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The Court of First Instance acquitted Malaysian Paul Phua, along with 14 others of conducting illegal sports betting during World Cup 2014

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A TASTE OF HISTORY WITH IMPERIAL CUISINE
Chefs Ivan Li and Liu Guo Zhu showcase the essence of Qing dynasty court cuisine at Golden Flower in Wynn Macau

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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA'S economy is showing the first signs of recovery after months of slowdown, as stock and commodity rallies lift confidence. But increasing optimism aside, the clouds haven't cleared for the country's economy.

More on p10



CHINA has unveiled draft regulations on gene editing and other potentially risky biomedical technologies after a Chinese scientist's claim of helping to create gene-edited babies roiled the global science community. More on p11

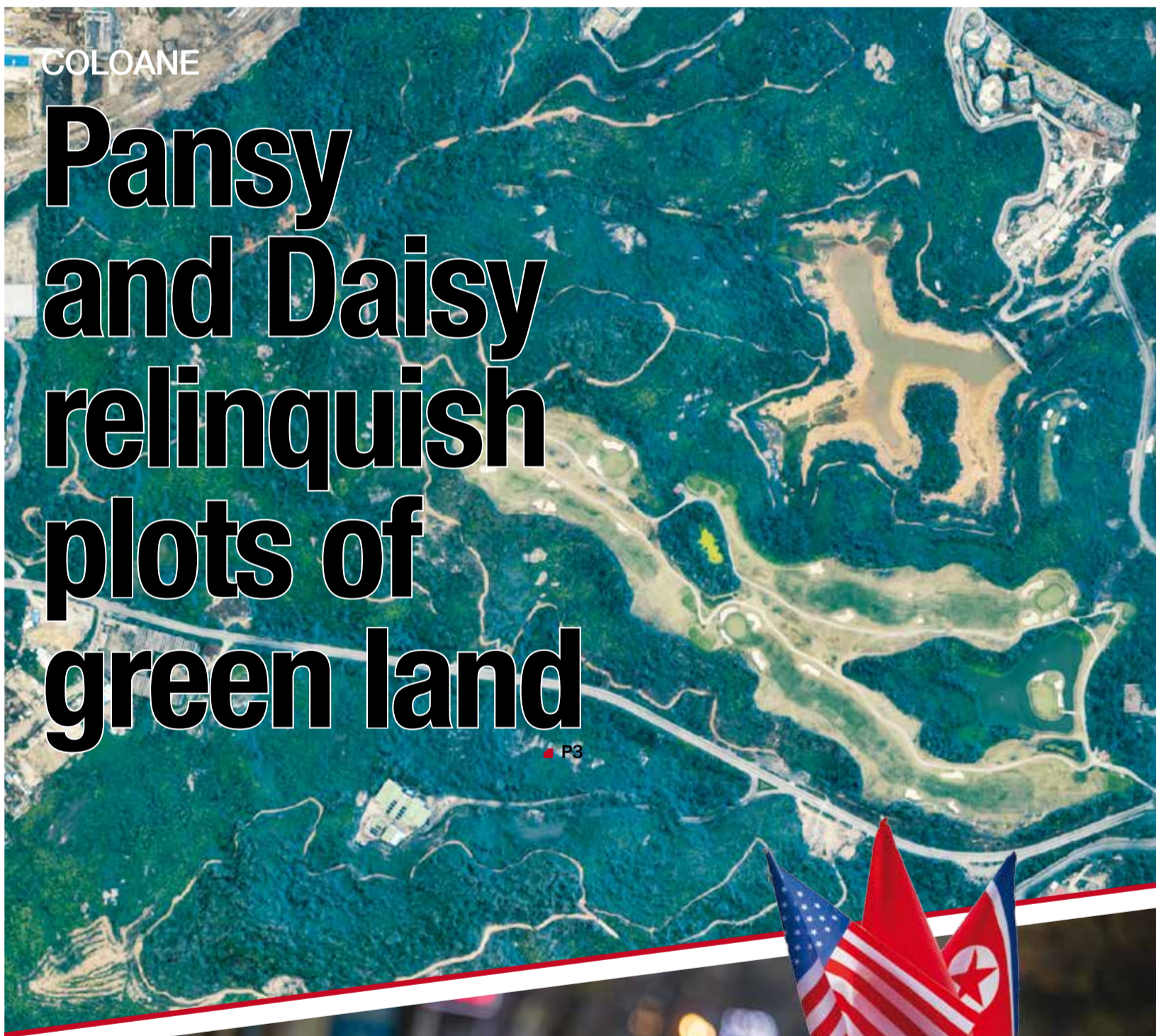


AUSTRALIA The most senior Catholic cleric ever convicted of child sex abuse was sent to prison yesterday and will wait two weeks to learn his sentence for molesting two choirboys in a Melbourne cathedral two decades ago. Victorian state County Court revoked Cardinal George Pell's bail. The judge will deliver his sentence on March 13.



INDONESIA A court in Bali has sentenced an Australian man and his Indonesian girlfriend to five years and four months in prison each for possessing cocaine. Brandon Johnson, from Brisbane, and his girlfriend, Remi Purwanti, were arrested with 11.6 grams of cocaine separated into 13 plastic bags.

More on backpage



COLOANE

Pansy and Daisy relinquish plots of green land

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BEING THERE

Kim and Trump unlikely peace makers

■ P12,13 HANOI SUMMIT

One injured in industrial accident

A 37-year-old non-local worker was injured in an industrial accident while working at a construction site located in Cotai. The victim was run over by an excavator that reversed while the man was passing by the back of the vehicle. He was then sent to the Conde S. Januário Hospital. When other workers managed to get him out from under the vehicle, he was in a conscious state. On Tuesday, a 47-year-old local construction worker was also severely injured when he was hit by a falling wire rope while working at the University of Macau.

3 arrested, 4 on the run for theft

The Judiciary Police (PJ) has arrested three mainland men for their involvement in a 'bus theft' group. The three suspects were arrested on Tuesday. They have allegedly been involved in five recent theft cases at bus stops, which reported a total loss of MOP102,000. The cases were reported between November 2018 and January of this year. Besides these three men, another four mainland men, who are involved in these crimes are on the run. The thieves committed the crimes at busy bus stops at the Border Gate and San Ma Lou.

New leader appointed to Pension Fund

Ermelinda Maria da Conceição Xavier has been appointed to serve as Chairman of the Administration Council of the Pension Fund. The appointment is for a period of two years starting from March 1, 2019. Since 1990, Xavier has been a technician at the Pension Fund. In 1996, she started serving as a coordinator for different departments. She has a degree in business management from Simon Fraser University in Canada. The current Chairman of the department is Jeong Kim I, whose appointment will come to an end next month.

Science, technology funding yet to yield results

Julie Zhu

THE Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT) has not received any research or development products resulting from the subsidized projects that were approved for funding in 2017. Yesterday, at a press conference on the work report of the FDCT 2018 subsidies approval, the Chairman of the Administration Council, Ma Chi Ngai, disclosed the information when he was questioned by the Times.

According to Ma, the FDCT received a total of 89 applications for the FDCT Corporate Innovation R&D (Research and Development) Funding Program.

The FDCT approved 19 of the applications, granting a total of MOP24.44 million to the applicants. According to Ma's

explanation, the funds of 2017 were processed and approved in 2018.

Successful subsidy recipients are given a maximum of two years to create a research and development product.

The corporate program was first launched in 2017, providing a maximum of MOP2 million to locally registered companies for them to yield such products.

Moreover, in 2018, the total number of applications to FDCT funds was 639, with an overall requested sum of more than MOP610 million.

For popular science research projects last year, the institution accepted 308 projects, while some 196 masters and PhD graduates benefited from the institute's financing.

Also in 2018, the "smart city" subsidy program considered 44

applicants, of which 13 were accepted and a total of MOP4.15 million was approved.

In July 2018, the Ministry of Science and Technology of China approved the establishment of two state key laboratories.

Cheang Kun Wai, a member of the Administrative Committee of the FDCT, said that the institution hopes that in three to five years, Macau can have another two state key laboratories.

In 2017, the FDCT visited Portugal and signed agreements with the Foundation for Science and Technology of Portugal (FCT) in order to conduct joint programs to finance scientific studies.

According to Cheang, a cooperation agreement has already been signed between the two parties and they plan to launch joint projects soon.

Following the press conference, an agreement signing ceremony was held between the FDCT and WeBank, China's first digital bank founded in 2014. Together, the two parties will explore products within the realm of blockchain technology.

The cooperation is expected to offer more convenient identity verification techniques to local residents when they are in need of identity verification documents.

Regarding matters of data protection, Ma pledged that no data will leave Macau.

A representative of WeBank also claimed that the bank's technology will not involve Macau's data, and that, to the contrary, WeBank's technology for identity verification can indeed advance on the legal management of Macau's data.

Paul Phua, 14 others absolved in sports betting trial

THE Court of First Instance (TJB) has acquitted Malaysian online poker and gambling giant Paul Phua Wei Seng of conducting illegal sports betting during the FIFA World Cup, a charge made against him nearly five years ago.

The TJB ruled on Tuesday that Phua, along with another 14 defendants, were not guilty of con-

ducting illegal operations at Wynn Macau rooms between June 7 and 21 of 2014.

None of the defendants were present at any of the trial sessions held in the city.

During the February 12 trial – which lasted for just two days – several Judiciary Police (PJ) inspectors were witnesses.

Some HKD1.16 billion in

bets were placed through the group during the two-week period – allegedly the largest illegal sportsbook that was conducted in the region during that period.

Presiding judge Lei Wai Seng mentioned that the PJ complied with the law during its surveillance. However, the authorities had failed to directly link neither Phua nor his co-

defendants to placing bets on World Cup matches.

He also said that the Public Prosecutors Office and the PJ had failed to acquire sufficient evidence to prove that Phua was the owner of the apprehended computers that contained betting information.

"The court can't make any connection [...] There is a lack of connecting ele-

ments," the judge said, as cited in reports.

The evidence for a sports-betting operations included information stored on several laptops, betting slips, and cellphones, all of which were seized during the June 19, 2014 raids.

Phua, a recognized poker whale, is said to be the founder and principal owner of the Asian online betting giant IBCBet. LV

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Ka Ho Reservoir in Coloane

Ho family firm to relinquish land free of charge

Daniel Beitler

A Macau company headed by influential businesswoman Pansy Ho is to concede five parcels of land to the government for its Ká Hó Reservoir extension project in eastern Coloane. According to a dispatch published yesterday in the government's Official Gazette, the five land plots will be returned to the public domain of the state "free of charge."

Sociedade de Turismo e Desenvolvimento Insular S.A. (STDI) controlled a land concession in the area near Estrada da Barragem de Ká Hó in Coloane amounting to 767,373 square meters, or approximately 0.76 square kilometers.

According to the dispatch, signed by Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo Arrais do Rosário, STDI has withdrawn five parcels of land marked with the letters A2, A3, A4, B1 and C, with respective areas of 1,274 square meters, 1,240 square meters, 747 square meters, 335 square meters and 36 square meters.

The total land area relinquished to the public domain is 3,632 square meters, leaving STDI with a remaining 763,741 square meters. Excluding the under-construction land reclamation zones, the remaining area of the STDI concession accounts for about 2.5 percent of Macau's land jurisdiction.

