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Acquiring operation licenses remains a challenge for business operators keen on starting a firm in Macau

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WORLD BRIEFS

PHILIPPINES A grenade was thrown into a mosque in the southern Philippines where Muslim teachers were sleeping early yesterday morning, killing two of them and injuring four, authorities said.



INDONESIA Activists in the mountainous jungled-clad Papua region risked imprisonment to collect 1.8 million signatures for a petition calling for self-determination but had a final dilemma: They were blocked from presenting it to the intended recipient, the United Nations.

THAILAND A political party closely associated with Thailand's military government yesterday named Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha as a possible candidate to become the next premier if it forms a government after next month's election.

INDIA Authorities in India's most populous state have been ordered to bar code stray cows and use vacant buildings to shelter them in response to farmers' complaints that the closure of slaughterhouses has created a menace of crop-destroying, free-range cattle.



SYRIA It only took a few days for al-Qaida-linked militants to seize more than two dozen towns and villages in northern Syria from rival insurgents earlier this month, cementing their control over an area the size of neighboring Lebanon.

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Hengqin always takes time. I don't think all the required policies are in place right now to attract tenants.

OLIVER TONG

Property expert calls for easing of license acquisition

Lynzy Valles

ACQUIRING operation licenses remains a challenge for business operators keen on starting a firm in the region.

Real estate expert Oliver Tong called on the government to address the issue, noting that it should provide a degree of flexibility when it comes to licensing and even construction permits.

Speaking yesterday on the sidelines of the annual business talk of the American Chamber of Commerce, British Busi-

ness Association of Macao and the France Macau Chamber of Commerce, Oliver Tong, senior director and head of leasing at Jones Lang LaSalle said a number of clients at the firm had encountered licensing dilemmas.

Tong remarked that Macau has been actively promoting diversified development of tourism and different industries, which has attracted much attention from overseas operators. However, Macau's complicated laws, regulations and license application procedures

have made them move back and give up their plans.

"Sometimes for food and beverages or supermarkets, it can take three to four months before you get the license ready. In those three to four months, they have to pay rent, so they are paying it for nothing [and] that is the very big challenge for [business owners]," Tong told the Times.

"[Licensing procedures] definitely need to be more effective, otherwise many international brands and retailers would say

that it is much easier in Hong Kong [so they may] focus on Hong Kong instead," he added.

The senior director noted that some operational licenses can take up to nine to 12 months before being ready to fully open a firm.

The expert made such comments on the food and beverage sector as it had showed steady growth, mentioning the opening of franchise stores such as Lady M, The Cheesecake Factory and Hey Tea amongst others.

"The other issue is human resources. This deserves more attention from the government because getting enough people to work for them is not easy, and getting foreign quotas is another challenge. It's always very tight," Tong commented in regards to other issues the retail sector faces.

"On the landlords' side, honestly speaking, I don't think they are open minded enough to accept new concepts. [...] They are not open minded and are just focused on developing traditional retail [firms]," he added.

With the increasing supply of retail leasing space in Macau, it is forecasted that over 1 million square feet of retail space will enter the market in 2019.

According to 2019 predictions, a downward adjustment in retail rental costs is expected, yet at the same time, lower rental costs will create opportunities for experiential entertainment operators, such as VR game centers, trampoline parks, cinemas and food and beverage businesses amongst others.

Furthermore, when questioned over whether local residents are leaning towards purchasing real estate developments in Hengqin, Tong noted that current policies and regulations are not yet attracting local residents to purchase apartments in the region.

"Hengqin always takes time. I don't think all the required policies are in place right now to attract tenants. Most build infrastructure and big buildings but in terms of software it is [still lacking]," Tong explained.

"I think it is happening progressively but not everything is ready. [...] It will take five to ten years at least," he added.

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Canadian man's arrest in Macau not linked to China detentions

THE arrest of a Canadian man (surnamed Leao) in Macau is not linked to the detention of other Canadian citizens in China.

"I can confirm that [...] Leao, who is a Canadian citizen, has been arrested in Macau. He has been detained by police authorities there," said Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland.

"We have no reason to be-

lieve that his detention is in any way connected with the other cases. We are seeking more information, and we are seeking consular access," Freeland told Global News.

As the Times reported earlier this week, Leao was arrested in Macau on January 26 for allegedly attempting to defraud a local entertainment company out of MOP2.3 billion (around USD284 million).

The bank rejected the suspect's request to transfer funds from the unidentified company's account on January 21, after his signature did not match the one they had on record, upon which he left.

The 61-year-old suspect was arrested when he tried to leave Macau. He has been charged with fraud and document forging after forged papers were found on him. He has denied the accusa-

tions and was transferred to the prosecutor's office.

The police spokesperson said, "we have enough proof that the suspect used a fake power of attorney and remittance slip when attempting to steal money from a local entertainment company and bank."

According to authorities, the suspect refused to cooperate. It is believed other people were also involved in the case.

BLOOMBERG



Chrystia Freeland (right)

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Jolie Howard, chief executive officer of TAG Aviation Asia (left), and Rita Tam general manager of the Macau FBO



AVIATION

New services base well entrenched and 'here to stay'

Daniel Beittler

TAG Aviation, a private and business aviation services firm, has chosen Macau for its first fixed base operation in the Asia-Pacific region. Joining three existing operations in Farnborough, Geneva and Sion, the new base will provide business aviation services, including on-site customs and immigration clearance, flight planning and chartering, and aircraft maintenance and servicing.

It opened only a few weeks ago, but at a visit to the TAG Macau office this week the Times learned that the operation is already well entrenched.

Business aviation is flying high in China and global players are

keenly eyeing the market. Forty percent of TAG's clients come from the Southeast Asia and mainland China region, according to a representative of the company, and despite having just opened the fixed base operation, the upcoming Chinese New Year has generated "more business than we expected."

That might be the case, but with a Hong Kong presence since 2006, Macau has long been on TAG's radar. In fact, company representatives said that TAG had scouted Macau as an expansion opportunity over a decade ago and were aware of the city's potential.

"We identified Macau as a good opportunity," said Jolie Howard, chief executive officer at TAG Aviation Asia. "When

TAG first started operating [in Asia], we actually came to Macau to see if there was space for us. That was 12 years ago."

At that time there was just a single concession in Macau for a fixed base operation and fewer than 1,000 general and business flight movements.

Little over a decade later and the airport business is booming.

The Macau International Airport recently opened the north extension to the passenger terminal building, with plans for the south extension scheduled to begin soon. General and business flight movements today exceed 3,100, according to latest information released by the Civil Aviation Authority, while local aviation authorities are projecting passenger traffic

will climb to 8.7 million in 2019, following a 15 percent rise last year.

When TAG revisited Macau about two years ago, the company learned that the local government wanted to open up aviation services to international players in order to accommodate the fast-growing business at the airport. The firm decided to bid for a new concession providing ground handling services for private jets.

In Howard's words, TAG "saw the potential in Macau."

"We chose Macau because of the government's attitude, which is welcoming to general aviation," she explained. "It's good that the airport [authority] recognizes the need to expand as that will help with the development of Macau as a destination."

Rita Tam, who oversees the local arm of TAG as general manager of the Macau fixed base operation, said that according to her understanding of the Macau International Airport master plan, aviation authorities intend to build more airplane parking spaces in the coming years. She said that this represents an opportunity in Macau because these parking spaces are in short

supply in neighboring Hong Kong, where the firm operates in aircraft operations support and maintenance services.

"In Hong Kong we have a lot of business, but the [problem] is a lack of parking space for airplanes," said Tam, adding that infrastructure improvements in Macau could prove the impetus to promote the local business aviation sector.

Indeed, the added space is a necessity for TAG as a business aviation firm that needs to be flexible in the services it provides to clients.

According to Howard, "we have to be more flexible [than commercial airlines] because we have to adapt to the individual owners. We don't know where they are going to want to fly, we can't predict that. We have to be like a limousine, and that's different to what the [commercial] airlines do."

Howard and Tam are optimistic about the future of the Macau International Airport. They said that the expansion projects are a good sign of local authorities' commitment to the development of the aviation sector, and that their new fixed base operation will help to build a presence in the Asia-Pacific business aviation market for both TAG and Macau.

"We certainly look at Macau from a long-term growth perspective over the next 10 to 15 years," nodded Howard. "We are expanding our footprint in this part of the world and we are here to stay."

198 extra flights approved for CNY



THE Civil Aviation Authority of Macau (AACM) has approved a total of 198 extra regular and charter flights to allow airlines to increase their capacity to meet the air transport demand for the 2019 Chinese New Year. The extra flights are to and from mainland China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand and Japan. The extra and charter flights have already been in operation since January 21 and will end on February 28. The operators of these flights are Air Macau, Juneyao Airlines, China East-

ern Airlines and East Asia Airlines. The flights are destined to mainland China (151 flights to and from Shanghai, Wanzhou, Chengdu, Changzhou, Zhengzhou and helicopter services linking to Shenzhen); Taiwan (25 flights to and from Taipei); Vietnam (10 flights to and from Danang); Thailand (8 flights to and from Bangkok); Japan (4 flights to and from Osaka and Sapporo). The number of flights for the 2019 Chinese New Year has increased by 150 percent compared with the number in 2018.

TURKISH AIRLINES STILL WORKING ON ISTANBUL ROUTE

THE MACAU International Airport Company (CAM) said it is still working on a deal with Turkish Airlines to establish a long-haul flight connecting Macau with Istanbul. If successful, the airline would be allowed to carry both passengers and cargo. A long-haul connection between Macau and a European flight hub has long been anticipated in the MSAR, with various proposals having been

made in recent years. At a Media Spring Dinner held last week, CAM's Director of Airport Operation Antonio Barros said that the airport was working toward establishing such routes that would open up connectivity to Europe. Currently, there are connections between Macau and Moscow, as well as plans to explore route development for the Indian sub-continent.

Lam Wai Hou officially appointed GDI head

The acting director of the Infrastructure Development Office (GDI), Lam Wai Hou, has been officially appointed GDI Director for the period of Feb. 1, 2019 to June 29, 2019, according to a dispatch published in the Official Gazette. Lam started serving as GDI Acting Director in September 2018, and has been serving in GDI since 2005. Between 2005 and 2008, he was a senior technician. Between 2009 and 2017, he became a functional leader at GDI, and during 2017 and 2018 he served GDI as a deputy director. Lam has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master's degree in structural engineering.

Year of the Pig statues revealed in five places

Yesterday, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) erected Chinese zodiac statues in five locations to welcome the Chinese New Year, in the hopes of adding a festive atmosphere to the Chinese holiday. The IAM president and IAM members were present at the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge to reveal the statue there, which is about 3 meters high. The five statue locations are the Leisure Area of Taipa Waterfront, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Macau Port, Seac Pai Van Park, Taipa side of the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge, and Iao Han Park.

Taxi driver required to regularly report to police authority

The court has accepted the prosecution authority's suggestion and ordered a taxi driver, who lodged a false accusation with the police, to regularly report to the police, according to a statement released by the Public Prosecutions Office yesterday. On January 25, the taxi driver lodged a false accusation against some passengers after they refused to be overcharged. Four passengers got into his vehicle at Cotai to go to the Border Gate. The driver asked for MOP300 for the trip, but his request was declined. The local driver then returned his vehicle to the pick-up spot and left it to go to the bathroom. In his absence, the passengers took down his license information and left. The driver later called the police, saying that they had stolen his license and MOP1,000. The suspect is in his 30s, and has 38 recorded infractions in the police system.

HKZMB's effect on Zhuhai considered 'far from enough'

THE mayor of Zhuhai, Yao Yisheng, said that the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HKZMB) is far from enough in terms of its effect on Zhuhai, according to the Chinese press.

During yesterday's press conference for Guangdong province's National People's Congress, Yao remarked that at present, he clearly realizes that the HKZMB is only a bridge, and although the bridge has attracted lots of attention, its effect on Zhuhai is still far from enough.

Zhuhai will work with Macau and HK to launch a bridge sightseeing tour

In addition, Yao noted that in the future, Zhuhai will cooperate with Macau on education and healthcare projects. The



Workers clean a pavilion as the HKZMB is seen in the background in Zhuhai

city will work with universities in Hong Kong and Macau to seek breakthroughs on various projects, according to Chinese reports.

