



FMCC RAISES MOP70,000 DURING CHARITY EVENT

P5



A 'MOSTLY FREE' ECONOMY

Macau was rated as a "mostly free" economy in the Asia-Pacific, ranking 9th out of 43 economies in the region

P7



40 DEAD AFTER BRAZIL DAM COLLAPSE

An estimated 300 people were still missing after Friday's collapse of a dam holding back mine waste in southeastern Brazil

P15



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS

PHILIPPINES Muslims in the southern Philippines overwhelmingly approved in a referendum the creation of a new autonomous region in hopes of ending nearly half a century of unrest, election officials said.



THAILAND A popular Thai music act has apologized amid a scandal set off when one of its members wore a shirt showing the swastika flag of Nazi Germany during a performance.



INDIA Thousands of Indians converged on a ceremonial boulevard in the capital to watch a display of the country's military power and cultural diversity amid tight security during the national day celebrations. **More on p13**

AFGHANISTAN The U.S. peace envoy to Afghanistan said that "significant progress" was made during lengthy talks with the Taliban in Qatar and that he was traveling to Afghanistan for more discussions aimed at ending the country's destructive 17-year war.

SAUDI ARABIA A military base deep inside Saudi Arabia appears to be testing and possibly manufacturing ballistic missiles, experts and satellite images suggest, evidence of the type of weapons program it has long criticized its archrival Iran for possessing.

More on backpage

Canadian arrested for MOP2.3 billion fraud

P6 MACAU



20 dead as bombs target Sunday Mass in Philippine cathedral

P12

AL PLENARY

Public financial disclosure guidelines completion expected this year

Julie Zhu

THE local government hopes to finish the guidelines for public financial disclosure within this year, as revealed by Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong during Friday's plenary meeting of the Legislative Assembly (AL).

The Secretary started by expressing his "understanding that the AL pays attention to public money's usage and to the public's request to increase transparency" in regards to this matter.

The aim of completing the guidelines within this year is to allow society to become aware of which companies have Macau's public money invested in them.

Leong also hopes that, within this year, the government can launch a consultation work on the legislation of such an instruction regime.

According to the former Deputy Director of the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT), Chan Pou Ha, government-owned company Lei Pou Fat (Sociedade de Fomento Predial, Limitada) was a wholly government-owned company that has always been responsible for the airport land management.



Lionel Leong (center) at the AL

Lei Pou Fat suspended its operations in April 2017.

Tai Lei Loi (Sociedade de Fomento Predial, Limitada), the offspring company of Lei Pou Fat, was also dissolved in October 2018 because its land lease had expired. When the company was dissolved, Tai Lei Loi had, at the time of dissolution, MOP217.78 million in capital.

After questioning Leong, lawmakers voted and passed the bill for the government budget for 2017.

The general revenue of the government in 2017 was MOP126.37 billion, representing an increase of 14.4 percent over the previous year. The government's general expenditure was

MOP81.3 billion, a decrease of 1.6 percent.

The surplus in 2017 was MOP45.6 billion, an increase of 61.7 percent.

The revenue from specific institutions amounted to MOP23.64 billion, while expenditures amounted to MOP9.47 billion.

Paid PIDDA expenses were MOP12.92 billion, corresponding to an implementation rate of 84.7 percent.

Regarding public expenditures, the non-autonomous sector's implementation rate was 90 percent, while the self-governing sector was at 94.8 percent, and finally, the autonomous agencies' implementation rate was only 79.3 percent.

Building reconstruction tax benefits regime passed

TAX benefits for building reconstruction was passed at the Legislative Assembly (AL) last Friday. The law proposes tax benefits for the reconstruction of old buildings, with the government including an "extra stamp tax" rebate in the regime.

In total, there are six tax types: stamp tax for property transfer, extra stamp tax, special stamp tax, stamp tax for obtaining second or subsequent properties, the stamp tax, and fees for notary endorsements and registration.

The tax rebate can be requested for the reconstruction of buildings which aim to strengthen Macau's social development and preservation of cultural heritage. It can also be applied to the reconstruction of buildings which follow their original plan or to a plan approved by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT), for the reconstruction of buildings that pose a risk to the public, and for the reconstruction of buildings that DSSOPT has approved for demolition.

In order to avoid abuse of the policy, the bill established restrictions on the number of properties, utilization purpose of the properties, and the actual area of the properties, as well as the ownership of the properties.

According to the bill, it is proposed that developers will not have to pay taxes over

the acquisition of a second or more building if the developers do not change the nature of the building's function. Nevertheless, the developers must complete the groundwork regarding the reconstruction of the buildings within three years after the acquisition.

A new property obtained by a given owner cannot be more than 10 percent larger than the owner's previous property.

Owners cannot transfer the ownership of a property within three years after it is obtained, if they have already benefited from the new tax laws.

Agnes Lam expressed that when it comes to the reconstruction of old buildings concerning cultural heritage, the government should regard the city's cultural heritage protection committee as an opinion consultation agency.

Financial Services Bureau director Iong Kong Leong said in his reply to Lam that the bill aims to provide tax benefits and exemptions to the concerned parties, and that while the bill outlines the eligibility criteria for the tax benefits, it does not mean that a building's reconstruction can be carried out without complying with other legal requirements.

Hence, Iong considers that there is no need to include the cultural heritage protection committee as an opinion consultation agency.

ASK THE VET

by Dr Ruan Du Toit Bester

CAT TEETH CLEANING STEPS

DENTAL hygiene is a vital part of keeping your cat healthy and there are a choice of options to help maintain the strength and cleanliness of the cat teeth. Whether performing a cleaning at home or consulting a professional veterinarian, it is important to have regular checkups; otherwise the risks of infection and gum disease are increased, resulting in discomfort or even illness for your cat.

Home cleaning

Most cats just don't like having our fingers in their mouths. So a little enticement is in order to get that cat more comfortable with the invasive measures involved in getting to their teeth. Food is always a good way to get the cat to become accustomed to the procedure you will need to perform, so dipping your finger in something the cat is fond of is a good start. Tuna,

milk or even the wet food the cat eats should be sufficient. Let the cat lick the inviting taste from your finger.

Dip your finger in it again and try to rub the cat's teeth with the flavor, while they are enjoying the taste, you can make them feel more comfortable with you touching their teeth. Be careful that the cat doesn't bite, and the best way to avoid this is to be very gentle and don't make any sudden or aggressive maneuvers.

Once the cat feels comfortable with you touching the teeth, wrap a little bit of gauze around your finger and apply a mild sterile solution or pet toothpaste. Then begin to rub the teeth in a circular motion, making sure you don't forget the gums as well. It may be necessary to do a few teeth at a time, as most cats will not tolerate your finger for a long time, no matter how comfortable they become.

Professional Veterinarian Cleaning

Of course, much of the above is often easier said than done and it's very possible that no amount of gentle coaxing will make your cat comfortable with you sticking your finger in his mouth. Therefore a professional cleaning will be necessary.

First, the veterinarian will give the cat a quick examination to make sure there are no major infections and that the cat will not react adversely to any anesthesia. Then the cat will be given an injection, usually a sedative to calm the cat and then GA to start a proper dental.

The veterinarian will then use an ultrasonic scaler, which will remove tartar buildup along the gum line. After the cleaning, the veterinarian will check for any infected or diseased teeth. A simple test to see if any of them wiggle in their sockets will reveal if a tooth needs to be removed. If there are no infections, the veterinarian might polish the teeth as cleaning sometimes leaves microscopic scratches. Polishing will remove them, otherwise they could be collection bins for more tartar.



Once a year cleaning at the vet is a very good idea as it keeps the teeth and gums healthy which then ultimately extends the life of your cat.

Hope this info helps
Till next week
Dr Ruan Bester

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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

IMF forecasts Hong Kong growth slowdown in 2019

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) commended Hong Kong in its recent report for maintaining its financial regulation and supervision. The IMF forecasted Hong Kong's economy to grow 3.5 percent in 2018, resulting from a cyclical upswing in the first half of the year. In 2019, it expects growth to slow to 2.9 percent.

Private consumption - aided by a tight labor market - and investments are expected to continue to support growth, with headwinds coming from the increased trade tensions, tighter global financial conditions, and slower growth in mainland China.

Over the medium-term, the economy is expected to grow at around 3 percent, close to its potential, The IMF said in a statement. "After two years of solid expansion, the world economy is growing more slowly than expected and risks are rising," said Christine Lagarde, The IMF's managing director, as she presented the new fore-



The logo of the IMF is displayed at the headquarters in Washington

cast at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The report described how the Hong Kong SAR's outlook has increased, taking note of the further escalation of global trade tensions, possible disorderly tightening of global financial conditions, slower-than-expected growth in mainland China, and a sharp housing market correction.

Meanwhile, in another report issued earlier, the IMF recommended policy strategies in its financial sector and housing market, amongst others.

The IMF recommended the for robust regulatory and supervisory framework to continue to be strengthened to limit buildup of risks and that fintech developments should also be carefully evaluated to balance efficiency gains against potential risks.

In terms of the housing market, the IMF recommended to utilize a three-pronged strategy comprised of macroprudential measures, stamp duties, and measures to boost housing supply, which remains appropriate and should continue in place, and be adjusted as financial stability risks evolve.

"However, ultimately resolving the imbalances in the housing market requires expanding supply and further efforts are needed in this area," the report said.

Meanwhile, the IMF reaffirmed its long-standing support for the Linked Exchange Rate System, suggesting that it should remain as an anchor of economic and financial stability for Hong Kong.

In response, the HKSAR's financial secretary, Paul Chan, welcomed the IMF's positive assessment and recognition of Hong Kong's sound policies.

"With ample of buffers, strong economic fundamentals and a robust regulatory and supervisory framework, Hong Kong is well placed to navigate through the challenges ahead," he said, as cited in the government's official website.

He pledged that the city will continue to sharpen its competitive edge and gain opportunities from further regional economic integration, especially in the context of the Greater Bay Area development. Reacting to the IMF findings, Norman Chan, chief executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, pledged that Hong Kong will continue to push forward initiatives, such as development of the bond market, fintech and green finance, as highlighted by the IMF, to develop Hong Kong as an international financial center.

China beefs up agricultural product supply to Macau, HK

CHINA'S Ministry of Commerce has designated Guangdong and Jiangxi provinces as the reserve bases to meet the needs of agricultural products for Hong Kong and Macau residents in case of emergencies, a spokesperson said last week.