The dispatch says that the return of the land was necessary in order to proceed with the expansion project for the Ká Hó Reservoir, but that the firm will not receive compensation for relinquishing the five plots. It also states that the arrangement enters into force immediately.

The expansion and improvement work at the Ká Hó Reservoir was outlined in the Macau SAR's Five-Year Development Plan, along with similar improvements to the facility at Seac Pai Van. The projects aim to increase the joint capacity of the reservoirs from about 300,000 cubic meters to 1.05 million.

STDI uses the large concession area to house the Grand Coloane Resort hotel, a golf course and other sporting facilities.

Pansy Ho, CEO of Shun

Tak and co-chairperson of MGM China, is STDI's Executive Committee President, while her sister Daisy Ho, CFO of Shun Tak and chairman of SJM Holdings, holds the position of vice president.

An alliance announced last month between Pansy Ho and the Henry Fok Foundation gives the two shareholders a controlling stake in the Sociedade de Jogos de Macau (SJM), appearing to edge out familial rivals with smaller shares.

Indicative of a takeover at Macau's oldest gaming concession, the agreement explicitly mentioned a commitment to use their combined majority voting power to determine the company's future board of directors.

Most analysts believe that property prices will continue to see growth, buoyed by medium-term growth prospects in the SAR of about 5 percent per annum.

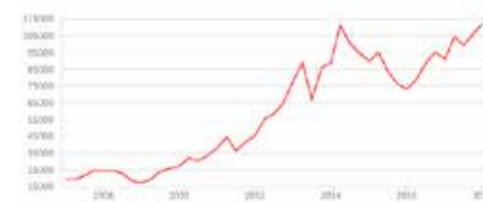
However, real estate firm Jones Lang LaSalle previously said that the local property market would face pressure this year due to slowing growth and various regulatory measures in the region's property market.

JLL predicts that capital values of high-end residential properties will drop 5 to 10 percent, while rental values will remain stable. Capital values of mass-to-medium residential and retail properties could also drop by 5 percent.

The firm called on the government to relax the mortgage lending ratios for residents to accommodate homebuyers.

This week the International Monetary Fund said that although property prices were mostly flat in the second half of the year, the new government measures would ultimately reduce market risks. **DB/LV**

Residential property prices up 7.5 percent last year



THE average price of residential properties in Macau increased by 7.5 percent last year, the Statistics and Census Bureau announced, even as recent policies aimed at taming erratic market movements were introduced.

The significant rise, which brings the average price of residential units to MOP108,427, returns the property market back to its 2014 peak prior to the gaming slump.

Analyzed by location, the average price of residential units in the Macau peninsula (MOP101,914) and Coloane (MOP135,527) rose by 11.1 percent and 5.7 percent respectively, whereas those in Taipa (MOP112,391) dropped on average by 2.4 percent.

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GASTRONOMY

Top Beijing chefs bring rich tradition of



Irene Sam

WHEN Chef Ivan Li of Family Li Imperial Cuisine visits Chef Liu Guo Zhu of Golden Flower in Wynn Macau, he feels right at home, as both of them are from Beijing. While Liu is a master of Chinese gastronomy who previously worked in Beijing Hotel and prepared culinary wonders for numerous dignitaries around the world including Deng Xiaoping, Henry Kissinger, and Queen Elizabeth II, Li is one of the most sought-after Chinese chefs in the country.

The recipient of Asia's 50 Best Restaurants' Lifetime Achievement Award represents the second generation of the Family Li Imperial Cuisine restaurant and fittingly works with Chef Liu, who oversees Golden Flower, a renowned gastronomic gem in Macau that preserves the rich traditions of Tan cuisine.

Tan cuisine originated in the household of Tan Zongjun. Originally from Canton, he was an official of the late Qing dynasty with an immense passion for gastronomy. A Cantonese who had taken residence in Beijing, he brought culinary elements of the South to the North, blending the best of both worlds and creating an exquisite cuisine that pleases the palette delicately with its subtle flavors.

Family Li cuisine is a combination of Imperial Court cuisine and Beijing traditional flavors, with ingredients and cooking methods based on Empress Dowager Cixi's imperial menu. Served in small portions, each dish must be patiently cooked over a gentle fire. Li's great grandfather, Li Shunqing, was in charge of the Qing Dynasty's imperial kitchens in the Forbidden City, and passed down imperial recipes to his offspring. While strictly following his ancestral training, Li blends contemporary culinary ideas to carry on traditions as well.

Together, Li and Liu showcase the essence of Qing dynasty court cuisine at Golden Flower. For discerning diners, it is an opportunity to explore dishes from these two particular Chinese gastronomic heavyweights at the same time. Highlights on the menu are foie gras, pea sprouts in chicken soup and Braised Oma abalone in original sauce extracted from fish lips and fish maw.

Macau Daily Times (MDT) - What fascinates you the most about imperial cuisine?

Ivan Li (IL) - Tan cuisine is extremely well-known. It is regarded as the epitome of good

taste. Back in history, Chiang Kai-shek wanted to invite a Tan chef to cook in Nanjing, but the invitation was rejected. There was a saying, "You must enter the Tan household to enjoy Tan cuisine."

Liu Guo Zhu (LGZ) - No matter how high an official you are, it does not matter. You might still get rejected, because it is imperial cuisine.

MDT - What are the similarities and differences between Tan cuisine and Li cuisine?

IL - There are a lot of similarities and differences between Li cuisine and Tan cuisine, but one element in common is that we choose the best ingredients. Our aim is to bring purity and richness to the palate at the same time. For example, in Tan cuisine, the broth is very clear and when combined together with bird nest, one can appreciate its natural taste.

MDT - How do you select ingredients today to match the taste profile of the Qing dynasty?

LGZ - In modern times, we can get ingredients from all over the world. We only choose the best. Tradition has its pros and cons, but if it can traverse history and

still remain relevant, we must preserve it. However, [dealing] with modern ingredients while being innovative on the basis of tradition is a question that masters like ourselves often discuss among [ourselves]. It is a dilemma. My answer is to use modern ingredients while keeping traditional cooking methods and taste profiles.

Some taste profiles must not be modified as we hope to pass them down to future generations. If they change, we will have no tradition. One can change taste profiles, but with other dishes, not with traditional cuisine.

MDT - What is the essence of Chinese cuisine?

IL - Patience is essential for both Li cuisine and Tan cuisine. Chinese have the word 鮮 "xian." It first appeared in oracle bone script. The Chinese understanding of "xian" is not a concept that individuals from other countries can easily understand.

For the Japanese, the word "umami" came about only after the invention of MSG, monosodium glutamate. What is MSG? Amino acids. This can only be appreciated as an enhancer. The English dictionary only included the word "umami" in 1979, but the Chinese word "xian" has been

Stay true to each detail and execute each step diligently. That's the Chinese philosophy when it comes to aesthetics, not just gastronomy.

IVAN LI



Chef Liu Guo Zhu

imperial cuisine

with us for thousands of years.

We Chinese are patient with our protein. If we make chicken broth, we take our time. Both Li and Tan cuisine has an aspiration to preserve slow-cooking methods. The Chinese have an idiom, 淡泊致深 “danbo-zhishen”, meaning that we must take elements lightly in order to appreciate deeper meaning and wisdom. Flavors must be subtle for one to enjoy the nuances of “xian” in amino acids.

LGZ - 咸中有味淡中鲜 “Complexities in savor, freshness in subtleties.”

IL - Yes, it is a feeling. We do not have the same gastronomic aspiration as foreigners and this level of sophistication started with Kangxi Emperor.

MDT - Is there an element in the menu that represents Northern cuisine very well?

IL - On today's menu, Liu's Steamed pork dumpling with crab roe is an example of [a] Northern delight. It is very juicy, but the juice does not come from pork skin.

LGZ - We don't cultivate the juices using pork skin. We use fresh pork meat and blend it with chicken broth. That way, pork meat absorbs the broth, and then we add crab roe and steam. The result is high-quality

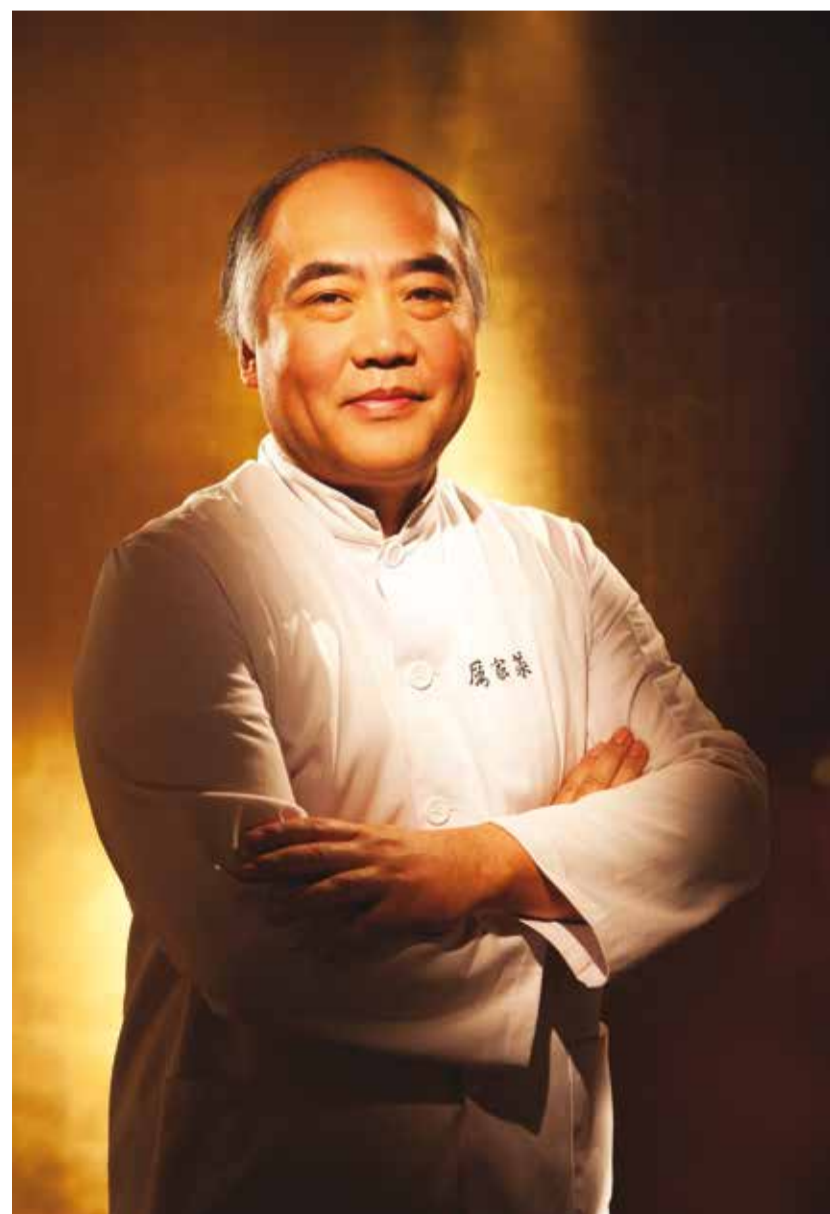
juice coming out from the thin dough of the dumpling, succulent and “xian.”

MDT - What is the future of Chinese cuisine?

