



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE STOOD AT 1.8 PERCENT

The unemployment rate was 1.8pct in 2018, the Statistics and Census Service revealed, saying that the situation last year was 'favorable'

P4



40 LOCAL ARTISTS JOIN NEW EXHIBITION

P7 MDT REPORT



EUROPE'S RETAIL ROUT DEEPENS

Traditional bricks-and-mortar stores in the U.K. and Germany are poised to cut thousands of jobs as online shopping grows

P9 BUSINESS

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P11 CHINA

WORLD BRIEFS



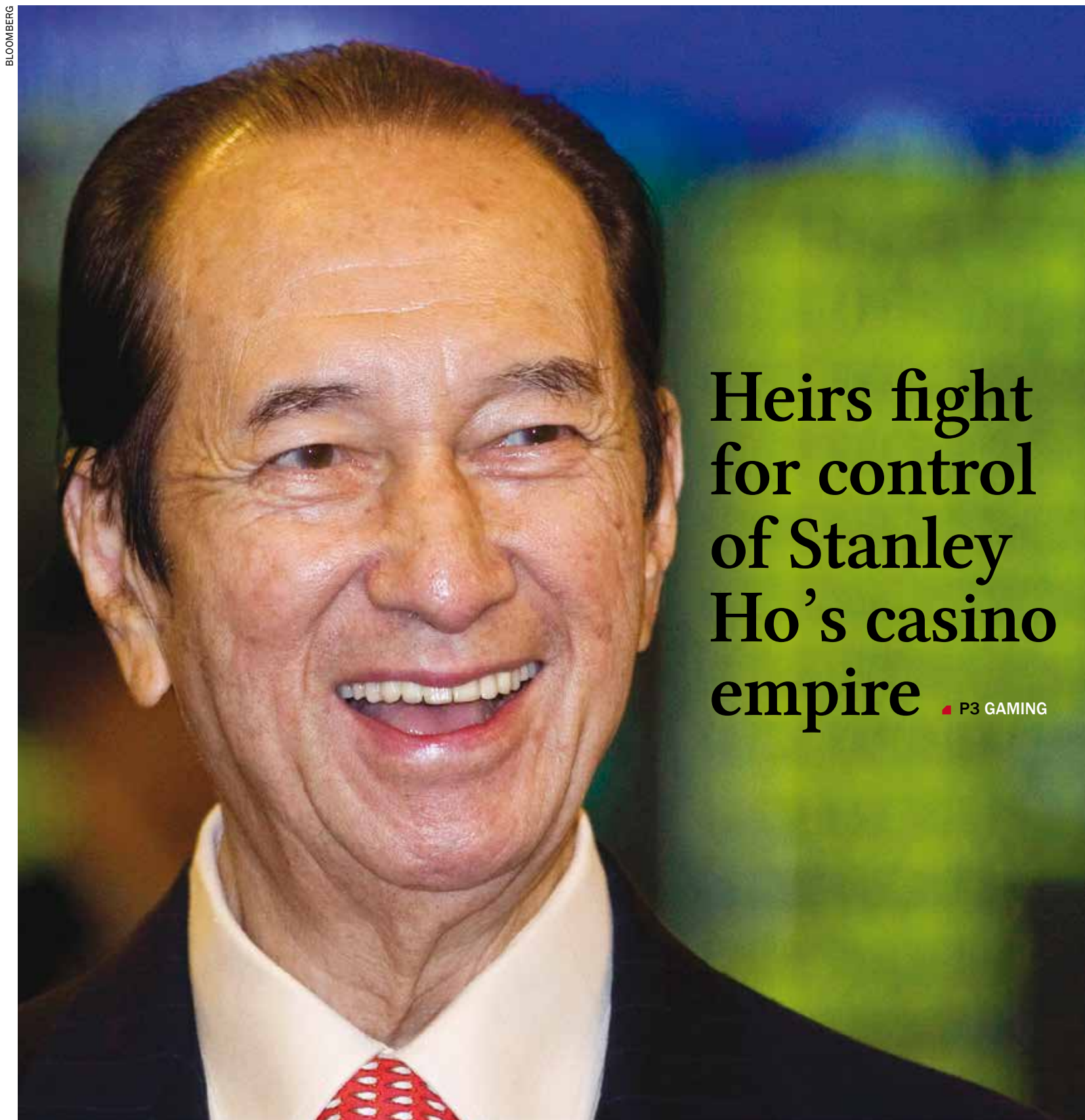
CHINA-JAPAN Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged he will further expand his country's already improving ties with China but said Japan still needs to bolster its defense capability amid concern about Chinese military activity. *More on p10*

INDONESIA Separatists opened fire on an aircraft carrying military personnel and local government officials in Indonesia's easternmost Papua region, killing one soldier.



PHILIPPINES President Rodrigo Duterte and his top security officials yesterday visited a Catholic cathedral in the southern Philippines where suspected Islamic militants set off bombs that killed at least 20 people and wounded more than 100. *More on p13*

More on backpage



Heirs fight for control of Stanley Ho's casino empire

P3 GAMING

CRIME

Another gambling loan goes south

Renato Marques

A happy experience in Macau of a lucky 30-year-old tourist from mainland China soon turned into a nightmare. A Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson revealed yesterday that a 48-year-old male suspect from the mainland in this case was finally caught last Friday while trying to exit the region at the Border Gate checkpoint. The man has been presented to the Public Prosecutions Office for breach of trust, after tricking a victim into transferring his casino earnings into his VIP account at a local casino.

In October, the victim borrowed HKD500,000 from the suspect to gamble. The victim's luck allowed him to transform the initial HKD500,000 into HKD4 million. However, when trying to return the borrowed money, the suspect suggested that the victim deposit the chips into his VIP account at the casino in order to be more easily transformed into cash. The victim accepted, but the suspect only handed him HKD1 million instead of the HKD3.5 million, telling him that he needed to wait a couple of days before he could withdraw the full sum.

On October 26, the victim sought to request the remaining



sum, however the suspect was now out of reach. The victim decided to file a complaint with the PJ, feeling that he had been scammed.

Police investigations were able to identify the suspect, but were only able to find and intercept him on Jan. 25, 2019.

Questioned by the PJ, he denied committing the crime, but police say that they have enough evidence to prove his guilt.

The victim retained HKD1

million of the original HKD3.5 million.

In a separate event occurring last Thursday evening, two alleged victims (aged 36 and 37 years old) claimed to have been scammed by two other men (aged 49 and 46) who offered them a deal "too good to be true."

According to the report of the victims, the suspects offered to exchange a total of HKD400,000 in gaming chips

for the HKD200,000 in cash that the victims had, and they did not hesitate.

A few minutes later, the victims fulfilled their part of the deal, handing the sum in cash to the suspects, who requested them to wait "for a while" while they were retrieving the chips.

Around 11:30 p.m. the victims decided to call the suspects to ask them to meet to get the chips. The chosen meeting point was the lobby of the hotel.

Instead of the two suspects, the victims met with only one of them, who informed the victims that the other had taken off with the money. The victims then called the PJ and the first suspect was detained on site.

During questioning, the first suspect told the police where they could find the second suspect, who was also caught by the authorities.

Although both suspects were detained, there is no further information as to the whereabouts of the victim's money.

REAL ESTATE SCAM VICTIMS AND AMOUNT UPDATES

AT A press conference held yesterday, the PJ spokesperson updated the most recent figures involving the case of the real estate scam involving businesswoman Isabel Chiang. According to the PJ, the

number of victims has now risen to 56, of which 54 are locals, with one from Hong Kong and another from the mainland. After the new calculations, the sum lost by the investors surpasses HKD255 million.

'Ferrari: Under the Skin' opens in Asia for the first time

MACAU resort City of Dreams is teaming up with the Design Museum of London and Italian luxury sports car manufacturer Ferrari to present the "Ferrari: Under the Skin" exhibition in Asia for the first time.

Following on from highly acclaimed runs at the Museo Ferrari in Maranello, Italy and the Design Museum in London, the exhibition is being showcased at the City of Dreams in Macau until June 16.

According to a statement from resort operator Melco Resorts & Entertainment, the major HKD2 billion-valued exhibition takes visi-

tors on an immersive journey exploring the history and design of the world's most iconic and luxurious car brand. Curated by the Design Museum and the Museo Ferrari, the exhibition features over 10 cars of significance and some 100 original artifacts from the legendary Italian marque's rich history, many of which are from private collections and are being displayed to the public for the first time in Asia.

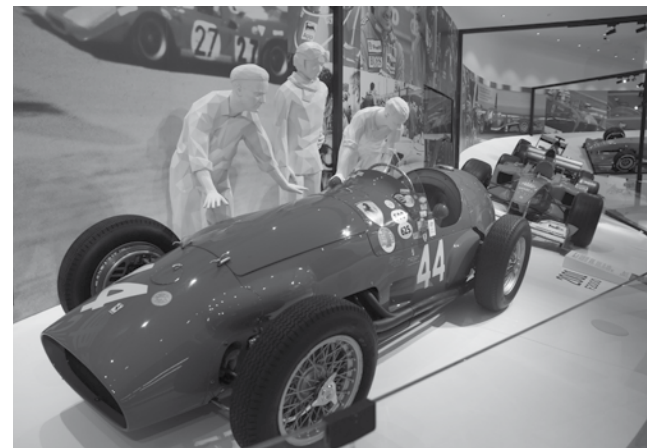
For the duration of the exhibition, City of Dreams will transform its contemporary art space into a museum that will showcase the rise of Ferrari from its

against-the-odds beginnings in an Italy ravaged by the Second World War to the glamor and glory of the brand today. The exhibition captures the passion, ambition and relentless drive for excellence that has made Ferrari one of the most sought-after names among motor enthusiasts the world over.

"Ferrari: Under the Skin" is divided into six distinct zones, showcasing everything from original hand-drawn sketches and early wooden master models to engines, gearboxes and other parts that illustrate Ferrari's ground-breaking engineering techniques

and design. Among the highlights set to thrill visitors is an exact replica of the first Ferrari ever made in 1947, the 2000 Formula 1 championship-winning car driven by Michael Schumacher, as well as an elite selection of vintage racing cars that hold a special place in Ferrari's incredible story.

Regarding the joint project, David Sisk, property president of City of Dreams Macau, said "the collaboration between the two ultra-luxury brands highlights our shared values and relentless drive to keep raising the bar," according to the Melco statement.



Meanwhile, Deyan Sudjic, director of the Design Museum, said that the exhibition showed "the remarkable creative process that goes into designing, building and racing some of the most beautiful and powerful cars ever made."

"We are delighted that the exhibition will be en-

thrilling a new audience in Macau. It's particularly appropriate that it will be shown in a venue so closely associated with the architecture of Dame Zaha Hadid, a brilliant designer, and a long-term friend of the Design Museum," added Sudjic, referring to the work of Hadid on the Morpheus tower.

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GAMING

Extended family wrangles for control of Stanley Ho's empire

A new alliance emerged among some of billionaire Stanley Ho's 17 children in the decade-long family battle for his Macau casino empire, and eldest daughter Pansy looks the likely victor.

As the Times reported last week, Ho announced that she had joined up with some siblings and the Henry Fok Foundation and would hold a combined 53 percent in Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau (STDM), which controls casino operator SJM Holdings Ltd. The alliance gives her the upper hand over Angela Leong, the fourth wife of 97-year-old Ho, and her main rival in the battle for control of Macau's original gaming company.

Here are four people to watch as the family saga over control of the nearly USD6b business continues.

PANSY HO



Born in 1962 to Stanley and his second wife, Lucina Laam King-ying, Pansy studied marketing and business at Santa Clara University in California before pursuing a brief TV acting career in Hong Kong. She eventually ended up running Shun Tak Holdings Ltd., a publicly-traded conglomerate that operates ferry and helicopter services linking Hong

Kong and Macau. She was appointed managing director of Shun Tak during Macau's handover from Portugal to China in 1999, and became chairman after her father stepped down in 2017. Pansy helped form MGM

China in a joint venture with billionaire Kirk Kerkorian's MGM Resorts. The company raised \$1.5 billion in an initial public offering on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in 2011

and is a STDM director. SJM has 20 casinos, about 1,700 gaming tables and more than 2,400 slot machines. SJM shares slipped 2.6 percent to HKD6.8 as of 12:02 p.m. in Hong Kong. The shares have gained 8.3 percent this year.