The move aims to cope with abrupt disastrous weather and ensure the supply of agricultural products to the two regions during the upcoming Spring Festival, said the ministry spokesperson, Gao Feng, at a press conference.

According to a Xinhua report, a work team with officials from the Ministry and other departments will go to Hong Kong and Macau before the Spring Festival to communicate with the regional governments and relevant industries as well as to make arrangements on the supply in wholesale and retail markets, he noted.

Gao Feng said the Ministry had proposed five measures to ensure steady supply when necessary, including strictly guarding against African swine fever, increasing sources of agricultural products, activating emergency plans, making timely adjustments and strengthening communication and coordination among affected parties.

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FMCC's 10th annual charity gala dinner raises MOP70,000



APPROXIMATELY 300 local and international guests and members of the France Macau Chamber of Commerce (FMCC) joined Friday's 10th FMCC Annual Charity Gala Dinner, themed "First Class to Tahiti."

The event was in support of Macao Fok Sin Association's (MFS) "Visit the Elderly" project, which arranges personal visits and brings useful gifts along to underprivileged local elderly adults who either have low mobility, broken or no families, or lack emotional and financial support.

During the charity event, FMCC raised over MOP70,000 through donations by generous sponsors and guests. Macao Fok Sin Association is expecting to cater to over 200 elderly people. FMCC chairman, Rutger Verschuren and the executive board of members welcomed the Deputy Consul General of France in Hong Kong and Macau, Paule Ignatio, Macao Government Tourism Office's (MGTO) director, Helena de Senna Fernandes, among other leading executives from Macau and the Greater Bay Area.

The Annual Charity Gala Dinner commenced with a welcome speech from Ignatio, followed by Verschuren, who said that this year's 10th

Charity Gala Dinner was the Chamber's first gathering in 2019. He added that the networking event aimed to bring closer together the business and community leaders in the Greater Bay Area.

FMCC, one of Macau's largest chambers of commerce, connects to the CCI France International network that unites via French Chambers of Commerce in 92 countries to over 35,000 companies globally, hence members benefitting tremendously by reaching across borders, as well as within the region. Accompanied by the founders, the VIP guests and Board of Directors, Verschuren made a toast and wished everyone a successful year.

MFS is a local non-profit association that provides a platform for young residents to participate in community work, in order to understand, appreciate and accept that the unfortunate and underprivileged are part of our community. Through the project "Visit the Elderly," MFS organizes visits and provides gifts such as food, clothes and essential articles to unprivileged elderly.

The MFS volunteers also bring support on special days such as Chinese New Year, allowing disadvantaged elderly residents in Macau to be part of the celebrations. **JZ**

ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Sands China Ends Its Use of Plastic Straws at All Properties

One of several initiatives to cut back on single-use plastics

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

The company's ban on its use of plastic straws went into effect Jan. 1 and will eliminate the use of 2.2 million plastic straws each year – saving 1 ton of plastic annually.

The move is one of several new initiatives to curb the use of single-use plastics at Sands China's properties, which employ more than 28,000 team members and received more than 92 million visitors in 2017.

"Our company is constantly looking for new ways to decrease our carbon footprint, so that we can be ever-more responsible stewards of our environment," said Mark McWhinnie, senior vice president of resort operations and development for Sands China Ltd. "This ban on plastic straws, along with other plastic-reduction measures, will have a significant impact on our sustainability efforts, resulting in a greener Macao."

Those other measures include a plan to progressively replace hotel rooms' single-use bathroom amenities – such as shampoo and conditioner bottles – with refillable dispensers. Implementation is scheduled to begin early this year and is estimated to eliminate around 2.7 million plastic bottles per year.

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

Additionally, the company is installing filtered water dispensers in properties' public areas on a trial basis. If successful, the change would be rolled out at all properties, massively reducing the usage of bottled water.

Sands China's initiatives to reduce single-use plastic have also identified other areas for improvement. One such area is in the company's laundry services, where efforts are being made to eliminate, replace, or recycle 95 per cent of single-use plastic packaging, clothes hangers and garment clips.

Sands China's environmental initiatives are part of the Sands ECO360 global sustainability strategy of parent company Las Vegas Sands Corp., which utilises measures like energy saving, resource recycling, conservation and community engagement. Sands ECO360 is designed to help minimise the company's environmental impact and lead the way in sustainable building development and resort operations.



Sands China Ltd. has discontinued its use of plastic straws at all its properties, including The Venetian Macao (pictured), in an effort to reduce the consumption of single-use plastics. The move will save 1 ton of plastic annually and is one of several new initiatives to curb the use of single-use plastics at Sands China's properties.

Canadian arrested for MOP2.3 billion fraud

A Canadian man was arrested in Macau on Saturday for allegedly attempting to defraud a local entertainment company out of MOP2.3 billion (around USD284 million).

The bank had rejected a request by the suspect on Jan. 21 to transfer funds from the unidentified company's account after his signature didn't match one they had on record, and he left, according to media reports.

The 61-year-old suspect, surnamed Leao, was arrested as he tried to leave Macau, and has been charged with fraud and forging documents after such papers were found on him, according to the report. He has denied the crime, and was transferred to the prosecutor's office, the paper said.

Bank staff informed the police after they noticed that there were irregularities in the transaction, such as the signatures being different.



The suspect left the bank immediately, while the bank contacted the entertainment company to question such remittances. The company allegedly informed it hadn't authorized any of its employees to carry out the transaction.

"After our department's investigation, we learned

the suspect's identity and stopped the suspect when he was leaving town on January 25, at around 6 p.m. After investigations of the suspect, we found the remittance slip with his signature [along with] other information," said the spokesperson.

"We have enough proof

that the suspect used a fake power of attorney and remittance slip, attempting to steal money from a local entertainment company and bank," he added.

According to authorities, the suspect refused to cooperate but it is believed that there were other people involved in the case.

Non-resident labor reaches record high



THE number of non-resident workers (TNR) reached its highest point ever in 2018, totaling 188,480 people at the end of December, data disclosed by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) show.

According to the report, which cites figures from the Public Security Police Force (PSP), 2018 registered year-on-year growth of 5 percent.

The hotels, restaurants and other similar establishments sector continue to employ the largest share of the TNR workforce with 53,064 workers (28.2 percent) followed by the construction sector with a total of 30,129 (16 percent) and domestic workers which totaled 28,692 (15.2 percent).

There was no change in the origin of such workers, with a large majority continuing to arrive from mainland China (62.5 percent), followed by the Philippines (16.7 percent) and Vietnam with 8 percent.

Indonesia is responsible for 5,308 workers (2.8 percent) and closing the top five is the neighboring region of Hong Kong with a total of 4,721 workers (2.5 percent).

The previous record high in the number of TNR was registered in 2015 when the number of workers reached 181,646, following year-on-year growth of 6.6 percent. RM

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MSAR retains 9th place for most 'free economy' in Asia-Pacific

Renato Marques

MACAUI is amongst the group of countries and regions with a "mostly free" economy, according to the latest economic freedom report from U.S. organization the Heritage Foundation.

Macau's ranking has remained almost unchanged for the past three years, scoring 71 points (out of 100), just 0.1 up from the 2018 report. According to the report, it is in the 34th position overall and ninth amongst the Asia-Pacific countries.

As the report, released last Friday, states, Macau's results are mostly due to "monetary freedom and tax burden exceeding a decline in the score for government integrity." From the report, it is also possible to conclude that Macau's overall score is considered "above the regional and world averages."

Despite having a positive outcome, the same report also highlights challenges relating to the casino industry that the region must stay up to date with, which include "money-laundering risks and the need to diversify the economy and reduce dependence on gaming revenues."



The organization also notes that Macau shares several factors contributing to its favourable result with its neighbor Hong Kong, which tops the 2019 index of the organization as the most free economy in the world for the twenty-fifth consecutive year, followed by Singapore and New Zealand. One of the similarities is that each region has a free port, resulting in the regions benefiting "from global trade and investment. Other growth areas include finance, insurance, and real estate," with the Heritage Foundation classifying the entrepre-

neurial environment as "generally efficient and streamlined." The rights of property were also a factor taken into account, which according to the report are "generally respected," followed by a relatively efficient and low taxation system.

This year, there was a decrease in macau in the category of "Government Integrity" scoring only 33.2 points, a drop of 3.2 points from the 36.4 achieved in 2018.

In fact, the government integrity is one of the few categories in which Macau's results have been dropping continuously

ever since its inclusion in the report in 2009. Ten years ago, Macau scored 57 points. The biggest decrease registered was in 2017, when the government integrity dropped 12.6 percent (from 49.7 to 37.1), failing to recover ever since.

Factors contributing to these results include "the rapid economic expansion [that] has left the judiciary understaffed," as well as "public protests against a range of issues such as corruption, favoritism, and nepotism have increased in recent years."

Macau also scored low in the category of "Labor Freedom", in which Macau has been scoring 50 points for the past four years after dropping from 55 in 2014 and 60 points in 2012.

The Heritage Foundation notes that "the economy lacks a dynamic and broad-based labor market," with the government setting "minimum standards for the terms and conditions of employment."

On a more positive note, factors such as Monetary, Trade, Investment and Financial Freedom as well as Fiscal Health pulled up Macau's scores, achieving the maximum score of 100 points.

Regarding these catego-

ries, the report states that the overall regulatory environment is "relatively transparent and efficient, with license requirements varying by type of economic activity." The Heritage Foundation noted that monetary stability in the region has been relatively well maintained, although in many cases this related to "generous government subsidies to households, students, and the elderly," which increased in 2018.

It was also noted that Macau is relatively open to foreign investment and that the "small financial system functions without undue government influence."

China ranks 100th (scoring 58.4 points) on the 2019 list, which includes a total of 180 countries and regions.

Although China is still considered under the "mostly unfree" group, the country's result this year constitutes a rise by 0.6 points when compared to 2018, performing well for the fourth consecutive year.

On behalf of the Macau government, the Monetary Authority of Macau released a statement acknowledging the results of the region and highlighting the praise made to the areas performing best.

Twenty Macau buyers involved in mainland property scam

A group of 20 local residents held a press conference on Saturday morning seeking help from lawmakers over an alleged real estate scam they say they are victim to, TDM reported.

The homebuyers say they were lured into investing in a real estate project development known as the "GBH development" in Jiangmen prefecture in Guangdong province in between 2015 and 2017.

According to the contract, they should have seen the project reaching the conclusion stage in 2018 but the residents say that the developer kept giving excuses to stall the residents on fake promises.