LGZ - Using the simplest methods to cook while preserving the nutrients of ingredients. It is to [...] appreciate original flavors. We must not complicate things. The process of preparation might be simple, but if one takes each step seriously, it might become complicated. An example: we need at least six to seven hours to make a broth. After that, we still need to reduce it. We only use it following the reduction process. Steps are not numerous, but attention to detail is important.

IL - Not to invent extra steps but staying true to each detail and executing each step diligently. That's the Chinese philosophy when it comes to aesthetics, not just gastronomy.

LGZ - In the past we had a lot of carvings as decorations for Chinese dishes, but that's from another era. We don't really see that anymore and I would consider that progress. Even Western cuisines are now influenced by Japanese and Chinese presentations. There are no secrets in the world of gastronomy. We all learn from each other.



Chef Ivan Li



A game booth set up for Melco employees during Responsible Gaming Awareness Month

RESPONSIBLE GAMING

MELCO named Socially Responsible Operator of the Year

Asian gaming company Melco has recently been named Socially Responsible Operator of the Year (Land Based) at the 12th International Gaming Awards (IGA). Shortlisted among a line of global integrated resorts and gaming operators, Melco was nominated as category winner by an esteemed judging panel of worldwide gaming industry experts. The award recognizes the company's proactive and innovative corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, particularly for its efforts promoting and enhancing processes and safeguards towards responsible gaming.

The company's chairman and CEO Mr. Lawrence Ho commented, “Responsible gaming has been and continues to be a top priority for Melco. We are thrilled to receive this award from IGA as a testament to the efforts we dedicate to this highly significant focus area as part of our Corporate Social Responsibility; and wish to take this opportunity to thank the organizers and our employees who made this achievement possible.”

A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

Melco's specially devised three-pronged system utilizes a comprehensive framework developed to target promotion and implementation of responsible gaming; and includes process and technology, community engagement and employee education. With use of the most advanced technology, Melco is Asia's first gaming and integrated resort operator to deploy facial recognition systems at all its gaming area entrances to assist self-exclusion, as well as consented third-party exclusion. Melco continues to promote and raise awareness of responsible gaming both internally and externally through its best-in-class and pre-emptive strategies to benefit a healthier, and more sustainable society.

FAR-REACHING INITIATIVES

Last summer, Melco sponsored, produced and aired a responsible gaming public service video on local primetime television to promote the importance of family support to help one stay in control. For the community, the company hosts regular responsible gaming knowledge workshops for women free of charge, and sessions are coupled with classes involving lifestyle activities such as flower-arranging, gift-wrapping and dessert-making to attract a broader audience. For employees, Melco hosts a wide range of activities and training courses as well as large-scale competitions to help colleagues develop a deeper understanding of responsible gaming.

INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

Just a few months ago, Melco hosted Responsible Gaming Awareness Month, organizing game booths across its various properties City of Dreams, Studio City, Altira Macau, Mocha Club and its Macau corporate office to enhance responsible gaming awareness for employees. The series of events attracted close to a third of Melco's entire workforce, with more than 5,800 participants. In the last 10 years, over 65,000 employees have joined Melco's responsible gaming awareness activities, dedicating more than 1,300 hours to the cause.

In addition to the Socially Responsible Operator of the Year (Land Based) accolade attained at IGA, Melco is also the first and only integrated resort operator to attain CSR Gold Award twice at Business Awards of Macau, in the years 2013 and 2017. “For us, [responsible gaming] goes beyond compliance, and forms an integral part of our strategy and how we train our employees”, said Melco Executive Vice President, Chief Officer of Human Resources and Corporate Social Responsibility Ms. Akiko Takahashi. “We look forward to doing more to support the sustainable development of the gaming industry as well as our local community.”



Ms. Akiko Takahashi receives IGA's Socially Responsible Operator of the Year accolade



Melco hosts responsible gaming workshops for women free of charge and are coupled with classes involving lifestyle activities such as dessert-making to attract broader audiences

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CASINO mogul Steve Wynn's former company was fined a record USD20 million by Nevada gambling regulators on Tuesday for failing to investigate claims of sexual misconduct made against him before he resigned a year ago.

The penalty against Wynn Resorts Ltd. ends an investigation that began after The Wall Street Journal reported that several women said the company founder harassed or assaulted them.

Wynn Resorts will keep its gambling license under the Nevada Gaming Commission settlement approved by four commissioners who set the fine.

"It's not about one man," said Commissioner Philip Pro, a former federal court judge. "It's about a failure of a corporate culture to effectively govern itself as it should."

Pro called the commission "guardians of the integrity of gambling," with a responsibility to make sure license holders "don't do things that bring disrepute on the industry" in Nevada.

The previous highest fine in state history was \$5.5 million in 2014 against the sports betting and mobile gambling system company now known as CG Technology. Chairman Tony Alamo said \$20 million "makes it clear to all licensees that this culture cannot be tolerated," while also letting the

GAMING | NEVADA

Wynn Resorts fined USD20m over sex allegations



Matt Maddox (front left), CEO of Wynn Resorts, speaks before Nevada Gaming Commission Chairman Tony Alamo (center)

publicly traded company "heal." Steve Wynn himself was not part of the settlement, and neither Wynn nor any personal representatives attended the commission hearing. Wynn has denied all allegations against him. One of his attorneys, Colby Williams, said by telephone that he was aware of the fine but declined to comment.

The commission has frozen Wynn's Nevada casino license. It has not taken other disciplinary action against him or the other board members and executives named in the settlement. None are still with the company. Wynn resigned as board chairman and company CEO in February 2018 following reports that

he harassed or assaulted several women. He also sold his company shares. "The company's initial response during this period was driven by Mr. Wynn's adamant denial of all allegations," said a statement from Wynn Resorts spokesman Michael Weaver. It acknowledged a "short-sighted focus on initially

defending Mr. Wynn, rather than reassuring employees of the company's commitment to a safe and respectful work environment."

The company points to wholesale leadership changes, including hiring a new chief executive, requiring new sexual harassment prevention training for all employees and adding a women's leadership council to promote equality in the workplace.

"In sum, these 25,000 employees, led by CEO Matt Maddox and a reshaped board of directors, are the company that stands before the commission today, and not Steve Wynn," the company said in its January 25 written settlement.

A company settlement also is pending in Massachusetts, where gambling regulators launched a similar investigation of whether Wynn Resorts should be allowed to operate a more than \$2 billion Boston-area casino resort slated to open in June. Wynn's name was removed the project now called Encore Boston Harbor. **DB/AP**

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The Courage of Creativity


An insight into Macau SAR Government's plan on the development of cultural industries
An understanding of AFA (Art for All Society), a non-profit art organisation established in 2007 to enhance the development of contemporary art in Macau and an introduction to the Macau artists currently exploring the realms of painting, installation, photography, sculpture and multimedia.
What are the keys to building a healthy market for the development of cultural industries and how can local businesses help?

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HONG KONG

The winners and losers in the 2019 budget

HONG Kong's Financial Secretary Paul Chan unveiled a modest budget that included cash for tech, a boost for healthcare and a hefty handout to clean up the city's public toilets, as he juggled a much smaller pile of cash than he had last year.

The economy is forecast to slow this year as the city grapples with weaker property values and the fallout from U.S.-China trade tensions, leading to a more modest range of budget handouts than last year.

The economy will grow by 2 percent to 3 percent, Chan said, after the 3 percent pace in 2018. For the final three months of 2018, GDP expanded 1.3 percent from a year earlier. Output contracted when compared with the third quarter.

"As a small and totally open economy, Hong Kong has been susceptible to economic headwinds over the past few months, as evidenced by notable slackening growth and diminishing confidence of enterprises in the future outlook," Chan said.

In his speech announcing the new budget, Chan emphasized caution on the outlook for the global economy and Hong Kong, while looking ahead to "enormous business opportunities in close proximity" to Hong Kong

as a key cog in the Greater Bay Area development spearheaded by China.

The Financial Secretary announced the available fiscal surplus this year was HKD58.7 billion (USD7.48 billion) — a figure well down on last year's HKD149 billion, thanks to a slowdown in the economy in the wake of the U.S.-China trade war and a cooling property market which dented land sale revenues. Still, the figure was higher than Chan's original estimate of HKD46.6 billion made last year.

These are some of the groups that will benefit from the number crunching — and those who have been left out in the cold:

TECH STARTUPS

Chan earmarked HKD5.5 billion for a further phase of development at Cyberport, a hub for startups and a center for Hong Kong's efforts to rebrand itself as a tech leader, as it plays catchup to Shenzhen across the border. He also announced HKD16 billion for refurbishment of R&D facilities at universities as the government attempts to nurture local talent.

HEALTHCARE

Hong Kong's public health care system has become so stretched that some patients are forced to

wait months to see specialists. Chan offered an additional 10.9 percent of funding to the Hospital Authority, taking the total to HKD80.6 billion in 2019/20. In addition he announced HKD5 billion to update medical equipment and boost training, and a HKD10 billion healthcare stabilization fund to prepare for additional expenditure which may be incurred in case of unexpected circumstances.

STUDENTS

Chan announced a one-off grant of HKD2,500 for each student to support learning. In addition, secondary school students sitting public exams in 2020 will have their exam fees paid.

THE ELDERLY

Vouchers worth HKD1,000 were earmarked for the elderly, as well as an extra allowance for recipients of social security. The government earned criticism last month for changes to elderly welfare policies that they later backtracked on.

PUBLIC TOILET USERS

Perhaps taking a cue from Chinese President Xi Jinping's campaign to improve sanitary conditions on the mainland, Chan said the government would spend HKD600 million in the coming

five years on upgrading Hong Kong's 240 public toilets, which are often slammed for being smelly, dirty and clogged. Critics, however, say cash must also be put into maintenance and cleaning, and civil education, to stop them from quickly deteriorating again.

TOURISTS AND JOGGERS

The Financial Secretary set aside HKD6 billion to develop new harborfront spaces — popular with tourists and locals alike — extending the length of promenades running along Victoria Harbour from around 20 kilometers to 34 kilometers within the next decade.

NATURE LOVERS

After tens of thousands of trees in the city fell during last year's Typhoon Mangkhut, sparking a major cleanup operation, Chan announced a HKD200 million fund to promote urban forestry and tree protection, with one aim being to encourage more students to pursue studies in arboriculture.

ELECTRIC CAR OWNERS

Good news for electric car owners looking to juice up their vehicles, Hong Kong will spend HKD120 million on expanding electric car charging stations. But there won't be tax incentives

for drivers to shell out for EVs this year.

SALARIED WORKERS

Salaries tax and tax under personal assessment to be reduced by 75 percent up to a maximum HKD20,000 for the fiscal year 2018-2019. Last year's cut was the same but the cap was set at HKD30,000. The slightly less generous reduction — putting the rebate back to the 2016/17 level — affects 1.9 million residents.