Leong was born into a wealthy military family in Guangzhou in 1961. She met the tycoon in 1986, and backed by him, built a sprawling property business. She also became a member of the Legislative Council of Macau.

Her real estate holdings include the Entertainment Building, the Bank of China Insurance Tower in Hong Kong, L'Avenue Shanghai in China and L'arc Macau in Macau.

LAWRENCE HO



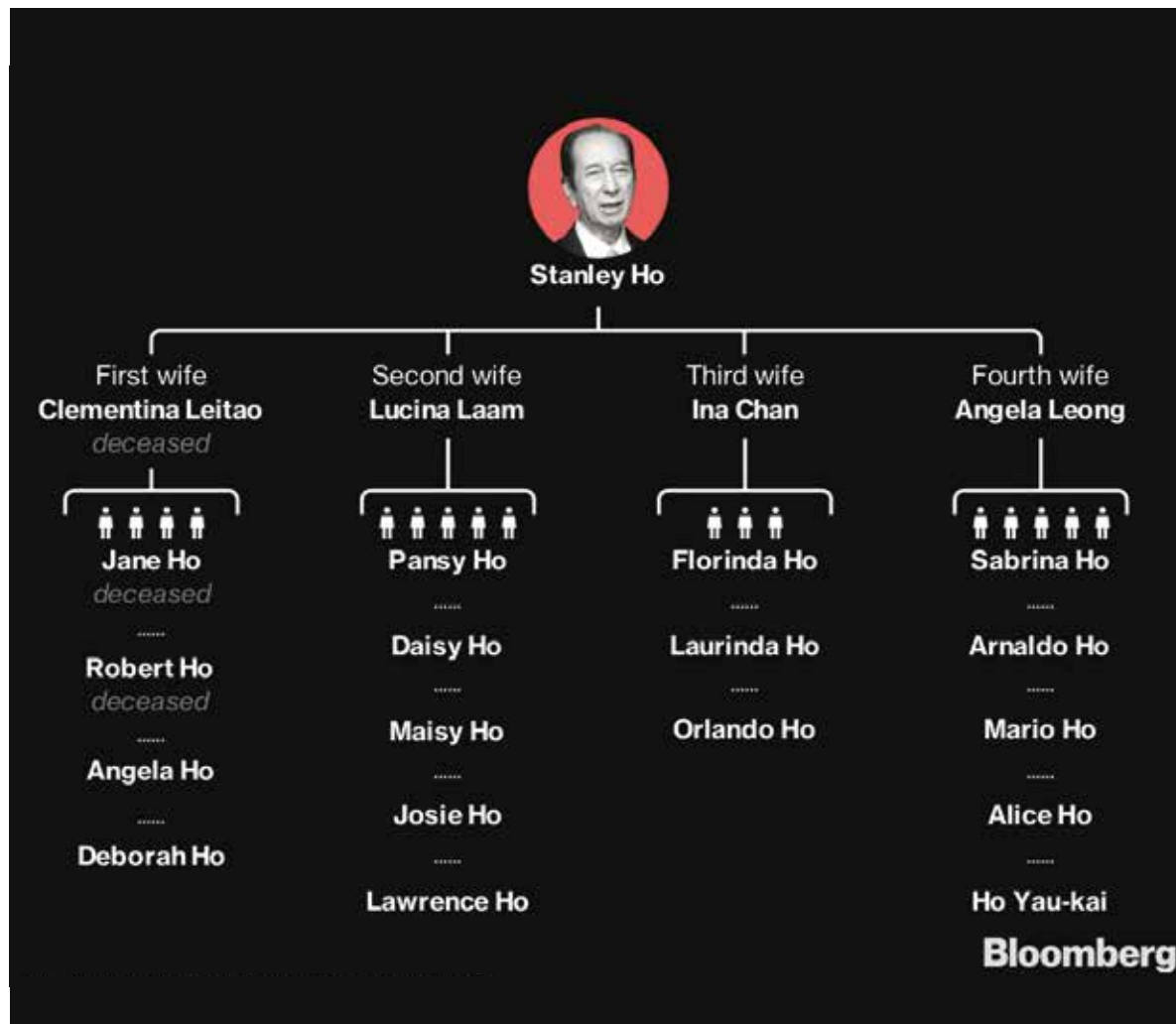
Lawrence, Stanley's son with Lucina, worked at Citibank and Jardine Fleming after returning to Hong Kong from studies at the University of Toronto. Despite being quoted as saying he doesn't like gambling, Lawrence eventually joined the family business. In 2006, he became chairman and chief executive officer of Melco International Development Ltd., a Hong Kong-listed entertainment group, which includes Nasdaq-listed Melco Resorts & Entertainment Ltd. He ended a partnership with Australian billionaire James Packer after working on four casinos together.

DAISY HO



After obtaining a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Southern California and a master's of business administration degree in finance at the University of Toronto, Daisy became chairman and executive director of SJM Holdings. She is also CFO of Shun Tak Holdings, chairman of the board of the Hong Kong Ballet and vice-chairman of charity provider Po Leung Kuk.

Daisy has been a committee member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference of Tianjin since 2008. MDT/Bloomberg



HOTUNG DEMANDS DIVIDEND PAYOUT FROM STDM

MICHAEL HOTUNG, the nephew of gaming tycoon Stanley Ho, has written to the unofficial alliance between Pansy Ho and the Henry Fok Foundation demanding HKD2 billion in unpaid dividends from the 6,263 STDM shares owned by his late mother Winnie Ho. Hotung's shares in the company represent about 7.3 percent. He also requested

that the newly-announced partners register him as the owner of the shares, since he is the sole heir to her will. Last week Pansy Ho and the Fok Foundation announced a partnership in deciding the future of the Macau gaming operator. Together they own a 53 percent stake in STDM, through which they control a 54 percent stake in SJM Holdings.

ANGELA LEONG



Billionaire Leong is the co-chairman of SJM, one of six companies authorized to operate casinos in Macau,

HERITAGE

Temple managers warned about fire prevention

AHEAD of the upcoming Spring Festival, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) and the Fire Services have visited several temples between January 16 and 18 to check measures taken to control incense burning and the risk of fires.

During the inspection, which included visits to 43 local temples, representatives of Macau's temples were informed of measures that should be enforced to avoid damage to the sites. The IC has requested that the curators ensure that incense bur-

ning be extinguished during the night in the inner areas of temples. The public should also be advised to obey instructions given by temple managers regarding fire prevention, such as avoiding the excessive burning of incense and votive papers.

In 2016, a fire erupted in the A-Ma Temple during Chinese New Year, leaving the interior of the temple's main hall severely damaged. The fire was believed to have been caused by malfunctioning electrical equipment in one of the temple's pavilions.



CCAC takes global corruption ranking seriously, says Cheong

Julie Zhu

The Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) takes Macau's global corruption ranking seriously, said the head of the CCAC, André Cheong Weng Chon, yesterday on the sidelines of the Liaison Office New Year Reception.

Talking about a recent report [Transparency International 2018] which indicated a fall in Macau's ranking in the corruption perception index, Cheong said "I also noticed that, between 2009 and 2016, the global rankings of Macau's corruption perception index were about 40 to 50 [least corrupt region or country]. But, in 2017, the ranking suddenly dropped to over 100, and this year the ranking seems to be even worse, but I don't remember."

"We try to understand why there is this change. In 2017, the ranking dropped to double the number of the previous year," said Cheong, further explaining that he "tried to understand the reason, [before realizing] that it seems the organization changed their criteria for scoring."

"Because Macau is too small, and since some statistics could not be provided, [the organization] didn't believe or didn't ask the government to provide the information, but it collected statistics from NGOs," said Cheong, adding that "because the association could not collect some of the information, it could not evaluate [the score]."

"From the CCAC's point of view, this kind of survey is good for forming a clean society, especially at a global level," said Cheong, adding that "regardless of whether the ranking is high or low, the CCAC pays attention to it, and we will use it



André Cheong

as a reference, hoping to push forward Macau's clean government development."

Regarding Hong Kong's ranking being far ahead of Macau's, Cheong said that he gives more consideration to the Macau public's opinion.

In addition, when talking about the former Iec Long Firework Factory, Cheong said that the government does not need to bear the fee to take back the land.

"If it involves a criminal situation, the CCAC will definitely follow it up," said Cheong.

"Regardless of whether it's the Iec Long Firework Factory reports or other reports, we always feel that laws and administrations in land management need to be improved. If

there are conditions, we will see whether there [is a] chance for us to review the land management [policies]," said Cheong.

In addition, Cheong is not giving an estimated time for completing the analysis of the cases

of 74 plots of expired land.

The CCAC is currently collecting information and documents about the 74 cases.

Cheong believes that the change in government will not affect the progress of CCAC's work.

LIAISON OFFICE HEAD STILL LEARNING ABOUT MACAU

ON THE sidelines of yesterday's Liaison Office New Year Reception, the Director of the Liaison Office, Fu Ziyang, said that he still needs to learn more about Macau, having only been appointed to the territory approximately one month ago. Fu remarked that Macau's development will enter a new

phase when the SAR government leadership changes in the near future. Fu hopes that Macau can take more initiative to enhance communications with mainland China, and that Macau can be brave at trying things, in particular regarding the development of the Greater Bay Area.

2018 unemployment rate stood at 1.8 percent

The Statistics and Census Service says that the employment situation in Macau was "favorable" in 2018. The general unemployment rate was 1.8 percent and the unemployment rate of local residents was 2.4 percent, down by 0.2 and 0.3 percentage points respectively year-on-year.

During 2018, median monthly employment earnings of the employed (MOP16,000) and employed residents (MOP20,000) both went up by MOP1,000 year-on-year.

Regarding household employment, the average number of employed persons per household was 1.7 in 2018, consistent with 2017, while median monthly employment earnings per household rose by MOP1,600 year-on-year to MOP30,000.

In the fourth quarter of 2018, the general unemployment rate (1.7 percent) and the unemployment rate of local residents (2.4 percent) held steady compared with the previous quarter. The total labor force was 394,900 and the labor force participation rate was 70.9 percent.

Total employment was 388,000 and the number of employed residents totaled 283,800, up by 1,900 and 800 respectively from the previous period. The number of people unemployed was 6,900, an increase of 100 from the previous period. Fresh labor force entrants searching for their first job accounted for 11.8 percent of the total unemployed, down by 2.3 percentage points.

Analyzed by industry, employment in the Transport, Storage & Communications Sector (20,600) increased by 1,000, while employment in Hotels & Similar Activities (30,100) decreased by 1,400. Meanwhile, median monthly employment earnings of the employed (MOP16,000) and employed residents (MOP20,000) held stable quarter-to-quarter.

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GLOBAL GAMING JAM

48-hour challenge ends with six finished projects

Daniel Beittler

THE Macau leg of an international computer game creation challenge was held over the weekend at the Macau Design Center, inviting about 25 local participants to showcase impressive projects made during the weekend.

The Global Gaming Jam, which had over 42,000 participants in 108 countries and territories last year, challenges contestants to design a computer game from concept to launch within a 48-hour period.

Held for the third consecutive year in Macau, local participants seemed to know what to do. The Times visited the Macau Design Center on Sunday afternoon - prior to the close of the 48-hour window - and found that all six teams had successfully published their projects and were excitedly trying each other's computer games.

Local organizer Ip Pan, who is also a game developer, said that



he hoped the challenge would serve as a platform to facilitate the growth of Macau's game development industry.

"Game development is already becoming more popular in Macau," he told the Times. "When I first came back to Macau from Taiwan four years ago, basically there were no game developers in Macau. Today, there are several developers."