The mayor of Zhuhai also remarked that considerations of Macau were included in the development of Hengqin.

According to Yao, one of the three key aims of the Hengqin development is to "preserve good mountains and good water" on undeveloped lands.

Zhuhai will also research and

prepare to launch affiliated measures for the Macau and Guangdong cooperative industrial zone, including ways to attract Macau companies to enter the industrial zone of Hengqin.

Moreover, Yao hopes to gain the central government's approval for a renovation of Hengqin's reform and management.

Yao also revealed that in 2019, Zhuhai will work with Macau and Hong Kong to launch a HKZMB sightseeing tour, which

will include the bridge and sea tourism projects.

Additionally, the city places great importance on cooperating with Macau in promoting the construction of Hengqin's cross gate central business district.

According to Yao, regardless of the height and content of the buildings at the cross gate central business district, they must be connected with Macau, and they must promote the diversification of Macau's industry.

MGM aims to create platform between local and global artists

Lynzy Valles

MGM is seeking to have local artists share and exchange works with global artists in a bid to boost the city's art scene.

As the gaming operator pledged to promote art and culture to the public, Cristina Kuok, vice president of Art and Culture at MGM said that the company's exhibitions are also aimed at promoting diversity between east and west cultures.

Currently, MGM Cotai is showcasing its first public art project – "Celebrating Life – Ju Ming Living World Sculpture Selling Exhibition," which is on display across its three exhibition rooms until April 7.

Over 40 pieces of unique wood carving work of Ju, including painted wood and wood relief sculptures are available for the public to view.

The series features Ju's survey on human rela-



Cristina Kuok



Aspect of the exhibition

tionships with an emphasis on the aesthetic concept of merging art into life, and life into art.

Living World series is one of the most iconic series of Ju Ming, conveying Ju's exploration of human sentiments using vivid and lively images and postures, with numbers of works particularly focusing on a depiction of traditional family values.

Inspired by his multicultural experiences and with over 30 years of development, Ju applies

both traditional and contemporary materials, such as wood and stainless steel, in this series. However, for Ju wood carving sculpture is the most significant, for he carves directly onto a log piece with his signature sharp cutting strokes to create one-of-a-kind works.

Speaking on the sidelines of a media tour to the exhibition, Kuok said that the gaming operator will be a part of the Macau Arts Festival, yet refused to disclose

further details.

"[The festival] will cover visual arts, installations, sculptures and all sorts of arts. We will also be part of that festival and we will be doing something quite big over here at MGM. I can't say what it is yet but definitely something that is very eye opening that involves innovation, technology and art," Kuok explained.

The vice president further noted that MGM is working on creating exchanges for local and

international artists.

"We have worked with many local artists and have had a series of local artists' exhibitions," said Kuok.

"However at the same time, what we would also be doing later on, which everyone will see, is that we will also involve a lot of local artists to exchange and work with some of the global artists; and to bring more workshop experiences to the community. This is what we are aiming for," Kuok added.

Wynn Spreads Love Across Community

Wynn has always been committed to caring for the community, regularly working closely with local charities to demonstrate its support. With Chinese New Year just around the corner, a group of dedicated and caring Wynn volunteers not only organised charity sales with local institutions in the hotel's back-of-house areas, but also initiated a series of visits to the underprivileged to warm their hearts.

Established in 2010, the WE (Wynn Employees) Volunteer Team continues to grow. As such, Wynn extends its sincere gratitude to each and every one of the volunteers, who engage in community services with a selfless spirit – including spending their spare time to visit the elderly in their homes. This year, Wynn has continued to work with charities in Macau year-round to fulfil its corporate social responsibility whilst promoting the sustainable development of the local community and building a harmonious and inclusive society together.



CELEBRATING SPRING FESTIVAL TOGETHER

It was this spirit that led the WE Volunteer Team to visit the Asilo Vila Madalena home for the elderly in Coloane this year. Established by the Canossian Daughters of Charity in 1964, the home provides services to female seniors aged 60 or above. On this occasion, the volunteer team showered the seniors with love as they played interactive puzzle games and chatted with them about their lives. One highlight was when two volunteer team members sang golden oldies together with the seniors, filling their hearts with joy as they connected across the generations.

The volunteers also presented the elderly with practical New Year gift bags, specially tailored for the elderly, including natural health foods, daily necessities and festive couplets. Grateful for the opportunity to visit provided by Asilo Vila Madalena, Wynn enjoyed bringing festive cheer to the senior citizens in appreciation for the indispensable contributions they have made to Macau society. In doing so, Wynn also hopes its team members can foster interaction with the elderly who, in turn, can feel the gratitude shown by various sectors of society.



SPREADING THE JOY OF CNY

On 23rd January, the WE Volunteer Team visited and decorated Lar De Nossa Senhora Da Penha of Caritas Macau for the ninth straight year. Situated on Penha Hill, Lar De Nossa Senhora Da Penha is a residential home for physically and mentally disabled children that operates under the auspices of Caritas Macau, which has committed itself to comforting, caring for and serving disabled children. During the visit, experienced Wynn volunteers helped put up traditional Spring Festival decorations and couplets in the residential home, creating a lively, festive atmosphere amid the children's daily lives.

The following day volunteers visited the Hil Kong Centre of the Association of Parents of People with Intellectual Disabilities of Macau. Opened to the public on 1st January 1997, the Hil Kong daytime activity centre provides care and training for those with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, enabling their personal growth while temporarily relieving pressure from their caretakers. Volunteers also put up Chinese New Year decorations and selecting colourful couplets, seeking to create a pleasant environment for them to fully celebrate the festival.

Through these joint efforts, the WE Volunteer Team seeks to continue

spreading positive energy and build an inclusive, equal and harmonious society.



VISITING TELE-ASSISTANT 'PENG ON TUNG' USERS

With the goal of 'Helping Others' firmly in mind, over the course of five years the WE Volunteer Team has visited hundreds of users of 'Peng On Tung', a tele-assistance service provided to the elderly by the UGAMM.

Setting off from Wynn Palace in the morning, the volunteer team visited households in Taipa and Coloane where the Peng On Tung service is used, with seven teams of two maximising their service to the elderly within the limited time available. Peng On Tung users include seniors who live alone, elderly couples, people with chronic medical conditions and those with other needs. The visits helped to ensure the proper function of the Peng On Tung devices in the seniors' homes, with volunteers reminding them of how to use them correctly. The home visits also enabled volunteers to check on the physical and living conditions of the elderly users, while enabling face-to-face conversations where warm wishes could be shared in person.

In addition, the volunteer team, did some Spring cleaning at the homes of the elderly, presented the senior citizens with healthy food products and daily necessities while

helping them hang Chinese New Year decorations, which was greatly appreciated by the Peng On Tung service users.



CHARITY SALE OF CNY GIFTS

To support members of the local community, the WE Volunteer Team also invited the Richmond Fellowship of Macau to hold a charity sale of handmade Chinese New Year gifts at the back-of-house areas at Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace in early January. The charity sale featured products all designed by members of the fellowship, such as ceramic handicrafts, couplets, plants, terrariums and festive flowers. It not only provided many Chinese New Year gift options for Wynn employees from different departments, but served as a platform for them and those who had previously dealt with mental illness to interact and learn about each other. By setting up the sales booth in the back-of-house areas, Fellowship members had the opportunity to strengthen their social and communication skills, helping them in a small but important way to return to society.

Through such humble efforts, Wynn hopes to sow the seeds of kindness and spread the spirit of caring to every corner of Macau.

BNU profits fell 17 percent

THE profits of Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU) fell by 17 percent in 2018 when compared with 2017. The figures came from an analysis of the bank's Annual Trial Balance, published yesterday in the government's Official Gazette (BO).

According to the final balance sheet that closed the 2018 calendar year, dated to December 31, the banking institution made earnings that amounted to MOP585 million, a significant drop from the MOP706 million made in 2017.

Although the bank had been registering lower performance throughout the year, the drop was significantly larger in the second half of 2018.

To recall, the half-yearly bank results, which were made public in August 2018, already showed a 3.1 percent drop in profits. The situation was then aggravated during the second half of 2018, when BNU only achieved 46.9 percent of its annual results.

Noting the final total results, BNU recorded costs totaling MOP1.1 billion, making their total income MOP1.7 billion.



TOURISM

Tour groups above 9m benchmark in 2018

VISITORS on package tours totalled 9,096,000 in 2018, up by 5.5 percent year-on-year, with those from mainland China (7,103,000), South Korea (616,000) and Taiwan (696,000) recording increases of 2.6 percent, 28.3 percent and 53.8 percent respectively.

According to information released yesterday by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), in 2018, guests at hotels and guesthouses reached 14,107,000, up by 7.2 percent year-on-year. Guests coming from mainland China rose by 12.5 percent to 9,717,000, whereas those from South Korea (484,000), Hong Kong (1,515,000) and Taiwan (477,000) dropped by 3.4 percent, 5.9 percent and 3.2 percent respectively. The average occu-



pancy rate of hotels and guesthouses went up by 3.9 percentage points year-on-year to 91 percent, with 5-star hotels leading at 92.4 percent, an increase of 4.6 percentage points. The average length of stay held steady year-on-year at 1.5 days.

In 2018, outbound residents using services of travel agencies totalled

1,579,000, up by 13.5 percent year-on-year. The number of residents travelling on package tours decreased by 6.1 percent to 527,000, with those visiting mainland China rising by 2.4 percent to 385,000.

In December, group visitors reached 917,000, up by 2.3 percent month-to-month and 1.6 percent year-on-year.

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XINHUA



Rodrigo Duterte

GAMING

Duterte's ban clouds Philippines' casino push, regulator says

THE Philippines' gaming chief said she will ask President Rodrigo Duterte to relax a ban on new casino licenses as the nation risks losing out on a gaming boom for which its Asian neighbors are lining up.

A moratorium on new casino licenses that took effect in January 2018 could drive away gaming investments, Andrea Domingo, the head of the state gaming regulator said in an interview on Tuesday in Manila. She hoped Duterte can be persuaded to implement a selective ban when she meets the president as early as this week.

"Gaming seems to be the sunrise industry now in Asia," Domingo said. "There are still areas in the Philippines that can still absorb and benefit

from these investments, which won't go here with the current ban."

Domingo's efforts are aimed at ensuring the nation has a shot at becoming a regional gaming hub despite Duterte's decision to halt new casino approvals. While Philippines has shut its doors, others such as Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar have been aggressively raising their game.

"It's better to be discerning in giving new licenses rather than a complete ban," said Rick Santos, chairman at real estate consultant Santos Knight Frank. Domingo sees casinos as a tourism magnet and recommends banning them in areas not accessible for foreign travelers since that would encourage the locals to gamble. **Bloomberg**

Three football fields proposed for new urban zone A

THE Sports Bureau (ID) has made a proposal to the relevant governmental department to build at least three football courts in the New Urban Zone A.

In her reply to lawmaker Sulu Sou's inquiry about the city's football courts resources, ID acting director Lam Lin Kio said that the ID also proposes building three standardized swimming pools in addition to three sports stadiums in Zone A, as well as bicycle and running tracks.

According to Lam's reply, in 2018, Macau had more than 400 students aged between six and 14 years old enrolled in the city's football schools. In total, there are 17 football classes.

Regarding football court facilities, in the past, Macau had a

total of four natural turf pitches, including Lin Fong Sports Center, Olympic Sports Center, the Macao University of Science and Technology (MUST) and the University of Macau.

However, starting from August 1 2018, MUST stopped cooperating with the ID, with the school also informing the ID that after the school's football field was rebuilt, the school would manage the relevant facilities by itself.

The ID expressed its respect for MUST's decision, and the bureau is continuing communication with the school regarding the facility.

According to Lam, the ID hopes that MUST will continue to cooperate with the bureau and open its football field to the public during specific hours.



MELCO

WHOLE PERSON DEVELOPMENT

Nurturing local talent for professional excellence

As one of the largest employers in Macau with over 21,000 employees, Melco Resorts & Entertainment fosters local talent for enhanced career prospects

Integrated resorts operator Melco's dedication to providing world-class, non-gaming leisure offerings is apparent in its recent launch of Elekron, the world's first all-electric indoor theatrical stunt show, as well as its record-breaking achievements in the Michelin Guide 2019. Six signature restaurants attained a total of 10 Michelin Stars, establishing Melco as the world's integrated resort operator with the highest number of Michelin stars.