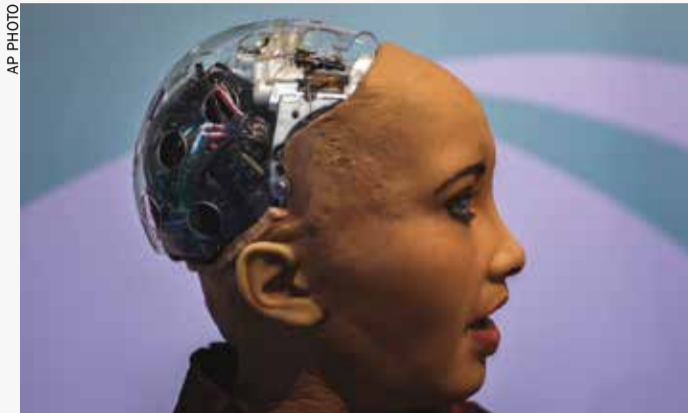
HOMEBUYERS

Chan reiterated that the government has no plans to ease existing property-cooling measures. He also poured cold water on expectations that the loan-to-value ratio on mortgages could be eased to help first-time homebuyers. Home prices in the city have fallen about 9 percent from their August peak.

BANK BALANCE

The Financial Secretary underlined the government's support for a proposal to build housing for up to 700,000 people on yet-to-be-built artificial islands. That idea has been slammed on environmental grounds, and on the basis that it will be a waste of the government's reserves, which currently stand at HKD1.15 trillion. **MDT/Bloomberg**

opinion

CHINA IS CATCHING UP TO THE US
ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH

A lifelike robot powered by artificial intelligence, speaks with visitors at the Mobile World Congress wireless show in Barcelona on Tuesday

Thomas H. Davenport, Babson College

Researchers, companies and countries around the world are racing to explore – and exploit – the possibilities of artificial intelligence technology. China is working on an extremely aggressive multi-billion-dollar plan for government investment into AI research and applications.

The U.S. government has been slower to act.

The Obama administration issued a report on AI near the end of its term. Since then, little has happened – until a Feb. 11 executive order from President Donald Trump encouraging the country to do more with AI.

The executive order has several parts, including directing federal agencies to invest in AI and train workers “in AI-relevant skills,” making federal data and computing resources available to AI researchers and telling the National Institute of Standards and Technology to create standards for AI systems that are reliable and work well together.

Government spending

China is doing far more than talking about AI. In 2017, the country’s national government announced it wanted to make the country and its industries world leaders in AI technologies by 2030. The government’s latest venture capital fund is expected to invest more than USD30 billion in AI and related technologies within state-owned firms, and that fund joins even larger state-funded VC funds.

One Chinese state alone has said it will devote \$5 billion to developing AI technologies and businesses. The city of Beijing has committed \$2 billion to developing an AI-focused industrial park. A major port, Tianjin, plans to invest \$16 billion in its local AI industry.

These government programs will support ambitious major projects, startups and academic research in AI. The national effort also includes using AI in China’s defense and intelligence industries; the country’s leaders are not reluctant to use AI for social and political control.

U.S. investment plans, mostly in the defense industry, are dwarfed by the Chinese effort. DARPA, the Defense Department’s research arm, has sponsored AI research and competitions for many years, and has a \$2 billion fund called “AI Next” to help develop the next wave of AI technologies in universities and companies. It’s not yet clear how much real progress its efforts have made.

Private sector contributions

In China, the private sector is much more closely tied to government plans than in the U.S. The Chinese government has asked four large AI-oriented firms in China – Baidu, Tencent, Alibaba and iFlytek – to develop AI hardware and software systems to handle autonomous driving and language processing, so other companies could build on those skills.

China may have also surpassed the American historic advantage in venture capital investments. In 2018, U.S. AI startups received \$9.3 billion in venture funding – a record amount, but the number of deals was down from 2017.

Beyond investment money

A recent analysis of LinkedIn data suggests that the U.S. has far more AI engineers than China does. But China is closing the gap rapidly, with a variety of education and training programs beginning as early as elementary school. The Trump administration’s restrictions on immigration are encouraging some of the world’s best AI researchers to stay home, rather than come to the U.S.

Another element in long-term AI success is how particular regions build mutually reinforcing communities of companies, university ecosystems and government agencies. Silicon Valley is the world leader in this regard, and China doesn’t have anything to match it yet.

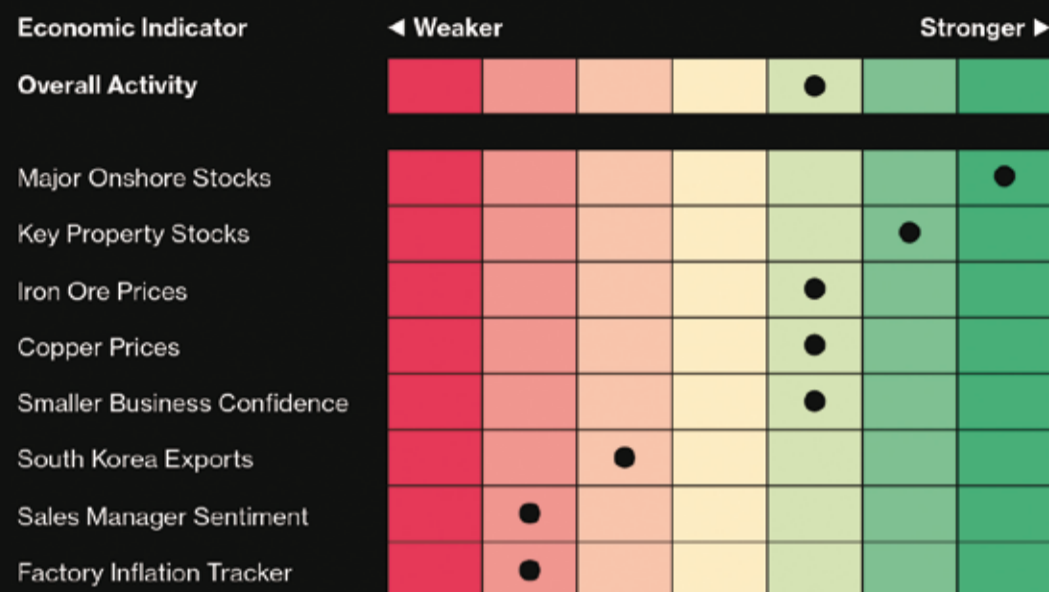
A final key element in AI progress is data: The more data a country’s companies have, the better able they are to develop capable AI systems. Chinese online firms have massive amounts of consumer data on which to train machine learning algorithms. Because of its very large number of inhabitants, the population’s heavy use of digital services and its lax regulatory environment, China clearly beats the U.S. on data. **The Conversation via AP**

ECONOMY

First signs of pickup seen,
earliest gauges show

Brightening Up

Earliest China indicators show recovery after months of deterioration



Source: Bloomberg Economics

Note: Bloomberg Economics generates the overall activity reading by aggregating the three-month weighted averages of the monthly changes of eight indicators, which are based on business surveys or market prices.

Bloomberg

CHINA’S economy is showing the first signs of recovery after months of slowdown, as stock and commodity rallies lift confidence.

That’s the message from a Bloomberg Economics gauge aggregating the earliest available indicators on market sentiment and business conditions. Key stocks and commodities led gains, and smaller firms became more confident. At the same time, gauges of inflation, trade and sales-manager sentiment signal that it may still be too early to say China has bottomed out.

Markets were boosted by the People’s Bank of China’s monetary easing and the breathing room offered by the now extended trade truce with the U.S., according to David Qu, an economist at Bloomberg Economics in Hong Kong. This week, Chinese shares surged and the offshore yuan strengthened after President Trump announced he was pushing back a deadline on additional tariffs on Chinese goods.

Those developments help dispel some of the gloom that’s been cast over the global economy in recent months. World output may already have bottomed out, according to Goldman Sachs Group Inc. Chief Economist Jan Hatzius. In turn, that could strengthen the China outlook.

The China stock rally “may

strengthen consumer confidence, but it is still too early to say it would benefit economic activity significantly,” Qu said.

Stimulus measures including channeling credit to private firms and boosting infrastructure construction have started to work, with new loans hitting a record and exports perking up in January. Monetary policy will remain supportive and fiscal measures – such as tax cuts, spending increases and special bond sales – will even strengthen this year, Qu said.

Increasing optimism aside, the clouds haven’t cleared for China’s economy

Targeted policy support by the authorities to better meet financing needs of small and medium-sized companies is taking effect, according to Shen Lan, the Beijing-based economist in charge of the survey of smaller firms at Standard Chartered Plc. The bank’s gauge edged up to 55.1 this month from 54.9 in January.

“We expect continued poli-

cy measures to improve monetary policy transmission and lower funding costs for China’s real economy,” she wrote in a note released with the data.

Increasing optimism aside, the clouds haven’t cleared for China’s economy. An index based on a survey of sales managers remained at the lowest level on record, suggesting “the rate of economic growth continues to fall,” The London-based World Economics Ltd. wrote in a note.

A factory inflation tracker remained lackluster, and global demand is still a drag on the world’s biggest exporting nation. Outbound shipments from South Korea – a major supplier of components to Chinese assemblers of electronics such as iPhones – fell 11.7 percent from a year earlier in the first 20 days of the month. The gauge, which is usually volatile, has shown a downshift in the world electronics trade in recent months.

The first official economic data for February, the purchasing managers indexes for the manufacturing and non-manufacturing sectors, will be released this morning in Beijing. The manufacturing indicator will probably have edged down further, and the gauge of services and construction will also fall, according to economists polled as yesterday. **Bloomberg**

Yanan Wang & Fu Ting, Beijing

China drafts rules on biotech after gene-editing scandal

CHINA has unveiled draft regulations on gene editing and other potentially risky biomedical technologies after a Chinese scientist's claim of helping to create gene-edited babies roiled the global science community.

Under the proposed measures released Tuesday, technology involving gene editing, gene transfer and gene regulation would be categorized as "high-risk" and managed by the health department of the State Council, China's Cabinet.

The measures follow assertions in November from scientist He Jiankui that he altered the DNA of twin girls born that month using a powerful new tool. The technology, called CRISPR-cas9, makes it possible to operate on DNA to supply a needed gene or disable one that's causing problems.

The revelation that it may have been used to conceive children elicited widespread outcry over the procedure's ethical implications. Researchers said He's actions exposed the twins to unknown health risks, possibly including a higher susceptibility to viral illnesses.

Gene editing for reproductive purposes is effectively banned in the U.S. and most of Europe. In China, ministerial guidelines

prohibit research on embryos that "violates ethical or moral principles." Ethical guidelines published in 2003 say that gene editing is permitted for research, but that the experimental embryo cannot be nurtured for more than 14 days.

He Jiankui said he edited the babies' genes at conception in hopes of making them resistant to the AIDS virus, as their father is HIV positive. His lab was in Shenzhen, China's southern tech hub, and he recruited study participants through an AIDS advocacy group. He said his goal was to rewrite DNA before birth to make some children immune to HIV during their lifetime.

China immediately halted He's experiments after his announcement.

He also pursued international experts at Stanford and Rice universities, where he had done graduate studies work, and elsewhere, seeking advice before and during the experiment.

In an interview with The Associated Press the month before his project was publicized, the



AP PHOTO

34-year-old scientist said he believed gene editing of human embryos resulting in live births was legal in China because the country has no law specifically forbidding it.

China's official Xinhua News Agency reported last month that He had breached national guidelines and would be punished for any legal violations. Xinhua did not say which laws He might have violated, but noted that he had fabricated an ethical review.

Along with the birth of the twins, another embryo yet to be born reportedly resulted from He's experiment. All three will remain under medical observation with regular visits supervised by government health departments, Xinhua said.