Ip also said that while some local developers make computer games, others prefer to work for the mobile market. "The split is about 50-50," he explained, ad-

ding that mobile gaming is very popular in China and at least one local game developer has already found success with a hit project.

The game projects showcased at the event's conclusion on Sunday included "Home Crusher", a colorful, cartoon multiplayer game for two, with players competing - and sometimes brawling - over packages falling from the sky.

In "New Year Greetings", players take control of a character who must respond to non-playable family members and their wants - illustrated via

a thought bubble - for example a cup of tea, changing the television channel or taking their photo. Players can choose three games modes, running for 30, 60 or 120 seconds, and win by generating a high score based on successes and failures.

"Turtle Turtle Hug Hug" is a multiplayer cooperative game for two, three or four players. Players take control of a turtle and must collect items on a beach - such as shells, rocks and seaweed - and build a nest for their collective egg. Players must watch out for gusts of wind that threaten to overturn the turtles and put them out of action until they can be flipped by their teammates. A humorous surprise awaits the players upon finishing the game.

"Baba Apartment", developed by Ip Pan and his team, is a single player game involving the management of apartments in a residential building where players must respond to the various needs of the inhabitants to keep them contented.

Cable TV concession to be renewed



The Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo Arrais do Rosário, has been authorized by the Chief Executive to sign a supplementary notarization contract for the renewal of the Macau Cable TV Limited contract, according to a dispatch published in the Official Gazette. The concession contract is related to the renewal of the terrestrial subscription TV service. In 2014, the SAR government signed a five-year renewal of contract for Macau Cable TV.

Hainan plans yacht scheme for SARs

Mainland Chinese province Hainan is expecting to launch a yacht scheme between Macau and Hong Kong. According to Chinese reports, the governor of Hainan Province, Shen Xiaoming, said that in 2019, Hainan would try to build the province as a center of international tourism and consumption. Regarding the yacht scheme, Hainan hopes to explore overseas yacht routes as well. In addition, Hainan hopes to make more breakthroughs with the SARs in the service industry. In 2018, Hainan welcomed approximately 7 million visitors.

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Art Garden showcases series of works from local artists

Lynzy Valles

TAK Chun Macau Art Garden is currently showcasing a series of artworks from 40 local artists in its art week, which commenced over the weekend.

Presented at the five-story building, the art week will hold arts and crafts workshops, along with a cultural and creative craft market, where members and other artists were invited to put up their products for sale.

The art week is also the official inauguration of the mural created by Joaquim Franco, who will also participate in the arts and crafts workshop to be held next weekend.

Supported by gaming junket Tak Chun Group, Alice Kok, president of General Assembly of Art For All Society, said that after the Art Garden opened its doors to the public in 2016, this year was perfect timing for the 40 local artists to showcase their works to the public.

"We have been gathering a lot of artists and associations so [...] we decided that it was time for us to show the public what we have been working on," Kok told the Times.

Held until Feb. 3, the Art Week is based on the accomplishments of the Art Garden since its opening, included its newly painted murals, public spaces, galleries and café.

"We think that it's time [and] the time is ripe for the public to see what's going on and to let our sponsors know what we've been working on," Kok said.

During these weeks, the exhibition will also feature light installations and light photography.

According to Kok, the Art Garden has encountered management challenges and financial difficulties as they rented the whole



Alice Kok



Aspect of the exhibition

building and shared it with other associations and artists.

Yet since July 2017, the group obtained sponsorship from Tak Chun, hence the change of name.

Kok noted that finding a sponsor for the art venue was challenging, explaining that they decided to approach the junket operator after looking for possible sponsorships since its opening in 2016.

"This project is quite big because it's the whole building and in Macau we do not have that yet. Around 40 to 50 artists work here, so it's a big project. [...] We [Tak Chun and Macau Art Garden] spoke a different language so the challenge was to show

them our values and why we need them," Kok explained.

The group submits its work reviews every six months to the junket operator as part of its contract.

Meanwhile, Kok admitted that the five-story building is a significant help to the local artists, explaining that it is being used as a platform for them to share their resources and adding that one of the main challenges of the artists is to acquire a space in which to work.

"The atmosphere here is different and the artists could reach out to each other. It is an official space where ideas and works can be shared," she said.

Cultural Affairs Bureau celebrates CNY with a series of activities



THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) will be organizing a series of performances, workshops and exhibitions to usher in and celebrate Chinese New Year in Macau.

During the first three days, from February 5 to 7, of the Lunar New Year, the Drum Art Society of Shanxi Province and Ethnic Art Troupe of Hunan will present "New Year Gong and Drum Performances" at various locations on the Macau Peninsula and in Taipa.

In the afternoon, Anim'Arte Nam Van will be holding performances by artistic troupes from Hunan and Shanxi Provinces. There will be activities and stalls displaying intangible cultural heritage handicrafts at the same venue. A lion dance performance will be presented at the Mandarin's House, while Chinese New Year concerts will be staged at the Lou Kau Mansion and at General Ye Ting's Former Residence.

On February 2 and 3, "Couplets Workshop" sessions will be held at the Mandarin's House, where calligraphers will offer New Year blessings in the form of Chinese calligraphy to visitors. From February 2 to 10, the "Chinese Zodiac Card Colouring Workshop" will be held at the Jao Tsung-I Academy, promoting Chinese culture to the public.

In addition, a series of concerts will be presented in various districts, including the concerts "Music in the Library" and "Mesmerising Austro-German Music" by the Macao Orchestra to be held on January 26 and 27 at the Taipa Library and the Dom Pedro V Theatre, respectively, as well as the "Community Involvement with Music - 2019 Spring Concert" by the Macao Chinese Orchestra, to be held on February 1 at the Pak Wai Activity Centre.

The exhibition "Oneness: Calligraphy by Professor Jao Tsung-I" is being held at Jao Tsung-I Academy from January 26, while the exhibition "Prayer & Blessing - Exhibition of Chinese New Year Wood-block prints of Shanxi and Hunan Provinces" will be open to the public at Chun Chou Tong Pavilion in Lou Lim Ioc Garden from February 1.

Several sessions of the activity "New Year Family Reading Session" will also be held at the S. Lourenço Library, Wong Ieng Kuan Children's Library in Areia Preta Urban Park, Taipa Library, Ilha Verde Library, Wong Ieng Kuan Library in Luís de Camões Garden, Patane Library, Wong Ieng Kuan Library in Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Municipal Park. The public can participate in the activity at any of these areas.

corporate bits

MGM TO PRESENT HIP-HOP DANCE CREW JABBAWOCKEEZ



MGM will present hip-hop dance crew Jabbawoockeez's first-ever Macau residency show from March 2 to 31, the gaming operator announced in a statement.

Billed as one of the world's most influential dance crews, the Jabbawoockeez will entertain audiences with their energetic mix of various contemporary choreographies to deliver a show tailored for the MGM Theater in Cotai.

With their core belief in dance being a universal language, the crew aims to showcase their talent and skills strictly through dance, hiding their faces behind masks to break through the

barriers of race, gender and age.

Bringing dance to the forefront of entertainment, "Jabbawoockeez - true to yourself" will give the audience an up-close-and-personal performance with MGM Theater's state-of-the-art audio, visual and lighting technology.

Kicking off MGM's new lineup of innovative and unparalleled entertainment experiences in 2019, MGM is bringing the Jabbawoockeez from their current residency performing at MGM Grand Las Vegas. The group is best known for their signature plain white masks

and synchronized dancing, and for being the winners of the first season of America's Best Dance Crew in 2008.

They were initially formed by members Kevin "KB" Brewer, Phil "Swagger Boy" Tayag, & Joe "Punkee" Larot under the name "3 Muskee".

According to the statement, local residents may enjoy 25 percent off the standard ticket price to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Establishment of the SAR.

Tickets will be available for purchase from Feb. 1 at the concierge counter at Grande Praça, MGM Macau, and the box office at MGM Theater, MGM Cotai.



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Scott Soshnick, Eben Novy-Williams

NFL bullish about USD25b revenue goal as Super Bowl nears

NFL executive Brian Rolapp has an old photo on the wall of his office, hanging right in his line of sight. It shows a group of prep-school football fans so captivated by a game that they ignore a building engulfed in flames behind them.

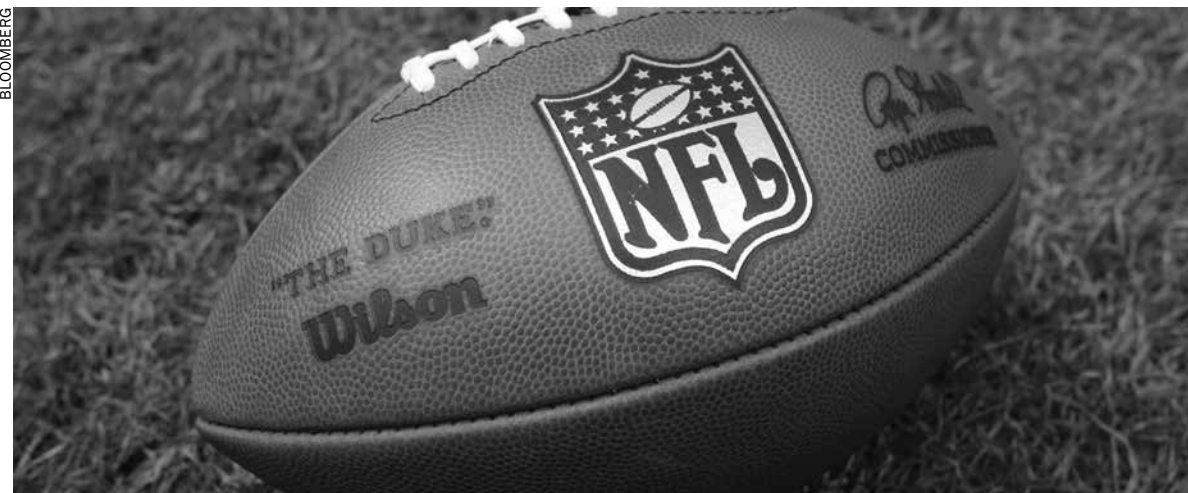
"Without exaggeration, it sits in a place where I look at it every day," said Rolapp, the chief media and business officer for the National Football League.

For years, pro football has inspired that kind of passion in millions of fans. The NFL generated about USD15 billion this past season, making it the king of U.S. sports. And the league is about to lean even harder on its fans, aiming to boost its annual revenue to \$25 billion by 2027. That may test the limits of a sport grappling with shifting TV habits and controversies surrounding brain injuries and the national anthem.

But tailwinds could help the NFL and Commissioner Roger Goodell achieve their growth targets. The spread of legalized sports betting across the U.S. promises to lock in fans and keep them riveted to games. Tech companies like Amazon.com Inc. and Facebook Inc., meanwhile, have emerged as bidders for big-dollar broadcast packages.

"Roger's aspirational target of \$25 billion is starting to look pretty good," said Marc Ganis, a sports consultant who advises the NFL and a number of its owners on business strategies.

According to the league, NFL regular-season games, excluding those played in London, averaged 15.8 million viewers. Moreover, 45 of the top 50 telecasts this season were NFL games. The AFC



championship - won by the New England Patriots, who face the Los Angeles Rams in the Super Bowl on Sunday - drew almost 54 million viewers. That's more than double the number of people who watched the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade or the 2018 Oscars.

"There's nothing left in media that will aggregate that many people," Rolapp said.

Just how valuable NFL games are to the broadcast networks and digital newcomers like Amazon and Facebook will determine whether the commissioner hits his revenue target.

The NFL reaps about \$5 billion a year from its TV contracts with CBS, NBC, Fox and ESPN. All indications are that the league will get a lot more when the contracts expire after the 2021-2022 season.

In November, Major League Baseball signed an extension of its TV contract with Fox Sports, which agreed to pay \$5 billion over

seven years, a 36 percent annual average increase.