Although there were only 20 buyers present at the press conferen-



Lawmaker Leong Sun lok attended the press conference

ce, a representative of the alleged victims said that the number of buyers is 755, of which around half are from Macau.

The group claims that

a total of over RMB20 million is involved, investment that they made through real estate agencies located in the nearby cities of Zhuhai and Jiangmen.

One of the victims told TDM that a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the site, counting the attendance several high profile officials from both Macau and Jiangmen.

The press conference was held with the support of lawmakers that represent the Workers Association in Macau.

According to Leong Sun Iok, the local government should pay attention to these cases as in the upcoming years it is likely that more residents will be interested in buying property in the neighboring cities in the mainland due to the Greater Bay Area Initiative. He suggested the government establish a system that offers investors guarantees in cases like this. **RM**

CRIME

Authorities crack down on counterfeit credit cards, forged documents

POLICE authorities have arrested a group of five suspects who have been using fake international credit cards to purchase items on online shopping platforms in Hong Kong and Macau.

According to the Judiciary Police (PJ), the forged credit cards were used on two local online stores in Macau and a delivery company, amounting to losses of some MOP400,000 and MOP450,000 respectively.

After investigation, the authorities concluded that two Filipino nationals and two Moroccans aged 24 to 29 were suspects and have been arrested.

A 20-year-old Russian national is believed to be linked to the crimes, and was also arrested.

Reports said that the Moroccan nationals were key members of that group and have admitted to the crime.

"The criminal group came to Macau irregularly. They used credit card information from the United States, Canada and Middle Eastern countries to shop in some online shopping platforms or order food," said Leng Kam Long, spokesman and chief criminal investigator of the PJ.

"After investigation by the authorities, we discovered the suspects' identities and found out that they leave Macau every time they carry out [illegal] activities," he added.

According to the spokesperson, Macau authorities cooperated with Hong Kong police due to the suspects also actively committing illegal activities in Hong Kong, purchasing luxury goods and electronic products with the use of the fake credit cards. The case was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office.

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(Ref: 19015574)
2503 sq.ft. HKD 17.8 M
Rate: HKD 7,111

Beautiful, large 4 bedroom apartment in the popular complex of Nova City in Central Taipa. This mid floor apartment has great views over Central Park and swimming pool. Clubhouse facilities include gymnasium, outdoor pool, mini theater, function rooms and more. Car park space is available in Tower 5.



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(Ref: 19015572)
1497 sq.ft. HKD 11.82 M
Rate: HKD 7,900

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 7,961

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 11.88 M
Rate: HKD 7,378

A beautiful modern stylish apartment in the popular Ocean Garden complex in Taipa. A fabulous family or first time buyer home. Clubhouse facilities which include a gymnasium, outdoor pool, function rooms etc. can be used under a monthly membership. Free shuttle bus to Macau is also available. A car park is available, asking HKD1.48M



Va Fat Taipa

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

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



One Central, Tower 7 - Macau T7

(Ref: 18045554)
2700 sq.ft. HKD 31.9M
Rate: HKD 11,814

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 7,906

3 bedrooms apartment in an excellent location, in the 5-star residence: The Manhattan. High quality finishes and furnishings. Club House facilities include gymnasium, outdoor swimming pool & sun deck, golf simulator, children door & outdoor play areas.

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German expert panel agrees on 2038 deadline to end coal use

Kirsten Grieshaber, Berlin

IN a pioneering move, a government-appointed panel on Saturday recommended that Germany stop burning coal to generate electricity by 2038 at the latest, as part of efforts to curb climate change.

The so-called Coal Commission reached agreement in the early hours of Saturday, following months of wrangling that were closely watched by other coal-dependent countries.

"We made it," Ronald Pofalla, the head of the commission, told reporters in Berlin. "This is a historic effort."

Germany gets more than a third of its electricity from burning coal, generating large amounts of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

The 28-member panel, representing mining regions, utility companies, scientists and environmentalists, suggests a review in 2032 could bring forward the deadline to 2035.

The plan foresees billions in federal funding to help affected regions cope with the economic impact, and to shield industry and consumers from higher electricity prices. The energy transition will also need a huge overhaul and modernization of the country's power grid, the commission's members said. The decision still needs government approval.

"The whole world is watching how Germany — a nation based on industry and engineering, the fourth largest economy on our planet — is taking the historic decision of phasing out coal," said Johan Rockström, the director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research. "This could cascade globally, locking in the fastest energy transition in history."

The plan foresees that Germany's



Water vapour rises from the cooling towers of the lignite-fired power plant in Brandenburg

coal plants will be phased out step-by-step to reduce the output of greenhouse gases. Currently, Germany's coal plants produce the largest amount of carbon dioxide of any country in Europe.

The commission's plan leaves open which plants should be shut down first, saying it's a decision the government needs to negotiate with the plants' operators, the German news agency dpa reported.

The commission suggests that in the next ten years, the government should help create up to 5,000 new jobs in the affected regions when coal mining will be phased out. These regions — in the states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt and Saxony — should also get federal subsidies totaling 40 billion euros (45.6 billion dollars) in the next twenty years.

"New jobs will be created through structural measures in the coal mining regions," Pofalla said. "We will keep up secure and affordable energy

supply and the agreement will lead to sustainable climate protection in Germany."

Germany is committed to an "energy transition" that involves replacing fossil fuels with renewable sources such as solar and wind power. While the country has made great strides in that direction — renewables beat coal for the first time last year — removing coal from the power equation entirely is a major challenge.

The reduction in coal will have to be compensated by an increase in renewable power sources and — at least in the interim — from burning more natural gas, which emits about half the amount of greenhouse gases as coal.

Greenpeace, which wants all coal plants shut down by 2030, welcomed that "Germany finally has a timetable how the country can become coal-free," but said the measures were not ambitious and fast enough.

"The speed is wrong," said Martin Kaiser, the head of Greenpeace. "Exiting coal by the year 2038 only is unacceptable."

The country's environmental groups welcomed the commission's recommendation that Hambach Forest in western Germany, an ancient woodland which became a flashpoint of anti-coal protests last year, should be saved.

Energy company RWE's plans to cut down half the Hambach Forest to expand a lignite strip mine had seen protesters camping out in the trees for months to block workers from cutting them.

An opinion poll released by public broadcaster ZDF found that 73 percent of Germans agree a quick exit from coal is very important. The telephone poll of 1,285 people, conducted Jan. 22-24, had a margin of error of about three percentage points. **AP**

INDONESIA

Palm oil tycoon who built USD9b empire dies

Harry Suhartono, Fathiya Dahrul

EKA Tjipta Widjaja, who became a coconut and palm-oil trader at the age of 15 before building a multi-billion dollar empire with businesses spanning paper and pulp to financial services, has died.

Widjaja, 98, passed away at his home in Jakarta on Saturday, said Gandi Sulistiyanto, a managing director at Sinar Mas Group. The founder of Sinar Mas was Indonesia's fourth-richest person with a net worth of USD9.3 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

The Indonesian tycoon of Chinese origin will also be remembered for the \$14 billion default by his flagship Asia Pulp & Paper Co. after the 1998 Asian financial crisis. While several of Sinar Mas's businesses were taken over by the government after the fall of the dictatorship of General Suharto, Widjaja managed to rebuild his empire, which employs around 380,000 people in Indonesia.

Widjaja, then known as Oei Ek Tjhong, landed at Makassar in Indonesia's Sulawesi province as a seven-year-old with his parents from mainland China. He started out selling biscuits and sweets by

bicycle, Sinar Mas Group said in a statement.

"Even though he only graduated from elementary school, for him there was no hope and ideals that were too high," Sinar Mas said. "The philosophy of honesty, maintaining credibility, and being responsible, both toward family, work and social affairs became his life's compass."

His early success in commodities trading spurred him to diversify into paper and pulp, real estate, food and telecommunications, with holdings primarily in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia.

The fallout from the Asian financial crisis forced the group to surrender control of its flagship bank, PT Bank Internasional Indonesia, after opting for a bailout from the central bank. Widjaja moved back into banking by acquiring PT Bank Shinta Indonesia in 2005 and later renamed it as PT Bank Sinarmas.

Widjaja's business empire is now run by his children and grandchildren. Companies under the Sinar Mas brand include Singapore-listed Golden Agri Resources Ltd., one of the world's biggest producers of palm oil, and Bumi Serpong Damai, Indonesia's largest listed property company. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

MORPHEUS OPENS NEW RETAIL SPACE



Morpheus at City of Dreams has unveiled a new retail space called

"Morpheus Boutique." The retail space will feature a selection of

must-have products appearing in Macau for the very first time, the gaming operator noted in a statement.

More than 100 top brands, each with its own personalized space, including super brands Thom Browne, Proenza Schouler and Calvin Klein 205W39NYC, as well as featuring an expertly chosen selection of "first in Macau" brands.

Meanwhile, to celebrate the Chinese New Year, three-Michelin-starred Cantonese cuisine at City of Dreams' Jade Dragon, as well as confectionaries and desserts at Pierre Hermé Lounge at Morpheus, are featuring a series of festive delicacies.

CTM LAUNCHES SERVICE PLAN FOR THE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY



CTM has launched the "CTM Telecom Service Caring Plan" for the "Disability Assessment Registration Card" issued by the Social Affairs Bureau, providing a spe-

cial telecom service caring plan. In collaboration with the Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind, Fuhong Society of Macau, and Macau Deaf Association, the

"CTM Telecom Service Caring Project" is available for application from now onwards, covering mobile communication and fiber broadband services.

In her speech, Eliza Chan, director of Corporate Communications of CTM, said that with the increasing popularity of smart phones and various smart applications, the demand for telecom services by different communities is increasing.

"It is a great honor to launch this telecom service caring plan after in-depth exchanges with the Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind, Fuhong Society of Macau and Macau Deaf Association under the coordination of CTT. Through this [plan], CTM hopes to encourage more people with disabilities to live a wonderful life through advanced technology," she said, as cited in a press release issued by the company.

Beijing joins talks to strike a worldwide digital trade pact

Bryce Baschuk, Shawn Donnan

CHINA will join a group including the U.S. and the European Union in negotiating new rules to cover the USD25 trillion e-commerce market.

The EU and 47 other members of the World Trade Organization launched the discussions, according to a Friday statement. If successful, a digital trade accord hashed out through the Geneva-based trade body would establish a baseline international regime for 21st century trade and reduce cross-border hurdles to e-commerce.

China, which for years has heavily restricted use of the internet inside its borders, had resisted joining the talks until Thursday, raising concerns over the language in the statement advocating a "high standard outcome," according to four people familiar with the talks who asked not to be identified because the discussions were private.