Late last year, China's education ministry sent notices to universities requiring self-checks on research related to gene editing. In an email, the ministry told the AP that it called on educational

institutions to strengthen management of scientific research ethics and inspect research involving gene-editing technology.

Kehkooi Kee, a Tsinghua University researcher who conducts gene editing on stem cells, said the volume of paperwork he must now fill out has increased as a result of being subject to more checks.

"He [Jiankui] is an irresponsible scientist," Kee said in late December after the Education Ministry issued its notification. "I don't even want to call him a scientist — he is an irresponsible man."

While He's work was widely condemned by his fellow scientists in China, it has had repercussions for others studying gene editing. It has also become more difficult to get gene-editing research approved, Kee said.

"The industry will develop at a slower pace," Kee said. "The government will be more cautious with research funds, and private organizations, such as charities and startups, will be less likely to invest." AP

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Unspoken link to Kim: The woman accused of assassinating his half brother

AS North Korea's Kim Jong Un is feted in Hanoi, a Vietnamese woman accused of assassinating his half brother at Kuala Lumpur International Airport just over two years ago, faces a potential death penalty in Malaysia.

Doan Thi Huong, 30, is accused of delivering the potent VX nerve agent that killed Kim Jong Nam in February 2017.

US officials have said the orders came from Pyongyang.

"There is zero per cent chance that Kim Jong Un didn't order the assassination of his brother himself," said Dr Sue Mi Terry, a senior fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington and a former CIA analyst.

Huong and her co-defendant say they thought they were taking part in a prank television show. Whether that is true, they were not the ones with the motivation to kill Kim Jong Nam, Dr Terry said. "They were just used."

The charges that Huong faces carry an automatic death penalty, though the new Malaysian government has suggested that it will move to abolish capital punishment.

The contrast between the warm welcome given to North Korea's leader in Vietnam and the harsh future that lies ahead of Huong shows how complicated diplomacy with North Korea can be - and how repercussions for North Korean abuses and exploitation may fall by the wayside as the world tries to realign its relationship with Kim Jong Un for the better.



Doan Thi Huong escorted by police as she leaves after a court hearing at Shah Alam High Court, Malaysia, back in March 2018

In Hanoi, Huong is little mentioned, but the North Korean leader is everywhere.

Even Huong's parents have said that they welcome the summit, telling Japanese reporters that they had hopes that Kim could "save their daughter."

Professor Andrew Yeo of Washington's Catholic University, who tracks North Korean human rights issues, said it was ironic that the Vietnamese government was "willing to roll out the red carpet for Kim", even though his regime embroiled a Vietnamese national in an international murder plot.

Although Vietnam is often taken as a model for North Korea, Prof Yeo said, the country also has its human rights problems. "The 'Vietnamese model' also signals to Kim that economic deve-

lopment and investment are possible without necessarily improving its human rights record," he added.

Huong - thought to have been recruited by North Korean agents while working at a bar in the Vietnamese capital - is awaiting the conclusion of her trial in Malaysia. She flew to Kuala Lumpur a week before Kim Jong Nam's slaying on Feb 13, 2017.

The eldest son of late North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, the 45-year-old had once been groomed to take over the country himself. He had been living in Macau since 2003 and his sometimes critical stance, as well as his bloodline, made him a potential threat to his brother.

Huong and Siti are the only two people on trial for Kim Jong Nam's killing.

Both have pleaded not guil-

ty; their trial has been extended due to the large number of witnesses and is likely to drag on until at least mid-2019.

Investigators do not believe they acted alone: Malaysian officials identified four men at the airport who were probably North Korean agents, but all fled the country shortly after the attack.

However, North Korea has denied involvement.

Reports said that North Korean officials have informally offered regret for involving a Vietnamese citizen in the killing of Kim Jong Nam.

Josh Kurlantzick, a fellow for South-east Asia at the Council on Foreign Relations, said that many in Vietnam probably knew little about Huong's case and that the government was unlikely to draw attention to it, due to its own use of the death penalty and pursuit of

critics internationally. "The government doesn't want to highlight this case," he said.

The U.S's Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has suggested that Vietnam may be a model for North Korea's economic and diplomatic reforms, arguing that the "miracle" seen in the country could be replicated in North Korea.

“We're talking about a man who assassinated his brother.”

DR SUE MI TERRY

Such comments worry many activists.

"If Vietnam serves as any example for the path North Korea should head in, then we should be very concerned about the future state of human rights in the Korean Peninsula," said Francisco Bencosme, Asia Pacific advocacy manager at Amnesty International.

Dr Terry said there is little chance that Trump will bring up broader human rights issues with Kim Jong Un in Vietnam, and even less that he will bring up the assassination of Kim Jong Nam.

"He doesn't care," she added, of Kim Jong Un's thoughts about Huong. "We're talking about a man who assassinated his brother."

Courtesy The Straits Times

INDONESIA

Workers dig by hand to free dozens in mine rubble

Ninie Karmini, Jakarta

THE collapse of an unlicensed gold mine in Indonesia buried dozens of people, and rescuers dug desperately with their bare hands and farm tools yesterday to unearth victims calling for help from beneath the rubble.

National disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said three people were confirmed dead and 14 have been rescued. "It is estimated that 43 peo-

ple are still buried," he said.

Makeshift wooden structures in the mine in North Sulawesi province's Bolaang Mongondow district collapsed Tuesday evening due to unstable soil and the large number of mining holes, burying people in the mine pit.

Local disaster official Abdul Muin Paputungan said the search effort was difficult because of the risk of causing more landslides and a lack of equipment.

"Unstable soil con-

ditions make us extra careful lifting rocks because it can lead to new landslides," Paputungan said. "We still hear voices crying for help from people beneath the rubble."

Informal mining operations are commonplace in Indonesia, providing a tenuous livelihood to thousands who labor in conditions with a high risk of serious injury or death.

Miners often burrow straight into hillsides with few supports, and children often are sent

into the tunnels to dig and carry out ore hacked from rock faces.

Police, search and rescue agency workers, soldiers and Indonesian Red Cross personnel were taking part in the rescue effort, but the remote location was complicating the operation.

Paputungan said the mine and a village connected to it are in a steep area that can only be reached by foot. Earth-moving equipment and ambulances can't reach the location, he said. **AP**



Rescuers evacuate a survivor from inside of a collapsed gold mine

Jonathan Lemire, Foster Klug
& Deb Riechmann, Hanoi

HANOI SUMMIT

Trump, Kim share smiles, dinner before nuke talks

U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un, leaders of two nations with a long history of hostility, opened their second summit yesterday with smiles, hopeful talk and a friendly dinner that will set the stage for the much more difficult talks to come about curbing North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Facing widespread skepticism about whether they can solve a problem that has bedeviled generations of diplomats and officials, the two men exchanged a warm handshake before a phalanx of alternating American and North Korean flags before disappearing for a private, 30-minute pre-dinner chat.

"A lot of things are going to be solved I hope," Trump said as dinner began. "I think it will lead to a wonderful, really a wonderful situation long-term."

Kim, for his part, said that his country had long been "misunderstood" and viewed with "distrust."

"There have been efforts, whether out of hostility or not, to block the path that we intend to take," he said. "But we have overcome all these and walked toward each other again and we've now reached Hanoi after 261 days" since their first meeting in Singapore.

"We have met again here and I am confident that we can achieve great results that everyone welcomes."

For all of the optimistic talk in front of the cameras, there was broad concern that Trump, eager for an agreement, would give Kim too much and get too little in return — perhaps a peace declaration for the Korean War that the North could use to eventually push for the reduction of U.S. troops in South Korea, or sanctions relief that could allow Pyongyang to pursue lucrative economic projects with the South.

A deal like this, skeptics say, would leave in place a significant portion of North Korea's nuclear-tipped missiles while robbing the United States of its negotiating leverage going forward: If the North has already gotten a good deal of what it wanted, and kept part of its nuclear program, what would be the point of giving up the rest?

Asked if this summit would yield a political declaration to end the Korean War, Trump told reporters: "We'll see."

The two leaders were joined for dinner by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, Kim Yong Chol, a former military spy chief and Kim's point man in negotiations, and North Korean Fo-

AP PHOTO



Trump and Kim in a private, 30-minute pre-dinner chat

reign Affairs Minister Ri Yong Ho. Interpreters for each side also attended.

Kim said that his country had long been 'misunderstood' and viewed with 'distrust'

As Trump reached for a summit victory abroad, back in Washington his former personal attorney, Michael Cohen, was prepared to deliver explosive testimony on Capitol Hill that the president is a "racist," a "conman" and a "cheat." Unable to ignore the drama playing out thousands of miles away, Trump tweeted that Cohen, who has been sentenced to three years in prison

for lying to Congress, "did bad things unrelated to Trump" and "is lying in order to reduce his prison time."

Anticipation for what could be accomplished at the summit ran high in Hanoi, and there were cheers and gasps as Trump's motorcade barreled through this bustling city, with crowds three or four deep lining the streets and jockeying to capture his procession with their mobile phones. But the carnival-like atmosphere in the Vietnamese capital, with street artists painting likenesses of the leaders and vendors hawking T-shirts showing Kim waving and Trump giving a thumbs-up, contrasted with the serious items on their agenda: North Korea's nuclear weapons program and peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Trump has been trying to convince Kim that his nation could thrive economically like the host country, Vietnam, if

he would end his nuclear weapons program.

"I think that your country has tremendous economic potential — unbelievable, unlimited," Trump said. "I think that you will have a tremendous future with your country — a great leader — and I look forward to watching it happen and helping it to happen."

A lot of things are going to be solved I hope.

TRUMP

The summit venue, the colonial and neoclassical Sofitel Legend Metropole in the old part of Hanoi, came with its own dose of history: Trump was trying to talk Kim into giving up his nuclear arsenal at a hotel with a bomb shelter that

protected the likes of actress Jane Fonda and singer Joan Baez from American air raids during the Vietnam War.

Trump and Kim first met last June in Singapore, a summit that was long on historic pageantry but short on any enforceable agreements for North Korea to give up its nuclear arsenal. North Korea has spent decades, at great economic sacrifice, building its nuclear program, and there are doubts that it will give away that program without getting something substantial from the U.S.

The Korean conflict ended in 1953 with an armistice, essentially a cease-fire signed by North Korea, China and the 17-nation, U.S.-led United Nations Command. A peace declaration would amount to a political statement, ostensibly teeing up talks for a formal peace treaty that would involve other nations. **AP**

EGYPT

Train crash, fire at central Cairo station kills 25

By Maggie Michael, Cairo

A speeding railcar crashed into a barrier at Cairo's main train station, causing its fuel tank to explode and triggering a huge fire that left at least 25 people dead yesterday, officials said.

Railway officials said the train was speeding and collided head-on with the barrier. At least 47 people were also injured in the accident.

Mohammed Said, the head of the Cairo Railroad hospital, said there are concerns the death toll could rise further following the blaze. Other officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to the media.

Photographs from the station showed charred bodies lying on the platforms at the Ramsis station in downtown Cairo. Firefighters struggled to get the flames under control.

Heavy black smoke rose into the sky as ambulances rushed



Policemen stand guard in front of a damaged train inside Ramsis train station

to the scene. The Ramsis district is among the busiest and most crowded areas of the Egyptian capital.