50 PERCENT

Ganis, the consultant, said the NFL will do much better. He expects the league's next TV deals to yield increases in excess of 50 percent. On top of that, he expects a new billion-dollar package of games will go to a digital distributor such as Amazon, which currently pays \$50 million a year to show "Thursday Night Football." Amazon Chief Executive Officer Jeff Bezos personally held talks with Goodell about the Thursday night package, which helped the league boost online viewing by 86 percent.

Online executives aren't the only ones clamoring for a tie-up with the most visible and valuable U.S. sports league.

When Papa John's International Inc. and the league ended their relationship after the company's

former CEO blamed player protests for sliding sales, it took the NFL just 24 hours to announce a new, bigger deal with Yum Brands Inc.'s Pizza Hut.

NEW SPONSORS

More widely, the NFL has added seven new league-wide partners since January, including its first casino partner, Caesars Entertainment Corp., and its first presenting sponsor for the conference title games, Intuit Inc. The NFL and its clubs brought in a record \$1.32 billion in sponsorship in 2017-2018, according to consulting firm IEG, significantly more than the National Basketball Association or Major League Baseball. That doesn't count the league's newest partners, including home-improvement giant Lowe's Cos., which chose the NFL after exiting a 17-year relationship with Nascar.

"Let's face it: The NFL is dominant," Lowe's Chief Marketing Of-

ficer Jocelyn Wong said. "It's the largest, most avid fan base. That was very important to us."

Every summer, by virtue of an odd semipublic ownership structure, the Green Bay Packers disclose their shared and local revenue -- a glimpse into the financial health of the league.

For the 2017-2018 season, the NFL divvied up \$8.1 billion among its 32 teams, a 5 percent jump from 2016 - despite declining TV ratings and continued criticism from President Donald Trump over players kneeling during the national anthem. The Packers' total revenue has increased every year since 2003.

SPORTS BETTING

The prospect of widespread legalized sports betting in the U.S. will only buoy the ability of leagues to make money.

When - not if - the NFL embraces the U.S. sports betting market, the money will flow. The league should see an annual revenue increase of \$2.3 billion, more than the combined estimate for MLB (\$1.1 billion), the NBA (\$585 million) and the National Hockey League (\$216 million), according to the American Gaming Association.

Rolapp says the NFL, advertisers and networks have done research, tracking people's eyes while they watch games.

The conclusion was familiar: Like the football fans in his photo, they're so focused on the screen that they probably wouldn't notice a fire either. **Bloomberg**

Europe's retail rout deepens as UK and Germany lose jobs

EUROPE'S retail crisis deepened as companies in the U.K. and Germany are poised to cut thousands of jobs as online shopping accelerates the erosion of sales from traditional bricks-and-mortar stores.

Tesco Plc, the biggest U.K. grocer, will eliminate about 15,000 positions and close meat, fish and delicatessen counters, the Mail on Sunday reported, citing unidentified industry sources. Galeria Kaufhof, which has department stores in cities including Berlin and Munich, will cut about 2,600 jobs, it said Friday - the same day that German fashion chain Gerry Weber Internatio-

nal AG began insolvency proceedings. They join a growing list of European retailers that have

In Germany, politicians have warned that inner cities may turn into wastelands if the bricks-and-mortar onslaught continues

collapsed amid ever tougher online competition.

The shift to internet shopping, slowing economic growth and insecurity in the U.K. over the country's exit from the European Union are eating into sales. Traditional retailers like Tesco are getting squeezed by German discounters Lidl and Aldi, while more people are buying groceries online from home.

Retailers that were late to get online have struggled in the U.K., where e-commerce has advanced more rapidly than the U.S. and other European countries. That's fed concern over the future of retailers such as

Debenhams Plc, which is in talks with lenders as it faces at least 300 million pounds (\$395 million) of debt coming due starting next year.

The U.K.'s shopping districts have already been decimated by a series of collapses, including the company behind cake chain Patisserie Valerie, which is seeking a buyer. Sports Direct International Plc Chief Executive Officer Mike Ashley rescued department-store chain House of Fraser last year.

Tesco's job cuts will probably affect the majority of its 732 larger stores, according to the Mail on Sunday. The retailer will also overhaul



in-store bakeries, and replace staff canteens with vending machines, the newspaper said. Tesco declined to comment on the size of cuts outlined in the report.

In Germany, politicians have warned that inner cities may turn into wastelands if the bricks-and-mortar onslaught continues. Ga-

leria Kaufhof needs comprehensive restructuring to cut costs, parent company Karstadt Warenhaus said Friday. Gerry Weber, which operates more than 1,200 stores in 60 countries, had reported its first full-year loss before interest and taxes in almost three decades in October. **Bloomberg**

AP PHOTO



Abe vows to step up China ties but bolster defense

Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo

JAPANESE Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged yesterday he will further expand his country's already improving ties with China but said Japan still needs to bolster its defense capability as far as space amid concern about Chinese military activity and uncertainty over North Korea's denuclearization.

In a policy speech to Parliament, Abe omitted references to South Korea, which he had routinely mentioned as Japan's most important neighbor, as Tokyo tries to distance itself

amid escalating spats over history and alleged incidents between the two defense forces.

Abe said Japan-China relations have returned to "normal" since he visited Beijing in October and he now wants to further promote their cooperation in trade and other areas.

"Japan-China relations have fully returned to a normal orbit," Abe said. "I will elevate it to a next level by deepening exchanges in every area in all levels."

Apparently drawn closer amid shared trade friction with the U.S., the two Asian rivals have improved their ties since a low in

2012 during a dispute over east China sea islands controlled by Japan but claimed by China.

Yet, Japan still needs to expand defense capability, especially in space and cyberspace, Abe said. Japan has repeatedly said China's growing military presence threatens regional security and its recent rapid advancement in space technology is an additional concern. Japanese officials have also said North Korea remains a missile and nuclear threat since it has not taken concrete steps except for a vague promise it made at the June summit with the U.S.

Japan, under pressure from President Donald Trump's demand for more American imports, is to start trade talks with Washington later this year. Japan has already increased purchases of expensive U.S. missile defense systems and other arms.

Maintaining good ties with China is one of most important diplomatic goals for Abe, but analysts said it may be affected by how things work out between the United States and China.

"Even if Prime Minister Abe wants to further improve Japan-China relations, it would be influenced by U.S.-China rela-

tions," said Harukata Takenaka, international politics professor at National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies. "It would be difficult for Japan to make a decision by itself."

Abe did not mention South Korea as the key U.S. allies and close economic partners are currently locked in disputes over military issues and wartime history. Japan's Defense Ministry is reportedly considering not participating in a multinational defense exercise planned in South Korea this spring.

Abe said he seeks to achieve unresolved postwar legacies during his leadership — settling island disputes and signing peace treaty with Russia and normalizing relations with North Korea, while cooperating with other countries toward achieving the North's nuclear and missile program abandonment.

The Soviet Union took the four southernmost Kuril Islands during the final days of World War II. Japan asserts territorial rights to the islands, which it calls the Northern Territories, and the dispute has kept the countries from signing a peace treaty. Abe has held dozens of meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin in recent years in a bid to solve the dispute, and they agreed in November to accelerate negotiations based on a 1956 Soviet proposal to return two of the islands to Japan. Their talks this month in Moscow produced little progress.

The parliament's ordinary session lasts for 150 days until late June. Abe, who took office in December 2012 and is serving his third term, seeks to lead his party to win parliamentary elections in July and strengthen his grip on power until 2021 or possibly beyond. **AP**

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Australia says Beijing has raised 'anxiety' in disputed waters

AUSTRALIAN defense minister Christopher Pyne urged China today to resolve tensions in the South China Sea in accordance with international law, in a swipe after Beijing's sudden detention of a writer who holds dual citizenship.

Pyne said the artificial islands Beijing has been building in the disputed waters has "increased anxiety" and "not increased regional confidence in China's strategic intentions."

"On the other hand, resolving disputes in the South China Sea in accordance with international law would build confidence

in China's willingness to support and champion a strategic culture that respects the rights of all states," he added.

Pyne was speaking at a forum in Singapore attended by defense representatives from 24 countries. He said Australia was open to taking part in multilateral activities in the "international waters" which are crucial for global commerce and rich in fish and potential oil and gas reserves.

China is pitted against smaller neighbors in those waters that it claims almost in entirety. While Australia is "not interested in containing Chi-

na," it wants Indo-Pacific countries to not have to make "choices between economic gain and sovereignty," Pyne said.

He added that the growing rivalry between the U.S. and China should not be defined in "wholly adversarial terms" or characterized as a new Cold War, as economies are far more mutually dependent than they were when the West contested the Soviet bloc.

"There is no gain in stifling China's growth and prosperity, and this is not an agenda in any capital that I know of," Pyne said.

Instead, Australia hopes to increase its engagement

with the Indo-Pacific, which is home to the world's busiest sea lanes and 50 percent of its population.

It will invest more than 90 billion Australian dollars (USD64.8 billion) in a fleet of attack class submarines, frigates and other ships to strengthen its maritime capabilities. Pyne said the country hopes to grow its defense budget to over 2 percent of its gross domestic product by 2021.

"Australia sees its role as one of being able to talk to both China and the United States openly and frankly," he said. "We are clearly a very close ally of the United States [...] but we don't

AP PHOTO



Australian defense minister Christopher Pyne

believe we need to choose between security and prosperity, and we haven't in the past and we don't intend to in the future."

Pyne visited Beijing last week for a meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wei Fenghe. They discussed the detention of Chinese-Australian writer Yang Hengjun, whom

China has accused of endangering its national security.

Yesterday, Pyne said consular access to Yang, a 53-year-old novelist and online commentator "has been granted." He did not give further details on the matter but said Australia's relations with China were in "positive shape." **AP**

AP PHOTO



Li Wenzu, wife of Chinese human rights lawyer Wang Quanzhang reacts after Wang's sentencing, at her house in Beijing

WANG QUANZHANG

Prominent human rights lawyer sentenced to 4½ years

Dake Kang, Beijing

PROMINENT Chinese human rights lawyer Wang Quanzhang was sentenced to 4½ years in prison on the charge of subversion of state power yesterday, more than three years after he was detained in a sweeping crackdown on the legal profession.

The No. 2 Intermediate Court in the northeastern city of Tianjin announced the sentence in an online statement, adding that Wang's political rights were also being withheld for five years.

Wang's wife, Li Wenzu, told The Associated Press she is worried about her husband's health while he is incarcerated.

"Wang Quanzhang has never committed a crime, but they still forcibly charged him with a crime," Li said. "I think this is because he wouldn't compromise with them, wouldn't admit any crime."

"So I firmly refuse to recognize or accept this result," Li said.

Wang was a member of the Fengrui law firm that was well known for its advocacy work. As such, he

pursued land rights cases on behalf of poor villagers and represented members of the banned Falun Gong meditation sect.

Rights groups condemned the verdict, with Amnesty International China researcher Doriane Lau calling it a "gross injustice."

"It's outrageous that Wang Quanzhang is being punished for peacefully standing up for human rights in China. He must be immediately and unconditionally released," Lau said in a statement.

Human Rights Watch said the sentence made a "mockery of the 'rule of law'" being championed by the ruling Communist Party under President Xi Jinping.

"Authorities' treatment of him [...] is the true metric of rule of law in China," the group said in a statement.

Wang was tried in a closed hearing last month after being held without access to his lawyers or family since 2015, when he became one of more than 200 legal activists detained during a crackdown. It wasn't clear whether his time in detention would be

counted against his sentence.

The subversion charge is only hazily defined, and it wasn't clear what specific acts Wang had been accused of committing. The authorities regularly try people accused of such charges behind closed doors on the presumption that opening them to the public might expose state secrets — a practice activists say is a thin excuse for a failure to provide solid evidence.

Trials for rights activists in China often draw out over years while the accused are held under harsh conditions that can endanger their health, including frequent accusations of torture, while being routinely denied the right to hire their own legal representation and receive visits from family members.

China's best-known prisoner of conscience, Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo, was serving an 11-year sentence for "inciting subversion of state power" when he died of liver cancer in 2017. He helped write Charter 08, a manifesto calling for political and economic liberalization.