This esteemed mark of excellence highlights Melco's dedication to brilliance in food and beverage offerings; none of which would be possible without the determination and commitment of its extraordinary line-up of culinary talents. But such recognition on this global scale does not obscure Melco's vision that commits to developing local employees as part of its Whole Person Development initiative. With deep roots in Macau, Melco continues to devote its greatest efforts to developing and nurturing local talent for excellence.

Earlier this month, Melco selected a group of 15 local employees to participate in the first ever Macau Integrated Tourism and Leisure Enterprise Vocational Skills Competition co-organized by the Macao Federation of Trade Unions and Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL). The Melco team received Bronze awards in the Hotel Services and Western Culinary competitions, in addition to receiving the culinary category award for Best Dessert.

Culinary category representatives came from all three of the company's properties: including City of Dreams, Studio City and Altira Macau. The competition required teams to create and serve up multiple portions of three dishes including appetizer, main course and dessert, all within two and a half hours. To maximize time to prepare and to enable top quality teamwork, Melco devised special work schedules for participants to group together for brainstorming, training and the physical execution of the dishes.

Winner of the Best Dessert competition and Chef at Studio City Mr. Li Kun Pou, commented: "With Melco having multiple Michelin stars and a team of highly experienced chefs from the world over, as a young local Macau chef I would never have dreamt of being selected to represent the company. Thanks to Melco's initiatives focused on nurturing local talent through comprehensive training for colleagues to support future opportunities, I am honored to participate, and even more thrilled to be named winner. From the onset of my successful application to the day of the actual competition, the company provided myself and teammates with intensive training and invaluable tips from the management team. I am extremely grateful to Melco for the opportunity, making the seemingly impossible possible, by enabling this experience that will undoubtedly benefit my

professional and personal growth."

Ms. Akiko Takahashi, Chief Officer of Human Resources and Corporate Social Responsibility expressed, "We are delighted to take part and support our teams to further enhance their professional skills, as well as advancing industry standards through competition. We would like to thank the Macao Federation of Trade Unions and DSAL for the opportunity, and of course our participating colleagues who contributed enthusiastically to showcase and further improve skills within their respective areas of profession."

Melco's teams also received industry recognition at the MORS Gold Pin Awards organized by Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT); with two colleagues winning Best Room Attendant and Best Chinese Cook – Cantonese Cuisine (Intermediate Level). Looking ahead, the company continues to develop local talent to broaden perspectives with focus on lifelong learning for a better, more sustainable Macau.



Participants worked together to achieve Bronze Award and Best Dessert in Culinary Competition



The Culinary team celebrate teamwork and achievements at the first Macau Integrated Tourism and Leisure Enterprise Vocational Skills Competition

This article is sponsored by Melco Resorts & Entertainment.

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Venus Feng

More than USD125b of really old money awaits Asia heirs

IT'S been a mournful start to 2019 for two of Asia's richest families. Eka Tjip-ta Widjaja, who began as a coconut and palm-oil trader at age 15 before building a multi-billion-dollar empire in Indonesia, died Saturday at 98. A week earlier, Henry Sy, a shoe salesman who became the wealthiest man in the Philippines, died at 94. Their combined fortunes exceeded USD16.5 billion.

It's no coincidence that the world's richest people are also some of the oldest as it can take a long time to amass extraordinary wealth. About a fifth of the 500 people on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index are at least 80 years old, and 21 are nonagenarians, including eight from Asia with a combined net worth of \$125 billion. That's setting the stage for one of the most concentrated transfers of wealth in history.

"More and more families are thinking of succession," said Peng Qian, associate director of the Tanoto Center for Asian Family Business and Entrepreneurship Studies of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. "We expect huge demand from Asia's richest for private wealth-management services in the next few years."

When a billionaire dies, it can

go at least two ways. An orderly split of assets or a battle royal among infighting heirs.

Sy attempted to adopt the first approach. He was worth \$7.2 billion when he died after giving stakes in his SM Investments Corp. to his six children more than a decade ago, making all of them billionaires.

Li Ka-shing retired from CK Hutchison Holdings Ltd. and CK Asset Holdings Ltd. last year, with his son Victor taking over the conglomerate. He recently brought in his 23-year-old granddaughter Michelle Li to the board of Chesterfield Realty Inc., a family-controlled unit of CK Hutchison Holdings.

For other scions of ultra-wealthy families, it can mean intense struggles for who will take control. Stanley Ho, 97, split most of his fortune among his wives and children in 2011 to settle a family dispute, but members of Ho's family, including his eldest daughter Pansy, are still embroiled in a decade-long battle for his Macau casino empire.

Bloomberg

AP PHOTO



Li Ka-shing

INTERVIEW

Ghosn says arrest due to plot within Nissan

Yuri Kageyama, Tokyo

NISSAN'S former chairman Carlos Ghosn, in his first interview since his arrest in November, blamed fellow executives opposed to forging closer ties with the automaker's French alliance partner Renault for scheming against him, the Japanese newspaper Nikkei reported yesterday.

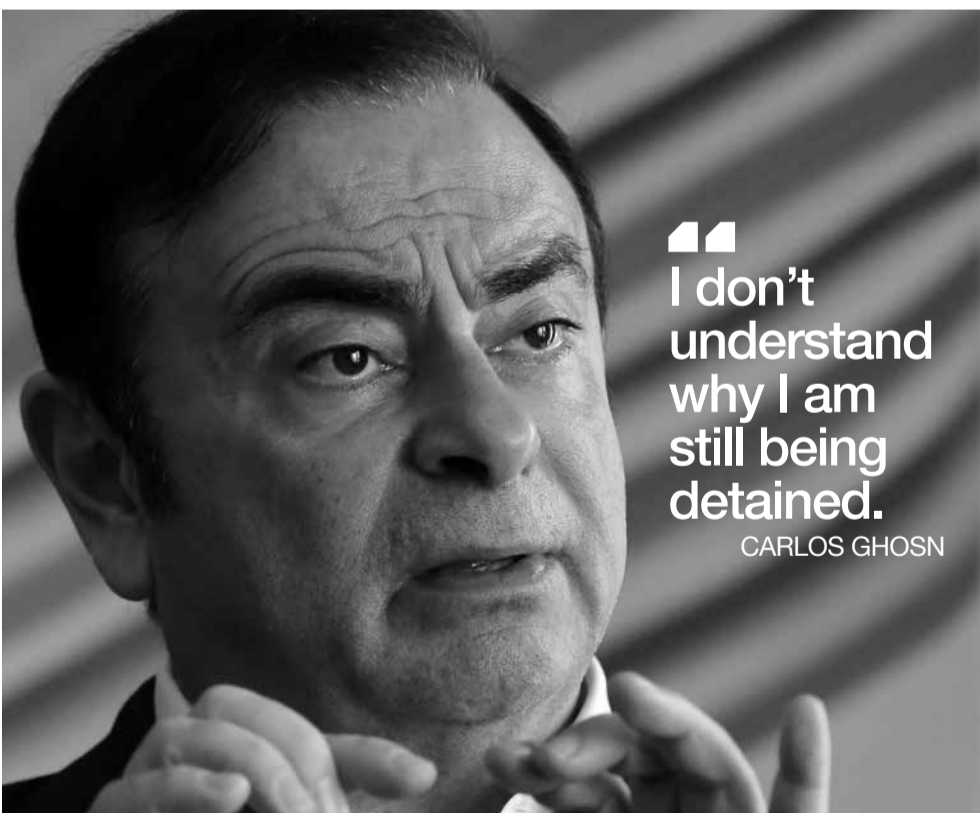
The financial daily said it spoke with Ghosn for 20 minutes earlier in the day at the Tokyo Detention Center, where the 64-year-old star executive has been held since Nov. 19.

Earlier, Ghosn only was allowed visits by his lawyers and embassy officials.

Prosecutors have charged Ghosn with falsifying financial reports in underreporting his compensation. He has also been indicted on charges of breach of trust related to his handling of investment losses and to payments made to a Saudi businessman.

In the interview, Ghosn reiterated his insistence

AP PHOTO



Carlos Ghosn

I don't understand why I am still being detained.

CARLOS GHOSN

that he is innocent and said others in the company schemed to force him out with a "plot and treason."

"People translated strong leadership to [mean] dictator, to distort reality," he told the Nikkei. It was for the "purpose of getting rid

of me," he was quoted as saying.

Nissan Motor Co. defended itself, saying prosecutors took action following an internal investigation set off by whistleblowers in the company.

"The sole cause of this chain of events is the mis-

conduct led by Ghosn and Kelly," company spokesman Nicholas Maxfield said. He was referring to Greg Kelly, another executive who has been charged with collaborating with Ghosn in underreporting his compensation. Kelly was released on bail last

month and remains in Tokyo.

Authorities have rejected Ghosn's requests for bail, saying he might tamper with evidence or possibly flee.

Ghosn told the Nikkei he had no intention of fleeing and wants to defend himself in court. But he questioned why he could not gain release on bail.

"I don't understand why I am still being detained," he was quoted as saying, adding he could not tamper with evidence because "All the evidence is with Nissan."

The newspaper said Ghosn did not appear tired or flustered and when asked about his health, he said he was "doing fine."

"In life there are ups and downs," the newspaper quoted him as saying.

Renault SA owns 43 percent of Nissan. It sent Ghosn to Japan in 1999 to help lead the Japanese automaker's turnaround from near bankruptcy. Ghosn said he had discussed a "plan to integrate" Nissan with Renault and their smaller alliance partner Mitsubishi Mo-

tors Corp. with Nissan's CEO, Hiroto Saikawa, in September.

The plan was to bring Nissan, Renault and Mitsubishi Motors closer together and ensure they had "autonomy under one holding company," he told the newspaper.

Nissan dismissed Ghosn as chairman shortly after his arrest. He was also dismissed as chairman of Mitsubishi. Earlier this month, he resigned as chairman and CEO of Renault and was replaced by Jean-Donimique Senard, the former chairman of Michelin.

Ghosn refuted various allegations against him, saying most of the alleged violations were approved by Nissan's legal department or other senior executives.

He also denied any wrongdoing in buying expensive homes in Brazil and Lebanon, saying he needed a safe place to work and meet with people. The homes were no secret and if they had been a problem, he should have been consulted, Ghosn said. **AP**

TIMELINE: THE BATTLE OVER HUAWEI

DEC. 1: Canada arrests Huawei Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou, the daughter of the company's founder, at America's request on a stopover at Vancouver airport. The U.S. is reported to be investigating Huawei's use of a Hong Kong shell company to sell equipment to Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions. The same day, President Donald Trump and President Xi Jinping meet in Argentina and announce a cease-fire in the U.S.-China trade war.

DEC. 6: A Chinese government statement says Meng broke no U.S. or Canadian laws and demands her immediate release. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says Canada has an independent judiciary that will decide Meng's case "without any political involvement or interference."

DEC. 8-9: China summons Canadian Ambassador John McCallum and U.S. Ambassador Terry Branstad on successive weekend days to warn of "grave consequences" if Meng is not released and demand the U.S. cancel its order for her arrest.

DEC. 10: Two Canadians are detained separately in China in an apparent attempt to pressure Canada to release Meng. Former diplomat Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, who runs tours to North Korea, are taken into custody on suspicion of engaging in activities that endanger national security.

DEC. 11: Meng is released on bail of 10 million Canadian dollars (USD7.5 million), and Trump tells Reuters that he might intervene in her case "if I think it's good for what will be certainly the largest trade deal ever made." Meng is required to wear an ankle monitor, surrender her passports and stay in one of her two Vancouver homes from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

DEC. 21: Canada makes a formal demand for the release of Kovrig and Spavor. Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland says "we are deeply concerned by the arbitrary detention by Chinese authorities of two Canadians earlier this month and call for their immediate release."

JAN. 14: A Chinese court sentences Canadian Robert Lloyd Schellenberg to death in a drug smuggling case, overturning his 15-year sentence from November. Trudeau suggests that China trying to pressure Canada and says that "all countries around the world" should be concerned about Beijing's arbitrary use of its judicial system.