The state railway agency briefly halted all train traffic and ordered the evacuation of the station.

Videos from surveillance cameras inside the station showed

flames ravaging the station. A video that surfaced on social media showed men and women carrying bags and personal belongings and walking on the rail platforms as the train car crashed and exploded.

Another video showed men and women running, searching for exits after the explosion. A

man runs back and forth, his shirt on fire, until another man rushes to pour water on him.

Egypt's Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli said authorities must determine "who caused the accident and hold that person accountable." He promised "harsh punishment" for the culprits.

Egypt's railway system has a poor safety record, mostly blamed on decades of badly maintained equipment and poor management. Official figures show that 1,793 train accidents took place in 2017 across the country.

Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli promised 'harsh punishment' for the culprits

In March last year, President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said the government lacks about 250 billion Egyptian pounds, or USD14.1 billion, to overhaul the run-down railway system. El-Sissi spoke a day after a passenger train collided with a cargo train, killing at least 12 people, including a child.

And in August 2017, two passenger trains collided just outside the Mediterranean port city of Alexandria, killing 43 people. In 2016, at least 51 people were killed when two commuter trains collided near Cairo. AP

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Cara Anna & Khaled Kazziha, Abuja

NIGERIA

NIGERIA'S president was declared the clear winner of a second term in Africa's largest democracy yesterday, after a campaign in which he urged voters to give him another chance to tackle gaping corruption, widespread insecurity and an economy limping back from a rare recession.

While many frustrated Nigerians had said they wanted to give someone new a try, President Muhammadu Buhari, a former military dictator, profited from his upright reputation in an oil-rich nation weary of politicians enriching themselves instead of the people.

Speaking shortly after the announcement of the official results and as many Nigerians awakened to the morning prayer, Buhari told colleagues that he was "deeply humbled" by the win. He also said he regretted the loss of dozens of lives in election-related violence.

"I will like to make a special appeal to my supporters not to gloat or humiliate the opposition. Victory is enough reward for your efforts," said Buhari.

He pledged that in his second term, his new administration "will intensify its efforts in security, restructuring the economy and fighting corruption. [...] We will strive to strengthen our unity and

inclusiveness so that no section or group will feel left behind or left out."

Supporters began dancing in the streets of the capital, Abuja, on Tuesday night as vote counting stretched his lead from the weekend election to nearly four million votes over top opposition challenger Atiku Abubakar, a billionaire former vice president who made sweeping campaign promises to "make Nigeria work again."

Buhari received 15.1 million votes, or 55 percent, the electoral commission said in making its official declaration. Abubakar received 11.2 million, or 41 percent. The average national turnout was 35.6 percent, continuing a downward trend.

In a failed last-ditch effort to stop the official declaration, Abubakar's party claimed that election data had been manipulated and demanded fresh elections in four of Nigeria's 36 states.

Buhari's party rejected the accu-



President Muhammadu Buhari

sations. It also called on Abubakar, who hasn't made a public appearance since Saturday's election, to accept his loss gracefully and concede. "Let this nation move forward," campaign spokesman Babatunde Fashola said.

"There's no opposition that will roll over and play dead. Anybody that lost an election will always complain," Hameed Ali, the ruling party agent attending the vote declaration, told reporters.

The election, once described as

too close to call, suffered from a surprise weeklong postponement and significant delays in the opening of polling stations. While election observers called the process generally peaceful, at least 53 people were killed in an attack claimed by the Islamic State West Africa Province extremist group and other violence, analysis unit SBM Intelligence said.

It remained to be seen whether Abubakar will follow through on pledges to accept a loss, or challen-

ge the results. A former U.S. ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, said the troubled election had given the candidates grounds to go to the courts. That route could take months.

Many Nigerians have prayed for peace. They were surprised in 2015 when President Goodluck Jonathan took the unprecedented step of conceding to Buhari before official results were announced. It was the first defeat of an incumbent president by the opposition in the country's history.

"Jonathan set the benchmark on how electoral outcomes should be handled," Chris Kwaja, a senior adviser to the United States Institute of Peace, a U.S. government-backed institution promoting conflict resolution worldwide, told The Associated Press. "Accept defeat in the spirit of sportsmanship. This is a critical vehicle for democratic consolidation."

Nigerians were praised for their patience and resilience in this bumpy vote. AP

AD



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what's ON



MICRO VIEW – A COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS

TIME: 12pm-7pm (closed on Wednesdays)

UNTIL: March 2, 2019

VENUE: At Light, Pátio do Padre Narciso n° 1, R/C

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 6595 7203

THE SHANGHAI SCHOOL OF PAINTING – COLLECTIONS OF THE PALACE MUSEUM

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: March 10, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

NO WHERE THERE – WORKS BY TANG JING

TIME: 11am-1pm & 2pm-6pm (closed on Sundays)

UNTIL: March 16, 2019

VENUE: 1844 Macau Photography Art Space

Admission: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 6311 1390

3RD MACAU PRINTMAKING TRIENNIAL

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm, closed on Monday)

VENUE: Macau Contemporary Art Center - Navy Yard No.1

Exhibitions Gallery and Nostalgic House of the Taipa Houses

UNTIL: March 16, 2019

VENUE: 1844 Macau Photography Art Space

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6866

CELEBRATING LIFE – JU MING LIVING WORLD SCULPTURE SELLING EXHIBITION

TIME: 10:30am-11pm

UNTIL: April 7, 2019

VENUE: Rippling Gallery, Roaming Gallery, and Floating Gallery, MGM Cotai

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8806 8888

Offbeat

INARRITU PICKED TO HEAD CANNES JURY, FIRST MEXICAN IN POST



Award-winning Mexican director Alejandro Gonzales Inarritu will preside over the jury at the 72nd Cannes Film Festival in May.

Festival president Pierre Lescure, announcing the choice yesterday, praised Inarritu – the first Mexican to be given the honor – as a “daring filmmaker [...] full of surprises” and an “artist of his time.”

Inarritu said in the statement that “this is a true delight and a responsibility that we will assume with passion and devotion.”

The Cannes festival, he said, is the heart of world cinema. Inarritu won best director Oscar for “The Revenant” in 2016 and “Birdman” in 2015, among numerous awards.

Cate Blanchett served as jury president last year when the Palme d’Or, the top prize, was awarded to “Shoplifters” by Japanese director Kore-eda Hirokazu.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Mistura Fina
15:50	Zig Zag
16:25	Viver é Fácil
16:50	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
17:45	Moda Portugal Sr.2
18:20	O Douro nos Caminhos da Literatura
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
22:00	Justiça de Chicago Sr.1
22:45	Todas as Palavras
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Macau, Quatro Séculos de Aventura - Uma República no Império
00:20	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:05	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

28 FEB

HAPPY DEATH DAY 2U

ROOM 1

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

Director: Christopher Landon

Starring: Jessica Rothe, Israel Broussard, Phi Vu

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 100min



BEN IS BACK

ROOM 2

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

Director: Peter Hedges

Starring: Julia Roberts, Lucas Hedges, Courtney B. Vance

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 103min

FATE/STAY NIGHT: HEAVEN'S FEEL II

LOST BUTTERFLY

ROOM 1

7:30pm

Director: Tomonori Sudô

Starring: Yu Asakawa, Mai Kadowaki, Hiroshi Kamiya

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 117min



THE WANDERING EARTH

ROOM 3

42:30, 7:15pm

Director: Frant Gwo

Starring: Chuxiao Qu, Jing Wu, Guangjie Li

Language: Chinese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 123min

DRAGON BALL SUPER BROLI

ROOM 3

4:45, 9:30pm

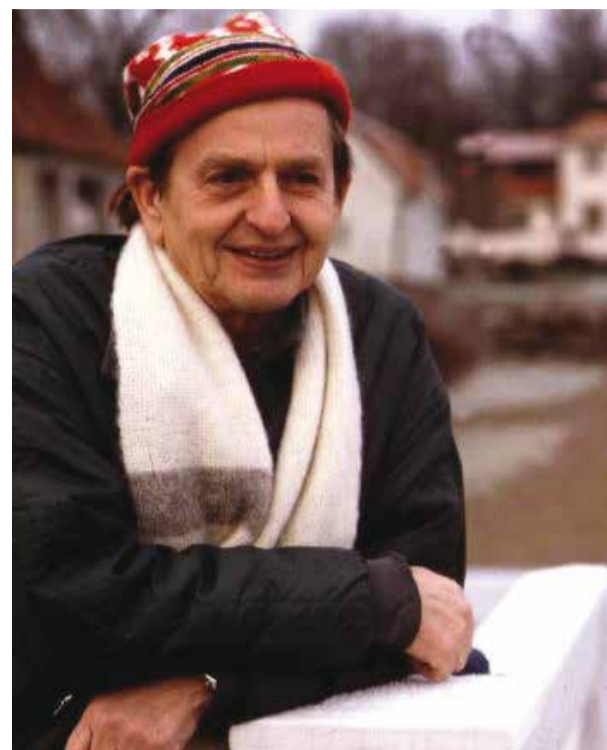
Director: Tatsuya Nagamine

Starring: Masako Nozawa, Aya Hisakawa, Ryô Horikawa

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 100min

this day in history



1986 SWEDISH PRIME MINISTER ASSASSINATED

The Swedish prime minister has died after being shot in a street ambush in central Stockholm. His wife was wounded.

Olof and Lisbeth Palme were attacked as they were leaving a cinema at about 2330 local time. Mr Palme was shot twice in the stomach, his wife was shot in the back.

Police say a taxi-driver used his mobile radio to raise the alarm. Two young girls sitting in a car close to the scene of the shooting tried to help the Prime Minister.

He was rushed to hospital but was dead on arrival. Mrs Palme is being treated for her injury, but it is not thought to be life threatening.

Mr Palme, 59, and a social democrat, was serving his second term as leader. He believed in open government and shunned tight security.

He had two bodyguards to protect him on official functions but frequently walked unattended through the Swedish capital and went on holidays unescorted to his summer cottage on the island of Gotland.

His assassination will come as a shock to the Swedes. They have always taken great pride in the fact their prime minister could walk openly in the streets without the security which accompanies other heads of state.

Mr Palme will be remembered as a campaigner for the working classes and Third World causes. He was first elected as prime minister in 1969.

He became a leading advocate of peace and non violence and campaigned for an end to the war in Vietnam.

He saw himself carrying the banner of Social Democracy through Europe at a time when the Right was only temporarily in triumph.

He once said: “I know that the Thatchers and the Reagans will be out in a few years. We have to survive till then.”

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Olof Palme's deputy Ingvar Carlsson was chosen to succeed him as Social Democratic party leader.

At the time of his death, Mr Palme had been accused of being pro-Soviet and not safeguarding Sweden's interests. Arrangements had been made for a trip to Moscow to discuss Soviet submarine incursions into Swedish waters.

A drug addict and social outcast, Christer Pettersson, 42, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder in July 1989.

The verdict immediately became controversial as the court's two judges voted for acquittal but six lay assessors disagreed.

In October 1989, Pettersson was cleared. Although several witnesses thought they could place him at the scene of the crime, no motive was ever found for the killing.

Pettersson died in September 2004. He was reported to have confessed to the killing before his death.

The investigation into Olof Palme's death remains open.