In a statement emailed to Bloomberg, China's ambassador to the World Trade Organization, Zhang Xiangchen, said China had in the end decided to join the negotiations out of concern over a broader crisis surrounding the WTO, which has been coming under attack from the U.S. and President Donald Trump's administration.

"The multilateral trading system is in a deep crisis," he said. "Against this backdrop, the launching of e-commerce negotiation will in a significant way help reinvigorate the negotiating function of the WTO, and shore up confidence in the



multilateral trading system and economic globalization."

Robert Lighthizer, the U.S. Trade Representative, said in a statement on Friday that the U.S. is seeking an "ambitious, high-standard agreement that is enforceable and has the same obligations for all participants." He called the digital economy a "powerful force for global economic growth" that should be guided by market-based rules and lowered barriers. The inclusion of China was important because of its scale and role in the global economy, Cecilia Malmstrom, the EU's top trade negotiator, told Bloomberg. With China on board the negotiations will include WTO

members accounting for more than 90 percent of global trade. But it also served as a sign that the WTO still had life in it.

"It shows that the WTO is still alive and that we can take on board one of the biggest challenges on global trade - e-commerce," Malmstrom said in an interview.

■ The new rules will seek to reduce barriers that prevent cross-border sales

The new rules will seek to reduce barriers that prevent cross-border sales, ban duties on electronic transmissions, ensure the validity of e-contracts and e-signatures and address forced data localization requirements, according to Friday's EU statement.

G-20

Simon Birmingham, the Australian trade minister, said the hope was that some tangible progress could be made in negotiations before a Group of 20 summit in Japan in June and that the negotiations could be wrapped up next year.

"If anything this is an initiative that started too late because the

reality is that e-commerce and digital trade are here, they're big, and there is an inevitability that the way in which commerce occurs around the world is going to be influenced more heavily by the digital economy," he told Bloomberg in an interview.

The group is expected to hold their first formal negotiating session in March, and movement toward an agreement has been praised by some retailers, including Amazon.com Inc.

"Amazon welcomes progress made this week by the joint statement group towards a global e-commerce agreement, which has the potential to significantly benefit Amazon's customers and seller partners by eliminating and preventing barriers to online trade," an Amazon spokesperson said in an emailed statement.

LARGEST MARKET

China, which is expected to surpass the U.S. this year as the biggest retail market in the world, adds greater weight to a potential accord. China will likely register \$5.5 trillion in online sales this year due to the spread of its powerful online companies like Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. and Baidu Inc.

But some in the U.S. fear that China could also seek to water down any eventual outcome and Beijing's decision to join at the end was tinged with reluctance. "To be very frank, the current text of the joint statement before us, in our view, could have been better drafted if time allows," Zhang told Bloomberg.

Even though Trump's administration didn't send a representative to Friday's meeting in Davos, the U.S. has been a key contributor to e-commerce discussions ever since they were first floated at the WTO's 2017 ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires. **Bloomberg**

Joe McDonald, Beijing

CHINESE internet users lost access to Microsoft's Bing search engine for two days, setting off grumbling about the ruling Communist Party's increasingly tight online censorship.

Microsoft Corp. said Friday that access had been restored. A brief statement gave no reason for the disruption or other details.

Comments on social media had accused regulators of choking off access to information. Others complained they were forced to use Chinese search engines they say deliver poor results.

"Why can't we choose what we want to use?" said a comment signed Aurelito on the Sina

Microsoft's Bing blocked for two days, prompting grumbling

Weibo microblog service.

Bing complied with government censorship rules by excluding foreign websites that are blocked by Chinese filters from search results. But President Xi Jinping's government has steadily tightened control over online activity.

The agency that enforces online censorship, the Cyberspace Administration of China, didn't respond to questions sent by fax.

China has by far the biggest population of internet users, with some



800 million people online, according to government data.

The Communist Party encourages internet use for business and educa-

tion but blocks access to foreign websites run by news organizations, human rights and Tibet activists and others deemed subversive.

Since coming to power in 2012, Xi has promoted the notion of "internet sovereignty," or the right of Beijing and other governments to dictate what their publics can do and see online.

Chinese filters block access to global social media including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Officials argue such services operating beyond their control pose a

threat to national security.

Xi's government also has tightened controls on use of virtual private network technology that can evade its filters.

Alphabet Inc.'s Google unit operated a search engine in China until 2010 that excluded blocked sites from results. The company closed that after hacking attacks aimed at stealing Google's source code and breaking into email accounts were traced to China.

That has helped Chinese competitors such as search engine Baidu.com to flourish. But Baidu has been hit by repeated complaints that too many search results are irrelevant or are paid advertising. **AP**

Rob Gillies, Toronto

Canada's prime minister fires his ambassador to China

PRIME Minister Justin Trudeau fired Canada's ambassador to China after the envoy said it would be "great" if the U.S. dropped its extradition request for a Chinese tech executive arrested in Canada.

Trudeau said Saturday that he had asked for and accepted John McCallum's resignation Friday night. McCallum made the remark to the Toronto Star on Friday. That came a day after he issued a statement saying he misspoke about the case earlier in the week and regretted saying Meng Wanzhou has a strong case against extradition.

The arrest of the daughter of the founder of Huawei Technologies Ltd. at Vancouver's airport Dec. 1 severely damaged relations between China and Canada.

The U.S. wants her extradited to face charges that she committed fraud by misleading banks about Huawei's business dealings in Iran.

"Last night I asked for and accepted John McCallum's resignation as Canada's Ambassador to China," Trudeau said in a statement.

Trudeau said Jim Nickel, the deputy head of mission at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing, would represent his government in China. He thanked McCallum, a former minister in Trudeau's Cabinet, for his 20 years of public service.

China detained two Canadians shortly after Meng's arrest in an apparent attempt to pressure Canada to release her. A Chinese court also sentenced a Canadian to death in a sudden retrial of a drug case, overturning a 15-year prison term handed down earlier.

McCallum told Chinese media in the Toronto area earlier in the week that the extradition of Meng to the United States "would not be a happy outcome."

He suggested the case was politically motivated and said the U.S. could make a trade deal with China in which it would no



John McCallum

longer seek her extradition, and two Canadian detained in China could then be released.

But on Thursday McCallum walked back the remarks and said he "misspoke."

Trudeau had earlier dismissed calls to fire McCallum, but he clearly had enough after the envoy spoke off script again. Trudeau and Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland have stressed that Canada's government can't interfere politically in the case.

The leader of the opposition Conservative Party, Andrew Scheer, said McCallum should have been fired days ago because his remarks raised concerns about the politicization of the Meng case.

Scheer said McCallum caused damage to Canada's reputation

by delivering different messages through different media on different days.

McCallum's remarks surprised many and fueled speculation that Canada might be trying to send a signal to China to reduce tensions.

A year ago, McCallum also made controversial comments about how Canada had more in common with China than the United States under Trump. McCallum has strong personal ties to China, and he pointed out to Chinese-language media last week that his wife is of Chinese ethnicity and his three sons have Chinese spouses.

Guy Saint-Jacques, a former Canadian ambassador to China, said he felt bad for McCallum but said it was the right thing

to do. "What is worse is this is happening in the middle of the crisis when we need all-hands on deck," Saint-Jacques said. He said the Chinese will now know that McCallum was not speaking for the Canadian government.

Roland Paris, a former foreign policy adviser to Trudeau, said "Mr. McCallum's remarks were continuing to cause confusion about Canada's position. On a matter of this importance, the Canadian government has to speak with a single, clear voice."

Robert Bothwell, a professor at the University of Toronto, said it is not an ambassador's job to speak out of turn.

"Of course, McCallum can obviously take refuge in arguing that what he said was largely

true, but he can't escape the fact that it wasn't his job to say it. It does underline the hazards of sending a politician to do a diplomat's job," Bothwell said.

Saint-Jacques said he spoke to China's consul general in Montreal on Thursday who reported that China is furious at Canada for arresting Meng on behalf of the U.S., which is involved in a trade talks with China.

Trudeau had earlier dismissed calls to fire McCallum, but he clearly had enough after the envoy spoke off script again

Saint-Jacques said the consul general told him he thinks a Canadian delegation should visit Beijing for talks. Saint-Jacques believes Canada should appoint a special envoy to try to resolve the crisis.

Trudeau and Freeland have stressed that Canada has an extradition treaty with the U.S. that it must respect.

The White House National Security Council declined comment on McCallum.

Meng is out on bail in Vancouver awaiting her extradition proceedings. The U.S. has until Wednesday to submit paperwork for the extradition request. Huawei has close ties to China's military and is considered one of the country's most successful international enterprises. **AP**

Smoking by cabin crew banned in cockpits of domestic flights

PILOTS and other cabin crew can no longer smoke in the cockpits of domestic flights in China.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China issued a notice last week to enforce the ban on in-flight smoking with immediate effect, the China Daily reported Friday. First-time violators, including those who smoke electronic cigarettes, will be suspended for 12 months and repeat offenders will be

barred for 36 months. Airlines must carry out routine inspections, the regulator said.

China's government had outlawed in-flight smoking in October 2017, but individual airlines were given two more years before the cockpit ban was to take effect. The latest order, which scraps the extra time the carriers got, follows recent incidents that have triggered safety concerns.

In July, an Air China Ltd. pilot mistakenly switched off the cabin air-conditioner, when he actually wanted to turn off a circulation fan to prevent smoke from reaching the cabin, causing the Boeing Co. 737 aircraft to descend rapidly and oxygen masks to drop during a flight to Dalian from Hong Kong.

Cabin crew who fail to stop other members from smoking in the cockpit

will also be suspended for six months, the regulator said. Penalties could be more severe should smoking result in serious consequences, it said.

The International Civil Aviation Organization prohibited smoking on all international flights more than two decades ago due to growing health concerns, and most airlines around the world have complied with the ICAO rule. **Bloomberg**



20 dead as bombs target Sunday Mass in Philippine cathedral

TWO bombs minutes apart tore through a Roman Catholic cathedral on a southern Philippine island where Muslim militants are active, killing at least 20 people and wounding 111 others during a Sunday Mass, officials said.

Witnesses said the first blast inside the Jolo cathedral in the provincial capital sent churchgoers, some of them wounded, to stampede out of the main door. Army troops and police posted outside were rushing in when the second bomb went off about one minute later near the main entrance, causing more deaths and injuries. The military was checking a report that the second explosive device may have been attached to a parked motorcycle.