JAN. 15: China expresses strong dissatisfaction with Trudeau's criticism of the death sentence. Foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying says the Canadian leader should "respect the rule of law, respect China's judicial sovereignty, correct mistakes and stop making irresponsible remarks."

JAN. 16: Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei, who is Meng's father, tells foreign reporters that Huawei obeys the law, including export restrictions, wherever it operates. "We are sure there will be a just conclusion to this matter," he says.

JAN. 22: China demands the U.S. withdraw its arrest warrant for Meng and not make an extradition request. Hua, the foreign ministry spokeswoman, says Canada's extradition treaty with the U.S. infringes on the "safety and legitimate rights and interests of Chinese citizens."

JAN. 24: Huawei announces plans for a next-generation smartphone that will use its own technology instead of U.S. components. It says the foldable fifth-generation device will be unveiled next month in Barcelona at the Mobile World Congress, the industry's biggest annual event.

JAN. 25: Trudeau fires Ambassador McCallum after the envoy is quoted saying it would be great for Canada if the U.S. drops its extradition request for Meng.

JAN. 28: The U.S. Justice Department unseals charges against Huawei, Meng and several of the companies' subsidiaries, alleging not only violation of trade sanctions but also the theft of trade secrets. Meng is charged with misleading American banks about Huawei's business with Iran.

JAN. 29: China's foreign ministry says in a statement that Beijing will firmly defend its companies and urges the U.S. to "stop the unreasonable crackdown on Chinese companies including Huawei."

TRADE WAR

For US-China talks, hopes are high, expectations low

Paul Wiseman & Christopher Rugaber, Washington

U.S. and Chinese negotiators start two days of high-level talks today [Macau time] aimed at settling a six-month trade war that has weakened both sides, shaken financial markets and clouded the outlook for the global economy.

Yet the odds seem stacked against any substantive resolution this week to the standoff between the world's two biggest economies. Perhaps the best that might be hoped for, analysts say, is for the two sides to agree to keep talking.

The differences between Beijing and Washington are vast. The United States is essentially demanding that China downsize its economic aspiration to become a supreme world leader in such fields as robotics and electric cars.

"A comprehensive deal that fundamentally changes their system — I don't think that's possible," said Christopher Adams, a former U.S. trade official specializing in China and now a senior adviser at the law firm Covington.

Earlier negotiations flamed out. And this time President Donald Trump might be inclined to drive an especially hard bargain after being forced to cave in a dispute with congressional Democrats that partially shut the federal government for 35 days.

Moreover, a new complication injected itself into U.S.-China relations on the eve of the talks when the Justice Department brought criminal charges earlier this week against the Chinese tech giant Huawei, accusing it of stealing technology secrets and violating sanctions against Iran. Beijing shot back by demanding that the Trump administration pull back from what it called an "unreasonable crackdown" on the Chinese maker of smartphones and telecom gear.

"We are anticipating no big outcomes this week," said Erin Ennis, senior vice president at the U.S.-China Business Council.

A deadline looms. On March 2, the Trump ad-



ministration is scheduled to escalate its tariffs on USD200 billion worth of Chinese imports from 10 percent to 25 percent.

The American delegation to this week's talks is led by Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, a longtime critic of aggressive Chinese trade practices and of U.S. policies that failed to blunt them. Heading the Chinese team is Vice Premier Liu He.

The core of the U.S. allegations against China is that Beijing systematically steals trade secrets, forces foreign companies to hand over technology as the price of access to the Chinese market and subsidizes its own tech companies.

But compelling China to reform its trade policies and treatment of foreign companies will be difficult.

"The idea of just grabbing [technology] however they can is kind of ingrained at this point," said Amanda DeBusk, chair of the international trade practice at Dechert LLP and a former Commerce Department official. "You can't just flip a switch" and expect China to drop long-established practices.

The administration has imposed tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese imports; Beijing has retaliated with import taxes on \$110 billion in U.S. goods.

President Donald Trump has threatened to extend the tariffs to an additional \$267 billion

in Chinese goods. If he did, Trump's import taxes would cover virtually everything China ships to the United States.

Last spring, it looked as if the two sides might avoid a full-blown conflict. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin declared the trade war "on hold" after China had agreed to step up its purchases of U.S. goods, especially in agriculture and energy, and narrow America's huge trade deficit with China. The cease-fire didn't last. Critics dismissed Beijing's commitments as vague, and Trump backed away from Mnuchin's deal and decided to proceed with tariffs.

The trade war has magnified uncertainties for businesses, raised priced in some sectors and unsettled investors. Pointing to the U.S.-China conflict, economists at the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development have downgraded their forecasts for global growth. The Dow Jones Industrial Average is down more than 8 percent since early October, though it has rebounded since Christmas.

The Chinese economy is decelerating, having expanded last year at its slowest pace since 1990. U.S. officials and some analysts say they believe its weakening economy will pressure the Chinese into making concessions.

"The economic circumstances are a powerful

bargaining tool," DeBusk said.

But she added that "the Chinese slowdown also impacts the United States." Indeed, U.S. heavy equipment maker Caterpillar reported that its China sales were slowing — news that sent its stock price tumbling.

Deepening the challenge is the U.S. view that China has pledged in the past to curb cyber-theft and forced transfers of technology — and then failed to do so. Lighthizer is sure to insist that any agreement be enforceable.

"The odds of them stonewalling and rope-a-doping in this meeting are close to zero," said Robert Atkinson, president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation think tank. "What are they going to put on the table? Are they going to put tidbits on the table, or they going to put something meaty on the table?"

The Justice Department's decision to charge Huawei, meanwhile, "has thrown a curveball" into the talks, said Patrick Chovanec, chief strategist at Silvercrest Asset Management Group.

U.S. officials insist that the Huawei case is entirely separate from the trade negotiations. But Atkinson said he thinks the Huawei indictment was meant to send a signal to the Chinese.

"This is about power politics," he said, "to get them to do what they should be doing." AP

REPORT

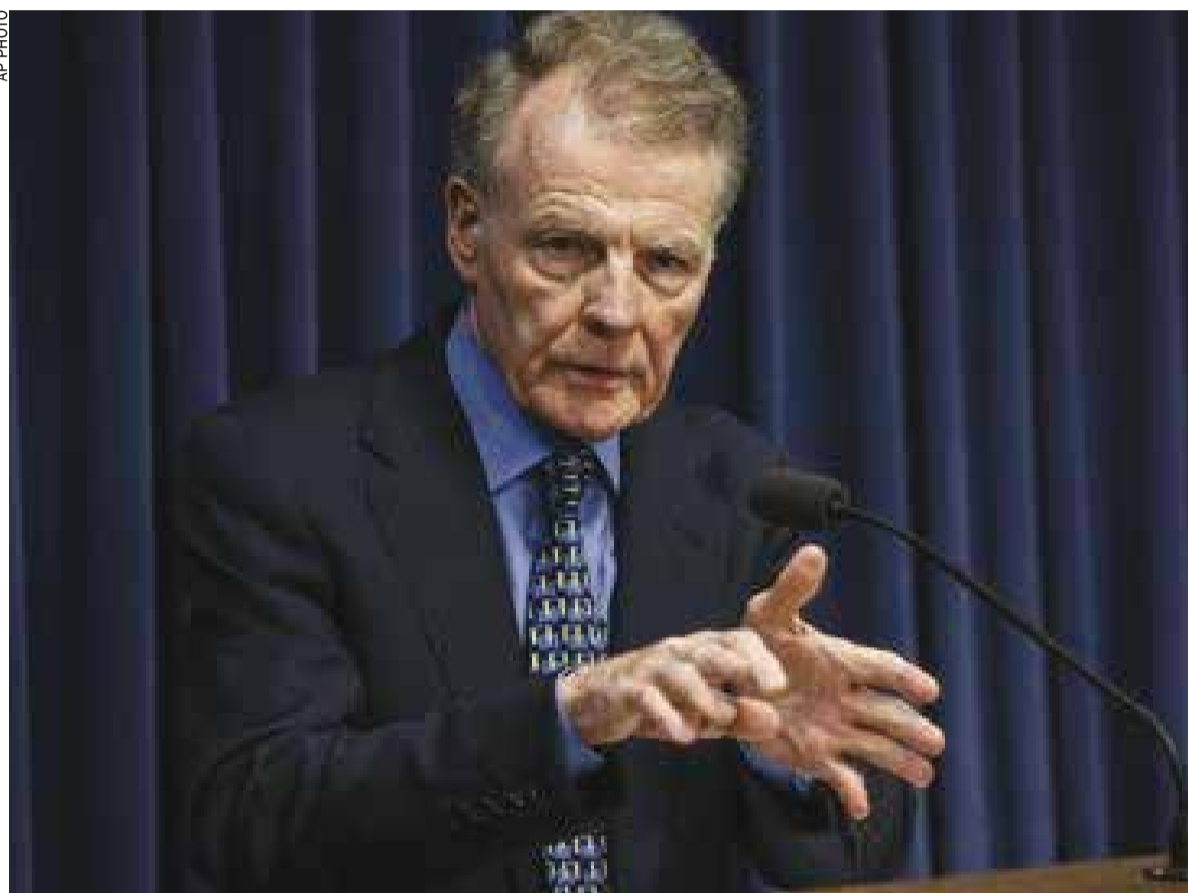
Powerful Illinois speaker recorded in probe involving Chinese developer

A Chicago newspaper reported that a lengthy federal court affidavit says the FBI secretly recorded Illinois' powerful House speaker in 2014 discussing a hotel development project and the possibility of its Chinese developer becoming a client of the speaker's private law firm.

The Chicago Sun-Times report on Michael Madigan, a formidable powerbroker in Illinois for decades, suggests a federal investigation may cast a much wider net than first thought after it led to an attempted extortion charge earlier this month against an influential Chicago alderman, Ed Burke.

Madigan, a 76-year-old Chicago Democrat, is the longest-serving current speaker of a Statehouse in the U.S. He has held the post almost continuously since 1983. The recent swearing in of Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker only boosted Madigan's influence by ending four years of divided government with Republican Bruce Rauner at the helm of state.

In a statement to the Sun-Times, a Madigan attorney, Heather Wier Vaught, denied any wrongdoing by the speaker, adding neither he nor his law firm is under investigation to their knowledge. In none of the alleged Madigan comments cited by the Sun-Times does the speaker say he'd exchange official action for new legal business. The newspaper doesn't cite the affidavit as saying Madigan was ever an investigative target or faced any prospect of being charged.



The 120-page court affidavit says an associate of the Chinese developer recorded Madigan (pictured) during an Aug. 18, 2014, meeting at Madigan's law office

The 120-page court affidavit obtained by the Sun-Times says an associate of the Chinese developer recorded Madigan during an Aug. 18, 2014, meeting at Madigan's downtown Chicago law office about the proposed hotel in the city's Chinatown neighborhood. It was never built, though developers did secure requisite zoning approval from the City Council.

The newspaper does not provide details about how it obtained the affidavit.

During the meeting, Madigan

allegedly said to the developer about his Madigan & Getzenanner law firm that "our interest would be that we represent buildings like that on the real estate taxes." A Madigan's law partner also explained, through the associate, who translated for the developer, that its fee would be 12.5 percent of any tax savings or a fixed annual fee of between USD3,000 to \$3,500, the newspaper reported.

The Sun-Times report says the 2014 meeting was arranged by Alderman Danny Solis, who-

se ward included the would-be hotel's location. The newspaper has previously reported Solis, a chairman of the City Council's zoning committee, was cooperating with a federal corruption investigation, including by secretly recording Burke. Yesterday [Macau time], Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office announced Solis has resigned as the head of the zoning committee. It offered no detailed explanation, but did include a brief statement from Emanuel saying Solis "recognized that he cannot effectively

preside over the matters before" the committee.

Charging documents in Burke's case focus on his private law firm and accusations he tried to squeeze the owner of a Burger King franchise for legal business in exchange for city construction permits. Burke, who has personified Chicago machine politics for decades, is charged with one count of attempted extortion and has denied any wrongdoing.

The Sun-Times says the developer's associate telephoned Alderman Solis three days after the sit-down meeting with Madigan to tell the alderman the developer had agreed to hire Madigan's law firm. But neither the associate nor the developer signed a retention deal with the law firm by the time the 2016 affidavit was composed, the Sun-Times reports.

