junior partner in the country's coalition government, has resigned over the Macedonia name deal. *More on p15*



AUSTRIA Three German skiers have been killed in an avalanche in Austria and a fourth is missing, police said yesterday as snowfall set in again in the northern Alps.

FRANCE A powerful explosion apparently caused by a gas leak has blown apart a Paris bakery and devastated the street it was on, killing three people and injuring dozens.



BOLIVIA Italy sent an aircraft to Bolivia yesterday to pick up fugitive communist militant Cesare Battisti after he was captured there nearly three decades after he was convicted of murder.

COLOMBIA Thousands of Colombians staged protests in several cities to demand the resignation of the country's chief prosecutor. Nestor Humberto Martinez is a key U.S. ally in the war on drugs, but his critics at home say he has withheld information that links Colombian politicians and business groups with Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht, at the center of a mammoth regional corruption scandal.