Legal advocacy flourished for a time after Chi-

na opened up its society and economy in the late 1970s, as lawyers defended the disenfranchised and contributed to a nascent civil society.

While these lawyers frequently faced intimidation and harassment from the authorities, the roundup in 2015 marked a severe turning point, displaying Xi's determination to crush any potential challenges to his authority.

The crackdown made clear that human rights lawyers would come to face the kinds of charges previously reserved for those they defended. The coordinated sweep left lawyers detained, disbarred, under house arrest or facing vague charges. It's known as the "709 crackdown" for the date, July 9, on which the majority of them were taken.

Most of the lawyers have since been released, though they can no longer practice or talk openly with the media. Wang is believed to be one of the last to be tried.

Wang's wife was kept from attending his trial by security agents who blocked the exit of her apartment complex. **AP**

opinion

CHINA'S BANKS ARE DESPERATE FOR CAPITAL



Christopher Balding, Bloomberg

In the past decade, China has relied primarily on credit growth to fund its economic ambitions. The country's banks are now feeling the constraints of this lending binge and need to raise a lot of capital over the next couple of years.

The way China handles this challenge will determine its economic health. With 267 trillion yuan (\$39.4 trillion) of total assets, and home to the world's four largest banks by this measure, the country's financial system doesn't operate in isolation. Whatever happens in China will have a global impact.

Major Chinese banks raised or announced plans to raise 343 billion yuan in 2018, according to a recent note by Nomura Holdings Inc. That's well below the estimates of UBS Group AG, which just last year said these firms would need 1 trillion to 3 trillion yuan, depending on the targeted capital-adequacy level. Neither forecast counts the additional funds the big four banks need to meet Basel III requirements for systematically important institutions by 2024.

The fundamental problem is the conflicting pressures on the sector. Despite talk of deleveraging in 2018, as nominal GDP growth slowed to 9.7 percent, total loans outstanding grew 13.5 percent. To prop up the economy, Chinese banks have been lending well in excess of deposit growth. Since the beginning of 2016, as loans outstanding grew 41 percent, deposits rose just 29 percent. That put balance sheets under increasing strain. Officially, capital adequacy ratios improved to 13.8 percent in 2018 from 13.4 percent two years earlier. In reality, this was only achieved with an accounting sleight of hand.

With the Chinese economy slowing, Beijing has been leaning on banks both to absorb the build-up in shadow assets and continue lending to drive investment-dependent growth. With new loans outpacing new deposits by 20 percent in 2018, and a similar trend expected this year, capital is becoming increasingly constrained. Almost every cut to banks' reserve requirements over the past year has coincided with a significant repayment to the central bank. In other words, banks are borrowing from themselves to reimburse the People's Bank of China.

Banks simply don't have the ability to continue lending as much as they do without additional capital.

Chinese banks and regulators thus need to establish a plan to raise funds. They've made a start: On Thursday the PBOC announced measures to help banks raise capital by issuing perpetual bonds. Whether officials also consider convertible bonds or secondary offerings — to name just a few of the possibilities — they need to speed up approvals and encourage firms to address their balance-sheet weaknesses more promptly. Waiting for an economic slowdown or external event to raise capital isn't a wise strategy.

As Beijing comes under fire for favoring state-owned firms over private ones, it should urge the larger dinosaurs to deleverage faster, making it easier to allocate credit to smaller enterprises. China needs to move away from favoring the firms that consume the largest amounts of capital inefficiently.

Bank-capital levels may not grab headlines, but continuing to lend faster than deposits are growing and reducing the ability to cushion a slowdown can only continue for so long. Regulators need to address this problem before it becomes a crisis.

AP PHOTO



AFGHANISTAN

President Ghani assures people as US envoy reports progress

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani (center) speaks to U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad (third left) at the presidential palace in Kabul

Rahim Faiez, Kabul

THE Afghan president yesterday assured his people that their rights will not be compromised in the name of peace with the Taliban, days after the U.S. envoy tasked with resolving America's longest war reported significant progress in talks with the insurgents.

President Ashraf Ghani's remarks came as U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad told the New York Times that American and Taliban officials have agreed in principle to the framework of a peace deal with the insurgents.

The newspaper yesterday quoted Khalilzad as saying the "framework deal, which still has to be fleshed out before it becomes an agreement," will see the Tali-

ban commit to guaranteeing that Afghan territory is not used as a "platform for international terrorist groups or individuals."

The deal, the envoy said, could lead to full pullout of American troops in return for a cease-fire and Taliban talks with the Afghan government.

Ghani, in turn, apparently tried to assure Afghans that no deals would be made without Kabul's awareness and full participation in negotiations.

"Our commitment is to provide peace and to prevent any possible disaster," President Ashraf Ghani said in his address to the nation. "There are values that are not disputable, such as national unity, national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Ghani and Khalilzad met late on Sunday in Kabul. In a state-

ment, Ghani's office said that the U.S. envoy shared details of his latest round of talks with the Taliban in Qatar. It quoted Khalilzad as saying he had discussed a cease-fire deal with the Taliban but that there was no progress on the issue.

Khalilzad and the U.S. Embassy in Kabul did not immediately respond to AP's requests for comment.

The Taliban have been staging near-daily attacks targeting Afghan forces, causing scores of casualties every week. Their offensive has not let up despite the severe Afghan winter and the Taliban now hold sway over nearly half of the country.

That has made peace an even more pressing issue.

Khalilzad met with the Taliban on a number of occasions in re-

cent months — most recently last week in Qatar where the Taliban have a political office — in the latest bid to end America's longest war. The U.S. invaded Afghanistan after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks to topple the Taliban, who were harboring Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida.

yesterday's statement from Ghani's office also claimed that the Taliban demanded from Khalilzad the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan, but that there was also no agreement on that issue.

The statement added that Khalilzad has no authority to discuss issues such as a future Afghan administration but that his goal is to facilitate an intra-Afghan dialogue, meaning direct talks between the Taliban and Kabul.

On Saturday, after six days of meetings with the Taliban in Qatar, Khalilzad on his official twitter account said: "Meetings here were more productive than they have been in the past."

"We made significant progress on vital issues," he tweeted, without offering details.

Abdul Hakim Mujahid, a former Taliban official and currently a member of the High Peace Council, an independent body of clerics and respected Afghan figures, said he believes the Qatar talks resulted in a "good understanding between both sides" but that more discussions are needed in the coming weeks or months.

"Afghanistan's problem is not so simple that it can be solved in a day, week or month, it needs more time and more discussions," Mujahid told The Associated Press.

The Taliban have in the past refused to negotiate directly with Kabul — a standing that does not appear to have changed. They have maintained that they are prepared to talk with U.S. officials only and only about the pullout of foreign forces from Afghanistan.

Afghan political analyst Waheed Muzhda says he believes that Khalilzad and the Taliban have reached agreement on both the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan and a cease-fire deal, but that neither side is prepared to say so at this point.

"But peace talks are not possible unless both sides first agree on a cease-fire," Muzhda said.

Ghani, in yesterday's address to the nation, also stressed that American and other foreign forces are in Afghanistan because they are needed here and that if there is to be any downsizing or pullout, the Kabul government will have to play a role in the talks.

Ghani also reiterated his call on the Taliban to engage "in direct talks with the Afghan government." **AP**

NEPAL

Disoriented pilot, bad runway approach cited in crash

A Bangladeshi airliner was misaligned with the runway and its pilot was disoriented and tried to land in "sheer desperation" when the plane crashed last year in Nepal, an investigation report said.

US-Bangla Airlines Flight BS211 from Dhaka crashed on its second landing attempt at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport on March 12, 2018. The 51 people killed were

28 Bangladeshi, 22 Nepalese and one Chinese national, and 20 others were injured. The pilot and co-pilot were among the dead.

The investigation report compiled by Nepalese officials and made available yesterday said the probable cause of the crash was the pilot's disorientation and loss of situation awareness.

"Contributing to this, the aircraft was offset to the proper approach path

that led to maneuvers in a very dangerous and unsafe altitude to alight with the runway. Landing was completed in a sheer desperation after sighting the runway, at very close proximity and very low altitude," it said.

The report also said the pilot had been released from the Bangladesh Air Force in 1993 due to depression and was only allowed to fly civilian planes from 2002 after a detailed medical evaluation.

Also, the pilot was under stress and emotionally disturbed and had lack of sleep in the preceding night.

The report also cited a lack of assertiveness from controllers at Kathmandu airport in monitoring the flight path and failing to issue clear instructions to carry out a standard missed-approach procedure.

The flight crew and the controllers also lacked a clear understanding of each other when they

AP PHOTO



Nepalese rescuers stand near a passenger plane from Bangladesh that crashed at the airport in Kathmandu on March 12

communicated about the landing runway, the report said.

The report recommended that assertiveness in such situations become part of the training for air traffic controllers.

It also asked the Bangla-

desh civil aviation authority to reassess the physical and psychological status of grounded pilots before their licenses are renewed and that all airline pilots undergo psychological evaluation during training. **AP**

PHILIPPINES

Duterte visits site of fatal bombings, Abu Sayyaf suspected

Jim Gomez, Manila

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte and his top security officials yesterday visited a Catholic cathedral in the southern Philippines where suspected Islamic militants set off bombs that killed at least 20 people and wounded more than 100.

The first blast sent people, some of them wounded, fleeing out the church's main door. Army troops and police were rushing inside when the second bomb exploded a minute later. The explosions scattered wooden pews inside the main hall, blasted out window glass panels and hurled human remains and debris across a town square fronting the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, witnesses said.

The attack occurred in the Sulu provincial capital on Jolo island, where Abu Sayyaf militants have carried out years of bombings, kidnappings and



President Rodrigo Duterte (center) concedes with relatives of bombing victims

beheadings and have aligned themselves with the Islamic State group, which claimed responsibility for the attack.

Duterte walked slowly into the bombed cathedral, where the wooden pews were still in disarray. At one point he looked at the ceiling, where many panels

were ripped off by the blasts.

Duterte ordered the armed forces to crush the Abu Sayyaf. The group has an estimated 300 to 400 members, mostly in Sulu where it is holding several foreign and Filipino kidnap victims.

Duterte later met with families

of the victims at a military camp in Jolo where coffins were laid side by side.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, who was with the president, blamed the attack on Abu Sayyaf commander Hatib Sawadjaan, who he said has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group.

"This is an act of terrorism," Lorenzana said. "This is not a religious war."

Sawadjaan is based in the jungles of Patikul town, near Jolo, and has been blamed for ransom kidnappings and beheadings of hostages, including two Canadian men, in recent years.

Police put forces around the country on heightened alert to prevent similar attacks.

The bombings 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 Muslim areas approved the autonomy deal, voters in Sulu province rejected it. The province is home to a rival rebel faction that is opposed to the deal as well as smaller militant cells that are not part of any peace process.

A statement by the Islamic State group posted on social media claimed the attack was carried out by two suicide bombers who wore explosive belts, one detonating at the gate and the other in the parking lot.

Police said at least 20 people died and 111 were wounded. The fatalities were 15 civilians and five troops. Among the wounded, about 90 are civilians.

The United Nations and others denounced the attack. In a statement attributed to a spokesman, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice and reiterated the U.N.'s support for the Philippines' efforts to fight terrorism and to carry forward a peace process in the Muslim region.

Western governments have welcomed the autonomy pact in part to ease concerns that Filipino militants could ally themselves with foreigners and turn the southern region into a breeding ground for extremists. AP

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AP-NORC POLL

Most Americans oppose Trump's foreign policy

Deb Riechmann & Hannah Fingerhut, Washington

A majority of Americans disapprove of the way President Donald Trump is handling U.S. foreign policy and about half think the country's global standing will deteriorate during the next year, according to new poll that highlighted the nation's partisan divide on foreign issues.

The poll, conducted by Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, also found the public split about the president's plan to remove U.S. troops from Syria and possibly Afghanistan — and about a quarter don't have an opinion one way or the other.