In November 2006 police recovered a Smith and Wesson revolver believed to have been used in the murder. It was found in a lake in central Sweden.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 If someone you care about is acting dramatically out of his or her character today, try to find out what is on his or her mind, but be careful you don't push too hard.

Taurus April 20-May 20 There's magic in the details, so why not slow down and take them all in? You will find great joy in the little things you witness today...and a big part of this joy is in noticing something that no one else notices.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Flex your muscles today! You have a lot more power than you think you do, and it's time you reminded yourself that you are definitely a force to be reckoned with!

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Keep a sharp eye out for minor differences that could create some major problems today...you may have a tendency to get mixed up a bit here and there, and details really matter!

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Right now, you are entering a phase where shallow ideas and material goods aren't nearly as important to you as ideas, concepts, and emotions. So today, try to gently push all your conversations into these areas.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Keep a dinner date, even though you might have to work early tomorrow... or make sure you're home in time for dinner instead of pushing through until you get things done. Keep your life in the right perspective!

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 So today, try to gently push all your conversations into these areas and steer the talk away from the latest music, hottest new clubs or juiciest celebrity gossip.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Get ready to put on a command performance today—you may not want to go public with your latest news, but it seems like no one can wait for the inside scoop. Divulge only as much as you want.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Someone you don't know very well could serve as inspiration, so follow their actions and do like they do. Lean on them for insight on how to approach the situation.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 The mists of your memories will do nothing but cloud up your vision today, and you will need clarity to make some important decisions. So try to live in the present moment each step of the way today.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 This is not the time to puff out your chest and stake your claim. Exhibiting too much aggression will do you more harm than good, pushing people to react in ways that will only shut you out of the action.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Someone who is working with you has been a bit behind the curve, but today you will finally see them catching up. Your words of encouragement will help them even further...

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles: Easy and Easy+. Each puzzle is a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled. Easy puzzle: Row 1: 6, 4, 9; Row 2: 3, 7, 4; Row 3: 4, 5, 8, 6; Row 4: 5, 8, 6, 7; Row 5: 5, 2; Row 6: 3, 7, 1, 5; Row 7: 2, 9, 6, 3; Row 8: 6, 7, 1; Row 9: 4, 2, 8. Easy+ puzzle: Row 1: 3, 4, 7; Row 2: 7, 5, 2, 1; Row 3: 3, 6, 4; Row 4: 6, 9, 5; Row 5: 8, 9, 1; Row 6: 5, 8, 9, 7, 4, 8, 3; Row 7: 7, 1, 8.

Sudoku puzzles: Medium and Hard. Medium puzzle: Row 1: 1, 3; Row 2: 1, 2, 7; Row 3: 5, 2, 3, 8; Row 4: 6, 4, 1, 2; Row 5: 4, 9; Row 6: 3, 7, 4, 9; Row 7: 4, 6, 1, 3; Row 8: 7, 8, 9; Row 9: 1, 7. Hard puzzle: Row 1: 6, 2; Row 2: 1, 5; Row 3: 1, 4, 3, 5; Row 4: 6, 7; Row 5: 2, 7, 1; Row 6: 5, 3, 8; Row 7: 4.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Includes sections for CHINA and WORLD. China cities: Beijing (-2, 14, clear), Harbin (-8, 6, cloudy), Tianjin (1, 15, clear), Urumqi (-12, -9, foggy), Xi'an (2, 13, clear), Lhasa (-3, 7, overcast/snow), Chengdu (7, 11, cloudy/overcast), Chongqing (10, 14, overcast), Kunming (5, 21, shower), Nanjing (4, 10, cloudy/overcast), Shanghai (6, 11, cloudy), Wuhan (3, 11, cloudy), Hangzhou (6, 10, overcast), Taipei (17, 20, overcast), Guangzhou (17, 23, cloudy), Hong Kong (19, 25, cloudy). World cities: Moscow (-1, 2, sleet/drizzle), Frankfurt (0, 11, clear/drizzle), Paris (5, 13, drizzle), London (3, 13, drizzle), New York (-5, 4, flurry/drizzle).

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Sp. ladies; 5- Cotton deseeders; 9- Govt. property overseer; 12- Isn't wrong?; 13- Pertaining to a sovereign; 15- Score; 16- Mirth; 17- ___ a customer; 18- House member; 19- Continuously; 21- Republic in E Africa; 23- Clublike weapon; 25- Must have; 26- Airport stat.; 29- Lash; 31- Least polite; 35- Untrained; 36- Crystal ball users; 38- Perfect Sleeper maker; 39- Let's just leave ___ that; 41- One of the family; 43- Geeky type; 44- Capital of Egypt; 46- Pointed arch; 48- KGB counterpart; 49- Maestro Toscanini; 51- In the blink ___ eye; 52- ___ in turkey; 53- Balkan native; 55- Intestinal sections; 57- Agreement between states; 61- Suave; 65- Garage job; 66- Scent; 68- Iowa college town; 69- ___ vera; 70- Snob; 71- Small blemish; 72- Formerly known as; 73- Olympic weapon; 74- Exxon, formerly;

DOWN: 1- It's a long story; 2- Small stream; 3- From scratch; 4- Water vapor; 5- Former monetary unit of Austria; 6- Electrically charged particle; 7- Russian refusal; 8- Lucifer; 9- Thug; 10- Hindu garment; 11- "M'A'S'H" star; 14- Hermit; 15- Elate; 20- Goes off-course; 22- Chief god of ancient Greece; 24- Children's refrain; 26- Novelist Jong; 27- Golden Horde member; 28- Look forward to; 30- Ragu competitor; 32- Standing up; 33- Narrow furrow; 34- Triumphant cries; 37- Fantasy genre; 40- Depository; 42- Appraise; 45- Sweet sandwich; 47- Steven Chu's cabinet dept.; 50- Killer whales; 54- Shouldered; 56- Degrade; 57- Scheme; 58- Govern; 59- Slender woodwind; 60- Roller coaster feature; 62- Concert gear; 63- Revivalists; 64- This, in Tijuana; 67- A Stooge;

Yesterday's solution crossword grid with filled-in words. Words include: LAMBS, CENTER, LASH, ALAR, TOADY, SPEE, NONE, ARIDE, ANIS, GUNWALE, AGGRESS, BARRABAN, RENAM, LINGUA, AGATE, ARIES, ARES, GANK, TAP, EARNEST, ICI, HESAL, LAID, RENAL, GLENN, FANTAN, SHEATH, GELIO, PERIOD, DOLLEPUL, RAIN, UNDER, ARLO, AVES, SUOMI, RENO, TEST, ETHAN, SEAN.

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Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
IACM 28 387 333
Tourism 28 333 000
Airport 59 888 88



Real estate advertisement for JML Property. Includes 'FOR SALE' sections and property listings: Choi Long Meng Chui (Three Bedroom Apartment), Pacifica - Perfect Locality (Three Bedroom Apartment), Ocean Garden Elm Court (Three Bedroom Apartment), Taipa, Supreme Flower City (Four Bedroom Apartment), Sea View Condo, Hellene Garden (Three Bedroom Apartment), Va Fat, Taipa Village (Two Bedroom Apartment), Taipa, Nam Long (Two Bedroom Apartment), Coloane Village (Two Bedroom Apartment).

Rugby Academy

Bats had a bumpy weekend at HK Festival

Donald Shaw, Hong Kong
Special to MDT

Fresh from their exploits in Bangkok, it was back to the latest Hong Kong rugby festival for the Macau Bats on Sunday. Hosted by Valley Fort, the Macau U6s team had just enough time to arrive pitch-side before starting their first early morning game against USRC Tigers which ended in an entertaining 2-2 draw. This was followed by two wins against Discovery Bay Pirates (2-1) and Hong Kong Football Club (3-2) before a second 2-2 draw, this time against Tung Chung, saw the young Bats head home undefeated.

The U7 team had a tougher start to their games, losing 1-3 to South China Athletic and 2-4 to East Kowloon. However, the team bounced back to win against both Football Club (3-0) and Tung Chung, also 3-0, in their final games.

The U8s were auditioning for the role of "great entertainers", being involved in several high scoring games. They lost against Shatin Sha Pei (4-5), Football Club (4-6) and Tuen Mun Sharks (6-7) before rounding their games off with a 5-3 win over Discovery Bay Pirates.

The U9s were once again playing in the top tier and found the going tough against Sandy Bay (0-6), Sai Kung Stingrays (0-3) and Valley Fort (0-4) before achieving a good 2-2 draw against Football Club.

The U10s were also playing in the top tier and began with a 1-1 draw with Football Club before three losses against Valley Fort (0-3), Discovery Bay Pirates (2-3) and a strong Sandy Bay (0-5).

Meanwhile the U12s were playing in the latest round of the Richard Hawkes league at the Happy Valley ground. The Bats led in their first game again Football Club before letting in a couple of late tries to go down 1-3. A similar story was the case against USRC Tigers with the Bats leading 2-1 until the Tigers ran in late scores to win 2-5. This set up an important game against Discovery Bay Pirates that saw the Bats win 4-3 in another entertaining match. The final game saw the Bats run Valley Fort close before losing 2-3 in a tight game.

The Bats now have a well earned break before the next Hong Kong festival in mid-March.



Anne M. Peterson

FOOTBALL

The Women's World Cup is 100 days out

THE Women's World Cup countdown has begun in earnest.

Yesterday marked 100 days until kickoff for the game's biggest tournament, opening on June 7 in Paris. The 24-team event will be played at nine stadiums in France over the course of a month, with the final set for July 7 in Lyon.

The United States is the defending champion, having won the 2015 World Cup in Canada. The top-ranked Americans are also the presumptive favorites this time around.

So far, ticket sales have been strong, with more than 330,000 of an allotment of 1.3 million sold following the ticket package launch and the presale phase. Single-match tickets go on sale March 7.

According to FIFA, 57 percent of the sales have been in France, while 25 percent have been to fans in the United States.

There are a few lingering controversies hanging over the event, including prize money. Last October, the FIFA Council raised the prize money from USD15 million in 2015 to \$30 million in France. But by contrast, the prize pool for the men's World Cup in Russia last year was \$400 million.

In 2015, the U.S. women received \$2 million for raising the trophy, and the winner this summer will earn \$4 million. The French men, who won their World Cup, earned \$38 million.

While the men's World Cup generates far more revenue, critics say FIFA should back up its pledges to grow the women's game with investment and incentives — like a sweeter prize pool.

"We need to try to find what is the most balanced way, and I think we made a step and there will be many more steps going ahead," FIFA President Gianni Infantino vowed when the increase was announced.

Another issue is timing. FIFA has been criticized for scheduling the Women's World Cup

AP PHOTO



The WWC trophy is displayed at the women's soccer 2019 World Cup draw, in Boulogne-Billancourt, outside Paris yesterday

final on the same day as the men's Copa America final and the CONCACAF Gold Cup final.

Here are some other things to watch in the 100 days leading up to the World Cup.

VIDEO WATCH

The next Women's World Cup milestone for FIFA is confirming the use of video review.

The prospect of VAR in France looked in doubt as FIFA prevaricated when asked if women's players would benefit from the same technology as debuted at the men's World Cup in Russia last year.

But FIFA confirmed its Women's World Cup referees were training with VAR earlier this month. The FIFA Council has to ratify the use of VAR at a meeting in Miami next month.