The Madigan attorney added that, if it was true that some of the speaker's conversations were recorded, Madigan was unaware of it and "has no concern if they were." She added Madigan "has no recollection of ever suggesting that he would take official action for a private law firm client or potential client."

Solis has not been charged. And he has previously denied cooperating with federal investigators or secretly recording others on their behalf.

Burke has also denied any wrongdoing in his criminal case.

A spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago, Joseph Fitzpatrick, declined any comment. **AP**

China bans wife of jailed Taiwan activist from visiting him



In this file image taken from a video Taiwanese human rights activist Lee Ming-che sits during a court session at the Intermediate People's Court of Yueyang in Hunan

CHINA has banned the wife of a Taiwanese human rights activist jailed in China from visiting him for three months due to alleged improper behavior, a government spokesman said yesterday.

Lee Ching-yu made false statements and "interfered with prison operations" during and after a visit last month with her husband Lee Ming-che, the spokesman for the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office, Ma Xiaoguang, said at a regularly sche-

duled news conference.

Lee's husband, Lee Ming-che, is serving a five-year prison sentence at Chishan prison in the central province of Hunan after being convicted by a Chinese court in November 2017 on charges of subverting state power.

A college program director, Lee Ming-che was found guilty of subversion for holding online political lectures and helping the families of jailed dissidents in China, to which he had traveled often. He disappeared into the custody of the security services shortly after entering China in March 2017, when he'd planned to meet with a friend.

Lee's arrest was viewed as a sign that China's ruling Communist Party is seeking to extend its intolerance to criticism even outside its borders. The party allows no challenges to its authority and claims sovereignty over Taiwan, a freewheeling democracy with personal and political freedoms largely unknown on the mainland.

Beijing vows to use military force to gain control over Taiwan and has raised pressure on the island's government since the election of President Tsai Ing-wen, whose Democratic Progressive Party advocates for Taiwan's formal independence.

China and Taiwan split amid civil war in 1949. **AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Protesters mourn death of wartime sex slave who fought Tokyo

Kim Tong-Hyung, Seoul

A South Korean woman who was forced as a girl into a brothel and sexually enslaved by the Japanese military during World War II was mourned yesterday by hundreds of protesters who demanded reparations from Tokyo over wartime atrocities.

Kim Bok-dong had been a vocal leader at the rallies that have been held every Wednesday in Seoul for nearly 30 years. She died on Monday at a Seoul hospital where she had been receiving treatment for cancer. She was 92.

On a street near where the Japanese Embassy used to be, protesters gathered around a bronze statue of a girl representing Korean sexual slavery victims and held a moment of silence for Kim. Many of them held signboards with Kim's photos and words including, "We will never forget the life of Kim Bok-dong" and "Japanese government, apologize!"

Kim was one of the first victims to speak out and break decades of silence over Japan's wartime sexual slavery that experts say forced thousands of Asian women into front-line brothels. She traveled around the world testifying about her experience, including at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 and at a U.N. Human Rights Council panel in 2016. Of the 239 Korean women who have come forward as victims, only 23 are still alive.



Participants pay a silent tribute as they hold pictures of the deceased Kim Bok-dong, a former South Korean sex slave

"We do not have much time left to spend with them," said Lee Seong-rim, one of the protesters, who said it would be "miraculous" if the Japanese government ever fully acknowledges accountability over the sexual slavery of Korean women.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who visited an altar set up for Kim at a Seoul hospital on Tuesday, said in a statement that Kim devoted her life to "restoring human dignity" and that her campaigning gave South Koreans

a "braveness to face the truth."

According to Yoon Meehyang, who heads an activist group representing South Korean victims of Japan, Kim was dragged away from home at the age of 14 and forced to have sex with Japanese soldiers at military brothels in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore from 1940 to 1945. She came forward as a victim in 1992, a year after Kim Hak-sun became the first South Korean woman to identify herself as a former sex slave.

"I am a victim of the Japanese military's comfort women system and I stand in front of the Japanese embassy every Wednesday fighting for the restoration of our honor and dignity, but I also know too well the pain of women all around the world who are currently suffering from wartime sexual violence," Kim Bok-dong said in 2012 as she launched the "Butterfly Fund" for helping victims of wartime sexual abuse with another former Korean sex slave, Gil Won-ok.

A 1991-1993 Japanese government investigation concluded that many of the women were recruited against their will, leading to a landmark Japanese apology. The investigation found no written proof in official documents, however, and conservatives in Japan have cited that in arguing the women were not coerced. Many South Koreans say past apologies didn't go far enough.

Kim's death comes as relations between South Korea and Japan have sunk to their lowest point in years over what South Korea says is Japan's refusal to fully acknowledge the suffering of the so-called "comfort women" during WWII and of forced Korean laborers during its colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula from 1910 through 1945.

Moon's government in November announced plans to dissolve a foundation founded by Japan to compensate South Korean sexual slavery victims, which if carried out would effectively kill a controversial 2015 agreement between the countries to settle a decades-long impasse over the issue.

Many in South Korea believed that Seoul's previous conservative government settled for far too less in a deal where Tokyo agreed to fund the foundation with 1 billion yen (\$9 million). There's also criticism that Japan still hasn't acknowledged legal responsibility for atrocities during its colonial occupation of Korea. **AP**

THAILAND

Bangkok shuts hundreds of schools as toxic haze shrouds city

THAI officials shut hundreds of schools in Bangkok yesterday as some of the world's most toxic air hung over the city.

The metropolis of about 10 million people closed 437 government schools until tomorrow, its local authority said, prompting private institutions to follow suit. The air quality index, or AQI, was around 170 in the afternoon, the fourth-worst major urban reading globally, according to data from AirVisual, which tracks pollution levels.

Prime Minister Prayu-

th Chan-Ocha, leader of Thailand's military government, said he's seeking temporary closure of some factories during pollution spikes to tackle the problem. He added that he's ordering soldiers to inspect and report back on the worst polluters.

"In the short-term, shutting down factories may mean accepting some economic damage, but protecting public health must be the utmost priority," said Kakuko Nagatani-Yoshida, the UN Environment Programme's regional coordinator for chemicals, waste

and air quality.

Bangkok is grappling with a severe seasonal deterioration in air quality for the second year in a row. Officials have faulted exhaust fumes, industrial emissions, construction dust, rubbish burning and smoke from rural regions, as farmers burn crops to clear fields.

The city has resorted to desperate measures to try and clear the visible gray haze, including spraying water off skyscrapers and flying rainmaking sorties to wash away the pollution, but with little success.

"The state has come out with short-term measures but they don't fix the root causes," Sivalai Khantachavana, a researcher at Siam Commercial Bank, wrote in a report. Officials need to take steps such as limiting the number of polluting vehicles as well as restricting trash and crop burning, she said.

The smog spike is unwelcome for a city that relies on tourism for economic growth. Bangkok received more than 20 million international overnight visitors in 2017, the highest such figure in the



world, a Mastercard Inc. gauge shows.

The gray mist - including tiny, toxic PM2.5 particles that penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream - has descended on the capital at a sensitive time.

A general election is due

in March, more than four years after Prayuth seized power in a coup. He's signaled he may ally with a political party and try to return as premier. Junta opponents have said the thickening smog is an example of the administration's failings. **Bloomberg**

David Tweed, Iain Marlow & Dandan Li

BELT & ROAD

Souring deals in Asia put China's initiative dreams under pressure

CHINESE President Xi Jinping already had plenty of reasons to rethink his grand plan to build railways, ports and other infrastructure across the globe. Malaysia has given him 20 billion more.

The Malaysian government's move to cancel a China-financed high-speed rail link across the Malay Peninsula raised new questions about Xi's so-called Belt and Road Initiative. The cabinet decided the USD20 billion project was "beyond the government's financial capability," Economic Affairs Minister Mohamed Azmin Ali said Saturday, previewing a move that could be formally announced by next week.

The deal's collapse adds urgency to a debate already growing in Beijing about the potentially \$1 trillion program, the main engine of Xi's effort to convert China's economic might into global influence. In recent months, countries across Asia have suspended, scaled back or terminated projects amid concerns over corruption, influence-peddling and rising debt.

"We are seeing more backlash and challenges," said Pang Zhongying, an international relations professor at Macau University of Science and Technology. "China needs to draw conclusions from its experience and absorb the lessons from the all these incidents, because the external landscape is changing rapidly and its internal economic challenges looming."

VANITY PROJECTS

Xi will have a chance for a reset in April, when he is expected to convene leaders in Beijing for his second BRI summit. In September, the Chinese president promised African nations he wouldn't pursue "vanity projects," and last month the country's top regulator of state-owned enterprises published a report calling for greater "overseas social responsibility" in investments.

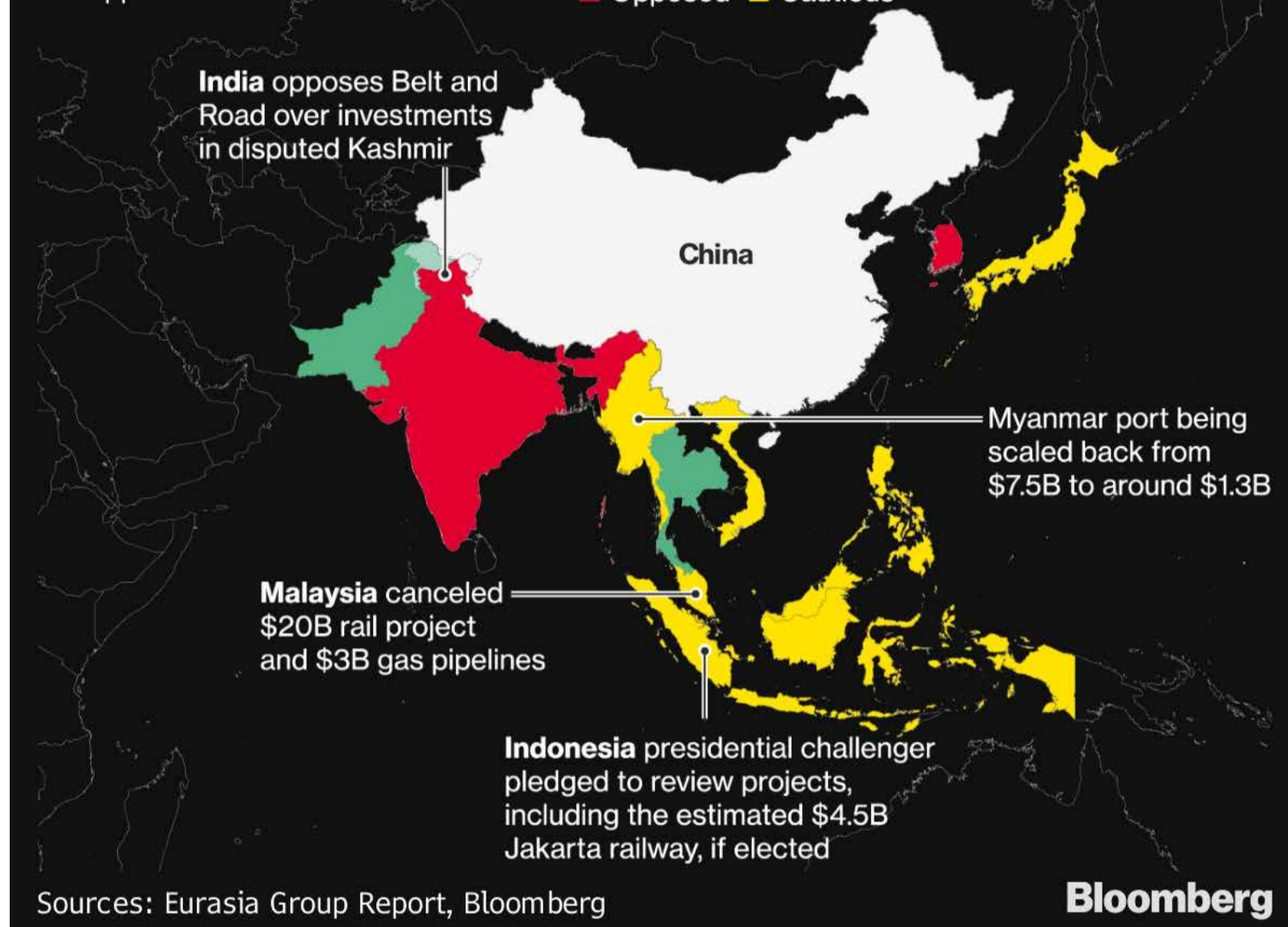
The growing wariness toward Chinese largess adds another complication to Xi's effort to manage an economic slowdown at home and a more confrontational U.S. abroad. The Trump administration has seized on the doubts to bolster its own regional clout, with Vice President Mike Pence telling an Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in November that U.S. wouldn't "offer a constricting belt or a one-way road."