Overall, the president receives low marks from the public for his job handling foreign policy — 35 percent approve, while 63 percent disapprove. Like other issues, the partisan divide is startling. While 76 percent of Republicans approve, just 8 percent of Democrats say the same.

"I just think that any time you buddy up with Russia or North Korea, it's going to be bad business," said Samantha Flowers, a 30-year-old third-grade teacher from Columbia, Missouri.

"Also, the way that he's handling our neighboring countries — Mexico in particular. I think it just goes against our American values in general. We've been a welcoming and compassionate country," she said before starting to recite words emblazoned on the Statue of Liberty, which reads in part: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Richard Cleaveland, a 65-year-

old truck driver from Ogden, Utah, disagrees and wholeheartedly backs Trump and his foreign policy.

"I think he's doing a good job with North Korea. He's done better than anybody else has ever done. Nobody else has even got it this far with North Korea," he said referring to Trump's meeting last year in Singapore with the North Korean leader to discuss Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program.

Turning to U.S. involvement in foreign wars, the poll showed 39 percent of Americans approve of pulling the 2,000 American troops from Syria, and 35 percent say they disapprove. The president's decision is supported by 56 percent of Republicans and 26 percent of Democrats.

"I think it's time for our troops to come home — Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria," said Cleaveland, who was interviewed on speaker phone as he drove his semitrailer through western Kansas. "I lost a lot of good friends when I was in Vietnam. I think that was a stupid war too."

Last month, Trump announced that Islamic State militants had been defeated in Syria and that American troops would be brought home "now." The plan triggered the resignation of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and criticism from U.S. allies and national security experts. Later, Trump and others appeared to adjust the timeline, saying it will likely take several months to safely withdraw American forces from Syria.

Americans have similar views about the president's expected decision to pull at least some U.S.

troops out of Afghanistan. Forty-one percent said they would approve of a pullout from Afghanistan versus 30 percent who disapprove.

The nation's partisan divide is evident when it comes to Americans' views of the United States' role in the world, its global standing and its relationships with other nations.

Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to say the U.S. should play a more active role in solving the world's problems.

Forty-three percent of Democrats think the U.S. should be more active, compared with 23 percent who think it should be less active; another 32 percent of Democrats say the nation's current role is about right.

Republicans see it differently. Four in 10 Republicans say the U.S. should be less active in solving the world's problems, while 46 percent think the current role in world affairs is right. Just 13 percent of Republicans think the U.S. role abroad should be more active.

Republicans also think the nation's global standing and relationships with other countries will improve or stay the same during the next year. Democrats largely expect U.S. relations with other nations will worsen.

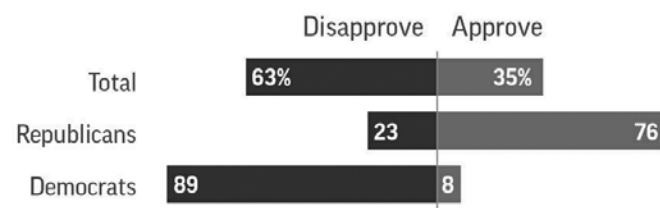
Forty-four percent of Republicans say the nation's standing in the world will improve and another 35 percent say it won't change. By comparison, 77 percent of Democrats think the country's global standing will get worse.

In assessing global threats to the United States, the poll found: —Fifty-five percent of Ameri-

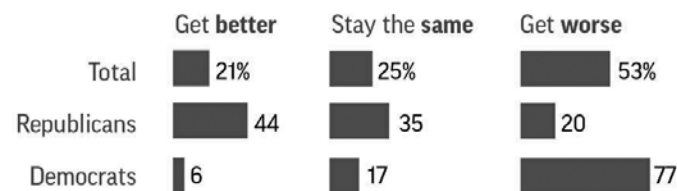
AP PHOTO

Low marks for Trump's foreign policy

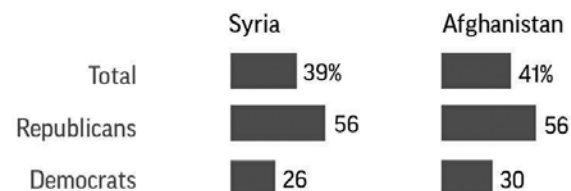
Percentage who approve/disapprove of how Trump is handling foreign policy:



Percentage who believe U.S. standing in the world in the next year will ...



Percentage who approve of removing U.S. troops from ...



Results are based on interviews with 1,062 U.S. adults conducted Jan. 16-20, 2019. Margin of error is ±4.1 percentage points for the full sample, higher for subgroups.

TRUMP

Presidential standoff may worsen Venezuelans' misery

THE U.S. recognition of opposition leader Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president is being touted by the Trump administration as the only way to restore the country's democracy. But as Elizabeth Pineda was stocking up on staples yesterday [Macau time] at a sidewalk market near a Caracas slum, she was bracing for things to get a lot worse, not better.

A retired secretary, Pineda survives on a monthly pension of just 18,000 bolivars, or about USD6. She supplements her income working as an astrologer, and although the stars have been telling her Ve-



nezuelans are on the road to ridding themselves of socialist President Nicolas Maduro, she doesn't expect him to go quickly or quietly.

"The government is going to strangle us even more with their bad decisions and shamelessness," Pi-

neda said while sharing a bowl of beef soup with two friends, none of whom can afford the \$1.50 meal on their own.

Economists agree that the longer the standoff between the U.S.-backed Guaidó and Maduro drags on, the more regular

Venezuelans are likely to suffer.

Maduro, who so far appears to have the backing of the decisive military, has dug in, accusing the U.S. of orchestrating a coup by encouraging Guaidó to declare himself interim president and then leading a chorus of nations that immediately recognized his rule.

The high-risk and seldom-used strategy of recognizing an alternative government that doesn't already have de facto power is tantamount to blocking Maduro's access to Venezuela's all-important oil revenue, with enormous

legal and financial entanglements.

Directives sent Friday to the U.S. Federal Reserve will make it very hard for Maduro to access Venezuela's overseas assets and earnings, including those from Houston-based Citgo, a subsidiary of state-owned oil giant PDVSA and the major source of revenue for the bankrupt government. Also at risk is \$1.2 billion in gold reserves — 15 percent of Venezuela's foreign currency reserves — stored in the vaults of the Bank of England.

If the Trump administration's confrontational

approach is adopted by the European Union, some of whose members have threatened to recognize Guaidó if Maduro doesn't announce new elections in eight days, it could bring oil production to a standstill, heaping more hardships on the 29 million Venezuelans already struggling with hyperinflation, widespread food shortages and anemic economic activity.

"If Maduro stays in power, Venezuela could suffer a humanitarian catastrophe," said Francisco Rodriguez, chief economist of New York-based Torino Capital. AP

EGYPT

Macron to press counterpart on human rights

Brian Rohan, Cairo

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron is to hold talks today [Macau time] with his Egyptian counterpart in Cairo, saying beforehand that he wants to boost ties with an important ally to fight terrorism but also use the visit to encourage respect for human rights.

Macron, heading a large delegation on a three-day trip to the Arab world's most populous country, said he wants to "pursue a truthful dialogue on topics of public freedoms and human rights" — an area he feels Egypt has not progressed enough on since he raised it with officials earlier in his mandate.

France, which considers itself the birthplace of human rights, has come under pressure by advocates to raise the matter with general-turned-President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, whose human



rights record has been widely condemned and is seen as worsening.

Macron said that too many normal people "who do not threaten the regime's stability" were being jailed.

"It is on this area of what is happening in Egypt that I will continue to focus things. I will do it more openly during this trip," Macron told reporters yesterday,

adding that better treatment for political opponents was in the interest of el-Sissi and Egypt.

Macron said he felt the current crackdown on opposition in Egypt, begun after el-Sissi overthrew his elected but divisive Islamist predecessor in 2013, had become worse than under the country's longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak, who was overthrown in the 2011 Arab Spring uprising.

"I think what is happening here sooner or later threatens the stability of Egypt," Macron said. "That's to say, I think that the policies as they are being done are perceived by intellectuals, the Egyptian civil society, as being even stronger than [under] the Mubarak regime."

Macron also said that he would raise specific names with el-Sissi in a confidential discussion. Aside from heightened public emphasis on human rights, he did not mention raising any new specific levers to try and incentivize the Egyptian leader, who has faced no real competition in parliament or elections.

Rights groups and activists have urged France and other Western powers to halt weapons sales to Egypt, a major purchaser, until it shows improvement on the way it treats its own citizenry. But Macron dismissed using such pressure, saying it was important to respect Egypt's

sovereignty and not cut it off because that could drive it further into the arms of the West's authoritarian rivals, Russia and China, which el-Sissi has courted.

Asked specifically if human rights issues could affect specific arms sales, such as one under discussion for additional Rafale advanced fighter jets to Egypt, Macron said such matters were separate.

"I would differentiate between the two subjects, they are not linked for us and they never were."

Macron arrived Sunday in Egypt and visited the country's south, where he toured the famed temple of Abu Simbel and other archaeological sites. He is to meet el-Sissi later on Monday, when he will sign several bilateral accords.

His delegation includes government ministers, two dozen representatives from academic, cultural, and scientific fields, and a dozen business leaders - including the heads of Rafale producer Dassault.

Macron will also dine with local business leaders and meet the heads of Egypt's Christian and Muslim communities during the trip, his first to Egypt since taking office in 2017. AP

AD

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FEB 4th-19th

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what's ON



ASSEMBLAGE OF TREASURES - EXHIBITION OF THE MACAU MUSEUM COLLECTION FOR CELEBRATION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

TIME: 10am-6pm (ticket booth closes at 5:30pm; closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: February 24, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum

ADMISSION: MOP15 (free admission on Tuesdays and on the 15th of every month)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

SPARKLING GARDEN - GUAN HUAI BIN WORKS

TIME: 10am-7pm (last admission 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: February 24, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

DISCOVER MACAU: MUSEUM OF TAIPA AND COLOANE HISTORY

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Mondays)

ADDRESS: Rua Correia da Silva, Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

LA PARISIENNE CABARET FRANCAIS

TIME: 8pm (except on Mondays)
5pm (Sundays)

UNTIL: February 3, 2019

VENUE: The Parisian Theatre

ADMISSION: MOP188, MOP388, MOP488

COTAI TICKETING: (853) 2882 8818

KONG SENG TICKETING: (853) 2855 5555

SURFACE REVEALED - DRONE PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHAN HIN IO

TIME: 12pm-8pm (closed on Tuesdays)

UNTIL: February 8, 2019

VENUE: Taipa Village Art Space

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2857 6118

MOTIONS OF BRUSH AND INK - CALLIGRAPHY EXHIBITION OF HO LAI SIM AND HER STUDENTS

TIME: 9am-10pm

UNTIL: January 31, 2019

VENUE: Team Building, IFT Main Campus, Mong-Ha Hill

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2856 1252

Offbeat

CZECH DOG SLED RACE HIT BY SEVERE WEATHER

Severe weather conditions have caused about half of the 100 competing drivers to give up the five-day Sedivackuv Long dog sled race, organizers said.

The 23rd edition of one of the toughest dog sled events in Europe took place last week with around 100 drivers and 700 dogs from eight countries racing in deep snow and frozen conditions in the Orlicke Mountains, a range in the northeastern Czech Republic that forms the border with Poland.

Organizers said the last time conditions were as bad as this was in 2004. Three years ago, the race had to be cut short due to warm weather.

In the race - part of the European extreme dog sled race series - competitors are expected to cover at least 200 kilometers and spend one night sleeping out in the snow.

TV canal macau



13:00 TDM News (Repetição)

13:30 Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)

15:00 Mistura Fina

15:45 Zig Zag

16:00 Os Compadres

16:45 Quem Quer Ser Milionário

17:40 João Semana

18:30 TDM Desporto (Repetição)

19:35 Os Nossos Dias Sr.2

20:30 Telejornal

21:15 TDM Entrevista

21:50 O Contrato Sr.1

22:35 Viajante da Música

23:15 TDM News

23:50 Filhos da Nação Sr.2

00:25 Telejornal (Repetição)

01:10 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



1959 FOG BRINGS TRANSPORT CHAOS

Dense fog - the worst for seven years - has brought road, rail and air transport in many parts of England and Wales to a virtual standstill.