The initial explosion scattered the wooden pews inside the main hall and blasted window glass panels, and the second bomb hurled human remains and debris across a town square fronting the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, witnesses said. Cellphone signal was cut off in the first hours after the attack. The witnesses who spoke to The Associated Press refused to give their names or were busy at the scene of the blasts.

Police said at least 20 people died and 111 were wounded, correcting an earlier toll due to double counting. The fatalities included 15 civilians and five troops. Among the wounded were 17 troops, two police, two coast guard and 90 civilians.

Troops in armored carriers sealed off the main road leading to the church while vehicles transported the dead and wounded to the town hospital. Some casualties were evacuated by air to nearby Zamboanga city.

"I have directed our troops to heighten their alert level, secure all places of worships and public places at once, and initiate pro-active security measures to



Soldiers and police cordon off the area after two bombs exploded outside a Roman Catholic cathedral

thwart hostile plans," said Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana in a statement.

"We will pursue to the ends of the earth the ruthless perpetrators behind this dastardly crime until every killer is brought to justice and put behind bars. The law will give them no mercy," the office of President Rodrigo Duterte said in Manila.

It said that "the enemies of the state boldly challenged the government's capability to secure the safety of citizens in that region. The [Armed Forces of the Philippines] will rise to the challenge and crush these godless criminals."

Jolo island has long been troubled by the presence of Abu Sayyaf militants, who are blacklisted by the United States and the Philippines as a terrorist

organization because of years of bombings, kidnappings and beheadings. A Catholic bishop, Benjamin de Jesus, was gunned down by suspected militants outside the cathedral in 1997.

No one has immediately claimed responsibility for the latest attack.

It came nearly a week after minority Muslims in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation endorsed a new autonomous region in the southern Philippines in hopes of ending nearly five decades of a separatist rebellion that has left 150,000 people dead. Although most of the Muslim areas approved the autonomy deal, voters in Sulu province, where Jolo is located, rejected it. The province is home to a rival rebel faction that's opposed to the deal as well as

smaller militant cells that not part of any peace process.

Western governments have welcomed the autonomy pact. They worry that small numbers of Islamic State-linked militants from the Middle East and Southeast Asia could forge an alliance with Filipino insurgents and turn the south into a breeding ground for extremists.

"This bomb attack was done in a place of peace and worship, and it comes at a time when we are preparing for another stage of the peace process in Mindanao," said Gov. Mujiv Hataman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. "Human lives are irreplaceable," he added, calling on Jolo residents to cooperate with authorities to find the perpetrators of this "atrocious."

Security officials were looking "at different threat groups and they still can't say if this has something to do with the just concluded plebiscite," Oscar Albayalde, the national police chief, told ABS-CBN TV network. Hermogenes Esperon, the national security adviser, said that the new autonomous region, called Bangsamoro, "signifies the end of war for secession. It stands for peace in Mindanao."

Aside from the small but brutal Abu Sayyaf group, other militant groups in Sulu include a small band of young jihadis aligned with the Islamic State group, which has also carried out assaults, including ransom kidnappings and beheadings.

Abu Sayyaf militants are still holding at least five hostages — a Dutch national, two Malaysians, an Indonesian and a Filipino — in their jungle bases mostly near Sulu's Patikul town, not far from Jolo.

Government forces have pressed on sporadic offensives to crush the militants, including those in Jolo, a poverty-wracked island of more than 700,000 people. A few thousand Catholics live mostly in the capital of Jolo.

There have been speculations that the bombings may be a diversionary move by Muslim militants after troops recently carried out an offensive that killed a number of IS-linked extremists in an encampment in the hinterlands of Lanao del Sur province, also in the south. The area is near Marawi, a Muslim city that was besieged for five months by hundreds of IS-aligned militants, including foreign fighters, in 2017. Troops quelled the insurrection, which left more 1,100 mostly militants dead and the heartland of the mosque-studded city in ruins.

Duterte declared martial law in the entire southern third of the country to deal with the Marawi siege, his worst security crisis. His martial law declaration has been extended to allow troops to finish off radical Muslim groups and other insurgents but bombings and other attacks have continued. **AP**

Indonesia stands to gain from US-China trade war, Lembong says

INDONESIA is among countries set to benefit from companies relocating factories from China because of its trade war with the U.S., according to Tom Lembong, chairman of the country's Investment Coordinating Board.

While countries like Indonesia, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Cambodia are seeing relocation of factories from China, the

trade tension will cause downturns in demand and confidence as the sparing nations account for one-third of the world demand, Lembong said in an interview with Bloomberg TV on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum on Friday.

Indonesia is struggling to attract investment with foreign direct investment falling 20 percent in the

third quarter from a year earlier, official data show. Lembong said last month that 2018 was probably the first year of negative investment growth since President Joko Widodo came to power in 2014.

Indonesia still has room to improve its supply side to boost the economy and has learned its lessons from the past and is reforming to boost investmen-

ts, Lembong said.

Southeast Asia's largest economy was hit hard in 2018 by an emerging-market rout, which saw its rupiah fall to a two-decade low against the dollar, prompting the government to adopt measures, including higher tariffs on some goods. The central bank also raised interest rates six times to stem the market rout. **Bloomberg**



View from Jakarta

Ashok Sharma, New Delhi

THOUSANDS of Indians converged on a ceremonial boulevard in the Indian capital to watch a display of the country's military power and cultural diversity amid tight security during Saturday's national day celebrations.

Schoolchildren, folk dancers, and police and military battalions marched through the capital's parade route on a cold morning, followed by a military hardware display that included M777 Howitzer artillery guns, T-90 main battle tanks, locally made nuclear-capable missile systems and infantry combat vehicles.

Similar parades were held in other Indian states, including Jammu-Kashmir and Manipur, where separatist militants don't accept Indian rule and called for general strikes.

Police said government forces killed two suspected militants Saturday on the outskirts of Indian-held Kashmir's main city, Srinagar. A police statement said Indian troops laid a siege in the area based on "credible input" of presence of militants, leading to a gunfight. The slain militants "had serious plans of a terrorist act today," the statement said.

Suspected militants carried out at least half a dozen grenade attacks in the region on Friday,

AP PHOTO



India displays military power, cultural life on national day

targeting police and paramilitary camps, police said. There were no reported injuries.

Most Kashmiris support the rebel cause that the territory be united either under Pakistani rule or as an independent country. Authorities shut down the internet on mobile phones in the region, a common tactic to make organizing anti-India protests difficult and discourage dissemination of protest videos.

The possibility of an insurgent attack prompted more than 50,000 police and paramilitary

soldiers to guard the parade route in the Indian capital.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa was the chief guest at the Republic Day parade, which celebrates the anniversary of the adoption of India's Constitution in 1950. India had first invited President Donald Trump but U.S. officials declined, citing a scheduling issue.

Men, women and children in colorful dresses performed traditional dances and acrobatics on the sun-bathed boulevard, drawing applause from the spectators.

The spectacle ended with Indian air force aircraft whizzing past the saluting base. Millions of Indians watched the 90-minute display on television sets in their homes across the country.

The theme of the parade was the 150th birthday of India's independence leader, Mohandas Gandhi. Ramaphosa watched with interest and waved at tableaux depicting among other things Gandhi's life as he won independence for the country from British colonialists in 1947.

Gandhi's days in South Africa

influenced his decision to resist racial segregation and other injustices with nonviolent protests.

Four Indian National Army veterans, aged over 90 years, also took part in the parade, seated on a tableau. They were followers of Subhash Chandra Bose, a Congress party leader who formed an army to fight British colonial rulers with the help of the Japanese in the 1940s.

Bose advocated an armed struggle for Indian independence and led the radical wing of the party in late 1920s and 1930s. AP

AD



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Russia and Putin mark 75 years since WWII siege of Leningrad

Irina Titova, St. Petersburg

THE Russian city of St. Petersburg marked the 75th anniversary of the end of the devastating World War II siege by Nazi forces with a large military parade yesterday in the city's sprawling Palace Square.

Russian President Vladimir Putin later laid flowers at a monument in Piskarevskoye Cemetery, where hundreds of thousands of siege victims are buried. The siege of the city, then called Leningrad, lasted nearly 2½ years until the Soviet Army drove the Nazis away on Jan. 27, 1944.

Estimates of the death toll vary, but historians agree that more than 1 million Leningrad residents died from hunger or air and artillery bombardments during the siege.

Yesterday, more than 2,500 soldiers and 80 units of military equipment paraded as snow fell and temperatures hovered around minus-18 degrees Celsius (0 Fahrenheit). The vehicles included a T-34 tank; such tanks played a key role in defeating the Nazis and became a widely re-



Soldiers wearing Soviet army World War II uniform march in snowfall during a military parade

red symbol of the nation's wartime valor and suffering.

During the siege, most Leningrad residents had to survive on rations of just 125 grams (less than 0.3 pounds) of bread a day and whatever other food they could buy or exchange at local markets after selling their

belongings.

Among those who succumbed to the deprivations of the siege was Putin's 1-year-old brother. Putin himself was born after the siege, in 1952.

The Russian president did not attend the parade, which some civic groups had objected to as

inappropriate, saying the day should commemorate the victims rather than flaunt military strength.

The Kremlin also announced Sunday that Putin had signed an order allocating 150 million rubles (USD2.3 million) for creating new exhibits at the state museum of the siege.

"Today we mourn those who died defending Leningrad, who at the cost of their lives broke through the blockade. We recall those who worked in the besieged city, who, risking themselves, delivered bread and medicine along the Road of Life," Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev wrote on social media.

Medvedev was referring to the ice road across Lake Ladoga that was the only conduit for supplies and evacuations during much of the siege.

Tamara Chernykh, 81, told The Associated Press that she still can't forget the tiny pieces of bread that her granny used to put under her pillow as a night treat for a starving four-year-old girl in besieged Leningrad during the deadly winter of 1941-1942.

In the daytime, Chernykh said she and her baby cousin mostly stayed put under several blankets in the darkness. There was no heating during the first and the coldest winter of the siege, when temperatures outside sometimes plunged to -40 degrees Celsius (-40 degrees Fahrenheit).

Chernykh's grandmother, who gave the bread out of her own scant food ration, said the crumbs would bring good dreams. She died from starvation before the siege ended.

The siege of the city lasted nearly 2½ years

Germany has allocated 12 million euros (\$13.5 million) to modernize a Russian hospital for veterans of the war and to create a center in St. Petersburg where Germans and Russians can meet, the German and Russian foreign ministers said Sunday.