Malaysia emerged as a particular headache last year, after a scandal over embezzlement allegations at the country's 1MDB wealth fund helped Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad oust his one-time protégé, Najib Razak. Mahathir put a series of deals under review, including the East Coast Rail

Belt and Road Backlash

Opposition to China's infrastructure push picks up across Asia

■ Supportive of Belt and Road Initiative ■ Opposed ■ Cautious



link, and warned against a "new version of colonialism" during a trip to Beijing.

Skepticism about Beijing's intentions was fed by a Wall Street Journal report earlier this month that Malaysia was investigating whether China offered to bail out 1MDB in exchange for infrastructure deals. Mahathir struck a conciliatory tone on Tuesday, saying the government's reason for canceling the rail was simply a lack of funds.

"Concern about its development model, Malaysia's high debt and allegations of impropriety around 1MDB all weighed on this decision," said Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow at Singapore Institute of International Affairs. Beijing was learning that its model of infrastructure-led economic growth might be difficult to export, Sun said.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

Chinese projects - big, disruptive and debt-dependent - inevitably get tangled in domestic

politics and fiscal considerations of the countries they're intended to help.

Nepal, for instance, canceled and then reinstated a \$2.5 billion dam project after a series of government changes. In Pakistan, the government declined to include a pre-existing \$14 billion dam project in the broader \$62 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, reportedly due to onerous financing terms.

Myanmar's minister of investment and foreign economic relations said the country would scale-down a \$7.5 billion plan for a deep-sea port built by CITIC Group in the town of Kyaukpyu. Thaug Tun told a news conference in the capital Naypyidaw the Myanmar didn't want to repeat the experience of other countries and build infrastructure without sufficient demand.

"We do not have any concerns about the debt trap," he said. "We are not going to borrow to the extent where we can't repay."

In a State of Southeast Asia survey released this week, nearly half of respondents suggested that Xi's Belt and Road "will bring Asean member states closer into China's orbit," a finding the ASEAN Studies Centre said "may have profound implications for Southeast Asia given the region's concern that China will become a revisionist power."

Moreover, places like Southeast Asia may have less appetite for large infrastructure projects than expected. The value of new large investment and construction projects dropped by half to \$19.2 billion in the six largest members of Asean last year, the lowest in four years, a Citigroup Inc. analysis found.

"China's overarching geostrategic imperatives suggests it will be incentivized to be more sensitive to Asean's pushback going forward," Citigroup analysts said. They anticipated that China would show more interest in co-financing projects with multilateral de-

velopment banks.

Xiao Gang, a former head of China's securities watchdog, said during a speech in Washington last week that projects built solely with Chinese funds weren't sustainable. Xiao said that China needed to ensure that more of its investments meet international standards, according to the South China Morning Post.

The criticism could also wind up strengthening the Belt and Road effort. Dane Chamorro, a senior partner at the Control Risks Group, said Beijing might decide it needs to make state-run companies meet higher standards to secure financing for overseas projects.

"There's been a huge reputational blow for China, but don't underestimate their ability to learn fast and change course," Chamorro said. "BRI 2.0 won't have anywhere near the same numbers of huge, high-profile projects as the first version and they'll be more more sustainable." **Bloomberg**

UK

May seeks Brexit deal changes, but EU stands firm

Jill Lawless, London

BRITISH Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday [Macau time] won a few weeks to salvage a Brexit deal but headed toward a clash with the European Union by promising to overhaul the divorce agreement she spent a year and a half negotiating with the bloc.

Trying to break the U.K.'s Brexit deadlock, May got Parliament's backing for a bid to rework an Irish border guarantee in the withdrawal deal — a provision May and the EU both approved, and which the bloc insists cannot be changed.

"It is now clear that there is a route that can secure a substantial and sustainable majority in this House for leaving the EU with a deal," she said, promising to "obtain legally binding changes to the withdrawal agreement" from the EU.

The EU immediately ruled that out, insisting in a statement that the current deal with the U.K. remained the "best and only way" to achieve an orderly Brexit. French President Emmanuel Macron said the agreement "is the best accord possible. It is not re-negotiable." Guy Verhofstadt, the top Brexit official at the European Parliament, said there was "no majority to reopen or dilute" the deal.

It was the latest disorienting chapter in a Brexit process that has grown increasingly surreal since Parliament rejected May's divorce deal two weeks ago, leaving Britain lurching toward a cliff-edge "no-deal" departure from the bloc on March 29.

A series of Commons votes on



PM Theresa May got Parliament's backing for a bid to rework an Irish border guarantee in the withdrawal deal

next steps submitted by both pro-Brexit and pro-EU legislators ended up sending starkly mixed signals, as lawmakers backed a call to renegotiate the deal, and also approved a rival motion ruling out a no-deal exit.

May had urged lawmakers to "send an emphatic message" to the EU, but their response is likely to leave the bloc even more confused about British aims.

May believes her agreement can still win Parliament's backing if it is changed to alleviate concerns about the Irish border measure, known as the backstop. The backstop would keep the U.K. in a customs union with the EU in order to remove the need for checks along the border between the U.K.'s Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland after Britain leaves the bloc.

The border is crucial to the divorce deal because it will be the only land frontier between the U.K. and the EU after Brexit, and because the free flow of people and goods underpins both

the local economy and Northern Ireland's peace process.

Opposition to the backstop by pro-Brexit lawmakers — who fear it will trap Britain in regulatory lockstep with the EU — helped sink May's deal on Jan. 15, when Parliament rejected it in a 432 to 202 vote.

Yesterday, Parliament backed, by 317 votes to 301 votes, a call for the border measure to be replaced by unspecified "alternative arrangements."

Leading Brexiteers praised the result. Former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said Parliament had sent a "clear, unambiguous" message that the backstop had to be removed.

"I hope that our friends in Brussels will listen and that they will make that change," he said.

But Green Party legislator Caroline Lucas, who wants a new referendum on Britain's EU membership accused May of chasing "heated-up fantasies that have already been rejected by the EU."

May acknowledged that the EU had "limited appetite" for changing the Brexit deal. But she vowed to go to Brussels and seek "significant and legally binding change" to the backstop. May's office said that might include an end date to ensure it is temporary or an exit clause for Britain. Both those ideas have been repeatedly rejected by the EU.

"There can be no change to the backstop," said Ireland's European Affairs Minister, Helen McEntee. "It was negotiated over 18 months with the U.K. and by the U.K."

Lawmakers voted on seven Brexit proposals, including the border change supported by May and several measures that sought to rule out a "no-deal" Brexit.

Much of the business world says a no-deal Brexit would cause economic chaos by eliminating existing EU trade agreements and imposing tariffs, customs checks and other barriers between the U.K. and the EU, its

main export market.

Most members of Parliament oppose leaving without a deal, but they rejected several proposals that tried to wrest control of the Brexit process from the government and give it to Parliament so lawmakers could stop Britain crashing out of the EU without a deal. Some opposition Labour Party members sided with the government, worried about being seen as obstructing Brexit.

Lawmakers approved, by a narrow 318 votes to 310 votes, a motion ruling out a "no-deal" Brexit but not saying how that should be achieved. The vote is not legally binding, but has political force as an expression of the will of Parliament.

Yesterday's ambiguous votes won't mark the end of Britain's turmoil over Brexit: There could be a rerun in two weeks

Yesterday's ambiguous votes won't mark the end of Britain's turmoil over Brexit: There could be a rerun in two weeks. May said if she has not struck a new Brexit deal by Feb. 13, Parliament would get to vote, again, on what should happen next.

Robert Hazell, professor of government and the constitution at University College London, said the EU was "pretty resolute in not being willing to reopen the negotiations unless the British government can come back with something more specific."

"Tonight's votes only kick the can down the road for another two weeks," he said. **AP**

Germany slashes growth outlook on Brexit, trade fears

THE clouds darkened over Europe's slowing economy as the German government slashed its growth forecast and said concerns about a chaotic Brexit and trade tensions were holding back the continent's powerhouse.

Germany's Economy Ministry said yesterday it was cutting its 2018 forecast to 1.0 percent from 1.8 percent in its previous outlook issued last fall.

Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said that while the German economy would grow for a 10th year

in a row, "the headwinds, primarily from the external environment, are increasing." He cited Brexit and trade conflicts as key issues.

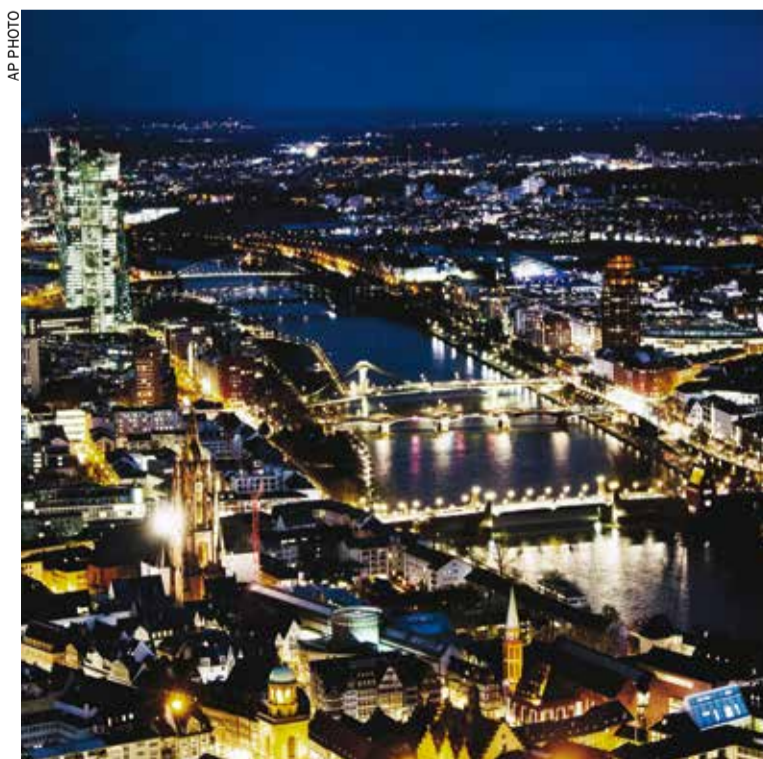
German businesses are unsettled about the possibility that Britain will leave the EU without agreeing on trade rules for a transition period. New import taxes imposed by the U.S. and China are also weighing on prospects for global trade. That hurts the outlook for Germany because the country is a major exporter.

Germany's economy grew 1.5 percent last year and 2.2 percent in 2017. Growth was also held back by automakers' troubles getting vehicles certified under new, tougher emissions tests.

Unemployment is low and wages are rising, thus far helping to keep the economic upswing going. But measures of industrial activity have sagged in recent weeks. Growth has been disappointing in Italy, where the central bank has indicated the country likely

slipped into a recession, defined as two straight quarters of declining output, at the end of last year.

European Central Bank head Mario Draghi said this month that risks for the 19 countries that use the euro currency have "moved to the downside," leading to speculation the bank could postpone raising interest rates from current record lows. The bank has said rates will stay at current lows at least "through the summer." **AP**



The river Main and its bridges are seen in Frankfurt, Germany

USA

Intel heads list North Korea, not border, as threat to US

DIRECTLY contradicting President Donald Trump, U.S. intelligence agencies told Congress yesterday that North Korea is unlikely to dismantle its nuclear arsenal, that the Islamic State group remains a threat and that the Iran nuclear deal is working. The chiefs made no mention of a crisis at the U.S.-Mexican border for which Trump has considered declaring a national emergency.

Their analysis stands in sharp contrast to Trump's almost singular focus on security gaps at the border as the biggest threat facing the United States.