London has been worst affected - but many areas of the Midlands, East Anglia, southern England and east and south Wales have also been shrouded in fog and frost for most of the day.

In 1952, London suffered from what became known as The Great Smog - fog intensified by thick smoke. More than 2,000 people died in the week ending 6 December mostly from chest and lung-related illnesses.

The Meteorological Office is predicting the latest "smog" will persist during the next 24 hours in the London area and possibly in some parts of South Wales, Birmingham and the industrial Midlands.

An AA spokesman said 28 hours of fog in the capital had left a nil-visibility ring around London.

He said: "It is a motorist's nightmare as rush-hour drivers grope their way through nil visibility in the Hendon, Finchley, Northolt, Wandsworth, Bromley and Sidcup districts."

Traffic patrols have reported nose-to-tail jams and vehicles travelling at a crawl from all parts of the capital.

At least six people were injured in three collisions on the ice-covered Kingston by-pass in Surrey. Thirty-five vehicles were involved in a collision in dense fog at Hampton Hill in Middlesex.

A London Transport spokesman said many buses had been unable to leave their garages because crews could not get to work on time.

London airport was closed with visibility down to 20 yards. Many flights were diverted into Gatwick.

Many long-distance trains from London were cancelled. Suburban services were also seriously disrupted.

There are some businesses benefiting from the smog. One Birmingham travel agent has reported bookings up 10% on last year and the number of inquiries has gone up since the fog descended.

Chemists are also reporting a boom in the sale of smog masks. One chemist in the centre of Manchester had sold out of masks by 1000 this morning.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In response to the smog of December 1952, the Clean Air Act was introduced in 1956.

It restricted the burning of domestic fuels in urban areas with the introduction of smokeless zones, but fogs continued to be smoky after the act as residents and operators were given time to convert.

The act was revised in 1968 when industries burning coal, gas or other fuels were ordered to use tall chimneys. In 1974 the first Control of Air Pollution act introduced regulations on the composition of motor fuels. By the 1980s and '90s the increasing use of the motor vehicle led to a new kind of smog caused by the chemical reaction of car pollutants and the sunshine.

The 1995 Environment Act introduced new regulations for air pollutants.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Smart folks will come out of the woodwork soon, and they'll have encouraging offers and supportive pats on the back for you. They have faith in you, and they're there for you. Aren't you lucky?

Taurus
April 20-May 20
You've reached a point of confidence you should be proud of. There will be little (if any) resistance to someone like you — someone who knows what they want.

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
A gigantic personality blows into your life early on today and upsets some of your carefully laid plans. But even if upheaval results, this person's charm outweighs all of the negative impacts.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Your creative side will grab onto these interesting aspects — and you could gain rich inspiration from the questions they trigger. Keep your curiosity in the forefront and ask a lot of questions.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
When given the choice between telling the cold, hard truth or hiding your real feelings, always choose the truth. Any embarrassment you fear is unwarranted. People want to see who you truly are.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
This imbalance in your mood won't be major, but it will distract you from all the fun you could be having. Think ahead and get some stuff out of the way now so you won't have to worry about it later.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22
There's a possibility that you're overextending yourself socially right now. Having friends and making connections is important, but so is getting some alone time and recharging your batteries.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
It's a great time to tackle your most intimidating task — and encourage everyone around you to do the same. Play your cards right, and you'll become the inspiring leader of a bunch of happy people.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
It may feel like you wandered into a daycare center today with all the childishness and silly antics going on around you. Some of it's amusing, but unfortunately, most of it will get very old very fast.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Direct more of your attention to the things you tend to overlook — these parts of your life go smoothly without your attention, but they're in danger of veering off track right now.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You're in high spirits and feeling good. Later today, the tough problem you've been wrestling with starts to crumble, and your newly invigorated confidence helps take it the rest of the way.

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20
Right now, you need to let things come to you; try to be patient and understand that events proceed on their own timeline. Things will change when and how they need to — not one minute before.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-4	7	shower/drizzle
Harbin	-15	-1	shower
Tianjin	0	10	overcast/moderate rain
Urumqi	-18	-13	clear/cloudy
Xi'an	0	7	drizzle
Lhasa	6	7	shower
Chengdu	6	9	drizzle/overcast
Chongqing	9	11	moderate rain/shower
Kunming	4	18	clear/cloudy
Nanjing	4	9	cloudy
Shanghai	6	11	clear/cloudy
Wuhan	4	6	shower
Hangzhou	7	15	cloudy
Taipei	16	21	overcast/cloudy
Guangzhou	14	24	moderate rain
Hong Kong	17	20	heavy rain
WORLD			
Moscow	-8	-1	flurry
Frankfurt	1	3	drizzle
Paris	1	4	clear/drizzle
London	3	7	drizzle
New York	-3	7	cloudy/drizzle

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- WWII battle site; 5- Adventurous exploit; 9- Tax experts: Abbr.; 13- Turndowns; 14- As a companion; 16- Do followers; 17- Cut out; 18- Sporty Mazda; 19- Draft status; 20- Like non-oyster months; 22- Take guns from; 24- Lip shaped; 27- Cpls.' superiors; 28- Delphic shrine; 29- Divinity; 33- "Peter and the Wolf" bird; 34- Gravy ____; 35- Ivy League school; 36- Golf champ Ernie; 37- Eating implements; 38- ____ the season...; 39- Monetary unit of Cambodia; 41- Knowledge; 42- Kid leather; 44- Soak; 46- Petrol units; 47- ____ Ness monster; 48- Indian wrap; 49- Sloping letter; 52- RR stop; 53- Booty; 57- Room in a casa; 58- Ran in neutral; 60- Calvary letters; 61- Kafiyeh wearer; 62- The Wreck of the Mary ____; 63- Bluish white metallic element; 64- Grand Ole ____; 65- Was indebted to; 66- Hot times abroad;

DOWN: 1- ____-cone; 2- Aunt Polly's nephew; 3- Wreath of flowers; 4- Flightless bird; 5- Reproductive cell; 6- Beethoven dedicatee; 7- In order (to); 8- Explosive initials; 9- Peevishly; 10- Clinton cabinet member Federico; 11- From the U.S.; 12- "The King and I" setting; 15- Small mechanical devices; 21- In ____ land; 23- How was ____ know?; 24- Runners-up; 25- Decorative ivy; 26- Hunting dog; 27- Tremble; 29- Yankee manager Joe; 30- Horse opera; 31- Move effortlessly; 32- Approvals; 34- Voting compartment; 37- Flabby; 40- Cradlesong; 42- Highly respectful way of addressing a man; 43- Put to use; 45- Louis XIV, e.g.; 46- Acre; 48- One cubic meter; 49- Golfer Aoki; 50- Waterproof cover; 51- Banned orchard spray; 52- Cabbage salad; 54- Put a lid ____; 55- Writer Sarah ____ Jewett; 56- Nervous twitches; 59- ____ volente (God willing);

Yesterday's solution

R	A	S	H	A	A	M	B	I	R	S	T	V
A	N	W	A	R	D	A	R	N	E	C	O	L
U	N	E	M	P	L	O	Y	E	D	P	R	O
S	U	E	S	A	P	O	D	R	A	I	T	T
A	L	P	A	P	T	R	E	S	C	I	B	L
G	A	I	T	E	D	C	A	R	E	E	R	
E	R	N	E	S		H	A	H	A			
G	E	T	T	O								
						S	W	E	R		O	T
A	S	S	E	S						L	O	O
S	E	L	F	A	S	S	U	R	E	D	P	O
K	R	A	F	T								
F	A	K	E			A	L	L	A	R	G	A
O	P	E	C			C	O	E	D		A	S
R	E	S	T			S	I	S	T	S	T	

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PJ (Open line) 993

PJ (Picket) 28 557 775

PSP 28 573 333

Customs 28 559 944

S. J. Hospital 28 313 731

Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333

Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300

IACM 28 387 333

Tourism 28 333 000

Airport 59 888 88


Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283

Water Supply - Report 2822 0088

Telephone - Report 1000

Electricity - Report 28 339 922

Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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	<p>Pacifica - Perfect Locality Taipa 948 sq ft / HKD 10.88 M HKD 11,485 sq ft Three Bedroom Apartment Ref: 19015575</p>	<p>Coloane Village - Coloane Macau 664 sq ft / HKD 4.25 M HKD 6,404 sq ft Two Bedroom Apartment Ref: 16095490</p>	<p>One Central, Tower 7-Macau T7 Macau 2,700 sq ft / HKD 31.9M HKD 11,814 sq ft Exclusive Penthouse Ref: 18045554</p>	<p>Taipa, Supreme Flower City Taipa 2,060 sq ft / HKD 16.4 M HKD 7,961 sq ft Four Bedroom Apartment Ref: 13105367</p>

Rugby Academy

Auspicious U6 debut in HK festival

Donald Shaw
Special to MDT

A return to rugby festival action saw the Macau Bats send seven teams to Hong Kong for the latest round of games. It was the U6's competitive debut and it did not take them long to find their feet, drawing their first game 3-3 against Tuen Mun Sharks before winning their next three games against South China Athletic (3-1), Aberdeen (4-1) and Valley Fort (4-3) for an impressive first round of results.

The U7s performed well winning 4-0 against TaiHung Tung, before suffering a similar reverse to Valley Fort (0-4), a draw against Sandy Bay (2-2) and a close 2-3 defeat from South China Athletic.

The U8s had a free scoring 6-6 draw against Tsuen Wan Rhinos before finding the going tougher against Valley Fort (2-7), Causeway Bay Monkeys (0-4) and USRC Tigers (5-7). Meanwhile the U9s were making their first appearance in the HK top division and started with a close 4-5 loss to HK Football Club then two draws against Valley Fort (2-2) and Sandy Bay (2-2) before a narrow defeat by Sai Kung Stingrays (1-3). The two draws and the fact that the team was competitive in all their games should give the youngsters great confidence for their future games in the top tier.

The U10s had also been promoted to the top tier in their age group and despite 4 defeats they also showed good technique and battling spirit in their games against Discovery Bay Pirates (1-2), Valley Fort (2-3), Sai Kung Stingrays (1-5) and Sandy Bay (2-4). The performances of the Macau team suggest that they also will have future success in the higher tier.

Meanwhile the U12s played in the 2nd Division of the Richard Hawkes Cup and started with a very good 2-2 draw against eventual league winners HK football Club. The Bats then came up against a strong USRC Tigers team and lost 0-4 in a game that was closer than the score reflected. The Bats bounced back with a 1-0 win against Sandy Bay before a close 1-2 loss in their final game to Valley Fort. The Bats remain in the second tier for the next round of games in February.

Finally the U16s played in the inaugural rugby 10s tournament at Tin Hau and had two wins against USRC Tigers (17-0) and Kowloon Lions (43-19). The Bats again joined forces with the Pirates and Kukris for this tournament, however the team narrowly lost their last game 14-15 against Sai Kung Stingrays and had to settle for the runners-up berth.



Steve Douglas

FOOTBALL

Silva struggling to revive big-spending Everton

NICKNAMED the “Mini-Mourinho” after his illustrious compatriot, Marco Silva arrived in the Premier League in January 2017 as the slick, sharp-suited and smooth-talking coach with progressive ideas and a track record of success.

Two years and three clubs later, English soccer is starting to wonder if he is worth all the acclaim.

Silva is the latest top-flight coach to come under big pressure, after Everton's slump in results in the league was followed this weekend by elimination from the FA Cup by an opponent in the lower reaches of the second tier.

It isn't even February and Everton's season already has been reduced to a fight for seventh place in the Premier League.

Hardly the return Everton's majority shareholder, Farhad Moshiri, was expecting after spending an estimated USD350 million on players in the last three transfer windows.

If the Silva experiment fails, you start to wonder where Moshiri and the club go next.