"We are sure that this voluntary action will improve the life quality of the victims of the siege who are still alive and also serve the historical reconciliation of the peoples of both countries," ministers Heiko Maas and Sergey Lavrov said in the statement.

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VENEZUELA

Maduro abandons demand that US diplomats leave country

VENEZUELA abandoned its decision to sever diplomatic ties with the U.S., stating that each country agreed to keep a so-called interest section open in their respective capitals.

The Saturday evening announcement that the missions would remain open was a retreat after days of bellicose rhetoric prompted by the U.S. decision to recognize National Assembly leader Juan Guaido as the nation's rightful head of state. President Nicolas Maduro's election to a six-year term last year has been widely criticized as a fraud designed to keep him and his military allies in power despite the country's years-long spiral into misery and hunger.

This weekend, Guaido's supporters maintained a united front from New York and Brussels to the streets of Caracas, and the country's military attache in Washington declared allegiance to the newcomer. The European Union demanded speedy elections and U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo told the UN that the socialist Maduro must go.

"It is time for every other nation to pick a side. No more delays, no more games. Either you stand with the forces of freedom, or you're in league with Maduro and his mayhem," Pompeo told the UN Security Council on Saturday during an emergency session called by the U.S.

Maduro called Pompeo "a warlord" who speaks with "a lot of despair and hate" in a preview of an interview with CNN-Turk channel.



Juan Guaido

EFFECTIVE RETREAT

Pompeo and President Donald Trump have been intransigent in the face of Maduro's fury. Despite the regime's threats to throw out diplomats and cut off electricity, the U.S. had refused to close its embassy.

However, nonessential staff were leaving the country, Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza said in a statement, calling it "an effective retreat." Venezuelan diplomats in Washington were already returning to Caracas on Saturday, he said.

Now, the governments have 30 days to reach an agreement that will establish interest sections, which permit basic consular func-

tions, but are the lowest level of diplomatic exchange. Remaining personnel will stay in their respective embassies, protected by "diplomatic prerogatives" during that time, according to Arreaza's statement.

There was no immediate response from the U.S.

Venezuela's competing leaders - Guaido is a 35-year-old engineer-turned-lawmaker while Maduro succeeded the late President Hugo Chavez in 2013 - are vying for support in the streets, the military and the mainstay oil industry.

The nation's diplomatic outposts are more leverage Guaido would like to seize. At a Saturday morning rally in Caracas, he said that

many diplomats were heeding his calls to stay in place in defiance of Maduro. "Remember all those consulates that were going to close?" Guaido asked the crowd. "I've got good news for you: They're going to stay open for a long while!"

Colonel Jose Luis Silva Silva, Venezuela's top military diplomat in the U.S., said in a video widely circulated on social media Saturday that he supports Guaido.

"The armed forces have a key role in restoring democracy in the country," Silva said, calling on the government to "stop the usurpation of executive power."

BACKING DOWN

Carlos Luna, a professor of international relations at the Central University of Venezuela in Caracas, said Maduro's decision to allow interest sections represents a "loss in power."

"He made a threat and didn't complete it," Luna said. "He's doing this to ease tensions with the U.S. When he made the decision to break relations he did so because he felt obligated, but forcing diplomats out by force carries consequences, especially if you're staring down the world's greatest military power."

Guaido's success in keeping a unified opposition to Maduro at home and abroad - and Maduro's reluctance so far to arrest Guaido - raise the prospect of a grinding standoff.

TIPPING THE SCALES

The U.S. is betting it has the

clout to tip the scales after Trump's decision to recognize Guaido was joined by countries including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Panama. EU powers shifted toward the U.S. position Saturday with envoys of the U.K. and Germany saying the European Union would recognize Guaido as interim president unless a new election is called within eight days. Arreaza called the push for a new election "almost childlike."

Maduro has stood firm in the face of demonstrations against his rule this week, winning the endorsement of key military leaders and vowing to defeat what he calls a U.S.-backed coup against his government.

Pompeo on Saturday urged countries to help isolate the Maduro regime economically, saying they should "assure that they disconnect their financial system from the Maduro regime."

SYMBOLIC CLASH

The UN hearing was mostly a symbolic clash. With Venezuelan allies China and Russia holding veto power, there was little chance the UN body would agree to take action. Among the countries rejecting the U.S. request for an emergency meeting was South Africa.

Russia has helped Maduro's government with loans and weapons exports. China has provided more than USD62 billion, mostly in loans, to Venezuela since 2007 and it's paid back in crude.

Moises Rendon, associate director of the Americas Program at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies, said Saturday that Maduro's opponents should ready themselves for a long struggle.

"The path to restoring Venezuela's democracy and stability will undoubtedly be long and arduous," he said. **Bloomberg**

BRAZIL

200 missing as Vale dam breaks, echoing 2015 tragedy

Atailings dam owned by miner Vale SA broke in the state of Minas Gerais on Friday, hitting a local community near the capital and echoing a similar accident that became Brazil's biggest environmental disaster three years ago.

By Saturday night, when authorities called off rescue efforts until day break, the death toll stood at 40 dead. Approximately 200 people are missing, according to several media reports.

Helicopter footage from local television showed several buildings leveled by a slide of mining waste, and a sea of mud blocking roads.



AP PHOTO

Minas Gerais has formed a crisis management group and sent first responders to the affected area, according to a statement. Aircraft are doing flyovers as part of rescue operations, it said, without mentioning any deaths or injuries. Vale

announced yesterday that rising water levels at its Dam 6 had prompted new evacuations of local residents.

President Jair Bolsonaro intended to visit the disaster zone on Saturday, according to a spokesman. Earlier, the pre-

sident said he had sent a team of high-ranking officials to the area, including the ministers of environment, and mines and energy. "Our biggest concern at the moment is to attend to possible victims of this serious tragedy," he posted on his twitter account.

In an emailed statement, Vale said there are possible victims among employees who were at an administrative facility hit by the mud. It added there's no information about the cause of the accident. The failed dam serves the Feijao mine, one of Vale's smaller operations that produced 7.8 million tons of iron

ore in 2017, according to the company.

In Brazil's largest-ever environmental catastrophe, another tailings dam collapsed near the municipality of Mariana, also in Minas Gerais state, in November 2015. It spilled the equivalent of 25,000 Olympic swimming pools of toxic mud that destroyed entire towns, contaminated waterways and resulted in 19 deaths. The dam was owned by Samarco, a joint-venture between Vale and BHP Billiton Ltd.

While the images of mud burying houses and cars are reminiscent of the 2015 disaster, the

scale should be quite different. The Feijao dam's capacity is no more than 2 million cubic meters, while the Samarco dam spilled 50 million cubic meters into the surrounding environment, according to a committee that gathers 110 groups advocating for greater mining regulation.

"The type of waste is similar to Mariana's, but the volume is significantly lower," said Katia Visentainer, a spokeswoman for the committee. "Also, the Mariana disaster happened during a raining season, which augmented its impacts. It's not the case now." **MDT/Agencies**

what's ON



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

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MOP980, MOP1280

Offbeat

TELEGRAPH TO PAY MELANIA TRUMP 'SUBSTANTIAL' DAMAGES FOR ARTICLE



The Telegraph agreed to pay U.S. First Lady Melania Trump "substantial" damages after running an article in its magazine a week ago that it said included "a number of false statements" and shouldn't have been published.

The British newspaper said "The Mystery of Melania," the cover story of its Jan. 19 edition of the magazine, it made erroneous claims about her family and career. The article can no longer be found its website.

In an explanation titled "Melania Trump -- An Apology," the newspaper wrote that the first lady's father was not "a fearsome presence and did not control the family." It also said she didn't leave her studies in design and architecture at university due to an exam, but because she wanted to pursue a career as a model. It also said it inaccurately stated she was "struggling" as a model when she met Donald Trump, now the president.

It corrected the timing of when she met Trump, and when her family arrived in the U.S. The apology also said the story erroneously reported she cried the night her husband was elected president.

"We apologise unreservedly to The First Lady and her family for any embarrassment caused by our publication of these allegations," the Telegraph article said. "As a mark of our regret we have agreed to pay Mrs. Trump substantial damages as well as her legal costs."

A spokeswoman at the Telegraph didn't immediately respond to an emailed request for comment on Saturday.

Melania Trump has previously taken aim at other journalists who have written about her family or experience growing up in Slovenia. On her Facebook page, she regularly posts retractions that media outlets have made after reporting on her immigration status or other aspects of her life. She has also posted letters from her lawyers, challenging the accuracy of news stories.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Mistura Fina
16:00	Os Compadres
16:40	Grande Entrevista - José Manuel Júdice
17:40	João Semana
18:30	Contraponto (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Desporto
22:20	Impostores Sr.1
23:15	TDM News
23:50	A Madeira e a República - Parte III
00:15	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:05	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

24 JAN - 30 JAN



GLASS

ROOM 1

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

Director: M. Night Shyamalan

Starring: Bruce Willis, James McAvoy, Samuel L. Jackson

Language: English

Duration: 112min

SECOND ACT

ROOM 2

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

Director: Peter Segal

Starring: Jennifer Lopez, Vanessa Hudgens

Language: English

Duration: 89min



MORE THAN BLUE

ROOM 2

4:30 pm

Director: Gavin Lin

Starring: Jasper Liu, Ivy Chen

Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)

Duration: 105min

TAKE POINT

ROOM 3

4:30, 4:45, 9:30 pm

Director: KIM Byung-woo

Starring: Ha Jung-woo, LEE Sun-kyun

Language: Korean (Chinese & English)

Duration: 95min

MORE THAN BLUE

ROOM 2

4:30 pm

Director: Gavin Lin

Starring: Jasper Liu, Ivy Chen

Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)

Duration: 105min

this day in history



Ion Iliescu

1990 ROMANIANS CALL FOR GOVERNMENT CHANGE

Tens of thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators have taken to the streets of the Romanian capital, Bucharest to protest against the interim government of Ion Iliescu.

It was the biggest demonstration in the capital, since the revolution just over a month ago which led to the fall and execution of the former communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

The protesters converged on Victory Square, where Mr Iliescu's National Salvation Front party has its headquarters.

They called for the resignation of Mr Iliescu and the removal of all former communists from the party.

The demonstrators claim the interim president is denying opposition parties the chance to stand on equal terms with the ruling party in the free elections planned for May.

Mr Iliescu himself appeared on a balcony overlooking the square and promised to carry on talking with the opposition parties.

Ion Ratiu, leader of the opposition National Peasants' Party, told the BBC: "We are at long last emerging from a dictatorship that's lasted virtually 45 years and we had hoped we could advance toward democracy and this is precisely why the young people shed their blood."