Top security officials including FBI Director Christopher Wray, CIA Director Gina Haspel and Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats presented an update to the Senate intelligence committee on their annual assessment of global threats. They warned of an increasingly diverse range of security dangers around the globe, from North Korean nuclear weapons to Chi-



FBI Director Christopher Wray testifies before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington

nese cyberespionage to Russian campaigns to undermine Western democracies.

Coats said intelligence information does not support the idea that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will eliminate his nuclear weapons and the capaci-

ty for building more — a notion that is the basis of the U.S. negotiating strategy.

“We currently assess that North Korea will seek to retain its WMD [weapons of mass destruction] capabilities and is unlikely to completely give up

its nuclear weapons and production capability because its leaders ultimately view nuclear weapons as critical to regime survival,” Coats told the committee.

Coats did note that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has expressed support for ridding the Korean Peninsula of nuclear weapons and over the past year has not test-fired a nuclear-capable missile or conducted a nuclear test.

The “Worldwide Threat Assessment” report on which Coats based his testimony said U.S. intelligence continues to “observe activity inconsistent with” full nuclear disarmament by the North. “In addition, North Korea has for years underscored its commitment to nuclear arms, including through an order in 2018 to mass-produce weapons and an earlier law — and constitutional change — affirming the country’s nuclear status,” it said.

The report said Kim’s support at his June 2018 Singapore summit with Trump for “com-

plete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula” is a formulation linked to an end to American military deployments and exercises involving nuclear weapons.

Trump asserted after the Singapore summit that North Korea no longer poses a nuclear threat. However, Coats and other intelligence officials made clear they see it differently.

“The capabilities and threat that existed a year ago are still there,” said Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley, the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Plans for a follow-up Trump-Kim summit are in the works, but no agenda, venue or date has been announced.

More broadly, the intelligence report on which Coats and the heads of other intelligence agencies based their testimony predicted that security threats to the United States and its allies this year will expand and diversify, driven in part by China and Russia. It says Moscow and Beijing are more aligned than at any other point since the mid-1950s and their global influence is rising even as U.S. relations with traditional allies are in flux.

The report also said the Islamic State group “remains a terrorist and insurgent threat” inside Iraq, where the government faces “an increasingly disenchanting public.” AP

AD




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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

LANDSCAPE OF CHANGE - MACAU WATERCOLOUR PAINTINGS FROM THE MAM COLLECTION

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

UNTIL: February 10, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

SPARKLING GARDEN - GUAN HUI 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

Offbeat

CHRISTINA AGUILERA TO LAUNCH LAS VEGAS RESIDENCY IN MAY



Christina Aguilera is joining the growing number of musicians launching residencies in Las Vegas.

The singer announced this week that "Christina Aguilera: The Xperience" will open at Zappos Theater at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino on May 31.

Aguilera announced 16 performances. Tickets go on sale Saturday.

"I really want to make this as interactive as possible and also explore some new territory, maybe some original material," Aguilera told The Associated Press.

The Grammy winner released her debut album in 1999 and is known for hits such as "Genie in a Bottle," "Beautiful" and "Ain't No Other Man."

Aguilera released the album "Liberation," last year. Two of its songs — "Fall in Line" with Demi Lovato and "Like I Do" with GoldLink — earned nominations at the 2019 Grammys, airing Feb. 10 in Los Angeles.

The singer's 4-year-old daughter and 11-year-old son will join her in Vegas. The children are familiar with Aguilera's lifestyle already, occasionally joining her on stage during her recent tour.

"As long as we're all together and making the best of the moment, that's all I can ask for and truly, it is what our lifestyle is all about," she said.

Others who have made Vegas a temporary home include Britney Spears, Lady Gaga, Celine Dion, the Backstreet Boys and Mariah Carey.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Mistura Fina
16:05	Os Compadres
16:45	Quem Quer Ser Millionário
17:40	Moda Portugal Sr.2
18:15	A Ilha dos Escravos
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
21:55	Justiça de Chicago Sr.1
22:40	Todas as Palavras
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Macau Sítios: História Que Eu Ta Vai Contar - Igreja de São José Operário - Fim
00:20	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:05	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

31 JAN

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE!

ROOM 1

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

Director: Wong Cho Lam

Starring: Eric Tsang, Teresa Mo, Ivana Wong,

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)



MARY POPPINS RETURNS

ROOM 2

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

Director: Rob Marshall

Starring: Julie Andrews, Meryl Streep, Colin Firth

Language: English

Duration: 130min



MORE THAN BLUE

ROOM 3

2:30, 4:30pm

Director: Gavin Lin

Starring: Jasper Liu, Ivy Chen

Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)

Duration: 105min



A LIFETIME TREASURE

ROOM 3

7:30, 9:30 pm

Director: Andrew Lam Man Chung

Starring: Louis Cheung, Ivana Wong, Andrew Lam Man

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 90min

this day in history



1983 BRITISH DRIVERS ORDERED TO BELT UP

Drivers and front seat passengers must wear seatbelts under a new law which came into force at midnight.

The Department of Transport says 30,000 people a year are killed or seriously injured in road accidents. It hopes the compulsory wearing of front seatbelts will save 1,000 lives a year.

Evidence suggests six out of 10 drivers currently ignore advice to belt up in the front.

Police are being urged to take a softly softly approach to start with - but drivers could eventually be fined £50 for not wearing their seatbelts.

The row over making front seatbelts compulsory has been going on for 15 years and there have been 11 previous attempts to make it law.

Critics have accused the government of operating a nanny state and some drivers have complained their personal freedom is being infringed and they find seatbelts uncomfortable.

The government has been urging drivers to check the position of their seatbelts and make the necessary adjustments before today's law came into effect.

Junior Transport Minister Linda Chalker said: "Nobody likes being told to do something when they haven't seen for themselves the sense of it."

"You can remain in control of a vehicle when you don't get knocked out. If you are held in your seat by a belt you have more chance of stopping your vehicle careering into another vehicle containing other people."

She dismissed claims some people would suffer worse injuries through belting up, saying the evidence suggested only a tiny proportion of front seat passengers would suffer worse injuries if they were restrained by seat belts.

There will be some exceptions to the new law. Taxi drivers will be exempt because of the possible threat to their safety from dangerous passengers. Drivers of electric delivery vehicles such as milk floats will also be exempt.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Figures showed 90% of front-seat passengers began routinely wearing seat belts after it became compulsory.

In 1991 it became compulsory for adults to belt up in the back seat. Figures showed an increase from 10% to 40% of backseat passengers wearing seatbelts

Research in 1998 showed 160 lives could be saved a year through belting up in the back - this included 40 drivers or front-seat passengers killed by an unbelted passenger in the back.

A high-profile advertising campaign, launched in July 1998, showed a mother being killed in a car when she was hit from behind by her unbelted child.

Figures for October 2000 showed the wearing of rear seatbelts had increased to 59% of adults and 91% of children.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19
If you're asked to make a donation, buy something whose proceeds will benefit a nonprofit or contribute your time to a charity, you'll be only too happy to do it. Just be sure the person who sees your soft heart.

Taurus April 20-May 20
This is your day to be lucky. If you've been thinking about getting to know someone new, and you're feeling a bit on the sheepish side about starting up a conversation, think about that luck and use it to your advantage.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21
Time has a funny way of taking the pain out of agonizing events. So before you get too swept up in the sentimentality of the day, be sure you're remembering everything correctly - with your mind.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22
If you're not sure that you're authorized to discuss this classified piece of information, you may want to double check before you spill the beans - or you can just opt not to say anything at all.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22
There are ways of saying what's on your mind without offending anyone, and you're familiar with them all. Your feelings about a certain situation, probably involving a family member, must be expressed right now.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22
Being sure of what you say before you say it is a good thing - same goes for making sure you don't hurt anyone's feelings. You'd never mean to do that intentionally. Keep this in mind today.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22
Someone is angling to take advantage of your soft heart and compassion for others, so be super careful with your money right now. Before you sign anything - anything at all.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
Keep doing what you've been doing. The family members you've been trying to help will finally realize what you've been up to, and believe it or not, you may even hear a thank you or two.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Authority figures will be especially helpful to you now - but it won't seem that way at first. In fact, you probably won't know what they're talking about when they first bring up the issue.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Don't expect your schedule to stick to any sort of itinerary. Your daily routine will keep you quite busy, no doubt about that, but you'll also be dealing with pleasant and unexpected last-minute situations.

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

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20
Stick with the winners right now - you know who they are. The folks you've been associating with for months are only too happy to back you up, no matter what you need or when you need it.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle.

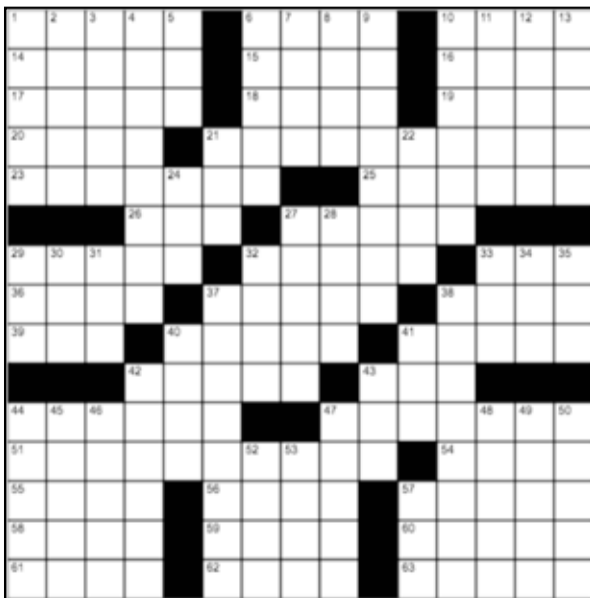
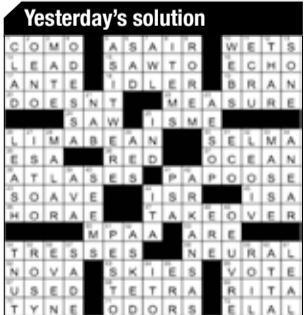
WEATHER

Weather forecast table for China and World cities, including min/max temperatures and conditions.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Small tree; 6- Comply; 10- Guitarist Atkins; 14- Reeves of 'The Matrix'; 15- Spelunking site; 16- Listen to; 17- Overhangs; 18- Barbershop request; 19- Comedian Johnson; 20- Balanced; 21- Next largest scoop after tea; 23- Climbing shoot; 25- 'You ___ worry'; 26- Land in la mer; 27- Use a baton, say; 29- People and places, e.g.; 32- Major artery; 33- Conductor ___ Pekka Salonen; 36- Floe; 37- Up ___ (trapped); 38- Ale, e.g.; 39- Prince Valiant's son; 40- Moan; 41- Upright; 42- Pizazz; 43- Travel on snow; 44- Good brandy; 47- Dons clothes; 51- Surgery drug; 54- Milhouse's pal; 55- State bird of Hawaii; 56- Prolific author, briefly; 57- ___ Domingo; 58- Put a lid ___; 59- ___ boy!; 60- Bury; 61- Refusals; 62- Stadium din; 63- Poke fun at;

DOWN: 1- Shooting sport; 2- Hoist; 3- Lustrous black; 4- Incessant; 5- Student's conveyance; 6- In base 8; 7- Cutting remark; 8- Heinous; 9- Inhabitant of Aden; 10- Oratory; 11- Biblical king; 12- Stationery brand; 13- Lott of Mississippi; 21- No-win situation; 22- Antitoxins; 24- 'Treasure Island' monogram; 27- Synagogue scroll; 28- Brownish songbird; 29- Jazz org.; 30- ___ the ramparts we watched...; 31- Pot used to contain the ashes of a dead person; 32- Looking down from; 33- A really big shoe?; 34- Blink of an eye; 35- Gallery offering; 37- Archie Bunker's is in the Smithsonian; 38- Capital of Queensland Australia; 40- Capricorn's animal; 41- Barely make, with 'out'; 42- Beginnings; 43- Mexican Mrs.; 44- Ecclesiastical rule; 45- Bridge bid, briefly; 46- Bottled spirit; 47- Kuwaiti currency; 48- Vixen's master; 49- Some Art Deco works; 50- Mall unit; 52- Within (prefix); 53- Cubs slugger Sammy; 57- Make a lap;



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Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
IACM 28 387 333
Tourism 28 333 000
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AD

Real estate advertisement for JML Property, listing various properties for sale in Taipa and Macau, including Nova City, Ocean Garden, Sea View Condo, and Taipa, Nam Long.