The Portuguese coach was targeted by Moshiri more than a year ago as the man to take Everton, which last won a trophy in 1995, to the next level. Even if that meant waging what turned out to be an ugly battle for his services with Watford, where Silva was the manager at that time.

Aware of Everton's interest, Silva lost focus and after a strong start to last season — Watford at one stage was fourth in the Premier League — the team went on a slide. Silva was fired in January, a year ago last week.



Everton manager Marco Silva

Everton eventually got its No. 1 target in the offseason after muddling through the second half of last season with a temporary, and unpopular, coach in Sam Allardyce. But there's been no upturn under Silva.

After its first 23 league games under Silva, Everton has won 30 points. Allardyce, and indeed previous managers Ronald Koeman and Roberto Martinez, all won more in the same period.

It is only now, after Saturday's 3-2 loss to Millwall in the FA Cup, that the criticism is really ramping up on Silva.

“In the bad moments, you see

how many men, how many big characters you have, how many big personalities you have,” Silva said.

Everton is 11th in the league after two wins in the last 10 games, three points off seventh place but 14 points off sixth-place Manchester United. Lose today against Huddersfield — the last-place team without a win since November — and the heat will increase on Silva.

Speaking at the club's recent annual general meeting, Moshiri said he had “put a big bet on Marco” and that he retained his “total support.”

“I look at the table and it is just not good enough, I think we know that,” Moshiri added. “We need to go up the table. We need to utilize the fans' impatience to drive the club.”

But there is no sign things are about to get better.

One of Everton's weak points has been its defending, especially on set pieces, and conceding two late goals off free kicks to lose at Millwall underlined the point. Silva is known for his strong work ethic and intensity on the training ground, but he seems to have a blind spot.

Everton has one clean sheet

in its last 12 games, a run which has included a 6-2 home loss to Tottenham that could easily have been bigger.

Silva's team has tried to play an attractive style but the central midfield — in his favored 4-2-3-1 — looks too open, with anchorman Idrissa Gueye often isolated and overwhelmed. Up front, Everton has never properly replaced Romelu Lukaku, who joined Man United in the offseason of 2017, and Silva has resorted to playing Richarlison as sole striker despite the Brazilian better coming in off the left wing.

Another area of concern is the inconsistency of goalkeeper Jordan Pickford, who hasn't been able to reproduce his impressive performances with England at last year's World Cup.

Silva rose to prominence with Estoril in Portugal, which he guided from the second tier to the Europa League. Since then, he's had one-season spells with Sporting, where he won the Portuguese Cup, and Olympiakos, where he won the Greek league title.

In the Premier League, he spent six months at Hull, which he failed to keep from relegation despite improving its results, and then another six months at Watford.

Everton supporters couldn't wait to see the back of Allardyce, whose defensive and pragmatic style of play got the results needed to push Everton away from relegation trouble but was never going to endear himself to a fan base eager for attractive soccer.

Silva's Everton is at the other extreme, with the team now looking fragile and so easy to penetrate.

If results don't improve, Silva could be looking for yet another job, probably away from England this time. **AP**

TENNIS

Australian Open champ Osaka is Asia's 1st No. 1

AUSTRALIAN Open champion Naomi Osaka is the first player from Asia to top the men's or women's tennis rankings — and the youngest woman to make her debut at No. 1 in nine years.

“I feel like I'm literally just still learning,” the 21-year-old Osaka said. “Everyone kind of adjusts to being No. 1 in a different way.”

Simona Halep's 48-week stay atop the WTA rankings ended yesterday as she slid to No. 3 after a fourth-round loss to Serena Williams, one year after getting to the final at Melbourne Park.

“The main goal is just to play as good as I can every match, to win every ma-

tch I play, so the ranking doesn't really matter,” Halep said.

Halep said the year-end ranking is what is “more important” than where things stand now, “so I will not stress myself about this.”

Osaka's second consecutive major title, following her success at the U.S. Open last year, helped her rise three spots.

She was born in Japan — her mother is Japanese, her father is Haitian — and moved to the United States when she was 3. She has dual citizenship and now is based in Florida.

Osaka is the youngest woman to reach the top since 2010, when Caroline

Wozniacki did it at 20.

“People were talking about [me] being No. 1 if I win this tournament. I was able to accomplish that,” Osaka said. “But the ranking was never my real goal. It was just to win this tournament.”

The runner-up at Melbourne Park, Petra Kvitová, jumped from No. 6 to No. 2.

Sloane Stephens is No. 4, and Karolina Plisková went from No. 8 to No. 5.

Williams missed the 2018 tournament after having a baby; her quarterfinal run this time pushed her up five places to No. 11.

Surprise semifinalist Danielle Collins, a 25-year-old from Florida, climbed

from No. 35 to No. 23. The woman she upset in the fourth round, three-time major champion Angelique Kerber, dropped from No. 2 to No. 6.

Novak Djokovic's record seventh Australian Open title allowed him to stay at No. 1 in the ATP rankings, and Rafael Nadal's runner-up showing kept him at No. 2.

But 2017-18 champion Roger Federer's fourth-round exit took him from No. 3 down to No. 6.

The player who beat Federer, 20-year-old Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece, turned his first run to a Grand Slam semifinal into a career-best ranking of No. 12. **AP**



Japan's Naomi Osaka holds her trophy after winning the women's singles final at the Australian Open in Melbourne

opinion

Our Desk
 Daniel Beitler



DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Macau SAR and possibly a turning point in the demographic development of the city.

Macau has welcomed successive waves of Chinese immigration in the two decades since the handover to an extent not seen since World War II, when the city's population reportedly swelled from about 200,000 to 700,000.

Today, the city is home to a combined permanent and foreign worker population of about 650,000, which has stood mostly unchanged since 2015. The non-resident component has also stabilized at around 180,000 workers.

The reality is that borders - whether geographic or artificial - create nations, ethnicities, cultures and so on. The longer a splinter society lives apart, the more distinct it tends to become from its mother society. From our local perspective in China, this is also the case for Taiwan and Japan, whose peoples can trace their roots or culture back to different periods in Chinese history.

Though Macau has long had its own culture - a variation of Chinese culture apart from the traditional definition of the "Macanese" - successive waves of Chinese immigration have brought a certain "mainlandization", born out of decades of political and ideological differences between the People's Republic of China and Portuguese-administered Macau. Mainland immigrants brought with them their own sensibilities that inevitably diluted the Macau variation of Chinese identity; a phenomenon exaggerated by the relatively small population of the territory.

Now, not only might that be coming to an end, it may well reverse.

It might be said that second-generation immigrants - particularly those hailing from the same ethnic and cultural background - are far more likely to assimilate into the local culture variation than their parents, who spent their formative years in another place. For example, one Macau-based researcher recently found that permanent residents had a stronger preference for democracy and universal suffrage than non-residents. Thus there are some values that hold together a local identity.

As the city enters into its third decade as a special administrative region of China, we might expect to see a strengthening of a Macau identity, providing that the population continues to hold stable. The cultural distinction is certainly not cause for self-rule, and Macau can have its own identity while remaining, in political terms, a semi-autonomous or even prefecture-level city within the People's Republic of China. This is the case for many stateless cultures, ethnicities and nations around the world, including my home country.

But from the perspective of the Central Government in Beijing, it is far easier to have a uniform culture in Macau with a single loyalty (albeit it's a holy trinity of loving the people, party and country) than a distinct culture that views the rulers and the ruled as different peoples and whose loyalty must be earned.

Looking at recent regional developments from a demographic perspective makes for an interesting exercise. The Central Government's encroachment into the autonomous affairs of Macau has the purpose of reducing the potential for social conflict born out of differences between China and Macau, including the varying degrees of political and social freedoms.

The Macau SAR could hardly accommodate a new influx of Chinese immigrants to weaken a localized sense of identity - there is just not enough space - but it could be incorporated into the southern China region in a way that borders would matter less or not at all. The Greater Bay Area might not be integration via economic initiatives, but a question of sustainable demographics.

THE POSTAL SERVICE HONORS ENTERTAINER GREGORY HINES WITH STAMP

The U.S. Postal Service is honoring entertainer Gregory Hines with a Black Heritage Series stamp.

Acting chief postal inspector Gary Barksdale is hosting the first day of issue ceremony yesterday at the Peter Norton Symphony Space in New York.

Hines, who was known for his unique style of tap dancing, won a Tony Award in 1992 for "Jelly's Last Jam." He died of cancer at age 57 in 2003.

The forever stamp features Hines smiling on one knee with one foot raised to show the taps on the bottom of his shoe.



Station	Air quality
Roadside	40-60 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	40-60 Moderate
Ambient	40-60 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

Singapore says American leaked 14,200 HIV records

Annabelle Liang, Singapore

SINGAPORE'S health ministry accused an American yesterday of stealing and leaking the records of 14,200 people infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, before January 2013.

It said Mikhy K. Farrera Brochez recently put the official records of 5,400 Singaporeans and 8,800 foreigners online. These included HIV test results, names, identification numbers, phone numbers, addresses and other health information, it said.

"While access to the confidential information has been disabled, it is still in the possession of the unauthorized person, and could still be publicly disclosed in the future," it said in statement. "We are working with relevant parties to scan the internet for signs of further disclosure of the information."

The ministry said Brochez worked in Singapore as a lecturer for a period before he was jailed for several drug and fraud-related offenses and deported last year. His partner, who headed the ministry's National Public Health Unit from March 2012 to May 2013, had access to the confidential information, it added.

It identified his partner as



Ler Teck Siang, a Singaporean doctor who has been charged under the Official Secrets Act for failing to take reasonable care of confidential information relating to HIV-positive patients. The charge is pending before the courts.

Ler was convicted last September of helping Brochez cheat and providing false information to the police and health ministry, the statement said. He was sentenced to 24 months in jail but has since filed an appeal which will be heard in March.

The ministry said it discovered that Brochez had obtained the confidential records in 2016, and reported it to police. Both Brochez and Ler's properties were searched and "all relevant material found were seized and secured by the police," it said.

The ministry said it realized last May that Brochez "still had part of the records" from 2016 but they hadn't been disclosed in any way. It said it lodged another police report and notified the affected individuals.

The ministry said it was notified last week that "more information" could be in Brochez's possession and that it had been disclosed online.

Police are investigating and the authorities are seeking help from foreign counterparts.

The ministry said it has put more safeguards in place to prevent information from being mishandled. Since September 2016, the downloading and decrypting of information from the HIV registry requires the approval of two people instead of one, it said. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko



White Square. Snow covered Red Square with the Spasskaya Tower and St. Basil's Cathedral after a snowstorm in Moscow yesterday. The storm dropped about 44 cm of snow on Moscow over the weekend.

WORLD BRIEFS

PAKISTAN The lawyer of a Pakistani Christian woman awaiting the final ruling on her fate vowed he would fight the last legal hurdle for his client who had faced death threats from Islamist radicals following her acquittal in a blasphemy case.

RUSSIA Police yesterday found the painting that was stolen a day earlier from Moscow's famed museum of Russian art in broad daylight before unsuspecting visitors.

AFGHANISTAN The president yesterday assured his people that their rights will not be compromised in the name of peace with the Taliban, days after the U.S. envoy tasked with resolving America's longest war reported significant progress in talks with the insurgents. More on p12



FRANCE Some 10,000 people wearing red scarves marched through Paris to protest acts of violence and vandalism on the sidelines of anti-government demonstrations by the yellow vest movement.

BRITAIN Pro-Brexit British lawmakers were mounting a campaign yesterday to rescue Prime Minister Theresa May's rejected European Union divorce deal in a parliamentary showdown this week.



BRAZIL Firefighters yesterday carefully moved over treacherous mud, sometimes walking, sometimes crawling, in search of survivors or bodies, four days after a dam collapse that buried mine buildings and surrounding neighborhoods with iron ore waste.

CUBA A tornado and pounding rains smashed into the eastern part of Cuba's capital overnight, toppling trees, bending power poles and flinging shards of metal roofing through the air as the storm cut a path of destruction across eastern Havana.