"Yet these demonstrations today make it look to me as if there is going to be a new attempt at taking over power from the people."

He is holding more talks with Mr Iliescu later this week, but said the opposition's limited access to the media meant there was little hope of a fair election.

The revolution began in mid-December with a protest in the town of Timisoara against the deportation of Hungarian priest, Laszlo Tokes, who had denounced Ceausescu in a sermon.

What began as a small protest, quickly grew into a massive anti-government riot. Many demonstrators were shot when troops were brought in to restore order.

But the demonstrations continued and Ceausescu and his wife were captured trying to flee the country, tried and executed on Christmas day.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Ion Iliescu remained in power until 1996.

But rather than pushing through democratic reforms as he had promised, he blocked moves to prosecute those behind the shootings in the December revolution.

There has been much speculation since the overthrow of Ceausescu that it was not so much a revolution as a coup, plotted by Iliescu and his supporters

It was Iliescu who ordered Ceausescu's trial and subsequent execution.

He was finally ousted from power by a centre-right government in 1996 - but three governments later and prolonged political feuding led to the re-emergence of Iliescu's opposition party.

He was returned to power in 2000 at the head of the party of Social Democracy, promising faster reforms to get Romania into the European Union.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 There will be quite a few opportunities to have a quiet conversation that will let you say your piece without having to worry about hurting anyone's feelings or creating an awkward moment.

Taurus April 20-May 20 A new person is coming into your life who personifies the skills you covet. Pay attention to their personality and try to focus on how their behavior differs from yours.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 If you can insert some breathing room into your schedule, you will end this day a lot happier than you would if you just plowed through everything without taking a breath.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 This idea of second-hand joy is a profound thing: it teaches you to enjoy happiness as an idea and a force in human existence, not just something you want for yourself.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 This day is the right day to take your firmly-held beliefs and turn them on their ear - and then toss them all right out the window. It's important to put your new ideas into practice today.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Inspiration can come in some unconventional ways today, so keep an eye out for the unusual. Anything that causes you to stray from your daily routine is something you should pay extra special attention to.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 The fastest talking salesperson in the world is no match for your baloney-detector! Bargains and heavy discounts will help you feed your piggy bank, and that's a good thing.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Some news will come along today that sets most of your immediate future in stone. Things are clearer. This is the direction you were hoping to take things in, so be joyous with this...

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 If you are waiting for more free time to come into your life soon, don't hold your breath. It's up to you to do whatever you have to do to make things work, and there's simply no getting around it.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Let people worry about their own lives and learn their own lessons. Being a sounding board or a cheerleader is one thing, but being the boss of someone else - no matter how much they ask for it.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Get out your pen and pick up a brand-new journal. This wouldn't be a bad time to start a dream log. Your dreams will be especially prophetic now, so try to remember them when you wake up.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Some days (like today) your life can be like a decadent piece of chocolate cake: so intense and delicious that you savor every bite and don't ever want it to end.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- "Peter and the Wolf" bird; 6- Prefix with dextrous; 10- Queue after Q; 14- Nobelist Sadat; 15- Mend socks; 16- Environmental sci.; 17- Without a job; 19- Career golfers; 20- Takes to court; 21- Footless animal; 22- Singer Bonnie; 23- Climber's challenge; 24- Liable to become putrid; 26- Having a specified way of walking; 28- Go at full speed; 29- Sea eagles; 30- Very funny; 33- Informal gathering; 38- Jug; 39- Alamogordo's county; 42- Valuate; 47- Relax; 48- Self-confident; 52- "The Bells" poet; 53- Kool-Aid maker; 54- Arrow poison; 55- Poetic daybreak; 56- Simulate; 57- Becoming slower and broader; 59- Crude cartel; 60- Like some dorms; 61- It can be used for collateral; 62- Repose; 63- Grounded jets; 64- Twice, a comforting comment;

DOWN: 1- Wurst; 2- Ring-shaped; 3- Decisive; 4- Poor actors; 5- Dada pioneer; 6- Take as one's own; 7- Executive of a municipality; 8- Plait, old-style; 9- Not Rep. or Dem.; 10- Mend; 11- Writer; 12- Proceed in a leisurely way; 13- Northern Ireland province; 18- Praise; 22- Nipper's co.; 24- Annoyance; 25- Shool; 27- Golf prop; 30- In what way; 31- Candle count; 32- That girl; 34- Mrs. Dick Tracy; 35- Head-cover; 36- DDE's command; 37- Rejoinder; 40- Bring back into stock; 41- Monotonous; 42- Request; 43- Mariachi's wrap; 44- Quenches; 45- Result; 46- Was in session; 47- Sly look; 49- Grain stores; 50- Still for rent; 51- Peruses; 55- Pulverize potatoes; 57- Cooling units, for short; 58- Gangster's rod;



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FOOTBALL

PSG coach says too early to know how long Neymar is out for

NEYMAR needs further medical tests next week to determine how best to treat his latest right foot injury, and assess how long he will be out for.

The Paris Saint-Germain forward sustained the injury in a French Cup game against Strasbourg on Tuesday. Initial tests showed a recurrence of a problem with the fifth metatarsal in the right foot which he fractured almost exactly one year ago playing against Marseille.

“He has started getting treatment, we need to wait until next week. His treatment will depend on how the injury develops in the next few days,” PSG coach Thomas Tuchel said Saturday at a news conference ahead of Sunday’s league game against Rennes. “It’s too early to say for Neymar.” It is Neymar’s third injury in a calendar year.

In February of last year, Neymar



cracked the fifth metatarsal in his right foot, and he underwent surgery back home in Brazil. Although he recovered in time for the World Cup, he was not at his best in Russia. Then, Neymar was substituted with a groin injury during the first half of Brazil’s friendly against Cameroon on Nov. 20.

A huge game is coming up for PSG against Manchester United on Feb. 12. Tuchel is sweating on the fitness of Neymar, the world’s

most expensive player when he cost 222 million euros (USD253 million) from Barcelona, and key midfielder Marco Verratti.

“The fact Neymar and Marco are injured is a sad situation for us,” Tuchel said. “We need to find solutions, collectively, so that we carry on winning.”

Tuchel avoided talking with Neymar about his injury when he saw the star forward on Friday, because “he is feeling sad.” AP

Arnautovic signs new West Ham deal amid interest from China

MARKO Arnautovic signed a contract extension at West Ham on Saturday, hours after declaring his intention to stay with the English Premier League club despite a “very tempting” offer from a Chinese team.

“I love this club and I will always love this club no matter what,” Arnautovic said in a statement released by West Ham. “You have decisions you have to make in life, but I say from now it doesn’t matter what happens I will always love West Ham.”

Late on Friday, the Austria forward wrote on Instagram that it was time to “put a stop to all the writings and speculation,” having needed time to talk to his family and West Ham about his future.

“I want to put the offers aside,” he wrote, “help the club to climb as high as possible in the [Premier League] table and try to win the [FA] Cup.”

West Ham lost to third-tier AFC Wimbledon 4-2 in the FA Cup on Saturday, with Arnautovic left



out of the matchday squad. Minutes after the fulltime whistle, West Ham announced the new deal for Arnautovic, whose previous contract ran until 2022.

“I’m happy for this,” he said, “and I want to say to the fans that I’m happy to stay.”

The 29-year-old Arnautovic was left out of West Ham’s squad for the Premier League game against Bournemouth last weekend. He returned to training this week.

“Marko Arnautovic never refused [to play or train],” he said in the club statement. “I would never refuse.” West Ham is 10th in the 20-team Premier League. AP

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TENNIS

Djokovic overwhelms Nadal for 7th Australian Open title

Howard Fendrich, Melbourne

NOVAK Djokovic was so good, so relentless, so pretty much perfect, that Rafael Nadal never stood a chance. Djokovic reduced one of the greats of the game to merely another outclassed opponent — just a guy, really — and one so out of sorts that Nadal even whiffed on one of his famous forehands entirely.

In a remarkably dominant and mistake-free performance that yielded a remarkably lopsided result, the No. 1-ranked Djokovic overwhelmed Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 yesterday to win a record seventh Australian Open championship and a third consecutive Grand Slam title, raising his count to 15 overall. “An amazing level of tennis,” Nadal acknowledged.

After dropping only four games in the semifinals, Djokovic spoke about being “in the zone.” Clearly, he did not budge from there, producing 34 winners and only nine unforced errors Sunday.

And this was against no slouch, of course: Nadal is ranked No. 2, owns 17 major trophies himself and hadn’t dropped a set in the tournament.

But Djokovic left Nadal smirking or gritting his teeth or punching his racket strings, unable to compete at all.

So Djokovic added to previous



Novak Djokovic makes a backhand return

triumphs in Melbourne in 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, along with four at Wimbledon, three at the U.S. Open and one at the French Open.

He broke his tie with Roger Federer and Roy Emerson for most Australian Open men’s titles. He also broke a tie with Pete Sampras for third-most Grand Slam trophies; Djokovic only trails Federer, with 20, and Nadal.

And he is gaining on them.

A sore right elbow cost Djokovic the last half of 2017. It contributed to a fourth-round loss in Melbourne a year ago. He had surgery about 11 months

ago. All that is in the past. The 31-year-old Serb is once again at an elite level. If anything, the gap between him and the rest is growing right now.

Djokovic and Nadal know each other, their styles and their patterns all too well. This was their 53rd meeting — more than any other pair of men in the half-century professional era — and record-equaling 15th at a Grand Slam tournament. It was also their eighth matchup in a major final.

So there should not have been any mysteries out there on Rod Laver Arena’s blue court as they

began with the temperature, which had topped 105 degrees (40 Celsius) in recent days, at a manageable 75 (25 C) and just a hint of wind.

Right from the start, though, this shaped up nothing like their only previous Australian Open title match, back in 2012, which Djokovic won in 5 hours, 53 minutes, the longest Grand Slam final in history.

Evenly matched as they were that night, this time was no contest. None whatsoever. It lasted a tad more than 2 hours.

Watching things swing so immediately and irrevocably in

Djokovic’s direction really was rather hard to comprehend, as was how someone of Nadal’s experience and excellence could come out of the gate quite so poorly.

Nerves? Perhaps they played a role. So, of course, did Djokovic, whose defense was impenetrable.

No ball, no matter how well-struck, seemed to be out of Djokovic’s reach. He slid and stretched and occasionally even did the splits, contorting his body to get wherever he needed to.