LAST-MINUTE CHANGES

Australia shocked many with January's dismissal of coach Alen Stajcic, who had been coach of the Matildas since 2014 and still had nine months left on his contract.

The Australian federation said it fired Stajcic following an internal review and Ante Milicic was named to take over through the World Cup.

Milicic is not the only one jumping aboard a team so late in the process. Cameroon coach Joseph Ndoko was replaced by Alain Djeumfa in January. Known as the Lionesses, Cameroon advanced to the knockout round in Canada but the team has struggled recently with preparation for France.

The move was somewhat of a surprise because Ndoko had

guided the team to a third-place finish at the Women's Africa Cup of Nations late last year, qualifying Cameroon for the World Cup.

TUNING UP

The 100-day mark also means teams are going all-in on preparation for the event. The United States is hosting the SheBelieves Cup with Japan, England and Brazil — all World Cup-bound teams — since yesterday. There's also the annual Algarve Cup in Portugal, which starts Thursday and features Canada, Sweden, Spain and several other teams.

Australia is hosting the inaugural Cup of Nations, which will also include New Zealand, Argentina and South Korea, starting Thursday.

"We've got eight games left,"

U.S. coach Jill Ellis said Tuesday about the remaining schedule. "Every minute we can get the players together to forge those relationships is really important."

But there's far more urgency for teams that normally don't have many regular exhibition games. Chile and Jamaica, who will each make their World Cup debut in France, will play a pair of matches in Jamaica, with the first on Thursday in Kingston.

"Chile have played Brazil and Italy recently, therefore we'll get an opportunity to measure where we are as a team," Jamaica coach Hue Menzies told reporters last week. The Reggae Girls, ranked No. 53 in the world, are also expected to play a friendly against Panama as the team prepares for the World Cup.

FOCUS

U.S. goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher was on the champion 2015 squad, albeit as a backup to goalkeeper Hope Solo. Now the presumed starter in France, Naeher is tempering her excitement with focus on the work to be done — starting with the match against Japan today (Macau time).

"My mindset has kind of always been taking everything one game at a time. My focus is going to be on Japan and how we can put together a good performance and come away with a win. Then we move on to the challenge that England brings us in a few days," Naeher said. "I mean, yes it's exciting to start a countdown like that [the 100 days] and it kind of builds the excitement around the whole event. But for me it's kind of staying focused in the moment."

HEGENBERG OUT

Norway coach Martin Sjogren told the BBC that there is no chance that Ballon d'Or winner Ada Hegerberg will play in the World Cup. Hegerberg stepped away from the national team out of what she said was a lack of respect for the female players. Sjogren said discussions were held, but ultimately Hegerberg decided not to play. **AP**

MOTOR RACING

Ferrari driver Vettel crashes in F1 preseason testing

SEBASTIAN Vettel crashed into a tire barrier in Formula One preseason testing yesterday, damaging his Ferrari but not sustaining any injuries.

Vettel lost control on Turn 3 at the Barcelona-Catalunya Circuit, going through the gravel and hitting the wall.

Ferrari said Vettel was "off due to a mechanical problem." It said the car was sent back to the garage "for all the needed checks."

The Italian team did not specify what problem led to Vettel's crash in the morning session of the second of four days of testing.

The crash prompted a red flag, and Vettel's Ferrari had to be towed back to the garage.

McLaren driver Carlos Sainz was leading yesterday's session with a time of 1 minute, 17.144 seconds, the fastest so far after six days of testing. Vettel had the second fastest

time of the day, followed by Red Bull driver Max Verstappen and Mercedes rival Valtteri Bottas.

Also Wednesday, McLaren said two-time world champion Fernando Alonso will be the team's ambassador and continue to advise its drivers and engineers, as well as "drive at selected tests to support the development" of the team's cars for 2020.

Alonso, who was at the Barcelona track on Tues-

day, will drive for McLaren in this year's Indy 500.

Renault said Russian driver Sergey Sirotkin, who raced for Williams last season, will be the team's reserve driver in 2019.

Testing will continue through Friday at the Barcelona-Catalunya Circuit, home to the Spanish Grand Prix.

The season-opening Australian Grand Prix is on March 17. **AP**

AP PHOTO



opinion

Girl About Globe

Linda Kennedy



CLEAN AIR, NO BULL

Here's an idea. Macau could have a hotel called The New Zealander Macau. No casino. Just hills, cable cars and thermal pools – all indoors.

Slogan: 'Forget a good hand. Enjoy the best breath.' Why? In the future, there is going to be AQI tourism. Travellers who choose destinations not because of sunshine or heritage - but the quality of air.

I was home in Scotland recently. The Air Quality Index (AQI) in the capital city, Edinburgh, was 34 on the same day that Macau's AQI reached 112, and Hong Kong's was over 130.

Let's remind ourselves what these figures mean. An AQI number below 50 is gulpingly great. Between 51-100 is still fair air. 101-150 is bad news for lungs and tongues. Above 151 it would be unwise to gasp in horror. Over 200, the chart is purple. That colour says it all.

So, why wouldn't one want 'an escape from it all' to include pollution? The idea of making a purchase decision based on air isn't ridiculous. Three years ago, Australia started selling air, in cans, to the Chinese. The product was called '100% Pure Australian Air'. It started as a novelty tourist souvenir, for Chinese visitors to 'take home a little of Australia'. But when sales figures grew, two Sydney businessmen went into production for real.

Given there seems to be an 'air-aware' market segment ready to be developed, where could an AQI tourist be persuaded to go?

Scotland, for starters. Filled with glens and bens – which are, respectively, valleys and big hills. The clean air might have small insects that we call midges but, hey, extra protein.

Switzerland. Ultimate mountain air. Pure Alpine goodness.

And New Zealand. Their tourist photographs show lakes, glaciers and sounds, against a background of a pristine sky.

Let's here return to the idea of The New Zealander Macau. You might be thinking: 'say what? Given these nice clean countries already exist, why the devil would a hotel be required?'

Answer: burping cows.

A report this week said burping cows are more damaging to the environment than all the cars on the planet. Emissions from both ends of livestock cause methane, a greenhouse gas. Methane contributes to long-term environmental decline rather than daily air quality. But still. If you're a beautiful country with cows, you have a herd issue. Those cows are ruining your air quality pitch.

Consider New Zealand. It has natural wilderness but it also has a big, big dairy industry all going 'hic'. Oh dear.

And Scotland. Our Highland cattle pose in their ginger woolly coats all over Instagram. And all the while they are creating Glen Methane.

Little wonder the savvy Swiss have long had cow bells to mask the burps.

Hence the idea of Macau stepping in to build hotels which would serve the AQI tourist sector. minus the cows. Clean air, no bull.

Travel aside, there are other reactions to gassy cattle which alarm me. If cows present such a threat to the environment, will what they produce become stigmatised? Like cheese. Or even milk? Is this burp business going to turn a frothy cappuccino into a guilty pleasure?

As well as AQI tourism, I leave you with this prediction. A burp offsetting industry will emerge, just as carbon offsetting did a few years ago. Every time you eat or drink dairy, you will be encouraged to purchase burp offsetting credits, to take responsibility for your methane footprint.

And it's inevitable: Hong Kong is going to have a cool café chain which serves burp-neutral milk. And I, for one, shall be disappointed if it's not called Cappuccin-moo.

THE ITV, BBC IN CONCLUDING PHASE FOR TALKS ON STREAMING SERVICE

ITV says it is in the final phase of discussions with the BBC to create a new on-demand video platform to rival the likes of Netflix.

Chief Executive Carolyn McCall says the service, to be called BritBox, will provide a home for British-made video, offering an unrivaled collection of television box sets and original series in one place. She says ITV and the BBC have a "joint vision" for the service and are working on

a formal agreement.

McCall says she anticipates "that other partners will be added to BritBox, and we will both speak to regulators and the wider industry about our proposals."

ITV, a free-to-air British network, plans to invest up to 25 million pounds (USD33 million) in BritBox this year and about 40 million pounds in 2020.

HANOI POSTCARD

Vietnamese painter of Trump art diversifies



Binh's portrait series of U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Hanoi

Tran Van Minh, Hanoi

THE stereotype of artists as eccentric is a common one, and the work of Vietnamese artist Tran Lam Binh seems to support that view. Since 2015 he has turned out painting after painting of Donald Trump. Many can be seen this week in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, where Trump is holding a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Binh has also fashioned a statue of the American president that's almost 2 meters (6½ feet) tall, more or less life size.

Don't assume Binh is single-minded, however.

In 2017, he began diversifying his portfolio of roughly 50 depictions of Trump by painting portraits of Kim Jong Un as well.

So this week is kind of a perfect storm for 36-year-old Binh with his two favorite subjects coming to his homeland to discuss peace on the Korean Peninsula.

To mark the event, Binh has created about 10 pop-art portraits of Trump and Kim on canvas and paper in bright pink, blue, orange and yellow colors decorated with hearts and the words "Love" and "Peace."

Binh said he won't sell the portraits and instead will keep them as a souvenir of the historic event. He may not be turning a profit, but has been reaping a motherlode of publicity as the summit has brought foreign and local media in droves to see

him and his work.

Binh started painting Trump portraits in 2015 when the American real estate mogul launched his campaign for the presidency. After Trump's election victory, Binh staged an exhibition of his works on a sidewalk near the White House.

Binh's style, with garish colors and casual brush strokes, somewhat recalls the paintings of Canadian comedian Jim Carrey, another Trump obsessive.

Carrey's barbed caricatures, posted on the internet, make no secret of the fact that he is a fierce critic of Trump and his politics.

Binh, on the other hand, is a fan.

"I liked his expression when he was running for president," Binh said. "He seemed like the world's most contemporary artwork. He's

at a relatively advanced age, but very youthful, dynamic, fashionable and with inner strength that shows the greatness of a man who can change the world – and so I began my paintings."

Binh said he wants to invite Trump and Kim, "if they have time," to visit his studio and view his work.

"I will invite them for coffee and paint portraits of them and give them the paintings as a token with a message of love and peace," he said.

Tran Tuan Anh, the owner of the cafe where Binh's works are being displayed, said he hopes Trump and Kim can strike a deal at their meeting in Hanoi.

"With a message of peace in the city of peace, I'm very hopeful that the two leaders will achieve peace for the two countries as well as for the whole world," he said. AP



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

WORLD BRIEFS



MYANMAR A French tourist was sentenced to one month in prison with hard labor, but he is expected to be released in about a week because of time he served while awaiting trial. Arthur Desclaux was arrested on Feb. 7 for flying a drone close to the capital's parliament complex.



KASHMIR Pakistan's military said it shot down two Indian warplanes in the disputed region of Kashmir and captured two pilots, raising tensions between the nuclear-armed rivals to a level unseen in the last two decades.



USA Donald Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen (pictured), is planning to tell a House committee that Trump knew ahead of time that WikiLeaks had emails damaging to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

NIGERIA's president was declared the clear winner of a second term in Africa's largest democracy. While many frustrated Nigerians had said they wanted to give someone new a try, President Muhammadu Buhari, profited from his upright reputation in an oil-rich nation weary of politicians enriching themselves instead of the people.



EGYPT A locomotive crashed into a barrier at Cairo's main train station at high speed yesterday, causing its fuel tank to explode and triggering a huge fire, leaving at least 25 people dead, officials said. More on p14