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FOOTBALL

Man City's title hopes dented, Solskjaer's winning run ends

Steve Douglas

NEWCASTLE 2, MAN CITY 1

RAFA Benitez never won the Premier League in his six years with Liverpool but he has done his old team a huge favor in its bid to end a 29-year wait for English soccer's biggest prize.

Newcastle, the injury-hit and relegation-threatened team now managed by Benitez, pulled off one of the surprise results of the season by coming from behind to beat Manchester City 2-1 yesterday [Macau time].

City squandered a lead for the third time this season — this one at St. James' Park arrived

after just 24 seconds through Sergio Aguero — and the champions have lost their sheen of impregnability as they bid to retain the league title for the first time.

They stayed four points behind Liverpool, which can extend its lead to seven by beating Leicester at Anfield on Wednesday. There are just 14 matches for both teams after that.

"When you are behind you have to win games, and we couldn't do that," said Guardiola, who remarked before the game that one slip-up would leave City's title hopes "almost over."

It was a disappointing night for Manchester all around.

Manchester United's interim manager, Ole Gunnar Solsk-

jaer, was looking to become the first coach to win his first seven matches in charge of a Premier League team and continue his perfect start to managerial life at his former club.

That's one record he won't be holding after Burnley — a team fighting relegation like Newcastle — surprisingly drew 2-2 at Old Trafford, with United scoring goals in the 87th minute through Paul Pogba's penalty and the second minute of injury time through Victor Lindelof to salvage a draw.

Still, the way United kept fighting and scored late goals will be viewed as a positive by United's hierarchy as it weighs up whether to give Solskjaer the job on a full-time basis.

"The comeback was brilliant," said Solskjaer, who was seeking a record-extending ninth straight win in all competitions to open his interim tenure. "The players have been asked about how they would react if they went 1-0 or 2-0 down, so I felt the comeback was fantastic."

United fell two points behind fifth-place Arsenal, which beat Cardiff 2-1, and fourth-place Chelsea, which plays away to Bournemouth on Wednesday, in the race for the four Champions League qualification spots.

SALA TRIBUTES

It was Cardiff's first game since the disappearance of its new striker, Emiliano Sala, and it was an emotional occasion for the

Welsh club at Emirates Stadium as tributes were paid to the Argentine player.

Cardiff manager Neil Warnock and his staff wore daffodils — a national emblem for Wales — and the yellow flowers were handed out to both Cardiff and Arsenal fans before the game. The away fans held up a large banner reading: "We never saw you play and never saw you score, but Emiliano our beautiful Bluebird we will love you forever more."

There was a minute of silent reflection for Sala and David Ibbotson, the pilot of the small passenger plane that was carrying the Argentine striker to Cardiff from his former French team, Nantes, when it disappeared over the English Channel last week.

Arsenal strikers Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Alexandre Lacazette both scored in the second half, with Nathaniel Mendez-Laing pulling a goal back in injury time for Cardiff.

ARNAUTOVIC INJURED

Marko Arnautovic left the stadium on crutches and wearing a protective boot after an unhappy return to the West Ham team.

The Austria forward missed West Ham's last two games after he was tempted to accept a lucrative offer from a Chinese club. On Friday, he said he was staying at West Ham and signed a new contract the following day, saying he couldn't wait to get back playing for the London club.

He was recalled three days later but played only 77 minutes in West Ham's 3-0 loss at Wolverhampton Wanderers before going off with a right leg injury. Mexico striker Raul Jimenez scored two of Wolves' goals as they climbed to seventh place.

FULHAM HOPES BOOSTED

Fulham boosted hopes of avoiding relegation by coming from two goals down after 17 minutes to beat Brighton 4-2. Aleksandar Mitrovic scored two of the goals for next-to-last Fulham, which is five points from safety.

Huddersfield looks doomed, though, after a 1-0 home to loss to Everton that marked a disappointing start to his tenure for new coach Jan Siewert. **AP**

RUGBY

Top officials discuss new global competition

RUGBY's world governing body says "positive and productive" meetings have taken place between officials from the sport's top nations regarding the introduction of a new global competition.

British newspaper The Times has reported that

a World Rugby Nations Championship would see the sport's 12 leading countries play each other once throughout the year ahead of a playoff series that leads to the top northern and southern hemisphere sides meeting in a final.

The newspaper repor-

ted that the aim of the new league was to provide greater context to the international game, which has test matches in June and November along with the northern hemisphere's Six Nations tournament in February-March and the southern hemisphere's Rugby

Championship in August to October.

World Rugby says chief executives from the top unions and tournaments attended a meeting in Los Angeles earlier this week about a global competition "that will deliver greater value and certainty to all unions by

building on the strong foundations of existing competitions and invigorating the July and November windows."

The governing body added yesterday [Macau time] that it has been "tasked to continue exploring the viability of potential global competi-

tion formats" that would "enhance the international game for unions, players and fans."

The Times reported that World Rugby is looking to start the new competition in 2022 and that it would not be staged in Rugby World Cup years. **AP**

opinion

Made In Macao

Jenny Lao-Phillips



THE DON'TS FOR CNY

For many people, especially ladies, every weekend is shoe shopping time. But in the last week of the lunar year, there are even more reasons to buy shoes. First, it is customary to buy new outfits for the new year, so it is not surprising that even non-shopaholics will buy new shoes at this time. Second, most shoe shops offer high discounts right before Chinese New Year, so it is a good time to get a good bargain on shoes. That brings us to the third reason which is the cause for this discount: Traditionally, shoe shops were closed throughout the Chinese New Year period, sometimes for up to two weeks, so owners needed to make up for the two weeks of no business during CNY, and competition led to higher discounts right before the CNY.

So why did shoe shops use to close for such a long period of time during CNY? The answer is simple, because buying shoes is one of the big don'ts during the CNY period. But that was in the past. Nowadays, only a few small, traditional shoe shops still close for over a week. All the international brands stay open and still gets tons of customers during CNY, thanks to non-Cantonese speaking tourists.

Technically, buying shoes is bad luck only for the Cantonese speaking world, mostly in Macao and Hong Kong, because it has to do with the Cantonese pronunciation of shoes (鞋 = haai), which sounds like a sigh.

The new year has to be celebrated energetically with new hopes and resolutions. It is believed that if one sighs at the beginning of the new year bad luck follows, and he or she will be demotivated and unenergetic for the whole year. So for us Cantonese speakers, not only are we not allowed to sigh during New Year, we should definitely not "buy sigh (shoes)." But for those who are not superstitious, the best time to buy shoes is actually during the week of CNY, because whatever was not sold out before CNY will be even cheaper.

Aside from buying shoes, there are a few other things we need to be aware of which may bring bad luck upon the whole year. One of my favorite don'ts is not to sweep or dust one's abode. The superstition is that if we sweep and throw out garbage during the CNY period, we may be kicking out the god of fortune. Although I cannot understand how dust and dirt in my apartment has anything to do with the Chinese god of fortune, I strongly abide by this rule. It is the one time in a year I can tell my husband that I "cannot" clean the apartment with good reason, instead of "I do not want to because I am lazy."

Another forbidden act during the first days of the CNY is washing one's hair. Like buying shoes, this superstition also has to do with Cantonese pronunciation. Hair (髮 faat) and prosperity (發 faat) are pronounced exactly the same, so by washing one's hair, it is feared that one's prosperity for the year will also be washed away.

We are not big on cutting anything during CNY either. Hair cutting is obviously a don't, but even cutting one's nails may cause our prosperity to be cut away. Another saying is not just about the cutting, but that the use of sharp objects during CNY will result in the misfortune of injury that year.

It is hard to understand why we need to keep our apartment, hair, and nails dirty and overgrown in the beginning of the year to have prosperity. But whether you chose to follow these CNY don'ts or not, I wish you a prosperous year of the Pig!

THE BUZZ US URGES CHINA TO RELEASE JAILED HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER

The Trump administration is calling on China to immediately release a jailed human rights lawyer who was convicted of subverting state power. The State Department says in a statement it is deeply concerned by the 4½-year prison sentence handed down to Wang Quanzhang. It says he had been held for 3½ years in pre-trial detention, often incommunicado and deprived of a lawyer of his choice.

The department says it was troubled by his treatment and is urging Chinese authorities to reunite him with his family. Wang was arrested in a 2015 crackdown on legal advocates. The statement comes as relations between the U.S. and China grow rockier over trade and criminal charges brought against a leading Chinese tech company.

ORGANIZED CRIME

Kate del Castillo glad to not testify in 'El Chapo' trial

Lynn Elber, Pasadena (Calif.)

Kate del Castillo said she's relieved she wasn't called to testify in the New York trial of Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman.

But she doesn't regret arranging a 2015 meeting between Guzman and Sean Penn, although the fallout kept her from visiting and working in Mexico for more than three years, the actress said.

She filmed the upcoming Telemundo sequel to her 2011 telenovela "La Reina del Sur" outside of the country, with a double shooting her scenes in Mexico, she told a TV critics' meeting yesterday [Macao time].

The actress said she was finally able to return last Christmas but had an unsettling experience upon arrival, when use of her Mexican passport triggered an alert. Del Castillo, an American citizen, said she could have presented her U.S. passport for entry but insisted on using the document from her native country.

"It shocked me," she said, when she was detained for about 20 minutes as officials scurried around. She recalled thinking, "Oh my God, they're going to arrest me right now or I'm going to be sent back to the United States."



Kate del Castillo speaks in Telemundo's "La Reina Del Sur" panel

Allowed to leave, she relished visiting her parents.

"I slept right between them. [...] I needed that. I'm a 46-year-old woman but I felt like I was 7," she said.

In 2017, del Castillo filed a human rights complaint alleging she was unable to travel to Mexico to work because her communications with Guzman were under investigation.

In December, she announced she was suing former Mexican officials for USD60 million in "moral and material damages" because of what she calls "political persecution" against her.

Del Castillo accused prosecutors in the administration of former President Enrique Pena Nieto of leaking information that suggested

she might be linked to drug trafficking or sentimentally connected to Guzman, something she said cost her acting work.

Mexican authorities investigated del Castillo following the meeting she arranged between the then-fugitive Guzman and Penn, who wrote a magazine article based on it. Del Castillo introduced them because she was considering doing a documentary or film about Guzman's life, something she said last year isn't in her plans.

Guzman is on trial on drug and murder conspiracy charges that his lawyers say are fabricated.

Del Castillo said work has prevented her from following the proceedings closely and she is "happy" not to be involved. **AP**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Firdia Lisnawati



Face off. A Balinese youth participates in the Hindu ritual of "Grebeg" at the Tegallalang village in Bali, Indonesia. Participants paint their bodies with colorful paint and parade around their village to ward off evil spirits.

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	50-70 Moderate	☹️
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Moderate	☹️
Ambient	35-55 Moderate	☹️

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

DJIBOUTI More than 130 migrants were thought to be missing after two boats capsized off the tiny East African nation of Djibouti, the U.N. migration agency said.



GERMANY Authorities arrested three Iraqi refugees yesterday on allegations they were planning an Islamic extremist bombing attack, and searched properties in three states in connection with their investigation.

FRANCE A top European human rights official thinks France is cracking down too hard on yellow vest protesters, joining other critics decrying the use of high-velocity rubber projectiles against unruly demonstrators and a draft law that could limit people's right to protest.

BRITAIN The European Union's Brexit negotiator says the EU stands united in defense of its divorce deal with Britain, after Prime Minister Theresa won a parliamentary mandate to reopen the agreement. *More on p14*



VENEZUELA Opposition leader Juan Guaido is looking to ratchet up pressure on President Nicolas Maduro with walkouts across Venezuela yesterday, just a day after the embattled socialist administration barred Guaido from leaving the country.

BRAZIL A torrent of muddy mining waste unleashed by a dam breach that killed at least 84 people in southeastern Brazil is now heading down a small river with high concentrations of iron oxide, threatening to contaminate a much larger river.