Djokovic grabbed 13 of the first 14 points, including all four that lasted 10 strokes or more. A trend was established.

Of most significance, Nadal was broken the very first time he served yesterday. That gave Djokovic one more break of Nadal than the zero that the Spaniard’s five preceding opponents had managed combined. But none of them is Djokovic, the best returner in the game now — and maybe ever.

Not a shabby returner, either, Nadal could make no headway on this day. Djokovic won each of the initial 16 points he served and 25 of the first 26.

By the end of the second set, after 75 minutes of action, Djokovic had won nearly twice as many points (59-30), made more winners (23-14) and far fewer unforced errors (20-4), while taking 14 of 17 points that lasted at least 10 strokes.

The longest was a 22-shot point, which ended when Nadal netted a backhand to give Djokovic a set point at the end of the first. Djokovic raised his right fist and held it there while staring at his guest box.

He was on the right path. Nadal could do nothing to stop him. **AP**

Japanese fans celebrate Osaka’s rise to top of tennis world

Jim Armstrong, Tokyo

LED by a congratulatory tweet from the prime minister, Japan reveled in Naomi Osaka’s dramatic Australian Open win yesterday. Osaka beat Petra Kvitova 7-6 (2), 5-7, 6-4 on Saturday to claim a second consecutive Grand Slam singles title. The 21-year-old Osaka also became the first tennis player from Japan to reach No. 1 in the rankings.

Osaka was born in Japan — her mother is Japanese, her father is Haitian — and she moved to New York at age 3. “What an impressive performance,” Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe tweeted. “Congratulations to Nao-

mi Osaka on winning the Australian Open!”

Osaka’s grandfather, who lives in the remote fishing village of Nemuro on Japan’s northernmost island of Hokkaido, said yesterday he was relieved. “My blood pressure is up,” 74-year-old Tetsuo Osaka said. “I’m really proud of how she won. She is so dear to me.”

When asked he was going to give her a congratulatory gift, Tetsuo Osaka said he hoped to be on the receiving end of a gift from his granddaughter now. Beyond dignitaries and relatives, average fans took pride in Osaka’s win.

“As a Japanese person, I’m very proud,” said 28-

year Satoshi Mizutani, who works in finance. “She showed a lot of character in coming back after dropping the second set. I think she is an inspiration to young people in Japan who can learn to do whatever they want if they work hard for it.”

Osaka has been a star in Japan since she beat Serena Williams in the U.S. Open final last year. She became the first woman to win back-to-back majors since Williams in 2015.

Her performance at the Australian Open has topped daily news coverage in Japan.

“Osaka becomes first Japanese Australian Open champion, Heading to World No. 1,” read the

headline of the Nikkansports online edition.

Osaka’s results on the court and her quirky sense of humor have sent her popularity skyrocketing, and her list of endorsements now includes major brands like Adidas, Nissan, Yonex, Citizen, Nissin and Shiseido.

Osaka’s victory at the U.S. Open was the first Grand Slam singles title by either a man or woman of Japanese nationality.

Kimiko Date reached the semifinals of the Australian Open in 1994, the 1995 French Open and Wimbledon in 1996 but never made it to a Grand Slam final.

On the men’s side, Kei Nishikori was runner-up



Naomi Osaka poses with her trophy the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup at Melbourne’s Brighton Beach

at the 2014 U.S. Open, losing to Marin Cilic in the final.

Osaka’s rise to the top of the tennis world couldn’t come at a better time. With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics just over a year away she could become the face of the Games.

“It would be fantastic to see her represent Japan,” said Daisuke Aizawa said.

“I think she would be the favorite to win gold and that would be a huge boost for Japan.”

When asked about being the face of the Olympics, Osaka was her usual quirky self.

“Yikes! if that happens, I’d be very honored,” Osaka said. “Hopefully for their sake, they don’t do that.” **AP**

opinion

World Views

Ronald W. Chan, Bloomberg

THAI PROPERTY CAN STAY HOT IN CHILLIER TIMES

Thailand's booming property market is at risk of cooling this year as rampant construction threatens an oversupply of apartments amid increasing global economic headwinds.

The country has been a relative bright spot in an otherwise lackluster Southeast Asian real estate market. Thai residential property has experienced substantial growth in recent years, much of it fueled by buyers from China, Japan and Singapore. The thriving hospitality sector has also drawn money from foreign and local investors to fund the building of many new hotels and resorts.

Mainland Chinese have poured roughly USD10 billion into condos in Thailand over the past three years, helping to drive annual price increases of 20 percent in major cities such as Bangkok. Japanese investors have spent \$8 billion and Singaporean buyers \$2 billion.

At a time when Beijing and Washington are still locked in a trade dispute, affluent mainland residents consider Thai real estate a safe place to park their money. Rental yields in Bangkok can be more than 4 percent – far more appealing than socking money away in domestic savings accounts that offer less than 2 percent. Analysts estimate that one out of every five condos in Thailand is sold to a Chinese buyer. As mainland economic forecasts grow stormy, more people are likely to gravitate to a country known in tourist brochures as the "Land of Smiles."

With Thailand's benchmark interest rate at 1.75 percent and inflation at about 0.4 percent, developers are able to obtain construction loans at a reasonable cost. As a result, they are flooding the market with projects. The Bank of Thailand expressed concern on Jan. 10 that a condo surplus amid a global downturn could adversely affect the Thai economy. The central bank has tightened mortgage lending rules to tame speculation and the government may take measures to clamp down on excessive construction if the situation worsens.

Moreover, bank representatives are worried that foreign buyers who have already put down a deposit might get cold feet and pull out, leaving properties empty. However, as the Chinese middle class continues to grow and accumulate wealth, the volume of people purchasing should remain steady. Though developers may ease up on new construction projects, demand – especially at the high end – will stay strong among Chinese home buyers.

Tourism, meanwhile, which represents almost one-fifth of Thailand's economy, will remain robust. The Tourism Authority of Thailand has predicted 40 million international tourists will flock to the country in 2019. A sizable number are expected to celebrate Chinese New Year there on Feb. 5.

The Thai government recently announced that it expanded its visa-free entry policy through April 30 to include visitors from China. That was partly a bid to entice visitors scared off by the deaths last summer of 47 Chinese tourists after their boats capsized in Phuket. Arrivals from the country dropped an estimated 20 percent after the accident, but the visa waiver alone is expected to boost tourism by 30 percent.

While Thailand's residential property market may cool slightly, it's hardly likely to slump. The combination of buoyant tourism and Chinese demand should mean that the market will weather 2019's dreary global economic forecasts.

THE MICHAEL JACKSON DOCUMENTARY PUTS STAR BACK UNDER MICROSCOPE

Michael Jackson, whose music remains ubiquitous nearly a decade after his death, is under fresh scrutiny. The singer's alleged sexual crimes are being re-examined in a four-hour documentary that screened Friday at the Sundance Film Festival. The movie, "Leaving Neverland," was shown under police presence, an unusual circumstance for the festival.

During breaks from the screening, critics suggested that the allegations – based on accounts from Jackson's accusers – may be explosive. The documentary is slated to air on HBO later this year.

For the music industry, the documentary brings a fresh test of how to deal with controversial artists. Just last week, Sony Corp.'s RCA label scrubbed R. Kelly from its lineup. In the case of Jackson, the stakes may be higher. He's one of the best-selling artists of all time and remains a staple of streaming services.

The artist's estate has sought to quash "Leaving Neverland," and his official Twitter account slammed HBO for agreeing to air the film. "In 1992, Michael gave HBO their highest-rated special ever," the tweet read. "Now, to repay him they give a voice to admitted liars."

Palestinian artist brings Japanese origami to Gaza

Wafaa Shurafa, Gaza City

IN a small studio packed with sculptures made of scrap metal, Palestinian artist Ahmed Humaid has found a new medium in origami, the Japanese art of paper folding.

It's an unlikely pursuit for an artist living in the Gaza Strip, which has been largely cut off from the outside world since Israel and Egypt imposed a crippling blockade on the Hamas-ruled territory more than a decade ago.

But the 29-year-old Humaid, who has no regular job, says interest in origami is on the rise.

"With more people asking about it, this work has turned into a source of income for me," said Humaid, who lives in Nusseirat refugee camp in central Gaza.

Humaid practices a form of origami in which he folds and forms the pages of an entire book into a readable inscription of calligraphic letters.

He has no formal training. He said he learned about origami when he saw some photos on Instagram. He began following Japanese artists and wrote to them.



Ahmed Humaid works on one of his Origami sculptures

Some offered help and feedback.

When he made his first origami work in October, it took him 15 hours to finish. He shared the photo with some Japanese artists who acclaimed the work.

Since then, Humaid has sold 45 works locally, including books folded into names that lovers have given to each other as gifts, as well as logos for local businesses. Depending on the size and number of letters, he charges 50 to 100 shekels (about USD15-30) per order.

Unemployment in Gaza,

a coastal enclave sandwiched between Israel and Egypt, stands at more than 50 percent, according to U.N. and other international estimates. It is even higher among Gaza's youth.

Humaid would like to expand his business beyond Gaza's borders, but the blockade has cut off virtually all exports, and Israel and Egypt heavily restrict travel into and out of the territory.

"I wish to visit the homeland of this art – Japan – so I can be closer to the people who creatively mastered it," he said. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Czarek Sokolowski



Survivors of Auschwitz gathered yesterday on the 74th anniversary of the liberation of the former Nazi German death camp in Oswiecim, Poland.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	65-95 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	55-75 Moderate
Ambient	65-95 Moderate

SOURCE: D5M/G

WORLD BRIEFS



SYRIA called on Turkey to withdraw its troops from Syria's northern territories and end support for armed opposition groups in order to revive a two-decade-old bilateral security agreement.

ITALY A prosecutor is investigating a flight instructor who survived a midair collision between a small tourist plane and a helicopter in the Italian Alps that killed seven.



BELGIUM Thousands of protesters are marching through the Belgian capital of Brussels to demand that the government increases its efforts to fight climate change.

ARCTIC Military authorities say U.S. Air Force and Canadian fighter jets were scrambled to escort two Russian bombers that were traveling in the Arctic region near the North American coastline.



PANAMA Pope Francis celebrated a final Mass yesterday before an estimated 700,000 people and presidents from across Central America as he brought World Youth Day to a close on a Panama City field splashed with flags from across the Americas.

VENEZUELA defused a potential showdown with the United States, suspending a demand that U.S. diplomats leave the country as Washington called on the world to "pick a side" in the South American nation's fast-moving crisis. More on p15